**Investigating Southern New Jersey GARB Church Leader’s Spiritual Formation and Transformational Leadership Practices**

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor

of Philosophy

Omega Graduate School

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Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

For leaders to lead ethically, central to good leadership (Faddis, 2020), there is a need to cultivate a personal spirituality foundational to various leadership models, including the transformational leadership model (Mabey et al., 2017). Definitions for spirituality are varied, though characteristics of spirituality as connecting to a Higher Being, people, and surroundings can be found in the literature (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). Moore (2021) defines spirituality as incorporating multiple aspects of human life together while also including the relationship with a higher power leading to or influencing not only change within an individual but also shaping their actions towards people and surroundings. What someone believes ultimately forms their values, influencing how they think about and generally view life (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020).

The problem of the study is to investigate if there is a relationship between Church Leader’s spiritual formation and transformational leadership practices. For church leaders to lead transformationally, they must be in the process of spiritual formation and being transformed themselves (Lewis, 2019). For Christians, the message of God’s salvation through Christ Jesus is a message of transformative change not simply for others but for believers themselves (Niemandt & Niemandt, 2021). Without personal transformation, the TL will not be able to authentically or transformationally lead, which is contrary to the primary organizational principle of leaders to be what they want to see others become (Sims & Lopes, 2011).

The purpose of this quantitative correlational research study is to investigate through self-assessed inventories if there is a relationship between church leaders’ spiritual formation and transformational leadership practices. Though the literature provides research on transformational leadership, it does not provide quantitative research investigating the relationship between leaders’ spiritual formation and transformational leadership practices (Taladay & Panesar-Aguilar, 2021). The literature search strategies, theoretical framework, literature review concerning spirituality, spiritual formation, and transformational leadership practices, gap in the literature, and summary are covered.

**Literature Search Strategy**

The key purpose of research is to add to the overall knowledge of topics (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). Developing new knowledge through careful analysis and research on current topics is important for researchers to accomplish (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). The research conducted for this project involves utilizing relevant online search engines including Google Scholar, ERIC, Springer; ProQuest databases including dissertations and journal articles; Google Books; Amazon Books; WorldCat; and Zlibrary and others. Peer-reviewed journal articles were accessed through SAGE journals; Emerald; MDPI; the Leadership Quarterly; Elsevier; Journal of Management; HTS Theological Studies; Journal of the Evangelical Society; Journal of Business Ethics; and others. Relevant databases searched via the internet are the Library of Congress; the New Jersey network of libraries; and others.

Ideas and relevant topics were researched to develop keywords which are as follows, Spirituality Theory; Spiritual leadership; workplace spirituality; relational spirituality; Transformational Leadership Theory; servant leadership; ethical leadership; authentic leadership; ethics and morality; spiritual formation; and transformational learning.

Theoretical Framework

Spirituality Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory are the two theories framing the research. The derivation of the two theories, summary of current literature, and relatability to the research topic will be reviewed. The discussion of the two theories and implications for the research contextualized to a Christian worldview are as follows.

## **Spiritual Theory**

Definitions for spirituality or spiritual formation are varied though characteristics of spirituality as being connected to a Higher Being, people, and surroundings can be found in the literature (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). An individual’s search for meaning while pursuing growth and development are further dimensions of spirituality (Kok & van den Heuvel, 2019). Moore (2021) defines spirituality by incorporating multiple aspects of human life including the relationship with a higher power which leads to or influences change within an individual while also shaping actions towards people and surroundings. What someone believes ultimately shapes their values, subsequently influencing how they think about and generally view life (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020; Muldoon & King, 1995).

***Workplace Spirituality & Spiritual Leadership***

Spirituality theory is recognizable within other theories such as workplace spirituality, which promotes loyalty and is seen to heighten morality within organizations (Balasundaram, 2020). Workplace spirituality highlights for individuals the idea of an inner and outer life (Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020). Spiritual Leadership developed by Fry, L., Fry, L. W., and Matherly, L. motivates followers by incorporating ideals such as faith, hope, and love (Balasundaram, 2020). Spiritual well-being and ethical behavior, as emphasized within the spiritual leadership practice, improve followers' increased experience of peace and joy (Balasundaram, 2020). Both workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership interconnect with the foundational ideals of spirituality as each theory focuses in part on the ethical and moral development of the inner person (Adnan et al., 2020; Ball, 2021; Driscoll et al., 2019; Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020).

### ***Christian Spirituality***

Secular writers recognize the need for leaders to lead ethically, though they do not include faith formation for leaders’ ethical development (Krispin, 2020). Prior to modernism, spiritual knowledge had been considered inferior to reason (Cranton, 2016). The term “spirituality” has been shared within Protestantism due to a focus on Christian believer’s spiritual life as emphasized in Scripture (Carson, 1984). To understand Christian spirituality, essential concepts of transformation and spirituality must be comprehended contextually as an individual’s alignment of life in God and resulting activity centered on the ways of Jesus as empowered by God’s indwelling Spirit (Niemandt, 2019). Christian spirituality involves ongoing, transformational learning focused on biblical doctrine as well as an empowering of the Spirit of God within every aspect of a believer’s existence (Meneely, 2015; Peng & Keller, 2019). Transformation leads to spiritual formation which is the initial changed life of a believer lived by a constant adjusting of life to the ways of Jesus to think, do, and most importantly, become what God can change a person to be (Wong et al., 2019).

For Christians, the message of God’s salvation through Christ Jesus is a message of transformative change, with the understanding that transformation is not simply for others but for believers themselves (Niemandt & Niemandt, 2021). The Church is instrumental to spiritual formation taking place (Holder-Londsdale, chapter 14, 2005). For church leaders to lead transformationally, they must themselves be transformed and in the process of spiritual formation. Relationships are one of the most essential aspects of spiritual formation (Knoetze, 2022). Dr. Hall’s Connected life model of spirituality is based upon a relational model of spirituality to measure spiritual formation (Hall, 2015). Connecting to self and others, God, spiritual community, spiritual practices, and God’s Kingdom are the five domains of the connected life used to measure an individual’s spiritual formation (Hall, 2015). Church leaders not only need to be spiritually transformed and forming, but they also must lead transformationally.

## **Transformational Leadership Theory**

The Transformational Leadership model (TL) originated by Burns, was developed further by Bass, who highlighted four main leadership categories: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). TLs develop a vision to clarify new directions for organizations while also encouraging employees to grow personally by thinking in new ways and accepting the challenge of beneficial change (Yue et al., 2019). Relationships between TLs and employees are essential as a foundational TL function is to inspire followers through building trust with them (Ewell, 2018). Followers begin to imitate their leader once trust and confidence are established, and therefore, relationships between TLs and their followers become highly significant.

The basis for strong relationships between TLs and their followers is the moral values and attitudes of the TL (Trnka et al., 2020; Usman, 2020). Groves & LaRocca (2011) connect the goals for change TLs seek to accomplish with the process for change, which TLs encourage using the values of honesty, loyalty, and fairness. Outcome values such as justice, equality, and human rights are also emphasized. These values promoted by TLs are based upon the essential development of morals within TL themselves (Vale, 2019). As such, ethics and morally based values such as forgiveness, and personal values such as honesty, are essential to the foundation of TL (Groves & LaRocca, 2011).

For TLs to lead ethically, they must themselves develop integrity which includes but is not limited to factors such as altruism, fairness, and ethical judgment (Mabey et al., 2017). While developing personally, TLs must also role-model integrity and integrate various ethical elements to the followers under their authority. To be a moral leader, having integrity is essential but must be role-modeled, encouraged intentionally, and followers held accountable (Laajalahti, 2018).
 The internal development of leaders is essential to the outcome practices of leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2021) give five domains transformational leaders should practice. These domains are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Church leaders ought to be forming internally, spiritually, as well as developing leadership practices that transform followers, the Church, and ultimately society.

## **Relating Spirituality and Transformational Leadership**

Spirituality theory and Transformational Leadership both involve ethics, relationships, and formation. Faddis (2020) emphasizes the centrality of ethics to leadership. Serrat (2021) regards ethics as central to the discussion of leadership due to a leader's need to appropriately influence followers. For the Transformational leader, integrity must be formed personally to develop ethically based relationships where persuasive vision and new direction for organizations can be successfully navigated (Mabey et al., 2017; Yue et al., 2019). Spirituality theory emphasizes the internal development of an individual specifically regarding beliefs, ultimately impacting an individual’s thinking and view of life (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020; Muldoon & King, 1995).

The formation of beliefs and ethical behavior leading to coherently aligned practices is essential for church leaders. For Church leaders to lead transformationally, they must themselves be spiritually forming. When spiritual health within a leader is present, there will be meaningful relationships developed through integrity and transformational leadership practices. Spirituality involving leaders' internal ethical and moral formation is closely associated with foundational Transformational Leadership practices (Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Knoetze, 2022; Yue et al., 2019).

**Research Literature Review**

## **Spirituality**

Spirituality has been defined in various ways, including elements of learning involving a search for meaning and growth toward a mature self (Kok & van den Heuvel, 2019). Basic elements of spirituality affect beliefs, morals, and ethical behavior, each forming through personal or life experiences (Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020). However, spirituality is more than simply the rationality of the mind or human response to experiences (Carson, 1984). The current understanding of human interactions has moved beyond the idea that human reason using scientific methodology is superior to spiritual ways of knowing (Cranton, 2016). Human nature is not simply cognitive but also physical, emotional, and spiritual (Piercy, 2013). A fuller understanding of human nature adds to a whole-person view of learning, as experiences are an essential part of human learning in these four arenas.

The moral development of an individual is a crucial element to be a transformational leader (Vale, 2019). Spirituality, which has not been a focal point of the leadership discussion (Makka, 2019), is aligned closely with the idea of ethical practices, which are based upon personally developed morals and personal values (Driscoll et al., 2019). Personally developed morals and values, which involve spiritual formation, are the basis of ethical behavior and are related to an individual’s relationship with God or the sacred (Porter et al., 2019).

 Spirituality, the development of morals and values, can be influenced by a specific set of beliefs, sacred writing, ethics, or God, encompassing the overall idea of religion (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). However, this does not necessarily support the idea that spirituality is automatically involved with and or influenced by a specific religion. Spirituality reflects the human search for transcendence beyond the material and relating in some manner to a Higher Being (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). Leaders who affirm a Higher Being and are accountable by following that Higher Being with a set of governing rules tend toward authenticity in their leadership practices (GumUsay, 2019).

Religious beliefs are shaped through religious teachings and have a transcendent aspect irrespective of which religion is in view (Carson, 1984). Regardless of which religion is the ultimate, the transcendent factor of spirituality within the context of human nature is an important issue. The Christian faith, along with Islam and Judaism, regards spirituality as the worship of God and, therefore, moves beyond definitions of spirituality, which tend toward including feelings or experiences as foundational to spirituality (Carson, 1984; Holder-Lonsdale, chapter 14, 2005). Spirituality involves both the mind and emotional response to a power outside and higher than the self (Holder-Thurston, chapter 3, 2005). A response to a higher power and the resulting decisions of how to live in response to that higher power ultimately define spirituality. Christian spirituality views Jesus Christ as the higher power and lives life in response to Jesus and His Word, the Sacred text of the Bible, and the Spirit of Jesus (Carson, 1984).

*Spiritual Formation*

The individual responding to and then seeking to live in response to a higher power, understood as spirituality, must then begin at some level a process of formation. Spiritual formation involves the whole person's intellectual, emotional, cultural, and spiritual dimensions being deepened in a spiritual journey (Knoetze, 2022). Spiritual formation is similar to the idea of transformative learning when learning that changes an individual internally is related to spirituality (Cranton, 2016).

An essential aspect of spiritual formation is the relationship between God and others (Knoetze, 2022). Society is involved in this relationship dynamic, as through information from society, certain beliefs are formed (Orticio et al., 2021). One aspect of society involved directly in working toward the spiritual formation of its members is the Church or a theological institution, where congregational formation ought to be recognized as taking place in alignment with theological instruction (Knoetze, 2022). Without congregational change to exemplify doctrinal teaching, the instruction loses effectiveness.

Interconnected Theories of Spirituality

*Workplace Spirituality*

Workplace spirituality emphasizes the inner life of employees and the importance of participating in meaningful work within a relational context (Adnan et al., 2020). The concept of workplace spirituality is still relatively new, yet it is showing promising results, such as increased loyalty and boosting morality (Balasundaram, 2020). The emphasis of workplace spirituality on the spirituality of the employee goes beyond simply defining the role one has within the workplace organization but, more importantly, emphasizes holistically the deeper needs of individuals to go beyond their own needs and serve others (Reddy, 2018).

*Relational Spirituality*

Spirituality has been defined to be ways of relating to the Divine or sacred (Jankowski et al., 2019). Increasingly, more scholars have begun to focus on the importance of the relationship between humanity and the divine, what has become known as “relational spirituality” (Hall, 2015). Relational spirituality focuses on the centrality of a relationship with a higher being or ultimate truth as being sacred and the resulting management of that relationship (Chapman et al., 2021). For some, this includes the relationship not only between a higher being and other humans but also other living beings.

Due to the importance of relationships and the formational impact on human development, the underlying principle regarding relational spirituality is the development of humans within the context of emotionally significant relationships (Hall, 2015). The framework of research regarding human development, including theories such as attachment and relational psychoanalysis, aligns with the idea that relational experiences impact the formation of the brain, thus impacting a person’s social relationships and personal emotions (Hall, 2015). The indication is that spirituality, the relationship with the Divine, is not simply a cognitive aspect of learning but includes a relational learning process (Counted & Zock, 2019). Formational relationships humans have with one another indicate the type of relationship involved with the sacred or higher being (Chapman et al., 2021; Hall et al., 2009). The inner dimensions of spirituality and psychology are not separated in understanding human development, providing a clearer relational understanding between a person and God and a person to others (Hall et al., 2009).

*Spiritual Leadership*

Understanding spirituality within the context of leadership is an issue not addressed sufficiently (Makka, 2019). Spiritual Leadership developed by Fry, L., Fry, L. W., and Matherly, L. focuses leaders on essential values such as vision, faith, hope, and love (Balasundaram, 2020). Leaders emphasize these spiritual values to establish core beliefs, ultimately impacting their behavior (Jufrizen et al., 2019). Spiritual leaders must be on their own spiritual journey to effectively lead others (Lyons & Munro, 2022). The emphasis on a leader’s developing inner-life values such as faith, hope, and love, is essential for role-modeling to followers the importance of inner-life needs.

Immoral behavior, the antithesis of spiritual leadership's emphasis, indicates failing leadership due to self-focused behavior (van Saane, 2019). The indication is that moral leaders are succeeding, at least at some level. These moral leaders practice the moral standard found in most spiritual traditions: doing good by placing others first (van Saane, 2019). Positive results of putting people first and emphasizing spirituality include internal values such as joy and peace, and at the same time, externally through their behavior, experiencing more significant levels of productivity and reduced absenteeism (Balasundaram, 2020).

Christian Spirituality

Early Christians understood Christianity to be a spiritual movement defined beyond simply being guided by one’s “inner spirit” to involve a believer’s relationship to God, the Holy Spirit (Peng & Keller, 2019). The life lived in relationship to the Holy Spirit has cognitive factors and a relationship overseeing every area of life, including the emotional (Meneely, 2015; Peng & Keller, 2019). Transformation is emphasized within the Christian faith and involves a believer experiencing a fuller life in God and missionaly engaged with God, all of which is accomplished through the power of God’s presence (Niemandt, 2019). In the Christian faith, the idea of repentance goes deeper than simply regretting and requesting forgiveness (Mabey et al., 2017). Repentance involves the soul's transformation, leading to a love for others, particularly outcasts of society.

In the transformation process, the believer continues to willingly learn the basics of the faith through Christian teaching and is further transformed personally and corporately within the Christian community (Meneely, 2015). Spirituality within the Christian faith does not occur apart from the Bible, or else the idea of spirituality changes to an introspective, personally defined experience (Carson, 1984). However, cold adherence to orthodox creeds, without transformation of the soul, must be guarded against (Carson, 1984).

Transformation dealing with an inward change resulting in outward expression can be found in Scripture (Hiebert, 1994). The apostle Paul in Romans 12:2 likens the metamorphosis of a believer to a worm forming into a butterfly. This type of change is not simply external but rather a deep inward change resulting in a new life accomplished by the Holy Spirit (Hiebert, 1994). Payette (2004) describes the Christian believer freed from bondage as being further transformed, which is a work of the Holy Spirit. Traditionally known as the process of sanctification, the believer's change is aligned with the ideas of spiritual transformation or spiritual formation (Greenway, 2022).

However, there is an issue of the believer’s will to continue within the work the Holy Spirit alone can accomplish. The believer's disposition in choosing to experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit involves learning more about God's theology, which changes a believer's thinking, feelings, and actions regarding how life is to be lived (Meneely, 2015). Learning is, in essence, the basis of discipleship, which many congregations realize goes beyond simply acquiring knowledge to a change in identity (Wong et al., 2019). Learning is part of the transformational process, but learning simply to gain knowledge without redirecting or reforming life is not a spiritual transformation.

Though Christian spirituality involves learning and change is empowered by the Spirit's work, discipleship is like Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning, highlighting a self-directed learner's involvement in transformative learning (Cranton, 2016; Wong et al., 2019). The unique Christian expression of spirituality is based upon learning, involving God’s transformational power to change a person from what they have been into what He can make them to be (Wong et al., 2019). Believers must be willing to learn to experience the transformational power of the Holy Spirit (Payette, 2004).

Questions concerning the meaning of life and God give urgency to learning and provide purpose to learning itself (Meneely, 2015). However, within the Christian perspective of spirituality, faith and learning are intricately bonded, for without one another, there is neither (Luetz et al., 2018). The transforming work of the Spirit, ultimately by faith, is available for believers but not without the correct attitude and desire of the believer (Payette, 2004).

**Transformational Leadership**

Change happens, and understanding how is central to understanding leadership (Green, 2016). Transformational leadership (TL) emphasizes particular leadership practices to exact change. This change is not primarily focused on short-term results but rather on an organization's long-term development and performance (Anthony & Hermans, 2020). Bass (1985), who further developed the TL model originated by Burns, defined four leadership categories: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. TLs look to generate long-term change through processes and results highlighting the importance of followers by communicating vision, emphasizing a broader perspective beyond self, clarifying purpose, the intellectual stimulation of employees, and developing relational trust (Bass, 1990; Ewell, 2018; Javed et al., 2020; Reza, 2019).

 The TL model has been characteristically compared with the transactional leadership model, with a key difference being the emphasis on relationships (Davidson & Hughes 2020). The TL model establishes effectiveness through inspiring, supporting, and intellectually challenging followers, increasing followers’ job competencies and satisfaction (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). The development of TLs within an organization will improve the performance of the organization overall (Usman, 2020). Competencies needed in part by TLs involve the creativity to develop and the skill to communicate a vision to followers (Usman, 2020).

TL practice involves understanding followers’ motives higher needs, and engaging the person wholistically (Beaver, 2011). Through the relationship developed with followers, TLs provide an opportunity for followers to question leadership views constructively, creating an environment of trust leading to a greater environmental capacity to produce results (Mekka et al., 2020; Beaver, 2011; Ewell, 2018). Bass and Avolio were proponents of the perspective that transformational leaders transformed organizations in part by developing a clear vision with direction and transforming followers to accomplish organizational change (Javed et al., 2020).

***Unique Characteristics of Transformational Leadership***

Relationships are central to transformational leadership as leaders seek to encourage and engage followers beyond self-interests into the greater vision and life of the organization (Crisp, 2018; Anthony & Hermans, 2020; Jensen et al., 2019). The relationship between leader and follower impacts the creative development and clear communication of vision and strategic direction (Bass, 1990; Usman, 2020). TLs develop a vision and clarify direction while listening to followers' concerns and providing needed guidance and training for followers to succeed in a new direction (Reza, 2019; Yue et al., 2019). TLs inspire followers toward the organization's greater good while emotionally meeting their needs and challenging them intellectually (Bass, 1990). Both followers and TLs work together, sharing responsibility to accomplish the vision using defined tasks (Steinmann et al., 2018). As followers are persuaded to go beyond themselves for the greater good and coached toward a new organizational vision, their morals and values are enhanced (Usman, 2020).

*Ethics within Transformational Leadership*

Ethics are instrumental to understanding leadership (Johnson, 2020). Narrowing the larger leadership picture to TL, moral development is needed for TLs to lead appropriately (Vale, 2019). The TL model stresses the importance of relationships and, in particular, followers’ identification with leaders’ moral values and attitudes (Trnka et al., 2020). The emphasis on leader ethics and morals is essential as followers of TLs perform well due in part to their level of trust (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). Trust is a critical component mediating the leader–follower relationship resulting in a provable impact on followers' attitudes, satisfaction, and performance (Mekka et al., 2020; Yue et al., 2019).

Trust is an essential focus within every organizational relationship (Mekka et al., 2020) and is enhanced when followers recognize their leader's integrity, beliefs, and competence (Khattak et al., 2020; Usman, 2020). The importance of moral and ethical formation within leaders is recognizable by the absence of leaders who developed internal ethics. The result of unethical TL practices can lead to the abuse of followers through manipulation and self-serving activities (Hoch et al., 2018; Kozminski et al., 2022). Leadership’s ethical or non-ethical behavior is influenced by personal values due to the impact values have on how leaders view themselves and others (Watton et al., 2019). TLs embrace moral-based values such as responsibility and honesty more significantly when compared to the transactional leadership model (Groves & LaRocca, 2011).
***Leadership Models***
 In comparing the Transformational Leadership model to the Authentic, Ethical, Servant, and Spiritual leadership models, similarities include a shared value of moral perspective and, as such, are placed within the banner of positive leadership (Serrat, 2021). Further commonalities include leader self-regulation, organizational health, concern for individuals, and follower development. Ethics are instrumental in leadership models due to the purpose in which leaders are tasked to influence followers and do so with appropriate values and processes (Demont-Biaggi, 2019; Serrat, 2021). A leader’s conscience is shaped through the coming together of authenticity and ethics (Demont-Biaggi, 2019). Faddis (2020) suggests ethics is a core issue of good leadership, while GumUsay (2019) links humility, a trait developed in part by the influence of religion and a belief in God, to leadership.
 While the authentic leadership model has a unique definition, taken within the idea of the overall positive leadership connection, the suggestion that true authentic leaders function with integrity, coinciding their actions with their core values (Alkaabi, 2019) also applies to the various positive leadership models listed. Examples are numerous. A moral and ethical link exists between the Authentic and Ethical leadership models due to an emphasis on integrity (Hoch et al., 2018). Empirical findings reveal a strong relationship between the Ethical and Transformational leadership models (Hoch et al., 2018). Crawford et al. (2020) suggest there is observable redundancy between the Authentic and Transformational leadership models. Avolio et al. (2004) recognize the strong bond authenticity has within the Authentic, Transformational, and Ethical leadership models. The use of persuasion over force by leaders with character and ethics to influence followers (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006) is a common attribute found in the positive leadership models. Ewah et al. (2020) suggest authentic leadership is needed for all leaders as authenticity is an essential attribute of leaders regardless of the leadership model represented. Spiritual leadership and transformational leadership share, among other characteristics, the importance of respecting others (Ewell, 2018; Smith et al., 2018).Finally, many common elements exist between the Servant and Transformational Leadership models (Hoch et al., 2018). There are many other examples of the relationship between the positive leadership models. The literature supports the idea that ethics, morality, and a leader’s beliefs relate to a leader's practice and, specifically, the practices of a transformational leader.

Beliefs are shaped significantly by religion, and as a result, religious beliefs greatly influence a leader’s style (Gaitho, 2019), which can be recognized in various leadership theories. The influence of core beliefs through a leader can be seen clearly within the spiritual leadership theory, which equivocates spiritual values with core beliefs, values, and the behaviors leaders exhibit toward followers (Jufrizen et al., 2019). Authentic leadership theory also emphasizes the centrality of a leader’s moral values to how leaders conduct themselves (Kozminski et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Servant and Spiritual Leadership models are shaped either directly from a theological context or, in the case of Transformational Leadership, while not as clear, is still evident (Spoelstra et al., 2021). Leman (2021) goes so far as to suggest that Spiritual, Transformational, and Transactional leadership theories have been provably derived from the biblical narrative. Due to the commonalities binding the positive leadership models together, the Authentic, Servant, Ethical, and Spiritual Leadership models will be discussed.

### ***Authentic Leadership***

Authentic leadership (AL) can be understood to be a leadership methodology beginning with the internal virtues and moral character of a leader, resulting in the development of followers authentically, including both positive psychological and ethical environmental factors (Ewah et al., 2020; GumUsay, 2019; Hoch et al., 2018). Various aspects of AL involve positive morality, relational transparency, and authentic behavior (Hoch et al., 2018). Transformational and Ethical Leadership is relatable to AL due to the similarity regarding the authenticity of a leader and the resulting positive relationship leaders seek to develop with followers (Davidson & Hughes, 2020). Authentic leaders consistently behave with integrity, forming internal moral standards (Alkaabi, 2019; Kim et al., 2018). Furthermore, ALs are transparent about information and decisions with followers while also being willing to receive advice (Alkaabi, 2019).

 The formation of internal moral standards by ALs takes place during difficult circumstances, giving an Al not only the understanding of what is authentic but also the strength of character to work through significant difficulties within both organizations and society (Crawford et al., 2020; Davidson & Hughes, 2020; Demont-Biaggi, 2019). Forming a moral conscious is essential to the understanding of AL as resisting the temptation to do wrong and do right regardless of the circumstance or potential consequence is vital for the Al leader (Demont-Biaggi, 2019). Ultimately, many authentic leadership scholars hold a deontological view of authentic leadership practice, whereas Crawford et al. (2020) hold a virtue-ethic view. Regardless of which ethical view is ultimately correct, the importance of ethics shaping an AL internally cannot be understated (Alkaabi, 2019; Crawford et al., 2020; Davidson & Hughes, 2020). The moral character and ethical formation of a leader, Authentic, Ethical, Transformational, or other, is of paramount importance for leader behavior to be aligned both internally and externally (Elrehail, 2018; GumUsay, 2019; Hoch et al., 2018; Johnson, 2020; Zhu et al., 2019). Leaders who align external behavior with internal moral standards ultimately build follower trust and positively influence environmental and organizational trust, which is vital to the ultimate goals and methods of effective leadership (Crawford et al., 2020; Elrehail, 2018; Ewah et al., 2020).

### ***Servant Leadership***

 Robert Greenleaf deserves credit for naming and developing Servant Leadership (SL), highlighting the primary role of leaders as servants (Hoch et al., 2018; Lyons & Munro, 2022). Greenleaf emphasized leadership from a serving follower perspective (Ayogu et al., 2022). A few key attributes of SL are consciousness, stewardship, persuasion, and the commitment to individuals’ growth (Ayogu et al., 2022). These key attributes indicate several important leader practices such as the stewardship of followers, placing the interests of others in front of self, showing humility, investing in followers wholistically, including their spiritual health, providing direction, and prioritizing social justice and equality above finances (GumUsay, 2019; Lyons & Munro, 2022).

Ayogu et al. (2022) further emphasize ethics within the list of attributes for SL, highlighting the role of the leader as a servant while de-emphasizing the pursuit of greater power. For the leader, moral development is critical to the service behavior espoused through the SL model (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Bass considered the SL model closely linked with Transformational Leadership due to similarities regarding vision, influence credibility, and the need for trust-based relationships (Hoch et al., 2018).

Implementing a Servant Leadership model is encouraged by leaders within the Church (Ayogu et al., 2022). Developing leaders in the church by emphasizing critical attributes of the SL model can help, over time, develop the skills and competencies needed by church leaders (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020). For church leaders, the SL model is vital to practice and role-model to leaders within society who can become better citizens through the practice of the various SL model attributes (Ayogu et al., 2022).

***Ethical Leadership***

Due to various scandals and leadership failures within various businesses and institutions, including Enron and the Church, Trevino explored the issues of ethics and leadership, ultimately developing the ethical leadership model (Brown & Trevino, 2006). Trevino’s ethical leadership theory emphasizes the need for ethics within the individual leader and the leader’s practices (Zhu et al., 2019). For the leader, personal moral characteristics, including integrity, fairness, and trustworthiness, are considered vital (Hoch et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2019). Furthermore, for the ethical leaders’ practice, promoting ethics within the workplace is highlighted, focusing on characteristics such as objectivity, fairness, concern for others, and consistently practicing espoused ethical values (Hoch et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2019). The role-modeling of personally held ethical beliefs to followers by the moral manager or ethical leader is an essential practical emphasis of the ethical leadership model (Laajalahti, 2018; Zhu et al., 2019).

 Essential for an ethical leader is the personal development and consistent practice of personal integrity, particularly when given a position of power (Mabey et al., 2017). To maintain personally held ethical beliefs and consistently practice these beliefs, cultivating a personal spirituality is vital, as spirituality is considered a foundational element for ethical, authentic, servant, and transformational leadership (Mabey et al., 2017).

### ***Spiritual Leadership***

 Spiritual Leadership theory, part of the earlier discussion of workplace spirituality, was developed by Fry and is possibly the most empirically tested spiritual leadership theory (An et al., 2019). Spirituality within the workplace has increased scholarly interest, leading to a further emphasis and development of spirituality in leadership (Lyons & Munro, 2022). Spiritual leadership attributes include having a greater life purpose beyond organizational goals, quality of work relationships, satisfaction in life and work, and experiencing full potential (Ball, 2021; Lyons & Munro, 2022).

 The spiritual leader is connected with positive ethical behaviors such as integrity, care for others, and justice (Ball, 2021). Spiritual leaders seek to encourage various practices at work, such as respect for others, fairness, and controlling one’s emotions (Smith et al., 2018). Spiritual leadership is recognized as an effective leadership model by improving followers’ commitment and employee performance (Ball, 2021).

 As good as improved worker performance may be, spiritual leadership seeks to go beyond profit and attain higher goals (Widodo & Suryosukmono, 2021). Fry’s spiritual leadership model emphasizes faith, vision, and altruistic love as elements when actively engaged, can create a higher understanding of purpose in life, produce greater organizational loyalty with higher accomplishments, and result in a greater sense of life fulfillment (Balasundaram, 2020; Lyons & Munro, 2022). Leaders function as spiritual leaders when they have a perspective beyond the normal functioning of daily work and respond to challenging or difficult circumstances as opportunities (Widodo & Suryosukmono, 2021).

 The focus of spiritual leadership, derived partly from spirituality theory, is the human spirit (Lyons & Munro, 2022). Spirituality involves connecting to others, surroundings, and, importantly, God or a Higher Being (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). Spirituality at work highlights an inner life nourished through a greater sense of participation relationally within the community at work (Lyons & Munro, 2022). Individuals’ personal beliefs impact their spiritual beliefs from a faith and religious perspective (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). A leader’s personal spiritual journey and belief formation are essential to spiritual leadership because a leader’s genuine motivation and passion are needed to inspire followers (Lyons & Munro, 2022).

### ***Biblical Leadership***

 The study of ethics is foundational to understanding leadership because ethics and leadership are closely related (Ciulla, 2017; Demont-Biaggi, 2019). Christian ethics and ongoing daily practices are partly shaped by Scripture, with the centrality of love impacting the service of others (Zigan et al., 2021). For Christians, the message of God’s salvation through Christ Jesus is a message of transformative change, with the understanding that this is not simply for others but for believers themselves (Niemandt & Niemandt, 2021). For church leaders to lead transformationally, they must themselves be transformed and in the process of spiritual formation.

For the Christian leader, consistent moral beliefs and ethical practices lived out with integrity before fellow believers and unbelievers alike allow for transformational change to occur (Crisp, 2018). Christian leaders seek to guide fellow believers in the Church toward spiritual and ethical maturity (Zscheile, 2013). Transformational and spiritual leadership theories are derived from biblical values and principles (Leman, 2021). The essence of Christian transformational leadership is the inspiration of followers with a purpose toward a clear vision, even at the expense of one’s own identity, the very thing most Protestant pastors seek to do (Butler & Senses-Ozyurt, 2020). As a result, Church leaders and pastors need sound biblical theology training to be transformed personally and lead transformationally (Resane, 2020).

Identification of Gap in the Literature

Leadership spirituality and the impacting results on leadership practices are ongoing discussions within the literature. Leaders' spirituality involving internal ethical and moral formation connects strongly to transformational leadership practices (Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Knoetze, 2022; Yue et al., 2019). Ethical beliefs are central to both spirituality and transformational leadership, impacting the spiritual formation of an individual and influencing their practices (Faddis, 2020; Muldoon & King, 1995; Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020; Serrat, 2021). The literature, though providing research on transformational leadership, does not provide quantitative research investigating the relationship between leaders’ spiritual formation and transformational leadership practices (Taladay & Panesar-Aguilar, 2021). Due to this gap in the literature, quantitative, correlational research will be done to investigate the relationship between a leader’s spiritual formation and transformational leadership practices.

**Chapter Conclusion**

The research of two main theories, spirituality and transformational leadership, reveals a need for further research to understand the relationship between a leader’s formation of beliefs and practice. The research underscores ethics as essential to good leadership (Demont-Biaggi, 2019; Faddis, 2020). Spirituality theory and interconnected theories such as workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership emphasize developing the inner person with intangible ethical and moral beliefs (Adnan et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2009; Lyons & Munro, 2022; Moore, 2021; Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020). The need to develop clarity regarding ethics and morality and how this development shapes actions is clearly expressed in the literature (Driscoll et al., 2019; Moore, 2021). Development or formation is needed within a person to have a positive direction regarding living life. Thus, spiritual formation and developing an ethical belief system are vital for successful leadership behavior and practice, particularly within the transformational leader (Allen & Fry, 2022; Vale, 2019).

Transformational leadership is a highly effective leadership model connected to the positive leadership models of Authentic, Ethical, Servant, and Spiritual, all emphasizing ethics and morality as essential elements of leading (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019; Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Serrat, 2021; Trnka, R. et al., 2020). These leadership models are closely related by emphasizing strong leader-follower relationships, ethics, morality, and trust development (Davidson & Hughes, 2020; Gigol, 2020; Hoch et al., 2018).

Though faith formation is not emphasized in secular literature, the development of the inner person through ethical and moral beliefs indicates faith formation (Krispin, 2020). Christian spirituality emphasizes the development of the inner person through ongoing transformational learning focused on biblical doctrine and the Holy Spirit's transformative role within every area of a believer’s life (Meneely, 2015; Peng & Keller, 2019). The continued transformation through the spiritual formation of a believer’s life is essential for church leaders to role model for their congregants (Knoetze, 2022; Wong et al., 2019).

The literature emphasizes a leader's formation of the inner person through ethics, morals, and beliefs, connecting the need for spirituality and transformational leadership theories. Despite this emphasis, further research is needed to investigate the relationship and potential strength connecting leaders' spiritual formation and leadership practices (Allen & Fry, 2022; Taladay & Panesar-Aguilar, 2021). The quantitative correlational research of church leaders’ spiritual formation and transformational leadership practices seeks to add knowledge to this vital area of scholarship. The next chapter highlights the design and rationale for the proposed research in this field.

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