

LEADING IN BETWEEN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF SELECTED SECOND
CHAIR MINISTRY LEADERS IN ALABAMA BAPTIST CHURCHES

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To My Nieces and Nephews
Wyatt, Callie, Sadie, Watson, Elsie, Wilson, Walker
As you grow, may the Holy Spirit empower you
to be leaders wherever you go.

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ABSTRACT

LEADING IN BETWEEN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
SELECTED SECOND CHAIR MINISTRY LEADERS
IN ALABAMA BAPTIST CHURCHES

Jennifer Blair Foster, PhD
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2024
Faculty Supervisor: Joe Sherrer, Professor of Discipleship and Ministry Leadership

The purpose of the dissertation was to create an essence description of the lived experiences of men and women who served as second chair ministry leaders in Alabama Baptist churches. Through in-depth interviews, second chair ministry leaders told their stories and provided meaningful reflections on calling, preparation, and job satisfaction as second chair ministry leaders. They further discussed how their genders impacted their lived experiences in local church ministry.

Through in-depth phenomenological inquiry, these leaders revealed the challenges and the successes of second chair ministry leadership in Alabama Baptist churches. Their stories were characterized by clear ministry callings and advanced ministry preparation with both formal and informal theological education. Their daily experiences yielded moments of job satisfaction related to fulfilling their callings, impacting relationships, and making a difference in their churches. They were dissatisfied with their jobs when they felt unnoticed or unappreciated, experienced disappointment with their own performances, endured staff disunity, and encountered difficult relationships. Both women and men identified times when their callings were diminished or their ministries were limited because of their gender. Only one of these

leaders aspired to be a first chair senior pastor. The others were content to remain in the background supporting their pastors, loving their people, and serving their churches.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Being second became my first choice. It proved the best one of my career.¹

Richard Hytner

In a culture that values competition and champions winners, second place can seem second best. The second car speeding across the finish line rarely receives camera time as the frame follows the first car's victory lap around the track. The athlete awarded the silver medal revels in far fewer accolades as the gold medalist adorns cereal boxes and garners thousands of "likes" on social media feeds. The audience applauds the first chair musician's solo while the supporting harmonies of the second chair fade into the background of the symphony. The seconds become quick memories as the firsts claim the spotlight.

However, these seconds provide an invaluable service to the firsts. In racing when the first and second cars closely align rear to front, they engage in an aerodynamic process called drafting. "Drafting allows the two cars to travel faster together than they would separately."² In individual sports like gymnastics, the single competitor is still part of a larger team. Gold

¹ Richard Hytner, *Consigliere: Leading from the Shadows* (London: Profile Books, 2014), 1.

² "Nascar Drafting," Rookie Road, February 6, 2023, <https://www.rookieroad.com/nascar/what--does-drafting-mean-in-nascar/>.

medalist Simone Biles noted that teamwork “is the most important part of the sport . . . equation.”³ She further described how victories occur within the context of a team as each team member contributes to the success of the whole. In the orchestra, the second chair violinist masters the variety beyond the melody, and “all first violinists appreciate the value and hard work of the second violins . . . as they constantly rely on the musical support of the second violins.”⁴ Firsts need seconds to propel them forward, push them toward success, and play to enrich the performance.

Like athletic competition or musical composition, leadership theory began with a focus on the single winner, the Great Man, born at the right time with the perfect combination of innate traits and skills to achieve greatness. As the singular Great Man theory faded into leadership history, leadership theorists considered not only the leader but also the followers and the context. Second chair leadership is an expansion of leadership theory that provides a place for gifted leaders beyond the corner office or the top position on the organizational chart. Second chair leaders lead in between the first chairs and the members of the organization by providing both support and influence.

Second chair leadership is a commonly understood position in government, education, and business. The vice president of the United States serves as a presidential advisor who advances the policies outlined by the president. Her primary task is readiness. She must “be

³ Shoshy Ciment, “Simone Biles on How Athletics Gave Her Skills to Enter Business and Partner with Athleta,” Footwear News, January 16, 2023, <https://footwearnews.com/business/business-news/simone-biles-on-athlete-businessparallels-1203393305/>.

⁴ Jennifer Jones, “What’s the Difference between First Violins and Second Violins?” Symphony Nova Scotia, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://symphonynovascotia.ca/faqs/symphony101/whats-the-difference-between-first-violins-and-second-violins/>.

ready at a moment's notice" to take the oath of office and assume the role of president.⁵ Vice principals handle many of the day-to-day tasks of running a school to free the principals to formulate policies and promote student achievement. "Vice principals take on a large part of the administrative load," yet they also must "pick up any tasks that help the school continue to run smoothly."⁶ The CEO might be "the highest ranking person in a company," but the other C-suite executives contribute to the company's enduring success by managing people and finances.⁷ While vice presidents, vice principals, and C-suite executives support their first chair leaders and influence others in government, business, and education, the church also needs second chair leaders to support the pastor and influence the congregation. Second chair leaders function as both subordinates and leaders within the local church. Called by God for vocational ministry, these women and men support the pastor and expand the reach of ministry by serving and leading in their areas of giftedness and preparation.

⁵ "The Executive Branch," accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/our-government/the-executive-branch/>.

⁶ "What Is a Vice Principal?" Western Governors University, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.wgu.edu/career-guide/education/vice-principal-career.html>.

⁷ Adam Hayes, "Chief Executive Officer (CEO): What They Do vs. Other Chief Roles," Investopedia, February 17, 2024, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/ceo.asp#:~:text=Key%20Takeaways,public%20companies%2C%20improving%20share%20prices>.

Research Problem

In March 2024, the Alabama Baptist State Convention reported a total of 3,092 churches.⁸ Assumedly, these churches had one senior pastor position. Based on the 2023 Annual Church Profile (ACP), these 3,092 churches had 6,081 church staff ministry positions other than the senior pastor.⁹ These 6,081 positions were full-time, part-time, volunteer, interim, and bivocational ministry roles that did not include support staff like secretaries, ministry assistants, or custodians. According to the Alabama Baptist State Convention, over one million people were members of Alabama Baptist churches.¹⁰ Alabama Baptist senior pastors need Alabama Baptist second chair ministry leaders to minister to the one million members and to reach the state with the gospel.

A substantial body of literature exists that explores the calling and work of the senior pastor. A quick internet search provides links to books, articles, and sites designed to describe, strengthen, and encourage the work of the pastor. At his disposal are resources on preaching, biblical languages, theology, and pastoral skills. Entire state convention offices are dedicated to the health and well-being of the senior pastor. Rightly so, as his calling is unique, holy, and essential to the health of the church and the propagation of the gospel.

Limited research exists on the role of second chair leaders in the local church. One primary text emerges in most searches: *Leading from the Second Chair* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson. Other articles, both academic and professional, tackle aspects of second chair

⁸ Mickey Crawford, email message to author, March 8, 2024.

⁹ Mickey Crawford, email message to author, May 11, 2023.

¹⁰ “About,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://alsbom.org/convention/>.

leadership in the church, but few provide an in-depth look at second chair leadership from the perspective of practitioners in the field. Even fewer research projects address an exploration of gender distinctions in the lived experiences of male and female second chair ministry leaders. The researcher is not aware of any research related to the second chair ministry leadership within the Alabama Baptist State Convention. Second chair ministry leaders are vital to the health of the local church in Alabama and beyond. More research is needed to explore their unique callings, responsibilities, and needs.

The support offered to senior pastors does not seem as readily available to second chair ministry leaders. When the researcher contacted one of the leadership offices in Alabama Baptist State Convention for information on second chair ministry leaders in her state, the office directed her to the Sunday school and discipleship office because that leadership office “works mainly with pastors.”¹¹ Although helpful in ascertaining information about second chair ministry leaders in Christian education, this direction seemed short-sighted because the focus on pastors only neglected administration, missions, prayer, communications, worship, and many other areas of second chair ministry leadership in the local church. Providing leadership support only to senior pastors is a problematic approach to total church health because of the failure to include support for second chair ministry leaders.

¹¹ Alabama Baptist State Convention, email message to author, May 4, 2023.

Thesis Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to create an essence description of the lived experiences of women and men who serve in full-time, vocational second chair ministry leadership positions in Alabama Baptist churches. This research expanded understanding about the nature and work of second chair ministry leaders in these local churches. Through the creation of an essence description developed from in-depth interviews, second chair ministry leaders told their stories and provided meaningful reflection on the calling, preparation, and job satisfaction of second chair ministry leaders in Alabama Baptist churches.

Furthermore, the research identified areas of preparation for second chair ministry leadership positions in the local church, job satisfaction in local church ministry, and gender distinctions in local church ministry. The collecting and telling of the stories of the men and women who shared the phenomenon of second chair ministry leadership gave voice to leaders who often served in the shadows. Analyzing these stories created meaning that will allow pastors, second chair ministry leaders, and the church as a whole to understand better the contributions and challenges of second chair ministry leadership.

Definitions of Terms

Second chair leader: “A person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization . . . anyone who is not the lead leader.”¹²

Second chair ministry leader (SCML): A second chair leader in the local church who is serving as a full-time, vocational ministry leader on an Alabama Baptist church staff in some

¹² Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2020), 2–3.

position other than the senior pastor and who reports directly to the senior pastor. These second chair ministry leaders had a variety of titles and job descriptions.

Alabama Baptist church: A church eligible to send messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention through their participation in the Cooperation Program. The participation of a church in the Alabama Baptist State Convention can be verified through the Annual Church Profile.

Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC): A collection of over three thousand Alabama Baptist churches that send messengers to an annual meeting to hear reports and make decisions.¹³

Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (ALSBOM): The organization that serves as the “executive, administrative, fiduciary, and promotional agency of the Convention” between the annual sessions.¹⁴

Annual Church Profile (ACP): “A report churches voluntarily submit to the Southern Baptist Convention, usually through their local association and/or state convention.”¹⁵

Entities of the Alabama Baptist State Convention: The independent collection of organizations that are supported financially to various degrees by the ABSC but that also expand the Great Commission ministries of the ABSC including The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, Shocco Springs, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers,

¹³ “About,” Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://alsbom.org/convention/>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David Roach, “ACP Accurate, Helps Churches, Leaders Say,” *Baptist Press*, September 22, 2014, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/acp-accurate-helps-churches-leaders-say/>.

The Alabama Baptist, Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes and Family Ministries, and Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU).¹⁶

Cooperative Program (CP): “Southern Baptists’ unified plan of giving.”¹⁷ Alabama Baptist churches give a portion of their offerings through the Cooperative Program to support the mission and ministries of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions as well as the Southern Baptist Convention.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC): “Both the annual two-day convention and the decentralized organization” of autonomous local churches that support the ministries and missions of the SBC.¹⁸

Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU): “An auxiliary to the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions . . . [that is] responsible for women's ministry and works cooperatively with other state entities on evangelism for women and ministry to ministers' wives.”¹⁹

Girls in Action (GA): “A missions discipleship group for girls in grades 1–6.”²⁰

¹⁶ “Alabama Baptist Entities,” Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://alsbom.org/partners/>.

¹⁷ “Cooperative Program,” accessed May 1, 2023, <https://alabamacp.org/>.

¹⁸ Joe Carter, “Things You Should Know about the Southern Baptist Convention,” The Gospel Coalition, June 8, 2014, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-you-should-know-about-the-southern-baptist-convention/>.

¹⁹ “About,” Alabama WMU, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.alabamawmu.org/about>.

²⁰ “Girls in Action (GA),” WMU, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://wmu.com/missions-discipleship/children/>.

Associational Missions Strategist (AMS): The leader of a local Baptist association that “serves the kingdom of God by facilitating cooperation among churches,” also known as a Director of Missions (DOM) or an associational missionary.²¹

Local Baptist association: A collection of local Southern Baptist churches that join together voluntarily and financially to support pastors, train leaders, and participate in “cooperative mission projects.”²²

North American Mission Board: An entity of the Southern Baptist Convention charged with the task of equipping churches “to reach North America and the nations with the hope of the gospel.”²³

Priesthood of believers: “The common dignity, calling and privilege of all Christians before God.”²⁴

Phenomenology: A qualitative research methodology aimed at “understanding experiences as lived.”²⁵ Phenomenology makes meaning of the lived experiences of people who share a common phenomenon.

²¹ “Associational Leader,” SBC Called, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://sbccalled.com/positions/associational-leader/>.

²² “SBC Systems of Support and Cooperation,” SBC Called, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://sbccalled.com/sbc-info/>.

²³ “About,” North American Mission Board, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://www.namb.net/about/>.

²⁴ David F. Wright, “Priesthood of All Believers,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 531.

²⁵ Katarzyna Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2021), 3.

Lived experiences: The direct, first-hand experiences of a person or group who live a certain phenomenon. Through reflection on the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences, meaning-making occurs by the actual people who share the phenomenon as opposed to meaning-making generated by people without lived experience of the phenomenon.²⁶

Phenomenon: The experience being studied. The phenomenon in this research is the experience of being a second chair ministry leader in an Alabama Baptist church.

Essence description: The end goal of phenomenological inquiry that creates a description of reality experienced by people who share a common phenomenon; "the real 'is' of another's experience."²⁷

Hermeneutic circle: The revisionary process developed by Martin Heidegger and used in phenomenological research to develop and refine understanding as the researcher moves between the parts and the whole of the interview data.²⁸

In-depth interviewing: The process of obtaining "stories" or data about the phenomenon as experienced by the participants. "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience."²⁹

²⁶ Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 12th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2019), 233.

²⁷ Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, 5th ed. (New York: Teachers College, 2019), 17.

²⁸ Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 10; Peoples, 32–33.

²⁹ Seidman, 9.

Fireflies ai: A software that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to allow the researcher to “transcribe, summarize, search, and analyze voice conversations.”³⁰

Google Meet: A software that “provides secure, easy-to-use video calls and meetings for everyone, on any device.”³¹

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS): Software programs that “facilitate data storage, coding, retrieval, comparing, and linking.”³²

Delve Tool: The CAQDAS used in this research to assist in analyzing the qualitative data.³³

Code: A word or phrase “that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based . . . data.”³⁴

Deductive coding: “A top-down approach” to phenomenological coding based on “research questions or an existing research framework or theory.”³⁵

³⁰ Fireflies ai, fireflies.ai.

³¹ Google Meet, <https://meet.google.com>.

³² Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2001), 442.

³³ Delve Tool, <https://delvetool.com>.

³⁴ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2021), 5.

³⁵ “Free Qualitative Data Analysis Course by Delve,” Delve Tool, <https://courses.delvetool.com/view/courses/introqualitative>.

Inductive coding: “A ground-up approach” of phenomenological coding based on codes derived from the data as the researcher allows “the narrative or theory to emerge from the raw data itself.”³⁶

Descriptive coding: A coding technique that “summarize[s] the content of the text into a description.”³⁷

In vivo coding: A coding technique “based on a participant’s own words, and not [the] interpretation [of] the researcher.”³⁸

Process coding: A coding technique that “communicates an action in the data,” the code usually ends with “ing.”³⁹

Codebook: “A document that lists all the codes used in [the] analysis, featuring clear definitions and illustrative examples of each.”⁴⁰

Situated narratives: “A reiteration of each participant’s story” arranged “thematically under the specific interview or survey questions.”⁴¹

³⁶ “Free Qualitative Data Analysis Course by Delve.”

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “How to Create a Qualitative Codebook,” Delve Tool, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://delvetool.com/blog/codebook>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Peoples, 61.

Job satisfaction: “The attitude of the worker toward their job, often expressed as a hedonic response of liking or disliking the work itself, the rewards (pay, promotions, recognition), or the context (working conditions, colleagues).”⁴²

Limitations

L. Ho and A. Limpaecher identified four limitations to phenomenological research: researcher bias, difficulty in establishing validity and reliability, complexity in coding and analysis, and time-consuming nature.⁴³ Bias is addressed in the subsection Researcher Bias. Ambiguity is normative in qualitative research that favors “purposeful strategies instead of methodological rules . . . inquiry approaches instead of statistical formulas.”⁴⁴ Stan Lester noted that analysis can be “messy as data doesn’t tend to fall into neat categories.”⁴⁵ Qualitative research resists statistical measures for validity and reliability. In this research, validity and reliability were maintained by answering Katarzyna People’s four questions about credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in the subsection Validity and Reliability in Chapter 3.⁴⁶

⁴² “Job Satisfaction,” American Psychological Association, accessed March 8, 2024, <https://dictionary.apa.org/job-satisfaction>.

⁴³ L. Ho and A. Limpaecher, “What Is Phenomenological Research Design?” *The Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data*, March 17, 2022, <https://delvetool.com/blog/phenomenology>.

⁴⁴ M. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1990), 183.

⁴⁵ Stan Lester, “An Introduction to Phenomenological Research,” Stan Lester Developments, accessed October 14, 2022. <https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?-nodeguid=7ad9b8d4-6a93-4269-94d2-585983364b51&lang=en-GB>.

⁴⁶ Peoples, 84–85.

Complexity in coding and analysis was streamlined by using Delve Tool, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).⁴⁷ After uploading the transcripts to Delve Tool, both deductive and inductive coding methods were applied to the language-based data to create a 459-page codebook. The software allowed for the alignment of descriptive, in vivo, and process codes to create a situated narrative centered around common themes. Even with CAQDAS, the coding process was labor intensive and time consuming.

Time was perhaps the greatest limitation to this phenomenological research. Irving Seidman suggested a three-interview approach in which each interview lasted no less than ninety minutes, while Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod noted that some interviews could last up to two hours.⁴⁸ The interviews were transcribed, checked for accuracy, approved by the participant, coded for data, and analyzed for common trends and patterns. The original words of the participants were preserved in two ways, by video in Google Meet and by audio in Fireflies ai. The transcription service in Fireflies ai mitigated the amount of time the researcher had to spend transcribing each interview. The use of a transcription service was a time-saving strategy, while multiple reviews of the transcripts by the researcher and the participants maintained accuracy.

Researcher Bias

A weakness of phenomenology is researcher bias. Like the participants, the researcher was a second chair ministry leader in an Alabama Baptist church. According to Stefanie McKoy and Natalie Boyd, researchers must “bracket” themselves from introducing personal bias or a

⁴⁷ Peoples, 66; “Qualitative Analysis Made Easy,” Delve, accessed February 4, 2023, <https://delvetool.com/>.

⁴⁸ Seidman, 26; Leedy and Ormrod, 233.

priori assumptions into the research.⁴⁹ Edmund Husserl introduced the terms *reduction*, *bracketing*, or *epoche* to describe the researcher's suspension of judgment to focus on the phenomenon. "It is not about eliminating biases but suspending them or setting them aside."⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger noted the difficulty in bracketing personal experience from the inquiry process. Heidegger allowed for "preconceived knowledge fore-sight" for the researcher as long as the biases are noted and disclosed.⁵¹ The researcher identified her own assumptions about the calling, theological education, title, job satisfaction, and gender differences in second chair ministry leadership. Those assumptions are noted under Researcher Role in chapter 3.

Delimitations

Describing the lived experiences of participants who lead in the first chair pastoral position was beyond the scope of this study. This research was delimited to women and men within the ABSC who were serving in full-time, vocational ministry leadership positions other than the senior pastor and who reported directly to the senior pastor. The study was delimited further to include only women and men who were serving in local Alabama Baptist churches in ministry leadership positions. Outside the scope of this research were other church positions like weekday education director, ministry assistants, or facilities supervisors who, while essential to the functioning of a healthy church, might not identify a vocational calling to ministry leadership or participate in ministry preparation. While second chair leaders lead in Alabama Baptist life

⁴⁹ Stefanie McKoy and Natalie Boyd, "Phenomenological Research Models & Examples," accessed October 14, 2022, <https://study.com/learn/lesson/phenomenological-research-model-examples-design.html>.

⁵⁰ Peoples, 30.

⁵¹ Ibid., 32.

through the ABSC, ALSBOM, convention entities, higher education, and parachurch ministries, those lived experiences were also outside the scope of this research.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem as a lack of research related to understanding the lived experiences of second chair ministry leaders. Chapter 2 provides a biblical basis for second chair ministry leadership in the local church based on the doctrine of the priesthood of believers and presents a theoretical basis for second chair leadership. The literature review reveals gaps in research related to second chair ministry leadership in the local church. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of phenomenological inquiry as an accepted research method for gathering and analyzing qualitative data. Chapter 4 details the results of the in-depth interviews through both inductive and deductive coding analysis. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the results and suggests further opportunities for continued research in the field of second chair ministry leadership.⁵²

⁵² Both Peoples and Moustakas described a five-chapter, phenomenological research project with chapter 1 as the introduction; chapter 2 as the literature review; chapter 3 as the research design and methodology; chapter 4 as the results; and chapter 5 as the summary, implications, and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Word of God provides the foundation for the people of God to engage in ministry leadership in the local church. While leadership occurs from a variety of positions within the local church, limited research exists that creates an essence description of the lived experiences of men and women in second chair ministry leadership positions in the local church. The first section of this chapter presents the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as a biblical basis for second chair ministry leadership (SCML) in the local church. The second section of this chapter explores the development of leadership theory, particularly second chair leadership theory. The third section of this chapter reveals gaps in the literature that lead to the importance of this research study.

Biblical Basis for Second Chair Leadership

Not all people called to vocational ministry leadership are called to be senior pastors.¹ The Alabama Baptist State Convention alone reported 1,692 full-time ministry positions other

¹ Portions of this research were presented as an unpublished paper for the seminar CWEM 9401 Women in Ministry Leadership. Jennifer Blair Foster, “Position and Purpose: The Priesthood of Believers as a Framework for Women in Ministry Leadership” (seminar paper, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA, November 26, 2021).

than senior pastor.² These SCMLs lead from the middle as they are both subordinates to the senior pastor and leaders to the followers who serve with them. Both women and men, called by God and equipped for ministry, hold positions of second chair ministry leadership in local Alabama Baptist churches. Some of these SCMLs experience frustration because people misunderstand or misinterpret their motives for serving the local church. To men who serve in subordinate ministry leadership positions, people may ask, “When are you going to be a real pastor and get your own church?” To a woman who serves as SCMLs, people might assume her goal is to be the senior pastor.

Both women and men in ministry leadership are essential to the flourishing of the local church and the dissemination of the gospel, yet false assumptions or traditional stereotypes disrupt the unity of ministry partnership. When asked about women in ministry leadership in 2019, Kathy Litton, director of Planter Spouse Development at the North American Mission Board, stated, “I don’t find women today in the SBC preoccupied with wanting to be a senior pastor. . . . When we assign false intentions to women, it’s unfair, and sometimes it’s slanderous. Not every woman that speaks wants to be a pastor, and we shouldn’t believe that about them.”³ In Michael McCullar’s experience as an executive pastor, “preacher-boys were highly celebrated” while music ministers or student ministers accepted a “second-class status [that] was

² Mickey W. Crawford, email message to author, May 11, 2023.

³ Kathy Litton, “A Discussion on Women in Ministry in the Southern Baptist Convention,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 90.

both inferred and enforced.”⁴ Neither gender nor status disqualifies a person from second chair ministry leadership.

The church needs the experiences and perspectives of both men and women in second chair ministry leadership. As Kristen Padilla affirmed, the “church family needs spiritual fathers to lead, guide, and teach; likewise it needs spiritual mothers to lead, guide, and teach.”⁵

Understanding the lived experiences of both women and men who serve as second chair leaders can help make sense of the unique giftings that both genders bring to second chair ministry leadership in the church. The distinctive Southern Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of believers can provide a path for both women and men to lead and serve the local church together as SCMLs.⁶

⁴ Michael McCullar, “A Chosen Chair: The Call and Gifts of Second-Chair Leadership,” *Congregations* (Fall 2009): 13.

⁵ Kristen Padilla, *Now That I’m Called: A Guide for Women Discerning a Call to Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 101.

⁶ While the discussion of women as first chair, senior pastors is outside the scope of this study, establishing a biblical basis that includes women in ministry leadership provides a necessary foundation for the further development of any gender distinctions that might exist in the lived experiences of male and female second chair ministry leaders. The subjects of this research are second chair ministry leaders who fall underneath the authority of the senior pastor. Currently, Southern Baptists are wrestling with the definitions of who a pastor is and what a pastor does as well as what constitutes a cooperating church. This research is not an attempt to address or answer those questions about first chair leaders. After the 2022 gathering of the Southern Baptist Convention in Anaheim, California, the leading question in Southern Baptist life appeared to be “What is a pastor?” The question emerged in response to the discussions around Saddleback Church’s position in the SBC given their ordination of three women in 2021. After Saddleback’s dismissal from the SBC in 2023, the messengers voted to amend the constitution of the SBC to define cooperating churches as “only churches that affirm, appoint or employ only men as any kind of pastor or elder.” The final vote will take place in June 2024 after the conclusion of this research. “What Is a Pastor? The Role, Ordination, Multi-Staff Church,” *SBCLife Journal* (Fall 2022): 8–12; Brandon Porter, “Mike Law Says Constitutional Amendment Meant to Provide Clarity,” *Baptist Press*, September 7, 2023, <https://www.baptist> -

The Priesthood of Believers in History

The doctrine of the priesthood of believers affirmed “the common dignity, calling and privilege of all Christians before God.”⁷ The *Disciple’s Study Bible* defines the priesthood of believers as “the belief that every Christian has direct access to God through Christ without a human *mediator* and that every Christian is to serve as a priest on behalf of others.”⁸ Historically, the doctrine of the priesthood of believers flowed from the Reformation thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The five Reformation *solas*, *sola Scriptura*, *solus Christus*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *solī Deo gloria*, exposed and rebuked the artificial boundaries and extrabiblical requirements established by the Roman Catholic church.⁹ Scripture alone, Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, and the glory of God alone form the basis of the believer’s faith and practice in relationship to God and others.

Timothy George called the priesthood of believers a “cardinal principle of the Reformation.”¹⁰ While rooted in Scripture, the doctrine of the priesthood of believers was

press.com/resource-library/news/mike-law-says-constitutional-amendment-meant-to-provide-clarity/.

⁷ David F. Wright, “Priesthood of All Believers,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 531.

⁸ “Glossary of Theological Terms: Priesthood of Believers,” *Disciple’s Study Bible: New International Version* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988), 1737. Italics original to quotation.

⁹ Matthew Barrett, “The Five *Solas*,” The Gospel Coalition, accessed November 19, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-five-solas/>.

¹⁰ Timothy George, “The Priesthood of All Believers,” *First Things*, October 31, 2016. <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/10/the-priesthood-of-all-believers>.

“classically formulated by Luther.”¹¹ With his 95 *Theses*, Martin Luther challenged the Roman Catholic understanding of the hierarchical relationship between the clergy and the laity.¹² In his *Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520), Luther rebuked the Catholic dichotomy of spiritual and temporal estates. Instead of a “spiritual estate” comprised of the “pope, bishops, priests and monks” and a “temporal estate” including “princes, lords, artisans and farmers,” Scripture affirms only one estate.¹³ According to Luther, “All Christians are truly of the ‘spiritual estate,’ and there is among them no difference at all but that of office.”¹⁴ All believers are set apart as priests because of the redemptive work of salvation.¹⁵ The people of God come to God not through a human mediator or acts of penance. They come through faith alone receiving grace alone by trusting in Christ alone as revealed in Scripture alone for the glory of God alone.

The priesthood of believers is both an individual identity and a corporate calling. In his *Open Letter*, Luther used Rom. 12:4 and 1 Cor. 12:12 to declare the unity and diversity of all believers: “We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, where by it serves every

¹¹ Wright, 531.

¹² Rachel Ciano, “Luther’s Doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers: The Importance for Today,” *Credo*, January 8, 2020, <https://credomag.com/2020/01/luthers-doctrine-of-the-priesthood-of-all-believers-the-importance-for-today/>.

¹³ Martin Luther, *Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520), Stanford, accessed January 5, 2024, <https://web.stanford.edu/~jsabol/certainty/readings/Luther-ChristianNobility.pdf>, 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians.”¹⁶ He further described all believers, not just ordained clergy, as priests as revealed in 1 Pet. 2:9 and Rev. 5:10. “Since, then, the temporal authorities are baptized with the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office [as] one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community.”¹⁷ Luther linked the identity of the believer with the responsibility of the believer.

If all believers can identify as priests because of their baptism into Christ, then all believers bear the responsibility of ministry. As Luther wrote,

A cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops, and every one by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another.¹⁸

Each priest bears the responsibility of ministry to the other members of the priesthood and to the world. According to Nathan A. Finn, “The Reformers argued for what might today be called an ‘every-member ministry’ that affirmed the dignity of all vocations as ways to glorify God, proclaim the gospel, and serve others.”¹⁹ Each believer then becomes a child of God with all the rights and privileges as joint heirs with Christ as well as a priest of God tasked with the responsibility to minister his grace to others.²⁰ SCMLs exercise their identities as priests through

¹⁶ Ibid., 1–2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ Nathan A. Finn, “Baptist Identity as Reformational Identity,” *Southeastern Theological Review* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 38.

²⁰ Rom. 8:17 and 1 Pet. 4:10.

service to their pastors and their churches. The every-member ministry of the priesthood of believers allows for women and men to serve in ministry positions both as subordinates and as leaders.

Luther never used the exact phrase “priesthood of believers,” but his understanding of justification by faith alone created equality “among those who trust Christ alone for their salvation.”²¹ George clarified Luther’s position on ministry leadership: “All baptized believers are called to be priests, Luther said, but not all are called to be pastors.”²² The call to vocational ministry leadership is not always the call to pastor a local church. Vocational ministry exists beyond the specific call to be a senior pastor.

Luther allowed for the possibility of spiritual leadership outside the role of pastor. In his *Open Letter*, he illustrated the doctrine of the priesthood of believers by drafting a hypothetical story about a band of believers captured and taken to a remote location without spiritual leadership. Without ordained clergy to guide them, he asserted that because all believers stand as priests before God, the band could choose one among them to consecrate as a minister. Then that person could lead and serve the band as a minister. “That is why in cases of necessity, any one can baptize and give absolution, which would be impossible unless we were all priests.”²³ The Reformation restored the foundation of biblical equality under the headship of Christ alone with mutual servanthood among the people of God. The doctrine of the priesthood of believers transcends gender, enabling both men and women to experience the fullness of their identities as

²¹ Ciano, “Luther’s Doctrine.”

²² George, “The Priesthood of All Believers.”

²³ Luther, 2.

priests before God in service to others. The doctrine of the priesthood of believers allows for ministry leadership that extends into positions in addition to senior pastor roles.

The Priesthood of Believers in Scripture

J. Terry Young asserted that the doctrine of the priesthood of believers begins in Gen. 1:26–27. Every human being bears the *imago Dei*; therefore, all people “are made in relationship with God—we can sense the leadership of God and can express ourselves to God.”²⁴

Acknowledging humanity’s inability to grasp the fullness of the *imago Dei*, Gregg R. Allison spoke of the image of God as present in the believer’s substance, function, relationships, and purpose. In a substantival sense, the believer derives identity in some way from God: “It is something that a human being *is*.”²⁵ The functional and relational aspects of the image of God point to the believer’s work and relationships with God and each other. “It is in the plurality of gender—male and female—and in the relationship between men and women that human beings reflect the plurality of persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and their trinitarian relationship with one another.”²⁶ Both maleness and femaleness represent the image of God to some degree, and healthy male-female relationships image the unity and work of the Trinity. The teleological nature of the *imago Dei* describes the purpose of the believer to reflect the image of God and

²⁴ J. Terry Young, “Baptists and the Priesthood of Believers,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 107.

²⁵ Gregg R. Allison, “Humanity, Sin, and Christian Education,” in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008), 179.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 179–180.

become more like Jesus Christ.²⁷ Both men and women express the purpose of the *imago Dei* when they live their identities as priests by doing the work of the church together for the kingdom.

In the New Testament, Peter spoke of the personal identity and corporate work of believers as priests. Wayne Grudem drew from 1 Peter to establish the identity and call of believers as priests.²⁸ He pointed to Christ's offices of prophet, priest, and king as a basis for the believer's identity as prophet, priest, and king that, in some subordinate way, imitates Christ.²⁹ Malcolm B. Yarnell III associated each office with a congregational function: prophet (proclaiming God's Word), priest (worshipping God), and king (governing the church under Christ).³⁰ In his epistle, Peter called believers "a holy priesthood" and "a royal priesthood."³¹ He then presented two callings of the priesthood: "to offer spiritual sacrifices" and to "proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."³² Thomas R. Schreiner condensed these passages into two responsibilities. "The declaration of God's praises

²⁷ Ibid., 180.

²⁸ 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Heb. 10:19, 22; Heb. 13:15–16.

²⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 630.

³⁰ Malcolm B. Yarnell III, "Article VI: The Church," in *Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in American's Largest Protestant Denomination*, ed. Douglas K. Blount and Joseph D. Wooddell (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 58.

³¹ 1 Pet. 2:5, 9. All Scriptures were quoted from the Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

³² 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.

includes both worship and evangelism, spreading the good news of God's saving wonders to all people."³³ God called his priesthood to worship and evangelism.

The writer of Hebrews also affirmed both the identity and work of all believers as priests. "Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus . . . let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together . . . but encouraging each other."³⁴ Through his blood, Jesus seals the identity of the believer in salvation and calls the believer to kingdom work. According to Herschel Hobbs, "The thought of the author is not only of our ultimate salvation but of our present responsibility."³⁵ As priests, believers are able to enter the holy of holies and offer sacrifices.³⁶ The sacrifices of the believer are praising his name and serving others.³⁷ This passage highlights the believer's call to "full engagement in a local church."³⁸ The task of the priesthood of believers is to "continually offer ourselves and all that we do or have as sacrifices to our most

³³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003), 116.

³⁴ Heb. 10:19, 24–25.

³⁵ Herschel H. Hobbs, *Studies in Hebrews* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board, 1954), 113.

³⁶ Grudem, 630.

³⁷ Heb. 13:15–16.

³⁸ Gregg R. Allison, "Salvation and Christian Education," in *A Theology for Christian Education*, ed. James R. Estep Jr., Michael J. Anthony, and Gregg R. Allison (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008), 217.

worthy king.”³⁹ Because of the believer’s identity as a priest, the believer’s calling is service and sacrifice in the church.

The priesthood of believers is both individual and communal. The identity of the individual believer is priest, while the outworking of the priesthood is communal. Schreiner observed that Peter likely did not intend for the focus to be on the individual alone. “The focus [in 1 Pet. 2:5] is on the church corporately as God’s set-apart priesthood in which the emphasis is likely on believers functioning as priests.”⁴⁰ God designed an active priesthood within the church to accomplish his mission in the world.

The priesthood of all believers does not mean, “I am my own priest.” It means in the community of saints, God has constructed his body such that we are all priests to one another. Priesthood of all believers has more to do with the believer’s service than with an individual’s position or status. We are all believer-priests. We all stand equally before God.⁴¹

Regardless of their gender or their position in ministry leadership, believer-priests fulfill their substantial, functional, relational, and teleological design by serving in the local church.

Young described the priesthood of believers as “a golden thread which runs all through Scripture from first to last.”⁴² No gender distinctions seem to exist in these passages describing the priesthood of believers. Both women and men bear the identity of priests and are responsible for the work of the priesthood. In Genesis, both the masculine and the feminine somehow reflect

³⁹ Grudem, 630.

⁴⁰ Schreiner, 106.

⁴¹ Daniel Akin, “The Single-Elder-Led Church: The Bible’s Witness to a Congregational/Single-Elder-Led Polity,” in *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity*, ed. Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2004), 37.

⁴² Young, 109.

the image God. While Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher acknowledged differences in male and female, they asserted that “the Bible does not begin with differences: it begins with sameness.”⁴³ Peter identified his audience in 1 Pet. 1:1 as “those chosen living as exiles dispersed abroad.” Schreiner suggested Peter’s audience were the churches in Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey.⁴⁴ With his instructions to wives in 1 Pet. 3, Peter seemed to intend that both women and men hear and follow the instructions in his letter. Even less is known about the original audience of Hebrews. The letter was “written from some place in the Roman Empire to a local congregation of Hebrew Christians located elsewhere in the empire.”⁴⁵ Hobbs noted that the lack of clarity about the original audience “even enhances the universal nature of its message.”⁴⁶ As participants in the priesthood of believers, God calls both women and men to the positions of priests and ministers in service to God and others for the sake of the gospel. Serving as SCMLs in a local church is one way that both women and men display obedience to God by serving his church.

The Priesthood of Believers in Southern Baptist Doctrine

The priesthood of believers is a fundamental doctrine in Southern Baptist theology. The doctrine of the priesthood of believers ascribes both a position and a purpose to all believers. The priesthood is both a right and a responsibility. The position of the believer is a restored

⁴³ Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher, *Worthy: Celebrating the Value of Women* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2020), 30.

⁴⁴ Schreiner, 49.

⁴⁵ Hobbs, *Studies in Hebrews*, 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

relationship as a child of God in which “each individual may encounter God’s grace directly, without clerical or ecclesiastical mediation,” resulting in the purpose of “every believer [to be] a minister in service in the church and in the world.”⁴⁷ Norman H. Maring and Winthrop S. Hudson asserted that the responsibility to serve as a priest to others is actually greater than the right of becoming a priest. “One cannot be a priest to oneself.”⁴⁸ Believers exercise their priesthood through service.

The believer’s service in ministry to the church and world takes a variety of forms. Jonathan Leeman defined the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as “the Adamic job description and list of responsibilities given to us upon our betrothal to Christ and our adoption as fellow heirs. . . . It is the claim that God has given his people the office and the work of mediating his own judgments before the onlooking world.”⁴⁹ Rachel Ciano’s definition of the priesthood of believers included some of those responsibilities: “To act as a priest to other believers, to minister to them, particularly through proclaiming Scripture to them.”⁵⁰ Similarly the *Disciple’s Study Bible* lists “witnessing, teaching, worshipping, and interceding responsibilities to the nations” as the duties of all believers.⁵¹ John S. Hammett spoke of the priesthood of believers as “our common responsibility to minister to one another and to the

⁴⁷ Bill J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways: A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2003): 7.

⁴⁸ Norman H. Maring and Winthrop S. Hudson, *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1997), 102.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Leeman, “A Baptist View of the Royal Priesthood of All Believers,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (2019): 120.

⁵⁰ Ciano, “Luther’s Doctrine.”

⁵¹ “19:5–8 Discipleship, Priesthood,” *Disciple’s Study Bible*, 97.

world.”⁵² Because of the believer’s position as a redeemed child of God, the believer’s purpose is to live for the glory of God in service to the church through a variety of expressions.

From the original composition in 1963 to the most recent update in 2000, *The Baptist Faith and Message* articulates for Southern Baptists the doctrine of the priesthood of believers in three sections: “The Preamble,” “The Church,” and “Religious Liberty.”⁵³ The Preamble to *The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)* affirms that Southern Baptists “honor the principles of soul competency and the priesthood of believers, affirming together both our liberty in Christ and our accountability to each other under the Word of God.”⁵⁴ “Section VI. The Church” affirms the priesthood of believers by describing “each member” of a Southern Baptist church as “responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord” and by acknowledging that “both men and women are gifted for service in the church.”⁵⁵ While the *Baptist Faith and Message* limits the role of pastor to men only, both men and women fulfill their identities and purpose in the priesthood by “invest[ing] themselves in the ministry of the congregation, finding and filling roles of service, leadership, and ministry.”⁵⁶ While a local church might have one pastor or

⁵² John Hammet, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005), 46.

⁵³ Walter B. Shurden, “The Priesthood of All Believers and Pastoral Authority in Baptist Thought,” *Faith and Mission* 7 (1989): 36.

⁵⁴ “Preamble,” *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000, <https://bfm.sbc.net/preamble>.

⁵⁵ “The Church,” *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#vi-the-church>.

⁵⁶ Charles S. Kelley Jr., Richard Land, and R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway, 2010), 90.

perhaps a plurality of elders, Southern Baptist polity allows for the work of additional ministers who serve the church under the pastor's authority.

The priesthood of believers emerges again in "Section XVII. Religious Liberty" through declarations that "God alone is the Lord of the conscience" and that all people have "the right of free and unhindered access to God."⁵⁷ Through submission to God alone, both the individual and the church are free to serve and lead as the Spirit of God directs that congregation. "The very existence of *The Baptist Faith and Message* statement presupposes that Christians and churches are free to articulate their beliefs and define who they are for the purposes of fellowship and cooperation in ministry."⁵⁸ For Southern Baptists, the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers flows from an understanding of the believer's position and purpose from creation to redemption and life in Christ as revealed in Scripture.

The Priesthood of Believers and the Calling to Ministry Leadership

If the doctrine of the priesthood of believers is a statement of both the believer's position in Christ and the believer's purpose through Christ, then what are the implications for women and men in second chair ministry leadership? Both women and men are related to God positionally through creation and redemption. Creation reveals both genders as image bearers of God. Gen. 1:27 describes the creation of male and female and reveals both the masculine and the feminine as expressions of the *imago Dei*. According to Julia B. Higgins, "Both genders are

⁵⁷ "Religious Liberty," *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#xvii-religious-liberty>.

⁵⁸ Jerry A. Johnson, "Article XVII: Religious Liberty," in *Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in American's Largest Protestant Denomination*, ed. Douglas K. Blount and Joseph D. Wooddell (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 173.

created in God's image, and both are given dominion over the earth."⁵⁹ As image bearers, women and men are like God in some capacity. The ability to love, to communicate, and to be in relationship are a few of the God-like characteristics that people share with their Creator. From the beginning, women as well as men are the crown of creation over which God exclaimed, "It is very good."⁶⁰ Women and men in second chair ministry leadership find their position rooted firmly in their identity at creation as bearers of the image of God.

Herschel H. Hobbs wrote that the priesthood of believers is both a privilege and a responsibility.⁶¹ The privilege of the priesthood is being an image bearer of God, while the responsibility of the priesthood is ministry. Often the title *minister* is used to describe first chair senior pastors, but *minister* "can also describe the work to which all Christians are called."⁶² Women and men are image bearers through creation, and they are ministers through redemption. Because of Christ's sacrifice, all people have direct access to God. Through confession and repentance, people become part of the holy, royal priesthood described in 1 Pet. Redemption allows women as well as men to become priests and ministers in service of the Great High Priest. This priesthood is not characterized by power or authority, but by servanthood. Jesus's model to his disciples in the Upper Room in Matt. 23 is the same model for women and men in ministry leadership. Priests minister before God in service to other people.

⁵⁹ Julia B. Higgins, "Biblical Womanhood," in *The Whole Woman: Ministering to Her Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength*, eds. Kristin L. Kellen and Julia B. Higgins (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2021), 9.

⁶⁰ Gen. 1:31.

⁶¹ Herschel H. Hobbs, *You Are Chosen: The Priesthood of All Believers* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 17.

⁶² Hammett, 160.

The doctrine of the priesthood of believers also allows women and men in ministry leadership to discover their purposes. Beginning at creation, God revealed his purpose for people. God issued a joint command to both men and women.⁶³ Higgins noted that “men and women alike are created with a common purpose: to reflect the Lord in exercising dominion over the entire earth through being fruitful and multiplying, filling the earth and subduing it.”⁶⁴ Similarly, Malcolm B. Yarnell III and Karen Yarnell pointed to creation as the revelation of God’s purpose for both men and women as communicators: “Both man and woman exercise that ability [language] by communicating directly with God, with one another, and with other creatures.”⁶⁵ As a member of the priesthood of believers, women join men in ministry leadership by fulfilling God’s purpose by proclaiming the gospel to the world.

The Great Commission in Matt. 28:19–20 is a universal command for both men and women to proclaim the gospel verbally. According to Section XI. Evangelism and Missions in *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000), “It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ . . . to endeavor to make disciples of all nations,” and “it is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by *verbal* witness” (italics mine).⁶⁶ The verbal proclamation of the gospel is the privilege and calling of the priesthood of believers for both men and women. Women and men in ministry leadership are called by God to “go into all the world and preach

⁶³ Gen. 1:27–28.

⁶⁴ Higgins, 9.

⁶⁵ Malcolm Yarnell III and Karen Yarnell, “On the Universal and Particular Offices of Proclamation in Relation to Women as Teachers in Church and Seminary,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 57.

⁶⁶ “Evangelism and Missions,” *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 2000, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#xi-evangelism-and-missions>.

the gospel to all creation.”⁶⁷ Yarnell and Yarnell argued that women as well as men are compelled by the universal office of Christian proclamation to speak God’s Word and to share the gospel message. “Human beings graced with regeneration, through the internal convicting work of the Spirit and the external proclamation of the Word of God, are commanded to proclaim the good news of salvation to other human beings.”⁶⁸ Likewise, Fitzpatrick and Schumacher affirmed,

Because New Testament women are no longer hoping to give birth to the Messiah, they are now free to look for other ways to take the good news of his work to the far corners of the earth. Yes, of course, they can do this through their marriages and families, but they can also do it through outside employment or ministry; either way, it’s up to them and the Lord’s unique call on their life. The work of ministry is now open to all [because of 1 Pet. 2:9].⁶⁹

The verbal proclamation of the gospel is not gender specific. God expects both women and men to share the good news of creation, redemption, and restoration to other women and men.

God calls both women and men to lead his people. “Ministry is not a work reserved for some, but the responsibility of all. . . . All believers are to minister, faithfully using whatever gifts they have been given.”⁷⁰ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob also called Deborah to lead the Israelites.⁷¹ The God of Moses and David also appointed Esther to be an agent of salvation to rescue the Jewish people.⁷² God chose Mary to birth the Word of God into the world and Peter to

⁶⁷ Mark 16:15.

⁶⁸ Yarnell and Yarnell, 58.

⁶⁹ Fitzpatrick and Schumacher, 192.

⁷⁰ Hammett, 175.

⁷¹ Gen. 28:13; Judg. 2:16; 4; 5.

⁷² Exod. 3:6–9; 1 Sam. 16:12–13; Esther 4:12–16.

proclaim the Word at Pentecost.⁷³ God equipped both Priscilla and Aquilla to admonish and strengthen the ministry of Apollos.⁷⁴ God used Lydia, Phoebe, Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus's mother, Julia, Nereus's sister, Chloe, Syntyche, and Euodia as well as Timothy, Silas, and Luke to multiply the ministry of Paul.⁷⁵ Finding women as well as men ministering throughout Scripture affirms the possibility that women as well as men can serve in second chair ministry leadership positions in the church:

Understanding the Bible as one complete narrative from Genesis to Revelation gives us insight into the value of women in church leadership. While some might say these examples [of women leading] go outside the norm of culture mores at that time, that God would choose to include these examples in the canon of Scripture highlights their importance even more. Biblical examples of women leading reveal that women can and should lead in some ways.⁷⁶

Both the Old and New Testaments affirm that God calls both women and men to accomplish his redemptive purpose in the world. The priesthood of believers allows for a variety of leadership positions within the church and provides space for both genders to serve as God leads. Serving in positions of second chair ministry leadership in the local church is one way that both men and women can honor God and fulfill his purpose for their lives.

⁷³ Luke 2:6–7; John 1:1; Acts 2:14.

⁷⁴ Acts 18:26.

⁷⁵ Acts 16:11–15; Rom. 16:1–2, 12–13, 15; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:2–3.

⁷⁶ Emily Dean, *Women Leading Well: Stewarding the Gift of Ministry Leadership* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2023): 12.

Toward the Development of Second Chair Leadership Theory

In a most basic sense, leadership is influence.⁷⁷ Joseph C. Rost defined leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.”⁷⁸ To Robert Clinton, “A leader, in the biblical context, is a person with God-given capacity and with God-given responsibility to influence a specific group of God’s people toward God’s purposes for the group.”⁷⁹ Kadi Cole wrote that leadership is “the ability to influence someone for change.”⁸⁰ The ability to influence others does not require a first chair leadership position. Bonem and Patterson described second chair leadership as “a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization.”⁸¹ Women and men in ministry leadership in local churches influence, add value, and lead from second chair positions, yet limited scholarly research exists to examine the unique position and practice of second chair ministry leadership in the local church. Understanding the development of leadership theory creates the foundation for exploring and understanding second chair ministry leadership in the local church.

⁷⁷ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2019), 5; Jeff Iorg, *Leading Major Change in Your Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 7.

⁷⁸ Joseph C. Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 102.

⁷⁹ J. Robert Clinton, *A Short History of Leadership Theory* (Altadena, CA: Barnabas, 1992), 63.

⁸⁰ Kadi Cole, *Developing Female Leaders: Navigate the Minefields and Release the Potential of Women in Your Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 61.

⁸¹ Bonem and Patterson, 2.

While leadership theory resists a single, authoritative definition of the word *leadership*, researchers developed a variety of theories by focusing on the person of the leader, the practice of leadership, the context of leading, the followers, or some combination of these components. Before 1900, understandings of leadership centered around Great Man theories that assumed that leaders were born with superior qualities that resulted in a unique capacity for leadership. To Thomas Carlyle, the leader as “Able-man” was the epitome of hero, priest, teacher, and king.⁸² The Great Man theory provided an exclusive approach to leadership. By centering leadership entirely at the top of the organizational structure for those elite few born with exceptional qualities, talents, and skills, the Great Man theories left little room for leadership expression through subordinate positions.

The first attempts to define leadership in the early twentieth century centered around the traits of the leader. Ralph Stogdill identified five broad trait categories that seemed present in many leaders: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, and status. However, he concluded that no one set of leader traits remained constant across various leadership contexts.⁸³ The trait approach failed to identify a consistent body of leadership traits that transcended the leader’s place, time, and context.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the singular focus on the traits of the senior leader limited the ability to understand leadership from associate positions within an

⁸² Thomas Carlyle, “The Hero as King,” in *The Leader’s Companion: Insights on Leadership through the Ages*, ed. J. Thomas Wren (New York: Free Press, 1995), 53; Clinton, 18; Northouse, 19.

⁸³ Ralph Stogdill, “Personal Factors Associated with Leadership,” in *The Leader’s Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages*, ed. J. Thomas Wren (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 129; Northouse, 20.

⁸⁴ Northouse, 39.

organization. Neither the Great Man approach nor the trait-centered approach considered the leadership potential outside the top tier of the leadership pyramid.

In the mid-1900s, leadership theory transitioned from the person of the leader to the practice of leadership, particularly seeking to understanding the skills and behavior of the leader.⁸⁵ Robert L. Katz suggested that leaders were not identified by who they were but rather by what they did. Instead of innate traits or characteristics born into exceptional people, Katz identified three “developable skills” essential to leadership: technical skill, human skill, and conceptual skill.⁸⁶ Proficiency in each skill area varied with the level of leadership within the organization. Regardless of the leader’s position in upper, middle, or lower management, Katz concluded,

The administrator needs: (a) sufficient technical skill to accomplish the mechanics of the particular job for which he is responsible; (b) sufficient human skill in working with others to be an effective group member and to be able to build cooperative effort within the team he leads; (c) sufficient conceptual skill to recognize the interrelationships of the various factors involved in his situation, which will lead him to take that action which is likely to achieve the maximum good for the total organization.⁸⁷

The skills approach to leadership opened leadership to multiple levels of influence within the organization. First chair leaders appeared to exhibit higher human and conceptual skills with lower technical skills. However, second chair leaders required a balance of technical, human, and

⁸⁵ Clinton referred to this period in leadership theory development as the “behavior era: 1948–1967” (33). Northouse used the same researchers as Clinton but distinguished between the skills approach and the behavior approach (43, 73).

⁸⁶ Robert Katz, “Skills of an Effective Administrator,” *Harvard Business Review*. (September 1974): <https://hbr.org/1974/09/skills-of-an-effective-administrator>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

conceptual skills.⁸⁸ The combination of these three skill areas within the second chair leader influenced the practical performance, the personal team dynamics, and the visionary path of the whole organization.

Similar to Katz's learnable skills approach, researchers at Ohio State and the University of Michigan focused on the behavior of the leader in relation to the leader's tasks and the leader's relationships.⁸⁹ Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton developed a managerial grid to identify leadership behavior based on six leadership elements: initiative, inquiry, advocacy, conflict resolution, decision making, and critique.⁹⁰ They concluded that the leader's behaviors revealed the degree of the leader's concern for people or the leader's concern for production. Ideal leadership behavior displays a high concern for both people and production. This "Team Management" behavior was "a goal-centered, team approach that seeks to gain optimum results through participation, involvement, commitment, and conflict resolving of everyone who can contribute."⁹¹ Blake and Mouton further opened the leadership experience to leaders beyond the top tier, asserting that the success of the organization depends more on a team approach than "impoverished management" or "authority-obedience."⁹² Second chair leaders as team managers balanced relationship behaviors and task behaviors as they served as the link that communicates the vision of the first chair and manages the performance of the followers.

⁸⁸ Northouse, 45.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 73

⁹⁰ Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, *The Managerial Grid III: The Key to Leadership Excellence* (Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing, 1985), 2.

⁹¹ Ibid., 12 – 13.

⁹² Ibid., 12.

Throughout the late twentieth century into the early twenty-first century, leadership research transitioned from the person or the practice of the leader to the context of the leader and the needs of the followers. Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard resisted the measurement of the leader's concern for tasks or relationships as the basis for effective leadership. Instead, they suggested that because the leader's context varies, the leader must adopt various leadership styles consistent with the situation. "Successful leaders are those who can adapt their leader behavior to meet the needs of their followers and the particular situation."⁹³ The Situational Leadership Model II identified four leadership styles (delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing) that adapted to the developmental levels of the followers as the leader provided more directive or supporting behaviors.⁹⁴ The situational leadership approach highlighted the adaptive nature of leadership that extends beyond the leader's traits, skills, or behavior to include the leader's awareness of and adaption to the needs of the followers. Second chair leaders most likely relate directly to a larger pool of followers than first chair leaders, making their relationships and situational awareness essential for the ongoing health of the organization.

In 1978, James MacGregor Burns challenged the assumption of leadership as an exchange of services to meet leader and follower needs. He asserted a new understanding of leadership that transitioned from meeting the immediate needs of the leader and the followers to embracing a higher good that changed both the leader and the follower for the better. In his

⁹³ Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, "Behavioral Theories of Leadership," in *The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership through the Ages*, ed. J. Thomas Wren (New York: Free Press, 1995), 148.

⁹⁴ Ken Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi, and Drea Zigarmi, *Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing Effectiveness through Situational Leadership II* (New York: William Morrow, 2013), 85.

Pulitzer Prize-winning *Leadership*, Burns distinguished between transactional and transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership was an exchange between the leader and the follower that benefited “the individual interests of persons or groups going their separate ways.”⁹⁵ Transformational leadership, however, was the elevation of both the leader and follower as “they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of ‘higher’ goals, the realization of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the collective or pooled interests of both leadership and followers.”⁹⁶ The strength of transformational leadership expanded the relationship between leader and the follower by highlighting the change in values and by propelling the work toward the common good of the organization. The resulting goal attainment was greater than either the leader or the follower could achieve in isolation. However, the weakness of transformational leadership existed in the potential for abuse as the transformational leader could coerce and manipulate the followers toward a less altruistic vision.⁹⁷

In 1970, Robert K. Greenleaf introduced the concept of the servant as leader. Instead of a Great Man born with impeccable traits, impressive skills, and authoritative actions, the most effective leader was a servant leader. The person aspiring to lead first took the posture of the servant and later determined to be a leader. The test of the servant leader was contingent on the well-being of the followers: “Do those served grow as persons; do they *while being served*,

⁹⁵ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 425.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 425–426.

⁹⁷ Northouse, 182.

become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”⁹⁸

The strength of servant leadership was “the principle of caring for others,” yet this focus might yield a leadership relationship complicated by a lack of clarity regarding who was leading and who was following.⁹⁹ Steve Echols suggested that transformational leadership and servant leadership were both leadership stances that complement an inclusive leadership style.¹⁰⁰ The strength of inclusive leadership “brings the maximum number of individuals into participation.”¹⁰¹ The inclusive leadership style, grounded in the stances of transformational and servant leadership, provided a basis for leadership no matter the leader’s position on the organizational chart. Second chair leadership is inclusive leadership. The first chair, second chair, and followers serve each other in a mutually beneficial relationship that leads to personal and organizational transformation.

Second chair leadership is a developing theory that includes the recognition of the role of subordinate leadership within an organization. Richard Hytner explored the shadow world of the *consiglieri*, advisors to the Italian mafia leaders, to describe the relationship between leaders and their associates.¹⁰² Leading from the shadows is not as nefarious as the mafia undertones suggest but rather a realization that behind all top leaders is a collection of subordinate leaders who

⁹⁸ Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader* (Atlanta, GA: The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2008), 15.

⁹⁹ Northouse, 241.

¹⁰⁰ Steve Echols, “Transformational/Servant Leadership: A Potential Synergism for an Inclusive Leadership Style,” *Journal of Religious Leadership* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 85.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁰² Hytner, 6–7.

rarely enter the limelight. C. Tracy Reynolds pointed to the maturity necessary to lead from the second chair “as we strive to complete the team by serving faithfully in the roles we are assigned, whether or not we are on the field or hidden somewhere on the sidelines.”¹⁰³ These subordinate leaders are essential for the success of the top leader and the health of the organization.

The second chair leader is both a subordinate and a leader. The singular definition of second chair leadership as a theory seems to exist only in Bonem and Patterson’s research. “A second chair leader is a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization.”¹⁰⁴ Second chair leadership can be positional—the actual second tier leader in an organization. In the local church, this person can have a variety of titles such as executive, associate, or assistant pastor or minister. As an executive pastor, Michael McCullar wrote that “the second-chair leader is the most misunderstood clergy position of all time. Whether we are called executive pastors, associate pastors, or assistant pastors, our role is rife with issues related to being the Number Two person.”¹⁰⁵ Yet second chair leadership is not always positional.

Bonem and Patterson’s definition allows for the inclusion of “anyone who is not the lead leader” to be a second chair leader.¹⁰⁶ Clay Scoggins argued that “some of the most effective

¹⁰³ C. Tracy Reynolds, *Second Chair Leadership: How to Serve, Thrive, and Lead from Where You Play* (Travelers Rest, SC: True Potential, 2023), 52.

¹⁰⁴ Bonem and Patterson, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Michael McCullar, “A Chosen Chair: The Call and Gifts of Second-Chair Leadership,” *Congregations* (Fall 2009): 12.

¹⁰⁶ Bonem and Patterson, 3.

leaders—the people who have changed our world—led without formal authority.”¹⁰⁷ These leaders have a variety of titles within the local church.¹⁰⁸ Tim Harle specifically identified potential second chair positions within the local church: teachers, worship leaders, or youth ministers.¹⁰⁹ Based on the SCMLs in the Alabama Baptist State Convention, these leaders are also children’s ministers, missions ministers, discipleship ministers, administration ministers, communications ministers, and a variety of other specialized areas of ministry.¹¹⁰

Determining who qualifies as a second chair leader can be challenging as no agreed-upon criteria exist to measure who is or is not a second chair leader in a local church. Bonem and Patterson suggested seven criteria for determining second chair leaders: title, tenure, timing, talent, touch, temperament, and tenacity.¹¹¹ Kevin Hampton included reporting “directly to the senior pastor” as a criterion for second chair leadership in the church.¹¹² In a multi-staff church, more than one SCML might report directly to the senior pastor. In a smaller church, a person with a specific title such as music minister might perform administrative duties as well as worship duties.

¹⁰⁷ Clay Scroggins, *How to Lead When You’re Not in Charge: Leveraging Influence When You Lack Authority* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2017), 28.

¹⁰⁸ Bonem and Patterson, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Tim Harle, “Second Chair Leadership,” *The Reader* (Summer 2019): 17.

¹¹⁰ Mickey W. Crawford, email message to author, May 11, 2023.

¹¹¹ Bonem and Patterson, 16–19.

¹¹² Kevin Hampton, “Effective Second-Chair Leadership in Ministry,” accessed October 27, 2022. <https://baptistcourier.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Kevin-Hampton-Effective-Second-Chair-Leadership-in-Ministry.pdf>.

McCullar noted that second chair leadership is not “second-tier” leadership and requires a “high-level of leadership skills.”¹¹³ Reynolds highlighted second chair leaders as influencers, creators, peacemakers, advocates, and supporters who multiply leadership capacity in the organization by investing in “the development of others while accomplishing the mission” together.¹¹⁴ Hytner described consiglieri as “content, constant, catalytic, and courageous,” while Bonem and Patterson discussed the paradoxes of second chair leaders as they balance the tension between subordinate-leader, deep-wide, and contentment-dreaming.¹¹⁵ Associate leaders within an organization are highly trained leaders with specialized skills and behavior who add value up and down the organizational chart.

SCMLs provide a unique ministry to both the senior pastor and the congregations they serve. Bonem and Patterson encouraged a SCML to “be a pulse taker, vision amplifier, leader multiplier, and gap filler.”¹¹⁶ Because they might be closer to the people in their ministry areas, SCMLs can feel the pulse of that people group and communicate needs that might have escaped the pastor’s notice. While the pastor determines the vision of the church, the SCML can be the megaphone that champions that vision to the church. The goal of the SCML is to develop other ministry leaders to expand the church’s work to achieve the pastor’s vision. The SCML fills gaps by seeing needs and meeting those needs regardless of job description specifics or ministry assignments.

¹¹³ McCullar, 14.

¹¹⁴ Reynolds, 118.

¹¹⁵ Hytner, 78; Bonem and Patterson 25, 67, 117.

¹¹⁶ Bonem and Patterson, 100.

Hytner discussed the role of the second chair leader in terms of the relationship with the first chair leader. Second chair leaders are “lodestones [that] liberate; educators [that] educate; anchors [that] help the [first chair leader] feel authentic; [and] deliverers [that] leave them feeling decisive.”¹¹⁷ Much like Bonem and Patterson’s gap filler, SCMLs as lodestones liberate the pastor by assuming administrative or other specialized tasks that might not be his area of expertise, thereby freeing him to focus on God’s vision and calling for the church. As educators, SCMLs enlighten the pastor in areas of which he may be unaware. SCMLs as anchors provide levity and laughter serving as the pastor’s confidant, joker, or friend.¹¹⁸ As a deliverer, the SCML achieves results and moves the church closer to achieving the pastor’s vision.

Aside from Scroggins in 2017, a Bonem and Patterson update in 2020, and Reynolds in 2023 as well as an occasional article in a ministry-related periodical, few resources exist that examine the lived experiences of the person and work of second chair leaders in the local church. In 2011, Catherine Dundas Reyes conducted phenomenological research with nineteen Southern Baptist women on staff at local churches. She concluded that these ministry leaders “simply wanted to do their work, rather than pushing for a specific position or title. . . . Participants were not ‘trying to be’ pastors or preachers in most of the churches, so they had very little resistance to their current roles.”¹¹⁹ In 2021, James K. Stevens used the case study approach to examine the ministries of eleven executive ministers and nine senior ministers in large churches with five

¹¹⁷ Hytner, 125.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 145, 147, 149.

¹¹⁹ Catherine Dundas Reyes, “A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Female Ministers in Southern Baptist Churches in Texas” (PhD diss., Dallas Baptist University, 2010), 258, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

hundred to one thousand attendees. He concluded that while the work of those second chair leaders provided essential support to the senior ministers, more research needed to be done to clarify leadership structures.¹²⁰ In 2022, John Sansom used a quantitative survey to explore the relationship between executive pastors and senior pastors as a contributing factor to the senior pastor's effectiveness. He found only a slight significance in that relationship.¹²¹ In 2023, Martin Benjamin Lovvorn conducted a correlation study to measure the relationship between second chair leaders' level 5 leadership scores and the growth of the churches they served.¹²² Additional research is needed to explore the role of the second chair in leadership theory as well as to understand the lived experiences of SCMLs in the local church.

¹²⁰ James K. Stevens, "Defining the Role of the Executive Minister in Large Churches" (PhD diss., Columbia International University, 2021), 122, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

¹²¹ John Sansom, "The Relationship of Executive Pastors to Senior Pastor Ministry Effectiveness: An Exploratory, Causal-Comparative, Relational Study" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022), 112, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

¹²² Martin Benjamin Lovvorn, "A Correlational Study: Second-Chair Leaders' Level 5 Leadership Score and Church Growth among Southern Baptist Megachurches" (PhD diss., Liberty University, 2023), 21, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Importance of the Study

As the literature review revealed, research gaps exist in the study of second chair leadership for both women and men in the local church. Bonem and Patterson's text along with a limited number of professional and scholarly articles and dissertations created the basis of second chair leadership research. These works provide a general understanding of second chair leadership that seems to apply to both women and men, yet few scholarly peers seek to ascertain the relationship between gender and second chair leadership in the local church.¹²³ Little research exists on the lived experiences of both male and female second chair leaders.

The lack of understanding can lead to assumptions, and assumptions can lead to wrong conclusions. Not all church leaders aspire to be senior pastors. Not every male student minister is biding his time until another church chooses him to be their pastor. Not every female seminarian called to vocational ministry campaigns for the first chair leadership role. "The second-chair pastor can be an intentional career path that is both productive and effective; and . . . the unique needs of God's kingdom often require unique people serving in unique roles."¹²⁴ Harmful assumptions about ministry leadership can damage the unity and effectiveness of the local church.

Research is lacking not only related to second chair leadership in general but also related to women in second chair ministry leadership or associate ministry positions in the local church.

¹²³ For example, an EBSCO search of "men and women and second chair leadership" as well as "gender and second chair leadership," "men and second chair leadership," and "women and second chair leadership" yielded no results. An EBSCO search of "second chair leadership" revealed one result, Michael McCullar's article "A Chosen Chair: The Call and Gifts of Second-Chair Leadership."

¹²⁴ McCullar, 13.

The literature is replete with doctrinal and theological arguments for and against women in ministry in general and women as senior pastors. The egalitarian position argues that women are equal in both value and role; therefore, all ministerial offices are available for women based on their callings from God and giftedness for service.¹²⁵ Complementarians, on the other hand, affirm that men and women are equal in value but distinct in role; therefore, some roles are gender specific and open only to men.¹²⁶ Some complementarians affirm women in positions of second chair leadership; others do not.

Complementarianism splits into two approaches: broad complementarianism and narrow complementarianism. Yarnell noted that both positions are “very well respected within the

¹²⁵ The following texts provide a basis for understanding the historical, doctrinal, theological, and practical implications of egalitarianism: C. S. Cowles, *A Woman's Place: Leadership in the Church* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1993); Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton, *Why Not Women: A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry, and Leadership* (Seattle, WA: YWAM, 2000); Rob Dixon, *Together in Ministry: Women and Men in Flourishing Partnerships* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021); Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997); Alan F. Johnson, *How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010); John G. Stackhouse *Partners in Christ: A Conservation Case for Egalitarianism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015); Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003); Terran Williams, *How God Sees Women: The End of Patriarchy* (Cape Town: Spiritual Bakery, 2022).

¹²⁶ The following texts provide a basis for understanding the historical, doctrinal, theological, and practical implications of complementarianism: John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021); Carolyn McCulley, *Radical Womanhood: Feminine Faith in a Feminist World* (Chicago: Moody, 2008); Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall, *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2008); Kathy Keller, *Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles: A Case for Gender Roles in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012); Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Mistake: The Radical Impact of Feminism on Church and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005).

Southern Baptist Convention.”¹²⁷ Denny Burk affirmed a broad complementarianism perspective that promoted the general positional subordination of women to men in all spheres of life including the home, the church, the seminary, and the community.¹²⁸ On the other hand, Kathy Keller, a Presbyterian, embraced a narrow complementarian view that asserted that “anything that an unordained man is allowed to do, a woman is also allowed to do.”¹²⁹ Likewise Yarnell and Yarnell argued 1 Tim. 2:12 allowed for women to speak and teach publicly, but without pastoral authority.¹³⁰ Broad complementarians would be less likely to affirm women in positions of second chair ministry leadership, while narrow complementarians would be more likely to find second chair ministry leadership within the scope of the priesthood of believers, allowing women to serve as they are called and equipped by God.

Perhaps a shift in thinking beyond what women can and cannot do or where they can and cannot serve is a necessary step in energizing both women and men to embrace all that God has called them to do and be in his church. Perhaps a shift in thinking beyond the assumptions that all men called to ministry are destined to be senior pastors or that any other ministry position a man might hold is second-class is a vital step in helping both men and women value the entire priesthood of believers. The purpose of this study is to describe the essence of the lived experiences of both women and men in second chair leadership ministry in the local church. If

¹²⁷ Shannon Baker. “Panel Examines Women’s Role in SBC,” June 17, 2019, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/panel-examines-womens-role-in-sbc/>.

¹²⁸ Denny Burk, “Broad Complementarianism in the Southern Baptist Convention,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 21–39.

¹²⁹ Kathy Keller, *Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles: A Case for Gender Roles in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 21.

¹³⁰ Yarnell and Yarnell, 41–74.

the research reveals that women and men encounter similar struggles in calling, preparation, and job satisfaction, then further research can identify strategies for strengthening and supporting second chair leaders. If gender distinctions emerge between women and men in second chair leadership, then further research can address struggles unique to women and men in calling, preparation, and job satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to make meaning of the lived experiences of selected SCMLs in Alabama Baptist churches, particularly their calling, preparation, and ministry satisfaction. Chapter 3 provides a rationale for phenomenological inquiry as an appropriate research methodology to ascertain an essence description from people who experience a shared phenomenon. The research process including participants, data collection, and procedures is described as well as the validity and reliability of the methodology.

Rationale

Phenomenology provides a strong approach to ascertaining the essence description of the lived experiences of women and men in second chair ministry leadership in local Alabama Baptist churches. Phenomenological research is both ontological and epistemological by describing reality and by providing a way of understanding the lived experiences of a particular population.¹ The foundational question of phenomenology asks, “What is the meaning, structure,

¹ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2021), 91; Lester, “Introduction to Phenomenological Research.”

and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?”²

The goal of phenomenological research is “an essence description” of the lived experiences of people who experience a central phenomenon.³ Peoples asserted that the primary goal of phenomenological research is meaning-making through “understanding experiences as lived.”⁴ Through listening, recording, coding, and analyzing data, an essence description was created of the ministry experiences of second chair leaders with particular attention given to identify any gender distinctions related to calling, preparation, and job satisfaction.

Philosophy provided the framework for phenomenology, particularly through the works of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger.⁵ To Edmund Husserl, “The first and principal part of phenomenology as a whole” was “the task of clarifying the essence of cognition and of being an object of cognition.”⁶ As the father of phenomenology, he “was concerned with the discovery of meanings and essences in knowledge.”⁷ His transcendental approach to phenomenology concluded that “what appears in the consciousness is an absolute reality while what appears in

² Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2001), 104.

³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 196; Patton, 104.

⁴ Peoples, 3.

⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁶ Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 18.

⁷ Peoples, 30; Moustakas, 27.

the world is a product of learning.”⁸ Heidegger expanded Husserl’s approach to include the hermeneutic circle.

The hermeneutic circle was a way of understanding reality. According to Heidegger, “The ‘circle’ in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning . . . that is, in the understanding which interprets.”⁹ Through the repeated processes of interviewing, transcribing, coding, and analyzing, “understanding increases by moving from the understanding of parts to the understanding of the whole and again back to the parts, continually changing as new data are introduced.”¹⁰ Learning increased through reflection and modification. Utilizing Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle allowed researchers to move between the parts of the interviews and the whole of the stories to create meaningful units of understanding. These meaningful units yielded themes that built the essence description.

Despite the differences in the theoretical frameworks of Husserl and Heidegger, Clark Moustakas highlighted the benefits of phenomenological inquiry common to both transcendental and hermeneutical approaches. According to Moustakas, employing the phenomenological research approach

1. Allowed for the valuable exploration of human experiences “that are not approachable through quantitative” methodologies.
2. Focused on “the wholeness of experience” instead of relying solely on parts or objects.

⁸ Moustakas, 27.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Eastford, CT: Martino, 2019), 195.

¹⁰ Peoples, 33.

3. Searched “for meaning and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations.”
4. Gathered data from first-person interviews with people living the studied phenomenon.
5. Included the researcher in the research process through the formulation of “questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher.”¹¹

Phenomenology revealed meaning as people shared stories of lived experiences and consciously reflected on those experiences.

The goal of this research was not a grand, generalizable theory but rather an essence description of lived experiences. Furthermore, using the qualitative approach of phenomenology for this research allowed for an exploration of human thought and experience that might not be possible in quantitative approaches. Phenomenology considered the whole experience of the SCML through reflection on childhood, calling, preparation, ministry experience, and job satisfaction. Instead of using secondary sources to measure or explain second chair ministry leadership and satisfaction, phenomenology built meaning from the unique experiences of the primary sources as they reflected on their own stories.

Researcher Role and Assumptions

The researcher was a second chair ministry leader in an Alabama Baptist church. Because she shared the same criteria as the participants, she acknowledged the potential for researcher bias. Her own lived experiences might share commonalities with the lived experiences of the

¹¹ Moustakas, 21.

participants. The researcher also had professional friendships with some of the research participants, which might introduce bias into the research study. Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed for the potential for bias and provided a balance for bias through the hermeneutic circle.¹² The researcher acknowledged several assumptions about SCMLs in Alabama Baptist churches based on her own position as an SCML in an Alabama Baptist church.

1. Call to ministry: All SCMLs articulated a call to ministry leadership.
2. Theological education: Most SCMLs had some degree of theological education to prepare them for their ministry assignment.
3. Title: The SCMLs had a variety of titles and ministry responsibilities.
4. Job satisfaction: Most SCMLs were satisfied with their ministry experience, yet they encountered misunderstandings about or challenges to their ministry roles.
5. Gender differences: Gender differences existed between male and female SCMLs.

Participants

A large sample size is not the goal of phenomenological research; rather, saturation or redundancy establishes the sufficiency of sample size. Peoples defined saturation as “reaching a point where no more new data are being obtained from participants.”¹³ The target sample size for this research was from ten to twenty participants.¹⁴ Fourteen SCMLs participated in the study. Five SCMLs were female; nine SCMLs were male.

¹² Peoples, 35.

¹³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴ Peoples suggested a sample size from eight to fifteen people (49), while Leedy and Ormrod suggested from five to twenty-five people (233). Seidman hesitated to suggest a numerical sample size, choosing rather to focus on sufficiency of information, saturation, time, money, and other variables (55). Patton recommended establishing a minimum number of

Participants were chosen through purposeful or purposive sampling.¹⁵ Purposeful sampling allows for “information-rich cases . . . from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research,” in this case the lived experiences of women and men in second chair ministry leadership in the local church.¹⁶ Michael Patton suggested sixteen approaches for obtaining a purposeful sample and identified the strengths and weaknesses of each.¹⁷ The criterion sample approach was used in this research. Criterion sampling is used to “review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance.”¹⁸

A participant in the purposeful sample for this research project met the following criteria:

1. The participant experienced God’s call to vocational ministry leadership.
2. The participant served as a full-time, paid ministry leader on an Alabama Baptist church staff in a position other than the senior pastor.
3. The participant reported directly to the senior pastor.
4. The participant served in this position for at least two years.

Each participant affirmed the preceding statements in order to continue with this study.

participants based on “reasonable coverage of the phenomenon” and allowed for additional participants as the research progresses (186). Reyes found nineteen women who volunteered for her phenomenological dissertation research, so from ten to twenty participants seemed to be a reasonable sample size for a similar project.

¹⁵ Seidman used the term “purposeful sampling” while Leedy and Ormrod preferred “purposive sampling.”

¹⁶ M. Patton, 169.

¹⁷ Ibid., 182–183.

¹⁸ Ibid., 176, 182.

Emails were sent to Alabama Baptist leaders who served with ALSBOM and Alabama WMU as well as an ASM to find potential participants. The email described the research project and criteria for participation.¹⁹ Mickey Crawford, State Missionary and Associate in the Communications and Technology Services department at ALSBOM, used the ACP to identify “ministers other than senior pastor” in Alabama Baptist churches.²⁰ The search resulted in 6,081 ministry positions other than senior pastor. These positions were full-time, part time, bivocational, volunteer, or interim ministry leaders. A single individual could hold more than one position in the church. The leaders at Alabama WMU and the ASM suggested names already included in the ACP spreadsheet from ALSBOM.

A spreadsheet was created and sorted to identify full-time positions. The sorting resulted in a population of 1,692 full-time positions. The list was delimited further to include only unique individual names. Individuals were eliminated who had transitioned to senior pastor roles since the ACP reporting, who retired since the ACP reporting, who no longer were serving in ministry, and who were the researcher’s colleagues on her church staff. The researcher also removed herself from the list. The resulting list included 1,240 potential participants.

The potential participants were emailed introducing the research project, explaining participant requirements, and asking the criteria questions.²¹ Some of the individuals did not have emails or had incorrect email addresses listed. A total of 860 initial emails were sent. One hundred forty-three replies were received, so additional introductory emails were not sent. Of

¹⁹ See appendix A: Email to Alabama Baptist Leaders.

²⁰ Mickey Crawford, email message to author, May 11, 2023.

²¹ See appendix B: Introductory Email to Potential Participants.

those individuals, fifty-two men and eleven women indicated that they both met the criteria for the project and were willing to participate. They answered a call to ministry service in the local church, and they ministered in their current local church in some position other than the senior pastor for at least two years. They also reported directly to the senior pastor, making them SCMLs for the purpose of this study.

Time limitations prevented conducting in-depth interviews with sixty-three people, so the sample was reduced further. A second email was sent to all eleven women with the informed consent form and the link to schedule the first interview.²² To identify male participants, the randomization feature in Microsoft Excel sorted the men's names. A second email was sent to the first fourteen men. After assessing the expectations of the project in more detail, nine men and five women signed the informed consent form and scheduled the first interview. A sample of fourteen participants met the target sample size of ten to twenty individuals.

Data Collection

The data collection method for this research was phenomenological interviewing based on a modification of Seidman's approach. According to Seidman, "Stories are a way of knowing," and "telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process."²³ This research modified Seidman's "in-depth phenomenologically based interviewing" methodology to make meaning of the lived experiences of women and men in second chair leadership ministry in

²² See appendix C: Informed Consent Form; appendix D: Second Email to Participants.

²³ Seidman, 7; Leedy and Ormrod, 233.

Alabama Baptist churches.²⁴ Seidman's original model required three in-depth interviews with each participant.

Seidman identified the first interview as a "focused life history."²⁵ This part of the interview will "situate participants' lived experiences" in their life story.²⁶ Seidman's second interview relates exclusively to "the details of experience" of the phenomenon.²⁷ The third interview allows the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences of the phenomena.²⁸ He noted, however, that "life sometimes intervenes," making the three-interview process difficult.²⁹ Because "there are no absolutes in the world of interviewing" or data that questioned the efficacy of a fewer number of interviews, a two-interview approach was used for this study.³⁰ This approach respected the limited time of the participants and provided an adequate data sample for evaluation. Each interview was approximately sixty to ninety minutes.

For this research study, Seidman's first and second interviews were combined into interview one. This interview included questions about childhood, calling, preparation, ministry experience, and job satisfaction.³¹ According to Seidman's original model, interviews one and two were foundational to interview three because "the combination of exploring the past to

²⁴ Seidman, 14.

²⁵ Ibid., 21.

²⁶ Leedy and Ormrod, 233.

²⁷ Seidman, 22.

²⁸ Ibid., 23.

²⁹ Ibid., 25.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See appendix E: General Interview Questions for the First Interview.

clarify the events that led participants to where they are now and describing the concrete details of their present experience establishes conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives.”³² The researcher’s second interview aligned with Seidman’s third interview allowing the participants to reflect on their experiences as second chair leaders in Alabama Baptist churches. The second interview questions were developed to delve deeper into second chair leadership ministry, gender differences, job satisfaction, and impact on the SCMLs family.³³ These themes emerged during the first interview. In this research study, interview one established the lived experience, and interview two provided space for reflective meaning-making.

Google Meet served as the platform for all twenty-eight interviews, and Fireflies ai transcribed each interview. At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were informed that the meetings were being recorded in both audio and video by Google Meet and audio and text by Fireflies ai.³⁴ The informed consent form listed both Google Meet and Fireflies ai as software used during the interviews, and verbal permission was obtained from the participants before recording the interviews. The participants understood that the audio, visual, and textual content of the interviews were housed in Google Meet, Fireflies ai, and the researcher’s

³² Seidman, 24.

³³ See appendix F: General Interview Questions for the Second Interview.

³⁴ See appendix G: First Interview Introductory Remarks.

computer.³⁵ They learned that all interview content would be deleted upon completion of the research and defense of the dissertation.

After completion of the first set of interviews, the transcripts were downloaded from Fireflies ai. The SCML's name was replaced with "Leader" and a number (i.e., Leader 1). Identifying references such as church name, family members' names, and location were removed. Nonessential words and sounds such as "so," "uh," or "um" were deleted. The transcript was compared with the audio recording to make sure the written words accurately reflected the spoken words. The transcript was emailed to the participant along with a link to schedule the second interview.³⁶ Participants emailed the researcher with any corrections that needed to be made to the transcript. During the second interview, the participants confirmed any changes to the first transcript. Only one participant noted a misspelling that needed to be corrected. All other transcripts were approved as presented. A similar process was followed for the second interview. After the transcripts were edited, the participants received the second transcript. They were given the opportunity to provide feedback about the transcript.³⁷ No participants offered additions or corrections to their transcripts.

The interview process adhered "to rigorous ethical standards," including approval by the NOBTS Institutional Review Board.³⁸ Confidentiality was maintained by not revealing the

³⁵ "Security and Privacy," accessed January 13, 2024, <https://fireflies.ai/security>; "Google Meet Security and Privacy for Users," accessed January 13, 2024, <https://support.google.com/meet/answer/9852160?sjid=16944209785999167018-NA>.

³⁶ See appendix H: Third Email to Participants.

³⁷ See appendix I: Fourth Email to Participants.

³⁸ Wayne C. Booth et al., *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2106), 82; appendix J: IRB Approval Letter.

identities of the participants in the study. The designation of Leader plus a number and the removal of personal identifying information within the transcript kept the responses as confidential as possible.

In-depth interviewing can trigger painful memories and challenging emotional responses. Prior to beginning the interview process, a care plan for second chair ministry leaders was developed.³⁹ The participants were told prior to the first interview that NOBTS cared deeply about the emotional well-being of the participants.⁴⁰ Should a topic trigger emotional pain, the care plan would be provided to the participants. The participants were free to not answer any questions, to end the interview, or to withdraw from the research entirely. No participants requested the care plan. No participants refused to answer any questions, requested to end the interview, or asked to withdraw from the research.

Procedures

As described in the Data Collection section, ALSBOM, Alabama WMU, and an ASM provided a list of potential second chair leaders in Alabama Baptist churches and their contact information. From a pool of 6,081 ministry positions other than the senior pastor, positions were removed that did not meet the criterion of full-time. The resulting list included 1,692 full-time positions. Because multiple positions could be held by the same person, the list was sorted again to isolate unique individuals. Also, the researcher and her colleagues were deleted from the list. The final sorting included 1,240 potential participants. An introductory email was sent to

³⁹ See appendix K: Care Plan for Second Chair Leaders.

⁴⁰ See appendix G: First Interview Introductory Remarks.

potential participants introducing the research project, explaining participant requirements, and asking the criteria questions.

Upon noting their willingness to participate in the research, the potential participants were assessed to ascertain whether or not they met the research criteria. A series of emails explaining the project in further depth, presenting the informed consent form, and scheduling interviews were sent to those who met the criteria. Fourteen participants who met the criteria agreed to participate in the study. Each participant submitted a signed informed consent form.

The participants completed the interview and feedback process for two rounds of interviews. The first interview focused on participants' lived experiences in childhood, calling, ministry preparation, and job satisfaction. The second interview focused on the participants' lived experiences as they reflected on second chair ministry leadership including gender differences, job satisfaction, and impact on family. Fireflies ai transcribed the interviews. Both the researcher and the participants reviewed the transcripts of interview one and interview two to check for accuracy.

After the completion of the interview process and transcript review, the interviews were coded to generate meaning using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Because of the user-friendly interface and the accessible price point, Delve Tool was the CAQDAS for this research.⁴¹ The transcripts were uploaded into Delve Tool qualitative coding software.⁴² The software assisted in the research by providing a digital platform for coding and organization.

⁴¹ "Qualitative Data Analysis Software Made Easy," accessed January 13, 2024, delvetool.com.

⁴² The informed consent form noted the use of Delve Tool for coding. See appendix C.

Qualitative research uses codes to make meaning of data. A code is a word or phrase “that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based . . . data.”⁴³ Multiple coding frames were employed to ascertain the essence of the lived experiences and to preserve validity and reliability. By assessing the material using multiple coding frames, Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle was used to make meaning of the data by returning to the transcripts repeatedly. The first coding frame was deductive coding. Deductive coding applies a predetermined list of codes, or codebook, to the data collected.⁴⁴ These codes were developed from the questions used in interview one and interview two. The data were coded by aligning words or phrases from each interview that corresponded to the question. The deductive approach produced codes such as “childhood,” “education,” “call to ministry,” “ministry title,” and “satisfaction in ministry.”

The second coding frame was inductive coding. The inductive approach allowed the data to reveal words or phrases common to the interviews.⁴⁵ Descriptive coding, in vivo coding, and process coding were three types of inductive coding. Descriptive coding revealed the key topics within each structure.⁴⁶ In vivo coding preserved the literal word choice used by the participants to describe their lived experiences.⁴⁷ Process coding captured actions through codes that usually

⁴³ Saldana, 5.

⁴⁴ Saldana, 40; Delve, “Qualitative Data Analysis Course.”

⁴⁵ Saldana, 41; Delve, “Qualitative Data Analysis Course.”

⁴⁶ Saldana, 130, 134; Delve, “Qualitative Data Analysis Course.”

⁴⁷ Saldana, 137; Delve, “Qualitative Data Analysis Course.”

end in “-ing.”⁴⁸ A hybrid approach of in vivo, descriptive, and process coding was used to analyze each transcript. The inductive approach produced codes such as “in the middle,” “strong relationship with my pastor,” “see around the corner,” “be approachable and accessible,” or “serving as an intern.”

The deductive and inductive coding processes for the twenty-eight interviews produced a 459-page codebook. The codebook was used to synthesize the codes into final meaning units from each interview and situate them within the narrative of each interview question to create “situated narratives.”⁴⁹ These situated narratives for each interview question created a general narrative that revealed common themes among the participants.⁵⁰ The development of common themes led to the essence description of the lived experiences of SCMLs.

Validity and Reliability

Peoples suggested four questions to strengthen the validity and reliability of phenomenological research through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.⁵¹ Answering these four questions helped maintain the validity and reliability of this research.

1. Credibility—Are the findings trustworthy? The population sample came from second chair ministry leaders who are known to other Alabama Baptist leaders at ALSBOM. The researcher spent considerable time with each participant through the interview process as

⁴⁸ Saldana, 143; Delve, “Qualitative Data Analysis Course.”

⁴⁹ Peoples, 61.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 84–85.

well as through individual emails or text messages. Both the researcher and the participant checked the transcripts of the interviews to account for errors, misunderstanding, or clarification.

2. Transferability—Can the findings be generalized? Generalizability is not the primary goal of phenomenological research. However, the discovery of certain themes through the coding process might reflect themes common to other second chair ministry leaders not interviewed in this research. The creation of the essence description of second chair ministry leaders in Alabama Baptist churches might provide meaningful insights to second chair ministry leaders in other Southern Baptist churches outside the state of Alabama.
3. Dependability—Can the findings be replicated? The research design presented in chapter 3 allows for other researchers to replicate this research study in other populations. Following similar research steps with second chair ministry leaders in other Southern Baptist churches should lead to similar research findings and essence descriptions.
4. Confirmability—Is the research unbiased? The potential for bias was noted in chapter 3 as well as steps taken to mitigate that bias. Using multiple coding frames, employing the hermeneutic circle, and allowing the participants to review their transcripts limited researcher bias.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to create an essence description of the lived experiences of women and men who served in full-time, vocational second chair leadership ministry positions in Alabama Baptist churches. The research explored vocational calling to local church ministry, ministry preparation for second chair leadership positions in local church ministry, and job satisfaction in local church ministry as well as gender distinctions in second chair leadership ministry. In-depth interviewing provided a platform to make meaning of the lived experiences of selected second chair leaders.

Chapter 1 presented the need for research that gave voice to second chair ministry leaders and described their lived experiences. Chapter 2 revealed the gaps in the literature related to second chair leadership in theory and practice. Chapter 3 provided a rationale for phenomenological inquiry as an appropriate research methodology to create an essence description. Chapter 4 details the results of the research including the demographic data for both the participants and the churches as well as the participants' lived experiences as second chair leaders including their childhood, salvation experience, call to ministry, theological education, daily ministry experiences, relationship with the first chair leader, job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and gender differences. The participants also provided insights into the definition of second chair leadership as well as the characteristics and skills required to be effective second chair ministry leaders.

Demographics

Research Sample

Fourteen SCMLs participated in this study. They engaged with the researcher in a series of two interviews. These participants met the criteria of the purposeful sample by answering yes to all four questions. Each participant experienced God's call to vocational ministry leadership. Each participant served as a full-time, paid ministry leader on an Alabama Baptist church staff in a position other than the senior pastor. Each participant reported directly to the senior pastor. Each participant served in this position for at least two years. Nine participants were men; five participants were women. Two participants served at the same church.

City Population

The participants lived in thirteen cities across Alabama. The United States Bureau of Census defined urbanized areas (UAs) as "a continuously built-up area with a population of 50,000 or more" and an urban place as "any incorporated place or census designation place (CDP) with at least 2,500 inhabitants."¹ According to the Bureau of Census, all thirteen cities were either urbanized areas or urban places (fig. 1). One participant served in an urbanized area of over 200,000, while two participants served in cities of over 175,000. Five participants served in cities less than 25,000. The population of the smallest city was approximately 7,000, while the population of the largest city was approximately 220,000.

¹ "The Urban and Rural Classifications," United States Bureau of Census, accessed March 4, 2024, <https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/GARM/Ch12GARM.pdf>.

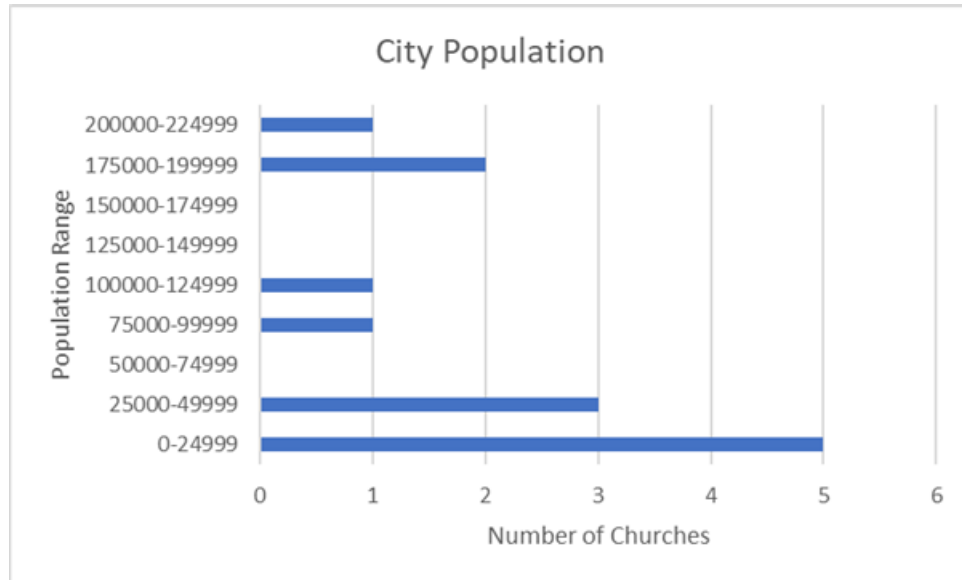


Figure 1. City population

Church Data

The participants represented thirteen different churches as two SCMLs served the same church. According to the ACP, one church was organized before 1849 (fig. 2). Two churches

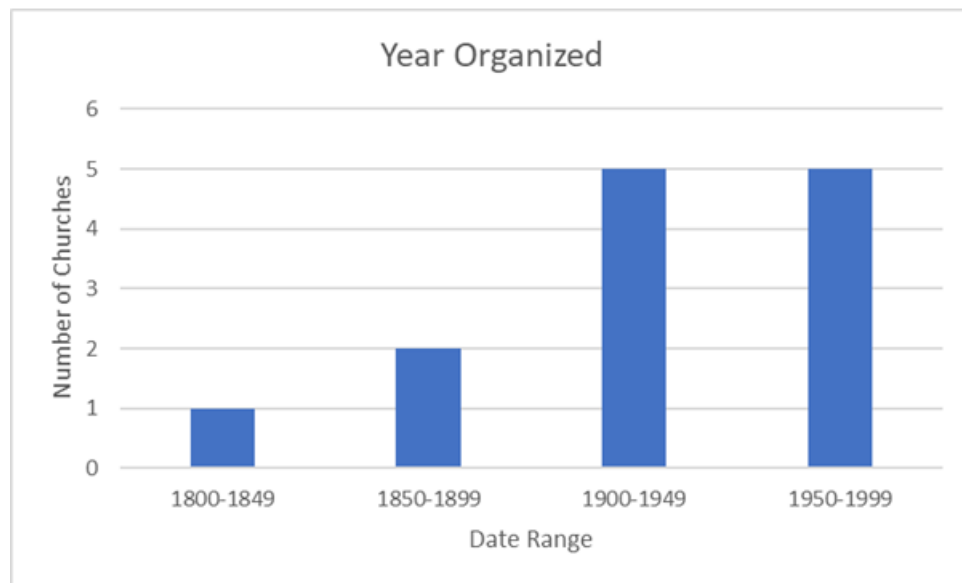


Figure 2. Year organized

were organized between 1850–1899. Five churches were organized between 1900–1949, and five churches were organized between 1950–1999.

According to Lifeway Research, 2023 ACP data revealed that 73% of Southern Baptist churches “have an average worship attendance below 100,” while “one in 5 (19%) are between 100 and 249, [and] 5% average between 250 and 499.”² The remaining 3% of churches reported an average of at least 500. Twelve of the thirteen churches provided attendance data to the Alabama Baptist State Convention through the ACP in 2023 (fig. 3). The largest church reported

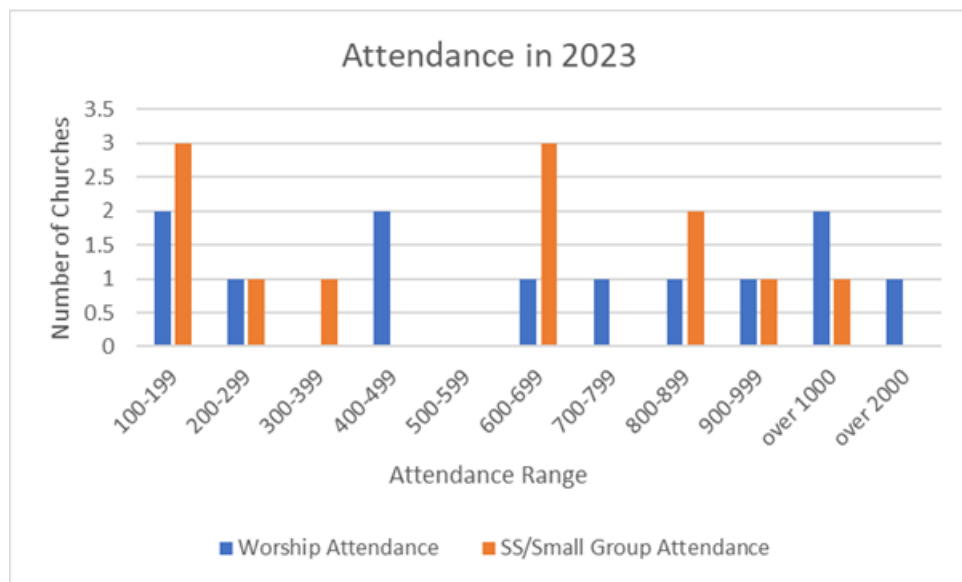


Figure 3. Attendance in 2023

a worship attendance of over 2,300 and a Sunday school-small groups attendance of 1,900. The smallest church reported a worship attendance of 150 and a Sunday school/small groups attendance of 100. Two churches reported a worship attendance of less than 200, and three

² Aaron Earls, “Growing Southern Baptist Churches More Likely in Northeast, among Newer Churches,” Lifeway Research, September 22, 2023, <https://research.Lifeway.com/2023/09/22/growing-southern-baptist-churches-more-likely-in-northeast-among-newer-churches/>.

churches reported a worship attendance over 1,000. When compared to the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole, the churches in this sample ranked in the top 25% based on their average worship attendance.

Twelve of the thirteen churches provided financial data to the Alabama Baptist State Convention through the 2023 ACP (fig. 4). Three churches reported undesignated receipts between \$2.5 and \$2.9 million dollars. Two churches reported undesignated receipts between \$500,000 and \$999,999. The largest undesignated receipts totaled over \$9.4 million dollars, while the smallest undesignated receipts totaled less than \$450,000.

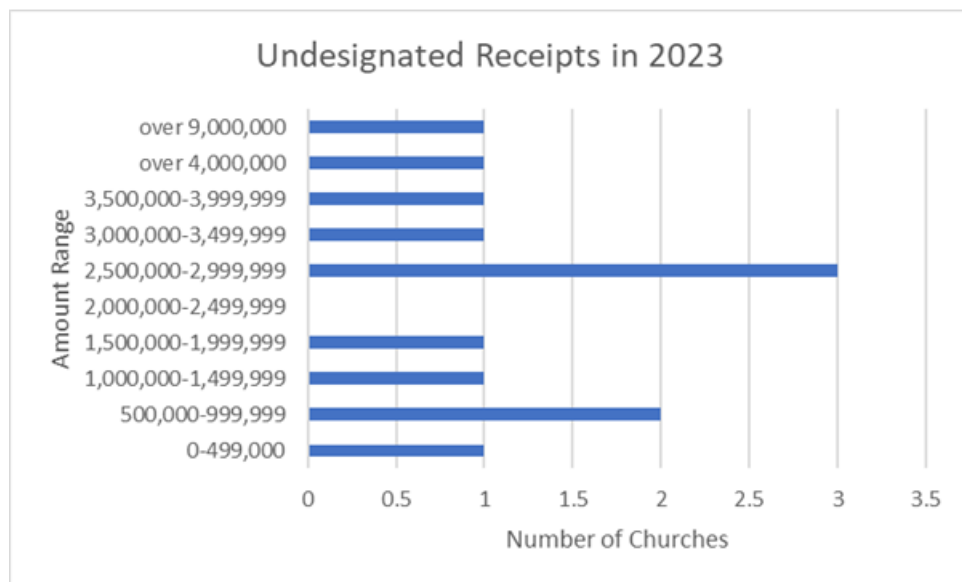


Figure 4. Undesignated receipts in 2023

Call to Ministry

Childhood Experiences in Church

Participants were asked to describe their childhood experiences.³ All fourteen participants mentioned growing up in a Christian home and attending church as a child (table 1).

Table 1. Christian Home

Leader	Experience
1	Grew up in a Christian home.
2	My parents carried me to church since I was two weeks old.
3	Went to a local church growing up with my parents.
4	Started attending church in utero.
5	Don't remember a time in my life when I wasn't in church.
6	Grew up in a Christian home.
7	Was a preacher's kid.
8	Was raised within the church.
9	Grew up in a dead Methodist church.
10	Grew up in a Christian home.
11	Went to church Sunday morning, Sunday night.
12	My parents were faithful every week folks.
13	Grew up going to church.
14	My parents . . . took me to church.

Some recounted positive childhood memories of the church, and others recounted negative childhood memories of the church. Leader 9 described his church as “dead,” while Leader 8 recalled “a very bad experience” that his grandfather had in the church that resulted in his own father being “hurt.” Leader 1 stated, “I’m thankful that I grew up in a Christian home and grew up in a home that valued us being in church.” Leader 6 remembered that “both my parents [were]

³ The tables in this research were created using in vivo coding; they contain the words and phrases as spoken by the leaders. Therefore, the tables reflect the conversational nature of the interview process. Quotation marks were not used inside the tables in order to increase readability. The reader should assume that all the tables record the spoken words of the leaders.

. . . very faithful . . . served in various roles within the church, and so we were there for Sundays and Wednesdays.” Four participants mentioned not remembering a time when they were not in church (table 2).

Table 2. Earliest Memories of Church

Leader	Experience
2	My parents carried me to church since I was two weeks old.
4	I actually started attending church in utero. I'm a Southern Baptist since before I was born.
5	I don't remember a time when I wasn't in church.
10	I honestly do not remember a time where I didn't know church and I didn't know who Jesus was.

Their church experiences played a formative role in their spiritual development as children and adolescents leading to their salvation experiences.

Salvation Experiences

Thirteen of the fourteen leaders became Christians as children or teenagers (table 3). Six participants placed their faith in Christ during or as a result of a church event like a revival, Vacation Bible School, or camp. Three leaders mentioned the role their parents played in leading them to Christ. With the exception of Leader 8, all the participants described a clear salvation experience when they repented of their sins and received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Leader 8 did not articulate a salvation story. He talked about family frustrations with the church and how that impacted his call to ministry.

Table 3. Salvation Experience

Leader	Experience
1	And it was there [in my childhood church] in response to the gospel at a revival service that I put my faith in Christ and turned from my sin and recognized the need for a Savior.
2	I became a Christian . . . when I was eight years old.
3	My dad went on the Walk to Emmaus. He got saved there, and he came home and the first thing he did was tell me about Jesus. I made that decision when I was nine.
4	I became a Christian at Vacation Bible School one year. I think I was six or seven years old.
5	I prayed with the pastor [when I was eight], walked down the aisle, did all that, and I truly believe that's when I was saved. . . . When I was a teenager . . . I really made Jesus Lord of my life.
6	I came to faith at a young age and was baptized in that church at six years old.
7	I was six. . . . I told my mom, "I need to go down front." And she said, "Why?" And I said, "I need to go get Jesus."
9	I trusted Christ at sixteen.
10	When I was nine . . . it was one Sunday there at that church, and it was one of those times when it was a pray this in your heart type thing. So I prayed, asked him in my heart.
11	I became a Christian [at my childhood church] . . . I did Awana there. . . . One Sunday night the pastor . . . gave an invitation, and it just clicked with me that I was not a Christian just because my parents were [or] because I went to church.
12	I was twelve years old in October 1982 when I accepted Christ.
13	I was saved at age nine at GA camp.
14	My parents are both believers and took me to church, and so they were able to share the gospel with me. And so I believed . . . on my eighth birthday.

Answering the Call to Ministry

All fourteen participants described answering God's call to vocational ministry leadership. Seven participants remembered a specific moment when they knew God was calling them to ministry. Leaders 3, 4, and 13 were in a camp or retreat environment when they heard God's call. Leaders 2 and 14 were at a conference when God used the speaker's words to reveal to his call. Leader 9 was at a deacon ordination service, and the pastor's Scripture passage impressed God's will on his heart. Leader 7 was at a revival service praying for others to respond to God's call when God called her to ministry.

Six participants experienced a gradual call to ministry over time. “The Lord used a collection of relationships and ministry moments” to reveal his plan to Leader 1.

Leader 6 “came to a place” where he knew God wanted him to pursue a ministry call. Leader 5 pursued a secular career and served in bivocational ministry when God called him to full-time ministry. Leader 10 was in college doing communications work for the Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) at her college when God showed her that communications and media could be a path for full-time ministry. Leader 11 had a “pretty gradual” call from high school teaching to full-time ministry. God used a local pastor to call Leader 12 into ministry.

The participants sensed God’s call to ministry at various life stages from childhood to adulthood (fig. 5).

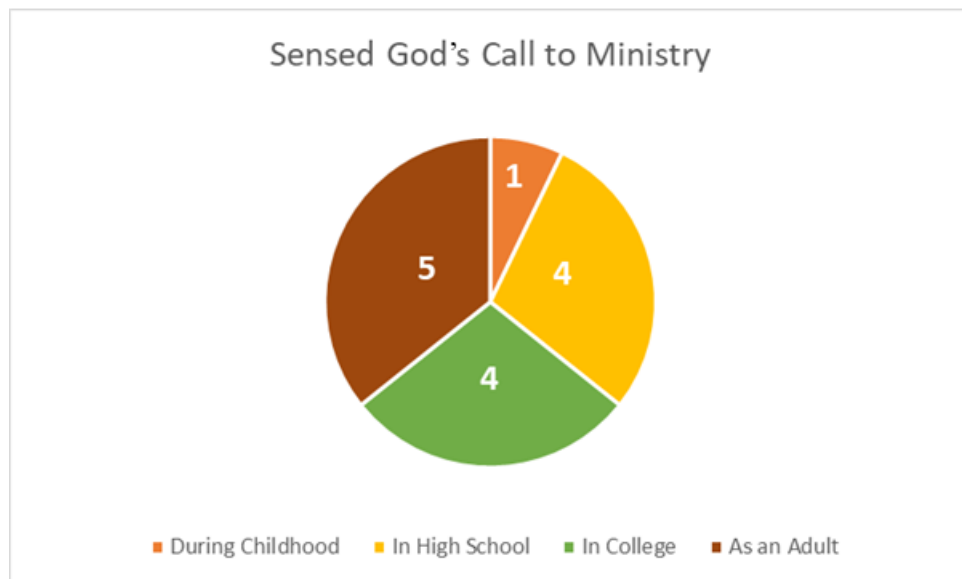


Figure 5. Sensed God’s call to ministry

One participant traced her call to ministry to her childhood when she attended Girls in Action (GA) camp, a mission camp for elementary aged girls: “When I was in 6th grade, after I finished 6th grade, I was at GA Camp again. I felt God calling me to ministry.” Four participants began to

experience God’s call to ministry while they were in high school (table 4). Three of those participants began taking steps to answer that call to ministry, while one participant “ran” from God’s call until adulthood.

Table 4. Called as Teenagers

Leader	Experience
3	When I was fourteen, we were on a small group canoeing trip on the Coosa River and were camping out, and I remember around the campfire feeling like a tug in my heart to ministry.
6	In high school, I came to a place where I felt like God was calling me to ministry. I was fifteen, called into ministry, ran from it the rest of my high school
8	career. Really just loved the Lord, served him, was active . . . but I was miserable at the time.
14	I went to this conference, and the guy that was speaking . . . it felt like he was talking directly to me. He was like, “Some of you in here, God's calling you to ministry and you're trying to get out of it.” And he was like, “There's no plan B. When God has called you, there's no plan B.” And I was like, “Okay.” So I knew right then. . . . That was clear as could be. And so that was my senior year.

Four participants were in college when they sensed God’s call to vocational ministry (table 5).

Table 5. Called as College Students

Leader	Experience
1	Through a relationship with a BSU director, through that college and student minister and other people there in that church and others the Lord used a collection of relationships and ministry moments to kind of orient my heart toward vocational ministry. . . . And I remember being afraid I was going to disappoint [my parents] in that I felt like the Lord was calling me to ministry. And it’s quite the opposite. They’ve been nothing but supportive of me since that day and have been helpful in a lot of different ways.
4	I was praying one night on the beach after everything was over. It's probably about midnight, somewhere around in there, one night on the beach by myself. And the only way I can put it is that the Lord audibly spoke to me to call me into ministry.

Table 5. Continued

Leader	Experience
7	But when I was in my second senior year, we're in revival. . . . This is when I do get emotional. I was praying, "Lord, call somebody. These kids are good. Call somebody out. Call somebody out." And he said, "What about you?" And I said, "Oh, I'm sorry, God. I'm headed to Juilliard or to Cincinnati. I've got my life planned. Thank you so much. But call somebody out. Lord, just call somebody out." And he said, "But what about you?" And I said, "Now, God, we've talked about this. This is what I have planned." I kept praying, "What about so and so? What about so and so?" And he said, "What about you?" And I went, "OK, what about me?" And that was my call to go. I went from planning to go to Juilliard and getting ready for auditions to which seminary am I going to? I guess the call of ministry thing has very much to do with the type of ministry, which is the media communications. . . . But that was the thing that actually got me going at first. It wasn't necessarily, "Oh, I feel called to ministry." It was I feel called to do stuff in media, communications, video, that sort of thing, and then it led into that. . . . I realized I could do this for ministry and also my career.
10	

Five participants were adults who changed career paths after receiving God's call to vocational ministry leadership (table 6).

Table 6. Called as Adults

Leader	Experience
2	My husband was Sunday school director, and we went to Ridgecrest to a conference, and I went in the director's conference with him. And the Bible lesson was when God called Abraham, and he told Abraham to go. He called him and told him to leave, but he didn't tell him where he was going, and he didn't tell him what he was going to do. He just said, "You go." And he went. And I felt like God was calling me to go to the other side of the campus at Ridgecrest to go to the children's, to the preschool area. Wow. I went over there, and I immediately felt at home.
5	I was seventeen or eighteen years old, serving as a bivocational minister of music at a church plant at that point, and really, for years after, I loved leading worship on Sundays and Wednesdays at churches. But I didn't feel like it was my calling . . . then God wouldn't let me stop thinking about it. And I tried to in my prayers . . . I don't have a music degree. I've never been to seminary. I'm just a good old boy that loves praising the Lord and helping others do the same. And the Lord wouldn't let me stop thinking about it, so I was like, "All right, fine. I'll send in a resume. I'll show you." And as always, God knows better. Here I am, ten years later.

Table 6. Continued

Leader	Experience
9	I had lost all desire whatsoever to remain in college athletics. I did not necessarily think that the next step for me was ministry, but after experiencing, maybe the first time a full surrender to Christ and his Lordship in my life, we had started attending [our current church]. . . . [Our pastor quoted 2 Timothy 4:6–7] “I’m already being poured out as a drink offering and have finished the course and kept the faith.” . . . There’s a break in my Bible right there at the end of 2 Timothy, and I wrote down this message. Yeah, this message was his call. I put the time 7:41 PM June 30, 1991. “I’ll be the next minister of Youth and Evangelism in [this church] because it is his will.”
11	I got super involved in [volunteering with my local church] and I thought, “Wow! I really love this!” I was really invested in it. . . . It was pretty gradual, but I guess when I had to make the choice because I resigned from teaching and kind of said, “This is what I’m going to do.” So that was, I guess, the step. That was the big one.
12	[A local pastor] came back to the house, and he said, “I want you to pray about being our youth minister.” And I thought, “What? I’m not even called to ministry.” . . . I mean really that was my thought. . . . And so we prayed about it and in September 1990, we stepped into bivocational youth ministry work.

Leader 8 heard God’s call to ministry as a teenager but “ran from it” until he was an adult. God used a human video while he was in college to reveal his will again. Leader 8 remembered, “During that video, God literally tapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘You have gifts. You have talents. You need to use them for me.’ So that was my second time that I verbally heard God. But guess what I did? I ran.” God continued to pursue Leader 8. While teaching children’s church as a volunteer, Leader 8 heard God’s voice again.

The Holy Spirit whispered to me again. He said, “Turn around. I want to talk to you.” So, I literally turned around and he goes, “I reminded you when you were in college that I have gifts and talents that I’ve gifted you with. Use them.” And I’m like, “Okay. God, what does that mean?” And God said, “Put down the book. Teach the word of God.” And so, I put down the book. I turn around, and I call it my Saul to Paul moment. The scales fell off my eyes, and I started teaching, and it was like I could breathe for the first time in my entire life.

Leader 8 then began to pursue God’s call to vocational ministry leadership.

Theological Education

All fourteen participants had some degree of higher education. Thirteen participants had a bachelor's degree representing a variety of fields: home economics, music, marketing, communications, media, vocal performance, accounting, physical education, English, history, religious education, and psychology. One participant was currently working on his undergraduate degree in youth ministry studies.

The participants had various levels of theological education (fig. 6).

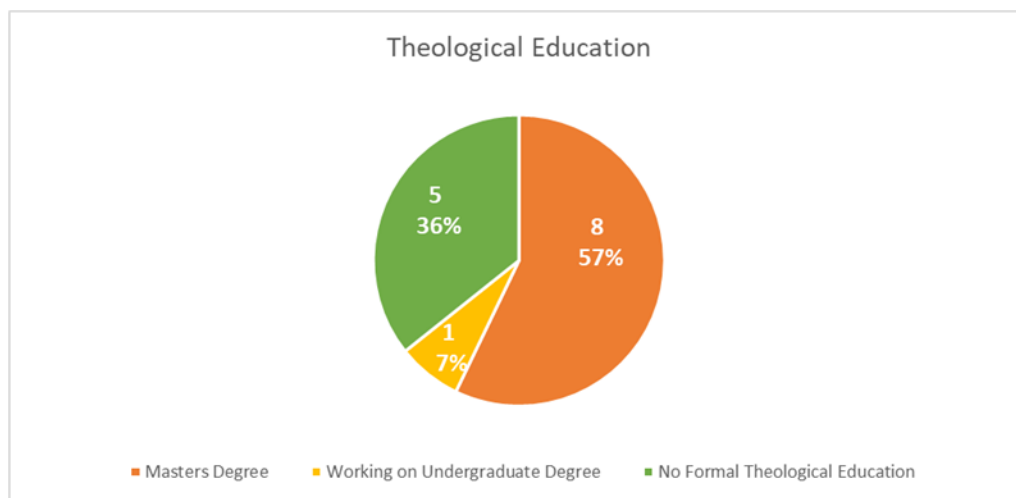


Figure 6. Theological education

Seven participants completed a master's degree with a theological emphasis:

Leader 1	Master in Religious Education
Leader 4	Master of Divinity
Leader 6	Master of Divinity in Youth Ministry
Leader 7	Master in Religious Education
Leader 8	Master in Christian Ministry
Leader 12	Master of Arts in Christian Education
Leader 13	Master of Arts in Christian Education

At the time of the interview, Leader 3 was pursuing a Master of Theological Studies. Five participants had no formal theological education. Those participants presented different reasons for not pursuing a theological degree (table 6). Leaders 2, 5, and 9 were called to ministry as

adults. They pointed to other responsibilities and lack of time as the primary reasons for not going back to school.

Table 7. Reasons for No Formal Theological Education

Leader	Experience
2	I never went to seminary or anything like that. I thought about it, but I had kids and responsibility. I just had to learn a different way.
5	I didn't go back [to seminary]. One of my stops along the way, when I was in college, I spent half or spent one semester as a music major. And I thought at the time I wanted to be a high school band director. I've had some musical training and I play a few instruments, not really well enough to play any of them in front of people, but I can read music. But more than anything else, I just have a heart for worship and helping other people to worship.
9	When I was hired, I did not have any formal theological education, nor have I ever achieved any, which is odd, because we have a partnership with Southern Theological Seminary. We've had nine cohorts, or was it seven cohorts, and we're fixing to start that back again. We've got their MDiv [program] here. But quite frankly, I just did not have the time.

Leader 11, also called to ministry as an adult, received counsel from a pastor that experience was more important than education. According to Leader 11,

I reached out to a ministry leader who was a super nice guy. He took my call and I said, "Look, I really love ministry. What would be my next steps?" I thought he would say, "You need to go to school and get a degree." And I thought, "This I can do." But he said, "You really need experience more than you need to go back to school." He said, "If you could find an internship, that would be great."

As a result of that conversation, she worked at the church's summer camp then accepted an internship and never pursued theological education.

Although called to ministry in college, the thought of more education was daunting to Leader 10, so she did not pursue theological education. Leader 10 stated, "I don't have any of that [theological education] actually officially. I feel like I know a lot about it . . . not to diminish it, I just mean, I have a lot of people around me that I know a lot about it, but the thought of more schooling is the only thing that's got me not doing anything like that."

All five participants who were called to ministry as adults pointed to other avenues of informal theological education and ministry training. Leader 2 completed study courses from Lifeway Christian Resources and continued to attend leadership conferences sponsored by ALSBOM and Lifeway. Leader 5 surrounded himself “with talented musicians” and focused on “helping others understand what worship is because we know it’s more than a song.” Leader 9 “read Ryrie’s book on systematic theology,” but he concentrated on reading the Bible. He said, “I just take it for what it says and figure that’s how we’re supposed to do it.” If he had a theological question, he asked someone with a degree or tried to discover the answer himself. Leader 10 also surrounded herself with people with advanced degrees who assisted her when needed. She also served as a summer missionary when she learned how to incorporate communications and media into ministry. Leader 11 participated in an internship to learn about ministry leadership, and she continued to read widely about ministry.

Lived Experiences as Second Chair Ministry Leaders

Titles and Ministry Positions

The participants served in a variety of ministry areas in the church including administration, education, worship, missions, and communications. Three participants served in administration. Eight served in education to preschool, children, or students. One served in worship ministry. One served in missions ministry. One served in communications ministry.

None of the fourteen participants had the same title, even those who held similar ministry positions (table 8). The titles of the three participants in administrative ministry were Executive Pastor, Executive Pastor of Ministries, and Campus Pastor. Leader 1 was Executive Pastor of a large, multi-staff church. Leader 3 was one of two executive pastors on the church staff. He supervised ministry-related aspects of the church, while the other executive pastor managed the

facilities and financial aspects of the church. Leader 12 was Campus Pastor of a new church site, but he was also over administration at the home church site. All three of these SCMLs are male.

Table 8. Titles of Second Chair Ministry Leaders

Leader	Title on Church Website	Title Given in Interview
1	Executive Pastor	Executive Pastor
2	Children's Director	Director of Preschool Ministries
3	Executive Pastor of Ministries	Executive Pastor of Ministries
4	Administrative Pastor to Students	Administrative Pastor to Students
5	Minister of Music and Outreach	Minister of Music and Outreach
6	Minister of Children and Families	Minister to Children and Families
7	Preschool Minister	Preschool Minister
8	Director of Preschool and Children's Ministry	Pastor to Preschool and Children's Ministry
9	Associate Pastor for Missions and Prayer	Associate Pastor for Missions and Prayer
10	Media and Communications Director	Media and Communications Director
11	Director of Children's Ministries	Children's Minister
12	Campus Pastor	Campus Pastor
13	Minister to Children	Preschool and Children's Minister
14	Student Minister	Student Minister

The eight Christian education-based ministry positions covered age-level ministries within the church. Three of these positions were “directors” of their ministry areas. Two of the directors were women, while one director was a man who considered himself Pastor to Preschool and Children's Ministry. The Director of Children's Ministries was a woman who calls herself the Children's Minister. Three other children's ministry positions, all held by women, were titled “minister.” The two student ministers were both men. One was titled “pastor”; the other was titled “minister.”

The three remaining areas included worship, missions, and communications. Leader 5 was the Minister of Music and Outreach. He and the senior pastor were the only two full-time staff members at his church. Both Leader 9 and Leader 10 served in large multi-staff churches.

The size of the church allowed for specialized ministry positions such as Associate Pastor of Missions and Prayer as well as a Communications and Media Director.

Daily Experiences

The participants discussed their daily experiences as SCMLs in their local churches. The participants identified ten primary areas of responsibility in their daily experiences (fig. 7).

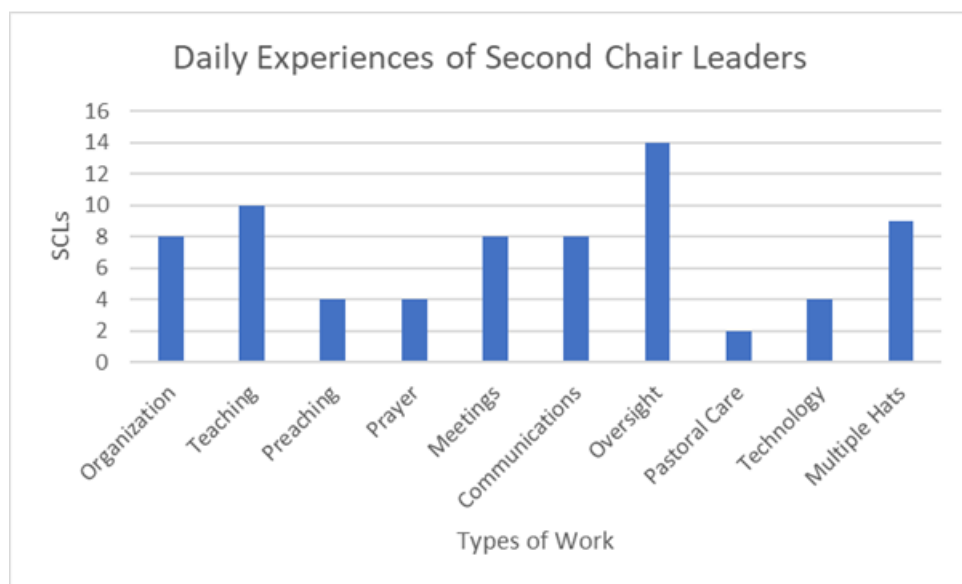


Figure 7. Daily experiences of second chair leaders

Organization

Eight leaders noted the importance of organization in both their ministry areas and the church as a whole. According to Leader 1, “If [the senior pastor] is the one who casts vision, I’m the one who helps chart the course and gets us there.” Leader 7 said that a large part of her ministry was “knowing what you need to do, knowing who needs to do what, and when it needs to happen.” Collectively these fourteen second chair leaders provided organizational support for preschool ministry, Next Gen ministry, children’s ministry, student ministry, small groups,

assimilation ministry, guest services, Vacation Bible School, fall festival, church anniversary celebrations, local missions, international missions, child development centers, custodial services, building programs, facilities management, human resources, communications, finances, insurance, print media, digital media, paid staff, and volunteers. Sometimes their titles did not match their area of organizational responsibility. For example, Leader 2, a preschool minister, made all the supply purchases for the church, and Leader 13, a children's minister, organized the churchwide anniversary celebration.

Teaching

Ten participants were responsible for parts of the teaching ministry of the church. The age-graded ministry leaders taught preschoolers, children, and students weekly on Sundays and Wednesdays as well as for special events like Disciple Now weekend, Vacation Bible School, camps, or retreats. Some of these leaders taught outside their assigned ministry areas. Leader 4, a student minister, taught an adult Sunday school class. Leader 5, a worship minister, led Man Church each week. Leader 8, a children's minister, hosted a men's discipleship group in his home. Leader 9, a missions minister, taught a large multigenerational Sunday school class. Leaders 2 and 7 noted the importance of teaching volunteers. Leader 4's heart for teaching was representative of the other participants' love for teaching: "I love teaching. I love being able to dig into the Word. I have a passion for it."

Preaching

Four participants included preaching in their regular experiences. None of them preached every week. Leaders 3, 4, and 9 preached occasionally when invited by the senior pastor. Leader

12 shared the preaching responsibility at the new satellite campus with the senior pastor. All four leaders were men. None of the women identified preaching as an area of responsibility.

Prayer

Four participants noted the importance of prayer in their day-to-day experiences. Leader 3 gathered weekly to pray with colleagues. Leader 6 spent time praying over prayer requests from families in the church. Leader 9 led a prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings and coordinated the prayer ministry of the church. The staff at Leader 11's church met on Mondays and Wednesdays for staff prayer.

Meetings

Eight participants listed meetings as one of the primary tasks in their weeks. Those meetings included time with the senior pastor and other staff members as well as time with the volunteers or staff who report to them. Leader 5 noted that his church does not have a staff meeting: "We've never once had a staff meeting in ten years. There's conversations in the hallway. Even when we had another full-time minister, there was never a time of let's all sit down together and plan." He noted that while he would not lead in that same way as a first chair leader, not having staff meetings had "worked" for a decade.

Communication

Seven participants mentioned communication as an important task in second chair leadership. These second chair leaders communicated with a variety of people in diverse ways. They communicated with team members, people within their sphere of ministry influence, ministry volunteers, paid staff, the entire church, and the community. They used one-on-one conversations, mass announcements, emails, social media, digital media, print media, and video.

Leader 3 described one-on-one communication with his team members. He invited communication from his team by having an open-door policy.

My office has kind of become that I'm the guy you go to if you have a problem. I'm the guy to go to if you're struggling with something, if you need to unload emotionally. Really what it is, I want to be there for them because ministry is difficult, and these folks are young and they're figuring out and they're getting into it. They're incredible, and I love them. I'm so proud of them. But I want to be available to them because I know some leaders that had a very closed-door policy; and I know the detriment that had on me developing as a leader. My door is always open to them.

Leader 6 intentionally communicated with families in his ministry area “by just staying in touch with them, keeping them informed of what’s going on and trying to catch up with them and talking to them and saying hello and letting them know that I’m praying for them and asking if there’s a prayer request.” Leader 7 worked hard to communicate ministry logistics with volunteers and staff: “You need to have a plan. You need to share that plan. I make list of what I do every day. I come in and make a list. . . . Make sure your people know what they need to do, whether it’s Sunday morning, Sunday night, whatever.” As the Media and Communications Director, Leader 10’s primary area of responsibility was communications: “I pretty much deal with anything to do with our website and social media and online presence, anything to do with videos being produced, graphic design, photography and branding in general, like just keeping our entire brand going, anything that the public sees. And then anything that I have to promote within the church.” Leader 14 noted that he is responsible for both the verbal announcements from the stage as well as the livestream link during each Sunday service. Leader 11 described the importance of communication: “Figuring out how to communicate is key. Make sure everybody knows what’s going on at the most basic level.”

Oversight

All fourteen participants provided oversight to staff, volunteers, or both in their areas of ministry. Six participants managed volunteers only; eight participants supervised both volunteers and paid staff. Leader 1 served “as the right hand to our senior pastor in carrying out, implementing, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of ministry.” Leader 3’s job was “to take care of the staff and the team” as he oversaw multiple staff and volunteer teams.

Technology

Four participants mentioned technology as a weekly task. Only the Media and Communications Director was tasked directly with technology ministry. The other participants did these tasks in addition to their primary ministry tasks. Leader 3 was an executive pastor who also did the church’s graphic design and social media. Leader 4 was a student pastor who got “the words ready for Sunday morning and makes sure the computers are updated.” Leader 14 was a student minister who did the Sunday morning slides, managed the YouTube channel, and ran the livestream during the service.

Multiple Hats

Nine participants emphasized the many responsibilities related to and not related to their job descriptions that they are responsible for as SCMLs. Regardless of their titles, these participants engaged in a variety of tasks or “odd jobs” according to Leader 14. Leaders 1 and 5 used the imagery of wearing many hats to discuss their various roles in Sunday school, communications, financial administration, bus driver, camp chaperone, and so forth. Leader 1 stated, “I believe one of the most difficult roles in the church is the second chair leader that’s in the church that has to wear all of those hats.”

Leader 2 described herself as a “jack of all trades” whose additional duties include ordering all the church supplies and substituting for the church secretary. She said, “I have been there so long if anybody needs anything, doesn’t matter what it is. . . . They know to come to me. And most of the time, I can service them.” Leader 4 expressed a similar sentiment: “I’m the person that people come to get things done. That’s kind of the way that my job functions.” Leader 6’s job description included “the line that says anything else assigned to you by the pastor.” His pastor assigned him various tasks outside his primary responsibility “maybe for a short season, maybe for a long season.” Leader 8 described his various responsibilities in the most detail.

I am a music minister, an education minister, an activities minister, a missions minister, a senior minister, and almost like a young adult babysitter minister all wrapped into one. I think it’s one of the few positions in the church, honestly, like if you’re the music minister or worship pastor for the church as a whole, how many duties do you have? One. Right? But I have to prepare and plan to have music and worship for bed babies through fifth grade, and make sure it’s done every week. I’ve got to make sure that the education as far as Sunday school, small groups, D groups, Sunday nights, Wednesday nights. . . . I’ve got to pick the curriculum and make sure it’s being taught and do everything else. . . . I also put together mission opportunities for our children and our parents. I’m basically the senior pastor because I am teaching three and four times a week. And I’m also a counselor because I’ve been around long enough, people are calling me and asking me things to do. I’m also the outreach pastor because I’m responsible for making sure per our senior pastor, that we fill the building. I do tons of trying to contact, text, email, talk to people. What am I missing? Hospitals, care pastor, it’s just all those things.

These participants revealed the challenges associated with second chair ministry. Leader 1 expressed the attitude of the group: “It’s hard to do it all.”

Relationship with the First Chair Leader

When asked about their relationships with their first chair leaders, the participants revealed both positive and negative aspects of those relationships. Six participants described their first chair leader as a friend (table 9).

Table 9. Friendship with the First Chair Leader

Leader	Experience
1	Is a dear friend.
4	We are very good friends.
5	I love our pastor.
11	Become close friends over the years.
12	Friend and good friend at that.
14	Consider him probably to be my best friend.

Seven participants understood one of their primary roles to be as a support and champion for their first chair leader (table 10).

Table 10. Support for the First Chair Leader

Leader	Experience
3	My job is to be that dude's biggest fan.
4	I see my role as a support to [my pastor].
5	You're there as a supporter.
7	You do everything you can to uphold him, support him.
8	God has called me to love my senior pastor and to minister to him.
9	We've got his back.
14	I can be the biggest hype man for him.

Four leaders described similarities with their leaders that contributed to a successful working relationship (table 11).

Table 11. Similarities with the First Chair Leader

Leader	Experience
1	We complement one another well.
4	Our leadership styles are similar.
10	We're in sync and in step without even explicitly saying it to each other.
14	Our vision and goals for our church are just very similar.

Six participants noted the importance of the trust relationship that they have with their senior pastor (table 12). Trust empowered them to make decisions and to serve effectively in their roles.

Table 12. Trust from the First Chair Leader

Leader	Experience
4	He trusts us enough to make those decisions.
5	He's fully supportive of everything.
6	He empowers the ministers to serve in their roles.
7	He trusts us.
9	He said, "A lot of people try and give me counsel, but you're the only one I'm going to listen to."
10	He puts a lot of trust in the staff.

Leader 5 saw himself as either "a bulwark, a filter, or a sponge" in his relationship with the senior pastor. As a bulwark, he was "a protector of the pastor [and worked] to defend him" when people were critical or complaining about the pastor or the direction of the church. As a filter, he "take[s] information given to [him] and in a loving way get[s] that to the pastor . . . without ever saying, 'Hey, people are saying.'" As sponge, he said, "Sometimes you just have to listen to what they're saying, and you have to soak it all in and you just have to hold it and not tell anybody." Leader 5 loved and supported his senior pastor, but he acknowledged "sometimes it's tough to be that guy in the second chair."

Holding different viewpoints on issues was one of the primary challenges to the relationship between first and second chair leaders according to these participants (table 13). Seven participants remembered times of frustration caused when they held a position differently than their first chair leader. Leaders 3 and 9 felt frustration over decisions that cost ministry equity in both financial and people resources. Leader 2 expressed hurt when the first chair's "very conservative and fundamental" views cost her opportunities for ministry. Leaders 5, 6, and

7 experienced disappointment when the first chair leader's opinion caused challenges in their specific ministry areas.

Table 13. Differences with the First Chair Leader

Leader	Experience
2	His views are very conservative and fundamental.
3	I thought it was wrong. . . . This is going to hurt us. We're going to burn equity.
5	I felt very differently.
6	Where we're a little out of step would be me pushing to have more of the kids in the worship center service with their parents.
7	His timeline is a little different than ours.
8	He won't say anything then and two weeks later, you get called into his office and you get raked over the coals.
9	I would get irritated because he had no idea what the cost was going to be, either in resource cost or human cost.

Seven participants mentioned frustrations with the first chair's leadership style (table 14). A "my way or the highway" leadership style resulted in the perception that the senior pastor was "intimidating" or "he already knows what he wants to hear." Similarly, a laissez faire leadership style that never allowed for ministry teams to "sit down together and plan" communicated that the first chair leader had "no real action plan" and "little or no idea about what it took to get from point A to point B." Leaders 5, 6, 8, 9, and 13 pointed to the first chair leader's lack of understanding or inaction as causes of tension in the relationship.

Table 14. Challenges of Leadership Styles

Leader	Experience
2	My way or the highway . . . that's kind of been his leadership style.
5	There was never a time of let's all sit down together and plan.
6	He certainly listened and heard but didn't [act]. No real insight. No real action plan.
8	He already knows what he wants to hear.
9	He had little or no idea about what it took to get from point A to point B.

Table 14. Continued

Leader	Experience
12	He can be very intimidating.
13	Our pastor understands a little bit, but I wish he understood better the day in and day out of what it takes to do preschool and children's ministry.

Job Satisfaction

During both interviews, the participants answered questions to identify sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their roles as second chair leaders in the local church. They also discussed when and how they felt or had not felt valued as a second chair ministry leader. They identified seven sources of satisfaction in three primary areas: calling, relationships, and ministry (fig. 8).

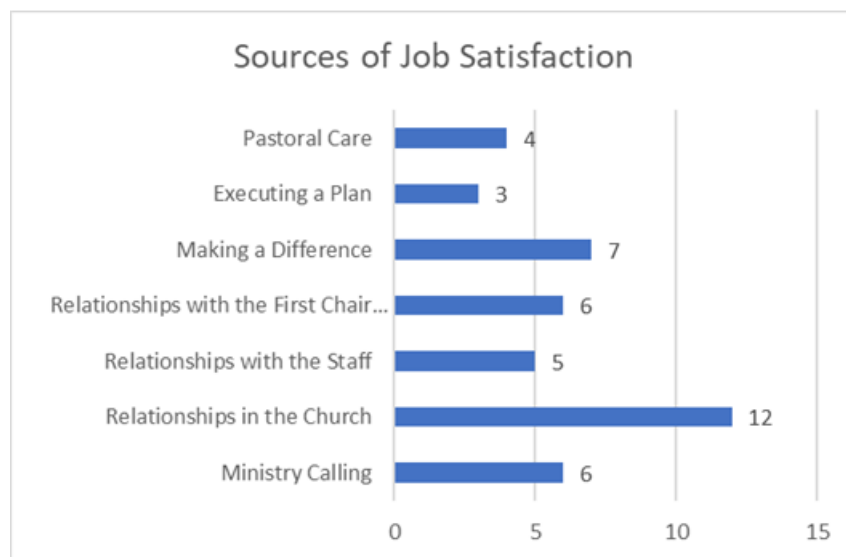


Figure 8. Sources of job satisfaction.

Calling

Six participants found the source of their job satisfaction in their vocational calling to ministry (table 15). Leaders 2, 7, and 8 specifically used the word “call.” Leader 5 indicated that

his love for the Lord compelled him to lead worship each week. Leader 11 knew that “it’s what I’m supposed to be doing [because] this is where the Lord wants me.” Leader 9 was satisfied regardless of whether or not he received the approval of people because he was “more concerned about pleasing the Lord these days.” Their confidence in fulfilling God’s calling on their lives gave them satisfaction.

Table 15. Satisfaction from Calling

Leader	Experience
2	You’re doing this because God called you to do it. I love doing those things so much. I’d do it for free. . . . They pay me for all the other stuff during the week. But I love worshipping my Lord so much. And if I can help other people do the same thing, that’s great!
5	This is what God has called me to do, and so I’m going to enjoy it.
7	The Holy Spirit . . . there’s something about that call.
8	I’m more concerned about pleasing the Lord these days and less concerned about the approval of men or even my superiors.
9	I think just really the knowledge that it’s what I’m supposed to be doing. That this is where the Lord wants me.
11	

Relationships

The greatest sources of satisfaction, according to these participants, were relationships in the church, in the staff, and with the first chair leader. Twelve of fourteen participants named relationships in the church as a source of job satisfaction. The relationships included both volunteers they led and people they served in their ministry areas. Leaders 1, 5, and 8 used the word “valued” to describe how they felt about these relationships with people in their churches. Leaders 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, and 14 felt satisfaction in seeing people in their areas grow in their relationships with Christ and his church (table 16).

Table 16. Satisfaction from Relationships in the Church

Leader	Experience
1	When I sense effectiveness or accomplishment with some of those groups that have navigated something effectively, successfully . . . the feedback that comes from those groups means a lot and brings value.
2	Being able to work with the families and see the kids developing relationships . . . and then seeing how that impacts their home.
3	Seeing the team excited and flourishing and growing and seeing the results from that . . . that's the most satisfying thing to me.
4	I just love every bit of it. I really do. I love the people. I love being able to work with them and see them grow in Christ.
5	People tell me that they appreciate me. I definitely feel valued.
6	Just getting to be with the kids and see them learn, see them grow, see them enjoy being at church. . . . Seeing parents have that heart to disciple their kids at home.
7	The kids . . . and seeing the adults' faces when they're with the children having a good time and teaching them and realizing they do learn.
8	Those that serve under me. We have great relationships. We communicate constantly.
10	The relationships . . . I just need you to be willing and to be reliable with your time.
11	The growth you see in the children or the families, the new Christians, the kids who even later, after their Christian light bulbs go off as they learn more about the Bible or get to know the Lord better.
13	Seeing my kids do missions and be excited about missions.
14	Seeing growth.

Five participants pointed to staff relationships as a source of job satisfaction (table 17). Leaders 2 and 4 used the word “value” to describe the mutual interaction among staff. Leader 3 described a colleague as “one of my best friends.” Leaders 7 and 9 mentioned the affirmation that occurred among the staff as a source of satisfaction.

Table 17. Satisfaction from Relationships Among the Church Staff

Leader	Experience
2	The people of our church staff . . . we value each other.
3	The other XP is one of my best friends. . . . When you go through really tough times, God forges those friendships.
4	I feel highly valued by both my congregation and my pastor and other staff here.

Table 17. Continued

Leader	Experience
7	The staff is doing well. We cut up. We laugh. . . . We affirm what you're doing.
9	It's when your co-laborers and your first chair leader says nice things to you. "Well done." That's good.

Affirmation from the first chair leader contributed to job satisfaction for six participants (table 18). Each of these participants felt valued when the first chair leader frequently communicated his gratitude to the second chair leader through compliments, affirmation, bragging, and appreciation.

Table 18. Satisfaction from Relationships with the First Chair Leader

Leader	Experience
1	I feel most valued when that first chair leader lets you know you're valued.
3	Our pastor . . . met with myself and the other XP once a week and was always very complimentary.
5	On that 10th anniversary Sunday they had for me, I didn't expect it, but [my pastor] took a few minutes to say some words, and he teared up. . . . I love the guy.
7	Affirmation from the pastor.
12	Our pastor does a really good job of making clear to us as a staff that he is always for us and that we are a team. He brags on the team quite often.
14	He tells us pretty frequently that he's glad that we're here doing ministry together. . . . I feel valued and appreciated from that aspect.

Ministry

Seven participants found their job satisfaction in making a difference in their ministry areas (table 19). The SCMLs in Christian education felt satisfaction in seeing children and parents "learning their Bible," "walk[ing] with the Lord throughout their life," and "serv[ing] next to them" in ministry. When Leader 5 saw "somebody taking a step in the way they express their praise," he experienced satisfaction in worship ministry leadership. A second chair leader in

student ministry traced his satisfaction to helping expand the reach of the entire church by starting new social media endeavors. The media and communications second chair leader noted the most satisfying times were when she could see that she was making a difference by connecting new people to ministries in the church.

Table 19. Satisfaction from Ministry: Making a Difference

Leader	Experience
2	It's the little things that I hear from parents that I know the kids are learning their Bible.
5	When I see somebody taking a step in the way they express their praise, that's what it's all about. That's great!
6	Continuing to see kids and youth grow in their faith, own their faith, walk with the Lord throughout their life.
7	Seeing the ministry thrive and grow and kids learn about Jesus and be happy about that.
10	The most satisfying things, the times that make it most, are when I don't have to just tell myself you're making a difference. I can actually see it . . . see people being connected with . . . a ministry that is just getting started.
13	The big wins for me are when [military] families come back, and I'm just as close to the kids or when I am able to serve next to them when they're youth.
14	I started our YouTube and Spotify stuff just as a way to connect outside of the walls. That's been really good too.

Three participants described satisfaction in executing plans in their ministry areas (table 20). Whether successfully completing a building project in Leader 1's church or rebuilding VBS after COVID in Leader 11's church, both participants experienced satisfaction in executing specific plans. For Leader 3, any time his team executed a plan and achieved a goal that for him "is the most satisfying thing."

Table 20. Satisfaction from Ministry: Executing a Plan

Leader	Experience
1	To walk through [a building project] and get to the other side of that and it be a win was really encouraging and has continued to prove to be a win in the way that it has served our ministries and our faith family.
3	When we set the goal, when we execute the plan, and when we hit that goal, that for me is the most satisfying thing.
11	Our Vacation Bible School is always good. That was a tough one to rebuild after COVID . . . but the Lord really provided.

Four participants specifically named pastoral responsibilities as sources of satisfaction as SCMLs. Leaders 1, 3, and 14 used the words “pastor” or “shepherding” to describe aspects of their ministries. Leader 4 explained that serving people in difficult times was a source of satisfaction.

Table 21. Satisfaction from Ministry: Pastoral Care

Leader	Experience
1	I love the pastoral side of what I get to do.
3	They’re getting the purpose that God’s called them to do and so kind of helping them with that. That’s when we get to really love on our folks. Sunday mornings for me are the opportunities to be a pastor.
4	Just being able to be there in some of those situations and minister well . . . being able to serve people through really hard things.
14	The middle school and high school students, that’s my flock that I’m shepherding.

Job Dissatisfaction

These second chair ministry leaders identified nine sources of job dissatisfaction.

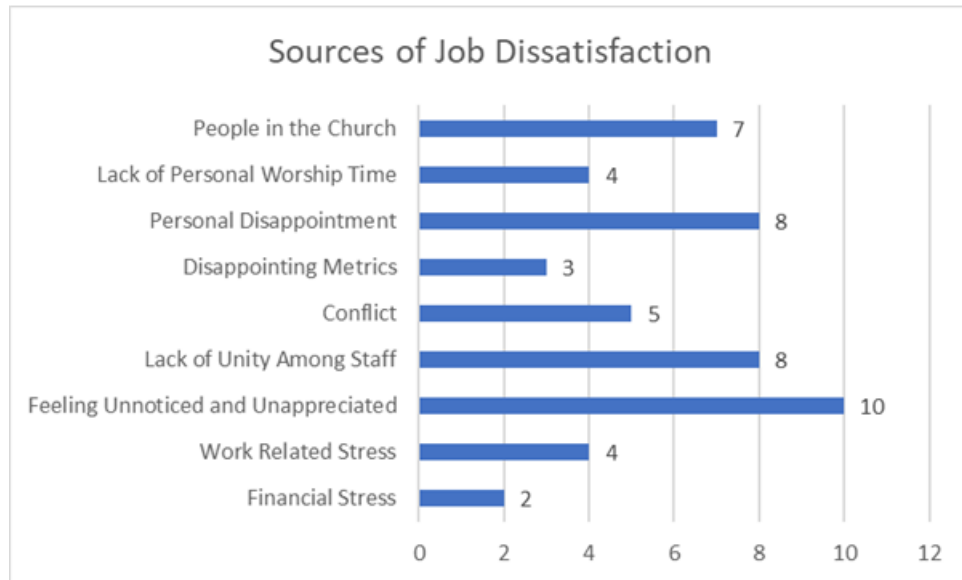


Figure 9. Sources of job dissatisfaction.

Feeling Unnoticed and Unappreciated

The greatest source of job dissatisfaction among these participants was feeling unnoticed or unappreciated (table 22). Ten participants identified situations that resulted in feelings that their work or opinions did not matter. Leader 1 felt dissatisfied when he “brings the most to the table on a particular area” yet his opinion is “disregarded.” Leaders 2, 10, and 13 expressed similar feelings of being overlooked when others did not see “the big picture,” when their hard work did not receive even a “thank you,” or when they seemed to be “filling a chair.” Leaders 4, 7, and 9 pointed to feelings of being “taken advantage of” or being perceived as “hired help” instead of ministry leaders. Leaders 3 and 8 expressed frustration when ministry successes were not celebrated.

Table 22. Feeling Unappreciated and Unnoticed

Leader	Experience
1	There’s probably not good basis for this, but probably when a decision or opinion doesn’t carry the day and you feel like maybe you bring the most to the table on a particular area or topic, if it’s disregarded or yeah, again, it doesn’t carry the day. And that’s true for all of us, right? I mean, that’s the nature of church leadership oftentimes.

Table 22. Continued

Leader	Experience
2	I think one of the things that makes it less satisfying is when you have other staff members that don't really understand or don't see the big picture of how everything fits together or the importance of something that you deal with.
3	I worked my butt off on that sermon and planned it and it worked. We had so many people get connected to groups, so many people get connected to serving. And I don't know what I was expecting . . . for the staff to come one by one with gifts to my office and bow down and say, "Thank you for helping us staff our ministries. We're so grateful for you." All that kind of stuff. Instead, I had to turn around . . . I got to turn around and thank them for getting those people plugged in . . . I felt completely unvalued.
4	There have been a few times where I've had conversations with some deacons, one in particular, who just kind of views me as the hired help.
6	Those moments that you feel beat up a little bit because you've put a lot of your heart and time and everything into it and someone who sees something that isn't to their liking and can be critical.
7	But that's probably [when I feel] least valued . . . when I feel taken advantage of.
8	And so instead of celebrating those successes, I've gotten to where I just can't talk about [my discipleship group] anymore because it's seen as a threat for whatever reason. I have no idea why, but it's sad. I just keep it to myself.
9	I suppose the thing I value the least is that sometimes I think congregants sort of take you for granted. Whether they are well meaning or not well meaning, they think what you do has little value and express it that way or in ways that may not be explicit.
10	But that's why I guess it's more of a problem when I know the people who do know what . . . my coworkers and my fellow staff leaders . . . obviously they know all about what I'm doing, and they see me doing it. They see me here for extra hours that week or whatever. And that's when it's kind of like, "Okay, well, just even like a 'thank you' walking by would have been fine."
13	Probably when I just feel like I'm not seen at all, you know, like you're just filling a chair and your input doesn't matter.

Feelings of Personal Disappointment

Feelings of personal disappointment was the second highest source of job dissatisfaction for these participants (table 23). Leaders 4, 10, and 13 recalled moments of self-doubt that created dissatisfaction related to their own lack of confidence and sense of place in ministry. Leaders 1, 3, and 9 associated job dissatisfaction with their own feelings of inadequacy in being "hard on myself," "my own poor planning," and "my character flaws." Leaders 5 and 12 pointed

to their own weariness in ministry working a “16-hour day” or “feeling bogged down” as a source of job dissatisfaction.

Table 23. Feelings of Personal Disappointment

Leader	Experience
1	When there’s a sense of just disappointment in my own self, maybe in how something came across or I don’t know, a way I reacted or something I said or did. I can be hard on myself at times, maybe even in ways that probably no one else is thinking. But I can wear some of that sometimes if I feel like something hasn’t gone as planned or just fell flat.
3	That’s my own poor planning.
4	So that’s really more of me being what’s the word . . . just not confident in myself in making those decisions.
5	Just when I’m tired, when I’ve got a lot of things going on and I’m like, it’s easy to get in my own head and be like . . . people don’t know that I served with four people from the church at the clothes closet this morning down the road. And then I did this and this and this and had to stay late for band practice for Christmas music and worked a sixteen-hour day.
9	You’ve got to understand one of my character flaws, one of my many character flaws. I’m probably OCD with no formal diagnosis, but I’m a perfectionist.
10	And so, part of that is really just me reminding myself, “You do have a place here. You are supposed to be doing this.”
12	I guess if I have those moments where I am feeling bogged down in ministry, it really has nothing to do with the other staff pouring into me. It has more to do with me and my pity party if you will. I don’t want to say that I feel disvalued by staff or anybody else, because I really don’t. I feel like I have those struggles in ministry where I have those times when I feel like, “What in the world am I doing? Is this really getting anywhere?” Those kind of things. But that’s more of an internal. It’s not an external.
13	But I think sometimes that has to do with me too and where I’m at in life and what’s going on around me too. Sometimes I feel like I can’t contribute when really, I can.

Lack of Unity among the Staff

Eight participants identified the lack of unity among the staff as a key contributor to job dissatisfaction (table 24). Leaders 2 and 11 noted a lack of unity displayed with an uneven amount of promotion or preference in calendar planning among the church’s ministry areas.

Leaders 3 and 13 experienced a lack of unity when decisions were made that they did not agree

with, yet they were required to execute that plan and “just go with it.” Leaders 5 and 7 noted isolation as a cause of disunity among the staff. “Four or five different islands of ministry” and hallway meetings that include only part of the staff contributed to job dissatisfaction. Leaders 8 and 10 were the most candid about the lack of unity among the staff. Leader 8 described his church as “a toxic environment,” while Leader 10 experienced “a lot more bad, like, every day.”

Table 24. Lack of Unity among the Staff

Leader	Experience
2	Another place might be occasionally if you feel like your ministry is not [highlighted]. . . . I mean, all ministries need to be highlighted in some way at certain times.
3	The most challenging part is, I think, executing a plan you don’t agree with. And your folks come in and you and the lead guy have had a discussion and we’re going to do this. And your folks come in and they bring up every single stinking argument that you brought up to the lead guy. You agree with them 100%, and you still have to motivate them and equip them and encourage them and lead them to do the plan.
5	I think we’ve got potential that we’re not reaching . . . because we’re almost four or five different islands of ministry going on instead of being one together.
7	So, our offices are over by the gym and everybody else is in a different building. That’s just how it is. Our ministry assistant’s here and she works the desk at the gym as well. So, when they have a meeting over there and they’re just standing in the hall and they talk about something and we don’t hear about it over here and we have a staff meeting and they say something, I’m going, “What?”
8	I’m stuck in what I would call a toxic environment. I don’t know why, but until God moves me, I’m going to stay here.
10	And obviously being just a member of a church is completely different than being on leadership of a church. And in a way, of course, the curtain is pulled back and you see a lot more good, but you also see a lot more bad, like, every day.
11	I would say calendaring would be a good example. Maybe another group seems to get priority, and somebody says, “Hey, why did you schedule this at this time when so and so is doing such and such?” . . . even if it doesn’t really seem to be an actual conflict. Or perhaps if there’s an event that is going to involve families. And maybe I had some idea, maybe even shared some ideas, and they were not used at all.
13	Sometimes you don’t like what other people are doing. We don’t really need to do that. . . . It’s all the other second chair people that you’re like, “Oh, I don’t know if that’s the best idea,” but that’s their area, and you have to just go with it.

People in the Church

Not only did a lack of staff unity cause job dissatisfaction, but also people in the church created frustration for second chair leaders (table 25). Not finding people in the church who will volunteer to serve was the greatest source of job dissatisfaction for Leaders 6 and 7. Leaders 11 and 14 expressed weariness over being a sounding board for people to unload their complaints. Leader 4 was disappointed when people did not participate in his ministry events. Leader 8 traced “the politics that happen around” his church as a source of job dissatisfaction. Leader 1 summed up this category with “people in the church is hard.”

Table 25. People in the Church

Leader	Experience
1	Interestingly, while I said one of the rewarding, satisfying things is the people side of ministry, I think the people side of ministry can sometimes be really hard and so difficult. People in the church is hard.
4	When we plan things, and this is the thing with student ministry, is you plan stuff and then nobody shows up. And it's like, “Well, you say you want this to happen so we plan this, and then nobody comes.”
6	I think the biggest challenge is now recruiting and having new volunteers that have a passion and heart to invest and teach and care for the kids for as long as God would kind of call them to that role.
7	Volunteers. Finding them. Begging. Pleading. And then you get frustrated when the youth ministry decides to take some of your volunteers. I had to look at one of them and say, “They're mine.” But the volunteers is the biggest thing.
8	And there are days where I could in fact, I've called my wife and said, “We're done.” And she's applauded. She's ready to go. She's ready to leave because of the politics that happen around here.
11	People just feel seemingly so free to unload all their problems or complaints or the least little thing.
14	You know, sometimes you've got people that complain about things that are lame and just bickering about things. And I think that definitely gets old.

Conflict

People in the church created conflict. For five participants, conflict was a source of job dissatisfaction (table 26). Both engaging in conflict and ignoring conflict created frustration for the participants. Leader 1 described engaging in conflict as “misery, absolute misery for me.” Leaders 7 and 10 experienced dissatisfaction when conflict was ignored, while passive aggressive conflict frustrated Leader 14. Conflicts within the church over tradition versus theology drove Leader 8 “absolutely insane.”

Table 26. Conflict

Leader	Experience
1	Conflict. I just hate conflict. I like unity. I like when we’re loving each other. . . . conflict and difficult confrontation when you have to speak a hard truth or painful something in somebody’s life, and I’m sort of involved in that right now. That is the most stressful, difficult thing for me because . . . misery, absolute misery for me. I don’t relish that. Some people enjoy it, but I don’t.
7	[My pastor] doesn’t like conflict at all. And you know what I do in church, there’s going to be conflict. And sometimes that can be a little hard because you go to him and you say, “Okay, this has happened.” And he’ll say, “I know you got it.” And sometimes you want him to say, “Let me handle that.”
8	I am sick and tired of church tradition over biblical theology. It drives me absolutely insane. Absolutely insane.
10	If it’s a problem we don’t really want to deal with because and I’m not trying to put words in their mouth, but it always appears like, oh, we’re Christians. We shouldn’t have conflict. Or if you do have conflict, you need to pray about it and deal with it and just love each other and we’ll just forget about it.
14	You’ll see people posting stuff online, like passive aggressive. All three of our wives get passive-aggressive comments. Those kind of things are just not good.

Work-Related Stress

Four participants listed work-related stress as a source of job dissatisfaction (table 27). Taking work home or office work that prevented spending more time in direct ministry with people led to feelings of frustration, being devalued, and even hate.

Table 27. Work-Related Stress

Leader	Experience
3	I love getting to lead people and work with people now. Any kind of in-the-weeds work, I have started hating.
6	At times I look and just feel like I'm more of a manager of everything rather than the shepherd encourager. I guess direct ministry with families is not there as I would like. So that's probably the biggest and then there's moments and I don't know if I feel devalued, but you're frustrated.
8	Whereas I used to spend more time in study and creating and creativity and doing all that, now I'm forced to spend more time on basically, I hate to say it, almost babysitting people through things, literally doing three times as much as I was when I first got here because I'm responsible for so much more.
13	And then you take work home, and it's just draining and overwhelming because the door is always open and people are always in, and then there's more work.

Lack of Personal Worship Time

Four participants found difficulty in engaging in personal worship because their ministry responsibilities prevented them from attending Sunday worship services (table 28). According to Leaders 1 and 5, "Sunday often can become so full and busy with things to do" that "there's no way at our church . . . to just sit and soak." Leaders 8 and 10 felt that they were pouring constantly into others and serving diligently in their ministry areas, but "no one's pouring in to me," and "we're not getting fed at all."

Table 28. Lack of Personal Worship Time

Leader	Experience
1	I think one thing we've got to be careful of, at least in my context, is Sunday often can become so full and busy with things to do and fires to put out and meetings to prepare for and volunteers to get in place and the list goes on and on . . . there might have been a string of Sundays that have passed since we have really sat and worshipped with God's people.
5	There's no way at our church, within our church that I'm able to just sit and soak in because I'm in leadership in everything I do, whether it's teaching a college Sunday school class or in Sunday service or something.
8	I will honestly say I wish I had an older [mentor] . . . I feel like I'm constantly pouring out. No one's pouring into me. I wish one thing I'd like to add would be someone who would invest in me and my wife and pour into us. I think we're missing that.

Table 28. Continued

Leader	Experience
10	A lot of times when I'm frustrated or whatever and [my husband and I are] discussing things . . . we've actually said this before, when times are really not great . . . like it feels like we don't actually have a church, we just work. It's like both of us too, because he's almost like . . . I'm here every day seeing it, but he's experiencing it too, because his perspective has completely changed. But we've literally said we feel like we do not attend this church. We don't go to church. We're not getting fed at all. We're just working.

Disappointing Metrics

Three participants pointed to disappointing metrics as sources of job dissatisfaction (table 29). Leaders 1 and 6 used the word “metrics,” while Leader 9 discussed “rewards and achievements and success.” All three leaders noted that relying on numbers and results “can be a very slippery and unhealthy slope” leading to an addiction to success. Finding value in metrics resulted in disappointment and frustration when those goals were not achieved. Leaders 6 countered that temptation by resting his identity “in God and in Christ and the calling he’s placed on [his] life.” Leader 9 reminds himself that “the Lord’s the only one who knows [his] heart.”

Table 29. Disappointing Metrics

Leader	Experience
1	Sometimes when attendance is not what we would have wanted it to be or giving was not what we would have wanted it to be or you can think of different metrics in church life. I think sometimes second chair leaders sometimes have value, right or wrong, tied to metrics, which can be a very slippery and unhealthy slope if not managed in the right way.
6	Not resting your identity and worth in what you do in the number of kids or youth or the different metrics, every person counts . . . but to rest your identity in God and in Christ and the calling that he’s placed on your life and to be as faithful to that and to return to that when you’re disappointed when you’re frustrated.

Table 29. Continued

Leader	Experience
9	I tend to be hard to please. . . . My wife gets on to me all the time and one of my other associate pastors said that I was too hard on myself to a fault. So that's why I have to drop back and just, you know, the Lord's the only one that really knows. And you know what? I don't trust my motives either. I really don't. I know how the old [self] was all about rewards and achievements and success, if you can be addicted to success. The Lord's the only one who knows my heart.

Financial Stress

Two participants noted the presence of financial stress as a source of job dissatisfaction (table 30). Leader 4 mentioned more than once during the interviews about the challenges he faced financially as a second chair leader. Leader 7 also mentioned more than once how both being a woman in ministry and being a preschool and children's minister meant that her financial compensation was not equivalent with her male counterparts. Staff salaries were made public in her church, so she knew exactly how her salary compared to other staff members.

Table 30. Financial Stress

Leader	Experience
4	There's a lot of stress. There's a lot of financial stress.
7	Children's ministers are low men on the totem pole. There's a difference in pay.

Self-Care and Second Chair Ministry Leadership

Given the intensity of the workload and the stress of ministry leadership, the participants reflected on how they nurtured their own souls. The participants engaged in self-care in three primary areas: physical, emotional-relational, and spiritual. Leaders 1, 3, 4, and 6 discussed the importance of physical self-care including rest and exercise. Leader 1 reported that he was "trying to make sure I'm sleeping and resting well, to try and make sure I'm eating right . . . and an exercise regimen on some kind of a regular basis." Leader 3 walked early every morning with

his wife. Leader 4 enjoyed time in nature while hunting. Leader 6 exercised four or five days a week.

Leaders 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, and 14 cared for themselves emotionally and relationally by nurturing healthy relationships with family and friends. Leader 1 pointed to time with his family as nurturing to his soul. Leader 2 discovered strength in friendships: “If you’ve got one or two people that you can talk to and share your struggles and joys with then you’re in a really good place.” Leader 3 renewed his strength through movie and game nights with his wife and daughters. Leader 4 enjoyed hiking with his family. Leader 6 attended conferences with other ministry leaders so he could just “sit . . . and not have responsibilities.” Leader 7 planned special weekends with her husband “to just chill.” For Leader 10, “having people to talk to” was an important part of self-care. Leader 12 noted that “community is a top word for me,” and he met monthly with a group of guys for accountability and support. Leader 14 found strength in spending time with his pastor and other ministry leaders: “We have a pretty solid community here.” The community of family, friends, and ministry colleagues contributed to self-care among these SCMLs.

Spiritual nurturing is a form of self-care that can be challenging for SCMLs. Because Leader 12 was providing spiritual care for others, he affirmed that he needed to “self-feed.” He added that “spiritual growth needs to be self-started, self-nurtured.” Collectively the participants mentioned prayer and Scripture reading as the key spiritual disciplines that nurtured their souls. According to Leader 1, “Spiritual nurture most fundamentally is time spent in the Word and prayer.” Leader 4 had a prayer kneeler in his office. He regularly fasted through lunch to spend time in prayer. Leader 8 pointed to fasting and prayer as key spiritual disciplines for SCMLs to be able to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit. Leader 9 began each morning in surrender to the

Lord: “The first thing I always ask for is by His divine grace . . . ‘Lord, help me to surrender absolutely today to you. And not a word on my lips, not a thought in my mind, not a step, not a movement, not a love, not a hate, not anything that’s not for Your glory.’” Leader 12 woke up between 4:30–5:30 am each morning to sit in his recliner and pray: “Sometimes that’s praying through a list, praying over names, and sometimes that is just praying back Scripture. And there’s that moment of pause where I can sit and listen to what the Father is saying.”

The participants studied God’s Word through reading, watching, and listening to Scripture and Bible studies. Leader 2 did Bible studies and listened to podcasts about the Bible. Leader 5 noted that a “personal daily quiet time with the Lord” is a key spiritual discipline. Leader 11 used a Bible reading plan to guide her time in the Word, and she memorized Scripture throughout the year. Leader 12 read through books of the Bible during his time with the Lord. Leader 13 watched video Bible studies, completed online Bible studies, and found “comfort in reading the Word.” Leaders 3, 6, and 14 distinguished the difference between reading the Bible for ministry preparation and reading the Bible to nurture their own souls. Leader 3 read Scripture that “has nothing to do with [his] message” so that he could hear God speaking into his own life. Leader 6 prioritized “reading through the Bible for me and my heart and not for a lesson.” Leader 14 worked hard to study the Bible devotionally not “just as a textbook” to prepare for teaching a lesson.

Leaders 1 and 2 mentioned two other areas of self-care: sabbatical and counseling. Leader 1 served a church that prioritizes spiritual self-care. While the church did not have an official sabbatical policy, they gave “allowance for our ministers to have what we call a spiritual retreat up to five days in a year.” With the blessing of his church including financial provisions for the sabbatical, Leader 1 took time for personal spiritual retreats that he “carve[ed] out for

prayer, Scripture reading, meditation, journaling, these kinds of disciplines.” Leader 2 found professional counseling helpful to guide her in processing hurtful seasons in both her family and her church. Talking to a professional counselor allowed her heart to heal so that she could continue ministering to others.

Impact on Family

Second chair ministry leadership in the local church impacted the families of these leaders in both positive and negative ways. Leader 7 served on the same church staff as her husband. She saw that as a positive because “we’re on the same plane. We share the same frustrations. We can share in the same joy.” She felt that serving in ministry has impacted their daughter positively because “she’s always been an underdog person, and she’s going to fight for the underdog.” Leader 6 affirmed that his children had a positive experience with ministry: “They enjoy coming to church and don’t have any real challenges or difficulties . . . with anybody at the church.” Leader 5 enjoyed having his wife and children participate in the ministry with him as they were “just fantastic at supporting me and my ministry.” Leader 4’s family was also “part of community,” “plugged in,” “highly involved, and engaged.” Leader 3’s wife and children understood the “sacrifice” of ministry, and all three served in the church in various ways. Leader 14 felt the church’s love for his toddler daughter, who was “definitely the favorite ministry baby.” Leader 12 believed his children received more exposure to more positive ministry opportunities like camps and mission trips because they were staff children.

At the same time, Leader 12 described the overall impact on his family as “challenging.” His children had “been viewed a little different or included or isolated, depending upon the circumstances,” and his wife “has days when she feels it would be easier in ministry if [he] was not a second chair” leader. Leader 13 hoped her children see the joy of ministry, but she admitted

“I feel some days they don’t.” Leader 14 regretted “the passive-aggressive comments” that his wife received from disgruntled members. Leader 2 recalled her adult children expressing frustration at how their mom was being treated by other church leaders: “They get frustrated because I don’t get to participate in some things.” Leader 3 pointed to the “sacrifice” that his wife and daughters make. He did not remember the last time they rode together to church. Leader 4 feels the long hours at work negatively impact his family: “There’s a lot of the nights that we’re gone; my wife has to handle things by herself.” Leader 6’s wife shared the “burden or . . . grief or sorrow or difficulty . . . that does come through being the second chair and having a first chair leader and either disagreeing on things or not liking the way things have been carried out.” Leader 8 said, “My family hurts with me . . . and there’s lots of hurt.” His daughter recently described their current church environment as “broken and ineffective.” Both Leaders 8 and 9 talked about the painful journey of having children who have left their faith.

Leaders 1 and 11 expressed a more neutral position on the impact of second chair ministry leadership on their families. Leader 1 did not sense an “adverse or negative effect” of ministry leadership on his family. He felt that he did “a pretty good job of putting some boundaries up around what my family feels and hears.” Leader 11 was single without children. When asked if her family had to make sacrifices for her to be in ministry, she replied, “I don’t think so. I really don’t.”

Definitions of Second Chair Ministry Leadership

The participants understood the duality of their roles as a SCML (table 31). They were both followers and leaders. Several participants defined second chair leadership in terms of their positions or responsibilities in relationship to the first chair leader. Leaders 4, 6, 7, 11, and 12 used the words “under” or “underneath,” while Leader 14 described “someone that is above

them” to define their positional relationships to the pastor. Leader 8 discussed the relationship between the first chair and second chair leaders as a “hierarchy” that is ordained by God. Leaders 7 and 12 expanded their positional definition to include walking “alongside the pastor” in their unique ministry leadership positions. Leaders 1, 4, and 11 used servanthood as the image for their relationships with both the pastor and the congregation. Leader 3 noted that his job is “to ensure that the mission and vision of the overall first chair leader is being carried out.” Leaders 1, 5, and 9 defined second chair leadership as the “right hand” of the senior pastor who is “absolutely loyal,” “has his six,” and supports him in ministry.

While they followed and supported the first chair leader, the SCMLs were leaders in their areas of influence. Leaders 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14 defined themselves as leaders with leadership responsibilities within the church. Leader 1 used the word “oversight” to describe his daily tasks. Leaders 2 and 13 used both “following” and “leading” in their definitions of a second chair leader. Leader 12 provided a succinct definition of the dual position and responsibility of second chair leaders: “I am a leader to the people, but I am a support to [the pastor].”

Table 31. Definitions of Second Chair Ministry Leadership

Leader	Experience
1	The way I describe my role in a nutshell to people is I serve as a right hand to our senior pastor, primarily giving oversight to the day-to-day operations of ministry.
2	I’m a leader, but I’m not the head leader, and so I have to be a follower. And so really you’re a leader and a follower.
3	As a second chair leader, my job is to ensure that the mission and the vision of the overall first chair leader is being carried out.
4	A great second chair leader is one who is for the leader that they are serving under, for the organization they are serving, and for the people that they’re serving.
5	My definition of second chair leadership is being in a leadership position in an organization where you’re not the head guy, but you’re still a leader in whatever ways you’re allowed to be, and you strive to lead in your areas while also supporting the first chair leader.

Table 31. Continued

Leader	Experience
6	Just any position where you have responsibility, but you're leading underneath someone else. You have a boss in a sense that is over you, that provides direction, that you're underneath, even as you have your own responsibilities to carry out.
7	It's the leadership that's underneath the pastor. It's usually an age group type thing or specific administrative pastor or something like that. But that's how I see that. They work alongside the pastor but have a specific area that they're responsible for instead of an overall preaching, teaching type thing.
8	It means willful submission to hierarchy as ordained by God.
9	He is a leader who is absolutely loyal to the first chair leader. And to use a military term, he has his six. We've got his back. But that loyalty then is expressed in how you perform your duties, and you try to use your gifts and talents and abilities and experience to complement his leadership, which in the context of the church is to edify the body and build it up and to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry.
10	I think that my first thoughts were that it very much brings my mind to what a pastor is, what the lead pastor is. And they're the ones that have a very specific job to be that lead pastor, and they have a higher calling to that. And I would say that . . . not that second chair leadership is only defined by that . . . but I feel like you can't have that if you don't have a lead pastor if you don't also have that. So my definition in my mind is like, how it relates to that.
11	Someone who reports directly to the senior pastor and serves at that leadership level of ministry right underneath him.
12	I'm a part of a team that the Lord has orchestrated or designed to help lead this church. And while I have responsibilities for the people, but I also have responsibility to walk along with the pastor under the pastor, under his leadership and his guidance as he leads our church. I am leader to the people, but I am support to him.
13	Following a leader and you being a leader yourself and being able to follow someone and then lead from that leadership area.
14	You have things that you're in leadership over, but you're not the one with the whole umbrella. A second chair leader would have leadership responsibility, but ultimately, they still answer to someone that is above them.

Leader 9 used the term “ministry of obscurity” three times throughout both interviews to define second chair ministry leadership. The term was not original to him, but he could not remember where he heard the idea. In the first interview, he said that SCMLs “need to seek a ministry of obscurity.” He further described “ministry of obscurity” as surrender: “You surrender

to the Lordship of Christ. You surrender to the needs of the body. You surrender to those in authority over you, and you seek a ministry of obscurity. You find your satisfaction in serving Jesus and not the applause of man or being the guy on the platform.” In the second interview, he stated that second chair ministry leaders must “be comfortable with the ministry of obscurity.” The ministry of obscurity was related closely to humility, which half of the participants listed as a primary characteristic of second chair ministry leaders.

Characteristics of Second Chair Ministry Leaders

Each participant identified key characteristics of an effective SCML. The collective list included sixteen characteristics that were mentioned by at least two people (fig. 10). The top three characteristics were flexibility, trustworthiness, and humility.

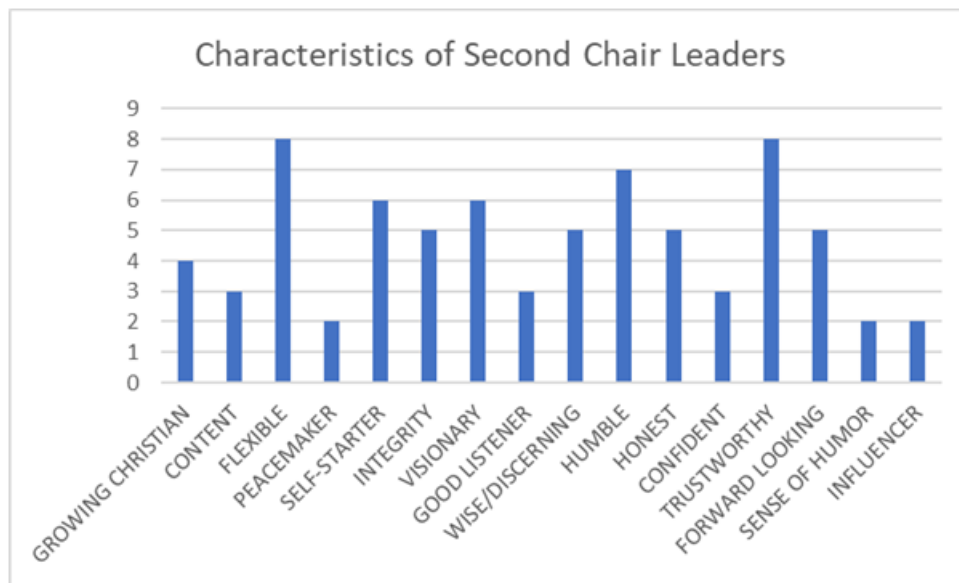


Figure 10. Characteristics of second chair leaders.

Flexible

Flexibility and trustworthiness were the most named characteristics with eight leaders discussing the importance of these characteristics (table 32). Words like “resilient,” “flexible,” “adapt,” and “adjust” highlighted the changing nature of ministry in the local church. Leader 2 described change as both fast paced and slowed pace requiring flexibility for sudden change and patience for delayed change. Leader 13 encouraged other leaders to “be ready” because change was constant.

Table 32. Flexible

Leader	Experience
2	I think you have to be resilient, flexible. Because things change. They change quickly sometimes, but then you have to be patient because sometimes they don't change quickly, not as quick as you think they should.
4	Be flexible. Someone who can easily adapt to anything and everything that's coming down the pipe.
5	They need to be ready for just whatever the day is going to throw at them because you never know what that might be.
6	Flexibility. . . the ability to change as circumstances change, as the first chair leader gives new direction and just as things come up in the ministry world.
7	They need to be flexible.
10	There will even be times when you really did have a staff meeting about something and there really were decisions made, and then people go to lunch or go off together and they change it, and it was like, but what happened to the real plan anyway?
11	Be flexible.
13	Be ready to adjust your plan to be flexible in situations but think things through and work it out.

Trustworthy

The participants identified the importance of trust both in the second chair leader's relationship with the first chair leader as well as with the congregation (table 33). Words like

“essential” and “high level” described the priority of trust. Leaders 4 and 11 noted that without trust relationships were broken.

Table 33. Trustworthy

Leader	Experience
1	It is essential that you have a healthy relationship with that first chair leader. It's got to be one where there's trust.
3	There's a high level of trust.
4	And even their failings, they have to be able to trust it that you're not going to weaponize that. And so, if you lack that kind of integrity, you're going to break trust so quickly with so many people.
6	The trust, the relationships that you build.
7	He trusts us. He said, “You're the expert; I'm not. So, I trust what you're doing, and you just keep doing what you're doing.”
9	They were trustworthy. I knew that they would do what they said they were going to do.
11	If you can't be trusted in your relationships, it's a deal breaker if you don't have that.
13	You can trust them and depend on them and to do right in the right situation.

Honesty

Closely related to trust was honesty; five participants included honesty as a key characteristics of an effective leader (table 34). Like trust, honesty with both the first chair leader and the followers was essential for healthy relationships. The participants talked about honesty particularly in hard conversations. Second chair leaders needed to “have hard conversations” at times and “step up and speak truth” both to the pastor and the congregation.

Table 34. Honesty

Leader	Experience
1	Tell the leader if you see things that are of note and need to be attended to, that they need to be done as well.
3	Have honest relationships where people can give you feedback, and you can hear feedback.

Table 34. Continued

Leader	Experience
4	Being able to talk with people, being able to have hard conversations, being unafraid to confront problems, that's something that I have had to learn is really important, even interpersonal problems between me and the pastor, if we have an issue, to just go to him in love and say, "Hey, this is what I'm seeing. This is what I'm feeling. Help me walk through this."
5	Be clear and honest and forthright with your senior pastor.
8	And the second chair needs to be praying fasting in the word of God so that they understand that there will be times when they're going to have to step up and speak truth.

Humility

Six participants included humility as an important characteristic for second chair leaders (table 35). SCMLs manifested humility in relationship with the first chair leader by recognizing that "you're not the final say," "you're not the pastor," "you're not the one making all the shots all the time," and "you're a team player . . . know your place." Humility was important in relationships with the congregation. The second chair leader "may work really hard, and nobody ever knows anything about it, but the Lord Jesus." Second chair leaders "do a lot of work, and you have to give the praise away to everyone else." Humility helped the second chair leader to do "the best of my job in my area so that I can contribute to the process as a whole."

Table 35. Humility

Leader	Experience
1	They need to have humility and realize that this is not about them. And you may work really hard, and nobody ever knows anything about it, but the Lord Jesus.
2	You need to be able to follow and understand that you have an opportunity to help guide, but you're not the final say and be able to live with that.
3	The biggest thing I think about second chair leadership is you do a lot of the work, and you have to give the praise away to everyone else.
7	This may sound negative is even though you're a team player, also know your place.

Table 35. Continued

Leader	Experience
8	To be plugged into the Holy Spirit, to be humble and to be coachable, to realize that there are many aspects going on that aren't necessarily. . . . As a second chair leader, I have to understand not just my department or my area of service. I'm one part of a greater whole, and I need to be doing the best of my job in my area so that I can contribute to the process as a whole.
10	You have to be humble. Be humble enough to know that you're not the pastor, you're not the one making all the shots all the time. It's not your place to do that.
14	Some humility to not overstep those boundaries.

Skills of Second Chair Ministry Leaders

The participants named important skills that contributed to the success of second chair leaders in the local church. They identified eight skills: communicating, being team players, decision making, delegating, organizing, leading change, managing resources, and serving others (fig. 11). The top three skills were communicating, being team players, and making decisions. Twelve SCMLs mentioned the importance of communication. Eight SCMLs noted that being team players and making decisions were critical skills for second chair leadership ministry.

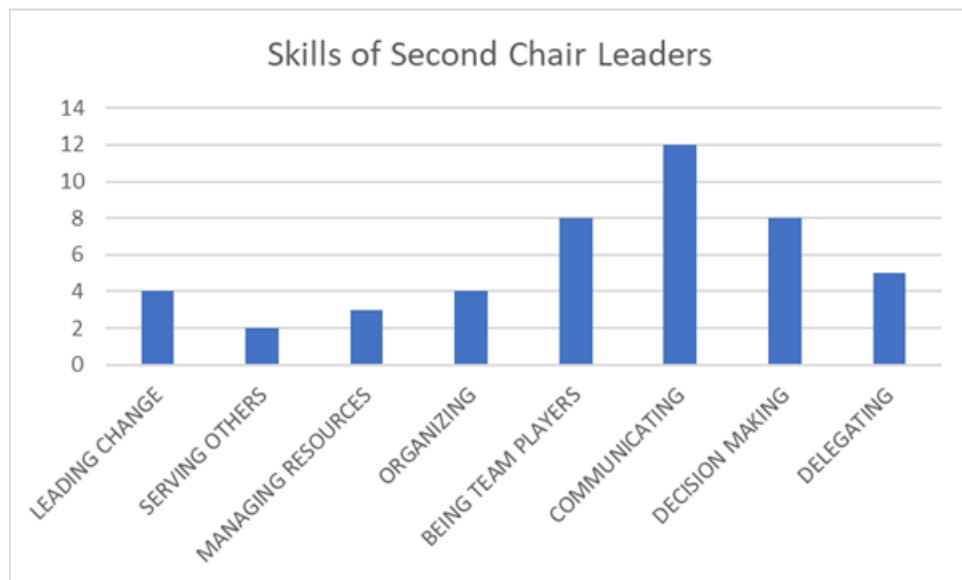


Figure 11. Skills of second chair leaders.

Communicating

Twelve participants discussed the importance of communication as a second chair leader (table 36). Communication involved a variety of disciplines. Leaders 3 and 4 noted interpersonal communication skills: “Be well spoken” and “being able to talk with people.” Leader 6 noted the priority of effective communication with the first chair leader so that they were “on the same page as you’re on.” Leader 1 discussed the challenges of communication as a second chair leader because “the second chair leader doesn’t necessarily have the built-in Sunday morning platform voice.” Leader 6 further described the complexity of communication from the second chair because not only were these leaders communicating with the first chair, but also they were communicating with volunteers and other ministry leaders.

Table 36. Communication

Leader	Experience
1	Communication is an incredibly valuable trait in a second chair leader. And it’s tricky because the second chair leader doesn’t necessarily have the built-in Sunday morning platform voice and so he or she has to find other creative and effective ways to communicate.
3	I think you better be well spoken. You better be able to communicate well.
4	Being able to talk with people, being able to have hard conversations, Communication is a big one. I’m the type that feels like I over communicate and that’s a good thing because I’d rather give people too much info than not enough.
5	But yeah, you need to be a good communicator for sure Communication . . . because you’ve got the first chair leader that you want to communicate well with and be on the same page as you’re on, seeing things and wanting to make adjustments or making them. You want the first chair leader to be informed and to know and to be on board to support you. And then you’re always communicating with your volunteers, with my ministry leaders.
6	Communication is always key.
7	They need to communicate, be a communicator.
8	Communicate honestly.
9	They need to be good communicators.
11	An ability to communicate well.
12	Communication is a huge thing because it works both ways.
13	A good communicator.
14	Communication is key no matter what you’re doing.

Being Team Players

According to the participants, effective SCMLs were team players (table 37). Second chair leaders served on the first chair leader's team, yet they also led their own teams. Leaders 3, 8, and 11 talked about the teams they were leading. Leader 3's awareness of his team's needs guided his decision making. Leader 8 communicated clearly with his team and provided opportunities for evaluation and feedback. Leader 11 preferred to lead as a peer working alongside her team to accomplish tasks. Leaders 4, 6, 7, 12, and 13 noted their position as team players on the first chair leader's team. Leaders 4 and 12 both described themselves as one "part of a pastoral team." Leader 6 worked toward "alignment" with his first chair leader's vision. Leaders 7 and 13 used superlatives, "number one" and "best," to emphasize the importance of teamwork in their ministries.

Table 37. Being Team Players

Leader	Experience
3	I think an awareness of your team is one of the most important qualities you can have.
4	I'm here to be a part of a pastoral team that cares well for our church members, that teaches them the gospel and reminds them of the gospel week in and week out and helps lead them to sanctification.
6	I think with that teamwork, maybe alignment is a good word because if I'm going too far out in left field, then I'm going to eventually get reigned back in or there's going to be friction because the first chair leader is wondering why am I doing this or that. It doesn't fit well within how the first chair leader sees the direction of the church for my setting.
7	They need to be a team player, number one.
8	But I do my best to crank work out, communicate clearly and openly. I also try to garner opinions if we ever have an event. My leadership team, we work down a punch list of what needs to be done. There are things that we've done, but we always debrief every activity we do.
11	I think my leadership style is to lead as a peer, I guess would be the best way to describe it.
12	I just say I'm a part of a team that the Lord has orchestrated or designed to help lead this church
13	And coming out to work together, that's good. Teamwork is the best.

Decision Making

The participants stated that decision making was a key task of second chair leaders (table 38). Second chair leaders were decision makers. Leader 1 saw decision making as a vital yet “undervalued” part of second chair leadership. Leaders 2, 4, and 13 discussed the importance of gathering the opinions of others before they made decisions. Leaders 4 and 9 recognized that some decisions needed to be made quickly. Leader 3 described executing decisions as “a constant” in second chair ministry leadership. Leaders 10 and 13 remembered the challenges that come with decision making including unwanted attention or the overwhelming voices of others.

Table 38. Decision Making

Leader	Experience
1	I think one of the things that’s undervalued sometimes in this role is decision making, the ability to make decisions.
2	You have to be able to make decisions and to listen to others to gain insight and understanding of what is going on in the life of the people that you’re serving.
3	But you still have to execute those decisions, and so it is a constant.
4	Being capable and competent to do those things and figure out what is the best solution for this problem. Quick to problem solve, but also asking for others input in the midst of it.
5	Sometimes you need to be able to fix problems or see solutions. And so that’s a skill as well.
9	The tough decision is what is God’s best and trying to discern that and sometimes . . . you’re having to make these fairly expedient decisions.
10	It was just way easier for me to not be the leader because it’s more about the attention on me and having to make decisions. So, it was a little bit of adjustment with that part.
13	I love to get other people’s opinions and try to make the best decisions, but sometimes the opinions are really loud and so it’s hard.

Gender and Second Chair Ministry Leadership

In order to identify potential gender differences in second chair ministry leadership, both the women and the men were asked the same question about gender. The question was read

verbatim during each interview to ensure that no discrepancies existed in the wording of the question that might influence the response. The men were asked, “We are God’s special creation, created distinctively as male and female to reflect his glory. Are there experiences that are unique to men as second chair leaders?” The women were asked, “We are God’s special creation, created distinctively as male and female to reflect his glory. Are there experiences that are unique to women as second chair leaders?” Both women and men identified issues of pastoral involvement and pastoral limitations based on gender. Pastoral involvement is the ability to participate in pastoral duties such as preaching, baptizing, serving the Lord’s Supper, or providing care for congregants. Pastoral limitation is the inability to participate in pastoral duties such as preaching, baptizing, serving the Lord’s Supper, or providing care for congregants.

Leaders 2 and 7, both women, noted pastoral limitations based on gender, particularly the inability to baptize, lead the Lord’s Supper, participate in baby dedication, and preach. Leader 2 described the pastoral limitations placed on her as a woman in ministry leadership:

I don’t know if this would be one or not, but anyway I’m just going to say it. I feel like that the men on our church staff are asked to do things that the females are not, like a baptism. But yet if a child becomes a Christian and they’re going to be baptized and their parents are members of our church, then that father is asked if he wants to help baptize that child. But as a minister who has poured into that child’s life spiritually for several years, that doesn’t happen. So that’s an experience that I won’t get. And it’s the same with baby dedication. . . . I don’t get that opportunity. The pastor does that.

Although Leader 7 was allowed to baptize and lead the Lord’s Supper at her previous church, she stated of her current church, “I cannot baptize or do Lord’s Supper. That is not allowed. I don’t preach.” Leader 7 does have a degree of pastoral involvement on the platform during the service. Her current pastor wanted “all the staff members on the platform, at least every quarter or whatever, to make announcements, to pray, to welcome, to read Scripture.” Leader 13’s pastoral involvement was similar to Leader 7 as her pastor encouraged her to exercise pastoral

skills like hospital visitation. However, she felt limited in the training she received to perform pastoral duties. Leader 13 noted, “I really hate hospital visits. That’s probably the least satisfying thing. But I’ve been thinking about that recently. I feel like guys kind of get taken under their wings and they go with each other, and they learn how to do that. And as a girl I feel like I never got that training.”

The male participants also expressed pastoral involvement and pastoral limitations based on gender. Leader 4 credited his gender for allowing him to preach to the congregation and gain their respect as a pastor. He stated, “I do think that because I’m a man and I get to preach on occasion, that people tend to come to me. I am able to have a lot more heavy theological conversations that I don’t know that women do not. But I do see the respect that people give me because of my preaching.” Leader 12 used the word “honor” to talk about his relationship with his family and his church. He said, “But I think for me, it’s the word *honor*. I think what’s unique is that we as men get to honor our families. We get to honor our spouses. We get to honor the work. I think that it’s a privilege, if you will, to honor the things that the Lord has put in our life.” Leader 14 attributed his gender as the reason he was asked to do things a woman would not be asked to do, like move church member’s furniture.

Leader 5 expressed how his gender created pastoral limitations in the ways he could care for female members. According to Leader 5, “as a man, I don’t put myself in positions of being in a room alone with a female or in a car alone with a female. And that affects how I do ministry more than I ever thought it would.” Leader 8 also experienced limitations in ministry because of his gender. When applying for a ministry position, he had a positive interview experience at the church, “but then they called me at the last minute and said, ‘no, sorry.’ The search committee decided they wanted a younger female” to be the church’s children’s minister.

Both men and women expressed how their gender empowered their relationships with the same gender in the church. Leaders 1 and 9 discussed how their gender helped deepen relationships with their pastor and other men in the church. Leader 1 stated, “I’m afforded opportunities with my senior pastor that there probably would be boundaries and guardrails for someone who might be a female in a second chair leader role. I’m able to spend time with and do things alongside my senior pastor that are just he and I together that I think provides some uniqueness for that relationship.” Similarly, Leader 9 appreciated the brotherhood in ministry:

The thing that has been a blessing for me as a male in second chair leadership is the camaraderie that I have with fellow pastors. And it is akin to, not the same as, but it is akin to warfare. I mean, we’re involved in spiritual warfare, but you get these deep sort of relationships that have been refined by mutual effort together but also sometimes mutual heartache. You’re bound together in those ways. And that brotherhood in ministry has appealed to me, to my maleness.

Leaders 10 and 11 expressed corresponding sentiments from the female perspective. According to Leader 10, “It’s easier to relate sometimes, obviously, to your own gender. So, I’m going to gravitate towards talking about things to other women on the staff.” Leader 11 noted that she is “able to connect more easily and naturally with the women in the church.”

All five women expressed challenges related to gender in either finding their voices, finding their places, or having their callings and ministry positions diminished. When the female ministers used their voices to express opinions, they felt perceived as too harsh. Likewise when they failed to use their voices to express opinions, they felt perceived as too timid. Leader 2 noted several times throughout the interviews that her peers said that she had no tact. According to Leader 2, “Well, one of our pastors, he just says, ‘God didn’t give you the gift of tact, Leader 2.’ I said, ‘Well, I don’t know about that. I’m going to say what I need to say, and I’m not trying to be mean or ugly about it.’” Leader 11 remembered her pastor coaching her to use her voice to advocate for her ministry area. According to Leader 11, “you have to kind of be willing to stand

up and not back down and make your voice heard. And our pastor even told me that you need to be ready to basically throw some elbows and stick up for yourself.” Leader 10 had to remind herself to use her voice with confidence: “I’m actually on the staff and I actually have the right to do this, or not the right, but the privilege and the command to do this. And so, part of that is really just me reminding myself like you do have a place here, you are supposed to be doing this.”

Two of the five women experienced gender-related conversations that diminished their callings and roles as ministry leaders. Both conversations were with their pastors. Leader 2 remembered her pastor saying, “You weren’t called like we were,” referring to the men on staff. Leader 2 responded, “I don’t know what you mean by that because I know [that God called me to ministry].” Leader 7 recounted a similar conversation with her pastor: “But I went to him, and I said, ‘I just have a question for you.’ And he said ‘What?’ And I said, ‘Am I a minister here? Am I one of the ministers here?’ He said, ‘Well, yes.’ And I said, ‘I’m not being treated like that.’ And he said, ‘By whom?’ And I said, I’d rather not say’ . . . because it was him. And from that point, it’s changed.” Both women articulated clear ministry callings where they heard God’s voice speaking to them. Leader 2 identified her calling with Abraham. During a seminar on Abraham’s call at a Sunday school training conference, she heard God tell her to go to the other side of the campus and begin preparing for preschool and children’s ministry. Leader 7 felt God saying, “What about you?” as she prayed for others to be called to ministry during a revival at her church. Both women surrendered to God’s call and have served over two decades as second chair ministry leaders.

Two male leaders encountered gender-related assumptions that diminished their callings to second chair ministry leadership. People assumed that because they were men, these second

chair leaders were serving in temporary positions as they moved up the ladder to become senior pastors. According to Leader 3, “The question is always asked of second chair leaders when are you going to be a lead pastor, at least of guys.” Leader 14 stated, “There’s an assumption, ‘Oh, a student minister is going to grow up to be a pastor.’ He might not. His calling is to be a student minister. . . . I could see where maybe that would be something where people expect you to just be trying to climb the ladder. And that’s not really my goal.” Both Leaders 3 and 14 experienced God’s calling specifically to second chair leadership. Neither were interested in first chair leadership positions. Leader 3 said, “I’m not interested in that. This is where I want to be. . . . I feel called to be a support guy.” Leader 14 agreed, “I love student ministry and I want to do it for a long time.” Leader 2, a female second chair leader, voiced support and understanding for men like Leaders 3 and 14. She added in her interview, “I feel [second chair ministry leadership] is being so misunderstood at the moment, particularly as it relates to women in ministry, but also to our brothers who are diligently serving in second chair positions, and the Lord hasn’t called them to be the pastor.”

Eight participants, both male and female, clearly stated that their callings were to second chair ministry leadership positions within the church (tables 39 and 40). The women were not questing for the senior pastor position.

Table 39. Women: Not Called to be First Chair Leaders

Leader	Experience
2	I think it’s important for me to say that I have no desire to be the top chair leader.
7	You’re not there to be the pastor.
10	You’re not the senior pastor . . . and you’re not called to be either.
13	I don’t think women should be the pastor, but I think women should do and can be called to do absolutely anything else in the church.

Likewise, the men were not biding their time until a church calls them as senior pastor.

Table 40. Men: Not Called to be First Chair Leaders

Leader	Experience
1	I've never sensed a call or the Lord leading me to be a first chair senior pastor leader. I find great joy and fulfillment in this role.
3	I'm not interested in that. This is where I want to be. I feel called to be a support guy.
9	That's the last thing I want to do; I've been quite satisfied and content to be the second chair guy.
14	That's not my goal. I love student ministry and I want to do it for a long time.

The only second chair leader who expressed a call to the senior pastorate was Leader 4.

According to Leader 4, after his pastor retires, "I'll step in and do that because I . . . like preaching. I like all the stuff that he does." Currently, his pastor is mentoring him to become the senior pastor. With the exception of Leader 4, none of the participants expressed a desire to become a first chair ministry leader. All of the participants expressed contentment and fulfillment in being second chair ministry leaders.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In the Alabama Baptist State Convention, non-senior pastor staff positions outnumber senior pastor positions three to one. These 6,081 church ministry staff positions represent thousands of full-time and part-time ministry leaders. Within Alabama Baptist churches, 1,240 women and men serve in full-time ministry leadership in positions other than the senior pastor. While abundant research existed to support the unique needs of senior pastors, less research was available to undergird and champion the calling and work of second chair ministry leaders in the local church. The purpose of this phenomenological research was to create an essence description of the lived experiences of women and men who served in full-time, vocational second chair leadership ministry positions in Alabama Baptist churches with particular attention to vocational calling to local church ministry, ministry preparation for second chair leadership positions in local church ministry, and job satisfaction in local church ministry.

Chapter 1 introduced the purpose of the research. Chapter 2 explored the doctrine of the priesthood of believers as a framework for second chair ministry leadership and revealed the need for additional research in the field of second chair ministry leadership. Chapter 3 discussed phenomenological inquiry as a method for collecting data and making meaning of those lived experiences. Chapter 4 revealed the results of the research as the participants' own words described their lived experiences as second chair ministry leaders in local Alabama Baptist

churches. Chapter 5 will summarize the results to create an essence description of those lived experiences and interpret the results to make meaning of those lived experiences.

Essence Description of the Lived Experiences

Demographics

These second chair ministry leaders served in Alabama Baptist churches in urban places and urbanized areas. The size of the town or city did not seem to be a factor in whether or not a church had a SCML. Churches in both small Alabama towns and large metropolitan areas called SCMLs to serve in their cities. The churches in this research were established churches, the majority with founding dates in the 20th century. Based on the average worship attendance, all of these churches ranked in the top 25% of all Southern Baptist churches. Most of these churches received annual receipts in excess of \$1 million dollars. Based on the total of undesignated receipts, the churches appeared to have a financial basis to support at least one staff position in addition to the senior pastor.

Call to Ministry

Growing up in a Christian home was a key component in the stories of all fourteen participants. Regular church attendance in childhood created a foundational understanding of the purpose and work of the church. Their parents and influential church leaders introduced them to faith at a young age. Thirteen participants made their own decisions to follow Christ as children or teenagers. Their relationships with the Lord led them to recognize a specific call to vocational ministry leadership.

Responding to the call of God in their lives was a significant moment in each participant's ministry journey. All fourteen SCMLs clearly articulated either a specific or gradual

calling to ministry. Seven participants experienced a clear call within a religious context like a camp, conference, or worship service. Six participants described a gradual call over time. One participant heard God's call as a teenager, but he ran from that call until a specific moment in adulthood.

God called them to ministry at various life stages. One participant answered the call to ministry as a child, while the majority surrendered to God's call while they were in high school or college. God called five of the participants to ministry as adults, resulting in career changes. The clarity of that calling and the accompanying certainty that they were following God's will for their lives sustained them during challenging ministry moments.

Theological Education

Higher education provided a valuable foundation for second chair ministry leadership. All of the SCMLs pursued some level of higher education. Thirteen SCMLs had a college degree, while one SCML was currently pursuing his degree. However, their college degrees were most often in fields not associated directly with ministry preparation. Some of these degrees served as groundwork for their ministry positions, but others did not. For example, the SCML with a communications degree served as the Media and Communications Director, but the SCML with a marketing degree served as the Minister of Music and Outreach.

Formal theological education was not essential for second chair ministry leadership. Only half of the SCMLs completed master's degrees in theological education from seminaries and Christian universities. Two of the five women completed master's degrees at a Southern Baptist seminary. Five of the nine men completed their master's degrees in a variety of theological concentrations. One SCML was working on his Master of Theological Studies, and one SCML was pursuing his undergraduate degree in student ministry. Five participants had no formal

theological education. They cited time constraints as well as personal and professional responsibilities as the primary reasons for not pursuing formal theological education. However, they valued theological training and employed other informal means such as seminars, podcasts, reading, and conversations with others to learn more about ministry theory and practice.

Daily Experiences

The second chair ministry leaders in this study held diverse positions within their churches. While all fourteen participants reported directly to the senior pastor, only three participants functioned in an administrative capacity. The other second chair leaders gave oversight to specific ministry areas such as worship, preschool, children, students, missions, and communications. These leaders demonstrated that SCML in the local church was not an ordinal position on an organizational chart, but rather a position of influence within specific ministry areas.

They also had diverse titles. Only men had the word “pastor” in their titles, while both women and men were “minister” or “director.” This research revealed a fairly equal use of all three terms: “pastor” (5 times, “director” (4 times, and “minister” (5 times. Most participants identified themselves by the title listed on the church’s website with two exceptions. One male leader referred to himself as “pastor,” while the church’s website lists him as “director.” His predecessor was female with the title Director of Preschool and Children’s Ministry. The church did not change the title even when hiring a male minister. One female leader described herself as “minister” when her official title was “director.” These two leaders highlighted the need for job titles that actually represent the calling, preparation, and heart of second chair ministry leadership. They saw themselves not as directors of programs but as ministers to people. They changed their own titles to reflect their ministry callings and their love for people.

These second chair ministry leaders were specialists in their ministry areas, yet they engaged in work that extended beyond their job descriptions. As true in-between ministry leaders, they received oversight from the senior pastor, and they provided oversight to both paid staff and volunteer teams. They regularly taught in areas of Christian discipleship, but they also mentored, trained, and coached in ministry-specific tasks. They communicated regularly through announcements from the stage, texts, email, newsletters, bulletins, social media, telephone calls, and mail. They participated in meetings with their first chair leader, the ministry staff, their subordinates, and their volunteers. They prepared lessons; gathered supplies; and taught about worship, missions, prayer, and Scripture. Their organizational skills kept their ministry areas running smoothly and contributed to churchwide endeavors. They utilized technology not only to communicate with their teams, but also to connect the church to the community. They prayed regularly for the needs of their ministry area and their congregation. They engaged in pastoral care through hospital visits, funerals, baby dedications, and counseling. A few men preached on occasion when invited by their first chair leaders. They all wore multiple hats and functioned as a jack of all trades to support the first chair leader and meet the needs of the church.

They understood their roles as both followers and leaders. They championed their first chair leader and worked to support his vision and mission for the church. Almost half of the participants described their relationship with their senior pastor as a friendship. They also recognized the importance of trust between a first chair and second chair leader. A complementary relationship between the first and second chair leaders yielded strength and productivity, while differing viewpoints created tension and frustration. Both authoritarian and laissez faire first chair leadership styles complicated the relationship with the second chair leader, leading to feelings of intimidation or neglect.

Job Satisfaction

Sources of job satisfaction for SCMLs included their callings to ministry, their relationships with people in their spheres of influence, and their abilities to minister to others. The second chair ministry leaders relied on the certainty of their callings and their obedience to the Lord as a source of job satisfaction. They sensed the Lord's approval as they stayed obedient to his vocational calling on their lives. The assurance of his calling on their lives sustained them as they embraced the positive and negative challenges of leading in between the senior pastor and the congregation.

The majority of the participants shared how relationships within the church led to feelings of accomplishment, success, and value. They felt valued through words of appreciation and notes of encouragement from the church members they encountered both inside and outside their ministry areas. Positive relationships with the first chair leader and among the church staff also contributed to feelings of job satisfaction. Encouraging texts from the pastor or an affirming hallway conversation with a staff member provided validation and value for the second chair leader.

The work of ministry also offered a source of satisfaction, particularly when the second chair leaders sensed they were making a difference, when they successfully executed a plan, and when they were providing pastoral care to the congregation. Watching people in their ministry areas grow in their relationships with the Lord encouraged and affirmed the work of the SCMLs. Working hard to strategize and successfully execute a plan that built up the church and strengthened leadership skills in the body gave SCMLs feelings of success as they contributed to

expanding the kingdom. Offering pastoral care to members of their congregations during moments of joy and sadness affirmed God's call in the SCMLs' lives.

Job Dissatisfaction

Feelings of being unnoticed and unappreciated were the greatest sources of job dissatisfaction for these second chair leaders. Serving as a SCML was a ministry of obscurity, and the behind-the-scenes nature of the second chair leadership led to loneliness and isolation. These leaders understood that they served an audience of One, and they felt his approval as they pursued his calling. However, they also needed the encouragement of their senior pastor and their church. When that affirmation was lacking, the SCMLs felt neglected and taken for granted.

The majority of these leaders identified personal disappointment as a source of job dissatisfaction. These SCMLs were reflective and could be hard on themselves. At times, the intensity and diversity of the job demands in their areas left them feeling inadequate, weary, and overworked. Their ministry extended beyond an 8am–5pm workday. When the mundane tasks of ministry replaced pastoral care for the people in their ministries, they felt disappointed in their performance. Job dissatisfaction resulted from frustrations within their own hearts as they reflected on the stresses of ministry.

The lack of unity among the staff further contributed to job dissatisfaction among most of these SCMLs. The lack of unity seemed to revolve around decision making. SCMLs were not satisfied with their jobs when they were not included in the decision-making process, especially when those decisions directly impacted their ministry areas. They expressed frustration when decisions were made in exclusive hallway conversations between a few leaders instead of a more inclusive approach like a staff meeting that gave all stake holders a voice in the process. They

also lacked job satisfaction when they were required to execute a decision that they felt was not right for the church or their ministry area.

As noted above, relationships were one of the greatest sources of job satisfaction among the SCMLs; however, relationships were also one of the greatest sources of job dissatisfaction. Conflict in relationships, whether the first chair leader, the staff, or other people, caused the SCMLs to feel tension and dissatisfaction. Being team players was an important skill for these SCMLs, so conflict on the team created stress and frustration.

Other factors influenced job dissatisfaction such as the lack of personal worship time. The nature of their work on Sunday mornings created a deficit of personal worship time with the church body. Work-related stress and financial stress contributed to job dissatisfaction when the compensation did not match the long hours and intensity of the work. Disappointing metrics, such as a low attendance or a smaller offering, also led to feelings of failure.

Self-Care and Second Chair Ministry Leadership

SCMLs recognized the importance of self-care, yet they struggled with navigating time constraints, ministry responsibilities, and complicated relationships in the church. To practice physical self-care, several SCMLs woke up early in the mornings to walk or exercise. The SCMLs pointed to spending time with their families and their friends as a way to nurture their emotional self-care. Some SCMLs mentioned the importance of having friendships outside their local churches because of the relationship challenges associated with ministry. Spiritual self-care was perhaps the hardest area to nurture because of their responsibilities at church during times of corporate worship. To strengthen their spiritual selves, the SCMLs participated in personal spiritual disciplines and looked to resources outside their local churches like conferences, podcasts, or media to provide additional discipleship support.

Impact on Family

Ministry leadership in the local church impacted minister's families in both positive and negative ways. Those leaders who expressed positive impacts pointed to the ability to serve with their families at church, the spiritual growth of their children, and the love their families received from the church. Conversely, those leaders who expressed negative impacts had children who abandoned their faith, spouses who endured hurtful conversations, and families who sacrificed in painful ways as a result of the SCML's position in the church. Only two leaders noted a neutral impact on their families. They attributed singleness and boundaries as the reasons that ministry had neither positively nor negatively affected their families.

Toward a Greater Understanding of Second Chair Ministry Leadership

These SCMLs understood the nature of second chair leadership. They characterized the duality of their callings as both followers and leaders. They led in between as both followers of the first chair leader and leaders of their ministry teams. They articulated their callings as opportunities to serve under, provide support for, and walk alongside the senior pastor. At the same time, they led staff members, volunteers, and ministry areas to expand the work of the church in the community.

They lived the characteristics they described of second chair ministry leaders. They were visionaries seeking God's plan for their areas of ministry yet submitting to the senior pastor's vision for the church. They were flexible as they prepared and planned to execute the pastor's vision, yet they adapted when that vision changed. They were trustworthy and honest as they held confidences or spoke hard truth with love. They were humble, seeking a ministry of obscurity. They were the movers behind the scenes who propelled the church toward goal achievement, yet they were content standing in the background while others received the

accolades. They were self-starters who continually looked ahead to see what was coming and looked behind to make sure the followers were ready. They were good listeners and peacemakers who often served as a bridge between the first chair leader and the congregation. They were decision makers who practiced wisdom and discernment. They had a sense of humor that sustained them during challenging moments.

They practiced the primary skills that they identified to be essential to second chair ministry leadership. They were communicators who linked their ministry areas to the total church life and connected their pastors with the congregation. They were team players who advocated for their ministry areas yet supported the total work of the ministry staff. They made decisions by gathering information, listening to other voices, and acting in the best interest of the church. They delegated tasks and built teams to expand the ministry's reach. They organized and managed both human and financial resources. They led change in the areas under their influence. They served others because that was their primary calling.

Gender and Second Chair Ministry Leadership

Both the male and female second chair ministry leaders identified moments of pastoral involvement and pastoral limitations based on gender. Some female participants noted their inability to preach, baptize, serve the Lord's Supper, or serve on the platform because they were women. Other female participants, however, discussed their ability to make hospital visits or serve on the platform by praying, making announcements, or reading Scripture. One male participant attributed his gender as the reason he was able to preach and gain the respect of his congregation. Some male leaders articulated pastoral limitations because they could not provide pastoral care to women in certain situations. Both the men and the women felt that their genders

empowered them to build healthy relationships and minister better to people of that same gender in their congregations.

The female participants expressed unique challenges of being women in second chair ministry leadership. The women faced obstacles in finding their voices among ministry colleagues. When they used their voices, they felt perceived as being too harsh and were called “tactless.” When they failed to use their voices, they felt perceived as being too timid and were urged to “throw some elbows.” Similarly, some struggled to find their places in ministry leadership and had to remind themselves of their callings. Two of the women experienced hurtful conversations with their senior pastors that diminished their roles as ministry leaders when those pastors questioned their callings to ministry.

The male participants also remembered conversations that diminished their callings as second chair ministry leaders. They endured condescending questions about when they were going to be senior pastors. They felt insulted by assumptions that they would one day “grow up” to have their own church. Both genders clearly articulated a calling to second chair ministry leadership. None of the women longed to be the senior pastor. Only one of the men expressed a desire to be a senior pastor. The majority of the second chair leaders were content in their callings to serve the Lord in a position of subordination to the senior pastor. They did not view their current positions as steppingstones to higher-level ministry positions.

Comparison to Previous Literature

These lived experiences of SCMLs in Alabama Baptist churches revealed consistencies with the existing literature. Both the men and the women in this research affirmed experiencing the gender stereotypes sometimes associated with ministry leadership. The female participants verified Kathy Litton’s assertion that most women in the Southern Baptist convention were not

questing to become the senior pastors of their churches. In fact, most of the women volunteered this information during the first interview before any gender-related questions were asked. These women were called to and content with being second chair ministry leaders. Likewise, the male participants upheld Michael McCullar's experience that second chair male leaders could be assigned second-class status as people assumed they were waiting until a church calls them as senior pastor. With the exception of one male participant who was pursuing pastoral leadership, the male participants expressed their contentment with their callings to second chair ministry leadership.

The doctrine of the priesthood of believers undergirded both the general call to salvation and the specific call to vocational ministry for these SCMLs. Both male and female SCMLs articulated clear calls both to salvation and to ministry. Through salvation, they became priests of God with the responsibility of ministry to others. Whether a specific moment of hearing God's voice or a gradual drawing to himself, these SCMLs discerned God's call to be second chair ministry leaders, not pastors. As George reminded, all Christians were called to be priests, but not all priests were called to be pastors. These second chair leaders stood firmly in their callings to be priests who supported their pastors and ministered to their congregations.

Both genders reflected God's image and performed the duties of priests as they planned, prepared, studied, taught, witnessed, worshipped, prayed, and led those under their influence. Because of their status as a child of God through salvation and redemption, these leaders exercised their gifts as communicators, decision makers, team players, peacemakers, organizers, managers, delegators, change agents, vision casters, and servants. Because the verbal proclamation of the gospel was not gender specific, these men and women taught God's Word,

witnessed to the lost, and cared for God's people. They led a ministry of obscurity for the glory of God alone.

They displayed Bonem and Patterson's definition of second chair leadership as they added value to their churches as both a subordinate and a leader. They held a variety of titles and positions in their churches. A common characteristic of these SCMLs was that all the participants reported directly to the senior pastor as Hampton noted in his criteria for second chair leadership. They functioned at a high level of experience and capacity. They were highly trained with both formal and informal theological education. They were their harshest critics and felt misunderstood like McCullar suggested.

The female second chair ministry leaders served in church leadership as they were called and equipped by God. They stood shoulder to shoulder with their male colleagues in ministry to the congregation and the community. They embraced public expressions of pastoral leadership when invited by their pastors, and they accepted pastoral limitations in grace mixed with frustration. The male second chair ministry leaders also served in church leadership as they were called and equipped by God. They affirmed their female colleagues and recognized the value they added to the team. They embraced their second chair callings with pleasure, yet they endured harmful assumptions that questioned their callings and ministry aspirations.

Implications

The strength of this research was the ability to hear the voices of second chair ministry leaders actively serving in Alabama Baptist churches. The SCMLs experienced a dual expression of God's call on their lives. They led in between as subordinates of the senior pastor and as leaders of those they influence. They did not carry the weight of the entire congregation, but they carried the weight of duality. They seamlessly moved in and out of leadership as they navigated

the roles of follower and leader. They were content in their calls to ministry yet frustrated when they were misunderstood or unappreciated. They dreamed big in their ministry areas, yet they managed the minutiae to propel that vision forward. They created an environment for worship, but they often had little time for worship themselves.

Second chair ministry leadership is an under-researched area of ministry in the local church. This study affirmed the preceding literature on second chair ministry leadership and created an essence description of the day-to-day world of second chair ministry leaders. This essence description yielded six implications for the church and the second chair ministry leaders who serve them.

1. Childhood experiences in a Christian home with regular church attendance matter. All fourteen leaders identified growing up with Christian parents in a home where church participation was valued. Thirteen described their conversion experience as a child or a teenager. Each participant shared how these early faith experiences provided the foundation for future ministry in the local church. Churches and parents are wise to introduce children and students to all areas of vocational ministry and to provide opportunities for families to engage in ministry together.
2. God calls people of all ages to journey with him in vocational ministry. People can sense God's calling to vocational second chair ministry leadership. While none of the participants verbalized the initial moments of their calling using the language "second chair ministry leadership," they all articulated clear callings to ministry and allowed God to unfold that calling in their lives. Creating space for discussions about hearing God's call and pursuing vocational ministry are important considerations for all age-level

ministries including children's ministry, student ministry, college ministry, and adult ministry.

3. Theological education is an important component for second chair ministry leadership preparation, but some second chair ministry leaders, especially those called to ministry as adults, need other avenues to learn ministry theory and practice. State conventions and local associations can provide ministry training that addresses not only the needs of pastors but also the specific needs of second chair ministry leaders. These needs could include the characteristics and skills of effective second chair ministry leadership.
4. Second chair ministry leaders experience job satisfaction when they are obedient to God's call, are engaged in ministry relationships in the local church, and are making a difference in the lives of the people they serve. They experience job dissatisfaction when they feel unnoticed and unappreciated. The encouraging voice of the senior pastor produces feelings of job satisfaction, while the distant or critical voice of the senior pastor contributes to feelings of job dissatisfaction. Pastors need satisfied and productive second chair ministry leaders. Pastors can increase job satisfaction by spending time with their second chair ministry leaders, seeking to understand the unique demands of their roles, and affirming their valuable contributions to the church.
5. Both men and women in second chair ministry leadership encounter challenges attributed to their gender. Both genders expressed feelings of being taken advantage of by others based on their gender, the women as "babysitters" and the men as "furniture movers." Both genders described moments when their callings were diminished. People assumed that the men are waiting to be pastors of their own churches or that the women received a lesser call from God. Both men and women recounted moments of pastoral limitations as

a result of their gender. Whether the women who are unable to preach and baptize or the men who, at times, are unable to provide pastoral care to women, gender impacts the pastoral involvement of second chair ministry leaders. Gender is a gift from God. The church needs both women and men to serve him in the fullness of their femaleness and maleness. The church needs an expanded understanding of how men and women can serve together in ministry leadership.

6. Second chair ministry leaders are probably not longing to fill first chair ministry positions. Only one participant in this study was working to become a pastor. The remaining thirteen leaders were content and fulfilled as second chair ministry leaders. A greater understanding of the call, responsibility, and satisfaction of second chair ministry leadership can help address misunderstandings and harmful assumptions about these men and women leaders who serve in the local church.

Generalizations

The purpose of phenomenological inquiry was to create an essence description of a particular population that shared a common phenomenological experience. Phenomenological method does not lead to a generalizable statement about the population. The qualitative nature of this research was limited to the specific population sample under study, and therefore, unable to make a comprehensive statement of the population as a whole.

This research cannot be generalized to all Southern Baptist churches. However, the results of this study provide a helpful understanding of second chair ministry leadership in Alabama Baptist churches. This research cannot be generalized to non-Anglo second chair ministry leaders. However, the results of this study provide a helpful understanding of second chair ministry leadership from an Anglo perspective. This research cannot be generalized to rural

churches. However, the results of this study provide a helpful understanding of second chair ministry leadership in churches in urban places and urbanized areas. This research describes the lived experiences of fourteen second chair ministry leaders. Their experiences can provide a foundation for an expanded study of second chair ministry leadership.

For Further Research

These fourteen participants provided an essence description of life and ministry as a second chair ministry leader in an Alabama Baptist church. Their data could be foundational to further studies about second chair ministry leadership theory and practice.

1. A similar phenomenological study could be conducted with second chair ministry leaders in rural churches, non-Anglo churches, or non-Alabama Baptist churches to compare the lived experiences among the populations.
2. The data gleaned on characteristics and skills of effective second chair ministry leaders could be used as the first step in a Delphi method study to create an expanded understanding of second chair ministry leadership throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.
3. This study could lead to the creation of a new instrument to assess effectiveness in second chair ministry leadership based on characteristics, skills, or leadership styles.
4. The relationship between first chair and second chair leaders could be explored further, particularly in relation to trust, leadership styles, friendship, and ministry effectiveness.
5. More data were needed to research the impact of gender on second chair ministry leadership. Greater exploration could lead to a more in-depth understanding of how gender distinctions influence second chair ministry leadership.

Conclusion

There is no race with only one car. There is no competition with only one athlete. There is no symphony with only one instrument. There is no leader when there is no follower. The seconds matter. Second chair ministry leaders are essential for the health of the local church. They are creative and gifted leaders as well as followers. Their unique ability to flex between the confidence of the leader and the humility of the follower empowers them to support the first chair leader and strengthen the congregation. They are the ones who get things done. Following the vision of the senior pastor, they draw on their diverse experiences to lead the church to accomplish that vision. Their callings are unique, valuable, and no less real than any other vocational ministry calling. For many second chair ministry leaders, second is their first choice. They are confident in their calling. They are content in their churches. They are grateful for the privilege of leading in between.

Appendix A

Email to Alabama Baptist Leaders

Dear Alabama Baptist Leader,

I am a PhD candidate at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary working on my dissertation research in the area of Christian Leadership. The purpose of my research is to create an essence description of the lived experiences of women and men who serve in full-time, vocational second chair leadership ministry positions in Alabama Baptist churches. Because you work with second chair leaders throughout our state, can you help me identify participants for this study? I need their names and contact information so that I can assess their eligibility to participate and to explain the research study.

The criteria for study participants are listed below.

Has the participant experienced God's call to vocational ministry leadership?

Is the participant currently serving as a full-time, paid ministry leader on an Alabama Baptist church staff in a position other than the senior pastor?

Does the participant report directly to the senior pastor?

Has the participant served in this position for at least two years?

The participant must answer "yes" to all four questions to fit the criterion sampling required for this study.

As a second chair leader at Heritage Baptist Church in Montgomery, I am hopeful that this research will strengthen our understanding of second chair leadership and propel us forward in achieving God's mission for our churches. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me (334-224-8395) or email me. You can also speak with my supervisor, Dr. Joe Sherrer (jsherrer@nobts.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Blessings as you continue to lead Alabama Baptists,

Jennifer

Appendix B

Introductory Email to Potential Participants

Dear [Potential Participant's Name]

I am a PhD candidate at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary working on my dissertation research in the area of Christian Leadership. The purpose of this study is to create an essence description of the lived experiences of women and men who serve in full-time, vocational second chair leadership ministry positions in Alabama Baptist churches. I received your name from the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions as a possible participant in this study.

If you agree to participate, you and I will have two conversations either face-to-face or Google Meet. These conversations will last between 60–90 minutes. I know your time is one of your most valuable possessions, and it would be my honor to hear your story about how God called you, equipped you, and works through you in ministry. Your story along with others will be used to help us understand the calling, preparation, and ministry of second chair leaders in local Alabama Baptist churches.

The criteria for study participants are listed below.

Has the participant experienced God's call to vocational ministry leadership?

Is the participant currently serving as a full-time, paid ministry leader on an Alabama Baptist church staff in a position other than the senior pastor?

Does the participant report directly to the senior pastor?

Has the participant served in this position for at least two years?

The participant must answer "yes" to all four questions to fit the criterion sampling required for this study.

If you would like to participate in this study, please reply with your answer to the four questions above and I will give you more information.

As a fellow second chair leader at Heritage Baptist Church in Montgomery, I am hopeful that this research will strengthen our understanding of second chair leadership and propel us forward in achieving God's mission for our churches. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or text me (334-224-8395) or email me. You can also speak with my supervisor, Dr. Joe Sherrer (jsherrer@nobts.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

Blessings as you lead from the second chair!

Jennifer

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Understanding the Lived Experiences of Second Chair Leaders Informed Consent Form*

You are being asked to participate in a study investigating the lived experiences of second chair leaders in local Alabama Baptist churches.

The purpose of this study is to create an essence description of the lived experiences of women and men who serve in full-time, vocational second chair leadership ministry positions in Alabama Baptist churches. The researcher will seek to understand gender distinctions in vocational calling to local church ministry, ministry preparation for second chair leadership positions in local church ministry, and job satisfaction in local church ministry.

As a second chair leader, you can benefit from the results of this study. If the research reveals that women and men encounter similar struggles in calling, preparation, and job satisfaction, then further research can identify strategies for strengthening and supporting second chair leaders. If gender distinctions emerge between women and men in second chair leadership, then further research can address struggles unique to women and men in calling, preparation, and job satisfaction.

If you agree to participate, you will engage with the researcher in two interviews via Google Meet or face-to-face. Each interview will last from 60–90 minutes. The first interview will focus on childhood, calling to ministry, ministry preparation, and job satisfaction. The first interview will be transcribed and sent to you for corrections or additions. The second interview will focus on reflecting on your lived experiences as described in the first interview. The second interview will also be transcribed via Fireflies.ai and sent to you for corrections or additions. The transcribed data will be loaded into Delve Tool for coding.

Although all studies have some degree of risk, the potential in this investigation is quite minimal. You will be sharing your story in your own words. However, I will keep your data confidential. Neither your name nor your church name will be disclosed in the research project. Your participation is voluntary. There is no compensation for participation in the study. If at any time during this study you wish to withdraw your participation, you are free to do so without prejudice. Your data will be deleted and not used in the research project.

If you have any questions prior to your participation or at any time during the study, please do not hesitate to call us.

AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the nature of this study. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this study I have not waived any legal or human right and that I may contact the researcher or her supervisor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (Researcher: Jennifer Blair Foster, jennifer@hbcm.net or Supervisor: Dr. Joe Sherrer, jsherrer@nobts.edu) at any time. I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I may refuse to participate, or I may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. In addition, I understand that if I have any concerns about my treatment during the study, I can contact the chair of the Institutional Review Board of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary at (504) 282-4455 at any time.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

* This form was adapted from *Practical Research: Planning and Design* by Leedy and Ormrod, 2019.

Appendix D

Second Email to Participants

Dear [Participant's Name]

Thank you so very much for replying to my initial email. You indicated that you meet the criteria for my dissertation research on second chair leadership in Alabama Baptist churches. Because this is an academic study, I need to follow specific protocols including having all the candidates sign an informed consent form. I have provided this form as an attachment. The form further explains the research as well as your responsibilities as a participant.

If you can join me in this study, please sign the form and return it to me by Thursday, July 20. You can schedule time for the first interview at <https://calendly.com/jfoster1849/60min>.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the informed consent form or about scheduling on Calendly.

I appreciate you and your ministry to Alabama Baptists, and I can't wait to talk with you about second chair leadership.

Jennifer

Appendix E

General Interview Questions for the First Interview

1. Describe your childhood.
2. Describe your call to ministry.
3. Describe your theological education.
4. Describe your day-to-day experiences in your current ministry role.
5. What makes ministry most satisfying to you?
6. What makes ministry less satisfying to you?
7. Describe your relationship with your first chair leader.
8. What successes have you experienced in your ministry role?
9. What challenges have you experienced in your ministry role?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your story or second chair leadership?

Appendix F

General Interview Questions for the Second Interview

1. After reading the first interview, did you find any points for correction or clarification? If there are, let's talk about them.
2. How would you define second chair leadership?
3. What are the top three characteristics that a second chair leader needs have?
4. What are the top three skills that a second chair leaders needs to master?
5. Do you feel valued as a second chair leader? Why or why not?
6. We are God's special creation, created distinctively as male and female to reflect His glory. Are there experiences that are unique to men as second chair leaders?
7. To women, are there experiences that are unique to women as second chair leaders?
8. Describe the impact of second chair leadership on your family.
9. How do you nurture your soul as a second chair leader?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add about second chair leadership?

Appendix G

First Interview Introductory Remarks

Thank you so much for joining me today. I have your signed consent form. I also need verbal confirmation that you know that this conversation is being recorded visually on Google Meet and transcribed on Fireflies ai. **WAIT FOR RESPONSE**

Your well-being is of utmost importance to me. It is possible that our conversation could bring memories that are uncomfortable. You are free to end the discussion at any time and your conversation will be deleted from the research. If you need additional support in processing painful experiences, I have a list of Christian counselors that can walk with you during that process.

Appendix H

Third Email to Participants

Dear [Participant's Name].

As we are quickly approaching the holiday season, the goal is to complete the interview process with all the leaders before Thanksgiving. With that in mind, there are two action steps for your contribution to the research.

1. I have attached the transcript of our first interview. Please read over the transcript to check for accuracy and clarity. Your spoken word is probably quite different than your written word so don't fret too much about the informal style. Let me know if you find any corrections or additions that need to be made.
2. Please sign up for a final interview at <https://calendly.com/jfoster1849/second-chair-leadership-interview>. We will review the transcript, and I have few more second chair leadership questions to discuss with you.

Thank you again for being part of this process. Blessings!
Jennifer

Appendix I

Fourth Email to Participants

Happy Thanksgiving, [Participant's Name]!

Please find attached the transcription of our second interview. Take a moment to look over the transcript. If there are corrections or additions that need to be made or if the transcript is fine as is, please send me an email and let me know. I am, again, so very grateful for the time that you have invested in this project. I look forward to sharing this research with our larger Alabama Baptist family and beyond.

Blessings for your holiday season!
Jennifer

Appendix J

IRB Approval Letter



May 19, 2023

Mrs. Jennifer Foster
300 Holly Ridge Drive
Montgomery, AL 36109

Dear Mrs. Foster,

The Research Doctoral Institutional Review Board of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has reviewed your proposed research project, "LEADING IN BETWEEN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF SELECTED SECOND CHAIR MINISTRY LEADERS IN ALABAMA BAPTIST CHURCHES." On May 18, 2022 the IRB gave final approval of your research protocol. Once your prospectus is approved by your guidance committee, you can proceed with dissertation research and writing.

According to Section III.I.3b of the Manual for Research Doctoral Programs: "Any changes in the project after approval by the IRB must be resubmitted for review by the IRB before approval is granted. IRB approval is granted for a maximum of two years and may be subject to review at any time during that period." Therefore, your protocol approval expires on May 19, 2025. If your research has not been completed by that date, you will need to resubmit a request for IRB review along with an update regarding the research you have completed. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Alan Bandy, Associate Dean
Research Doctoral Programs

Appendix K

Care Plan for Second Chair Ministry Leaders

LEADING IN BETWEEN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF SELECTED SECOND CHAIR MINISTRY LEADERS IN ALABAMA BAPTIST CHURCHES CARE PLAN FOR SECOND CHAIR LEADERS

Stressful events, including negative interactions with first chair leaders, can create unpleasant feelings and thoughts. Not all stressful events can be considered trauma. According to the DSM-5, trauma must have “actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence.”¹ While this research might not trigger moments of trauma by definition, the participants could remember negative interactions with their first chair leaders that could trigger negative feelings or thoughts. The researcher will use the Five Principles of Trauma-Informed Care from the Buffalo Center for Social Research as a guide to create an environment that reduces negative stress and to support participants who might experience negative stress during the interview process.²

SAFETY

Definition: “Ensuring physical and emotional safety”

Principles in Practice:

1. The location of the interview will be chosen collaboratively by the participants and the researcher so that the participants will feel safe in their physical environment.
2. The researcher will review the Informed Consent form with the participants before the interview and give them the opportunity to ask questions.
 - a. *Although all studies have some degree of risk, the potential in this investigation is quite minimal. You will be sharing your story in your own words. However, I will keep your data confidential. Neither your name nor your church name will be disclosed in the research project. Your participation is voluntary. There is no compensation for this study. If at any time during this study you wish to withdraw your participation, you are free to do so without prejudice. Your data will be deleted and not used in the research project.*
3. Participants will share their own story in their own words so they can choose what topics feel emotionally safe to them.

¹ Scott Hunter, “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the DSM-5: Controversy, Change, and Conceptual Considerations,” PubMed Central, February 13, 2007, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5371751/#:~:text=The%20DSM%2D5%20definition%20of,considered%20trauma%20in%20this%20definition.>

² “What Is Trauma-Informed Care.” Buffalo Center for Social Research, accessed May 13, 2023, <https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/social-research/institutes-centers/institute-on-trauma-and-trauma-informed-care/what-is-trauma-informed-care.html>. All definitions are taken from “The Five Principles of Trauma-Informed Care Infographic Transcript” embedded in the article.

4. The researcher will read Psalm 19:14. She will note her desire that the all the words spoken and thoughts remembered will be pleasing to the Lord.
5. The researcher will pray and invite the Holy Spirit's presence and guidance during the interview process.

CHOICE

Definition: "Individual has choice and control"

Principles in Practice: If the participant experiences negative stress during the interview, she can choose to

1. Withdraw from the research project voluntarily. The data will be deleted and not used in the research project.
2. Pause the interview for a few moments to allow her to regather her strength. No data will be collected during the pause.
3. Reschedule the interview for a later date.

COLLABORATION

Definition: "Making decisions with the individual and sharing power"

Principles in Practice:

1. The participant and the researcher will work together to decide the best time and location for the interviews.
2. The participant has the power to refuse to answer any questions.
3. The participant has the power to provide as much or as little information as he feels comfortable sharing.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Definition: "Task clarity, consistency, and interpersonal boundaries"

Principles in Practice:

1. The researcher will respect the autonomy of the participants and affirm their choices.
2. The researcher will listen carefully to the participant's word choice, watch the participant's body language, and observe the content of the participant's reflection in order to identify negative stress. Prior to the interviews, the researcher will strengthen her listening skills by reading *The Lost Art of Listening* by Michael P. Nichols and Martha B. Straus.
3. The researcher will stop the interview process if the participant appears to be in emotional distress.
4. The researcher will refer the participants to counseling resources if necessary:
 - a. Pathways Professional Counseling: There are 44 locations throughout Alabama. 1-866-991-6864 <https://www.pathwaysprofessional.org/locations>
 - b. ALSBOM Office of Leader Care: Ken Allen, Director. 1-800-264-1225 <https://leadercareal.org/>
 - c. Venture Life Coaching: Janeese Spencer, a certified John Maxwell Team Member, Life Coach. 1-850-377-9586 <https://www.venturelifecoaching.net/contact>
 - d. Love Loud: Donna McCullough, MS, LPC, NCC. 1-334-269-5726. <https://mgmbaptists.org/initiatives/mbacm/rmc/>

EMPOWERMENT

Definition: “Prioritizing and skill building”

Principles in Practice:

1. The researcher will recommend resources to build skills as a second chair leader:
 - a. Bonem, Mike, and Roger Patterson. *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020.
 - b. Bonem, Mike. *Thriving in the Second Chair: Ten Practices for Robust Ministry (When You’re Not in Charge)*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2016.
 - c. Hytner, Richard. *Consiglieri: Leading from the Shadows*. London: Profile Books, 2014.
2. The researcher will recommend resources in peacemaking as a second chair leader:
 - a. Barthel, Tara Klena, and David V. Edling. *Redeeming Church Conflicts: Turning Crisis into Compassion and Care*. Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 2012.
 - b. Barthel, Tara Klena, and Judy Dabler. *Peacemaking Women: Biblical Hope for Resolving Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005.
 - c. Bozeman, Jeanine Cannon, and Argile Smith. *Interpersonal Relationship Skills for Ministers*. Gretna: Pelican, 2007.
3. The researcher will recommend resources for emotional health as a second chair leader:
 - a. Bolman, Lee G., and Terrence E. Deal. *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.
 - b. Scazzero, Peter. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017.

NOTE:

The potential exists for this interview to reveal an experience of abuse in a Southern Baptist Church. If a participant reveals “an instance of abuse in a Southern Baptist Church or Entity,” the researcher will provide the contact information for the SBC hotline.³ The participant will be matched with an advocate to help them through the healing process.

Report by phone: 202-864-5578

Report by email: SBChotline@guidepostsolutions.com

³ “Report an Instance of Abuse in a Southern Baptist Church or Entity,” Southern Baptist Convention, accessed May 13, 2023, sbc.net.

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EDUCATION

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Doctor of Philosophy 2024

Master of Theology 2022

Major: Christian Leadership

Minor: Christian Education

Master of Divinity 2015

Specialization: Christian Education

Concentration: Women's Ministry

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY 1998

Bachelor of Arts

Summa Cum Laude

Majors: English and History

Certification: Secondary Education

TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Adjunct Instructor

Mentoring in Discipleship Ministry 2023-present

Teaching Assistant for Dr. Joe Sherrer:

Mentoring in Church Leadership and Administration 2021-2023

Mentoring in Discipleship Ministry 2021-2023

Bibliographic Reader for DMin Project 2022

Field Mentor for DMin Project 2022

Grader: Hebrew Grammar and Old Testament with Dr. Teman Knight 2012

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Teaching Assistant: British Literature to 1800 with Dr. Steven Epley 1996

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH

Minister of Family Discipleship and Administration 2021-present

Minister to Women and Children 2008-2021

Child Development Center Administrator 2015-present

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH PIEDMONT

Minister to Children

2004-2008

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

2003-2004

Teacher

Content Areas: Alabama History, American History, Economics, Geography

OKINAWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL

2001-2003

Missionary Teacher

Content Areas: American Literature, World Literature, Speech, Debate, Bible

ALABAMA BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION

1997-2001

Assistant to the Executive Director

AWARDS**NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Master of Divinity in Christian Education Outstanding Student Award 2014-2015

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Who's Who Among America's Teachers 2004-2005

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Colonial Dames of America Independence Award 1998

School of Education Outstanding Senior in Secondary Education 1998

Pi Gamma Mu Scholarship Medal 1997

Colonial Dames of America Essay Award 1997

David Ingram Purser Scholarship Award 1996

The National Dean's List 1995-1998

Samford Dean's List 1994-1998

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS**CHILDREN'S HOPECHEST**

2000

Camp Counselor: Vladimir, Russia

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

English Teacher: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia 1996

Evangelism and Church Development: Davao, Philippines 1994

CURRICULUM PUBLICATIONS*Missions Mosaic*. Woman's Missionary Union. Doctrinal Reader. 2022-present.Leader Bible Studies, *Bible Studies for Life Preschool and Kids*, LifeWay Christian Resources, Summer and Fall 2025."God is in Control," *Bible Studies for Life Kids 1st and 2nd Grade*, LifeWay Christian Resources, Summer 2024."The Church Serves God," *Bible Studies for Life Kids 1st and 2nd Grade*, LifeWay Christian Resources, Summer 2023.

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- “The Bible is My Guide,” *Bible Studies for Life Kids 1st and 2nd Grade*, LifeWay Christian Resources, Winter 2018-2019.

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- “Building the Kingdom through VBS 2020,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2020.
- “Great Love,” *Advent Devotional for Ministry Wives*, Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union, 2020.
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- “Day Four.” *Seek God Prayer Devotional*. Montgomery: Heritage Baptist Church, 2013.
- “Connect to Kids in Crisis: A Special 2011 VBS Supplement,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2011.
- “First Baptist, Oxford, looks to future with nod to past.” *The Alabama Baptist*. March 8, 2001.
- “‘Serving God together’: Siegelman praises churches for efforts.” *The Alabama Baptist*. February 15, 2001.
- “Ken Miller retires after 30 years at SBOM.” *The Alabama Baptist*. January 25, 2001.
- “Venezuelan student reaching others at Samford.” *The Alabama Baptist*. November 30, 2000.
- “Fighting a grim future: Children’s HopeChest helps Russian orphans.” *The Alabama Baptist*. September 7, 2000.
- “Alabama pastor cites prayer as key to ministry.” *The Alabama Baptist*. May 11, 2000.
- “Association’s record points to missions emphasis.” *The Alabama Baptist*. March 23, 2000.
- “Baptists among leaders in hospital provisions.” *The Alabama Baptist*. May 21, 1998.
- Children of Light*, Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, 1998.
- “Jemima Condict Harrison: A Hidden One Revealed,” Colonial Dames of America, 1998.
- “Domestic Fiction and the Slavery Crisis,” Colonial Dames of America, 1997.

PODCASTS

“Episode 114: Jennifer Foster on Leadership Principles in Ministry & Women in Ministry,” Church Leadership Podcast, <https://churchleadershippodcast.com/podcast/episode-114-jennifer-foster-on-leadership-principles-in-ministry-women-in-ministry/>, 2021.

VIDEOS

“Calling Out the Called,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2024.
“Director’s Overview-Destination Dig VBS 2021,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2021.
“My Calling to Children’s Ministry,” ETCH, 2020.
“Session 1-Yes to VBS,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2019.
“Session 2-Yes to Prayer,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2019.
“Session 3-Yes to Preparation,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2019.
“Session 4-Yes to Promotion,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2019.
“Session 5-Yes to Presenting the Gospel,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2019.
“Session 6-Yes to Post VBS,” Kidzlinkal.org, 2019.
“Together in Women’s Ministry.” Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union, 2018.
“Helping People Find their PLACE,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2012.
“Discipline to Make Disciples,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2012.
“Teaching for Learning,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2012.
“Sharing Christ with Kids,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2012.
“Gardening Tools: Getting Ready for Sunday Morning.” Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, 2010.
“Planting Seed: Sharing Christ with Kids.” Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, 2010.
“Watering Plants: Learning Styles.” Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, 2010.
“Reproducing: Partnering with Parents.” Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, 2010.

CONFERENCES AND TRAINING EVENTS

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

“The Priesthood of Believers as a Framework for Women in Ministry,” Disciple Leaders’ Network, Nashville, 2023.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

“Be Still and Know,” You Lead Women’s Ministry Training, LifeWay, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, 2016.
“He Said, She Said,” You Lead Women’s Ministry Training, LifeWay, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, 2016.
“Children’s Sunday School and Discipleship,” North Regional Sunday School and Discipleship Leader Training, LifeWay, Lindsay Lane Baptist, 2012.

STATE CONVENTION

“Do You Know Gen Alpha?” Reaching and Teaching the Next Generation, Westwood, 2024.
“Hiring Best Practices,” Financial Issues Conference, Shocco Springs, 2022.
“The Post-COVID Church: Changes and Creativity,” Financial Issues Conference, Shocco Springs, 2022.
“Personnel: Team Building,” Financial Issues Conference, Shocco Springs, 2022.

“Called: Preparing Your Heart for Children’s Ministry,” Called Conference, Prattville, 2019.
 “Directors: In the Wild,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2019.
 “Nothing Less,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2019.
 “Brain Power,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2019.
 “Tools of the Trade,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2019.
 “Preschool Bible: Game On!,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2018.
 “Be Still and Know,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2018.
 “Jesus and Me,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2018.
 “Game On!” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2018.
 “She Said What,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2018.
 “Children’s Bible: Galactic Starveyors,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2017.
 “Growing Up Loving God: Elementary,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2017.
 “Plays Well with Others,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2017.
 “Be Still and Know,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2017.
 “She Said What,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2017.
 “Growing Up Loving God: Preschool,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2017.
 “Summer Missions Survival: Teaching Children,” ALSBOM Collegiate Ministries, Heritage, 2016.
 “Eat This Book,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2016.
 “Plays Well with Others,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2016.
 “Growing Up Loving God,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2016.
 “3rd and 4th Grade Bible: Submerged,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2016.
 “Teaching Multi-Age Groups in VBS,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2016.
 “Centering the Seasons,” Metro Regional Sunday and Discipleship Leader Training, Lakeside Baptist Church, 2015.
 “Connecting with Families,” Metro Regional Sunday and Discipleship Leader Training, Lakeside Baptist Church, 2015.
 “Guiding Behavior in a Children’s Classroom,” Metro Regional Sunday and Discipleship Leader Training, Lakeside Baptist Church, 2015.
 “Growing Up Loving God,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2015.
 “Let It Go,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2015.
 “Living Stories,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2015.
 “Essentials for Women’s Ministry,” Equip Alabama WMU, Shocco Springs, 2015.
 “The Best Ever: Ideas for Women’s Ministry,” Equip Alabama WMU, Shocco Springs, 2015.
 “5th and 6th Grade Bible: Journey Off the Map,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2015.

“Music: Journey Off the Map,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2015.
 “Next Level Women’s Ministry,” Equip Alabama WMU, Shocco Springs, 2014.
 “Involving Parents in the Classroom,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2014.
 “Ministering to Families in Crisis,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2014.
 “Connecting to Kids in their Culture,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2014.
 “Children’s Discipleship Options,” Northwest Regional Sunday and Discipleship Leader Training, Woodward Avenue Baptist Church, 2013.
 “Partnering with Parents,” Northwest Regional Sunday and Discipleship Leader Training, Woodward Avenue Baptist Church, 2013.
 “Speaking into a Child’s Heart,” Northwest Regional Sunday and Discipleship Leader Training, Woodward Avenue Baptist Church, 2013.
 “Essentials in Women’s Ministry,” Equip Alabama WMU, Shocco Springs, 2013.
 “Women’s Ministry Next Level,” Equip Alabama WMU, Shocco Springs, 2013.
 “Feel the Rush,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2013.
 “On the Right Track,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2013.
 “The First Six Weeks,” The Summit for Church Leaders, Shocco Springs, 2013.
 “Equipping Leaders for Effective Ministry,” Alabama Baptist State Convention, Ebenezer Baptist, 2012.
 “Living Stories,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2012.
 “Wiggles and Giggles,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2012.
 “Growing Up Loving God,” Church Weekday Education Conference, Shocco Springs, 2012.
 “Mobilizing Leaders in 1st-6th Grade Sunday School,” Gulf Coast Regional Sunday School and Discipleship Leader Training, First Baptist Church Fairhope, 2012.
 “Speaking into a Child’s Heart,” Gulf Coast Regional Sunday School and Discipleship Leader Training, First Baptist Church Fairhope, 2012.
 “Including All Kids,” Gulf Coast Regional Sunday School and Discipleship Leader Training, First Baptist Church Fairhope, 2012.
 “Soul Shaping for Teachers,” Gulf Coast Regional Sunday School and Discipleship Leader Training, First Baptist Church Fairhope, 2012.
 “Engaging Kids in Learning God’s Word,” Gulf Coast Regional Sunday School and Discipleship Leader Training, First Baptist Church Fairhope, 2012.
 “Children’s Sunday School,” Sunday School Training, Shocco Springs, 2011.
 “Women’s Ministry,” Alabama WMU Equipping Seminar, 2011.
 “Basics of Working with Preschoolers,” Urban Sunday School Conference, Ebenezer Baptist, 2010.
 “Children’s Ministry,” North Regional Sunday School Leader Training, Lindsay Lane Baptist, 2010.
 “Ministering to Preschoolers and Their Families,” Urban Sunday School Conference, Ebenezer Baptist, 2010.
 “1st and 2nd Grade Bible: Outrigger Island,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2008.
 “Crafts: Outrigger Island,” Alabama Baptist State Convention VBS Tour, 2008.

ASSOCIATIONS

- “Directors: Destination Dig,” Montgomery Baptist Association VBS Training, 2021.
- “Directors: Concrete and Cranes,” Montgomery Baptist Association VBS Training, 2020.
- “Directors: In the Wild,” Montgomery Baptist Association VBS Training, 2019.
- “Directors: Game On!,” Montgomery Baptist Association VBS Training, 2018.
- “Crafts: Outrigger Island,” Calhoun Baptist Association VBS Training, 2008.
- “1st and 2nd Grade Bible: Outrigger Island,” Calhoun Baptist Association VBS Training, 2008.
- “Game Day Central,” Calhoun Baptist Association VBS Training, 2007.
- “Missions: Arctic Edge,” Calhoun Baptist Association VBS Training, 2006.
- “Missions: Ramblin’ Road Trip,” Calhoun Baptist Association VBS Training, 2005.

SPEAKING

- “Pause: Crisis Leadership and Self-Care,” Alabama Department of Public Health Social Work Conference, Alabama State University, 2021.
- Deacon Wives February Gathering, Mt. Gillard Baptist, 2017-present.
- Morning Cup Weekly Teacher Devotional, Vaughn Road Elementary School, 2014-present.
- Kindergarten Graduation, Macon East Academy, 2020.
- “Forward is a Pace,” Judson College Chapel, Marion, 2019.
- “Generational Characteristics and Trends,” Alabama Department of Public Health Social Work Seminar and Training, Alabama State University, 2018.
- Elementary Chapel, Macon East Academy, 2017.
- Upper School Chapel, Trinity Presbyterian School, 2016.
- Fall Devotional, Alabama State Department of Agriculture, 2015.
- Devotional for the First Lady’s Bible Study, Alabama Governor’s Mansion, 2015.
- Upper School Chapel, Trinity Presbyterian School, 2014.
- Fall Devotional, Alabama State Department of Agriculture, 2013.
- Elementary Chapel, Macon East Academy, 2013.
- Fifth Grade Graduation, Vaughn Road Elementary School, 2013.
- “Beyond Cookies and Color Sheets,” Pintlala Baptist, 2012.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Society for Women in Scholarship, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Founding Member, 2021-present.
- Disciple Leaders Network, formerly Baptist Association of Christian Educators, 2019-present.
- Leadership Montgomery, Legacy Class XXXV, 2019.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- Montgomery Baptist Association Executive Board, 2022-present.
- Timothy Initiative, Alabama Baptist Collegiate Ministries, 2021.
- Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, 2018-present, Recording Secretary.
- Montgomery Baptist Association Nominating Committee, 2015-present.
- Alabama WMU, Adult Ministry Support Team, 2016-2018, Chairperson.

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, Commissioner and Chairperson, 2005-2016.
Resolutions Committee, Alabama Baptist State Convention, 2015.

CONFERENCES/TRAININGS ATTENDED

Disciple Leaders' Network, Nashville, 2023.

Connect Gathering, 2022-present.

LifeWay's Women's Leadership Forum, Long Hollow Baptist Church, 2021.

"Church Financial Issues," Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, 2021.

"Transitions: What's Next for the Church," Baptist Association of Christian Educators,
Virtual, 2021.

Destination Dig Vacation Bible School Institute, Virtual, 2021.

"Truth North: Navigating Culture Without Sinking the Church," Baptist Association of
Christian Educators, Virtual, 2020.

Women's Ministry Leadership Forum Virtual, LifeWay, 2020

ETCH Virtual, LifeWay Kids, 2020.

Concrete and Cranes Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center,
2020.

In the Wild Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center, 2019.

Game On! Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center, 2018.

Galactic Starveyors Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center, 2017.

Submerged Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center, 2016.

Journey Off the Map Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center,
2015.

Orange Conference, Atlanta, 2012.

Outrigger Island Vacation Bible School Institute, Ridgecrest Conference Center, 2008.

Game Day Central VBS State Training, First Baptist Birmingham, 2007.

Arctic Edge VBS State Training, First Baptist Birmingham, 2006.

Ramblin' Road Trip VBS State Training, First Baptist Birmingham, 2005.

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