

PASTORAL TRAINING APPROACHES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Multi-Case Study

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the types of pastoral training approaches being employed by evangelical churches today?

How are exemplar churches from each category of pastoral training approaches equipping their pastors for the work of the ministry?



RESEARCH PURPOSE

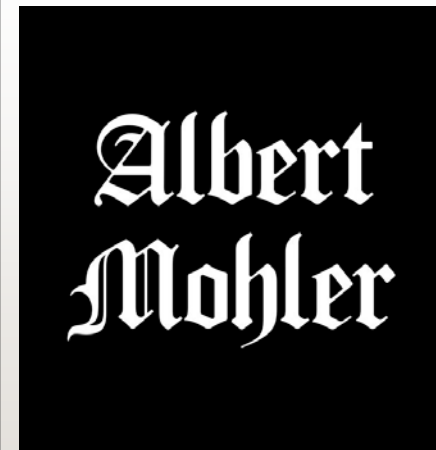
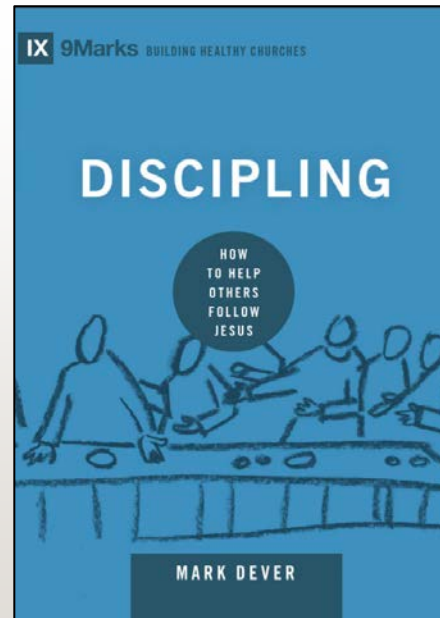
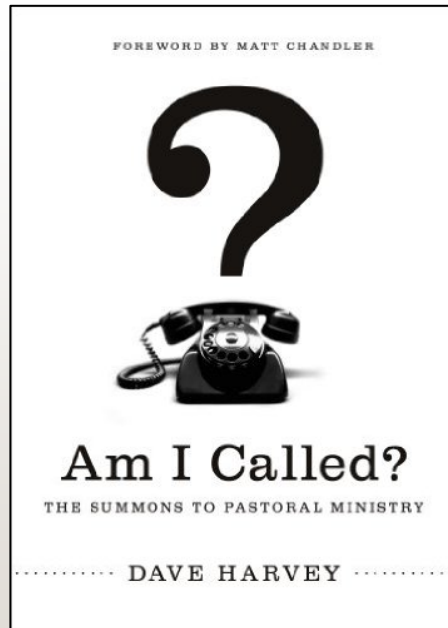
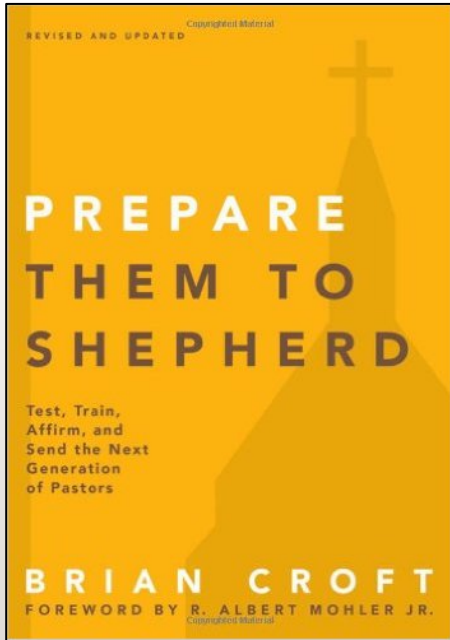
To categorize the pastoral training approaches used by evangelical churches today (RQ 1) and investigate exemplary churches of each category (RQ 2).

PASTORAL TRAINING APPROACH

A method, model, or program that a local church employs for preparing pastors to lead their churches effectively and fulfill the responsibilities of their calling.

THE LITERATURE – the good

- Strong voices calling for churches to take responsibility to train & some good models.



EXAMPLE - Quote

Brothers, seminaries don't make pastors in three years, under God local churches make pastors. We are what God uses to do that. Seminaries can be helpful, but its local churches that make pastors. And we must lead in that work. Like Luther training pastors in Wittenberg and Calvin in Geneva, each of those pastors represents an investment. . . . You want to see revival come in your area? Pray, and give your life to the training of the next generation of preachers. (Dever)

THE LITERATURE – concerning trends

- Low pastoral retention rates.
- Pastoral burnout stories and statistics.

Example: Barna Group

- More than one-third of pastors are at high or medium risk of burnout.
- Three-quarters know at least one fellow pastor whose ministry ended due to stress.
- One in nine U.S. pastors is at high risk for burnout based on their own self-assessment.

The State of Pastors (Ventura, CA: Barna, 2017)

LITERATURE GAP

- Little published or academic literature that discusses the types of approaches employed by churches today.
- Little scholarly research exists regarding training programs at model churches.
- *Concern:* Poor training at the local church level is a factor that contributes to the low pastoral retention rates and high burnout numbers seen today.

HOW LOCAL CHURCH TRAINING CAN HELP WITH THESE ISSUES

- Links knowledge with necessary ministry experience and coaching/mentoring.
- Provides the support of a community connected to a local church.
- Connection to local church develops the heart & character and helps discern calling.
- Provides necessary relationships for assessment of gifts, character, and skills.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Stage 1 - Categorize pastoral training approaches (RQ 1)

- Literature review and expert panel

Stage 2 - Investigate exemplar churches of each category (RQ 2)

- Case studies of churches

Applications – Cross-case analysis, shared practices, recommendations for churches

SUMMARY OF WHAT I FOUND



CATEGORIES AND APPROACHES

(1) **Send off to Seminary**

“hands off” posture

(2) **Church and Seminary Partnerships**

“hand shake” posture

(3) **Train on Own** – “hands cupped” posture

- accredited college and seminary

(i.e. Bethlehem, Masters)

- use in-house curriculum and/or utilize

training groups (i.e. Porterbrook Network)

CATEGORIES AND APPROACHES

Categories and Approaches

Send off to
Seminary

Church and Seminary
Partnerships

Train on
Own

Approaches

1. Apprenticeship Model
2. Cohort Program
3. Institute Approach
4. Finishing Residency

APPROACHES

(1) **Apprenticeship Model**

- Small to Mid-sized church
- Pastor with a strong heart to train
- Relational, mentoring focus
- Generally 1-2 at a time for 1-4 years
- Often congregation is highly involved
- Partnership – field or internship site

APPROACHES

(2) Cohort Program

- Group of pastoral trainees working through a program together.
- Leaders organize topics and classes.
- Mentoring designed for character development and spiritual formation.
- Supervised ministry experiences to develop skills.
- Generally 1-2 yrs; 4-22 participants
- Partnership – credit for a class

APPROACHES

(3) Institute Approach

- Large church with devoted resources.
- Pastoral trainee group part of larger church effort to train leaders - multiple cohorts with courses, seminars, and church-wide classes.
- Generally 1-3 years, 5-10 trainees
- Partnership – often can receive seminary credit for a number of classes.

APPROACHES

(4) **Finishing Residency**

- Post-seminary residency experience.
- Developing pastoral skills & character through mentored positions/programs.
- Sharpen doctrine, leadership topics.
- Generally 1-3 years, 1-4 residents.
- Usually trainees have full-time staff positions with supervision and coaching.

CASE STUDY CHURCHES

- (1) **South Woods Baptist** - Apprenticeship
“A Mentoring Church” Pastoral Internship
- (2) **Capitol Hill Baptist** - Cohort program
“Ecclesiological Boot Camp” Internship
- (3) **Cornerstone Church** - Institute approach
“Developing Next-Generation Leaders” CST
- (4) **Austin Stone Church** - Institute approach
“A Culture of Building and Sending” ASI-PCPR
- (5) **Christ Community** - Finishing residency
“Holistic Development” Pastoral Residency

SHARED PRACTICES AMONG THE CASE STUDY CHURCHES

Convictions

- Learning Bible and theology
- Developing topical knowledge

Character

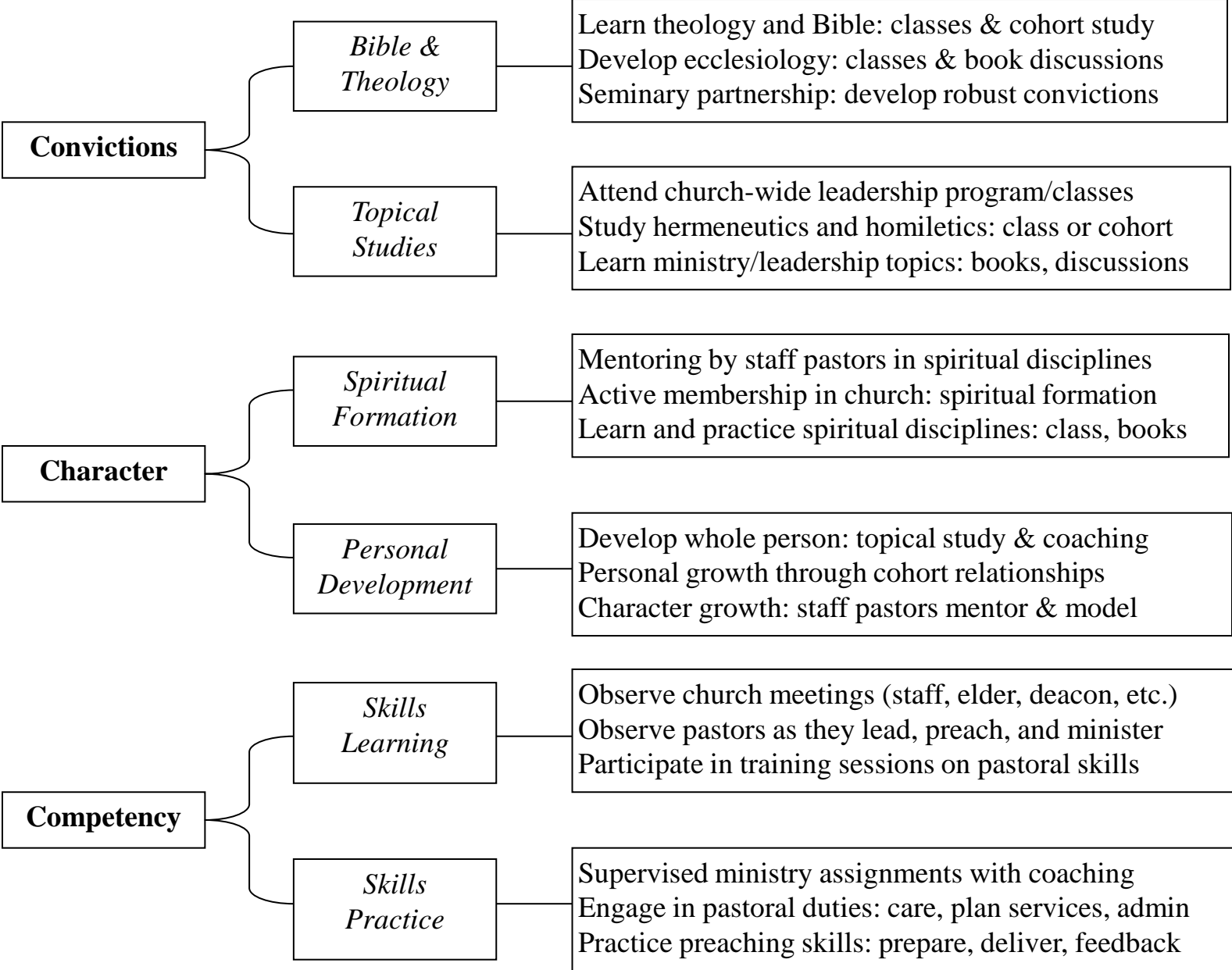
- Practices for spiritual formation
- Practices for personal development

Competency

- Pastoral skills learning
- Pastoral skills practice

Categories

Practices



APPLICATIONS – recommendations for practice (from top shared practices)

1. Develop robust biblical and theological convictions.
2. Provide opportunities to strengthen shepherding/pastoral ministry skills.
3. Include leadership topics in the training curriculum.

APPLICATIONS - recommendations

4. Cultivate relationships among trainees.
5. Delegate important ministry responsibilities in conjunction with pastoral coaching.
6. Provide a context for mentoring toward whole-person growth.

RESEARCH APPLICATIONS

- Adds to the literature base, provides categories for other researchers
- Provides helpful models - five case studies of exemplary church programs
- Assists churches and seminaries
- Shows wide variety of options available
- Encourages churches to start & partner
- Provides ideas on resources, strategies
- Helps strengthen existing programs

EXTRA MATERIALS



BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LOCAL CHURCH TRAINING

Rationale for Local Church Training	Scripture
Scripture models training by churches	Acts 13:1-3, 14:21-23, 18:24-28, 20:17-38
External calling is the responsibility of churches	Acts 11:26; 13:1-3; 1 Tim 4:14-15
Assessment is best conducted by churches	1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-4
Pastors should train other pastors in churches	2 Tim 1:14 - 2 Tim 2:2

DESCRIBING CATEGORIES OF PASTORAL TRAINING

Author	Training Area Categories				
<i>Bridges</i>	Study	Prayer	Exercise		
<i>Hillman/Wittmer</i>	Walking with Chief Shepherd	Feeding the Flock	Leading the Flock	Protecting the Flock	
<i>Geiger and Peck</i>	Provide Experiences	Deliver Knowledge	Offer Coaching	Develop Six Competencies	
<i>Busenitz/Sills/ Frame/Thoman</i>	Heart (character)	Head (knowledge)	Hands (skills)		
<i>Malphurs and Penfold</i>	Character	Knowledge	Skills	Emotional Maturity	Physical Health
<i>Marshall/Sojourn/ Gunter</i>	Character	Convictions	Competence		
<i>Montoya/Niebuhr</i>	Train toward three scriptural purposes: exalt, evangelize, edify		Train toward seven ministries to accomplish purposes: Word, prayer, Lord's supper, prayer, outreach, missions, interchurch		