CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER UNLESS THEY ARE AGREED?

THE ROLE OF CORE VALUES IN THE PASTOR/CHURCH CALL PROCESS AND RELATIONSHIP

A PROJECT REPORT

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ABSTRACT

As one surveys the landscape of the church, one will see that there are many incompatible pastor/church relationships. Incompatibility between a pastor and a church produces much negative fallout. The negative effects from the incompatibility result in long lasting, sometimes irreparable, damage to both pastor and church.

This project is a study that researches how pastors and churches can make more compatible choices. From all indications, the process of pastoral call is lacking in informative steps that would help pastors and churches make more informed choices. This project focuses on one of the fundamental dynamics of the pastor/church relationship: the role core values play in the pastoral call process and its subsequent impact on resulting ministry.

The study of six pastors and six churches yielded the result that pastors and churches that use the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in their call processes make more compatible choices. For a pastor and a church to have the best opportunity for a long-term, effective ministry, one of the building blocks in the relational foundation must be an agreement of core values.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

The prophet Amos, in his attempt to convince God’s people that their disobedience would incur the wrath of God, posed this question: “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so” (Amos 3:3, NIV)? It is obvious that the answer to this question is “no.” Not only is this true for two people who choose to travel down a pathway of life together, but it is also true for churches and pastors who choose to enter into a church/pastor relationship. Therefore, the question is, can a church and pastor successfully work together in effective ministry unless they have agreed to do so? The following research project is an attempt to explore and analyze one of the primary elements that assists in answering that question.

Context of the Problem

The problem addressed in this project is set within the context of a church movement identified as the Church of God Reformation Movement or otherwise identified as the Church of God (COG). A summary that describes the COG is found in the introduction of the 2004 Yearbook of the Church of God and states the following:

Approximately 2,300 fraternally affiliated congregations across the United States and Canada collectively make up the Church of God reformation movement in North America.

Reflecting its strong non-denominational polity, each congregation represents the basic organizational unit of the Church of God. Each church calls its own pastors and establishes its own internal organizational patterns and bylaws.
Congregations are not controlled by any person or organization outside their own membership. In fact, state, regional, and national organizations derive their strength from local churches and receive any voluntary support these congregations choose to give.

Most churches recognize, however, that "we do better together." For that reason, they commonly form interdependent partnerships with area, national, and international ministries.

Historically, the Church of God has held firmly to several important doctrinal distinctives that create a sense of interdependency:

- The reality of experiential salvation
- The unity of all believers in Jesus Christ
- The Spirit-filled life of holiness and
- The authority of Scripture (2005, 11)

According to the 2004 Yearbook of the Church of God, the movement not only has 2,300 fraternally affiliated congregations but also has 5,105 ordained ministers, 867 of whom are retired. The Church of God also has 917 licensed ministers who are in process and working towards ordination.

In any given year, approximately 25 percent of the 2,300 congregations of the Church of God go through a pastoral change. As noted, "Each church calls its own pastors and establishes its own internal organization patterns and bylaws" (2005, 11). Therefore, while there is some consistency in the pastoral call process in the COG, each church has its own uniquely designed process.

Generally, the process of a pastoral call in the COG primarily involves two parties: the pastoral candidate seeking a church and the church seeking a pastor. For both parties this is an anxious time because the decision will affect many lives.

For pastors or ministers seeking a new church pastorate, they begin by contacting the office of Congregational Ministries at the Church of God Ministries Office in Anderson, Indiana. The pastoral candidates inform Congregational Ministries of their
desire to make a transition. For some, they are seeking their first pastoral opportunity while others feel they have fulfilled their call at their current position and are seeking a new congregation. Following this contact, Congregational Ministries will first determine whether or not the candidates are approved ministers in good standing. This is based on their records of the pastors as well as those of the credentialing committee in the state where the pastoral candidates reside and minister. If the ministers are in good standing, they begin the process of developing a ministerial brief composed of basic biographical information, a philosophy of pastoral ministry, a statement of strengths and weaknesses, primary ministry interests, the type of ministry setting preferred, family feelings and contributions to the ministry, financial needs, and references. Once the paperwork is completed and returned to the Congregational Ministries office, the ministerial brief is reviewed to assure completeness. It is then added to the pool of briefs that are circulated to state ministers and churches seeking a pastor.

The ministerial brief is circulated in various ways: (1) The Congregational Ministries office reviews the brief and based upon the information provided circulates the brief to churches whose location, needs, financial ability, and philosophy of ministry most closely match that of the pastoral candidate; (2) Congregational Ministries then forwards the brief to state ministers who have a better knowledge of the congregations in the state over which they preside and allows them the freedom to circulate the brief to those that they deem to be a suitable match; (3) The pastoral candidates are provided a list of available pastoral opportunities by the Congregational Ministries office and can request that their brief be sent to a specific church; (4) Congregations may also contact the Congregational Ministries office and request a copy of a particular minister’s brief.
Some pastors/ministers choose not to follow the protocol of working with and through the Congregational Ministries office but contact available churches directly or make their availability known through a person who has influence with an available congregation. While this is not the method preferred by many pastoral search committees, there are those committees that find this approach acceptable. A pastor or congregation who chooses to circumvent the recommended protocol of working through the office of Congregational Ministries in the search process can do so without any fear of discipline or retribution. The polity of the COG will not allow it to require a set protocol for the pastoral search process but can only recommend a protocol to be followed.

Once ministers have completed their ministerial brief, they must allow time for it to be circulated to the various pastoral search committees and wait for a call. For some, a call will come in a short period of time. For others, it may be a long and tedious wait that requires much patience and prayer.

A COG congregation seeking a pastor follows a similar process in that when their pastor tenders his or her resignation the church contacts the Congregational Ministries office informing the office of the pastoral vacancy. Congregational Ministries adds the church to the list of available churches with basic information on attendance and the contact person for the church. This list is made available by request to approved pastors, ministers, institutions, and agencies of the COG.

After informing the office of Congregational Ministries of a pastoral vacancy, the church will either form a search committee or will appoint a standing board, council, or committee within the church to serve as the search committee. Initially, Congregational Ministries sends the search committee a packet of the most recent ministerial briefs that
have been filed with their office and each month will send any new briefs that have been developed as well as a list of pastoral candidates who are no longer available.

Once the search committee receives the latest ministerial briefs for consideration the process that the committee follows differs from church to church. Some search committees prayerfully review all briefs and attempt to identify a candidate who appeals to the majority of the committee and whom they feel led by the Holy Spirit to contact. Committee members are appointed to contact the candidate’s references, and the chairperson contacts the candidate. The chairperson conducts an informal interview to determine if the candidate is interested in the church. If there is mutual interest, arrangements are made for an interview with the search committee and the candidate. Some churches make the interview session a part of a candidacy weekend in which the candidate and family meet the church and preach a trial sermon. In some cases, the congregational vote takes place immediately following the trial sermon. Therefore, in a matter of forty-eight hours or less a candidate will be interviewed, preach, and be selected as the next pastor of a church.

Other search committees choose to proceed in a slower and more methodical manner, recognizing the significance and importance of their decisions. Once they have received a packet of ministerial briefs, they will prayerfully review each brief and identify several prospective candidates whom they believe match their pastoral profile. The committee then pares down the list of prospective candidates to the top three to five candidates. They may prioritize the list of top candidates and then work with one candidate at a time. Others contact the prospective candidates and conduct a formal interview with each one before identifying a particular candidate on whom to focus their
attention. The committee then conducts a second, more thorough interview of the identified candidate. If all goes well, they invite the candidate and family to meet the church and preach a trial sermon.

Once a candidacy weekend has taken place, the prospective candidate is formally presented to the church for a vote. The percentage of approving votes needed to extend a call to a pastoral candidate varies from church to church and is based on the church’s established bylaws. Also, when the vote takes place will vary from church to church. Some churches vote on the candidate immediately following the trial sermon while others require a week, ten days, or some other established period of time to pass before taking a vote.

The search committee informs the pastoral candidate of the results of the vote and gives the candidate time to respond. If the candidate responds affirmatively, he or she tenders his or her resignation with the current church if that has not already been done.

**Statement of the Problem**

It happens far too often that a new pastor comes to a COG church with great enthusiasm, hopes, and dreams of this being a long and productive pastorate. The members of the church are just as excited and expectant, hoping that this pastor will be there to love and minister to them for many years to come; often however, in just a few weeks or sometimes a few months, those hopes and dreams fade in the face of theological and philosophical conflict.

As the pastor and church leaders begin the work of ministry, they discover that they have very different ideas about how the ministry of the church should be conducted. Both
feel passionately about the direction they think the church should go and strongly believe their concept of leadership to be biblical and spiritual.

In many situations, the source of the pastor/church conflict lies in the difference in their core values. I experienced this in one of my pastorates. The core values of the key leaders of the church differed significantly from my core values. We differed on our understanding of the purpose and mission of the church. Their concept of the church was that it is more like a civic club whose mission is to keep its members satisfied, whereas my concept of the church is that of a spiritual institution whose mission is ministry. The church leaders felt the church should in a sense show a profit each year and cut spending wherever possible. I saw the church as a nonprofit institution that should be wise stewards of tithes and offerings, reinvesting them in the ministry of the church. Because of this vast difference in core values, my tenure with the church was short and the ministry was ineffective.

When the core values of the pastor and the church do not have a significant level of agreement there will be conflict between the two. It is like the Corinthian Church in I Corinthians 1:12, "This is what I mean: One of you says, 'I follow Paul'; another says, 'I follow Apollos'; another says, 'I follow Peter'; and another says, 'I follow Christ" (NCV). Some line up behind the pastor while others line up behind various church leaders.

This conflict usually produces one or more negative results for both the pastor and the church. The pastor may resign, as many of his or her predecessors have, and leave disappointed, hurt, disillusioned, and feeling like a failure. A pastor who goes through a series of short-term, conflictual pastoral experiences may suffer many ill effects.
According to John Boedeker, COG Area Administrator in Oklahoma, pastors who experience several short-term pastorates develop poor self-esteem, financial stress, and sometimes lose the respect of their family. Jeannette Flynn, Director of Congregational Ministries of the COG, noted that some of the ill effects on pastors who end up in the cycle of short-term pastorates include never building any connectedness with other ministers, tending to be loners, and rarely ever feeling fulfilled in their calling. One other ill-effect, according to Missouri COG Area Administrator Jim Duncan, is that when a congregational search committee receives a minister’s brief and sees a history of short-term pastorates it automatically brands this pastor as ineffective and one who probably has personality problems. David Hall, Illinois COG Area Administrator said, “Pastors who get caught up in the cycle of short-term pastorates seldom ever move up to a larger church because lay people are looking for pastors who have had experience in large churches” (pers. comm. 2004).

Despite all the hurt and disappointment, most pastors and their families somehow find the strength to move on to another church and try again. Other pastors, however, who have experienced this in church after church do not have the strength or desire to try again as a result simply drop out of the ministry.

The pastor is not the only casualty in this situation because the church experiences similar feelings. Some members may choose to move on to another church while others choose to quit church altogether. The members who do remain oftentimes become cynical, insecure, un-committed, and distrustful of the pastor. According to Ryan Chapman, COG Congregational Ministries Assistant Director for Pastoral Health and Growth, “Congregations that go through rapid pastoral change at best plateau in growth
and ministry. Their energy is spent on the next pastoral search” (pers. comm. 2004).
Boedeker made the observation that these churches “do not allow pastors in the clan, they
remain an outsider. Also, they look at a pastor like an interim and will not follow long-
term advice” (pers. comm. 2004). Another observation by Flynn is, “In the truest clinical
definition, churches suffer abandonment issues” (pers. comm. 2004)! Duncan noted that
church leaders become confused about their role in the church.

The result is that pastors and churches are left weak, ineffective, and unproductive
in ministry. Pastors leave the ministry and churches never make an impact on their
community for Christ. The question is: How can a pastor and a church in transition
identify a more compatible match with whom to enter into a pastor/church relationship?

In his book, *Values-Driven Leadership*, Aubrey Malphurs makes the following
observation:

A Christian should not work for any organization, sacred or secular, if he or she
does not share to a great degree the same institutional values. A person should not
join a church if he or she does not share its values. A pastor should not take a
church, nor should a church hire a pastor, if the church and pastor do not have
consensus on the ministry’s key values. The same is true for two churches that are
considering a merger. They should not do so unless there is substantial agreement
on their core ideals. To settle for less in any of these situations is to court spiritual
and emotional disaster (1996, 52).

Many pastors and churches do not take the time to explore the reasons they
continue in the vicious cycle of short-term, ineffective, conflictual pastor/church
relationships. The reason they have fallen into this cycle may not be that the pastor is a
bad leader or that the church is a difficult church. Part of the problem may reside in the
fact that they have never considered the importance of identifying their core values and
then sought a ministry partnership with a pastor or church that shares their core values.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a model in which core values of a prospective pastor and church are identified, defined, and compared to promote a compatible relationship.

This study could educate a COG church in search of a pastor and a sampling of prospective pastors for that church with the importance of identifying and defining their core values. This study will make them aware of the instruments that are available to help churches and pastors identify and define their core values. It could also make them aware that there are other tools needed in the pastoral search process in addition to prayer and Holy Spirit leadership to bring a pastor and church into a productive and compatible relationship.

The model also can be presented to appropriate national and state COG leaders to integrate and implement into their pastoral search guidelines. It is the desire of this researcher to influence the policy and practice of the pastoral search process in the COG.

Research Methodology

This study pursued the question how a pastor and a church in transition can identify a more compatible match with whom to enter into a pastor/church relationship? It employed the grounded theory approach to qualitative research. The choice of this approach seemed most appropriate because of the research dynamics. Merriam describes the grounded theory approach in the following manner:

As is true in other forms of qualitative research, the investigator as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis assumes an inductive stance and strives to derive meaning from the data. The end result of this type of qualitative research is a theory that emerges from, or is “grounded” in, the data—hence, grounded theory. (2001, 17)
The focus of this project was how a pastor and a church in transition can identify a more compatible match with whom to enter into a pastor/church relationship. In conducting this research, the following steps were taken:

1. The problem was identified, defined, and researched.

2. An interview was developed to use in determining the success, satisfaction, and compatibility of churches and pastors who included the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in the pastoral call process.

3. Three churches and pastors who have included the use of core values in their pastoral call were identified and interviewed.

4. Three COG churches and pastors who have experienced short-term, conflictual pastorates were identified and interviewed.

5. The interview sought to discover if a real difference in core values played a role in the short term, conflicting relationship between the church and pastor.

6. The information from the interviews was compiled, categorized, and coded.

7. Interpretation of the data and a model was identified and shared.

An open-ended interview was the instrument used to determine the levels of success, satisfaction, and compatibility of churches and pastors who included the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in the pastoral call process. Items that made up the framework of the interview were generated from written resources that address the use of core values in the pastoral call process as well as the theory that core values play a primary role in the process. Each of the three churches and pastors who used the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in their call process were interviewed using the same set of items.
A non-probability, unique type of purposeful sampling was used to interview and gain information to discover if the grounded theory that the identification, definition, and comparison of core values assist churches and pastors in entering into more compatible relationships. The sample is non-probability because it does not answer how much or how often but is seeking to solve a qualitative problem in ministry. It is unique because the use of the identification, definition, and comparison of core values between a prospective pastor and church has traditionally and historically not been typically used in the call process by many churches, particularly COG churches. The sampling was purposeful in that it only included churches and pastors who have used the identification, definition, and comparison of core values as a part of their pastoral call process.

The same open-ended interview was used as an instrument to generate data from a sampling of three COG churches and pastors who did not use the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in the call process. The interviews sought to determine if the lack of significant agreement of the core values between the church and pastor played a role in their short-term, conflicted relationship.

The sampling was also non-probability, unique, and purposeful. Only COG churches and pastors were interviewed who did not use the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in their call process and whose pastor/church relationship was short-term and conflicted.

**Research Questions**

The primary question on which this research focused was found in the statement of the problem: "How can a pastor and a church in transition identify a more compatible
match with whom to enter into a pastor/church relationship?" One way is to begin the pastor/church relationship with a higher degree of compatibility.

In addition to this primary question there were three other questions addressed that assisted in bringing out noteworthy issues. Those three questions were:

1. How does the identification, definition, and comparison of core values increase the quality of the pastoral search process?

2. How does the identification and definition of core values assist pastors in having a better understanding of their goals in ministry?

3. How does the identification and definition of core values assist churches in having a better understanding of its goals in ministry?

Question one recognized the need to enhance the pastoral search process in COG churches. While there are many elements lacking in the COG pastoral search process, this question helped discover if the identification, definition, and comparison of core values might improve the process.

Question two supposed that oftentimes prospective pastors are unsure of their own personal goals in ministry and need assistance in identifying and clarifying those goals. How does the identification and definition of their core values help pastors identify, understand, and clarify their ministry goals?

Question three assumed that many churches do not really understand their ministry goals. Could the identification and definition of core values assist churches in clarifying their ministry goals?
Significance of the Study

The cycles of short-term, conflicted pastorates in the COG are leaving a long line of casualties that include both pastors and church members. Pastors are leaving the ministry, losing their families, and even turning away from God because of this vicious cycle. Churches are losing members, becoming dysfunctional, and are ineffective in conducting ministry because of the constant turmoil, conflict, and pastoral change. Therefore, this study is significant in that it can assist churches in breaking the cycle of short-term, conflicted pastorates that continue to weaken and destroy them. It can help lead churches to returning to a healthy, stable ministry that allows them to take the focus off themselves and return it to the community that desperately needs them.

The study is also significant in that it can assist pastors in breaking the cycle of short-term, conflicted pastorates that leave them feeling like failures and misfits with low self-esteem. It could help them find a sense of fulfillment in their call to and practice of ministry.

When pastor/church conflict arises in a COG congregation a credentials committee made up of COG pastors within the state is invited to mediate the conflict. Many of those credential committee members have little or no training in conflict management and as a result are not able to identify the crux of the problem. This study is significant because it could assist those credential committees by providing them with a tool to help them in identifying the issues at the base of the problem. In many situations, the source of the pastor/church conflict lies in the significant difference in the core values of the pastor and the church.

At the national and state level of the COG, leaders are constantly looking for techniques they can use and recommend to pastoral search committees to assist them in
doing a better job of connecting with the right pastor. This study is significant in that it can assist national and state leaders to help churches work through the pastoral search process by educating them about the importance core values play in finding the right pastor for their church.

The ultimate significance will be based on whether or not pastors, churches, and leaders are willing to embrace this practice and use it in the pastoral search process.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

This study was not attempted without some preconceived assumptions. The first primary assumption was that COG churches want to become better informed and equipped for the pastoral search process. It was assumed that churches are tired of constantly searching for the next pastor and want some stability. It was assumed that churches want to break the cycle of short-term, conflicted pastorates and want to move beyond being in the constant state of transition.

* This study also assumed that pastors want to break this cycle as well. It assumed that pastors and their families do not like constantly being in a state of turmoil. The pastor and family who are caught in the cycle of short-term pastorates never have the opportunity to put down roots, build lasting relationships, become a part of a community, and experience a sense of belonging.

It was assumed that COG credential committees are looking for means to assist them in identifying and helping resolve pastor/church conflicts. This study assumed that members of credential committees are frustrated with not being able to assist pastors and churches in effectively resolving their conflicts and salvaging the ministry of both the pastor and the church.
The study also assumed that state and national leaders of the COG want to create a more comprehensive process by which pastoral search committees can make better, more informed choices. This assumption is based on the impression that state and national leaders see the COG Reformation Movement being weakened because of the churches and pastors that are constantly in turmoil and transition.

One of the key limitations of this study was the limited sample with which the study was conducted. Churches and pastors that have included the use of core values in their search process were a challenge to identify. The same true of COG churches and pastors that have had short-term conflicted relationships.

A second limitation of the study was that there were a restricted number of studies and written resources that addressed this specific subject. This was especially true in regards to the subject of core values and the church.

Another limitation was that matching a church and pastor based on similar core values may not always solve the problem of conflict and a short-term relationship. Despite the fact that the cores values of a church and pastor have a significant agreement, conflict can still develop between the two.

**Definition of Terms**

1. Candidacy Weekend—the time in which a prospective pastor and family is invited in to meet the members and leaders of a church and preach a trial sermon.

2. Church of God Area Administrator—the official title given to those who serve as state ministers.

3. Church of God Ministries Office—the main national administration for the Church of God.
4. Church of God Reformation Movement—a reform movement to lead Christians to unity and holiness.

5. Congregational Ministries—the team that serves local COG congregations by providing ministry resources, credentialing assistance, and leadership education for pastors and congregations in all their cultural diversity, which helps them win the lost and equip disciples.

6. Core Values—the constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that drive ministry.

7. Credentialing Committee—a committee made up of elected or appointed COG pastors and ministers who oversee the licensing and ordination of ministers. They also oversee the approval of COG congregations and assist in congregational conflict.

8. Minister—a person who is licensed or ordained, however is not serving as a pastor.

9. Ministerial Brief—the general form completed by COG pastors and ministers who are seeking a church. The form acts as a resume in that it contains information needed by a congregational search committee in giving consideration to a pastoral candidate.

10. Pastor—a licensed or ordained minister who is the recognized pastor or pastoral staff member of a church.

11. State Minister—a minister elected by the state COG assembly to serve as a pastor to pastors, a friend of the churches, and to work alongside of other state leaders in the development and implementation of ministry at the state level. The state minister does not have any official authority like a district superintendent, bishop, or denominational leader, in other denominational structures.
Organization of the Study

This study was organized into six chapters with the following titles:

Chapter One: Introduction to the Project

Chapter Two: Biblical and Theological Foundations

Chapter Three: Review of Literature and Other Sources

Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Procedures

Chapter Five: Results and Analysis of Data

Chapter Six: Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Chapter One provided a description of the larger context in which the study is set followed by a statement of the problem that served as the catalyst of the study. The methodological approach to the study was then outlined to give an overview of how the research process was carried out. In addition to the overall statement of the problem, additional research questions to be considered were identified and described. This was followed by a summary of the various assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter One concluded with a list of terms and their definitions followed by a summary outline of the study’s organization.

Chapter Two provided a study of the biblical and theological foundations that address the problem explored. A number of sources were explored. The sources included scripture, tradition, and experience.

Chapter Three drew in additional sources of information that addressed the problem as it explored literature outside the biblical and theological resources. This chapter also included other sources of information such as interviews with church leaders, members of credential committees, and other persons who are involved in addressing the issue.
Chapter Four gave a detailed description of the research process including the identification and choice of the sample for study as well as a description of the research process. The chapter also described the process of choosing the techniques used to survey the sample as well as the questions for the interview process.

Chapter Five gave an analysis of the data gathered in the research study from church and pastor surveys, interviews, observations, and analysis of documents.

Chapter Six served as a summary of the study reporting significant findings, conclusions reached, and recommendations made as a result of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

In the beginning God created human beings to be relational people. Genesis 1:26-27 says:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (NASV)

This passage implies that there are two primary elements of human relationships. The first element is that humans are created to live in relationship with God. Genesis 2:7 says, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (NASV). C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch comment, “The process of man’s creation is described minutely here, because it serves to explain his relation to God and to the surrounding world” (1996, 49).

The second primary element of human beings is the need for relationship with others. Genesis 2:18 states, “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him’” (NASV). Man was alone and needed companionship to complete him and fulfill his needs.

Therefore, the Bible records the story of the relationship between God and human beings as well as the relationships humans experience with each other. That need of relationship is often expressed in the 21st century through the church. Stanley Grenz writes, “The church of Jesus Christ is not a club we join. We are not members of a giant
organization. Rather, we are a special people. We are a people in relationship with God who saves us through Christ and a people in relationship to each other who together share in God’s salvation” (1996, 208). From the beginning, God determined to accomplish his work through his relationship with his people and through the relationship the people of God have with each other.

This project focuses on the importance of the relationship between a pastor and the individual church. It is imperative that a pastor and church first be in right relationship with God followed by being in right relationship with each other. This dynamic is essential if God’s plan is to be accomplished. The primary theological issue being addressed is the unity that must exist between the pastor and the church. A crucial element in the unity between pastor and church is the agreement of their core values.

While Scripture does not address the subject of core values as such, it does address the importance of unity. The biblical principles that give foundation to the importance of unity will sufficiently serve as a base for the role that agreement of core values play in unity between a pastor and church. Therefore, this chapter will reflect on various passages and images in Scripture that address the role of unity in the relationships of God’s people.

**Scriptural Exhortations for Unity**

Exhortations for unity are found throughout both Old and New Testaments. In fact, exhortations are so numerous that complete documentation would be prohibitive. However, for the purpose of this study, a few significant passages will be discussed.
Old Testament Exhortations

The book of Amos might seem like an unlikely place to find an exhortation from God for unity. As the prophecy begins, God is pronouncing judgment on Israel’s neighbors. The people were most willing to hear that prophecy and even rejoiced at the thought of the destruction of their neighbors. However, in chapter 2, they are sobered when the prophet declared God’s judgment on Judah and Israel.

Israel was indicted because they, too, were worshiping other gods and, “Religion became routine, almost mechanical, and alienated from Yahweh’s real presence” (Lasor 1996, 245). In Amos 2:6–8 God specifically notes Israel’s sins as they were disobeying his law concerning the treatment of the poor and oppressed among them.

The people of Israel, which included Judah before the northern and southern kingdoms divided, were the elect people of God. Long before Amos’ condemnation and judgment through his prophet Amos, the people of Israel entered into a covenant with God. God had chosen them to be his special people and promised that he would watch over them, protect them, provide for them, fight for them, and give them land: As the elect people of God Israel had a responsibility to live according to God’s revealed will. Israel understood God’s promise as well as their responsibility as evidenced in Exodus 24:7, “Then he [Moses] took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, ‘We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey’” (TNIV). If the people obeyed God, they would reap the benefits of God’s promises, however, if they disobeyed, the covenant would be broken and God would pronounce judgment on them. This is the issue addressed in Amos prophecy.

While the people of Israel transitioned into a nation, God had given them two things to unite them: worship and the Book of the Covenant. Millard Erickson notes that those
two central points of unity were symbolized in the institutions of the temple and the law. The temple unified the people because it was the main place of worship for all of Israel. Equally, the law united the people because the whole nation was required to abide by its statutes (1998, 1138). As long as Israel obeyed his commands, God would keep his part of the agreement. However, both Judah and Israel had ceased to fulfill their part of the covenant.

Amos 3:3 gives the impression that the people have questioned the judgment of God. God responds to their question with a question, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” (KJV)? The New Century Version translates the verse, “Two people will not walk together unless they have agreed to do so.”

While there is some debate as to whom the two walking together represents, for this writer it clearly represents God and Israel. Notice what Amos 3:1-2 says: “Hear this word, people of Israel, the word the Lord has spoken against you—against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins” (TNIV). The prophet has just said, “Hear this word, people of Israel”; therefore, the two must represent God and Israel.

The phrase, “walk together” (TNIV), is often used throughout the Scripture referring to living life together or having a relationship with one another. God is pointing out that they must worship him alone and follow his commands if they are going to have a relationship. Worship and obedience served as the two core values that God clearly stipulated had to be maintained if there was to be ongoing unity between Himself and Israel. If the people no longer valued worship and obedience, there could be no unity
between them and God or between each other, because unity was represented by the institutions of the temple (worship) and the law (obedience).

This illustrates that unity must have a basis or core around which to center. The core must be something on which the two entities were agreed and would maintain if unity was to occur. If there was no core around which the two entities could agree, there would be no basis for a relationship.

The same principle applies to the pastor/church relationship. A pastor and a church cannot have an effective working relationship unless they have unity between them. They cannot have unity unless they have some core values upon which they agree and use as the foundation for their relationship. Thus, as God questioned Israel, “Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so” (Amos 3:3, TNIV)?

The word unity is used only three times throughout the entire Bible: once in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament. Psalm 133:1 declares, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (KJV). Here the Psalmist was exhorting the people of God to practice unity by pointing out the positive effects that unity produces.

It is not certain what event or circumstance the Holy Spirit may have used to inspire the Psalmist to pen this exhortation for unity. Some identify this Psalm as postexilic. While many of the Israelites returned to Jerusalem following their exile, many remained in the foreign land to which they had been taken or found their way to other lands away from Jerusalem. Annually, during the feast of the Passover, the Israelites of the dispersion would return to Jerusalem to celebrate. The divided and dispersed nation of Israel would
experience a moment of unity when they would gather together for worship at the common altar in Jerusalem.

Historic writers such as C.H. Spurgeon speculated that Psalm 133 may have been the song of praise sung by the tribes of Israel as they departed from an inspirational experience of worship such as the feast of the Passover. The hearts of the people may have been joyously overwhelmed by the national unity experienced in an extended time of worship and fellowship at the temple in Jerusalem (1976, 121). On the other hand, a more recent scholar, James Luther Mays, identifies Psalm 133 as a Psalm of ascent, meaning this was a psalm sung by the people of Israel as they ascended to Jerusalem in anticipation of the blessings of God they were about to receive as a result of their united worship (1994, 412-413). James Massey, in one of his early books, Concerning Christian Unity, conjectures that some of the tribes of Israel may have been so caught up in their own selfish interests and pursuits that they were neglecting their commitment to participate in the appointed national festivals of worship, or there may have been conflict between some of the tribal leaders concerning the overall direction and goals of the nation (10, 1979). As a result, the psalmist may have been inspired to remind the leaders of the blessings of unity as well as the effect it would have on their followers.

Either way, the implication of the passage is that there was division among the Israelite people brought about by either the exilic dispersion or the selfish actions. Division was not God's idea or goal for his people; his foremost desire for his children was that they be in unity. John Ortberg, in writing the foreword for Gilbert Bilezikian's book, Community 101, notes that God's dream for humanity can be summed up in one
word, community. Community, common unity, will begin as people realize the truth of Psalm 133:1.

The unity depicted in Psalm 133 is more than an external manifestation motivated by compulsion. It is a unity that is motivated by a spirit from within the individual. When Israel gathered as a collective group for a time of extended worship, the feeling of unity was inspired by more than their common race, it was the result of their covenant relationship with God (Allen 1983, 214). Because of that covenant relationship, Israel was committed to two primary values: worship of the one true God and obedience to his law. When the nation gathered in Jerusalem for a time of worship, they were living out both of those values, which resulted in the blessing of being united with God and each other. This indicates that for unity to take place, persons must have similar passions and values that unite them.

When a pastor and a church from the same church group consider coming together in a pastor/church relationship, it does not mean they will have an automatic basis for unity. For example, this writer is a part of the Church of God. Many Church of God congregations publicly claim a loyalty to a basic set of doctrines that are historically characteristic of the Church of God. While there is agreement as to what those basic doctrines are, there are differing interpretations of them. In an interview process between a prospective pastor and church, both pastor and church may claim loyalty to the basic doctrines of the Church of God. However, when the pastor begins to teach and preach on those doctrines, conflict may ensue if there are divergent interpretations of those doctrines. This reveals that it takes more than just bearing the same denominational label for there to be unity.
It took more than common race for Israel to be in unity with one another. There was a commitment to the covenant that served as a foundation for their unity with God and each other. The same must be true for a pastor and church. A pastor and church must have common core values and passions that provide a foundation for them to construct an effective working relationship. When a pastor and church are in unity it will produce an image much like the one described in Psalm 133:1. It will be good and pleasant and will serve as a powerful witness that will draw others to the church and into the Kingdom of God.

New Testament Exhortations

God’s desire of unity for the covenant community in the Old Testament continues to be his desire for the covenant community in the New Testament. That desire is clearly revealed in what has come to be labeled Jesus’ high priestly prayer recorded in John 17. As Jesus approached the end of his earthly ministry, the one thing for which he earnestly prayed was that his followers would live in unity. That is evident in Jesus’ requests made to the Father in John 17:11, 21-23:

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (TNIV)

In this passage, Jesus prayed that “they” (his current disciples and those who would come to believe as a result of their testimony) would “be one” and that “they may be brought to complete unity”. The unity or oneness for which Jesus prayed was far more
than the organic union that is often presented as a picture of true unity in the 21st century church. Chuck Colson points out that the organic image of unity in the mind of the 21st century church has been strongly influenced by the ecumenism of the World Council of Churches. His understanding of the ecumenism approach to the achievement of unity is reducing all points of faith to the lowest common denominator. Colson contends this will not produce unity (1992, 104). Unity must have some common basis if it is to be achieved.

A. T. Robertson notes that the Greek word translated “one” in Jesus’ high priestly prayer means, “Oneness of will and spirit.” He goes on to write that, “The disciples had union, but lacked unity or oneness of spirit as was shown that very evening at supper (Luke 22:24; John 13:4-15)” (1932, 278). The Luke passage noted by Robertson is one in which after the Last Supper, the disciples got into an argument as to who among them was the greatest. Jesus taught them that the greatest among them was the one who was the servant of all. He then demonstrated that by washing the disciples’ feet (John 13).

William Hendriksen agrees with Robertson’s point as he argues that the unity Christ desired and prayed for was not some formal gathering of people in the his name. True unity goes deeper than people meeting together, the unity Christ desired for his followers was comparative to the unity experienced in the Godhead between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Whereas the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were one in essence, the followers of Christ can be one in heart, mind, spirit, mission, and purpose (1981, 364-365). Unity in the church is a matter of the heart where the Holy Spirit works to crucify personal agendas and bring the individual members into line with the will of the Father.
Both these scholars describe the essence of unity in terms like agreement of spirit, will, mind, effort, and purpose. How does one determine what another’s spirit, will, mind, and effort, are? This writer believes these can be determined through the identification and defining of the core values of an individual or group. Once an individual or group has identified and defined their core values, they will have an idea as to whether or not they have a basis for unity. If they do not have some significant agreement of the spirit, will, and mind expressed in their core values then there is no foundation upon which to establish an effective relationship.

There is a second issue in Jesus’ prayer that expresses the important purpose the unity of believers would play in the fulfillment of the mission of the church. The reason Jesus intently prayed for the unity of all believers was so “that the world may believe” (John 17:21 NIV). Colson makes this point, “Unity is the prerequisite for effective witness” (1992, 116).

When the church proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, one of the results of receiving Christ into one’s heart is a changed life. Through Christ, one is brought into right relationship with God and should be brought into right relationship with others in the faith. The church living out the unity for which Jesus prayed gives evidence of the power and love of Christ. As a result, the church has something to offer an individual that is very different from the world. The world teaches one to be selfish and to do what is in one’s own best interest. The church is a community of believers who worship and work together to fulfill a God-mandated mission that brings glory to God and benefit to each other.
When there is conflict in a church, especially between a pastor and the church,
people get hurt and the witness of the church is harmed; therefore, when a pastor and
church are considering coming together in a pastor/church relationship, much time and
careful consideration must be given, and both should use all means available to get to
know each other as well as possible. It is imperative that they get to know each other’s
spirit, will, heart, and mind, as would be expressed in their core values. This will assist
them in determining whether or not they have a significant basis on which to establish a
relationship. Unity between the pastor and church will be one of the keys to leading
others to believe. Conversely, disunity between the pastor and church will result in
conflict that could render the witness of the church ineffective, thereby negating the
opportunity to bring others into the Kingdom of God.

The second and third place in which the word “unity” is used in the New Testament
is found in Ephesians 4:3, 13: “Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in
the bond of peace...Until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of
the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (TNIV). Here
Paul compels the Christians at Ephesus to live out the teachings of the Christian faith
because in doing so the church can not only attain but maintain unity.

In thinking about unity, it is important that one take note of the source of unity. Paul
wrote that Christians are to “maintain the unity of the Spirit”. To maintain something, one
must first possess it. Paul identified the source of unity to be the Holy Spirit, which
indicates that unity is produced and given to the Church by the Spirit.

One might obtain a better understanding of why Paul took the time to note and
emphasize the source of unity by analyzing the make-up of the Church at Ephesus. This
church was composed of Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, men and women possessing different personalities, cultural backgrounds, and personal preferences. With such a diverse gathering of people, human efforts alone would not produce a real spirit of unity. If unity was to be achieved among the gathering of Christians at Ephesus it would take a divine counselor, whom Jesus identified as the Holy Spirit, to come alongside them and make them one. “One body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:4-5, TNIV).

While unity is given by the Holy Spirit, the Church is not without responsibility. This is indicative in Paul’s command to “maintain the unity of the Spirit”. The Spirit gives the gift of unity; however, it is the responsibility of the church to maintain it. This in turn means that unity requires constant attention and work by the church. Thus, one of the goals of this project is to remind pastors and churches of the responsibility each has in the quest to be faithful to the scriptural teaching to maintain the unity of the Spirit. In the pastoral call process, the prospective pastor and church should be cognizant of the importance that unity between the two plays in the health and witness of the church. Since unity is so vital to the success and effectiveness of ministry, each should be willing to take the time and expend the energy needed to explore whether or not there is a basis of unity between them. Part of that possible foundation for unity will be found in the comparison of core values.

The Images of Unity in Scripture

The Scriptures not only contain numerous exhortations that call the people of God to live in unity, but there are also many vivid images that compel Christians to practice
unity. These images serve as illustrations of what can be accomplished when the followers of Christ live and work together in oneness. While there are many images that illustrate unity throughout the Scripture, only four will be discussed in this document.

The Trinity

The Trinity of God is an image of unity. This is the position of Gilbert Bilezikian as he writes, “Thus, one need only go three verses into the Bible to discover what is amply taught in the rest of Scripture, especially in the New Testament, that God is presented as a tri-unity of divine entities existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the eternal community of oneness from whom all other communities derive life and meaning” (1997, 17). In other words, the Trinity serves as the primary model of what it means to live and work in unity.

The Trinity is difficult to describe. Many scholars have struggled to come up an anthropomorphic illustration that would adequately illuminate humanity’s understanding of the Trinity. It is an image seen in scripture; however, it is not easily described.

God is revealed throughout the Scriptures as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity has his own characteristics, yet one never sees conflict, contradiction, or division among them. Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30, TNIV). He also said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” And he went on to say, “The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:9b & 10B, TNIV). From these quotations of Jesus, it is obvious he had no problem submitting to the Father. The words Jesus spoke came from the Father and the works he did were done by the Father working through
him. There was no jealousy or concern as to who receives the credit; it did not matter
because it was the word and works of the triune God.

That same attitude continues where the Holy Spirit is concerned. Jesus was quoted
as saying in John 16:13-15:

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will
not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is
yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he
will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said
the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you. (TNIV)

The Spirit only speaks what he receives from Jesus, who has received what he spoke
from the Father. The Spirit shows no indication of having a problem submitting to Christ
or the Father. The three are one, a divine harmony.

That is God’s template for the church, each member submitting to the other with no
spirit of jealousy or concern about who gets the credit. Despite who is doing the work, the
work of the community of the church is one. That is what is important.

Humanity was created in the image of God. Sin entered the world and destroyed
that image, but through Christ, sinful humanity is reconciled to God and born into the
community of faith, the church. Accordingly, the church should reflect the image of God
by living in loving unity. Grenz says it well:

The creation of humankind in the divine image must be related to humans in
fellowship with each other. God’s own character can only be mirrored by humans
who love after the same manner of the perfect love which lies at the heart of the
Triune God. Because God himself is triune, we are in the image of God only as we
enjoy community with others. Only as we live in fellowship can we show forth
what God is like. (1998, 80)

The one sure way the church can be a revelation of God to the world is to live and work
in unity as illustrated in the Trinity. For that reason, the church should value unity and be
willing to give as much time, attention, and energy needed to attain and maintain it.
The Tower of Babel

As one reads the account of building the Tower of Babel, one can derive several points that held the people in unity. One point was they all spoke the same language. According to Keil and Delitzsch, "The unity of language of the whole human race follows from the unity of its descent from one human pair" (1996, 109). A second point of unity was a unity of purpose. Genesis 11:4 notes their purpose was to build a city and tower that would reach heaven that in turn would allow them to make a name for themselves. This was part of their folly that revealed their unity to be an ungodly unity. God had promised Abram that he would make a name for Abram. It was not humanity's place to make a name for itself.

Genesis 11:6 says, "And the Lord said, Behold they are one people and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing they propose to do will be impossible for them" (RSV). God recognized what could be accomplished by these people living and working in unity. The problem, however, was that their unity was of their own making and their goal left out the purpose for which they were created. The purpose for which all of humanity was created was to bring glory and honor to God. This image of unity serves as a reminder that much can be accomplished through unity, but it must be a godly unity. A godly unity will have as its purpose and goal to bring glory and honor to God.

Many times, a pastor's or church's purpose and goal will be expressed in a statement of core values. If that pastor and church have a similar purpose and goal as revealed in the comparison of their core values, with the help of the Spirit they have a basis for a unified relationship and work.
The Body of Christ

The New Testament is rich in images of unity; however, there is no other image as rich as the church being the body of Christ. Paul made reference to the church being the body of Christ in several of his letters. In Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23, 30 and Colossians 1:18, he clearly identified Christ as the head of the body. He illustrated the unity of the body of Christ in I Corinthians as he wrote, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (I Cor. 12:12-13, RSV). Paul went on in the balance of I Corinthians 12 to elaborate on how the physical body is made up of many parts such as the ear, eye, nose, foot, and hand and how those parts must operate in unity if the body is to function properly. This is pure logic, even “Socrates pointed out how absurd it would be if the feet and hands should work against one another when God made them to cooperate” (Robertson 1931, 171). Just as God created the human body to work in unity, he also created the church to work in the same manner. When the physical body does not work in unity, it cannot function, and so it is with the church.

There is one other important element of unity revealed in this image. Unity includes diversity. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 12:4-7,

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (TNIV)

The word “diversity” causes great concern for some. Many think of diversity as meaning division or disunity, which is not an accurate interpretation. In addressing the issue of diversity and unity, Massey contends that diversity is compatible with unity in the
church. In fact, his position is that the New Testament recognizes the diversity of the body of Christ and teaches that unity can be achieved in the midst of the diversity through the working of the Holy Spirit. “The unity of the Church is rooted in the work of Christ. The diversity of the Church is rooted in human nature” (1979, 78). In other words, just because Christians prefer a different style of worship or approach to fulfilling the mission of the church, that does not mean that Christians cannot experience unity. The central issue that unites is a common faith in Christ, and diversity is how one practices and lives out that faith.

This is one of the underlying theological issues of this project. A pastor and church are unified by their common faith in Christ; however, the diversity between the two will be in their personal preferences and approaches to living out that faith and strategies in fulfilling the mission of the church. These diversities will be revealed in the core values identified and defined by the pastor and church. “Core values are not just ideals toward which congregational participants strive, but real preferences that congregational participants actually make in daily life. Core values are not just goals that congregational participants seek to achieve, but real choices that shape the lifestyles of congregational participants individually and collectively” (Bandy 1998, 144).

When there are significant differences in the core values of a pastor and church, it does not always mean that one or the other is wrong. It may mean that even though they have a common faith in Christ, they have different preferences in how that faith is lived out and how the mission of the church is fulfilled. These differences should serve as an indicator that the two may not be compatible and that it would be wise to investigate other options. It would be better for a pastor and church to enter into a relationship with
similar preferences and a similar approach to the practice of the Christian faith and
ministry. That way there would be fewer obstacles to achieving an effective ministry.

The Bride of Christ

The last image of unity to be explored is that of the church as the bride of Christ.
Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:31-32, “As the Scriptures say, a man leaves his father and
mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. This is a great mystery,
but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one” (NLT).

Paul was quoting Genesis 2:24 in which he reminded his readers that God’s idea for
marriage from the beginning was that it was to be a monogamous relationship between
one man and one woman uniting together. “Jesus quoted this verse in arguing for the
permanence of marriage (Matt. 19:5), and Paul quoted it in a passage that compares the
marital relationship to the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31)”
(Erickson 1998, 1139). The oneness or unity that is experienced in a marriage is the unity
that must be experienced in the church’s relationship with Christ. A wife must be
committed to her husband and he is to be committed to her if there is going to be a
successful relationship and life together. The same is true if pastor and church are to
experience a successful and effective relationship together.

When pastor and church are considering entering into a relationship, it is similar to
the marriage relationship. There are those who even refer to the pastor/church
relationship as being a good or bad marriage. “Good marital preparation requires that
couples get in touch with the spoken and unspoken values, traditions, and expectations
that each one brings to the marriage” (Umidi 2000, 35). If a prospective couple does not
significantly share the same values, traditions, and expectations, the marriage will be
difficult, conflictual, and may be lost. The same is true of a prospective pastor and church who are considering entering into a relationship.

Jesus said in Luke 14:28, “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it” (NASV)? The process of identifying, defining, and comparing the core values of a prospective pastor and church who are considering entering into a relationship is just part of calculating the cost or viability of the relationship.

When a prospective couple does not take the time and put forth the effort to learn about each other’s values, traditions, and expectations, many times the marriage fails. The same is true for a prospective pastor and church. If the pastor and church do not take the time to learn about the values, traditions, and expectations each has, the relationship may end in conflict and division.

**Disunity in the Church**

Thus far, the focus of this chapter has been on unity; however, to provide some sense of balance, the following will briefly explore the subject of disunity. In fact, the reflection on disunity may help paint a clearer picture of the positive effects of its opposite.

Jesus spoke about the effects of disunity in Luke 11:17 when he said, “Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls” (NASV). The context of this statement is an occasion in which Jesus cast a demon out of a man. His enemies used this to attempt to discredit him as well as to slander his character by accusing him of casting out the demon by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler
of the demons. Hearing their slanderous accusation, Jesus responded by saying, “a house divided against itself falls” (NASV).

That principle is correct whether it occurs with the devil and his kingdom of darkness or with Christ and the Kingdom of God. “If Jesus were Satan’s ally, the exorcisms would represent a mutiny, and neither a kingdom nor a house can stand if there is internal dissension” (Culpepper 1995, 241). Internal dissension is just as detrimental and destructive, if not more so, as external opposition.

One must remember that the church is on a redemptive mission and has an enemy that seeks to stop the fulfillment of that mission. The strategy of the enemy is to use whatever means necessary to derail the church from affecting its God-ordained mission, including internal dissension. One of the primary areas in which the enemy will attempt to initiate internal dissension is in the pastor/church relationship.

This project is an attempt to develop a process that will alleviate some issues the enemy can use to create internal dissension between a pastor and a church. The wise thing to do is to attempt to identify and address the points of possible dissension during the pastoral call process. A primary point of possible dissension is in the core values held by each. Core values define, direct, inspire, shape, influence, and affect individuals and organizations. Both pastor and church invest emotion, time, and energy in their core values.

Aubrey Malphurs uses three key words in his definition of core values: constant, passionate, and sacred. Core values are constant because they provide stability in a climate of accelerated change. Core values are passionate because, “A good core value
touches the heart and elicits strong emotions” (2004, 34). Core values are sacred, because for Christians they are rooted in Scripture.

The one word that Malphurs uses that makes core values such a vulnerable target for the enemy is that core values can be passionate. Core values have much emotional investment in them. If the enemy can stir up the emotions of a pastor or church, he can cause dissension between the two. When a group of persons who form an organization such as a church have their emotions stirred, they act out of their emotions rather than use common sense. Emotions tend to cloud one’s understanding of an issue. As a result, people do not have a clear perspective and often act out of misunderstanding.

As a pastor and a church are attempting to work out their relationship, and there are points of disagreement, the pastor and the church may feel that their core values are being threatened. This precipitates an emotional reaction because core values are passionate, and as a result, the pastor and the church react out of emotion rather than attempting to communicate, clarify, and come to a clear understanding of each others’ position. Consequently, the pastor, the church, and others are wounded, the witness of the church is tainted, and the mission of the church is derailed. The logic of Jesus, “a house divided against itself falls,” proves to be true.

Another notable example of disunity is found in the church at Corinth. Following Paul’s greeting to the church at Corinth, he quickly revealed the main purpose of his letter as he strongly exhorted the church to resolve its differences and be united. He wrote, “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought” (I Cor. 1:10, TNIV).
An analysis of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians reveals that there were basically four primary problems: factions, incest, lawsuits, and sexual immorality. Paul addressed all four of these problems in the first six chapters, but he spent the majority of his time addressing the division in the church caused by the various factions. The reason he spent so much time on this issue is due to the fact “the Corinthian divisiveness to varying degrees underlay all other problems” (Blomberg 1994, 42). Sigurd Grindheim goes so far as to say, “The divisions are therefore indicative of the fact that the Corinthians are jeopardizing their salvation” (2002, 689). The disunity in the Corinthian Church was a serious problem.

There appears to be two points of division in the Corinthian Church. One point was that the members of the church were aligning themselves with four different Christian leaders: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. This was offensive to non-believers because it smacked of the political climate of the day in which political rivals attempted to garner more and more power and authority. As a result, political leaders did nothing for the good of the whole community, but only rewarded those who supported them, thus dividing the community.

Non-believers lived with this kind of division every day; they were looking for some place where there was a sense of justice and equality. The message of the Gospel proclaimed by the church at Corinth promised that justice and equality, however, was not being practiced among its members.

The second issue was a social division between the rich and the poor and the educated and uneducated. This was of special concern because it went against the message of the Gospel. The Corinthian Church was proclaiming a message that in Christ
there was no longer Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, but that all were equal in Christ. Nevertheless, non-believers were not witnessing this being lived out among the church at Corinth because of the difference made between the social classes in the church. This, too, was not different from what the non-believers struggled with each day of their lives.

The church at Corinth was hurting its witness. It was proclaiming a message of love and unity but it was not living out what it proclaimed. As non-believers listened to the message of the Gospel and observed the lifestyle of the members of the church, they saw no difference between the church and the world. Therefore, as a result of the division in the church, non-believers were not compelled to respond to the message of the Gospel.

As one observes the church in the 21st century, there is evidence that not much has changed. For example, a new pastor goes to a church. The pastor connects with several members of the church and even leads some non-believers to faith in Christ. This group supports and loves the pastor. Then there are those who for various reasons do not like the new pastor. This group attempts to garner as much support as possible, choosing one or two more vocal members to lead the disgruntled group. The disgruntled group begins to complain and attack the new pastor, thus precipitating conflict with those who support the pastor. As time passes and the conflict escalates, the pastor leaves along with some members of the church. All the while, non-believers look on from the outside, losing what little respect they may have had for the church and losing any interest they may have had in making a profession of faith. Many times it takes years to repair the damage.

This is why the core values of both pastor and church should be taken seriously. The witness of the church and the eternal life of many souls are at stake. Paul compelled
the Corinthians to resolve their differences and be united. The church in the 21st century should heed his advice.

The Achievement of Unity

The exhortations and images of unity in the Scripture leave little doubt that one of God’s greatest desires for his followers is that they live in unity. Yet, as one surveys the church in the 21st century, one sees a church that is anything but united. One can see division at all levels of church life. There is division in local congregations and in the state, national, and international levels of the church. The church is divided by such issues as race, culture, theology, doctrine, and denominational structures. The age-old issue that the church has wrestled with is how to achieve unity.

This is an issue at every level of church life. Since the scope of this project is the local church, that will be the focus of this section. In a survey of the literature that addresses the subject, scholars and authors offer numerous approaches to the achievement of unity in the church. Some approaches are founded on specific passages of scripture in which the writer, through an exegesis of the passage, identifies steps the church must take to achieve unity. This is the approach of Craig Blomberg, who offers the following steps to achieving unity in the church:

1. Focusing on the cross of Christ, (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5.)
2. Understanding true spiritual wisdom, (1 Corinthians 2:6-16.)
3. Recognizing the fundamental equality of all believers, (1 Corinthians 3:1-23.)

Another approach is to survey all the writings of a biblical writer such as Paul and identify some steps for the achievement of unity based on a summary of those writings. Author John Cowden discovered what he believed to be God’s plan for unity by
analyzing the collective writings of Paul and formulating the following steps to achieving unity in the church. In Cowden's interpretation of the writings of Paul there must be: a common standard of authority, a removal of differences, a removal of feelings, a common access unto the Father, a democratic church, a foundation of unity, an understanding of the units of union, and recapitulation, if the church is to achieve unity (1923, 62-93).

Other writers, such as theologian Gilbert Stafford, reflected on all the writings of the New Testament to establish what he believes to be a process the church must work through to achieve unity. Stafford identified multiple levels the church must negotiate to achieve unity. These levels are like a staircase in which the church must begin with the first step and systematically ascend upward to the goal of unity. Each step is built on the other; therefore, it is vitally important not to skip a step. The levels identified by Stafford are: Christology at the center, worshiping with one another, praying with and for each other, working with each other, sharing resources, the authority of Scripture, listening to what the Spirit says to the churches, inter-tradition studies and conversations, convergence of understandings, the ultimate goal this side of heaven: unity at the Lord 's Table; a common identification; a united mission and witness; the integrative compatibility of services, structures, and ministries; and mutual love in diversity, and finally at the heavenly throne (1996, 286-313).

While all of the above mentioned approaches to achieving unity in the church are valid and viable, there was one other approach that intrigued this writer. The intrigue comes from the fact that the issues noted for the achievement of unity in the church are simple yet all-encompassing: simple in that there are only five essentials for the achievement of unity, yet all five essentials encompass much if not all the steps and

These elements are essential to achieving unity in the church. Observation and experience, however, reveal that these alone simply do not work. One of the main reasons they do not work is the fact the church is made up of fallible human beings. They are fallible because they do not possess perfect knowledge and they can be biased in their thoughts and opinions. One writer describes the early church as, “not an ideal church, with saints whose perfect lives leave us panting with frustration over our failures and imperfections. It was a church with people just like us, but who nevertheless, were available to God and were used to do great things for him” (Fernando 1998, 434). Despite the fact that pastors and churches practice many if not all of the elements noted above, the church still experiences conflict. Therefore, something more must be needed in addition to the elements above.

One must realize that there are many dynamics involved in the pastor/church relationship other than spiritual and theological. It is imperative for a pastor and a church to consider the roles played by such things as personality type, leadership style, cultural background, and core values. These are important factors in whether or not a pastor and a church will be able to have an effective working relationship.

There may be those who would argue that when the spiritual/theological elements noted above are in place there should be unity in the church. However, the scriptures illustrate that even godly leaders experience conflict. A primary illustration of this is found in Acts 15:36-41 in which a conflict arose between Paul and Barnabas.
Paul and Barnabas were godly men who had experienced a long-term, effective, and united ministry together. One commentator described their relationship by writing, "They were so perfectly matched by talents, temperament, and Holy Spirit gifts; each needed the other" (Ogilvie 1983, 237). Paul and Barnabas were holy men, committed to maintaining the unity of the Spirit; however, as they prepared for a second missionary journey, a conflict arose between them.

On their first missionary journey together, Barnabas’ cousin, young John Mark, had accompanied them. Yet, when their journey turned toward Perga and Pamphylia, two areas where Paul and Barnabas experienced much resistance and difficulty, John Mark abandoned them and returned home. As Paul and Barnabas prepared to go on a second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to again take John Mark with them. Paul, on the other hand, would not allow it and as a result, a strong conflict arose between the two. It was such a strong conflict that Acts 15:39a says, "They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company" (TNIV).

While these men had experienced a long and united relationship, they encountered a circumstance that revealed their different values. Acts 15:37 says, "Barnabas, wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them" (TNIV). The English translation of this verse does not really reveal the strong feeling Barnabas had about taking John Mark along on this second missionary journey. Robertson translates this as, "was minded to take with them" in which he goes on to interpret as, "Barnabas willed, wished and stuck to it" (1930, 240). It is obvious that Barnabas was bound and determined to give John Mark a second chance.
There is much speculation as to why Barnabas was so insistent on giving John Mark a second chance. Some have mused that it was due to the fact that John Mark was related to Barnabas. This most likely did have some influence in the matter. Others have theorized that it may have been God’s will for Paul and Barnabas to separate in order to pursue other ministries he had for them. It is also possible that Barnabas’ strong feeling had a connection with a core value that he held.

Barnabas had a core value that was constant, passionate, and biblical. In fact, his core value was so constant that it came to be the primary characteristic for which Barnabas was known. Barnabas was known as the “son of encouragement” (Acts 4:36, TNIV); he possessed a core value that he was to encourage other people. That core value is what drove his ministry. In fact, in Acts 11, when the church at Antioch began to form, the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to work with them because of his ministry focus of encouragement. Acts 11:23 says, “When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts” (TNIV).

Barnabas’ core value of encouragement is revealed in his determination to give John Mark a second chance; however, when Barnabas presented the idea to Paul, he adamantly refused. When Paul balked, Barnabas’ passion about being an encourager rose up and he strongly disagreed with him because his core value was being threatened. Barnabas was determined, based on that core value to not back up, even if it meant the end of his relationship with Paul.

Paul, on the other hand, was just as passionate about his position that John Mark not go with them. Fernando notes that while it is not written, “perhaps the pain of the public
confrontation in Antioch after Barnabas went along with Peter (Gal. 2:13) had something to do with the severity of this conflict. Mark may have been in some way responsible for inciting the Judaizers to action, which would have made Paul all the more wary of taking him on” (1998, 431).

While this may have influenced Paul’s decision, it could be argued that Paul’s core values also had a significant impact on his decision. In observing Paul’s life both before and after he met Christ, it is obvious that one of the primary core values that Paul possessed was a steadfast, unrelenting commitment to the cause. This is obvious in the manner in which he persecuted the church. Before encountering Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul believed the men and women who were a part of “the Way” (Acts 9:2, TNIV) posed a threat to God and his Law. It is also obvious as Paul wrote in Galatians 1:14 about how he was “extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” (TNIV). Again in Philippians 3:6 he illustrates his commitment to the traditions of his fathers by reminding his readers of his “zeal, persecuting the church” (TNIV).

The commitment that Paul exhibited against Christ is also seen for Christ after his Damascus road encounter. In all of Paul’s ministry pursuits, there is not one recorded occasion when he considers turning back. No matter what the circumstances, hunger, shipwreck, snake bite, imprisonment, beatings, even in the face of death, he never relented. Paul was a driven man. He was driven by his belief that time was short and Christ’s return would be soon; therefore, the Gospel had to be proclaimed. He wrote in Romans 13:11-12:

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (TNIV)
When Paul gave himself to a cause, he was committed to the very end. Commitment was one of his core values in that it was constant, passionate, and biblical. Paul was committed and it appears that he expected anyone else with whom he worked to have a similar level of commitment. Right or wrong, because of his passionate commitment, he did not believe he had time to give John Mark a second chance. Like Barnabas, Paul was not going to relent.

This is a situation therefore, in which two godly men came to an impasse because of their core values. Neither man was necessarily wrong. It is important to be an encourager in order for others to mature into an effective ministry. Commitment is also important because ministry at times is difficult and if a pastor or a church is not truly committed survival is questionable. While both are important core values for an effective ministry, this is a situation in which the two could not agree. For that reason, it was best that Paul and Barnabas separate to pursue other ministry opportunities. As a result, Barnabas entered into a ministry relationship with John Mark and Paul entered into a ministry relationship with Silas. Both of these ministry relationships were effective and beneficial in the work of the Kingdom.

The same is true for a pastor and a church who are considering entering into a pastor/church relationship. A pastor/church relationship can be difficult enough when they have significant agreement of core values; however, it becomes almost impossible if they do not have such an agreement. When this is the case, intense conflict can result. In such a situation, much if not all of the time and energy of a pastor and a church can be spent on the conflict rather than doing the work of ministry. Since experience reveals that a pastor and a church often do not know how to disagree in a Christian manner, people
end up getting hurt, the witness of the church is damaged, and ministry is rendered ineffective. Much of this could be avoided if a pastor and a church would take the time and energy to identify and define their core values and then compare them during the call process.

A pastor and a church oftentimes base their decision of entering into a pastor/church relationship on externals. Many make their decisions on appearances, communication ability, family, pay package, and church prestige but rarely take the time to know each other’s heart. If there is not a significant agreement of core values, even though everything else may appear to be a match, this may be the Holy Spirit’s way of revealing that both the pastor and the church should seek other opportunities. It may not be that a pastor or a church is wrong, but like Paul and Barnabas, what they value in ministry is incompatible, and God may have other plans for both.

Malphurs shares an experience of a significant dissimilarity of core values between a pastor and a church in his book, *Values Driven Leadership*, that illustrates this point. He relates the story of a fifty-year-old church in Texas that began in what was then a rural community. The first pastor led the church from humble beginnings to a membership of around 250 and remained the pastor for some thirty years or so. Following his long tenure the church had five pastors over a ten year period.

After fifty years, the church extended a call to a second career minister fresh out of seminary in the Northeastern part of the United States. Pastor Dave and his wife had been a part of a church during seminary that valued reaching out to the un-churched. He had used a number of new and contemporary methods to reach many people.
By the time Pastor Dave arrived at the New Hope Church in Texas, it was no longer a rural church but was being swallowed up by the burgeoning city. As a result, there were many new people moving to the area and, many of them visited the church. Malphurs noted that under Pastor Dave’s ministry many people had come to faith in Christ and were especially attracted to his style of ministry (1996, 8).

As a result, the little New Hope Church, which had dwindled down to eighty, was once again growing. Many of the new members were young families with babies, toddlers, and children. The New Hope Church had allowed their facility to deteriorate and the new members were asking for the facilities to be updated and expanded to fit their needs. This resulted in a conflict with the “old-timers” who had been at the church for many years. When the conflict came to a head, much to the surprise of the “old-timers”, Pastor Dave sided with the new people because their requests fit into his vision for the church, a vision that he had not discussed with the church leadership.

After this confrontation, Pastor Dave stayed with the church for another year before he was asked to leave. Consequently, he left the ministry, all the new members of the church left to attend other churches, and the New Hope Church returned to the same eighty members it had before he came. People were hurt and the reputation and witness of the church was damaged.

In summarizing what went wrong, Malphurs writes, “We could place the blame on both sides. However, a primary missing ingredient in the candidating recipe was a discussion of core ministry values” (1996, 9). He notes that if both Pastor Dave and the New Hope Church had taken the time to identify and articulate their core ministry values
while in the call process, both would have realized that if they chose to enter into a pastor/church relationship there were going to be major challenges (1996, 9).

Pastor Dave was a godly man who after working with Malphurs in identifying, defining, and articulating his core ministry values went on to plant a successful church. The New Hope Church worked with Malphurs in identifying, defining, and articulating their core ministry values and used the comparison of those values with any prospective pastor they considered calling. Therefore, they found a pastor who had similar core ministry values; they called him to be their pastor and had a successful ministry. The issue that caused the conflict between Pastor Dave and the New Hope Church was their core ministry values were not in agreement. Each one, like Paul and Barnabas, felt so passionately about these issues that they could not compromise.

While the elements of holiness, community, agape love, dialogue and debate, education, and other elements are essential to the achievement of unity, experience proves something more is needed. It appears that one of the other elements needed for a pastor and a church to achieve unity lies in identifying, defining, and comparing of core values.
CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The relationship between a leader and group of followers is far more complicated than it appears. Mats Alvesson writes:

Understanding leadership calls for careful consideration of the social context in which processes of leadership take place. Leadership is not just a leader acting and a group of followers responding in a mechanical way, but a complex social process in which the meanings and interpretations of what is said and done are crucial. Leadership then is closely related to culture—at the organizational and other levels. (2002, 94)

There are many dynamics that make up the complex social process that takes place in the leader/follower relationship. One is the core values held by both leader and followers.

Leadership theory identifies this concept as "values-based leadership." This is somewhat new to the study of leadership. Consequently, a limited amount of empirical research has been conducted. There is even less research that addresses those issues between pastor and church.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. Section one will explore the role values play in the leader/follower relationship. The second section will look at the role core values play in the leader/follower relationship. Finally, section three will examine the limited research and literature concerning the role core values play in the pastor/church relationship.
Values and Leader/Follower Relationship

The majority of the articles and books reviewed in this section address various facets of the leader/follower relationship in business, education, medicine, and other institutions and organizations. It may appear that there is little connection between the research and literature in these areas and the focus of this research project since the above noted disciplines occur in secular rather than religious organizations. Pastors are in positions that are similar to Chief Executive Officers and Presidents who lead secular companies, institutions, and organizations. The context is different but the principles are much the same. In the following paragraphs, the facets of how values are linked to the leader/follower relationship will be explored. Issues such as cultural differences, dialogue, shared values, trust, motivation, and change will be explored.

Values and Cultural Differences

A key element of this project is the importance of shared values between a leader and the group who follows. Pamela Austin Thompson discusses leadership development in two different cultures. She concludes that while there are many differences in the interpretation and application of leadership practices due to cultural issues, there are far more commonalities based on similar or shared values.

Thompson reports on a study in which she compared the American experience of nursing leaders with the nursing leadership development that is emerging in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The framework for her study was the cultural diversity between the American nursing leaders and CEE nursing leaders using the Dimensions of Leadership developed by the Center of Nursing Leadership. "These dimensions are a core set of values, beliefs, and behaviors that look at leadership beyond the traditional skill
sets of leadership practice” (2004, 192). In other words, in her study, Thompson identified a set of values that were common in both cultures. Those values served as the primary foundation of commonality or unity within the two cultures. The study revealed that while American nursing leaders and CEE nursing leaders differed in their practice of leadership, they found a basis for a relationship in that there was a significant agreement in their values despite the diversity of expression.

This relates to the pastor/church relationship in that it is not uncommon for a pastor to be called to a church that is quite different culturally from where the pastor has previously served or outside of the cultural context in which the pastor grew up. Thus, after a pastor arrives at a new church and begins the practice of ministry, that approach to doing ministry may be different from the traditional practice of ministry in that church culture. Since the new pastor approaches the practice of ministry differently from that of the culture of the church, the pastor is often perceived as not sharing a similar value system to the church. This, in turn, may cause the church to feel uncomfortable or threatened and result in conflict. This could be avoided if the pastor and church will take the time to dialogue with each other. Through dialogue it may be found that they both share similar ministry values; however, the problem may be that they practice them differently. Despite this difference, they can still have a ministry relationship together built on the foundation of their similar ministry values.

Sometimes the differences in values may be due to a difference in culture. A leader must be cognizant of the culture in which she is working. Leadership always has its challenges, especially, when one is attempting to lead in another culture because it will have increased challenges. Often leaders are not aware that they are leading in another
culture. Typically, when one thinks about another culture, one thinks of cultures outside one’s country of origin, however, leaders must realize that other cultures exist in the same city, state, region, and nation. If a leader is going to be effective she will have to have, “an awareness of and a willingness to investigate the reasons why people from another culture act as they do” (DuBrin 2000, 125). One of the determining influences may be the values they hold. If a leader is going to lead effectively in another culture, the leader must understand the values of that culture, accept and embrace those values, and find points of agreement with her values.

Therefore, when a pastor is called to a church that is in a different cultural context, the pastor should take the time to investigate, identify, and understand the values of that church culture. The pastor should share her interpretation of that culture with church leaders to be sure they are accurate followed by sharing her own values, noting where there is agreement as well as disagreement. If there is considerable divergence between the values of the pastor and church, both will have to consider whether they can accept that divergence and focus on the commonalities in order to build a ministry relationship. This will take ongoing dialogue and communication.

Values and Dialogue

One of the primary ways for leaders and followers to come to an understanding of each others’ values is through investigative dialogue. Investigative dialogue means that those involved go beyond just accepting what appears to be a similarity of values to discover in practice what their values are. Leaders and followers may use the same terms to communicate their values; conversely, their practice may differ significantly, which in turn can become a point of disagreement and conflict. Therefore, it is imperative that
leaders and followers engage in dialogue to come to a clear understanding of each others’ values.

Sandra Drower found this to be true in her study of “Social Work Values, Professional Unity and the South African Context”. South Africa is a divided nation and the cause of much of that division is the differing value systems of its many groups. The social work profession is a microcosm of the greater South African society and plays a significant role in affecting unity throughout the nation. Like the greater South African society, the division among social workers is due to considerable differences in their values systems. The social work associations have been working to formulate a code of ethics to be used by those in the profession based on shared values. Drower reports that in order to accomplish this monumental task one of the primary prerequisites has been careful, ongoing dialogue. If unity can be established in the social work profession in South Africa, it is believed it can then influence the whole society towards unity. The dialogue process among South African Social Workers has been ongoing on since the 1980’s. It is a long-term, tedious process that cannot and should not be hurried (Drower 1996, 141).

Core values are often neglected in the discussions between pastors and churches in transition. This neglect may be due to the assumption by both pastor and church that they hold similar values, or it may be due to the fact that those involved in those discussions may feel that dialogue about values require too much time and energy. A pastor and a church cannot come to an accurate understanding of each others’ values without intentional dialogue. When a pastor and church fail in this area, it can be a misstep leading to a short-lived, ineffective, and conflicting pastor/church relationship.
Shared Values

Shared values may be the most important facet of the leader/follower relationship. Gilbert Fairholm makes this point as he writes, “to be effective, individual group members must see it [their relationship with the group leader] as a personal relationship. They must see a melding of their personal values with the leader’s, their purposes with his, their methods with his” (2000, 63). Without this melding of the personal values of each group member with the values of the leader, leadership is difficult. For that reason, it is imperative that a leader and followers identify and define their values before they attempt to enter into a leader/follower relationship. If they do not have a significant agreement of values, then they have no basis for a leader/follower relationship. This is discussed in many sources. For example, it is not uncommon for leadership to be described as “influence”. One is not a leader because one holds a position of leadership. If a leader is to have followers he or she must have influence to gain their favor and commitment.

Barbara Van Knippenberg and Daan Van Knippenberg write about the use of influence tactics in the relational concerns between leader and follower. One of the tactics is the inspirational approach. Leaders can inspire followers to follow by appealing to the ideals, values, and aspirations that they share. This shows that leaders can inspire followers by connecting with the followers’ values (2004, 63).

This is an important principle especially in a church where members’ participation is voluntary. A pastor’s ability to lead is contingent on his or her ability to inspire church members. One key way to obtaining the influence that will motivate members to follow is a perception of shared values between the pastor and the church.
Mark Ehrhart and Katherine Klein substantiate this in a study in which they identified participants' values and personality dimensions to predict the participants' leadership preference. The study focused on a participants' preference for a charismatic leadership style over relation-oriented and task-oriented leadership. One of the assumptions of their study was that followers will most likely be drawn to leaders who share their values. When the study was completed, their assumption was found to be true in that followers did prefer leaders, no matter their leadership style, who shared their similar values (2001, 175-176). This supports the premise that shared values play a significant role in the leader/follower relationship.

In an article about leadership in the World Journal of Surgery, Wiley Souba contends that leadership is much more than a matter of position but a matter of the relationship between the leader and those who follow. He notes that one of the key forces that make leadership happen is culture. For Souba, culture includes the norms of behavior and the shared values of the people. Values serve to guide an organization and define how organizational members live and reach their goals. He makes the point that understanding the culture of an organization is vitally important because culture can either enable or block leadership (2004, 179).

He goes on to note that there is a second force that drives leadership in academic medicine and in any organization. That force is people because they are what make leadership happen. More specifically, it is the relationships between people that make leadership happen (2004, 180). The dynamics that connect members in an organization are values and norms. This implies that if a leader is going to have an effective
relationship in which the people follow him, he must share similar values and norms with those people.

This is true of the pastor/church relationship. Every church has its own “church culture” derived from the values and norms of the people who make up that church. Like academic hospitals, the way things are done is shaped and influenced by the church members’ values. Just because a person holds the title of Pastor does not necessarily mean that the pastor will be given the opportunity to lead. That will only happen when a pastor comes to an understanding of the church culture and builds relationships with the people demonstrating that he shares their values and norms.

In the book, Partnering: The New Face of Leadership, the editors address the issue of shared values by addressing a new trend in leadership thinking. “The celebrity-style of leadership of the past will give way to a new era of leaders as partners” (Tracy 2002, 10). They note the changing role of leadership that seeks to form partnerships both inside and outside the organization. Leadership is made more effective through partnering with others and sharing leadership.

This change from the celebrity-style leader to a partnering leader may also be in response to the current corporate climate in which both workers and customers seek to share in shaping the way businesses conduct their work. Fairholm, in his book Capturing the Heart of Leadership, writes about this trend as he points out that both workers and customers in the 21st century are demanding more involvement in policy making and operations of the companies for whom they work and do business (2000, 49).

The same attitude is spilling over into the church as many lay leaders and the laity seek to be more involved in defining the mission and vision of the church. If pastors
ignore this, then the people either aggressively or passively, depending on the personalities, may refuse to participate in making the mission and vision of the church come to life.

One of the first steps in developing a partnership is for leaders and followers to identify and define their values. Once that has been done leaders and followers must work to find common values that will become the principles that shape how an organization operates. Tracy reports that following this process and then strictly adhering to the organizational values produced a strong sense of unity between organizational leaders and followers. This unity is characterized by cooperation, positive attitudes, and enthusiasm. As a result, the organization becomes very profitable and competitive. Without question, both leaders and followers attribute this success to the adherence to their shared values (2002, 254-255).

The same could be said of a pastor and church who take the time to do the hard work of identifying, defining, and then adhering to a clear set of shared values. With the process illustrated above, both pastor and church leaders will have the opportunity to have input into the values of the church, thereby, giving them a sense of ownership. Those values, in turn, become the foundation for the mission and vision of the church.

Fairholm supports this thinking as he addresses the role of spirituality in leadership. He writes, “Leadership takes place only in a context of mutual trust based on shared vision, ideals, and values” (1997, 172). He concludes that if leaders are going to be effective, they must share the same values and vision as the members of the organization.
Therefore, shared values between leaders and followers are a must if there is going to be an effective working relationship that produces a desired end. James Kouzes and Barry Posner report:

In our own research, we’ve carefully examined the relationship between personal and organizational values. Our findings clearly reveal that when there’s congruence between individual values and organizational values, there’s significant payoff for leaders and their organizations. Shared values do make a significant difference in work attitudes and performance. (2002, 79)

The importance of shared values between leaders and followers are evident from the studies noted above in several disciplines, and this principle is also true for the pastor/church relationship.

Values and Trust

Another element in the leader/follower relationship is trust. Nicole Gillespie and Leon Mann conducted a study on “Transformational Leadership and Shared Values: the Building Blocks of Trust.” They explored the relationship between leadership practices and followers’ trust. Out of this exploration three factors were identified as engendering trust in leaders. One factor was shared values with the leader. The researchers report, “As values are commonly believed to guide behavior, sharing common values helps team members to predict how the leader will act in the future, and gives them the assurance that the leader is unlikely to act contrary to their shared values:...In short, shared values, shared goals, and consultative decision-making reduce uncertainty about the leaders’ future behavior and send a signal that the leader is unlikely to breach trust” (Gillespie and Mann 2004, 602).

This is a very important element to any leader/follower relationship, and is definitely essential for transformational leaders. In an organization where a leader is
transforming or leading into change, the members of the organization will not follow a leader whom they do not trust. If the leader has shown to share the same values as the individual members of the organization and has proven to always make decisions in light of those shared values, this leader has established trust to make necessary changes for the good of the organization.

Rick Edgeman and Jens Dahlgaard support this thought in their article, “A Paradigm for Leadership Excellence.” They contend that when a set of core values has been established by an organization, those core values define what is right and what is wrong for that organization. When a leader is confronted with alternative opportunities, the leader will have a guide by which to make the right choice. The freedom to make choices and changes in an organization is based on profound trust. That trust is built on a history of a leader making decisions, even when offered alternative courses of action, by the values she shares with her followers (1998, 75).

This is true in the pastor/church relationship. Often a pastor has the responsibility to make major decisions that affect the church. Many times, leaders and members of a church do not trust the pastor to make these major decisions because they are unsure if the pastor will make the decision in accordance with the values of the church. When the church is assured that the pastor shares the values they share, then they are more comfortable and trusting of the pastor to make major decisions because they are confident she will make those decisions in keeping with their values.

Values and Motivation

Shared values also serve to motivate those led to follow the leader as well as to remain committed in the face of adversity. This is addressed in an article by Steven Hitlin
and Jane Piliavin in which they review the various approaches to linking values with culture, social structure, and individual behavior. They note the motivational impact that values have on individual behavior. Not only does it serve in initial motivation but "values seem to be related to the commitment individuals maintain in the face of adversity" (2004, 380).

This principle is also found in a study of managers' personal value systems in five different organizations and their effectiveness in motivating their workers not only to make production but go beyond the minimal requirements. Sosik found that employees are more enthusiastic about their positions in their companies when they see their involvement in the bigger picture of the future. This is especially true when that vision is consistent with the employees' values and empowers them with some level of responsibility to help make the vision become reality (2005, 240).

One of the struggles that a pastor often encounters is the need to motivate the church to embrace and enact the vision of the church. A vision begins with values; values provide the basis for mission, and the mission in turn provides the foundation for the vision. Therefore, if the church has not been given the opportunity to share its values, and its values have not been included in the formation of the vision; it is not going to be motivated to help make the vision a reality. Followers are much more motivated to have a positive attitude and adopt a vision when they sense that they share the same values as does the leader.

Values and Change

Shared values are vitally important to any organization seeking to change. In the book, *Leadership for Change: International Perspectives on Relational Leadership*, the
writers report on a study conducted of the elements required for sustained improvement in school. The study notes the limitations of the traditional transactional and transformational theories for change and sustained improvements, and puts forth a theory or model that blends the two theories. It was found that a key element of change and sustained improvement of a school was found in the shared values and beliefs between the multi-levels of school leadership. “The types of school cultures most supportive of school improvement efforts appear to be those that are collaborative, have high expectations for both students and staff, that exhibit a consensus on values, that support a secure environment and those which encourage all teachers to assume leadership roles appropriate to their experience” (West, Jackson, Harris, and Hopkins 2000, 36). The school leaders found that shared values were a driving force behind creating school improvements as well as maintaining those improvements. Thus, shared values between leader and follower are a must for change and to sustain change and improvement.

If a church is going to continue to be viable in its context and community, it must be aware of the changing needs not only of its members but also those it seeks to serve. The church must constantly be developing new methods for meeting those needs. This requires change. In many situations, the pastor will be the primary catalyst for change. If a pastor does not share similar values with the members of the church, he will not have the trust of the people to effectively lead them to make needed changes to continue to be a viable ministry to their own members and other community constituents.

Shared values between the pastor and church are needed to make change as well as to sustain changes once they are made. When changes are made, there can be problems or requirements that were not anticipated. As a result, some church members may want to
abandon the changes and return to the safety and security of the former structure or methods of doing ministry. Therefore, a pastor will need the trust of the people, based in part on the fact that he shares the same values as the church members.

While more study is needed concerning the role the agreement of values between a leader and follower play in the leader/follower relationship, the current research reveals this is a valid issue. If leaders and followers are going to have a harmonious relationship, one of the primary building blocks is shared values.

**Core Values and the Leader/Follower Relationship**

It is evident from the preceding review that there is considerable research and literature about the role values play in the leader/follower relationship. While this is pertinent to this project, the project has a more narrow focus on the role core values play in the leader/follower relationship. More specifically this project focuses on the role core values play in the pastor/church relationship.

Values are defined as, “the settled beliefs that guide our actions and judgments of what is good, right, and appropriate” (Fairholm 2000, 79). While individuals have values, groups also have values, therefore, it is appropriate to include the definition of group values. “Group values represent those truths all or most members of a community share and know they should seek after [whether they do or not]” (Fairholm 2000, 79).

Core values, on the other hand, are a narrower category. For an individual, core values are defined as, “the principles that guide one’s actions in all aspects of one’s life” (Moore 2004, 231). All individuals have core values; however, in most cases they are implicitly understood by the individual and not necessarily explicitly articulated.
Individuals have core values that guide their lives and organizations have core values that guide organizational life. Organizational core values are "the answer to the question, 'what does your team believe in'" (Warner 2006, 28)? "Core values are the 'shoulds' of the business, the things so basic and so important that you won't let yourself walk away from them" (Nicolino 2000, 101). There are more complete definitions such as, "Core values are the organization's essential and enduring tenets—a small set of general values, not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency and not to be confused with specific cultural or operating practices that are included in the guiding principles" (Oden 1999, 85). "Core values are the organization's essential, enduring principles and most fundamental beliefs. They define how people live and what is important to them as they do their work, interact with others, and pursue their goals" (Souba 2004, 446).

Whether one is speaking of the core values of an individual or an organization, core values are the basic, uncompromising, non-negotiable principles that define and guide the life of an individual or organization. Individual leaders as well as individual members of an organization all have core values that define and guide both their private, public, and corporate life. Leaders and followers can be united together in a common purpose by identifying and defining what their individual core values are and then identifying their shared core values. When working with a group of people in any organization, including the church, each individual member of that organization has her own individual values that in some aspects will be similar to other members as well as unique. A leader has the responsibility of leading the group to identify the shared values of the majority of the group. Those common values become the core values that in turn, become the foundation
for the vision that shapes the way the organization operates and the parameters for what they want to become or accomplish.

Individual leaders, individual members, and an organization will have many values. Core values, however, are basic, uncompromising, non-negotiable, and few in numbers. Writers such as Fossel, Monroy, and Monroy (2000, 38), and Oden (1999, 73), note that an individual or company will typically have three to six core values. Those three to six core values cannot be compromised by the latest trends or fads nor will they change if the business culture penalizes the company for holding those core values (Souba 2004, 446). This is what sets core values apart from just values. When leaders, followers, or organizations identify and define their core values, they will be easy to remember and recall and will guide decisions and behavior.

Core values are more than just static principles devised for mere show; they produce action. For example, organizational core values can connect the employees of that organization even across cultural lines. Jacob contends:

Organizational core values play the pivotal role of tying employees together, irrespective of cultural background. They imbue the employees of a global organization, distributed all over the world, with a sense of commonality of purpose. There is an emotional component to the sense of identification with these core values. (2003, 95)

To support this statement, Jacob refers to a study by Vikhanski and Puffer (1993) who described how McDonald’s has been a great success in Moscow, Russia. When opening a McDonald’s restaurant in Moscow, the company disseminated the same core values to the Russian employees that they disseminate to the McDonald employees in America or anywhere else in the world. One of McDonald’s core values is that they are one big family and that they care about their employees’ lives both at work and at home.
To put this core value into action, they organized regular social activities for Russian employees.

When referring to the employees of the Moscow store, they called them collectively "the crew", which is the same practice that they use throughout the world. This practice made the Moscow McDonald's employees feel special, which motivated them to adopt the practices of McDonald's. Jacob also notes that the success of McDonald's restaurants across the world in defusing internal conflict is the result of their adherence to their strong core values (2003, 99).

A second action created by core values is that they tend to unite people. In a brief article about the Caterpillar Corporation, Chairman and CEO Jim Owens talks about the diversity of people who make up the Caterpillar Corporation. He notes that they come from different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences and their diversity is one of the key factors that make them a better company. Then he asks, "But what brings us together?" He responds by noting that it is their four core values of integrity, excellence, teamwork, and commitment. He said, "The core values are proof of Caterpillar's commitment to build a business in which employees take pride, be a company others respect and admire, and move forward in developing a better world" (Owens 2006). These core values are used in every Caterpillar plant around the world and they transcend culture and, like the McDonald's Corporation, unite their employees.

This is also affirmed in a commentary by Soubia who wrote about the increased demand for leadership in academic medical centers. He is concerned about the increased expectations of leaders and the need for some principles to help guide them. His
philosophy in this situation is to revisit the fundamentals, one of which is to establish a set of core values that will guide an organization in reaching its goals (2004, 445).

He notes the core values held by most academic medical centers are trust, respect, integrity, communication, and excellence. In commenting about trust, he identifies one of the primary roles core values play. Souba found from his conversations with other medical colleagues throughout the nation, that trust is the most frequent core value discussed. He identifies the core value of trust as, “the glue that holds the organization together and the lubrication that makes it possible to get the work done collegially and resourcefully” (Souba 2004, 446). This is true of any organization that has identified, defined, and implemented a set of core values. Those core values serve as the basis for their mission and purpose. Core values also serve as a lubricant in that they are a template for how decisions are made.

A district manager, seeking to unite his team, developed a three-step process that began with both he and his team developing a set of core values to guide their work. The reason the district manager established this as his first step in the process was due to his belief that, “An effective team can be described as a group with the willingness to believe in an agreed-upon set of values [core values] and the diligence to put those values into action” (Warner 2006, 28).

Once the team’s core values were agreed upon, they served as the basis for the goals on which the team would focus. This was followed by a plan to reach the goals. As a result, this new district manager developed a winning team.

The fact that core values help produce organizational effectiveness was found to be true in a study conducted with a not-for-profit healthcare system in which their five core
values were put in place throughout all sites. Their premise was that when an organization lives out its core values it will help the organization be more effective. To support their premise they cited a study by Collins and Porras that found cutting edge companies are motivated by core ideology that is born out of the companies’ core values and purpose (Fossel, Monroy, and Monroy 2000, 38).

They cited another example in the turnaround of Sears in which the company completely revamped its way of doing business. Management involved all 80,000 employees in the process of identifying six core values and that led to increased employee satisfaction, which in turn led to increased customer satisfaction and produced a greater profit. One of the main points was that the company did more than just articulate a set of core values; they implemented them into every aspect of the company (Fossel, Monroy, and Monroy 2000, 39).

Once the study was complete it was found that there was a clear connection between leadership commitment to core values and organizational effectiveness. But the study obviously revealed that for an organization to become more effective, it takes more than just articulating core values, it also requires demonstrating a commitment to the core values by implementing them throughout the organization.

In “Is Your Organization Ethically Fit?” David Jadwin writes about the many moral meltdowns such as Enron that are invading the American culture. He pronounces these meltdowns to be the result of, “impaired right and wrong decision making that leads to wrong moral choices” (2006, 72). There are already many laws in place that attempt to provide guidelines for such decisions and more laws can be constructed, but the real answer to this problem for individuals and organizations to be come ethically fit. Jadwin
proposes that the way for organizations to become ethically fit is by establishing and living out organizational core values.

Leaders, followers, and organizations are daily confronted with ethical challenges. Core values provide a template for how to respond to those ethical challenges. For example, an individual goes to the store, pays for a purchase, and the clerk gives back more change than was supposed to be given. How does one respond to that ethical challenge? Does one keep the extra money and say nothing, or does one call the attention of the clerk to the mistake? If one has a core value of honesty, then one calls the attention of the clerk to the mistake and returns the money.

The economic, business, and consumer climate of the 21st century is one that deals constantly with change. This is especially true in the health care field. The dilemma with which many health care systems are wrestling is how they continue to change to meet the changing market demand and at the same time remain true to their traditional ethics and responsibilities. In an attempt to address these concerns, researchers came up with twelve fundamental characteristics health care systems should embrace.

Core values are the number one characteristic listed. The authors write, "Over the past decade, there has been considerable research showing that the core values of an organization are a major factor in helping it survive changing economic, technological, and market conditions" (Coddington 2000, 40). This statement is adopted from the thesis of the book, Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies. The authors then identify several health care foundations and companies such as the Mayo foundation and the many Catholic hospitals that have made changes and innovations in response to market demands and yet have not compromised their core values. They assert that if
healthcare systems are going to be successful it will only happen as they discover and develop their core values. Identifying and defining core values are an essential process for the success of any company or organization.

Core values have been shown to cross cultural lines to unite employees of a international company, serve as the glue that holds an organization together, and as the lubricant to help work be done in a collegial fashion. At the same time, they provide an ethical template to assist individuals and organizations in meeting ethical decisions, help organizations become more effective in their work, and help produce needed changes. All of these concerns or issues in the corporate world are also issues and concerns for the church. Since it appears that identifying, defining, and implementing core values addresses and resolves these issues in secular organizations, they should help resolve similar issues in a church.

**Core Values and the Pastor/Church Relationship**

While there is a limited amount of literature focusing on the role of core values in the leader/follower relationship, it is more limited in regards to the pastor/church relationship. Malphurs, one of the few writers to address this subject, notes “Little information from a Christian perspective is available for pastors or churches on this concept that is so vital to a significant ministry in the twenty-first century” (2004, 9). A number of researchers and writers such as Gary McIntosh, Bill Hybels, George Barna, Rick Warren, John Maxwell, Stan Toler and others will often mention the subject of core values in their writings. However, the mere mention of the subject lacks an in-depth explanation of the role core values play in the pastor/church relationship and the development of mission and vision for the church.
Malphurs has written several books and articles that include information about core values and their relationship to the church and ministry. His most comprehensive work on the subject came in 1996 when he wrote, *Values-Driven Leadership: Discovering and Developing Your Core Values for Ministry*. About this book he writes:

This book was written for ministry organizations in general and for churches in particular to help them realize the importance of their ministry core values, which are such a vital part of their culture. Every Christian organization, as well as its leadership, needs to bring out, dust off, discuss, refine, develop, display, and implement its predominant values if it desires to make significant spiritual impact in the 21st century (1996, 11).

While attending a major event for church leaders in the 1990's, Malphurs heard Bill Hybels and Ken Blanchard emphasize the fact that leaders in the 21st century would not be given the authority to lead based on their position alone. Leaders in the 21st century would be those who could articulate a vision for their organizations, be it church or business that is based on the organization's core values. This intrigued Malphurs who in 1992 wrote the book, *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*. This book was written as an introduction to the importance of organizational core values. It was written to help pastors and church leaders understand that ministry concerns in the 21st century were going to be different from those in the 1990's. Ministry in the 21st century was going to focus more on ministry values rather than ministry vision. As a result, pastors and church leaders needed to begin to shift their mode of thinking.

In reference to the dynamic of core values and the church, Malphurs makes the point that organizational values exist on two levels. There is the individual level in which both the people in general and leaders have a set of core values that form the basis for what they do. Then there is the organizational level in which an organization such as a church or para-church ministry organization has a set of core values. He emphasizes that
it is vitally important that there be a good understanding of both the individual and organizational core values if a pastor and church are to have a long and successful ministry.

Malphurs points out that in church planting, the core values of the planting pastor will most likely become the core values of the church. This is due to the fact that the planting pastor will be the primary influence in shaping the mission and vision of the new church. Most likely, those who seek to become members of the new church will be motivated by the fact that they share similar core values to that of the planting pastor. If they do not share similar core values, then most will continue in their search for a church that shares their core values.

Of an established church that is going through pastoral transition, Malphurs emphasizes the importance that both a prospective pastor and a prospective church understand each others’ core values to assist in determining whether or not they are a good ministry match. One of the primary reasons for this is that core values are important to Christian ministry and values will determine the level of an individual’s involvement in the work of ministry and support of the church. Malphurs asserts that whether it be a pastor who is considering going to a specific church or an individual who is considering becoming a part of that church, it is important that both have identified and defined their own core values and then determined if the church has similar core values. If a pastor and the individual members of a church do not share similar core values, then there will be no catalyst to motivate them to work together. There will be conflict, rather than unity, thus nullifying ministry effectiveness and longevity.
Malphurs began *Values-Driven Leadership* by sharing a story about a second career pastor who graduated from seminary and took his first pastorate. In the candidating process, neither the pastor nor the pastoral search committee discussed their core values. For a time after the new pastor arrived, there was excitement and growth, however, this quickly dissipated and descended into conflict. The bottom line was that the pastor and church did not share core ministry values. As a result, the pastor/church relationship ended with both the pastor and the church wounded and their reputations tarnished. In response to this, Malphurs advises:

If a pastor such as David Johnson is candidating for a particular church—in our example, Hope Community Church—both the candidate and the church would be wise to articulate and compare their primary church values as well as their ministry visions. They need to ask, do we share the same basic core values? Is there a ministry match? Where do we agree or disagree? Do we fit together? As demonstrated in the life of Pastor David and Hope Church, this could make the difference between tragedy and triumph. (2004, 16)

It is vitally important that pastors and churches recognize the importance that a significant agreement of core values play in having a long and effective ministry relationship. Taking the time to identify, define, and compare core values is hard work; but as noted above, it could mean the difference in tragedy and triumph for a pastor and church.

While Malphurs introduced this cutting edge concept to pastors and churches, Joseph Umidi took it a step further by incorporating it as a specific step in the pastoral call process. In his book, *Confirming the Pastoral Call: A Guide to Matching Candidates and Congregations*, Umidi takes a close look at the basic factors a church has traditionally looked at in choosing a new pastor. He points out that many churches base their decision to call a pastor solely on his or her ability to preach. “Our research has revealed that churches that rely heavily on the role of the ‘anointed message’ in the
confirmation process do not gain a statistical advantage in the longevity of their new staff over those who emphasize different priorities. Long-term relationships aren’t built on infatuation. They are built on the bonding of common values” (Umidi, 2000, 7).

Umidi compares the relationship of a pastor and church to that of a marriage. He makes the point that the primary reason for disillusionment in a marriage is due to little or no marriage preparation. The same is true with the disillusionment many pastors and churches experience with each other; it is the result of poor preparation and examination in the call process. Couples who engage in good marital preparation take the time to not only learn about each others’ values, both spoken and unspoken, but they also explore each others’ traditions and expectations in marriage. This is true for a prospective pastor and church. They need to take the time to know and understand each others’ values, traditions, and expectations. Many times those values, traditions, and expectations are unspoken and even hidden. Angie Ward addresses this in an article in Christianity Today. She writes:

Most churches these days have some sort of mission or purpose statement. All churches, however, also have their own internal culture, a set of shared attitudes, values, and beliefs that define church and shape its practices. This deeply entrenched culture can be summarized into an ‘ethos’ statement which is almost never officially articulated, but is nonetheless extremely powerful. (Leadership Journal, Feb. 2005)

While the church may have a mission statement, supposedly shaped by the shared (core) values of the church, those articulated values may not really be the real values of the church. The articulated values may be what the church perceives Jesus wants them to be rather than how they really are. When the work of ministry begins, conflict arises because the unarticulated values are being violated. A pastor does not understand why there is conflict because he does not understand or know the hidden values of the church.
Ward makes the point that it takes a long time to uncover and understand these unspoken values. Once a pastor uncovers these unspoken values and determines if they match his own, then a pastor is well on his way to becoming an effective leader in that church. However, if the values do not match the values of the church, the pastor can continue in conflict and frustration or move to a church that does share his or her values.

This is why it is better for a pastor and church to do the hard work of identifying and defining their core values before the pastoral call process ever begins. Umidi writes, "Mission statements and resumes' tend to answer the questions, ‘What are we doing?’ or ‘What have we done?’ A statement of core values, on the other hand, answers the question, ‘Why are we doing what we’re doing?’" (2000, 36)? He also makes the point that church vision and mission statements are fluid whereas core value statements are more steadfast, thus giving a more honest picture of a pastor or a church.

He goes on to emphasize the importance that both a pastor and church identify, define, and articulate actual core values, not aspirational values. This is not an easy process. Umidi believes that one can quickly get a sense of what a church's core values are by looking at two things: the church budget and ministry programs. Whatever a church values will be evident in their budget because they will spend money to be sure that what they value is accomplished. Also, a church will program for what they value. For example, if a church says that one of their core values is outreach then a large percentage of their budget will be set aside for outreach work. Also, a large part of their ministries will be to reach the city and community for Christ. If there is not a significant percentage set aside in the budget for outreach or a significant number of ministry
programs that focus on outreach, then chances are outreach is not one of the core values of the church.

Thomas Bandy writes about how difficult it can be to identify, define, and articulate core values. He says, "Core values are not a matter of wishful thinking, imaginative self-interpretation, or projected self-image. Core values are a matter of consistent choices that shape the daily, monthly, and yearly behavior of the people in the congregation—both individually and collectively" (1998, 145). This is true not only for a church but for a pastor as well. Identifying and defining core values requires honest reflection.

In searching the literature that addresses core values and the pastor/church relationship, much if not all the literature points to one source that assists pastors and churches in identifying and defining their core values. Malphurs developed two core value audits, one for pastors and the other for churches. Other sources of literature that address how a pastor and church identify and define their core values mainly point to Malphurs' core value audits or some adaptation of them.

The identification and defining of core values involve far more than just completing a core values audit. If a pastor or church is to identify and define their core values both must understand that it is a process. Malphurs identifies four elements involved in the values discovery process: a decision concerning who is responsible for discovering values, a determination of what values you will seek to discover, the reasons for discovering these values, and the values audit itself (2002, 59).

It is vitally important that a pastor or church seeking to identify and define core values understand that it is a discovery process. Malphurs also emphasizes that a pastor or a church should remember that they are not creating their values in this process but
discovering what their values are as they currently exist and shape the way they think about and conduct ministry. Often a pastor or church working through this process tends to identify and define core values they aspire to have or that they assume Christ wants them to have rather than discovering their current core values. The process of identifying and defining of one's core values according to Umidi, "is really a matter of seeking to discover the heart of your leadership and your ministry" (2000, 36). Discovering one's core values helps both a pastor and a church understand the impetus behind why they do what they do in ministry and how they do it.

According to a tutorial for *Finding the Core Values of Your Congregation*, put out by the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, the way a pastor or church identifies and defines their core values begins by working through a suggested list of common values. A pastor or a church can add to the list any values that are not included. Once the initial list of values is identified, a pastor or a church should go through the list and identify the top ten core values they hold. From there, the list is condensed down to seven values, then five, and finally three, with the final three to five values being identified and defined as core values (Massachusetts Conference, 1996).

This process takes considerably more time for a church than for a pastor since the church must solicit input from all of its members. The process for a pastor will also take some time as she will want to reflect prayerfully on her life and ministry to see if the core values she believes she holds are truly behavioral commitments in her life. If a pastor or a church truly holds the core values they espouse there will be evidence that reveals them. Evidence such as significant monies, time, energy, and other resources expended on those core values are indicative of true commitment.
Victoria Munro suggests that once core values are identified one should, "Write a brief description of what this value (values) means to you in practical terms, and commit to applying this in every area of your life" (2005). This is critical because pastors and churches often use the same terminology in identifying or labeling core values but the terminology takes on a different meaning in practice. While a pastor and church may seem to hold similar core values verbally, they may be dissimilar in how those core values are practiced, which could become a point of contention and conflict. Therefore, the identification of core values is important, but identification alone is not completely sufficient. It must include defining those core values.

Once these core values are identified, defined, and proven to be true, the comparison of these values should be one of the primary points of discussion between the prospective pastor and church in the call process. It is vitally important that a pastor and a church take the time for detailed discussion of their core values discussing not only the theological and philosophical basis of those core values but what those core values look like in practice. Therefore, it is helpful for the pastor and church to ask questions such as, "What does this core value look like in practice to you"?

Denominations such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the United Church of Christ (UCC), and the Presbyterian Church, USA have embraced and implemented the identification, definition, and comparison of core values as a part of their call processes. The core values of a pastor or a church must be included in the profiles the denomination requires a pastor or a church in transition to complete. This is the first step that must be completed before either the pastor’s or the church’s profile is released for consideration.
Once step one is completed a pastor’s profile is released for church call committees to view and determine whether or not a pastor may be a possible fit for their church. The same occurs for a church, their profile is released for pastors in transition to view and determine whether or not the church may be a possible fit for the pastor. One of the items a pastor and a church can look at is each other’s core values to determine whether or not there is a significant agreement that will provide a foundation for an effective pastor/church relationship.

If a pastor or a church determines that there is a significant agreement of core values among other factors, they move to the next step of interviewing. As noted above, the discussions go beyond just the theological and philosophical basis behind the core value to how that core value is lived out in ministry practice.

The models used by the ELCA, UCC, and Presbyterian USA serve as some good examples that another denomination could adapt to their polity. This phenomenon is a work in process and will not be exactly the same for each denomination. Therefore, it will require a lot of trial and error to come up with a working model for each denomination. Still, it can be a key in helping pastors and churches make better decisions about entering into a pastor/church relationship.

When a pastor and church have done the hard work of identifying and defining their core values and include an honest discussion of them in the pastoral call process, much hurt can be avoided. It is all right if a pastor and church have different core values. That does not mean that one is right and the other is wrong, but just a strong indicator that a proposed pastor/church relationship may be filled with constant frustration and conflict. It
would be wise for the pastor and church to continue their search until they find a better match.

Summary

Core values help cultivate a sense of community between the members of a church as well as between a pastor and church. Ron Benefiel says, “It is apparent that the people of any religious or spiritual community, by definition, must hold in common certain shared ideas, values and norms in order to be community.” He goes on to say, “Without commonly held core values that effectively call people to commitment, Christian community at any level (local or denominational) cannot easily be sustained” (2000). Core values bring people together as well as keep them together. If a pastor and church want to have an extended, effective ministry, it is imperative that they have similar core values as a basis for their relationship.

It appears that while the issue of values and the influence they have in the leader/follower relationship has been recognized and researched in many vocational and organizational arenas, this is somewhat new to the church. Despite this, the relational dynamics are similar in both secular and church organizations. As has been noted in the preceding pages, the church can learn much about the leader/follower relationship from the research conducted in the secular arena.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The identification, definition, and comparison of core values between a prospective pastor and church is a new phenomenon. This is evident in the limited number of resources found in the literature review addressing this subject. It also proved to be the case as there were a limited number of individuals who qualified to participate in the study.

Since this phenomenon is just beginning to be a part of the call process of some churches, it was determined that the research methodology used to collect information needed to be one that was flexible and at the same time would draw out specific information. According to Sharan Merriam, the research methodology that fits that description is the person-to-person interview. “The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information” (2001, 71). For this study, it was necessary to determine why a pastor and church did or did not use core values in the call process and how those that did went about incorporating it. It was also necessary to determine what happened as a result of using or not using core values and what it meant to those involved.

The person-to-person interview was the best method to obtain this special type of information and was the only method of data collection used. “Interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies in education. In numerous studies it is the only source of data” (Merriam 2001, 70).
Designing the Study

Once it was determined that the person to person interview would be the primary method of data collection, the type of interview to be used needed to be determined. After reviewing the assigned research texts, the semi-structured interview was identified as the type of interview that would produce the data needed for the study. The semi-structured interview “allows for planned questions around specific issues and general items but also employs the freedom of an unstructured approach” (Ammerman 1998, 206). “This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam 2001, 74).

In preparation for developing the interview guide, I determined that there were seven specific questions that needed to be answered: (1) Prior to the call process had the prospective pastor or church been educated about core values and the role they play in the pastor/church relationship? (2) Had the pastor or church taken the time and invested the energy to identify and define their core values? (3) Were those identified and defined core values mere verbalizations or truly behavioral commitments? (4) Did a comparison of those core values take place between the pastor and church during the call process? (5) If that comparison took place, how was the comparison done and how did the results of that comparison influence the call decision? (6) What difference did the agreement of core values make in the pastor/church relationship? Had there been less conflict between the pastor and church than in past relationships and was there a higher level of trust? and, (7) In any future call processes, would the pastor or church use the comparison of core values as a part of the call process?

Once those items were identified, I then met with the second reader of my committee, Larry Clayton, to get input from him in formulating the questions for the
interview guide. He and I met and formulated ten questions to be used in the interview process.

This rough draft of the interview guide was e-mailed to the chair of my project committee, William Reist, for his input. Reist responded with several questions and thoughts that served to sharpen the focus of the interview guide as well as to challenge me to think about and develop other questions to broaden the scope of information being sought.

After several edits and reviews between Reist and myself, a final interview guide emerged. The final interview guide contained three sections: (1) Pastor’s biographical information, personal knowledge, experience, and implementation of core values in their life and ministry; (2) The church’s biographical information, knowledge, experience and implementation of core values in the church’s life and ministry; and (3) The use or lack of use of core values in the call process.

**Defining the Sample**

A number of factors shaped the sample in this study. One factor was the limited number of pastors and churches who have knowledge and experience with core values and the role they can play in the pastor/church relationship. Another was finding churches that actually did a comparison of pastor and church core values as a part of their call process. Also, time, cost, and the location of subjects who would qualify to participate in the study were considered. With those limitations in mind, I chose to use a purposeful sampling (Merriam 2001, 61) that would provide information rich cases from which to draw information significant to the study.
The parameters for defining the sampling were established in Chapter One. Two types of pastors and churches were to be surveyed: (1) Three pastors and churches that had identified, defined, and compared their core values as a part of their call process; and (2) Three pastors and churches that did not use the comparison of core values as a part of their core values.

From experience and reading about core values and the influence they can have on the pastor/church relationship, I knew the most difficult pastors and churches to locate would be those who had identified, defined, and compared their core values as a part of the call process. This was something that would not be found in the church movement of which I am a part because it is not a part of the pastoral call guidelines suggested by movement leadership. Therefore, it would be easy to identify and recruit pastors and churches that did not use the comparison of core values in their call process; however, finding pastors and churches that did use the comparison of core values in their call process would be more of a challenge.

**Selecting the Sample**

Because the most difficult group to find was pastors and churches that had used the comparison of core values as a part of their call process, I attempted to locate these first. Since Aubrey Malphurs is one of the primary researchers of core values and the pastor/church relationship, I contacted him to see if he would recommend some pastors and churches he had worked with in a call process. He responded that it had been at least five years since he had worked with a church in a call process and that he currently just worked with churches in identifying and defining their core values. As a result, he could not remember any pastors and churches that he could recommend.
It was at that point that I began to search the Internet for churches or denominations that had posted a set of core values on their web sites. I reasoned that if a church or denomination had posted their core values, they had taken the time to identify and define those core values. If they had taken the time to identify and define those core values, then possibly they made that a part of their pastoral call process. From my search on the Internet, I found four churches that had posted their core values and one denomination that not only listed their core values on their web site but also had a link to a resource that would help a church walk through the process of identifying and defining their core values.

I e-mailed each of the pastors of the identified churches to see if they had used the comparison of core values in their call process. Two of the pastors responded to my e-mails: one who did not use a comparison of core values in his call process and the other who did use them. The pastor who indicated that a comparison of core values between himself and the church took place during his call process also indicated that he would be most willing to participate in the project. He also contacted the chairperson of the call committee who was willing to participate as well. As a result, this was the first pastor and church chosen to be a part of the research sample.

Instead of e-mailing the state denominational office that not only posted but provided a resource for their churches to identify and define their core values, I called their offices. After explaining who I was and what I was doing, the secretary directed me to the individual in charge of the core values project for their denomination. He was very kind and gave me the names of two pastors and churches that had implemented this in their churches and used the comparison of core values in their call process. I immediately
called and left messages for both pastors, one of whom returned my call and after some discussion qualified for the project and expressed a willingness to participate. This pastor also called the chairperson of the call committee and sought his participation in the project. After indicating that he was willing to participate, the pastor sent me the chair’s e-mail address and phone number so I could correspond with him. Thus, the second pastor and church were enlisted for the project.

A third source came from a fellow student in the Doctor of Ministry group. Mark Brodbeck who is an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor, put me in contact with the assistant to the bishop who oversees the pastoral and church transition in his synod. Once I connected with the assistant bishop and explained my project, he was not sure that the ELCA did use a comparison of core values as a part of the pastoral call process. He indicated that his uncertainty was that in principle they do compare the core values of a pastor and church but they do not call them core values. To be sure that the issue here was purely semantics he sent me a copy of the profiles that both a prospective pastor and church complete when entering transition. He told me that once I looked at the documents, and I found they were in keeping with the project to let him know, and he would find a pastor and church that would be willing to participate in the project.

After receiving and reviewing the documents I determined that in principle the ELCA did use a comparison of core values as a part of their call process. I e-mailed the assistant bishop and let him know that their procedure was in line with the project and that I would like to receive a name of a pastor and church to participate. Within just a short period of time, he e-mailed me the name and contact information for a pastor who had indicated a willingness to participate in the project. I contacted the pastor by e-mail,
thanking him for his willingness to participate. He responded that he was excited to participate that he had already contacted the chairperson and one other member of the call committee to see if one of them would participate in the project.

The pastor e-mailed me within a few days with the name and the contact information of the chairperson of the call committee indicating his willingness to participate. I contacted the chairperson, thanking him for his willingness to participate and let him know that I would soon be contacting him to set up an appointment for a phone interview. Therefore, the third pastor and church was secured for the research sample.

The second group of pastors and churches to be secured for the research sample was to be those who did not use the comparison of core values in the call process of their church. This group of pastors was no longer with the churches that they were to be interviewed about but had transitioned to another church or ministry.

I began by calling each of the three pastors and confirmed that a comparison of core values did not take place in the call process with their previous churches. They agreed to participate.

Either a member of the call committee for these pastors or a leader in their former church who was very familiar with the call process and the pastor/church relationship with that pastor was secured to participate in the study. Once the person who would respond to the interview on behalf of the church was identified, I called them and obtained their agreement to participate in the study. Therefore, the three pastors and churches for this group were secured.
I then telephoned or e-mailed each of the participants to re-confirm their willingness to participate in the study and scheduled a time for the interviews. All twelve of these interviews were conducted between January 24, 2007 and February 23, 2007.

Profile of Interview Subjects

The following is a basic profile of the subjects interviewed for this project. There are two different profiles addressed, one for the six pastors interviewed and the other for the six churches that were represented by a call committee member or other church leader.

All six of the pastors who were interviewed for the study were between the ages of thirty-three and sixty-four. Two held bachelors degrees, three had obtained masters degrees, and one had a Doctor of Ministry degree. The participants were all male and were serving as senior pastors. One was in his first pastorate, one was in his second pastorate, two were in their third pastorate, and one was in his fourth pastorate, while one was in his fifth pastorate. Two of the pastors were serving churches in rural areas, one in a small city, and the other three in suburban areas. There was a geographic diversity among the pastors interviewed in that one was from the northeast; two were from the east coast, one from the midwest, one from the southeast, and one from the northwest.

The churches represented in this study reported the size of their church in one of two ways, either by membership or average Sunday morning attendance. Based on the mode of reporting, the churches ranged in size from two-hundred to fourteen hundred. It is interesting to note that four of the six churches were one hundred years old with the other two ranging from seventy to eighty years old. Three of the six churches were main-line denominational churches while the other three were part of the same small holiness
church movement. Due to their theology, the latter three churches do not refer to themselves as a denomination but as a church movement.

In describing the constituency that made up each of the churches, three describe themselves as being a blend of both white and blue collar people, two as being a white-collar church, and one as a church made up of blue-collar, rural farmers. The three mainline denominational churches were from three different denominations whose call process appeared to be more structured and have more continuity than the other three churches. Each of the pastors and church representatives were willing to share information at will.

**Conducting the Interviews**

When scheduling the interview with each participant, I requested forty-five minutes to an hour of their time, which would be contingent on how much they chose to talk in response to the interview questions. I then let the participant tell me when would be the best time to interview them. If there was a conflict with my schedule, we negotiated a time that was best for both of us. In addition to scheduling a time for the interview and obtaining contact information, I thanked them for their willingness to participate in the research and let them know I looked forward to our interview at the appointed time.

At the scheduled time, I called or met with each participant and began by thanking him or her again for taking the time out his or her busy schedules to participate in the study. I then proceeded to give them a brief overview of how the interview would go and the basic outline of the questions that would be asked. If they had no questions or concerns, I would then turn on the recorder and begin by asking the participant if I had their permission to record, transcribe, and include their interview in the study project.
Most all of the participants were excited about being a part of this research study, especially pastors. However, I found that some of the call committee chairpersons or church leaders that I interviewed tended to be somewhat nervous. I tried to put them at ease by assuring them that I was confident they were going to do fine; they needed to just relax and share their thoughts.

As I interviewed the pastors, I began by asking them questions that focused more on them. I asked them about their age, the number of churches they had pastored, the denomination or church movement with whom they were affiliated, and about their knowledge and understanding of core values and the role they can play in the pastor/church relationship. I also asked them if they had personally identified and defined their own set of core values, to name and describe their core values, and to what extent those core values guided their life and ministry decisions.

The questions I posed to the call committee chairpersons or church leaders focused on the age of the church, the denomination or church movement with whom the church is affiliated, the type of persons who made up the call committee, and whether the church had established a set of core values. As with the pastors, I asked the church representatives to name the core values of the church and to what degree those core values influenced and guided church decisions.

These initial set of questions were somewhat different for pastors and churches; however, the last set of questions were exactly the same. The last set of questions focused on the call process of the pastor and church interviewed. I began this section of the interview asking each participant to identify the primary factors that each one considered in the call process. If core values were not listed I inquired if they were a part of the call
process. If so, how were the core values compared and how had their similarity or dissimilarity impacted their decision to enter into a pastor/church relationship? For those who did not use core values as a part of their call process, I inquired why they were not used.

The focus of the questions then turned to the type of relationship the pastor and church had, focusing specifically on whether the relationship had been cooperative and effective or conflicting and ineffective. Then participants were asked if a similarity or dissimilarity of core values had played a role in the type of pastor/church relationship.

Participants were asked if there was anything that came up after entering into a pastor/church relationship that, had that issue come up during the process, would have affected their decision. The interview concluded by my asking the participants if in any future call process they would use the identification, definition, and comparison of core values and if there were any other comments they wished to make. I then thanked them again for their time and interest in the project. Many of the participants requested a copy of the project once when it was completed. I promised to provide an electronic copy as a part of my appreciation for their participation.

During the interviews, I would often ask follow-up questions that came to mind to help clarify the thoughts shared by the participant or to extract more information. For those participants who still seemed nervous, I would interject comments that they were doing fine and that they were providing the information I was looking for in the interview. Each participant worked hard to recall information.
Analysis of Interview Data

Following the completion of the interviews, I had the recordings professionally transcribed. I began by labeling each transcription with either a P for pastors or C for churches, numbering them one through six thereby matching the pastor and church with the same number. At this point, I began to review and reflect on the data.

In order to organize the data for reflection and interpretation, I took the interview template and copied and pasted the answers from the respondents under each corresponding question. I continued to read and reflect on the date highlighting key and repetitive words and phrases and made notes in the margins.

From the key and repetitive words and phrases four major categories emerged into which the data were divided. Once these categories were established the analysis continued in search of sub-categories that were addressed under each of the major areas. This search resulted in identifying at least a minimum of two or more sub-categories under each of the major categories. With this process complete, I then formulated labels for each of the major and sub-categories.

Having established this framework, I continued my analysis of the data by identifying pertinent quotes that described and supported each of the categories. From this, I began to outline the issues to be addressed in the process of comparing and contrasting the data for each category. This in turn organized my thoughts in preparation for writing the detailed description of the data analysis.

Data analysis continued during the writing of the detailed description. The process of continued reading of the transcripts and the attempt to describe the data assisted in clarifying and connecting the data into a relevant form.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In the previous chapter, I described the methodology of this study. This chapter presents the results of the study and an analysis of the data.

A Synopsis of the Respondents

Pastors

Each of the pastors who participated in this study was labeled as P1 through P6 so as to conceal his identity and maintain confidentiality. The following is a brief synopsis of each of the pastors.

Pastor P1 is a fifty-three year old male serving in a mainline denominational church. He currently holds a master's degree and is working on his doctorate. His current church is his first senior pastorate. He had served there for three and one-half years at the time of the interview.

Pastor P2 is a fifty-four year old male serving in a church that identifies itself with a small holiness movement. He currently holds a master's degree and is serving in his fifth senior pastorate. His tenure at the church was approximately nine years.

Pastor P3 is a sixty-four year old male who also is serving in a church that identifies itself with a small holiness movement. He currently holds a bachelor's degree and has done some work towards a master's degree. Currently he is serving in his fourth senior pastorate and has a three-year tenure at the church for which he was interviewed.

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Pastor P4 is a fifty-nine year old male who is serving as senior pastor of a mainline denomination church. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree. The church he currently serves is his second senior pastorate where he has been for approximately three years.

Pastor P5 is the youngest pastor interviewed for this study at the age of thirty-three years old. He holds a master’s degree. While he has served a total of three pastoral positions in his ministry, his current assignment is his first senior pastorate. He has served there for six months at the time of the interview.

Pastor P6 is a forty-seven year old pastor who currently is serving as a state minister for a small holiness church movement. He holds a bachelor’s degree and has completed some work towards a master’s degree. Before coming to his current state position, he served one church as an associate and three others as a senior pastor. He served the church for which he was interviewed for seven years.

Churches

The churches in this study were represented by either the chairperson of the call committee, a call committee member, or a current church leader. To conceal the identity and maintain confidentiality, each church was labeled C1 through C6. The following is a synopsis of each of the churches interviewed for this study.

Church C1 is a church that is a part of a mainline denomination located on the east coast. It has a membership of approximately eight hundred and is over one hundred and fifty years old. The church constituency is made up of primarily white collar members, and the call committee was made up of members appointed by the church’s governing board.
Church C2 is located in the southeastern part of the United States and connected with a small holiness movement. It has a Sunday morning attendance of approximately five hundred. The church is one hundred years old and is made up of a blend of both white and blue collar people and the call committee consisted of the church's governing board along with some additional lay persons.

Church C3 is located in the midwest and is connected with a small holiness movement as well. It has a Sunday morning attendance of approximately three hundred and fifty people and is approximately eighty years old. This church consists of a blend of both white and blue collar people, and the call committee consisted of some church members and counseling pastors appointed by the church movement leadership.

Church C4 is located in the northeastern part of the United States, a part of a mainline denomination, and has a membership of three hundred and fifty members. The church is approximately one hundred and thirty years old and is made up of predominantly white collar people. In keeping with the church's polity, the call committee was appointed by the church's main governing body only after input from the rest of the church membership.

Church C5 is located in the midwestern part of the United States and is a part of a mainline denomination. The church has four hundred and fifty members who are mainly described as rural farmers and has been in existence for over one hundred years. A call committee for this church was assembled by its main governing board with input of the rest of the church membership.

Church C6 is located in the northwestern part of the United States and connected to a small holiness movement. It has a Sunday morning attendance of approximately twelve
to fourteen hundred and is a little over seventy-five years old. The church is made up of a blend of both white and blue collar people and their call committee consisted of individuals nominated and elected by both the church leadership and lay members.

Categorization of Research Data

As I began my analysis of the data, the first step was to develop a framework that would organize the results in a systematic manner allowing for accurate reporting and interpretation. I first identified the elements to create the framework. These were found in the notes, interview tapes, and transcripts. Therefore, I began to do a methodical review of all the information gathered in the interviews, seeking to identify key words, phrases, and themes that would reveal the major categories in order to organize the data for reporting and analysis.

One primary theme that emerged was that of core values. Beyond that, four other themes emerged related to that theme: pastors, churches, call process, and pastor/church relationships.

Out of this primary theme and connecting themes, I developed the following categories: (1) Pastors and Core Values; (2) Churches and Core Values; (3) The Call Process and Core Values; and, (4) Pastor/Church Relationship and Core Values. Each of these has subcategories. The following is an outline of the categories and subcategories to serve as a guide to the organization of the reporting and analysis of the data derived from the study.

Category One: Pastors and Core Values

Knowledge of core values

Identification of core values
Method of identification of core values
Motivation in identifying core values
Commitment to their core values

Category Two: Churches and Core Values
Articulation of core values
Identification of core values
Motivation for identification of core values
Commitment to their core values

Category Three: The Call Process and Core Values
Comparing core values
Matching core values

Category Four: Pastor/Church Relationship and Core Values
Effects of a similarity of core values
Effects of a dissimilarity of core values

Category One focuses on Pastors and Core Values. This category addresses how core values can help pastors understand who they are, how they approach life, and conduct ministry. Before a pastor considers entering a pastor/church relationship he must have a clear understanding of who he is, which includes the identification and definition of his core values. The identification and definition of those core values is a process that takes time and involves many elements. Those elements are reported and analyzed below.

The next category, Churches and Core Values, share a number of similarities with the first category as far as the elements explored, however, the dynamics of category two are somewhat different. For the Pastor and Core Values, it is a process that involves one individual, whereas, the Church and Core Values is a dynamic that involves the
membership of a church. If a church is to identify a pastor who will best relate to the overall congregation, it must have some idea as to the corporate identity of the church. A key element in defining that identity is through a process of identifying and defining the core values of the church.

Third, the Call Process and Core Values, is about that role the core values of both a pastor and a church play in the pastor/church transition. The call process that takes place between a pastor and church often proves to be inadequate. That inadequacy is due to many issues, however, one primary element is the lack of or the limited attention given to the core values of a pastor and a church. Some churches are attempting to incorporate this nuance into their call process practice.

The last category is the Pastor/Church Relationship and Core Values. When a pastor and church enter into a ministry relationship it is much like a marriage. The compatibility of the two is vitally important if the pastor and church are going to have a long and effective ministry relationship. Just as a man and woman take into consideration the core values that each one holds, a pastor and church must do likewise.

Each of these major categories has sub-categories and themes that emerged to facilitate and clarify the focus of the major category. I have used exact quotes drawn from the interview transcripts to support my analysis and the reporting of the data; however, in some quotes I changed some wording to protect confidentially and maintain the anonymity of the respondent.
Category One: Pastors and Core Values

Knowledge of Core Values

The matter of core values and the role they play in the pastor/church relationship is a new phenomenon. This was established in Chapter Three by the limited amount of literature that addresses the subject. Therefore, it was important to discover the pastors’ level of knowledge about core values. When the pastors were asked if they had read or informed themselves about the concept of core values and the role they play in the leader/follower relationship their responses revealed that their knowledge was limited.

Of the six pastors interviewed, two responded with an affirmative. They had educated themselves about core values and their connection to the leader/follower relationship. The other four pastors responded in a manner that revealed they had done a limited amount of reading or study in this area. One of the pastors said, “I have done some reading, but I would classify that probably as marginal as far as the core value subject” (transcript, interview P5, p. 2). Another pastor responded, “I know a little bit about those things I know some” (transcript, interview P4, p. 2). These quotes are representative of the kinds of statements of the other two respondents.

This reveals the need for more study in this subject area as well as the need for more books and articles to help educate pastors about the benefits, the knowledge, and use of core values. When one has identified and defined one’s core values it helps in self-understanding. This, in turn, enables pastors to make better decisions about life and ministry.
Identification of Core Values

Despite the fact that most of the pastors interviewed had a limited knowledge about core values, each of the six had informally identified their three to five core values. Informally means they had not completed any type of personal ministry core values audit in developing some type of formal document in which they formally delineated and defined their core values. Notwithstanding, each pastor had taken the time to think through what they value in life and ministry.

It was obvious each one had clearly thought through his core values. When asked what their core values are, without hesitation each one could name and articulate a well defined explanation that described each core value.

While all six of the pastors had informally identified and defined their core values, only three of the pastors had taken the next step in developing a formal statement. However, this did not occur until these pastors entered a call process. “I have not done a core values exercise per se until I really did the profile for the United Church of Christ, and that is where I began to list some of the core values I operate by” (transcript, interview P4, p. 2). Another pastor shared a similar experience:

Yes, part of the ELCA's mobility process includes a set of paperwork that's filed with your bishop and then that's what is used and sent in profile form to congregations or other synods who may be interested in calling you and the central part of those documents are establishing your core values and putting those in written form for a synod staff as well as a congregation to see. (transcript, interview P5, p. 2)

From this, one could conclude that some pastors are thinking about and identifying their core values but there are only a few who are taking the time to document them in a formal manner. It appears that those who are documenting them are doing so as a
requirement from their respective denominations that see the value core values bring to the call process.

Process of Identification of Core Values

One might think that the identification of one’s core values can be done simply by completing a personal ministry core values audit, but it requires more. As the pastors in this study responded to how they arrived at their core values, one word kept emerging: process. One pastor said, “To me, it’s been a lifelong process” (transcript, interview P3, p. 2). For another, “It was really the process of search, search and call, that process” (transcript, interview P4, p. 3). Some of the pastors were more descriptive as they spoke about the process:

Well, part of it is just the process of being involved in ministry over the years. I think part of what helped clarify this for me early on was being involved with Inner Varsity Christian Fellowship back in the late 1970’s. Inner Varsity has a strong program of developing their staff and part of that is becoming conscious of your leadership style as well as your values and developing a theology of who you are as you do ministry. (transcript, interview P1, p. 2)

Another related:

Just through a lot of personal struggle and personal interior conflict with who I am as a person, who I am historically, my theological premise and what God was and is shaping in me. I just discovered through those processes that the three things I mentioned, those core values, are the things that have and continue to drive my life. (transcript, interview P6, p. 2)

In describing how he arrived at his core values, another pastor spoke of how an older minister gave him some advice that began in him a process to establish some definite core values with which to guide his life and ministry. He said:

That really comes from some advice that I got from an older pastor when I first went into ministry and I was working diligently, thinking that I was supposed to win the whole world by myself and I was putting in about ninety to ninety-five hours a week at the church. I had a young daughter at the time and an older pastor
came in that was attending the church and sat down in my office one morning. We talked a little bit and he said, “I have got some things I need to talk to you about.” He talked to me about the importance of family. That really struck home and I started thinking about it and I developed some standards [core values] in my own life along that line with my family, my wife, and so forth because I wanted to try my best to minister to them and keep them involved in the church. (transcript, interview P2, p. 2)

Based on this evidence, how one identifies one’s core values is an on-going process that takes place over time and includes many life and ministry experiences. The process of identification may include personal struggle and conflict, responding to the advice of a seasoned pastor, attempting to develop a theology of who one is in ministry, and an attempt to discover what is important to one in ministry. Identifying and defining one’s core values is a process of evolution. The more one comes to know about one’s self and the more life and ministry experiences one has, the more defined one’s core values become.

Motivation in Identifying Core Values

The identification and definition of one’s core values is not an easy process. It takes time and a lot of hard work that can even be painful as one honestly reflects on one’s life and ministry. It must be remembered that a true core value is not something one aspires to, but a reflection of who one is currently. Therefore, one might ask, what motivates a person such as a pastor to work through this process?

The answers given by the pastors to this type of question were transparent and brutally honest. From the responses of three of the six pastors, it seemed that each one was motivated to invest the time and energy in identifying their core values out of a crisis in their life and/or ministry. These were not always negative, but were crises that
involved a time of uncertainty and confusion about themselves and their ministry. As a result, they were driven to work through this process.

This was the case for one pastor who needed some type of clarification or re-clarification about who he was. He said, "I think part of it was dissatisfaction with church ministry. And so, part of the clarification in my own mind was trying to understand who I was as I sought a place to serve in the broader church" (transcript, interview P1, p. 3).

For another pastor his motivation was confusion. "I was confused about what I had been given in terms of information through the years of ministry and what, and particularly as it pertained to what was most important. I had to go back to the core of what drives me, not what I'm interested in but what drives me, what makes me the person I am" (transcript, interview P6, p. 2).

A third pastor was concerned that he was getting off track in life and ministry and saw the need to establish some core values that would give him guidance. His concern was:

I just had seen too many very good men, very dear men that I had confidence in and I think they were great men of God, but somewhere along the line, they kind of got off kilter with their own personal life and the devil was able to defeat them. And I thought, hey, if he can defeat men that good and that strong and that intelligent, then boy, I don't have much of a chance if I don't really stay on top of this thing. (transcript, interview P2, p. 2)

While these pastors' knowledge about core values was limited, each one of them had been driven to take time to identify them. Fortunately, these pastors were wise enough to see the changes needed in their lives and had the courage to make those changes. They may have never experienced these crises if they had been guided into the identification of their core values earlier in ministry.
That is what happened for one pastor. He noted that he was motivated to begin identifying his core values in Bible College.

To be perfectly honest, some of it really happened back at Bible College under [my mentoring professor]. So that focal point was beginning right then and there and then through the years, I did some personal studies along with some various master’s courses that I took that related to the discovery process down to my mission, my mission statement, things of this nature. (transcript, interview P3, p. 2).

Encouragement from his professor to identify his core values kept him on course throughout his ministry, especially during a very difficult pastorate. Therefore, it appears that a motivation to identify one’s core values is to help one avoid or maneuver through times of ministry crisis. Core values serve as a foundation that provides stability when one is approaching or in the midst of a crisis.

Commitment to Their Core Values

All the hard work that it takes to identify one’s core values will be for naught if they are not implemented in one’s ministry. If a pastor has not formally identified his core values and shared them with his church or colleagues in ministry, it would be easy to compromise his core values. One pastor even raised that concern in reference to one of his core values, “Going back to the first one, personal. You know, sometimes that is the hardest one to keep on track because nobody’s looking over your shoulder. Nobody’s watching. Nobody knows, you know, whether you spend your time in the Word or you spend your time praying” (transcript, interview P2, p. 3). Therefore, one needs to build in accountability to assist in maintaining a commitment to one’s core values; however, that is not an issue of this study.

Each one of the pastors could readily cite examples of how his core values were being lived out in his current ministry. Each one could give examples of how he had
expend time, energy, and money to help him/her in the development and growth of his/her core values.

Whereas, these actions show a commitment to one's core values, the area of concern that relates to this study is the pastor's commitment to his core values in the call process. When each pastor was asked if he had ever declined a call to a church because there was a difference in core values, each pastor cited one or more occasions when he had done so.

During a call process, a pastor may find that the prospective church agrees with him theologically, but there are some differences in core values. This was the situation for one of the pastors interviewed. "Even though they agreed with my position theologically, you know that they were a conservative church in terms of their biblical doctrine, I could tell that their values about what was important in ministry were not very close to mine and so I, very early on, pulled myself out of those conversations and interviews" (transcript, interview P1, p. 3).

A fallacy that a number of pastors and churches make is that if there is theological agreement between them then there is a basis for an effective ministry relationship. Experience, however, reveals that this is not necessarily the case and a prospective pastor should move on in search of a more compatible relationship.

One has to be cautious because there are a number of things that might tempt a pastor to compromise his core values, such as finances. One pastor shared how that he and his wife reached the point of going to a church for a candidacy weekend, and they were very nice people but, "it was obvious that there were some strong core value differences. While they were wonderful people, they just blessed us unbelievably
financially, we realized we were not supposed to go” (transcript, interview P3, p. 3-4). In this case there was a true commitment to core values that not even money could compromise.

Another pastor revealed his commitment to his core values in that he interviewed with seven different churches before he found the one that was aligned with his core values. He said, “this last call process, I had the opportunity and the privilege of interviewing with seven different congregations and it was very clear that we did not have core values that matched up” (transcript, interview P5, p. 3). The dissonance between this pastor and these seven churches was outreach and ministry to the community. These seven churches had an inward focus rather than an outward focus and were more concerned about the preservation of their facilities than for ministering to the community. It would take a lot of commitment to one’s core values to turn down seven churches; however, it is better to keep that level of commitment than to enter into a relationship that will be conflictual and ineffective.

Without question, there must be a commitment to one’s core values if those values are to help provide guidance for one’s ministry. That commitment must supersede feelings, theology, money, or position.

Despite the fact that the pastors interviewed had limited knowledge as far as having educated themselves about core values through the reading of books and articles about core values, they showed experiential knowledge of core values. This experiential knowledge came about as a result of crisis, a desire to avoid demise, a drive to be more effective, as well as the willingness to submit to the process required by one’s denomination. One thing is clear, it is imperative that pastors take the time to do the hard
work of identifying and defining their core values and being committed to live by those core values if they are to have some sense of continuity and direction in ministry.

**Category Two: Churches and Core Values**

There is a marked difference in the dynamics of a pastor and core values and the church and core values. For the pastor it is an individual process which he works through alone. The church on the other hand is made up of many members and the task involves being able to solicit input from as many members as possible followed by filtering their responses down to the three to five core values that represent the whole church. Unlike the pastor whose core values represent the individual, the church’s core values represent the community of believers.

**Identifying Core Values**

In analyzing the data from the pastors and their use of core values, all six had identified, defined, and implemented their core values into their lives and ministries. The same cannot be said of the churches and their use of core values. Of the six church representatives interviewed, only four indicated that their church had in some measure addressed the core value subject.

Where the pastors were very definite about their identification and definition of core values, the churches were somewhat vague about theirs. Two of the three churches interviewed had a previous pastor who had done some work with them in identifying their values. One noted that the previous pastor had led them to the identification of eleven values that were refined to a set of core values. “Actually these were formulated with our past pastors, but we built on these core values in writing our church information
form” (transcript, interview C1, p. 3). As a part of the call process their denomination
requires the church to complete a Church Information Form that asked the church to
describe who they are and what they want to be. Ironically, what the church
representative defined as their core values were not their current core values but the core
values to which they aspired. According to the literature this is a typical mistake pastors
and churches make. He said, “what we described was kind of where we wanted to go
with the church more so than where we currently were” (transcript, interview C1, p. 2).
True core values are current, not what a church aspires to be.

A second church indicated their core values were not a completed set of core values
but were born out of the search committee’s attempt to find a pastor. The committee “felt
more important to be able to identify who we are as a church to a prospective candidate,
but not really formally looking at core values specifically” (transcript, interview C4, p. 2-3).

The third church shared that it was a process begun by their previous pastor who
died before the process was complete. This left the call committee to define the church’s
core values. As a result, the call committee established a usable set of core values, which
did not accurately define their church.

The fourth church, like the other three, had identified some values during the call
process of a pastor. He noted, however, while they did not call them core values that is
what they were.

All of this evidence supports the fact that the issue of core values and the church is
a new phenomenon. These churches appear to be unclear about how the process works
and how their core values can be used to guide the life and ministry of the church.
It is interesting to note that three of the churches that had in some measure identified their core values were from mainline denominations. Each of these churches had to complete a church information profile that included their core values. It would appear that while the churches at the local level are still somewhat unclear about core values and are making an attempt to move towards a better understanding of them, some denominations recognize their validity. As a result, many denominations are including a core value template in their pastor/church transition process that requires both pastors and churches to think about and in some manner identify their basic core values.

The context of the question to the church respondents was whether or not the church had identified any core values before the call of the pastor interviewed for the study. As shown, four of the six surveyed had identified some core values of their churches. The two churches that had not identified their core values before the call of their pastor have since, through the leadership of their current pastor, worked through this process.

Articulating Core Values

After determining if a church had identified and established a set of core values, the church representatives interviewed were asked to name the core values of the church. While the pastors could readily and without hesitation name and elaborate on their core values, it was ironic that the church representatives struggled to name them. Their responses were, “I can remember the last one very easily” (transcript, interview C1, p. 2), “I don’t recall very many specifics” (transcript, interview C4, p. 3), “Well you are putting me on the spot, but I know we had done a fair amount of research through the church” (transcript, interview C5, p. 2), and “Not readily” (transcript, interview C6, p. 2).
Once the church respondents had time to think, they were usually able to name a few of the core values of their church. Again, this supports the fact that this is a new phenomenon in church life and in the church call process. It validates the premise that churches need more informational and practical education about core values.

Process of Core Value Identification

As with the pastors in this study, when the church representatives were asked how they went about identifying their core values one word repeatedly came to the surface, "process". The identification of church core values was a process that for three out of the four involved as many people in the church as possible. For the fourth church the core values were identified by the leadership alone. It was not indicated whether that was due to the church polity and governance structure or simply the choice of the leadership.

Whether the identification of the core values was by church leadership alone or if it included as many congregational members as possible, it was a process. For the church whose leadership was the sole creator the respondent said, "Well, these particular core values that I read off came out of a process before the search process. Actually these were formulated with our past pastors, but we built on these core values in writing our church information form" (transcript, interview C1, p. 3). Another church described it this way, "Maybe we didn’t use the term ‘core values’, but yes, most definitely we went through a self-analyzation process and tried to discover who we were and what our emphases were and what was most important to us” (transcript, interview C6, p. 2).

The process often took time, up to two years. That was the circumstance for one church whose pastor began the process of leading the church in identifying its core values and passed away before the completion of the process. The call committee and church
leadership council completed the process. This church representative noted, "By the way, he passed away while he was our minister, and he was in the process of doing that [leading the church in identifying their core values] and it was a program that probably took a couple of years" (transcript, interview C5, p. 1).

Many of the pastors noted that the identification of their core values had been a process; one specifically said it had been a life long process born out of his many life and ministry experiences. It is a process for the church that takes time and hard work. The time and hard work is evident as one church respondent talked about how his call committee surveyed the church to get their input. "We took a survey actually at the end of a church service, so it was for anyone who was there in that service to fill out. Significant things came out of our survey" (transcript, interview C4, p. 3). Another respondent also noted their use of a survey, "We did a survey, a church wide survey, prior to or I guess as a part of the pastoral selection process when a committee was formed" (transcript, interview C6, p. 2).

Once these surveys were completed, it was hard work compiling all the information from those surveys and filtering it down to the three to five core values that represented the whole church. One church respondent shared that the surveys helped clarify some important issues about his church that were not only important for the leadership but in the selection of the next pastor. He said, "What we found, and it wasn't surprising, but it sort of opened our eyes as to the fact that in our particular congregation we have an extremely diverse group of members" (transcript, interview C4, p. 3). That was significant in the calling of their next pastor because he would have to be able to minister to that broad diversity or the pastor/church relationship would be a disaster.
Motivation in Identifying Core Values

Identifying and defining one’s core values, whether for an individual or for a collective group, is a process that takes time and energy. One of the church respondents made that point as he reflected on the process that his church and search committee went through as they sought to identify and define their core values and to find a pastor whose core values matched theirs. He said, “It was just a fantastic experience even though it was very, very demanding and lasted eighteen to twenty months in total, so it was not something that any of us could say was very short or very brief, but again something I look back on with a lot of very pleasant feelings” (transcript, interview C4, p. 4). Part of the pleasant feelings he was alluding to were the feelings of finding the right pastor whose core values matched those of the church. He excitedly shared, “Just seeing the way this whole process worked out and ending up with someone with the qualities that Pastor [Sam] has just reaffirmed all of our faith that God is looking over us and helping us in ways we did not anticipate” (transcript, interview C4, p. 4).

In finding a pastor whose core values matched the core values of the church another church representative shared, “We felt it was important [identifying our core values] and it would certainly be beneficial for anybody [potential senior pastor] with who we were able to visit. We certainly wanted them to know who we were and what our focus and emphasis was” (transcript, interview C6, p. 3).

Not only were churches motivated to identify their core values so they could communicate who they were and what they were about to prospective pastors, but they also wanted to communicate this to prospective members. That is the implication of the following quote.
I think we all saw a need to better define what we really believe in and how that should influence how we do ministry and we live life and put it in a way that we could use that to, get the entire congregation to understand it and believe that as well. We were seeing the church grow, new people coming in and we kind of felt like for the people to understand the culture of the church we had to be more intentional about telling them what we think it is. (transcript, interview C1, p. 3)

Therefore, core values serve as a way to unite people together, whether a pastor with a congregation or new members to a congregation. This illustrates how core values can communicate to prospective pastors and members the particular culture of a church so that this can be included in their consideration before entering into a relationship with the church.

Core values not only serve as a way to connect and unite pastors and people to a church, but they also serve as a means to uniting a divided church. One church representative noted how his church had gone through an extended time of division but had been healed by leading the church through the process of identifying and defining their core values. Thus, out of this study two primary factors came to the surface that serve as motivators for expending the time and energy to identify and define the core values of the church: communication and unity.

Commitment to Core Values

At this point, the evidence revealed that the identification and defining of a church’s core values is a process that takes place over time and requires a high level of energy and hard work. It would be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that once those core values are identified and defined the process is complete; however, that is just the initial step. All the time and hard work that goes into identifying and defining the core values of a church will be for nothing if those core values are not implemented into the life and
ministry of the church. Consequently, there must be a commitment by the pastor and church leaders to complete the process of implementing their core values into the life and ministry of the church.

The four out of six church representatives interviewed were able to demonstrate that their churches had made a commitment to continuing the core value process in shaping how they practice ministry. One of the most noted ways that commitment was demonstrated is in allowing their core values to serve as a foundation upon which the church created a philosophy of ministry. The first church representative interviewed said it in just those terms:

Part of what we’ve done is we’ve gone from that [the identification and definition of their core values] to developing what we call a philosophy of ministry. We have gone through these core values and we tried to build it into a mindset, a set of parameters that we use to make sure that the things we do are consistent and true to those core values. (transcript, interview C1, p. 4)

Another one of the church representatives described how they had developed a mission statement based on their core values, “Taking care of each other, seeking to care for others” (transcript, interview C4, p. 6). He then described how the church was intentionally reaching out to help people not only within the church but in the community who had mental, physical, and financial problems. In fact, the church has been so motivated by their mission statement that they are working with their local Habitat for Humanity as well as making trips to Appalachia to help rebuild homes.

The third church described the same results. One of their core values is outreach. For the this church, that has meant reaching out into the community to minister to the youth, developing a pre-school program, doing community events like ice cream socials and car shows, as well as joining with sister churches in various community activities.
The fourth church’s representative noted what the literature identifies as a key indicator of a church’s commitment to their core values: budget. The core values of this church influences, “the way that we spend our money through the budgeting process and where we spend our money” (transcript, interview C6, p. 3). For this church, three of their core values are: providing a Christian based education for children and youth, outreach, and home and foreign missions. He indicated that this is clearly evident for anyone who analyzes their church budget.

A commitment to core values also impacted the call process of the churches. In talking about their call process, one church representative recalled how their call committee established a set of qualifications that included core values they believed a pastor would need to be compatible with their church. “It’s not just core values, but many other factors that we looked at in who we were going to recommend to our church” (transcript, interview C4, p. 7). He did not elaborate on any of the specific qualifications or core values they were looking for but he makes up a valid point. Core values are just one of the many dynamics of the pastor/church relationship. There are many elements that must be considered in the call process.

Another church representative talked about the struggle of identifying the right pastor for their church. It came down to three final candidates and the deciding factors were the candidate’s core values and ministry gifts. One of the core values of this church is outreach to the community. They have a real passion to minister to the children and youth of their community and to do missions. They chose a pastor who shared their core values of outreach and missions. He reported, “Not that the other candidates weren’t capable but the one fellow was a great fit” (transcript, interview C5, p. 4).
He went on to share how the call committee had numerous discussions about the qualifications they were looking for in a pastor. The committee came to the determination, “You look at your core values and mission, and you say, ‘This is what we think,’ and you really have to live out your mission in the community and the whole world” (transcript, interview C5, p. 4). He concluded by saying that is how their core values were transferred into their call process.

The last church representative interviewed shared a valuable insight from the call process in which he was involved. He made the point that attempting to match the core values of a prospective pastor and church must go beyond just believing the same thing or using the same terminology. A prospective pastor may use the same terminology in delineating his/her core values as the prospective church uses, however, how one enacts those core values may be different. He said, “Do we all believe in Christian education? Do we all believe in serving those who are less fortunate than us? Yes, we all believe that, but how do you emphasize (practice) that and prioritize it” (transcript, interview C6, p. 4)?

In their call process, their committee found candidates whose core values verbally appeared to be in line with those of the church, Christian education, outreach, and missions. However, the difference came in how those core values were achieved. As a result, the discussion of core values must go beyond just the verbal identification and include the practical aspects of how those core values are lived out. The reason being that while there can be verbal agreement, there can still be great conflict over practical application.
Category Three: The Call Process and Core Values

When a pastor and church enter a call process, it is imperative that they consider the core values each holds. While there are many elements that should be considered in the pastor/church relationship, core values should be one of them. Three of the six pastors and churches interviewed for the study indicated that they attempted to compare and match their core values in their call process.

Comparing Core Values

The results of this study reveal that the comparison of core values between a prospective pastor and prospective church took place in two ways. One was by comparing the core values recorded in the minister’s or churches written profiles. This was evident as both pastors and church representatives reflected on their call process. One pastor talked about the Church Information Form used by his denomination that included a list of the prospective church’s core values. Upon receiving the Church Information Form he said:

The first thing I did was see whether they articulated who they were in ways that started to surface some of those values. This particular church did such a good job of that, that I identified this church as a church that I wanted to talk to before I said yes or no to any other church because this was my first choice from the first time I saw anything written down. (transcript, interview P1, p. 4)

Another pastor shared a similar experience. “Well, there are papers they have to fill out that have a list of core values and I got a sense from reading those” (transcript, interview P4, p. 7). Therefore, before these pastors entered into any type of conversation with their prospective churches, they had an opportunity to view the core values of that church and compare them with their own.
A similar experience was reported by the church representatives. The first church representative said, "The first part of our process is we review all these [Minister’s Profiles] that came in and just by reading the information forms got us a good sense of whether there was a chance that they [prospective pastors] met our core values or not" (transcript, interview C1, p. 6). In talking to two other church representatives (C4 and C5) both indicated that one of the first steps of their process was reviewing each pastor’s profile, giving attention to several items, including core values.

Once the comparison of the written documents was complete, if there appeared to be a significant agreement of core values the pastor and church moved on to a second step in the call process. This step often involved both telephone and face to face conversations in which core values were discussed. The first pastor recalled, "In the actual interview process, they were asking me questions about whether or not I fit the values of the congregation and I was asking questions back to make sure that they were fitting mine" (transcript, interview P1, p. 4). That discussion went beyond just a mere notation of each core value on the pastor’s or church’s lists but included a practical discussion of each. For example, "We talked about what I’ve done in ministry, how I have exhibited these values in my ministry patterns in the past and I was looking at the church to see what they had in place that already upheld these values" (transcript, interview P1, p. 5). Hence, this pastor looked at the ministry structure of this church to validate whether or not the core values of this church were accurate. At the same time, the church asked him to describe how his core values were lived out in his ministry. "We had four or five questions that we tended to use to try to dig deeper to see if they (prospective pastor) were a match with our core values" (transcript, interview C1, p. 6).
Another pastor (P5) had a similar experience as he not only engaged in practical discussions about core values with the church call committee he reviewed a lot of church documents that revealed the level of influence the church’s core values was having on their ministry. He looked at annual reports, newsletters, bulletins, and any other documents the church had that would allow him to analyze whether or not the church’s stated core values were more than just mere verbiage.

While the three pastors and churches above went through what might be considered a formal process of comparing their core values, the three pastors and churches who did not indicate a formal comparison of core values in their call process did reveal that an informal comparison took place. As noted in the previous sections of this chapter, the pastors were much better informed about the issue of core values than the churches. The pastors were conscious of their core values and as they interviewed with the prospective churches, they attempted to identify the churches’ core values in three ways. The first was by stating their philosophy of ministry that was shaped by their core values. Second was by listening to the members of the call committees and other church leaders as they talked about their church and ministry. And third was by reviewing church documents much like pastor (P5) above.

One church representative made the observation that the pastor was smarter than they were or more informed about the importance of connecting core values than the call committee or church leaders. “We didn’t know that’s what we were doing. If I may say it this way, Pastor was a whole lot smarter than we were. He was doing that [identifying our core values and comparing them with his] all along and we didn’t know it” (transcript, interview C2, p. 6).
This was the pattern with the other two churches that had not identified and defined their core values and used those in a formal comparison with the core values of the prospective pastor. Again, the pastors related that they knew what their core values were and how they influenced their ministry practice and they were looking to see if there was a match between them and the prospective church. The pastors, however, had to deduce what the core values of the prospective church were through conversations, the examination of church documents, and the analysis of the church ministry structure.

Matching Core Values

The preceding section explored the process of how the pastors and churches compared their core values. In this section, specific examples of how the pastors and churches matched their core values will be highlighted.

In the interview with one pastor, he noted that his core values were a commitment to biblical authority, a commitment to evangelism, and a commitment to the equipping model of ministry. His number one core value centered on the commitment to the equipping model of ministry, “I wanted to look at a church that was committed to this equipping model of ministry. I had no interest in a church that wanted me to do ministry on their behalf” (transcript, interview P1, p. 4). Obviously, he had a definite idea of the church he was looking for and was committed to wait until he found a church that matched his core values.

The church that extended a pastoral call to this pastor held as its philosophy of ministry, which was based on their core values, a commitment to the equipping model of ministry. “The very first item on our philosophy of ministry says that leaders are primarily equippers who give away ministry” (transcript, interview C1, p. 5). With this
point of agreement, both the pastor and church determined this to be an important indicator that there was a basis for a pastor/church relationship. The pastor even made the point, “One of the reasons I received the call was because our values overlapped so substantially, they matched very well” (transcript, interview P1, p. 5).

A second illustration of matching core values was one where the pastor was “interested in churches that had core values. For me, the spirituality thing needed to be big and they needed to show a kind of openness of spirit or at least something that I felt like I could work with” (transcript, interview P4, p. 6). In other words, he was looking for a church whose core values included a desire for spiritual growth as well as an openness to try new things and change.

In listening to the church representative, he talked about how they were looking for a pastor who could work with the broad theology represented in their church as well as someone who would support their strong mission orientation. He said, “We were looking for someone who would at least support that effort (missions effort) and bring some new ideas that they had tried as well” (transcript, interview C4, p. 7-8). While the terminology seems to be different, the pastor determined their core values to match or at least to be similar to his. “They [the church] were interested in family, education, and spirituality. I felt like it would be a challenge but it would be a place where I could do some of the things that I wanted to do” (transcript, interview P4, p. 7). His core value about spirituality matched the core value of the church’s desire to connect with the broad theological perspectives of various church members. The church’s openness to the trial of new things by the pastor matched his core value of an openness of spirit.
One last example was found in the interviews with the pastor who related that his previous ministry placement has been a great frustration to him. During the interview and call process with the previous church, the core values espoused by the call committee were not really the core values of the congregation. His core values centered on outreach and serving the community and his previous church was more concerned about institutional maintenance than on ministering to the community. Therefore, his conversations with his current church focused on three questions: “Are we more concerned about people or things? Are we more concerned about ourselves or the people outside the walls of the church? Who is more important?” (transcript, interview P5, p. 5).

It was revealed under the previous section, Church and Core Values, that this church’s (C5) core values included outreach and community service. They were true to those core values in that they were providing a pre-school for the community and did a lot of outreach events such as ice cream socials and car shows throughout the year to reach out to the community. There was an intentional effort to reach out and minister to the children and youth of the community. As a result, there was a good match of core values between pastor (P5) and church (C5). The pastor confirmed, “It was pretty clear to me early on in conversations with this church that our core values were much more aligned and this was going to be a good place to be about mission and ministry” (transcript, interview P5, p. 5).

As illustrated, matching of core values can happen. It is an intentional process through which it takes time and patience to work. There are times, like in example two with the pastor (P4) and church (C4), they do not use the same terminology but find through practical discussions that they mean the same thing.
For all three of these pastors and churches, the calls discussed in this chapter were the first time for them to use the formal comparison of core values in the call process. Some did not see the importance of working on this issue in the process. One church representative said, “It was interesting because at first I didn’t put a lot of emphasis on that particular section because it was such a challenge” (transcript, interview C5, p. 5). After using the comparison of core values in their call process and seeing the results of a more compatible pastor/church match, all three pastors and churches indicated they would definitely include this as a part of any future call processes.

Category Four: Pastor/Church Relationship and Core Values

The final category that emerged from the study is the Pastor/Church Relationship and Core Values. At this point, core values have been examined in relationship to a pastor, a church, and the call process; however, in this section there is a brief exploration of the role core values play in the pastor/church relationship. Under this category, two subcategories emerged: the similarity of core values and the dissimilarity of core values. These subcategories reflect on the effect that a similarity of core values as well as the dissimilarity of core values has on the pastor/church relationship.

Effects of a Similarity of Core Values

After analyzing the data, it was determined that four results are produced when there is a similarity of core values between a pastor and church. The number one result identified was a greater sense of unity between the pastor and church. In fact, five out of the six respondents mentioned unity as the result of a similarity of core values between a pastor and church.
There are a number of areas where unity between pastor and church occur. One pastor (P4) noted how it had created a unity in church structure, church mission, and church decisions. In order to maintain confidentiality, the specific details cannot be divulged, but he shared a specific example where the board of trustees was working on a particular issue and the pastor raised the concern as to whether or not the direction they were going was in keeping with the church’s mission and core values. At a second meeting, a lot of discussion took place and in the end a decision was made that was in keeping with the church’s mission and core values. This was done without conflict and struggle between the pastor and church leaders because they were united by a similarity of core values.

One of the church representatives (C1) related how the similarity in core values between the pastor and church had created the sense that the pastor is a part of the team. While the pastor is a leader to be respected, the similarity of core values makes the church feel that he is one of them, he is united with them in mission, and how to fulfill the mission. This in turn creates another important element that must be in the pastor/church relationship and that is trust.

Trust was the second most listed result that a similarity of core values creates. The issue of trust was not something identified by just one of the pastors interviewed but two of the church representatives as well. One church leader (C2) shared an example of where their church was in the process of building a new facility. The church leader reported how smoothly the building process went, but it was due to the trust the church had in the pastor. One of the primary reasons they trusted him was the similarity of core values and the fact that he communicated everything about the building process to the church. He
even reported what some might consider being minor details that few if any would find important, but he knew the people trusted him and he did not want to do anything that might give the appearance of hiding something that could create distrust.

A third result of a similarity of core values is the advanced pace of getting ministry done. The pastor who made this point identified a two fold reason for this. One is time and energy is not wasted on the pastor and church leaders trying to determine the responsibilities of the pastor. It is simple, the responsibilities of the pastor are found in implementing and fulfilling the mission of the church as defined by the core values of the pastor and church. He said, “What it means is that the conversations I have with leaders are now about how well I am doing in pursuing these things. We don’t have to discuss whether these goals are worth pursuing” (transcript, interview P1, p. 6).

Secondly, little time and energy has to be expended by the pastor and church leaders about where the church is going and what the church is doing. He says it well, “The highest level of where we should be going as a church is fairly effortless conversation with the elder leadership of the church. More of our discussion is how do we do it and then am I doing a good job within that job of facilitating and making that happen” (transcript, interview P1, p. 6). Similarity of core values accelerates the pace of ministry being developed and enacted in the church.

The last result identified is that it lessens conflict between the pastor and church leadership. One church representative raised this issue as he reflected on the conflict that occurred with a previous pastor at their church. He did not go into details other than to say that the relationship between the current pastor and the church was dramatically different because there was a similarity of core values. That did not mean there had not
been some disagreement between the pastor and some church members that resulted in some people leaving the church. Conversely, the level of disagreement or conflict was greatly reduced in comparison to the last pastor/church relationship. Therefore, the evidence so noted from this study supports the premise that there are many positive benefits from a pastor and church having a similarity of core values.

Effects of the Dissimilarity of Core Values

Despite the fact that there were four positive benefits identified when there is a similarity of core values between a pastor and church, there were six problems identified when there is a dissimilarity of core values. Two of the six problems were mentioned by two different respondents while the six remaining were only noted once.

The first problem identified was distrust. Whereas a similarity in core values breeds trust, dissimilarity in core values breeds distrust. One of the pastors (P5) in reflecting back on his previous ministry assignment shared how his core values did not align with the core values of the church and as a result there was a high level of mistrust of him, especially when he attempted to introduce and implement a new ministry. As noted in the early sections of this chapter, this pastor’s core values focused on outreach and ministry to the community. In his last ministry assignment when he attempted to minister to the community by starting an Alcoholics Anonymous group, the church revolted. They did not want the pastor bringing alcoholics into their facility in fear they might damage it. The issue here is not whether the pastor or the church was right or wrong. It exemplifies how dissimilarity in core values between this pastor and church caused problems and created distrust between the two
Another problem identified was the struggle between the pastor and church leadership. One pastor (P6) used that term several times in describing his relationship with the church. Since there was dissimilarity in core values, it was a constant struggle between the church leadership and him. “And so, I am saying that once the vision was cast, once the vision was stated and articulated through the years, greater synchronization happened, greater flexibility with how we are going to do this happened, but it was a struggle” (transcript, interview P6, p. 10).

From a church representative’s (C3) perspective it is a struggle because the pastor wants to lead the church in a direction that is consistent with his core values, but it is inconsistent with the church’s. “No matter how dynamic a pastor is, he’s not going to be able to lead a church if they do not want to go in that direction. And so, if his values are different than where the church is or where the church wants to go, it will never move anywhere” (transcript, interview C3, p. 8).

When a pastor attempts to lead a church in a direction that is inconsistent with the core values of the majority of the church, it can create another problem identified in the study: division. As one pastor (P3) reflected back on a conflictual church relationship, he recalled how it divided the church almost down the middle. He made the point that when half the church is aligned with the pastor’s core values and excited about the ministry that shaped by those core values and the other half of the church is not in line with those values; it creates constant turmoil and eventual division in the church.

This, in turn, creates another problem: stress. There is stress on the pastor, stress on the church leaders, stress on the pastor’s and leaders’ families, and stress on the whole church. One pastor recalled how stressful it was for him and his family when the conflict
over the dissimilarity of core values intensified during a former pastorate. He did not go into details of the negative effects of the stress on him and his family but the implication was that it was a very difficult time for them.

Consequently, when there is distrust, struggle, division, and stress in the church another problem is created, a decline in pastor/church morale. One church representative (C2) made the observation that when there is a similarity of core values there is enthusiasm and motivation for the church to follow the pastor’s leadership. Conversely, when there is dissimilarity in core values between the pastor and church, morale is depleted along with the enthusiasm and motivation to follow the pastor’s leadership.

Unfortunately, this creates the last problem identified, a hindrance to the growth of the church. This is the observation of a pastor who said, “I think that we would have been much further along in our growth” (transcript, interview P2, p. 10). The reason there was a hindrance to growth was the pastor and church leaders spent all their time and energy addressing the conflict created by the dissimilarity in core values.

The evidence shows that the problems created by a dissimilarity of core values exceed the benefits that come from a similarity of core values. Therefore, a more compatible relationship between a pastor and church comes as a result of them sharing a similarity of core values.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was born out of a growing concern for pastors and churches that are continually wounded because of conflictual, short-term pastor/church relationships. A concern that despite the fact that both a pastor and church have prayed and have tried to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in making the right choice, there are still too many short lived, conflicting pastor/church relationships. Therefore, pastors and churches should be seeking to discover ways to keep this from occurring. A process or procedure should be developed with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help pastors and churches make better, more informed choices.

In order to respond to these issues, the methodology chosen was the grounded theory approach in which an inductive stance was taken. Specific attention was focused on the extent to which a prospective pastor and a prospective church identified, defined, and compared their core values as a part of the call process. There was an attempt to discover if data that would support or reject the grounded theory that a similarity of core values between a pastor and a church would provide a basis for a longer term, less conflicting, more effective pastor/church relationship.

Once this goal was established, theological support for the theory was sought. This began by identifying the main theological issues in relation to core values and the pastor/church relationship. One primary theological issue emerged: unity, more
specifically, unity between pastors and churches. After this theological issue was identified, it was explored by looking at the calls to unity, the images of unity, examples of unity and disunity, and how to achieve unity in the *Bible* and other theological resources.

This exploration provided indirect theological evidence that supports the inductive stance that a similarity of core values is necessary for a longer term, less conflicting, and effective pastor/church relationship. The evidence is indirect because it does not use the specific terminology of core values and the pastor/church relationship. It does, however, address the issue of leader/follower relationships in God's economy and the necessity of unity between the two if kingdom work is to be accomplished.

A review of the literature was conducted. Realizing there was a limited amount of resources that address the subject of core values and the pastor/church relationship, I began my review by focusing on the broader context of values and leadership. Then, I narrowed the focus to core values and leadership, making sure to show the difference between values and core values. The conclusion of the literature review focused on the very narrow subject of core values in the pastor/church relationship.

The biblical/theological support along with the practical support deduced from the literature review assisted in informing and guiding the application of the research methodology. This methodology included designing the study, defining and selecting the sample, designing and administering the questionnaire, planning and conducting the interviews, and analyzing the interview data.

From the analysis of the data, four major categories emerged: pastors and core values, churches and core values, the call process and core values, and the pastor/church
relationship and core values. The pastors and core values category was sub-divided into knowledge of core values, identification of core values, process of identification of core values, motivation in identifying core values, and commitment to core values. The churches and core values category was sub-divided into identification of core values, articulating core values, process of identifying core values, and commitment to core values. The third category, the call process and core values, had two sub-categories, comparing core values and matching core values. In the last category, pastor/church relationship and core values, there were two sub-categories: effects of similarity of core values and the effects of a dissimilarity of core values.

**Findings**

The exploration of the role core values play in the call process and the pastor/church relationship centered around three research questions. The first question was, “How does the identification, definition, and comparison of core values increase the quality of the pastoral search process?”

One of the problems that prompted this study was the seeming large number of incompatible pastor/church relationships that end in conflict. I wondered if more compatible pastor/church relationships could occur when there is a similarity of core values between the two. From the study, it was found that when a pastor and a church had identified and defined their core values before entering into the call process, and then compared their core values during the call process it increased the likelihood of finding a more compatible pastor/church match.

A second finding from this study is that when there is a high level of compatibility of core values between a pastor and a church, it ensures that the pastor will have a
broader appeal to the church. Unless church polity dictates otherwise, the identified and
defined core values of a church represent a consensus of the congregation. If the core
values truly do represent the larger congregational membership and the core values are
compatible with the pastor’s core values, then the pastor should appeal to the broader
cross section of the church.

When time has been taken to identify and define the core values of both a pastor
and a church, it was found that this accelerates and streamlines the call process. Since
pastors and churches had to include their core values as a part of their pastoral or church
profile, both were able to do an informal comparison of core values through an
examination of the resulting profiles. Through this process, a pastor and a church could
quickly determine if they were compatible. If there was no match, then time, energy, or
resources would not be uselessly expended on an incompatible relationship.

The identification, definition, and comparison of core values provided a framework
for more in-depth discussions about ministry. Discussions that took place in the call
process were often shallow and only addressed surface issues. This study found that the
comparison of core values provided an opportunity to hear the passion of both pastor and
church. It was found that the comparison of core values provided opportunity to discuss
how those core values are practiced. That is important because while a pastor and church
may share similar core values, they must also have some level of shared agreement about
how those core values are practiced. The comparison of core values during the call
process allowed for these kinds of discussions to take place.

This study also found that the identification, definition, and comparison of core
values allowed pastor and church to be proactive in the call process. The identification
and definition of core values requires careful reflection and forethought. For that reason, before a pastor or a church enters into a call process, each has thought through who they are and what they are about and identified basic profiles. This reduces the risk of making an emotional or an uninformed choice.

A finding of the study is that the identification, definition, and comparison of core values reduced the opportunity for major conflict between a pastor and a church. In the analysis of the data, some of the pastors and churches reported less conflictual relationships in comparison to some previous relationships in which there was a marked difference in core values.

A second question addressed in the study was, “How does the identification and definition of core values assist pastors in having a better understanding of their goals in ministry?” In relation to this study, it was found that the identification and definition of one’s core values assist a pastor in developing a profile of a church that is most compatible with him and with whom he will have the best opportunity for an effective ministry. The identification and definition of one’s core values helps a pastor know who he is and what his primary focus is in ministry. Therefore, he will be empowered to make a more informed decision as to the church with which he should enter a pastor/church relationship.

Another finding of this study is that the pastoral identification and definition of core values helps a pastor arise out of a time of crisis or confusion in ministry. There are times in ministry when a pastor works long and hard but seemingly accomplishes very little. It seems the pastor has no control of his life and ministry. It is at this point that the study
found that pastors are often motivated to identify and define their core values in an attempt to renew or re-order their ministries.

Identifying and defining one's core values enables a pastor to minister proactively rather than reactively. Instead of ministering out of reaction to the next phone call, crisis, or a church member's expectation, the pastor can minister proactively according to her core values. If a pastor is ministering reactively rather than proactively, she will have a difficult time in achieving her ministry goals; however, when a pastor establishes a set of core values, it allows her to remain focused.

Another reason for identifying and defining one's core values is that it assists a pastor in achieving her ministry goals and establishes a set of boundaries within which she will minister. It is almost impossible to achieve one's ministry goals without a set of boundaries to channel one's attention and energy. Boundaries assist a pastor in knowing when to say "yes" and when to say "no". Core values assist the pastor in prioritizing ministry responsibilities, time management, leadership focus, and the many other duties that come with being a pastor.

The study found that the identification and definition of the pastor's core values assist him in balancing life and ministry. It is so easy for pastors to become engrossed in the business of ministry thereby neglecting his family, his marriage, even his own physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being. As a result, the pastor can burn out and lose his ministry and more.

It is vitally important that a pastor know herself well enough to establish a set of core values that will assist her from falling into some of these destructive patterns. A pastor must not only have a definite set of core values that provides guidance and
establishes boundaries, but she must articulate them to the church and be fully committed to them. A pastor’s commitment to her core values, especially those core values that keep balance in her life in regards to her marriage and family must be fully communicated to a prospective church. A church will constantly try a pastor’s commitment to her core values and if there is not an agreement up front from the church, conflict can occur when the pastor stands her ground. Without these core values in place, a pastor will rarely achieve her ministry goals.

The third question addressed in this study is how does the identification and definition of core values assist a church in having a better understanding of its goals in ministry? Much like the primary finding for the previous question, this study found that the identification and definition of core values by a church assists it in knowing who it is and what it is about in ministry. With that knowledge, a church can develop a profile, not only of itself but of the pastor. This study found this to be true in that churches that had identified and defined their core values had a much better understanding of the type of pastor who would be most compatible than the churches who had not. It was also found that the churches that had a better understanding of themselves and the type of pastor that would be more compatible were able to find a better pastoral match.

The study also found that the identification and definition of core values by a church created a more conducive atmosphere for unity in the church. As was explored in Chapter Two, unity is necessary for the work of God to be effective. In order for unity to take place, there must be a centerpiece of sorts around which the people to be unified can focus. A church’s core values can serve that the centerpiece. One of the reasons the core values of a church should be a uniting catalyst is that it is a representation of the whole
church. If the process for identifying and defining the core values of the church has been done properly, input has been solicited from as many congregational members as possible, thus, giving members a sense of ownership.

Another finding of this study is when a church has established a set of core values, that focus assists the church in the shaping of many other issues including the budget. In this case significant blocks of the church budget will be designated to support the ministries that fulfill the core values. It was found that the church budget is a key indicator of the legitimacy of a church’s core values. The church budget is where prospective pastors looked to validate the core values espoused by the prospective church’s call committee.

Core values also serve as a compass in setting the direction of a church’s ministry. Once core values were understood, they served as a guide in shaping the church’s philosophy of ministry as well as the church’s mission. This, in turn, influenced the ministry structure of the church that, like the church budget, validate the church’s core values.

One final finding was that established core values in a church helps provide stability and continuity of leadership. In many churches, leadership positions have term limits; therefore, core values provide stability and continuity in the mission of the church despite the turnover in leadership.

Core values assist the church in many ways, and they are invaluable to the call process of a church. The identification and definition of a church’s core values is a time-consuming, energy-depleting process. However, churches that took the time and did the
work expressed that they were glad they did, because they were experiencing positive results.

Conclusions

As one reflects on this study one can draw a number of conclusions. The following are not comprehensive but are the main conclusions of the study.

Several times throughout this project, it has been noted that the process of identifying, defining, and comparing the core values of a prospective pastor and prospective church is a new phenomenon. From all indications, this is an accurate conclusion. The accuracy is based on the limited number of pastors and churches that are using this as a part of their call process. It is also based on the fact that the pastors and churches interviewed have gone through other call processes in the past but now they are using the identification, definition, and comparison of core values. Many of the respondents indicated difficulty in understanding and using this core value process because of its newness.

A second conclusion is that the use of the identification, definition, and comparison of core values enhances the call process. The pastors and churches who used this process resolutely declared this fact. For example, the pastor who interviewed with seven different churches before finding a church that matched his core values shared that when he first looked at the matching church’s profile, he was not sure that he would be compatible with the church because of its rural location. Yet, as he read the core values section of the profile, he realized this could be the church for which he was looking. Further exploration with the church proved there was a match in their core values that
ended with the church extending a call to this pastor and to date, it has been a compatible marriage between the two.

The same was true for a call committee that initially reached the level of formal discussions with two other pastors before determining a third pastor was the right match for their church. This determination came as a result of a close comparison of the pastor’s and church’s core values. In looking at the profiles and talking with the first two pastors, the committee was impressed with their charismatic personalities. Consequently, as the call process progressed with both of these pastors, it became evident that they were not the right match for the church. As a result, they moved on to their third choice, a pastor whose core values were closely aligned with the core values of the church and has proven to be a compatible match. Both the pastor and the church are very pleased and the compatibility of core values is revealed in the growth and progress of the church.

The third conclusion reached in this study is that the identification, definition, and comparison of core values is not the single, miraculous solution to pastors and churches making better transitional choices because there are many dynamics in the pastor/church relationship to be considered. Dynamics such as personality, leadership style, preaching style, cultural background, theology, and more play a role in a compatible pastor/church relationship. While a similarity of core values is not the single dynamic to be considered in the pastor/church relationship, it is a foundational dynamic that must be in place in order for these other dynamics to function. Unfortunately, it is a dynamic that previously has been overlooked resulting in poor transitional choices by pastors and churches.

Another conclusion of this study is that the integration of the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in the call process will be met with some
resistance by both pastors and churches. In fact, one church leader verbalized an initial resistance to the requirement of identifying and defining the core values of the church for the church information profile. He noted that it was time consuming because of having to survey the whole church and then filter all the information down to the three to five core values. Also, he struggled with deciding on how to respond to the core values assessment tool because it took some real thought and reflection. In the end, he admitted that it was hard work but saw the value in it.

Some will be resistant to the inclusion of the core value process because it will be viewed as negating the work of the Holy Spirit. There will be a concern that pastors and churches will become more dependent on the use of the identification, definition, and comparison of core values rather than be dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit. This does not have to be the case. In fact, the core value process is a tool that the Holy Spirit can use to assist both pastors and churches in being more informed about themselves and each other in order to make better choices in times of pastoral transition.

The fifth conclusion is that there must be a commitment to one’s core values if they are to guide one’s ministry. That commitment must supersede feelings, theology, money, or position. This will not always be easy and may try the patience of both pastor and church. A pastor or church may have to interview and pass up a number of opportunities before a compatible match is found. As a result, it would be easy to become frustrated and give in to the temptation of circumventing the process and choosing a pastor or a church for which there is not a significant similarity of core values. It will take a lot of commitment to one’s core values to turn down a pastor or a church that looks good;
however, it is better to stay committed than to enter into a relationship that will be conflictual and ineffective.

A final conclusion is that it is imperative that pastors and churches take the time to do the hard work of identifying and defining their core values and be committed to live by those core values so they will have some sense of continuity and direction for ministry. The pastors and churches who have done the hard work and remained committed to the use of the identification, definition, and comparison of core values have found tremendous value to their lives and ministries.

**Recommendations**

This final section of this chapter addresses the recommendations for pastors and churches based on the findings and conclusions of this study. The identification and definition of a pastor or church’s core values followed by a comparison of those core values in the call process is a new phenomenon. Therefore, it is recommended that pastors and churches educate themselves about core values and the role they play in the call process and the pastor/church relationship.

In this study it was found that the pastors and churches that used the identification, definition, and comparison of core values in the call process did not begin the formal identification and definition phase until they entered a time of transition. The pastors, on the one hand, indicated that they had informally thought about what their core values were but had not taken the time to document and define them formally. Whereas, two of the churches had been led to do some work on identifying church values before the time of transition, they had not reached the point of formally identifying and defining their core values. While the work that was done made a significant contribution to their call
processes, it is recommended that both pastors and churches take the time when not under the pressure of transition to identify, define, and document their core values. The identification and definition of core values takes time and careful reflection. Pastors and churches must recognize that once their core values have been identified, defined, and documented, the process is not over, but should be revisited regularly to continue to sharpen and clarify them.

It is strongly recommended that both a pastor and church integrate the comparison of core values into any call process they begin whether or not they are required by their denomination to do so. It is recommended that a significant amount of time, discussion, and validation of each other's core values be given in the call process. As was found in the study, the comparison of core values must go beyond mere surface discussions. Discussions must include the practical element of how those core values are achieved and how they are lived out in the ministry of both the pastor and the church.

Validation should be sought through a research of church documents such as past bulletins, newsletters, annual meeting reports, and budgets. While this takes much time and energy, as noted in the conclusions, it is better to take the time to find a pastor or church whose core values are a match than to enter into a pastor/church relationship that will end up to be conflicting and ineffectual.

It is recommended that after a pastor and a church identify and define their core values, they resolve to be committed to them. That commitment will be evidenced in two ways: one will be that their core values will be used to shape their philosophy and practice of ministry by establishing boundaries, setting direction, dictating budget and, prioritizing ministry tasks and time. Secondly, a pastor and a church should resolve to be
especially committed to their core values when they find themselves in transition and entering into a call process. There will be many temptations that will challenge their commitment to their core values.

The last recommendation is that pastors and churches be reminded of the serious nature of the call process. A call process is a solemn matter because it has eternal implications. When pastors and churches make a mistake and enter into a pastor/church relationship that is conflicting and ends with a lot of hurt, damage, and souls lost to the kingdom of God. Experience reveals that much of the time when a church has gone through conflict and turmoil involving the pastor who eventually leaves under duress, the church loses people. Some of those people who leave the church move on to other churches, but others drop out of church and never return, and that is tragic. Many times it takes years for the pastor and the church to heal from such an experience and some never heal. Again, it is strongly recommended that pastors and churches remember the consequences of an incompatible pastor/church relationship.

Further Research

It has been stated numerous times throughout this study that the issue of core values and the role they play in the call process and the pastor/church relationship is a new phenomenon. That was evident in the limited number of literature resources found and the limited knowledge and experience of the pastors and churches interviewed. Thus, there are many more aspects of this issue that need to be researched.

One recommendation for further research is the process of how a pastor and church compare their core values in the call process. The findings of this study is that discussions about core values took place with some definitive points explored, but it is recommended
that more in-depth case studies be done of pastors and churches who compared their core values in the call process. It would be good if some type of template could be identified that would assist pastors and churches in a thorough comparison of their core values.

Based on that recommendation, it is also recommended that further research be conducted on what percentage of agreement of core values is needed that indicates a sufficient basis for an effective and long-term ministry relationship. It is rare that there will be complete agreement of core values between a pastor and church. How much agreement is necessary for a working relationship? If both the pastor and the church have five core values and if there is agreement on two of the five core values, is that enough to enter into a pastor/church relationship? Does it need to be three out of five or even four out of five?

This study covered the categories of pastors and core values, churches and core values, the call process and core values, and the pastor/church relationship and core values. It is recommended that further research be done focusing on any one of those categories alone. For example, further research of pastors and core values could explore such issues as a pastor’s informal and formal identification and definition of his core values, or how the identification and definition of core values affected a pastor’s life and ministry.

Further research for churches and core values could focus on the relationship of core values and their influence on the unity of a church. One very interesting aspect for further research could be the agreement of the core values of church leaders in comparison to the core values of the rest of the church. This, in turn, could lead into
research on the influence of church core values on the level of trust by the rest of the church.

Further research is also recommended in taking a more in-depth look at the level of conflict between a pastor and a church compared to the level of similarity of core values. As the level of similarity of core values goes up, does the level of pastor/church conflict go down or as the level of similarity goes down does the level of pastor/church conflict go up?

There are many other relational dynamics that should be considered in the pastor/church relationship along with core values such as leadership style, preaching style, and cultural background. For example, if a church is looking for a pastor whose leadership style is one of being a part of a team and the pastor’s leadership style is one that is individualistic, even if there is a similarity of core values, there will be difficulty. The same is true if a pastor comes from a different cultural background from the church setting, it may be difficult for him to cross cultures and pastor a church effectively even if there is a similarity of core values. When a pastor shared similar values to the church, but there were differences in cultural backgrounds, it created difficulty in achieving those core values. For that reason, it is recommended that further research be done to explore these other relational dynamics in addition to the issue of core values such as personality profiles.

The call process and the pastor/church relationship are complicated and almost mystical subjects. While much has been learned through the years, there is so much more to be learned to help pastors and churches make more compatible choices. Hopefully, this
study has contributed to the subject and will serve as a catalyst to spawn more study in
this subject area.
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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Demographics for Pastor
   a. Age
   b. Denomination
   c. Level of Education
   d. How many churches have you pastored?
   e. How long have you been at this church?
   f. Have you read or informed yourself about the concept of core values and the role they play in the leader/follower relationship?
   g. Have you formally identified and defined your top three to five core values for ministry?
   h. What are they?
   i. How did you arrive at these core values?
   j. What motivated you to invest time and energy in identifying and defining your core values?

2. Demographics for Church.
   a. Denomination or affiliation
   b. Location
   c. Size
   d. Date the church began
   e. Are the members of the church predominately considered white collar, blue collar or a blend of both?
   f. Type of church polity? (elders, deacons, church council, etc.)
   g. Who made up the pastoral call committee?
   h. Has the church done any study or have they been led in a formal process of identifying and defining their top three to five core values?
   i. What are they?
   j. How did you arrive at these core values?
   k. Were these core values determined by just the leadership of the church or was the whole congregation given an opportunity to give input?
   l. What motivated you to invest time and energy in identifying and defining your core values?
3. Other Research Questions

a. Name and describe the main factors that you considered in the call process? In other words, what were the main factors that you were looking for that would be an indication that this is the church I believe I will match up well with or for the church this is the pastor that will match up well with our church?

b. (If core values are not listed as one of the factors ask, if they were a factor go on to the next question) Were similar core values a factor in the call process? Why or why not?

c. You noted that a similarity in core values was a factor in your decision, how did you compare your core values?

   i. Did the comparison involve a discussion of each core value with some specific examples of what each core value looked like or is practiced or what did you do?
   ii. What was the percentage of agreement between your core values? In other words if both of you had five core values did all five match up or four out of five, three out five?
   iii. What was the minimum percentage or number of core values that had to be similar to influence your decision positively or negatively?

d. How has the similarity of core values made the pastor/church relationship more effective?

e. In your estimation, has the similarity of core values helped avoid what might have otherwise been some points of conflict between the pastor and church?

   i. What were those possible points of conflict?
   ii. How did the similarity in core values help avoid this?

f. Have any issues between the pastor and church developed that were not discussed in the call process? If so, what were they and how were they resolved?
g. In your estimation what would the impact have been had those issues been discussed during the call process?

h. Knowing what you know now, would you use the comparison of core values as a part of the call process in the future? Why?

i. What advice would you give to a pastor and/or church considering a call to a church?