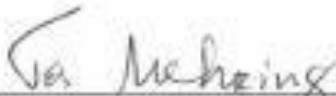


**Perceptions of U.S. Nazarene District Superintendents  
Regarding the Fulfillment of Educational Requirements for Ordination as an Elder**

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## **Abstract**

The Church of the Nazarene has been preparing clergy since its early days as a movement in the U.S. (Raser,1995). The Church of the Nazarene allows multiple educational delivery options for candidates for ordination to fulfill the educational requirements. There has been debate between the academy and church leaders about the preparedness of ordination candidates (Hillman, 2008). With the rising cost of education, student debt, and shortage of funds within local churches for salaries, the Church of the Nazarene must think about the avenues for fulfilling educational requirements for ordination as an elder. The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry as Elders. Seven district superintendents from two educational regions in the Church of the Nazarene were interviewed. Data obtained from the interviews were analyzed to identify themes and subthemes. Eight themes were identified: (1) satisfaction with the 44 Church of the Nazarene course of study ability statements candidates must demonstrate prior to ordination; (2) preparation issues; (3) strengths of current ministry candidates; (4) struggles of current ministry candidates; (5) no preference for a single ministry preparation venue emerged as a preference among the district superintendents; (6) a need for mentoring, coaching, or apprenticeships as a component of the ministry preparation process; (7) three primary 2019-2029 Church of the Nazarene challenges included: (a) identity of the Church of the Nazarene and finding ways to engage today's culture in the core identity; (b) the financial commitment that will be needed to maintain aging facilities and pastor salaries; and (c) an aging pastorate and a shortage of those preparing for ordination; and (8) clergy preparation to meet the needs of the Church of

the Nazarene 2019-2029. The findings present potential solutions for the Church of the Nazarene as it seeks to identify and prepare pastors for its denomination.

## **Dedication**

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my Heavenly Father who started me on the doctoral studies process with reading Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship*. My Heavenly Father has been with me throughout this journey. I am forever grateful for the special people He has brought into my life to journey with. Eldon, Sarah, Sam. Thanks for never giving up on me. I believe this season has brought us closer to God and each other. I am forever grateful. You are loved.

## **Acknowledgements**

I have learned a secret. If you want to remain comfortable never read a book that requires a response. It is interesting to reflect upon the doctoral studies journey. It has certainly ended very differently than what I imagined it would when I started. I thought I was simply preparing to be the best registrar at the institution I was previously employed; however, people and things have changed in this doctoral studies season. There are people I thought would always be on the journey with me who have become a part of my history. I must thank them for the roles they played preparing me for my studies and lament the loss of their not being part of this celebration. In the disappointment of that loss, God revealed family and friends who love me for me. He has blessed me, and I hope I am a blessing to them.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The Church of the Nazarene began as different movements in the western, eastern, and southern U.S. in the nineteenth century (Raser, 2009a). The preparation of Nazarene clergy has been a part of church history since its beginnings. Each of the movements developed schools for the training of clergy. In 1907, the western U.S. Church of the Nazarene and the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America from the eastern U.S. merged to form the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (PCON, 1907). The southern movement merged with the PCON in 1908. The PCON based its structure for ministerial preparation from its roots in Methodism. Ministry preparation in the 1800s for the Methodist church was a course of study directed by the annual conferences but completed individually (Ingersol, 2013). The PCON required men with a call by God to preach with gifts for ministry to be examined by the local church board for their understanding of the doctrine of the PCON (1907) and were licensed to preach according to the manual of the PCON. The pastor of a local church recommended, and the church board approved the license for one year. The license was renewed annually as the licensed preacher successfully completed the required course of study (PCON, 1907). The course of study was a four-year required reading of texts including scripture, theology, and practical theology. After the four years, licensed preachers were recommended by their local church board to the district assembly who determined if the individual should be elected to Elder's Orders. This is the recognition of the church of the permanency of the office of the elder. The elder is called to "presidency and pastoral ruling in the Church, and their more particular duties are to conduct public worship, to

preach the Gospel, and to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to solemnize matrimony" (PCON, 1907, p. 39). The General Superintendent issued the proper certification for the Elder's Orders (PCON, 1907). The General Superintendents are elected by the General Assembly every four years to provide overall leadership to the denomination. One of their responsibilities is to preside over each district assembly (PCON, 1907).

By 1928, the Church of the Nazarene had dropped Pentecostal from its name and divided the course of study into two categories: licensed minister for four years and local preacher for two years. A licensed minister could be ordained after serving two years as a regular pastor and successfully completing the prescribed four years' course of study for licensed ministers and ordination candidates (Fleming, Wilson, Bracken, Wiley, & Nease, 1928). Beginning in 1997, districts established district ministerial credentials boards composed of 5-15 ordained ministers whose duties included examining and evaluating all candidates for election of elders, deacons, and licensed ministers for the district assembly (Bowling, McCullough, Middendorf, Raser, & Stone, 1997). Each district also had a district ministerial studies board composed of five or more ordained ministers. The district ministerial studies board was responsible for examining individuals in the Minister's Directed Studies Program. The board insured that education requirements were completed and maintained educational records until ordination (Bowling et al., 1997). The secretary of this board had the responsibility of maintaining a record book according to the Church of the Nazarene's Sourcebook for Ministerial Development (Bowling et al., 1997). A licensed minister with a call to preach became an elder after holding a district license for two years, receiving a recommendation by the

ministerial credentials board, and after assignment to a ministry. This could be fulfilled by the local minister by serving for no fewer than two consecutive years as a pastor; three consecutive years as an associate or assistant pastor; one year as a pastor and two years as an associate pastor; four years in an assigned teaching role in a Nazarene institution of higher education; or assignment by the Board of General Superintendents to special services in Christian ministry (Bowling et al., 1997).

Today the district ministerial credentials board and district ministerial studies board still exist. The duties of these boards have not changed since the *1997 Church of the Nazarene Manual* except the district ministerial studies board cooperates with the district superintendent, Global Clergy Development Office, and the Regional Course of Study Advisory Committee (RCOSAC) to work with individuals pursuing validated courses of study in a Nazarene university, college, or seminary (Blevins, Rodes, Sowden, Spear, & Wilson, 2017). The ordination process begins with an individual receiving a local license by the local church board. The Church of the Nazarene provides a variety of delivery systems for ministerial preparation. Candidates for ordination are encouraged to complete the validated course of study available in their educational zone (Blevins et al., 2017).

## **Background**

At the time of the current study, the ordination process continued to begin with an individual receiving a local license by the local church board. The local licensed minister must pursue a validated course of study under the district ministerial studies board. The validated course of study may be completed through a modular course of study, district training center, Nazarene Bible College (NBC), NBC Alliance, District Training,

Nazarene higher education institution, Nazarene seminary, non-Nazarene higher education institution, or a non-Nazarene seminary (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b). The Church of the Nazarene has developed a course of study which is “organized as a series of abilities correlated to each curricular area: content, competency, character, and context” (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b, p. 15). Appendix A provides the complete list of ability statements categorized by content, competency, character, and context. The local license may be renewed annually for two years. Locally licensed ministers may be licensed by the district assembly if they have held a local license for a year, completed one-fourth of a validated course of study, received a recommendation from the local church, evidenced the call and qualifications of ministry, completed an examination by the district assembly, and have promised to continue pursuing a validated course of study. The district license is renewed annually at the District Assembly (Blevins et al., 2017). To be ordained as either an elder or a deacon in the Church of the Nazarene, the district licensed minister must complete a validated course of study within 10 years of receiving the license. The elder candidate must also have held the district license for at least three consecutive years, successfully completed a validated course of study, served as an assigned minister for at least three consecutive years, currently be serving in an assigned ministry setting, and “been carefully considered and favorably reported by the District Ministerial Credentials Board or District Board of Ministry of the district assembly” (Blevins et al, 2017, p. 219). Two-thirds of the district assembly must approve candidates for elder. The jurisdictional General Superintendent “shall issue to the ordained minister a recognition of ordination certificate, bearing the signature of the

general superintendent in jurisdiction, the district superintendent, and the district secretary” (Blevins et al, 2017, p. 220).

Houseal (2017) conducted a survey that included 61 U.S. and Canada districts in the Church of the Nazarene, 416 district licensed clergy, and 374 ordained clergy. He found that the median age of district licensed clergy was 43 and the average age of ordained ministers was 50. District licensed clergy are at the mercy of the district boards regarding fulfilling requirements for ordination. Houseal reported, “Four in 10 district licensed clergy do not know in which year of study their district board has placed them” (2017, p. 12). A third of the clergy surveyed by Houseal had a degree in a different discipline prior to ministry preparation. Ordained clergy used a Nazarene college or university more than any other education option to complete educational requirements. According to Houseal (2017), a majority of individuals who completed the course of study did so through a modular course of study format. NBC or Nazarene college or university were the most frequently attended type of institution. The least attended institutions were the NBC Alliance District Training, non-Nazarene seminary, and Nazarene seminary.

According to Houseal (2017), the traditional classroom is still the most often used format for coursework for district licensed clergy, but online courses are increasing. The 416-district licensed clergy surveyed by Houseal reported that family and the local church influenced how individuals pursued ministerial education. Houseal also found that the 416-district licensed clergy reported feeling least prepared for analyzing their community, leading evangelism, and leading worship.

## **Statement of the Problem**

District superintendents have questioned the need for higher education and the preparation of the graduates from the denominational seminary, Nazarene Theological Seminary (Raser, 1995). Their major concerns are that the graduates with masters-level education are more scholarly and unwilling to pastor small churches or to start new churches. Pastors, professors, church leaders, and laity have debated the purpose of graduate theological education for years. The debate has two sides. Professors want to theologically equip students (Foster, Dahill, Golemon, & Wang Tolentino, 2006), while pastors and church leaders want to educate ministerial candidates to be professional church leaders in ministry (Hillman, 2008). Pastors and church leaders are concerned that Master of Divinity graduates are not prepared to pastor local congregations because practical skills, such as church budgeting, interpersonal communication, and leadership skills have not specifically been taught in seminary courses (Hillman, 2008).

With the rising costs of higher education, increased educational debt (Miller, 2014), and decreased giving by local churches to the World Evangelism Fund (Warrick, 2017), individuals must think about the avenues for fulfilling educational requirements for ordination as an elder. There is little expectation of a substantial income upon graduation to pay education debt accrued during both undergraduate and graduate education. In addition, the Church of the Nazarene has multiple paths for ministers to fulfill the educational requirements for ordination as an elder (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b). Since 1944, the Church of the Nazarene has added two regional colleges and a Bible college (Cunningham, 2009). Each university, Bible college, and seminary that offers at least one degree that is a validated course of study by the Church of the



Nazarene is included in Appendix B. A detailed list of validated course of study programs by school is also provided in Appendix B. Six of the eight liberal arts colleges offer graduate degrees in the field of theology/ministry. The exact number of district training centers in the United States is unknown. With multiple paths to fulfill educational requirements for ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene, it is unclear whether or not U.S. district superintendents perceive that individuals are adequately prepared to perform the duties of pastor as determined in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene.

The Church of the Nazarene has conducted a series of studies regarding its corps of pastors in the U.S. and Canada every 10 years between 1988 and 2017 (Crow, 2017). The 2017 study had a special focus to determine the possibility of a shortage of pastors for the USA and Canada region (Crow, 2017). According to Crow, in 2016 there were 5,068 active churches and 4,641 pastors serving these churches. This comparison means 8.4% of the churches were without a full-time pastor (Crow, 2017). In addition, Crow found that 802 (18.5%) pastors were 65 years of age or older and eligible for retirement. There were 1,484 (34.2%) pastors who were 55 to 64 years of age, near the age of retirement. One thousand six hundred sixty-eight individuals 37-54 years of age comprised the largest group of pastors (38.5%) while 382 pastors aged 20-36 (8.85%) comprised the smallest group (p. 3). In February 2017, there were 4,399 USA Church of the Nazarene pastors (Crow, 2017). There were 153 (3.5%) pastors with a doctorate. Pastors with a master's degree numbered 915 (20.8%). While 24.3% have earned a graduate degree, the largest percentage 43.4% (1,910) of pastors did not indicate a degree

had been earned. Pastors with a bachelor's degree numbered 1,217 (20.8%) and 204 (4.6%) pastors had an associate degree.

According to Crow (2017), the number of ordained ministers in the Church of the Nazarene attending at least one Nazarene institution has declined and “nearly two-in-five (39.2%) did not report having attended any Nazarene institution” (p. 9). In the conclusion of the *The Corps of Pastors in the USA/Canada Region Church of the Nazarene 2017* Crow (2017) stated “the large “Baby Boom” generation has begun to reach retirement age which raises serious questions about a looming shortage of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene” (p. 13). Crow concluded there is probably already a shortage in certain settings such as “small churches, rural churches, and immigrant/minority churches” (p. 13). Crow shared a speculation about Boomers that

Members of a younger generation, like Millennials, are not as capable, committed, or obedient to God as they [Boomers] were. Observing some examples that fit the stereotypes, they may fear that younger people will not accept or be adequate for the demanding task [of ministry] (p. 14).

No studies were found that examined the curriculum currently required in the preparation of elders in the Church of the Nazarene. The lack of research on the preparation of elders could minimize the impact each clergy member has upon the individuals within his or her congregation. Every congregation should have not just an adequately prepared pastor but an exceptional pastor.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study examined perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry as

elders. The first purpose was to examine perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. about current pastoral ministry preparation. The second purpose was to identify district superintendents' perceptions about what should be included in the approved course of studies to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry. The third purpose was to examine district superintendents' perceptions regarding the greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this study may be of interest to leaders of the Church of the Nazarene as they review the multiple paths for ordination. Study findings could influence the current process for reviewing curricula of approved courses of study. The research also contributed to a body of research focusing on the preparation of church elders. Other denominations may consider examination of methods of clergy preparation.

### **Delimitations**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) defined delimitations as “conditions or parameters that the researcher intentionally imposes in order to limit the scope of a study” (p. 8). Lunenberg and Irby (2008) stated that “delimitations are self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (p. 134). One delimitation for this study was that all participants were Church of the Nazarene district superintendents residing within the north central or northwest education zones. A second delimitation is that the Church of the Nazarene was the only denomination whose ministry preparation was examined.

## **Assumptions**

“Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (Lunenberg & Irby, 2008, p. 334). The following assumptions were accepted as true for the purpose of this study:

1. Participants understood and responded to the interview questions accurately and honestly.
2. Participants were ordained elders in the Church of the Nazarene and had fulfilled educational requirements for ordination.

## **Research Questions**

The research questions are a “directional beam for the study” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 127). Three research questions guided this study.

**RQ1.** What are the perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about current pastoral ministry preparation?

**RQ2.** What do Church of the Nazarene district superintendents perceive should be included in the validated course of studies to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry?

**RQ3.** What do Church of the Nazarene district superintendents perceive as the greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029?

## **Definition of Terms**

The following is a list of terms utilized throughout this study. The definitions of the terms provide a common understanding for readers.

**Call.** According to the Church of the Nazarene (2016b), the call is initiated by God to ministry. This ministry may be fulfilled in a variety of contexts including a local

congregation, chaplaincy, education, etc. In the Church of the Nazarene, a candidate for ordination “reveals a life of holiness, possesses gifts and graces for public ministry, demonstrates a thirst for knowledge, especially for the Word of God, and displays capacity to communicate sound doctrine” (p. 3).

**Church of the Nazarene.** The Church of the Nazarene is a denomination in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition (Blevins et al., 2017).

**Course of study.** The Church of the Nazarene (2016b) has developed a course of study which is “organized as a series of abilities correlated to each curricular area: content, competency, character, and context” (p. 15). Candidates for ordination may complete the educational course of study for ordination through a liberal arts bachelor’s degree, a graduate degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary, NBC, or validated non-degree programs (district-directed course of study programs). Also, educational requirements from non-Nazarene degree programs “may be granted at the discretion of the District Board of Ministry pending its annual evaluation of official transcripts” (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b, p. 19). The course of study, regardless of delivery by district training centers, universities, or seminaries “must be equivalent to three years of full-time, college-level study” (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b, p. 16). Each student should have a high school diploma or its equivalent prior to admission to a program of study.

**Crusade or mass movement.** Miller (2007) defined a movement as something that mobilizes “people to fight this or that evil” (p. 156).

**Evangelicalism.** “The first evangelicals were people of deep religious experience who stressed the need for a new birth, the felt forgiveness of sins, personal biblical study,

and the centrality of the cross” (Miller, 1990, p. 315). Evangelicalism emphasizes personal renewal. Evangelical denominations include “Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Independents” (Miller, 1990, p. 315).

**International Course of Study Advisory Committee (ICOSAC).** Blevins et al. (2017) stated that ICOSAC endorses “all courses, academic requirements, and official administrative regulations shall be in a regional *Sourcebook on Ordination* developed by the region/language group in cooperation with Global Clergy Development” (p. 208).

**Licensed minister.** The Church of the Nazarene (2016b) stated “licensed ministers are persons who have been granted a District Minister’s License by their respective district assemblies and, by virtue of the same, are members of the clergy” (p. 4).

**Local church.** According to Blevins et al. (2017), “The membership of a local church shall consist of all who have been organized as a church...after having declared their experience of salvation, their belief in our doctrines, and their willingness to submit to our government” (p. 40).

**Local minister.** “A local minister is one who has been granted a Local Minister’s License by the local church and who is preparing for ministry under the direction of the District Board of Ministry” (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b, p. 4).

**Nazarene Bible College (NBC).** “Nazarene Bible College, an institution of the Church of the Nazarene, teaches and adheres to the statement of belief as found in the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*” (Nazarene Bible College, 2019, p. 10). It is an “undergraduate, professional school of Christian Ministry” (NBC, 2019, p. 11).

**Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS).** “A graduate school of theology in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition” (NTS, 2019, p. 3) for the Church of the Nazarene. It is located in Kansas City, MO (NTS, 2019).

**Ordained Minister.** The Church of the Nazarene (2016b) defined ordained ministers as “members of the clergy who have completed the preparations for ministry including the required years of service, and have been subsequently elected to ordination by the district assembly and ordained as an elder or deacon” (p. 5).

**Regional Course of Study Advisory Committee (RCOSAC).** In the Church of the Nazarene, the RCOSAC reviews curricula and recommends validation to the ICOSAC, General Board, and Board of General Superintendents (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b).

**Standard.** Miller (2014) stated “A standard is a mark or measure of how far the members of a group may have attained a goal” (p. 284).

**Supervised ministry.** Foster et al. (2006) described supervised ministry as “generally designed as a bridge between seminary and the congregational or other sites of clergy practice” (p. 296). Students engaged in supervised ministry courses may volunteer or work in a local church where they are able to develop skills learned in the classroom.

**Theological education.** Brown (1934) stated theological education occurs in “institutions which have for one of their specific objectives the provision of special courses for the training of students for the ministry” (p. 74).

### **Organization of the Study**

This chapter provided background information about the educational requirements for ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene along with a statement of the

problem, the purposes of the study, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and a definition of terms used throughout the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the history of theological education in the United States, the history of the Church of the Nazarene, and the history of the NTS. The methodology used to conduct the study including the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations are included in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.



## Chapter 2

### Review of the Literature

There are religious leaders in each religious tradition. These titles include: deacon, clergyman, pastor, reverend, minister, bishop, elder, overseer, licensed minister, superintendent, patriarch, archbishop, priest, living Eckankar master (Eckander spiritual leader), rector, vicar, rabbi, associate/assistant pastor, senior pastor, swami, monk, rishi, seek, guru, imam, khalifa, high priest, pope, maharmes, and shaman (Williamson, 1992). The Association of Theological Schools (ATS, 2018) listed 216 accredited institutions in the United States and 34 accredited institutions in Canada. Theological traditions and denominations have specific educational requirements for preparing religious leaders. This study focused on what district superintendents perceived were important factors related to current and future preparation of elders in the Church of the Nazarene. This chapter summarizes the history of seminaries in the United States, the history of the Church of the Nazarene, and the current options for fulfilling educational requirements for elder in the Church of the Nazarene.

### History of Seminaries in the United States

The preparation of clergy is part of the history of the United States. As different groups immigrated to the U.S., they brought their cultures and religious traditions. The history of graduate theological education is divided into three periods of time: antebellum (Colonial times-1869), 1870-1959, and since 1960.

**Antebellum: Colonial times-1869.** The word ‘public’ connotes different meanings in England and the United States. For the Englishman, public was used to define institutions that the elite of society attended. Less than 10% of society was part of

the elite from colonial times to 1869. Landowners and persons of positions who had a stake in the country were considered public. This group also included nobility, gentry, lawyers, ministers, and other professionals (Miller, 1990). The English college tradition was to prepare students for leadership either in the church or the state. Training included learning the classics, social graces, and religious duties while in residence for four years. The purpose of the English college was to produce a learned gentleman (Miller, 1990). Colonial leaders adopted the English college model for their sons. It was easier to transport this form of education to the colonies rather than the continental university model that had “multiple faculty, large student bodies, and libraries” (Miller, 1990, p. 127).

Harvard, William & Mary, and Yale “represented the English tradition of educating the ruling elite in church and state in the same school with the same curriculum” (Miller, 1990, p. 135). The churches located in the colonies in which the early schools were located, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Connecticut, were established and powerful. College charters admitted students from all denominations. Harvard’s first Professorship of Divinity was established in 1721 (Brown, 1934). The early schools did not have adequate endowments. Competition was strong for potential students. “Sponsoring denominations could not afford financially to emphasize their own peculiar teachings to the point where they might offend paying customers” (Miller, 1990, p. 140). The early schools were dependent upon benefactors and those contributing funds believed they could set the schools’ mission and direction.

The founding fathers were not interested in establishing the kingdom of God but rather a kingdom of men for civil liberties. The Constitution for this new nation was a

document that articulated the philosophy of the early leaders of the country. The United States was a secular country. The government acknowledged no god. The new republic “was to prove that liberty, civil and religious, might flourish in a vast empire (Miller, 1990, p. 19).

The first seminaries of most churches were established between 1808 and 1824 and set the benchmarks for clergy preparation (Miller, 1990, pp. 188-189). According to Brown (1934), four factors influenced the establishment of seminaries. The first factor was church leaders thought the colleges had insufficient resources for theology students. Second, the denominations wanted more control over educating their clergy. The third factor was the “growing fear of the liberal movement, which was one of the effects of the deistic move on the Continent” (Brown, 1934, p. 75). The fourth factor was the need for more practical training for missionary work than what the institutions were providing.

Church leaders also feared the separation of church and state known as disestablishment. The United States

reversed a pattern of church-state relations more than a thousand years old.

Since the reign of Constantine (c. 288-337), the Christian church had received financial support from the state, influenced the development of law, and represented the whole community in such areas as the distribution of charity, the education of the young, and the maintenance of public moral standards. No segment of life escaped its influence. (Miller, 1990, pp. 20-21)

The church could no longer expect the government to support its ministry. Church leaders needed to be up to the task of fighting for the place of the church in this new

society and the religious development of the nation. It was not sufficient for clergy leaders to have a minimum education. The strongest denominations, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, decided to set higher standards for their clergy and established new institutions as part of the church's response to the founding father's ruling on disestablishment. According to Miller (1990), "theological education was one of the less popular Protestant reforms and people never supported seminaries as handsomely as the parallel movement for Christian academies and colleges, the professional training of ministers received more support as time passed" (p. 26).

The earliest institutions established a new model for theological education. The first seminaries' founders set precedents for the current structure of seminaries. Theological studies were divided into separate disciplines with professors teaching in these specializations. The first seminary's governance was a board of trustees. The three areas of review for the early seminaries included having a faculty, a student body, and a theological library (Miller, 1990).

Seminaries have never been popular with the general membership of the church. Yet, according to Miller (1990), the seminary founders were able to establish and keep the seminaries operating because of the indifference of the laity. Denominations did not have the resources to require seminary training for their clergy.

Andover was established as the first seminary in the United States in 1808 by Orthodox Congregationalists in Massachusetts. The Congregationalists were convinced that Harvard "had become heretical" (Miller, 1990, p. 49). The experiment at Andover was successful which led to other institutions being established (Miller, 1990). In order to be part of the highest standards of theological education by 1800, a seminary had

multiple instructors, a student body, “a substantial library, a structure of legal accountability (trustees), an endowment or sound promises of money, and a defined relationship to education as a whole” (Miller, 1990, p. 49). Andover’s requirement for completion of a Bachelor of Arts remains a current prerequisite for admission to seminaries. The first seminaries had a clearer and more coherent relationship with colleges (Miller, 1990). The curriculum of the first seminaries was built upon the Bachelor of Arts degree.

At the time of Andover’s founding, Presbyterians in the middle-states were also planning a school. “The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church was one of the first and best attempts to build an ecclesiastical or church theological school” (Miller, 1990, p. 106). Princeton was also a response to church leaders’ awareness of other serious threats to the church and its ministry. Throughout the East, many members of the upper classes had deserted Christianity for deism, and the Masonic lodges threatened to lure some of the middle classes (Miller, 1990). Dunning (2013) defined deism as

a view of the divine that emphasizes God’s transcendence at the expense of divine immanence (current presence and activity). Deism is sometimes referred to as the “watchmaker” view of God; after God perfectly created the world, he withdrew and no longer intervenes in its operation. (p. 146)

According to Miller (1990), the standards for educating ministers changed with the establishment of the first seminaries in the U.S. The history of training ministers was altered. People assumed seminaries had always trained ministers. However, the task of colleges of England was to create ‘*learned gentlemen*’. The clergy and the nation’s elite received the same education prior to the establishment of seminaries. “The Bachelor of

Arts degree was the most widely-accepted evidence that a person had attained this status” (Miller, 1990, p. 123). During the antebellum period, colleges and seminaries were not in competition. Colleges were feeder schools for seminaries because colleges were creating the learned gentlemen and seminaries prepared religious leaders (Miller, 1990). The seminaries were professional schools distinct from the colleges. The undergraduate degree was established as an admissions requirement for attending seminary (Brown, 1934).

1820-1860 was a time of disunity in the United States and in churches. The establishment of different denominations led to more seminaries and a decrease in educational standards for theological education. Denominations were sponsoring small institutions based upon proximity to their churches. Small institutions did not necessarily mean lower standards but most smaller seminaries did not have the endowments, staff, or enrollment to be successful. “By 1850, seminaries existed on two levels: the better school (usually, but not always, the first school established by a denomination) and the others” (Miller, 1990, p. 200).

The schools were categorized by enrollment. The schools with enrollments of 100 or more were first tier. The second-tier seminaries had enrollments between 50 and 75. The third-tier schools had enrollments between 20 and 50, and the fourth-tier schools had enrollments of fewer than 20 (Miller, 1990). All the schools suffered from the widespread distribution of student enrollment and financial resources. The larger denominations (Presbyterians and Congregationalists) added another level of direct competition with having multiple denominational schools which divided resources

between schools. During this period, young men had more professional options and Americans had more activities than church on Sunday morning.

During the antebellum period seminaries provided a place where theology could be studied. Seminaries were places ideas could be discussed. The denominations needed places to help define their theological doctrines. Even though some pastors were better educated, the seminaries were dealing with the rapid expansion of churches that lowered their educational requirements for the preparation of clergy, especially in the Methodist and Baptist denominations. Ministers were part of supply and demand so even though seminary-prepared clergy were needed for the different denominations, the “denominations could not wait for such clerics to be available. When churches needed pastors, they found candidates who were willing to serve and, hence, were acceptable to themselves and to their judicatories” (Miller, 1990, p. 442). One achievement of the seminary was the preparation of the clergy to pastor the better educated laity who were business and community leaders.

The flaws of early nineteenth-century theological education were too many schools, small endowments, and too much controversy. The enrollment of these early seminaries was mostly white males. The early seminaries were important for establishing the standards for theological education for the next generation (Miller, 1990).

**1870-1959.** The second period of seminary history occurred between 1870 and 1959. Miller (1990) stated there was not much change in colleges from 1800 to the end of the Civil War. Schools were still preparing learned gentlemen. The Civil War provided other professional opportunities for gentlemen. Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Edison hired these graduates for their organizations. They became spokesmen, managers,

and part of government bureaucracy. The seminaries lost students because of these other opportunities.

This period was an era of social change. Railroads and industrialization changed the United States. George Williams founded the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1844. Sunday Schools, missions, and youth works were organizational revolutions in the 1880s (Miller, 2007). With these social changes, it is not clear where seminaries fit in the church. Boards of trustees managed the seminaries. The early twentieth century was a period of crusades including those that focused on anti-slavery and anti-alcoholism (Atkins, 1932).

As early as the 1820s, there was a call for free secondary education (Butts & Cremin, 1953). By 1860, there were 40 high schools in the U.S. (Butts & Cremin, 1953). The U.S. adopted eight years of education as an educational standard after the Civil War. Massachusetts required cities of 20,000 or more to provide high school manual training courses by 1894 (Butts & Cremin, 1953). High schools were comprehensive in their purpose. They had terminal or training programs and college preparatory courses. Between the Civil War and World War I (WWI), there was a growing concern about teenage children. The working class went to work immediately after finishing eighth grade. The middle class needed a solution for their young people, and this led to the establishment of the high school. These schools prepared students for college through requiring the study of Latin. High schools expanded the curriculum to include commercial programs which prepared young women for clerical positions and young men for mid-level management positions (Miller, 2007). Following WWI and for the next quarter century, American education enrollments increased. Even with the lower



birthrate during the depression, “the most significant educational fact of the thirties remains the steady increase in the holding power of the schools: secondary enrollments rose from 4,800,000 in 1929-1930 to 7,100,000 in 1939-40” (Cremin, 1961, p. 274).

The establishment of public high schools allowed the middle-class to save money previously used for academies. Geiger (2011) stated, “The average institution in 1870 had 10 faculty and 98 students; in 1890, these figures had grown to just 16 faculty and 157 students; but in 1910, they were up to 38 faculty and 374 students” (p. 52). This growth forced colleges to raise admissions standards and some started using standardized testing. High schools became the new normal for the U.S. (Miller, 2007). High school graduation became a standard for admission for the American university (Geiger, 2011). One example of the impact of high school education is that of surveying. In the early eighteenth century, this was the job of an educated gentleman. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, surveying was performed by high school graduates.

High school also became the basic requirement for clergy preparation with the Baptists, Methodists, and Disciples of Christ. With more high school graduates, enrollment increased at the denominational colleges. Churches had more college-educated laity which meant that clergy needed to be better educated. “The minister needed to be one step above the congregation educationally to secure the respect that had traditionally been given to the clerical office” (Miller, 2007, p. 119). This meant that if the congregation was mostly high school graduates, the minister had a college degree. If the congregation was mostly college graduates, the minister had a seminary degree. If the congregation was prestigious, the minister had a Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) or an earned doctorate.

The post-Civil War through WWI was a period of expansion and growth for evangelical churches (Miller, 2007). Dwight Moody, A. J. Gordon, and A. B. Simpson started Bible and Training Schools during this period. Initially, these schools were not alternatives for colleges and seminaries. There were many initiatives in social justice. Workers were needed for these initiatives and the Bible schools were quicker than the seven years of study required in colleges and seminaries. Financial concerns and the argument that seminaries were not preparing ministers for leading churches were two of the reasons that resulted in the creation of Bible and Training schools (Miller, 2007). According to Atkins (1932), the graduates of the Bible institutes were often “better trained in the technique of effective popular appeal than the graduates of the seminaries” (p. 230). Their graduates lived simply and served in smaller churches (Atkins, 1932).

The 1862 Morrill Act “aided agricultural and technical training in colleges, and by 1900 the core of a distinguished group of state universities in the Midwest – pre-eminently Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin – joined California (Berkeley) in the West” (Kuklick, 2001, p. 100). These schools created new markets which required changing curricula. By the turn of the twentieth century, most colleges had changed their curriculum. Latin was reduced and replaced with modern languages. Greek was removed and classics were also changed for science and other areas of study. These changes created a challenge for seminaries because the undergraduate institutions were no longer preparing students to enter seminaries as “an extension of the collegiate study of classical literature... advanced study of the Bible in Greek and Hebrew as well as some theology and church history” (Miller, 2007, p. 123). In 1900, few going to seminary could read Greek or Hebrew, and the study of Latin declined. Seminaries could

no longer require Greek as an admissions requirement because there were fewer college students taking Greek. “Despite the prosperity of Protestant churches from 1865 to 1920, they had difficulty attracting first-rate candidates into their service. If the ministry had been financially and economically rewarding, it could have insisted on its own lists of prerequisites” (Miller, 2007, p. 123).

With the 1862 Morrell Act, a new college model of majors and minors was introduced. Many colleges added religion, philosophy, or Bible departments. These undergraduate departments were direct competition with seminaries because the students could study different disciplines for ministerial preparation and achieve the status of a college graduate (Miller, 2007). Seminaries “now had to share students with more up-to-date (and more secular) programs in philosophy and social sciences” (Kuklick, 2001, p. 107).

After the Civil War, there was rapid industrialization and immigrants moved to the cities. Mission societies started after the Second Great Awakening of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century found a “renewed purpose in rebuilding the nation and assimilating scores of new immigrants in the American dream” (Foster et al., 2006, p. 199). It was the age of missionary work and social gospel that included student volunteer movements, Sunday School, YMCA, Young Women’s Christian Association, and other movements. New denominations such as the Church of the Nazarene and the Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee were established during this period (Miller, 2007). These new denominations were mission focused. The Bible schools trained workers more quickly than the seminaries. Age was a determining factor for individuals choosing between Bible schools and seminaries (Miller, 2007). The average life expectancy was 49 years so individuals

who experienced an early vocational calling chose seminary study while those who were older with prior experience were typically Moody's army, a term originally applied to individuals who were students of the Moody Bible Institute and worked for social justice. This was a time of battle for social reforms and workers needed to be trained quickly so the different movements would have the necessary workers to keep the movements moving forward in their social message. The Bible schools soon became and remain an alternative to seminary preparation (Miller, 2007).

A rich time in the American Protestant history spanned four decades from 1890-1920. It was an era of crusades, prohibitions, morality, foreign missions, and temperance. The Protestant church was progressive. The Conference of Theological Schools was established for leaders to discuss the impact of WWI on seminary operations.

After WWI, Harding was elected president, the Ku Klux Klan experienced a revival, there was an erosion of civil liberties and people "stopped looking to the churches for answers and began to see Christianity and the churches as part of the problem" (Miller, 2007, p. 381). Rockefeller's Institute of Social and Religious Research conducted numerous studies that provided the "best available picture of American religion in the 1920s and 1930s" (Miller, 2007, p. 470) and found that Protestantism had not "gone into a tailspin after the First World War. Rather, it was a picture of Protestantism that had been in unacknowledged crisis for some time. And the seminaries were no exception to the general rule" (Miller, 2007, p. 313).

The Interchurch World Movement of North America published its *World Survey* in 1920. Robert Kelly and O. D. Foster were the surveyors who found that "seminaries

needed funds, but they also found a lack of coherence among theological schools and a serious need for the schools to cooperate with each other in such areas as defining basic theological degrees and determining adequate preseminary standards” (Miller, 2007, p. 314). The Conference of Theological Schools met at Princeton in 1920 to discuss this report. The Interchurch World Movement was against denominationalism. Kelly was predisposed to university divinity schools. President William Douglas MacKenzie of Hartford Theological Seminary opposed Kelly. The conference attendees were concerned that the Kelly report would have the same kind of impact on theological education that the Flexnor Report had on medical education in 1910. In 1910, Flexner found that 32 medical schools were unacceptable and 46 were marginal. By 1915, the number of medical schools in the U.S. dropped to 95 (Miller, 2007).

Miller (2007) stated that Kelly was asked to expand his study by the Institute of Social and Religious Research after the Interchurch World Movement folded in 1921. Miller further stated that Kelly expanded upon the requirements of a theological curriculum in his 1924 *Theological Education in America: A Study of One Hundred Sixty-One Theological Schools in the United States and Canada*. Kelly concluded that “the theological curricula of the 1870s reflected a very clear understanding of what theological study entailed” (Miller, 2007, p. 327). Seminarians were prepared to be the resident theologians for their congregations.

During the 1920s there was a shift in the place of churches in the U.S. The church organizations that had influenced societal change were replaced with other organizations (Miller, 2007). Prior to the nineteenth century, college was for preparation as a gentleman. The 1920’s resulted in a shift for the middle-class to use education to

rise in status. Alumni became increasingly involved in financially supporting larger colleges and universities. The seminaries struggled because churches, from their beginning, did not provide necessary financial support (Miller, 2007).

In 1932, the degrees the seminaries offered were the Bachelor of Divinity, Master of Theology, and Doctor of Theology. At the 1936 meeting, the members of the Conference of Theological Seminaries created the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) and membership rules were created (Miller, 2007). The AATS adopted standards for the theological schools and the first list of schools included 46 schools from 61 applicants. The AATS added 11 schools and discussed compensation of ministers in 1940. The AATS determined that pre-seminary study was the admissions requirement for seminary study (Miller, 2007). WWII disrupted the development of the AATS.

In 1934, Brown and May conducted a study of theological education and published the results of their study of theological education in four volumes. These publications represented the joint work of the Conference of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Institute of Social and Religion Research. Brown (1934) described the training of the minister by the colleges and seminaries. He insisted that the colleges and seminaries could not continue their ministry preparation isolated from the church. He believed the graduates must be able to perform the tasks standard for the profession of clergy. Brown (1934) summarized the two objectives in the study conducted by Brown and May. The first was “to assist those engaged in technical professional education to improve their methods by them” (p. 5). The second, and more important objective, was to inform church policy to create conditions to attract men of high intellect and moral character to the ministry.

This study also showed ministers were paid less than the middle-class salary. Brown and May's (1934) study showed that to provide a salary of \$3,000 and a parsonage, a congregation needed 350 members. In 1926, there were 16,000 to 18,000 Protestant churches with this membership. "This meant that 155,000 churches were unable to pay at that level" (Miller, 2007, p. 477). According to May, Brown, Shuttleworth, Jacobs, & Feeney (1934), seminaries needed 2,300 graduates annually and 90% of the graduates needed to enter local church ministry and have an average of 28.6 years of ministry in the local church to provide enough clergy with adequate salary. The report contained a recommendation to close or merge 100,000 churches that were not financially viable and create 60,000 viable churches. Brown and May concluded if these conditions were not met, churches would not be able to support a trained ministry and seminaries would not be able to supply effective education for the churches (Brown, 1934). Brown and May formulated competencies required for ministers and an adequate salary for clergy.

During the time period of 1870-1959, World War II changed theological education. State universities continued to be dominant but also independent colleges emerged. The free-standing seminary became the minority. Colleges were no longer feeder schools for seminaries by the 1960s (Miller, 2007). The GI Bill provided student loans with low interest rates. Seminaries increased tuition. Costs spiraled upward. It was a difficult financial period. Denominations did not have the funds to cover the costs of theological education and began to charge tuition at the end of this time period (Miller, 2007).

**1960-Current.** The sixties began well even though “Protestant church membership had peaked several years earlier, the churches were well attended, with many congregations scheduling two Sunday morning services” (Miller, 2014, p. 1). By 1967, Protestant church growth was declining (Miller, 2007). Church attendance was no longer part of the status of the middle class. The 60s were a time of attacks on ministry. Seminary enrollment dropped in the early 1960s until the Vietnam War when “the seminary was a good place to avoid the draft. Once the war ended, seminaries had to be much clearer about their rationale” (Miller, 2014, p. 18).

Since 1956, religion departments have been defensive about the pre-seminary requirement adopted by the AATS. In 1963, the Supreme Court outlawed school prayer and Bible reading in *School District v. Schempp*. There was a brief increase in seminary enrollment from 1968-1971 as draft dodgers used seminary enrollment to avoid military service. According to Miller (2007), it was during this time that seminaries lost significant status in American higher education.

Seminary professors doubled between 1950-1960 and their tenure in the classroom lasted until the 1990s. The professors from 1960-1965 were in the shadow of the giants of theological education of the 30s, 40s, and 50s (Miller, 2007). The 1950s may have been the second wave of the theological renaissance. During the 1960s, the “symbol of God no longer held the central place in modern life it once did” (Miller, 2007, p. 747). The Readiness for Ministry Project was created in the 1970s for AATS resulting in the Bachelor of Divinity to Master of Divinity with a four year plus three-year program of study.



The AATS appointed a Resources Commission in 1966 and found that “graduate professional education was expensive, and the schools often lacked the resources to implement their best insights. In many cases, schools stood at the edge of bankruptcy” (Miller, 2014, p. 1025). Most theological schools are small institutions that still require large resources. According to Miller (2014), “theological education was the most expensive form of professional education in America, apart from medical training” (p. 35). The decade after 1968 was a period of financial crisis for the U.S. economy and theological education. Inflation rose and endowments decreased. There was little growth in the U.S. economy. There were economic and population shifts from the East and Midwest to the West and Sun Belt states. This impacted the most prestigious East coast seminaries. Mainline church membership also declined as did its contribution to theological education (Miller, 2014).

This period was also a period of increased specializations such as intercultural studies programs and religious education for the seminaries. For seminaries already struggling financially, these specializations added more expenses to their budgets in order to keep pace. In addition to expenses, seminaries did not have the sources of income available to other educational institutions with their wealthy alumni. Seminaries depend upon church aid. The U.S. is a nation of denominationalism which means each denomination believes it must have its own (or more than one seminary). Denominationalism has resulted in too many seminaries fighting for students. Even those with substantial endowments cannot provide the necessary funding to adequately support the number of existing seminaries. The ATS Resources Commission appointed in 1966 determined the problem of seminaries was scale. They are too small in faculty-student

ratio and their operating expenses too big (Miller, 2014). An increase in seminary administration also occurred in the 1970s especially in the areas of public and donor relations, staff, and financial support. The theological schools changed the name of the BDiv to Master of Divinity (MDiv) after 1970 (Miller, 2014). ATS adopted new standards for the Master of Divinity in 1972 (Miller, 2014).

In response to the economic struggles, seminaries created two additional degrees in the 1980s: the Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) and the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) (Miller, 2014). The MATS is a smaller degree program than the MDiv but most of the courses are in the classical disciplines of Bible, church history, theology, and philosophy. The small MDiv courses received a boost in enrollment from the MATS. The DMin did the same and included the practical disciplines courses. These two degrees increased enrollments without increasing faculty. The MDiv remains the central degree of seminaries. Each fall, the ATS conducts an annual survey for entering students. This survey provides the association with the demographics, finances, motivations, and professional plans of entering seminary students. Data are collected and shared with the ATS seminaries to provide useful information for recruitment, admissions, financial aid, and academic affairs (Miller, 2014).

There was a decline in white male students attending seminaries in the 1970s. As tuition driven institutions, seminaries had open admissions and recruited new students. This increased enrollment in minority and female students. “Women entered seminaries in significant numbers in the 1970s and 1980s, and by 1990, they came to be between one-third and one-half of seminary enrollments” (Miller, 2014, p. 91). Full-time students of the past were now part-time students juggling course work, family, and full-time

employment. Part-time commuter seminarians increased in the 1980s. Seminaries accommodated this type of student with intensive block and evening classes so seminarians could work full-time. Distance education emerged in the seminaries during the first decade of the twenty-first century. It also enabled full-time pastors to enroll in graduate education without moving to the seminary to obtain a degree. Distance education was a major component of American higher education by 2012 (Miller, 2014).

Seminaries struggled during and after the Vietnam War. “A period of relative prosperity followed, especially during the Clinton years, only to be shaken by the dot-com crisis and then by 9/11” (Miller, 2014, p. 301). The recession of 2007 and reduced denominational support have also had a significant impact on seminaries (Miller, 2014, p. 301). Over the last twenty years, significant changes have occurred in theological education. There has been a decline in the traditional campus enrollment resulting in few full-time and an increase in part-time students. The increases in personnel at the administration level in seminaries for fundraising, student recruitment, student services, and maintaining compliance for the federal government and accrediting bodies have impacted the viability of theological education (Miller, 2014). Few seminaries have the resources to reach their full potential for producing an educated clergy (Miller, 2014). According to Miller (2014), schools will continue to compete for students and resources. The cost of theological education is high and graduates have debt for their undergraduate and graduate education that makes it difficult to survive on a small church pastoral salary.

### **The Church of the Nazarene and Higher Education**

Raser (2009a) stated “the Church of the Nazarene had its beginnings in persons and events that rose directly out of the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement” (p. 57).

According to Raser (2009a), there were three streams in the Holiness Movement that eventually formed the Church of the Nazarene: Eastern, Western, and Southern. The eastern stream association opened its first school, The Pentecostal Collegiate Institute and Bible Training School, in 1900. It began with 51 students. The education committee purchased property in Rhode Island and opened Pentecostal Collegiate Institute (PCI) in the fall of 1903. These institutions became Eastern Nazarene College in 1918 and moved to Quincy, Massachusetts in 1919 (Raser, 2009a). On the western side of the U.S., the Church of the Nazarene opened the Pacific Bible College in 1902 with 41 students. In 1906, the Pacific Bible College received a donation of \$30,000 from Jackson Deets and became a four-year college named Nazarene University and Deets Pacific Bible College (Raser, 2009c). The school relocated to Pasadena in 1910 and changed its name to Nazarene University. In 1973, Nazarene University moved to San Diego. The southern stream established the Texas Holiness University and other resources such as a campground, orphanage, and a newsletter (Raser, 2009b, p. 128).

The Eastern (Association of Pentecostal Churches of America) and the Western (Church of the Nazarene) streams united in 1907 and became the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (Raser, 2009d). The Southern stream (Holiness Church of Christ) joined the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene at the second general assembly in Pilot Point, Texas in 1908 (Raser, 2009d). Whitelaw (2009b) stated, “In 1908 there were 10,034 Nazarenes in 228 churches, representing East, West, and South, with nineteen missionaries” (p. 511). At the time of this merger between the three streams, the following schools existed: Pentecostal Collegiate Institute, Pacific Bible Institute, Texas Holiness University, Bible Training School (Waco, Texas), Bible Training School (Pilot

Point, Texas), Arkansas Holiness College, Kansas Holiness College, Oklahoma Holiness College, and the Literary and Bible Training School for Christian Workers (Raser, 2009b).

As early as the 1920s, Nazarene leaders were asking for a Nazarene seminary. Raser (1995) summarized how J. B. Chapman, General Superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene, called for “more preachers and better preachers” (p. 10). It was a “calling for a ‘real theological seminary,’ where the best and the brightest of the Church of the Nazarene and the Holiness Movement could be spiritually and academically prepared in classical Christian theology and contemporary ministerial skills” (Raser, 1995, Foreword, para. 4). By 1944, the Church of the Nazarene had the following institutions: Eastern Nazarene College, Northwest Nazarene College, Olivet Nazarene College, Pasadena College, Bethany-Peniel College, and Trevecca Nazarene College. Pasadena College was the only institution to have a MA of Religion (Ingersol, 2009). Jones and Pace (1944) stated, “Our schools have struggled under burdens of debt so formidable as to always hinder their efficient operation, and at times so great as to threaten their very existence” (p. 141). During the 1943-1944 academic year, there were “approximately 3,500 enrolled in our schools and colleges” (Jones & Pace, 1944, p. 141). The 1944 General Assembly approved establishing a seminary. Kansas City was selected as the site of the school. “The first draft of a catalog detailing the academic program of the new school was put together in February 1945 in the basement of Chicago First Church, where new faculty member L. A. Reed was pastor” (Raser, 1995, p. 50). The seminary began offering courses on September 20, 1945 with a total enrollment of 61 students. The end of WWII provided veterans with funds to attend seminary. Nine students

composed the first graduating class in May 1947. Their average age was 29 years old. They were awarded Bachelor of Divinity degrees (Raser, 1995).

By 1928, the PCON had divided the course of study into sections: Licensed Minister for four years and Local Preachers for two years. A licensed minister could be ordained after serving two years as a regular pastor and successfully completing the prescribed four year course of study for licensed ministers and ordination candidates (Fleming et al., 1928). The course of study for the Local Ministry program expanded its reading list. The District Board of Examination had been established and was composed of five or more elders. The secretary of this board prepared a record book of the examinations. The record book included the name and contact information of each candidate along with the local church, date of licensing, and the course of study the individual had completed. The examinations were conducted the day before the annual district assembly. Each candidate was required to successfully complete a written examination consisting of at least 10 questions per area of study and book used in the course of study (Fleming et al., 1928). Candidates had to achieve an average of 75 out of 100 for all of their studies in order to proceed to the next year. The manual made provisions for candidates attending recognized schools in the Church of the Nazarene that instead of the annual examinations, the school could provide a school record. If the board was satisfied, the candidate was recommended without the examination (Fleming et al., 1928). According to Ingersol (2013), during the twentieth century, the liberal arts degree became the educational norm for clergy education. However, Methodist denominations still allowed candidates to complete educational requirements through the course of study.

The 1948 Education Commission wanted to keep small enrollments at the Nazarene institutions. Cunningham (2009) stated, “Many Nazarenes, including some district superintendents believed that the church was not preparing enough pastors – especially for its rural churches. The number of ministerial students in Nazarene colleges was declining” (pp. 472-473). The 1956 General Assembly delegates defeated a motion to establish a Bible college in North America (Cunningham, 2009).

The 1960 General Assembly created a commission “to study Nazarene education and ministerial preparation in North America” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 473). Its report was presented to the 1964 General Assembly. In 1964, there were 405,000 members in the Church of the Nazarene and 5,800 organized churches (Johnson & Mayfield, 1964). The districts had paid \$3,025,894 to schools and colleges from 1960-1963 (Johnson & Mayfield, 1964). From 1956 to 1962, these schools graduated 4,219 students with 1,234 (29%) entering full-time Christian service. There was growing concern that the colleges would need to replace old buildings at a cost of \$9 million over 10 years. The colleges were also competing with non-Nazarene institutions that offered higher scholarships than the Nazarene schools.

The Education Commission “recommended establishing two junior colleges and suggested Muncie, Indiana, and Dayton, Ohio, as possible sites” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 473). A second recommendation was that “local churches give the equivalent of 5 percent of all money raised for local interests to their regional college” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 473). This would help keep the colleges accountable to the district churches and the Church of the Nazarene. The commission found that many district superintendents “believed that advanced degrees were not essential for effective pastoral ministry”

(Cunningham, 2009, p. 473). At that time only 56% of district superintendents were college graduates. The third recommendation was to establish a Bible college. The district superintendents preferred a Bible college but there was ambivalence among ministers and laypersons. Also, “only 19 percent of students enrolled in the Course of Study indicated that they would transfer to a Nazarene Bible College if one existed” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 473). The fourth recommendation was that colleges offer Bible certificate programs and that the church should “strengthen campus-based correspondence courses for ministerial preparation” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 473).

The response of the 1964 General Assembly was to authorize two new educational zones. The East Central zone was composed of West Virginia, Ohio, and eastern Kentucky. The establishment of the East Central zone took potential students and local church funding from the Eastern, Olivet, and Trevecca educational zones. The second new educational zone, North Central, was composed of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The North Central zone took potential students and local church funding from Bethany, Northwest, and Olivet educational zones (Cunningham, 2009).

The education commission’s other recommendations were approved. Each college was asked to create a process for earning Bible certificates and correspondence programs for ministerial students who were not attending college. The Bible college recommendation was debated by the delegates and “voted by a close margin, 345 to 306, to establish a Bible college” (Cunningham, 2009, 474). The General Superintendents only allowed the Bible college to offer Associate degrees and only applicants over the age of 22 could attend (Cunningham, 2009).



The recommendation to establish two junior colleges and a Nazarene Bible college had a significant impact on the pre-existing institutions. MidAmerica Nazarene College was established in Olathe, Kansas and Bethany Nazarene College (BNC) was located in Bethany, Oklahoma. Cunningham (2009) stated the enrollment of BNC changed significantly. “In the fall of 1968 Bethany’s enrollment stood at 1,809. It dipped to 1,580 for the spring semester, fell to 1,548 in the fall of 1969, and to 1,450 the following spring” (pp. 467-467). This decline in enrollment resulted in a \$500,000 decline in tuition revenues. “By 1971, the school was \$600,000 in debt” (Cunningham, 2009, pp. 466-467). To curb the increasing debt, the president, Roy Cantrell, dismissed 20 faculty members and seven administrators.

Eastern Nazarene College (ENC) located in Quincy, Massachusetts experienced unrest in the late sixties. Cunningham (2009) stated, “At the same time, ENC faced declining enrollment and financial problems resulting from the beginning of Mount Vernon” (p. 468). In 1975, a commission explored moving ENC because of the cost of the Boston location and because the school was landlocked. It was also not centrally located in the Eastern educational zone. Parents who wanted a more suburban/rural atmosphere were sending their children to Mount Vernon Nazarene College in Mount Vernon, Ohio. The ENC trustees voted to relocate in 1977. City and state officials met with school officials to persuade them to stay in Quincy, Massachusetts. Alumni also voiced their opposition about relocation. The new sites did not work out, and ENC was unable to find a buyer for the campus. The plan to relocate was dropped in 1978 (Cunningham, 2009).

The Church of the Nazarene established the General Board of Education in 1911. It became the Department of Education in 1928. The 1972 General Assembly changed its name to the Department of Education and Ministry. Its new responsibilities included the Course of Study for ministers (Whitelaw, 2009a). The department's name changed again in 1982 to Department of Educational Services and was placed under the Division of Church Growth. "In 1985 the care for the ministers' Course of Study transferred to the Department of Evangelism" (Whitelaw, 2009a, p. 545). The 1985 General Board created an education commission and based upon its report at the 1989 General Assembly, the International Board of Education (IBOE) was created. Its purpose was "to function as the general church advocate for educational institutions in the Church of the Nazarene worldwide" (Whitelaw, 2009a, p. 546). A report at the 2017 General Board meeting indicated that IBOE had 52 schools worldwide with 51,555 students representing more than 120 nations (Church of the Nazarene, 2017).

By 2017, the Church of the Nazarene had become a global church with six regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Mesoamerica, South America, and USA and Canada). The USA and Canada region is divided by the two countries, and the U.S. has over 5,000 churches and 80 districts (Blevins et al., 2017). The U.S. Church of the Nazarene has eight universities, a Bible college, and a seminary (Church of the Nazarene, 2016a).

### **Educating the Clergy**

During the early years of the seminary, district superintendents were suspicious about the type of graduates NTS was producing. The district superintendents were concerned that the graduates were more scholarly and unwilling to pastor small churches

or establish churches. Pastors, professors, church leaders, and laity have debated the purpose of graduate theological education for years. The debate has two sides. Professors want to theologically equip students and advance knowledge for their academic guilds (Foster et al., 2006). Hillman (2008) indicated that on the other side of the debate are pastors and church leaders who want to educate students to be professional church leaders in ministry. Neither side believes seminaries are preparing seminarians for ministry well. Pastors and church leaders are concerned that MDiv graduates are not prepared to pastor local congregations because practical skills, such as church budgeting, interpersonal communication, and leadership skills have not specifically been taught in seminary courses. According to Hillman (2008), “the school cannot do it all; it can only take you so far. Internships serve as a link between theory and practice” (Chapter 1, para. 10). An internship or field education needs a proactive intern, caring mentor, and must be viewed as a beneficial site (Hillman, 2008) to be successful. Foster et al. (2006) stated that “field education programs are generally designed as a bridge between seminary and the congregation or other sites of clergy practice. Their purposes originate in the mission of seminaries – to educate leaders for service to various publics” (p. 296). Butts and Cremin (1953) stated that apprenticeships are an educational method of a student (apprentice) working with a master craftsman. There is usually a contract or formal agreement between the apprentice and craftsman. Apprenticeships were used in medieval times and seventeenth-century Europe. The colonists brought apprenticeships to their new country. “Graduation from a validated course of study requires the partnering of the educational provider and a local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development” (Blevins et al., 2017, p. 208). One component of the theology

of ordination of a minister is to “respond to opportunities to mentor future ministers and to nurture the call to ministry” (Blevins et al., 2017, p. 193). The Church of the Nazarene does not provide a manual for mentoring local or district licensed ministers.

In the Church of the Nazarene, there are different paths to ordination as an elder. Ordination may be completed through a district course of study that is the level of continuing education, an approved undergraduate pastoral ministry program at a U.S. Nazarene institution, undergraduate coursework at a non-Nazarene university approved by a district credentials committee, and the approved MDiv from Nazarene Theological Seminary (Blevins et al., 2017). There is limited research about the impact of supervised ministry for ordinands at the graduate level in the Church of the Nazarene.

### **Summary**

Clergy preparation for mainstream and evangelical denominations has been a part of the history of the U.S. since its founding. Chapter 2 provided a summary of the history of theological education in the U.S. The Church of the Nazarene began with a reading course of study similar to the Methodist Church at its founding in 1908. Since then, clergy preparation has been expanded to include various forms of acceptable course of study programs endorsed by the Church of the Nazarene. Even though the general church endorses programs, it is the district that tracks and approves individuals to be ordained as elders and deacons. District Superintendents work with local church boards to select and elect pastors. District Superintendents then work with the pastors in their districts to lead healthy local churches. District Superintendents have mixed perceptions about the different course of study programs available to complete educational

requirements for ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. Chapter 3 summarizes the methods used in the current study and includes the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. regarding the preparation of licensed ministers for the election to perform the duties of elder, as determined in the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene. This chapter provides a summary of the methods used to conduct the current study. It includes the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations of the study.

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative research design was determined to be the most effective way to address the purpose of this study. "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 12). The research was conducted from a constructivist worldview. In this worldview, the researcher is searching for understanding of the participants' world (Creswell, 2014). "These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) defined social constructivism/interpretivism as a knowledge claim and stated,

Constructivist researchers recognize and acknowledge their own background shapes their interpretation, and they thus "position" themselves in the research to acknowledge their own cultural, social and historical experiences. Rather than starting with a theory (as in

postpositivism), researchers pose research questions and generate or inductively develop meaning from the data collected in the field. (p. 29)

Within this worldview, the research begins with research questions which should be open-ended and the researcher interacts with the individuals in the study.

The current study involved the use of a phenomenological approach. This approach is one strategy that can be used under the research paradigm of constructivism. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) stated, “The purpose of phenomenological research is to investigate the meaning of the *lived experience* of people to identify the core essence of human experience or phenomena as described by research participants” (p. 32). This focus on the experience of phenomena is described through “basic information, actions, behaviors, and changes of phenomena, but always the description is about what it “looks like” from the perspective of the researcher and the participants in the research; it is not about how the phenomena function” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 89). One shared phenomenon in this study is each participant served as a district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene with responsibilities for directing the functions of a district including the preparation of clergy for the district.

### **Setting**

The setting for this qualitative study was the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S., specifically the North Central and Northwest education zones. The north central education zone includes seven districts in seven states: Prairie Lakes District comprises Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota; Iowa District; Kansas District; Joplin District; Kansas City District; Missouri District; and Nebraska District. The North Central education zone includes 531 churches with 54,516 members (Houseal, 2017).

The Northwest zone includes seven districts in nine states: Alaska District, Colorado District, Intermountain District comprises southern Idaho, central and northwest Nevada, eastern Oregon, and Utah. The Northwest District includes northeastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and northern Idaho. The Oregon Pacific District is composed of western Oregon (Houseal, 2017). The Rocky Mountain District includes Montana and Wyoming, and the Washington Pacific District is composed of western Washington. The Northwest education zone includes 446 churches with 62,932 members (Houseal, 2017).

### **Sampling Procedures**

The population for this study consisted of District Superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene. The research is site-specific because sample participants invited to participate in the current study included the seven District Superintendents from the North Central USA education zone and the seven District Superintendents from the Northwest USA education zone. The selection of the North Central USA and Northwest USA district superintendents was purposive and non-random. The researcher lives in Missouri. Out of the 14 district superintendents, seven agreed to participate and completed the interview protocol.

### **Instrument**

A semi-structured interview was chosen by the researcher to explore this study's qualitative research questions. People ask questions to understand another individual and respond to questions in order to be known and understood. Flick (2007) described the research interview:



In an interview conversation, the researcher asks about, and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived world, about their dreams, fears and hopes, hears their views and opinions in their own words, and learns about their school and work situation, their family and social life.

The research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. (p. 1)

An original interview protocol was developed for the current study. The instrument was developed based upon the researcher's education and experience in higher education in the Church of the Nazarene and assistance from three subject matter experts (SMEs). The SMEs consisted of one administrator of clergy development in the Church of the Nazarene, one district superintendent, and a faculty member at a university in the North Central Educational Region. A 17-question interview protocol guided the interviews. The first six questions were demographic questions:

1. Please identify your age range: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+, or I prefer not to disclose.
2. Please identify the district where you were ordained
3. When did you complete your course of study for the ministry?
4. How did you complete educational requirements for ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene: modular course of study, district training center, NBC alliance district training, Nazarene college or university; Nazarene Bible College, Nazarene Theological Seminary, non-Nazarene institution; combination of more than one; other preparation process?
5. How many years did you serve as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene?

6. How many years have you served as a district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene?

The Research Questions are listed below with the interview questions used to address each listed after it.

**RQ1. What are the perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about current pastoral ministry preparation?**

*IQ1a.* What is your opinion about current pastoral ministry preparation?

*IQ1b.* What, if any, typical duties of an elder have been strengths for these individuals?

*IQ1c.* What, if any, typical duties of an elder have been a struggle for these individuals?

**RQ2. What do Church of the Nazarene district superintendents perceive should be included in the validated course of studies to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry?**

*IQ2a.* What aspects of the current course of study, including college programs, should continue to be included in preparation programs for elders in the Church of the Nazarene?

*IQ2b.* In your opinion, are there any areas of study that should be added to curriculum of the current course of study to prepare elders for the range of duties they will be expected to perform?

*IQ2c.* What role, if any, should mentoring play in the preparation of women and men for Church of the Nazarene ministry? Describe characteristics of the mentoring program if one exists in your district.

*IQ2d.* As you consider the current options for settings where elder preparation takes place (e.g. seminary, bible college, etc.) what venue do you think best prepares individuals for ALL of the duties of an elder in the Church of the Nazarene?

**RQ3. What do Church of the Nazarene district superintendents perceive as the greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029?**

*IQ3a.* In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029?

*IQ3b.* Are there any areas of elder preparation that programs should add to the current curriculum now for Church of the Nazarene clergy to be prepared to address these challenges?

*IQ3c.* Are there any areas of elder preparation programs that should be removed from the current curriculum to prepare Church of the Nazarene clergy to address these challenges?

*IQ3d.* Do you have additional thoughts or concerns about clergy preparation that were not addressed in the interview questions?

The interview questions allowed the district superintendents to share their responses orally. The interview protocol was reviewed by the researcher's major advisor, research analyst, and three Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). The SMEs provided feedback for validity, relevance, significance, and clarity of the questions of the research protocol.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Prior to collecting data, the researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on April 9, 2019. The Baker University IRB approved the request April 10, 2019 (see Appendix C). The researcher conducted two pilot interviews with Church of the Nazarene district superintendents from non-North Central and non-Northwest educational zones. The district superintendents reviewed the interview questions, provided potential responses, and provided suggestions for conducting the interviews. Feedback from the district superintendents was incorporated into the interview questions and interview format. After obtaining the approval from the Baker University IRB, the researcher consulted Rev. Richard Houseal, Research Services, Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center, who provided the Minister Address Contact Information Request Form. The Minister Address Contact Information Request Form, along with a detailed explanation of how the research study information would be used, was submitted to the General Secretary's Office at the Global Ministry Center for the Church of the Nazarene in Lenexa, KS (Appendix D). The General Secretary, Gary Hartke, approved the request May 28, 2019 with an email from Rich Houseal (Appendix E) which informed the researcher that the General Secretary's Office no longer provides emails of district superintendents to third parties. The researcher was required to work with Rev. Richard Houseal to contact the district superintendents (Appendix E). Houseal contacted the 14 District Superintendents with an email from himself along with the researcher's initial email (Appendix F) describing the study, participation requirements, audio recording, confidentiality, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, how to withdraw, and compensation. The invitation to

participate also included the interview questions and consent form. Houseal's email included a Survey Monkey link to provide district superintendents the opportunity to indicate willingness to participate in the study (Appendix F). Once Houseal received a positive response from a district superintendent, he emailed the researcher the approval along with the contact information for the district superintendent (Appendix G). Those who responded affirmatively to participate in the study were sent an email to schedule an interview and determine if face-to-face or phone was the best method for conducting the interview. In some cases, a phone call was necessary to schedule an interview. To protect the confidentiality and identity of the participants, each participant was assigned an anonymous code (e.g. Participant 1, 2, 3, etc.). This code was used to reference interviews during the data analysis, presentation of results, and summary of results. Interviews occurred between June 26, 2019 and August 28, 2019. Interview times averaged twenty-three minutes.

The researcher conducting this study utilized Lunenburg and Irby's (2008) recommendations for the interview approach. The researcher listened carefully, observed and took notes about nonverbal cues, attended to the progression of the conversation, asked probing questions as needed, and allowed the participants to speak without interrupting (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The questions were sequenced with demographic questions first which allowed the interviewees to become involved in the interview and comfortable sharing information about themselves with the researcher. The demographic questions were followed by questions related to the district superintendents' perceptions about current preparation for the ministry, what the approved course of study for the ministry should include, and the greatest challenges Church of the Nazarene ministers

will face in the next 10 years. The interviewees were advised they could add additional information at the end of the interview (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The researcher concluded the interviews with an expression of her appreciation for each participant's time and assistance with the research study. Each participant was reassured that his identity and interview would be kept confidential. The participants were emailed a thank you for their participation a day after the interview was concluded. Once each interview was completed, the audio recording was labeled with the assigned code to insure anonymity. The researcher transcribed each interview recording manually. Once each interview was transcribed, it was emailed to the participant with a request to review the accuracy of the summary. No subjects made changes after transcript review. After verification of accuracy, the researcher's notes about non-verbal observations (body language, sighs, etc.) were added to each transcript using a colored font that clearly delineated the researcher's notes from the interview transcripts. These notes included details about the participant's demeanor and non-verbal communication during the interview. Once transcriptions were complete, the researcher initiated data analysis.

### **Data Analysis and Synthesis**

Data analysis begins with a plan for managing the data collected and then interpreting the data for meaning (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). After each interview, the audio recording was saved in a specific file folder for each participant. The notes the researcher had typed during each interview were saved in the appropriate participant's file. Once an interview was complete, the researcher listened to each audio recording after the interview to ensure that the recording was intact. During the second listening of each audio recording, the researcher transcribed the interview verbatim and identified

each transcript using a numerical code to ensure confidentiality. Once the drafts of the verbatim transcripts were completed, the researcher emailed the appropriate transcript to each participant. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) referred to this process as member checking. Each participant was asked to review the transcript and email the researcher within a week with omissions, corrections, clarifications, and additional insights. Once the participants' responses were received or the deadline passed, the researcher added participant responses in green to the transcription. The researcher listened to each interview a third time and noted nonverbal communication such as pauses, interruptions, and laughter on each transcript using a specific font for each identification. The researcher's notes taken during the interview were also added to each transcript using an orange color to identify interviewer observations from the verbatim interview transcription. Finally, the researcher formatted the transcription for coding. Each interview was typed double-space with a 2 ½ inch right-hand margin for coding purposes.

The next phase of the data analysis involved developing a code. Saldana (2016) stated, "a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 4). Coding allows the researcher to organize the data into families or categories. The researcher utilized a streamlined code to theory model beginning with the data to codes, subcodes to categories, and subcategories to themes and concepts to assertions and theories (Saldana, 2016). This method moves from particular (data) to general (assertions and theory). The researcher's first coding attempt was to type words used by the participant in the right-hand column of the transcript. At the end of the first coding attempt, the researcher created a list of the

codes and categorized the codes. The researcher repeated this initial coding with each transcription. The researcher then reviewed each transcription again for additional codes and subcodes. These were added to the list of comprehensive codes. The researcher analyzed the list of codes and subcodes of each participant and created categories and subcategories or families of the codes and subcodes. The researcher then created a comprehensive list of the participants' categories and subcategories. The researcher reviewed the codes, subcodes, categories, and subcategories prior to organizing the categories and subcategories into themes and concepts for each participant. This process of organizing the data through coding allowed the researcher to synthesize themes consistent across all the participants. After the researcher completed the identification of common themes, two professionals with experience in qualitative research conducted a coding process audit by reviewing the transcripts and researcher-identified themes. This process ensured accuracy and validity of the transcripts and the researcher interpretation of themes. The auditors were not connected to the Church of the Nazarene or the study. No changes in the analysis were made based on auditor review.

### **Reliability and Trustworthiness**

Reliability and validity are the standards for good quantitative research because the research will be comparable between two researchers studying the same phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). In qualitative research, reliability and trustworthiness are issues the researcher must ensure in the study. Creswell (2014) indicated reliability and trustworthiness could be established as "the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures" (p. 201). The researcher used six strategies to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of this study: 1) major advisor and research



analyst review of the interview protocol, 2) SME review of the interview protocol, 3) two pilot interviews, 4) member checking, 5) narrative analysis, and 6) coding process audit.

The interview questions were previewed by the researcher's major advisor, research analyst, and SMEs for alignment with the purposes of the study, clarity, and redundancy. The researcher conducted two pilot interviews to practice the process of inviting participants to participate and improve the skills of the researcher for the study's interviews. After the data were collected and analyzed, the researcher used member checking to provide an opportunity for study participants to verify accuracy of interview transcripts. "Reviewing and discussing findings with professional colleagues was a further way of ensuring that the reality of the participants was adequately reflected in the findings" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 125). The researcher chose to write a narrative analysis. The narrative analysis included the researcher's summary of interview notes, description of the research process, description of the coding process, and interpretation of the results of the qualitative research. The narrative analysis included what the researcher learned and personal interpretation of the findings. "The procedure of having an independent investigator look over many aspects of the project (e.g. accuracy of transcription, the relationship between the research questions and the data, the level of data analysis from the raw data through interpretation) enhances the overall validity of a qualitative study" (Creswell, 2014, pp. 202-203).

### **Researcher's Role**

According to Creswell (2014), "A researcher begins with a theory, collects data that either supports or refutes the theory, and then makes necessary revisions and conducts additional tests" (p. 7). Due to the nature of qualitative research and the role of

the researcher associated with data interpretation, Creswell (2014) recommended the researcher provide statements of past experiences and describe connections between the participants and the researcher that could result in a biased interpretation of the study results. The researcher acknowledges biases brought to this study as an ordained deacon in the Church of the Nazarene and as a graduate of one of the Church of the Nazarene's universities. She earned a Master of Religious Education at Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS) and had worked 17 years at the NTS. As an ordained deacon in the Church of the Nazarene, the researcher had experienced the educational preparation for ordination. It was important to the researcher that the study be credible and trustworthy. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Member checking and independent audits of results from interview transcript analyses assured integrity of the data analysis. The researcher is a third generation of this denomination which means her paternal grandparents and parents are members of this denomination. The researcher has been a member of congregations whose pastors completed their educational requirements for ordination by the various options and desired to conduct research that could be beneficial for leadership development in her denomination.

### **Limitations**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) defined potential weaknesses in the study as limitations. "Limitations are external conditions that restrict or constrain the study's scope or may affect its outcome" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 103). Four limitations were identified that may have impacted the current study:

1. Gender and age may create bias between a researcher and interview participants.  
The researcher of the current study is a female. All seven of the district superintendents who participated in the current study were male.
2. Creswell (2014) stated, “Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive” (p. 190). Some participants may not have clearly understood the interview questions or been able to verbally articulate their responses.
3. District superintendents may not have answered questions honestly due to concerns about the anonymity of the interview.
4. District superintendents who participated in interviews may not have been familiar with the educational options available for individuals fulfilling the educational requirements for ordination.

### **Summary**

This qualitative research study focused on the perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene North Central and Northwest education regions regarding the preparation of licensed ministers in the Church of the Nazarene. Participants in this study were district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene North Central and Northwest education regions. These individuals are ordained elders in the Church of the Nazarene. Data were collected through phone interviews that were audio recorded for transcription by the researcher. Member checking was employed by the researcher by having the participants review their interview transcript and the narrative analysis. Coding, identification of themes, and the narrative analysis were reviewed and verified by two qualitative research experts. Chapter 3 explained the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures,

data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations. Chapter 4 reports the results of the analysis of the interview data for this study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

This study examined perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry as elders. The first purpose was to examine perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. about current pastoral ministry preparation. The second purpose was to identify district superintendents' perceptions about what should be included in the approved course of study to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry. The third purpose was to examine district superintendents' perceptions regarding the greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029.

#### **Descriptive Demographics and Background Information**

To obtain an understanding of the backgrounds of the participants, six demographic questions were asked. The seven Church of the Nazarene District Superintendents interviewed in the current study serve the North Central and Northwest education regions. Two of the seven were in the age range of 50-59 and the other five were in the age range of 60-69. Their length of pastoral ministry ranged from 17 to 43 years with an average service of 28.9 years. Collectively, the interview participants have served 202.5 years in pastoral ministry. Their service as district superintendents ranged from 4 to 15 years with an average of nine years. Collectively, study participants have served 64.5 years as district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene.

Out of the seven district superintendents, four of the seven are the district superintendents in the districts in which they were ordained. Two of the seven are district

superintendents in a different region from their ordination district. One of the seven district superintendents is a district superintendent in the same region in which he was ordained. Only one of the seven district superintendents has served as a district superintendent in two districts in the Church of the Nazarene.

Four of the seven study participants completed the course of study in the 1970s. Two of the seven completed the course of study in the 1980s. One of the seven completed the course of study in the early 2000s. Five of the seven district superintendents completed the educational requirements with a combination of ministry preparation options. Four of these five superintendents completed their educational requirements with a combination of a Nazarene undergraduate institution and Nazarene Theological Seminary. Two of the seven participants completed their educational requirements at a Nazarene college or university.

### **Emerging Themes**

Participants were asked eleven interview questions organized around three research questions. Eight themes emerged from participants' responses to interview questions: (1) satisfaction with the 44 Church of the Nazarene course of study ability statements candidates must demonstrate prior to ordination; (2) preparation issues; (3) strengths of current ministry candidates; (4) struggles of current ministry candidates; (5) no preference for a single ministry preparation option; (6) a need for mentoring, coaching, or apprenticeships as a component of the ministry preparation process; (7) 2019-2029 Church of the Nazarene challenges; and (8) recommendations for clergy preparation to meet the needs of the Church of the Nazarene 2019-2029. The following sections describe the themes and include participants' feedback.

## **Satisfaction with the 44 Church of the Nazarene Course of Study Ability Statements**

### **Candidates Must Demonstrate Prior to Ordination**

The course of study for the Church of the Nazarene has 44 ability statements (Appendix A). The 44 ability statements are organized around the 4 C's (content, competence, context, and character). The district superintendents who participated in the current study stated that these 44 ability statements provide a good description of the abilities required to pastor. Participant 4 affirmed the work of the group who crafted the 44 ability statements. "The Breckenridge group has been pretty good at paring, you know, peeling things away that maybe weren't necessary. The 44 ability statements that are created are things that pastors need to know how to do." Participant 2, who looked over the ability statements prior to the phone interview, shared, "I don't see any that need to be excluded. I think they are all pretty strong and have relevance to all aspects of ministry." Participant 6 said, "I don't know if anything should be added. I think it [ability statements] needs to be emphasized." The superintendents agreed the ability statements are solid and well-rounded for clergy preparation. They provide a good foundation and baseline for being a pastor. Participant 1 said, "I don't know if we need to remove things." Participant 5 thought the ability statements provide a "good overview of what it means to be leaders in a local setting."

### **Preparation Issues**

Study participants were asked what aspects of the current course of study, including college programs, should continue to be included in preparation programs for elders in the Church of the Nazarene. Additional questions focused on areas of study that

should be added to the curriculum to prepare elders for the range of duties they will be expected to perform. The district superintendents agreed there is not a need to add or remove any of the 44 Church of the Nazarene course of study ability statements candidates must demonstrate prior to ordination. According to Participant 1, “We must find the best way and right now we’re working to bring the people who can help us together to say how we can best address educational delivery so that we hit those.” The district superintendents wanted more emphasis on the ability statements and opportunities given for each local and district licensed clergy to practice or gain experience with a qualified and trained mentor. According to the superintendents, the 44 ability statements are written clearly but lack prescription and consistency in how they are assessed between districts. Participant 4 articulated this concept by describing the ability statements as the description and the execution of the course of study as the prescription.

Now once you do the descriptive work and tell what the ability statements are, then it’s the responsibility of the university to come back and do the prescription. And I think that’s why a lot of things are in flux right now because they’re trying to figure out a well-defined description of what we are looking for. Now we are going to have to be more prescriptive. Cause [Because] if you don’t give the student the prescription and give them just the description, the ability statements, you find really frustrated students. So the university, the church, the board of ministry is going to have to come with the prescription and the prescription is still going to need to have good biblical theology. Gonna have to have ecclesiology. You need good homiletics. Hermeneutics. I still think all of those are still going to be really important. But I definitely think we are going to have to figure out



how to exegete the culture. The culture is changing rapidly.

Three district superintendents addressed how candidates are taught. Participant 5 shared that it is not about

letting go as much as I want to make sure our professors are learning themselves as they go forward. So, the dialogs we need to have may not be radically different but how we lead down that conversation and how we spend more time.

Participant 5 indicated he was a note taker when he was completing his educational requirements. This participant indicated his professors told him everything he needed to know. Participant 5 stated,

This is a generation that needs to be in dialog and in community. I think building teams of learners helps prepare pastors to be team leaders rather than know-it-alls. So, I think methodology as much as content is what I'm driving at. How we teach, how we engage, is as critical as content. When we pay attention to the four C's, content is one of those and it's critical but for some people, it's all that matters. I've got to get the content in their heads so it's kind of like open up and I'll put the funnel in and I'll fill you full of what you need to know. Context is as critical as content anymore. How do I take what I know and meet the people where I live because where I live is different than where you live? So, contextualizing and then character. God help us, we need to work on character.

Participant 6 shared the teaching strategy of Dr. Chic Shaver, emeritus professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Participant 6 stated, it

wasn't just teaching in the classroom, but the assignments were actually out there

doing it and showing them how to do it and I think we need to return to that. I think we've kind of dropped the ball a little bit in all of our training. I would really love to see us even modeling more opportunities for mentoring and apprenticeships and that kind of thing under good leaders while they are going through the seminary program or NBC... For nothing else, just to gain that confidence, to know themselves, and their gifts, and their calling.

Participant 6 advocated for adaptive learning throughout his interview.

Another district superintendent, Participant 3, expressed his concern about the type of church that local and district licensed pastors are being trained for.

We seem to be training pastors for high church and liturgical ministry and the majority of our parish settings aren't that, and especially the first assignment that a pastor goes into is probably not going to be that kind of setting.

He talked about the current teaching style compared to instruction in the military.

I've been exposed to some military leadership recently and seen where officers are deployed on the battlefield and come back and their next assignment is usually a teaching assignment followed by another deployment. So, in the classroom, the stories, the illustrations, the analogies are fresh and relevant and real world. I don't know how we get at that in the church, but we need to.

Participant 5 works with both his district and Nazarene institutions regarding

the need for heightened awareness of practical ministry. The nuances of ministry are many and book learning is never enough. There's got to be interaction, and experience, and opportunities given so I guess that would be one of the veins I would want to work with you on.

This participant also indicated that in the preparation of individuals for ordained ministry as Elders,

We need to continually ask the question, ‘Are we preparing more than minds?’

Are we preparing both the heart of the candidates as well as the tools to work in a,

I would consider, a very challenging period of church history.

The Church of the Nazarene has course, service, and interview requirements to be ordained an elder. Participant 1 asked, “How much education do we really need to provide? What’s the length of time that a person needs to be in an educational environment to be prepared?” According to Participant 4, “We do have a fairly robust evangelical process for ordination. We have course requirements and service requirements and interview requirements.” Participant 4 compared Church of the Nazarene ordination requirements to the Foursquare Church. Participant 4 stated,

So, we’ve got all of these requirements for credentialing that many organizations don’t have. Those are actually a bit of a debilitating factor for us as we think about trying to get young people involved in our programs because some churches that are more nimble and have very few ordination requirements are able to mobilize and deploy people so much faster than we are that a person is drawn to being deployed quickly and then all of all of their training and learning is on site. So we deploy slowly and that is a problem for us in terms of gaining momentum. One of the reasons we are struggling momentum-wise right now is partly because of the process we are using for credentialing and ordination because it’s complicated as compared to say the Foursquare Church where in order to be ordained you need the written approval of two ordained elders so you can be

ordained very, very quickly and deployed very, very quickly and they've been able to do entrepreneurial leadership because of that. The downside is that they can often have theological disaster and they are sometimes more prone to have moral failure because they haven't qualified people on the front end.

Participant 4 was not advocating for eliminating course requirements, service requirements, and interview requirements but a recognition by the church that current requirements for ordination are, as he put it, "creating a problem."

Participant 1 said, "We have to wrestle with the balance that says how much education does a person really need to be prepared for ministry." He wants the church to find the right balance to not "discourage the passion that individuals have for ministry. They get so bogged down that they lose their passion for ministry. So, we have to try to find the right balance." He asked the questions, "How do you do that? How do you do that well?" In addition to asking these questions, Participant 6 shared,

I think we always need to be evaluating what's needed to be effective. What is the measure of effectiveness? So, we're not just doing the same-old, same-old just because. If the bottom line is to thoroughly equip our leaders to be the best that they can be and, part of that is helping to be a life-long learner, or how to learn, or where to learn... it seems like we're hurting ourselves a little bit. I don't think anybody tells our students they have to do this [complete bachelor's and graduate degrees] but I think we can kind of slip into they have to jump through so many hoops that it's quite a while before they ever get into any ministry. So, I hate to see students who go through four years of liberal arts, and three years of seminary before they ever get out, and by that time they've kind of lost their

passion – call for ministry. So maybe it's a little long?

### **Strengths of Current Ministry Candidates**

Respondents indicated the strengths of ministry candidates are preaching and knowledge of the classical disciplines of theology, history, and scripture. Participant 1 said, "I think that most of them are fairly well prepared to preach." When describing strengths of candidates, Participant 6 stated, "I think theological training when they come out of seminary, when they come out of Bible college, the course of study. I just don't see too many deficiencies at all in their theology, thinking right theologically."

Participant 7 added,

I think they're fairly-well prepared theologically. Although I would like to see them exposed to a little more older theology. By that, I mean just some of the older writers rather than just the new writers, but I think theologically they're pretty sound.

Participant 5 affirmed current elders' preparation in scripture when he stated, "They've been given good exegetical skills and ability to work with the scripture and the preparation of sermons".

Study respondents indicated there is a difference in the preparation strengths of local and district licensed clergy. Participant 3 stated, "I almost have to divide it between traditional students and second career students." The traditional clergy are individuals who are called at a young age and have never pursued any vocation other than pastoral ministry. They usually go to college and major in religion or its equivalent and then possibly pursue a graduate degree at a seminary. Participant 1, when describing traditional students and their educational trajectory of college and seminary, shared,

I am a firm believer, and it really encourages them and helps to grow up because they have to be on their own and they've got to figure a few things out and mature. I just see that there are a lot of advantages to heading off to seminary and that process.

According to Participant 7, traditional students spend approximately seven years in their studies prior to their ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. "The traditional students need a better understanding of finances. These individuals would have financial sustainability if they would complete a double major in their undergraduate studies and learn a trade." According to Participant 7, the strengths of the traditional clergy are classical disciplines of theology and scripture. Their weaknesses are the practices of pastoral ministry. According to Participant 3, traditional students are well prepared for theological reflection. Participant 6 said, "My guys, that are maybe later in life getting their education while they are in ministry, seem to be a little more prepared, and some of that's a combination of kind of on the job training and maybe life skills they've learned up to that point."

### **Struggles of Current Ministry Candidates**

Practical theology is referred to as practices (e.g. evangelism, leadership, administration). Participants mentioned practices is a struggle area for current ministry candidates for elder ordination. Participant 7 expressed,

I think the real need is in practices. What to do? How do I get started in a pastorate? How to do a board meeting? How to set-up a budget? How to train leaders? Those sorts of practical things that I think are very important in a pastoral ministry.

District superintendents expressed concern about self-awareness and the local and district licensed clergy's relationships with their families, their congregations, their communities, and the general Church of the Nazarene. Participant 1 shared, "Number one, I think they have some relational challenges at times. Trying to figure out just how to work with people in a non-academic setting." Respondents indicated candidates need to know themselves, be more confident, and self-aware. Participant 6 stated, "Some of that is not that they aren't capable – it's just gaining confidence and understanding what they do well and what they need to work on." Participant 5 shared, "So, I think the nuances of navigating and keeping your head about water and learning how to be self-aware and not destroyed by things, can also be incorporated in the preparation."

Another struggle experienced by current ministry candidates was described by respondents as lack of knowledge about the nuts and bolts of ministry and day to day responsibilities. Participant 1 said,

They're struggling with work processes. What I mean by that is the nuts and bolts of day to day ministry. I've heard many say they're not sure how to fill their days. You know they prepare. They do the work and prepare a sermon but what else do I do with all my time?

Participant 4 compared leading the church to running a business. He stated,

I mean if you don't conduct the church in a business-like way, you're just going to lose a segment of the population that is not going to be part of an organization that isn't run well. So, I think that's potentially a place of where we don't have enough emphasis on just how to handle things.

Participant 7 shared that one of the struggles is the lack of mentoring and the need

to spend time with an experienced pastor to “learn the day to day routine of a pastor and how to set-up a board meeting, and how to do those things.” He also stated that the ministerial candidates

should sit in a finance committee meeting, how do you set-up a budget? How do you do accountability? How do you plan your curriculum for your Sunday School or your small groups? Hospital visitations - what’s bedside etiquette? You know, how to plan a funeral, how to participate in a wedding. Just things like that pastors are called on that we get a little bit of training but not much real experience in college. I’m talking about when I went ok, but I think mentoring is that walk beside as I do this and then gradually you do it and I’ll walk beside you as you do it.

Participant 5 indicated, “The struggle would be just the things they haven’t been exposed to or talked about.” He continued that candidates need

the ability to know if you’re given a situation, how you are going to navigate it. So, some of that has to be learned by doing. But I think case studies, and actual experiences and people who have done it talking into their lives can be a huge difference.

This Participant added that candidates need to learn to deal with the ongoing things such as “the criticisms you get, the gate keepers who want to control, just the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Those are pretty significant in learning how to pastor.”

Participant 6 shared candidates need “some time to apply what they are learning and learning to be a better preacher, learning how to handle conflict. Some lessons you kind of have to learn the hard way unfortunately.”



Participants 1 and 6 emphasized the challenge of evangelism as a struggle experienced by current ministry candidates. Participant 3 talked about the weakness of missional leadership. He indicated missional leadership involves “leading a congregation to engage in the community they serve.” Participants 4 and 6 talked about leadership during their interviews. Participant 4 stated, “Leadership is an interesting place to talk but lots of time leadership isn’t something that can be taught. Leadership potential is something more often innate.” Participant 6 indicated that part of the preparation is learning how to lead which means

not doing all of it but equipping and empowering others to do it. So learning how to pray a vision and praying a vision and step out boldly and rally others around them with those leadership skills that are needed in the church.

According to Participant 3, traditional students struggle with relational leadership. “By that I mean leading a church board or leading a church in mission with objectives, building consensus, casting vision.”

Second career individuals have had careers other than pastoral ministry and are called later in life. Respondents in the current study indicated these pastors need a better understanding of finances. According to respondents, these individuals need to be properly prepared as pastors to have financial sustainability by remaining in their careers. They need to be prepared how to transition to bi-vocational and co-vocational ministry. According to study participants, the strengths of second career elders are maturity and practices and their weakness is classical disciplines.

According to Participant 1, second career pastors need help with transitioning to pastoral ministry. Participant 1 shared, “We have to deal with issues of bi-vocational and

co-vocational ministry, and I'm not sure those are really addressed all that well in the course of study." Participant 3 said the struggle for second career students was theological reflection. Participants 2 and 4 did not like comparing local and district licensed clergy as a cluster because the strengths and struggles of the local and district licensed clergy varies depending upon their personalities, age, and contexts. Participant 4 stated, "It depends on the person's personality, their strengths, their basic natural weaknesses. So I think it would differ depending upon the individual." Participant 2 shared, "It's different for each individual. I don't know if I see a pattern, one way or the other particularly."

### **No Preference for a Specific Ministry Preparation Option**

Participants were asked to consider the current options for settings where elder preparation takes place (e.g. modular course of study, district training center, NBC alliance district training, Nazarene college or university; NBC, NTS, non-Nazarene institution; combination of more than one; or other preparation process) and which venue best prepares individuals for ALL the duties of an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. Responses from participants indicated there was no agreement regarding a single venue that provides preparation for all the duties of an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. One respondent indicated that a Nazarene university followed by NTS is the best option for training ministry candidates. Another respondent mentioned the distance education program at NTS. A third respondent indicated Nazarene Bible College is the best preparation option. The other four respondents did not indicate a specific option as the best preparation for ministry candidates. Participant 7 said, "There's pros and cons to all of them."

Participant 1 drew from his own experience of attending a Nazarene undergraduate institution and NTS. He said, “The best thing is they go to a Nazarene university and then go to the Nazarene seminary. The reason I say that is because there’s something about being displaced from your own environment.” Participant 1 shared that online education has “a whole lot of benefits but the one disadvantage is that you are learning in a very familiar environment.” He valued sending his candidates to seminary because it “forces them to learn in an unfamiliar environment and it places them with people outside of their region which encourages them to have conversation about theology and context.” Participant 2 shared,

Years ago, I might have said the Bible College because of the nature of their curriculum and how they process students and not the seminary. But now, I think I’m seeing real positive things at the seminary that are engaging students in ministry opportunities.

He said, “Fifty-seven percent of the students of the seminary are online, doing distance learning, and I think that helps facilitate some more practical, hands-on ministry while they’re pursuing education.” Participant 3 stated, “I think there are two venues. I think the first is a classroom setting with peers and the second is a parish setting with a mentor. I think the two are of equal importance.”

Participant 4 said, “None of them. None of them prepares for all of the duties.” He shared,

I think the problem is that they each have strengths and weaknesses. So if someone is involved in a district training program and it’s well done, they get a chance to do ministry in the context where they are serving.

Participant 4 affirmed,

The best quality of education, just in terms of education, is through our universities and seminary. But the downside of that is that the classroom experience is disconnected from practice and so it can become really academic and not have direct application of what you're learning to the assignments. So that's a pretty glaring weakness of that way of training people.

Participant 5 did not name any one venue but stated,

I think one of the strengths of the church is that we do have options. I think it's a challenging time to figure out the best deliverance. So, when you say what's best, I think options. Diversity is really a significant part of what the Church of the Nazarene must continue to do to help our pastors."

He particularly mentioned second career students who need help and he's "now working on a project to strengthen the course of study because I think the modular system is doing, trying to do more than it should try to do."

Participant 6 admitted his bias for the NBC. The NBC graduates are fruitful. He indicated he has had some good NTS graduates. He stated,

Most of them who go through Bible College training and are supplemented with online training with our course of study seem to be the ones who are doing the best. So, some of that adaptive learning. They're in context. They are hungry. They are passionate and not just about getting a degree but about really equipping themselves to do ministry and to be fruitful.

Participant 7 talked about traditional students and second career students. He stated,

I think if I had a student coming out of high school with a call to ministry

and was able, I'd want them to go to college because it does several things. It gets them away from home. It puts them in an environment where they have to grow up, find themselves. There are intensive studies week after week after week. They get to know the professors. They learn how to relate with other students. They have a more elongated study spectrum over four years. So, if you could plug in that mentoring semester, I would recommend that person go to college. I've seen that really work well for students in growing up and developing and finding themselves. Now if you've got a young man or woman whose coming out at 25 or 28, 30 years old, they've got a couple kids. They have to support a household. I would probably support something like NBC or the course of study because we could get them plugged in as a staff person or a pastor. They could learn on the go. So, you kind of have two different contexts there.

Respondents indicated the district credentials board, higher education institutions, and local churches need to work together to prepare the clergy for these challenging times. The district superintendents and faculty need to gather together and listen to one another to work together for the local and district licensed clergy. Participant 5 stated, "I think we've got to get our institutions of higher learning connected to our districts. The manual doesn't help us there, but we're working on it."

### **A Need for Mentoring, Coaching, or Apprenticeships as a Component of the Ministry Preparation Process**

All seven respondents agreed that mentoring is essential but 3 district

superintendents (Participants 3, 6, and 7) do not have an official mentoring program in their districts. Participant 1 said, “Mentoring is huge.” Participant 3 shared, “There should be a mentoring program, and the person who gets at that successfully wins the prize.” Participant 4 stated, “I think mentoring is essential. In fact, mentoring is probably more important in some ways than just simple completion of class assignments.” He continued, “To overlook mentoring is to doom people to have to go out and learn everything by themselves, and so I think it’s essential.” Participant 2 stated, “I think it’s huge, and I think it’s something that’s been overlooked in many ways.”

The three district superintendents without an official mentoring program affirmed the necessity of mentoring. Participant 7 said, “It’s in discussion stage. We want to do it; we just haven’t got it worked out yet.” Participant 3 shared, “I’m still trying to learn who the people are. So, we will get to that. But I’ve got other, more pressing, more urgent matters right now.” Participant 6 shared, “Sadly we don’t. We should have that. It’s kind of informal. What I’ve done when I became district superintendent, is I haven’t mandated as much as I should.” Participant 6 indicated he has made his “board of ministry credentials weekend a kind of mentor training event.”

The structure and organization of mentoring varies across districts. Participants 4 and 5 have a mentoring program called Minister in Training (MIT). Some study participants, (Participants 1 and 5), have changed the language from mentoring to coaching. Participant 1 stated,

We changed the title from mentoring to coaching. And the reason we did that is that many people assume that if they have a friend who walks with them on the journey, that’s mentoring, and we want something more than that on our district.

Participant 5 shared that he also uses the word coach. He stated,

Because I'm big into sports and I've had a lot of coaches assigned to me who I may not have chosen to play for, but they were the coach. And I was going to learn how to work with them and learn from them. So, I use the word coaching in my oversight so that every single person who served on my board of ministry had to have one or two and sometimes three people they were coaching which meant they were monthly to check in with them, work with them on the four C's of the course of study development to be sure they were integrating the process of character and context, and competency, and so that's what we instituted.

Participant 5 stated, "There were some who never got the attention that they both deserved and could have benefitted from. It was as good as the coaches themselves." He trained his "coaches on how to coach and then be frustrated because some took it seriously and some just before the meeting when they had to report would do a quick catch up on their coaches."

With the lack of consistency across the denomination, not every local or district licensed clergy has an official mentor. In some districts the mentors are assigned and in others the mentee chooses the mentor. Participant 4 has a mentor for every candidate in the MIT and connects the mentoring with the annual interview with the board of ministry. Participant 4 stated, "They must have met with their mentor during the year and have a report written by their mentor recommending them for their interview." According to Participant 4, if they do not meet with their mentor, the candidates are not allowed to interview and have their license renewed.

Even though there is not an official mentoring program in his district, there is discussion and planning for a mentoring program in Participant 7's district. He stated, "The mentor obviously is very important. I think there should be some qualifications, guidelines for a mentor. A mentor could teach some bad habits or disillusion a person or be discouraging."

Participant 7 wants to connect his students with his good strong pastors for a semester or six months because

that student would walk away having done a lot of these things and learn how to do them and take some of the pressure off them when they step into that first role because they've got some experience under their belt.

According to the study participants, mentoring needs to be a heart relationship and mutually accepted between the mentor or coach and the mentee. Participant 5 stated, "A mentor to me is someone who is mutually accepted." Those district superintendents who stated they had effective mentoring programs explained that the mentoring programs were very structured with set requirements for qualifications, training, and guidelines related to duties of the mentors/coaches. Participant 5 said he felt that coaches have authority to speak into the lives of their mentees.

Study respondents who have a mentoring program have a contract between the mentor or coach and mentee with requirements for how frequently the parties should meet. The mentor uses 8-10 questions and tracks the local and district licensed clergy's progress and development. Participant 4 said, "We give the mentor and the mentee a contract that they sign at their first meeting. And then we give them an outline for their first meeting. After that, we give them a set of 10 questions for all meetings after that."



Participant 1 shared,

I think there are about 10 areas that we walk through a year worth of time with those in our ministry program. And we do coaching which gives our coaches a little bit more authority that they can speak into the lives of young people or those in the ministerial preparation program. It's not just I'm here to be, come alongside and be a friend and whatever, but we are trying to do some things specific and those things have to do with their finances. They have to do with their devotional life, and their own heart. They have to do with their family life. They have to do with their commitment to ongoing education and lifelong learning. There's a whole range of things that we deal with in the coaching process.

### **2019-2029 Church of the Nazarene Challenges**

The seventh theme identified in the current study was 2019-2029 Church of the Nazarene challenges. Within this theme, three subthemes emerged in participants' responses to the greatest challenges clergy will face during the next decade (2019-2029). The first subtheme focused on the identity of the Church of the Nazarene and finding ways to engage today's culture in the core identity. The second subtheme addressed the financial commitment that will be needed to maintain aging facilities. The third subtheme described an aging pastorate and a shortage of those preparing for ordination.

**Identity of the Church of the Nazarene and finding ways to engage today's culture in the core identity.** According to Participant 3, "Maintaining its core identity in a changing culture" is the greatest challenge facing clergy between 2019 and 2029. Participant 7 stated, "Theological integrity is important to maintain." Participant 5 shared the biggest challenge is, "the internal pull of long-time Nazarenes to take the church to

the right.” He elaborated there is “a fundamentalist factor that is trying to shape the church and shapes it in the way it is perceived by some.” In order for the Church of the Nazarene

to truly be Wesleyan and truly to be people both of hope and of help to the culture we have to not be pulled narrowly to the right but be a church of conscientious thinkers and practitioners who meet a broken culture where it lives.

In spite of the potential for this pull to the right, Participant 5 stated, we need to “find ways to keep working together, listening to one another, sharing best practices, DSs [district superintendents] talking to faculty and faculty listening and then faculty talking to DSs and DSs listening. I think it goes both ways.”

Participant 4 used the example of a bell curve and well curve. He shared, When I was growing up the classes that I took had a bell curve. In the bell curve there were going to be a few kids who got A’s and few kids who got F’s but most people were going to [get] C’s and B’s because that was in the middle, where people were average. And now it just doesn’t seem like we have [n’t] any middle. We just have extremes. So we have a well curve. It just falls into a hold and then people are on either extreme, and there’s no middle. And I think it’s very dangerous for our theology to not find the middle way. And I think on both extremes there is not faith. There’s just no faith that is worth having on either extreme. So, on the far legalistic, fundamental side, well Paul just told us there’s not life there...On the other side, where we just simply say you know whatever you are doing is fine with God, there’s no life there either, and people in that camp know it. And if we go that direction we are going to clear the church and

we go the other direction, we're going to clear the church. But, we as Wesleyans have always found the middle way. And I think there is a middle way, but I think we better stick with it.

The perception of study respondents is that Wesleyan theology still works in these challenging times. However, respondents indicated the Wesleyan message needs to be repackaged and articulated for this challenging culture. Participant 7 stated,

I think we need to be diligent in finding ways to express our doctrine in modern language so that we don't lose who we are by how we talk. So we need to find new ways to present the old truth. I think in our culture, our doctrine still works. We just need to find a way to articulate it in an attractive way.

Two of the district superintendents (Participants 5 and 6) referred to Bolsinger's (2015) book, *Canoeing the Mountains* as a metaphor for the current time. Participant 5 stated that a three-fold statement resonated with him: "Gotta let go, you gotta learn as you go, you gotta keep going." Participant 6 commented,

We've got to continue to get the church beyond the walls. There's a lot of health already happening in the church. Some things aren't healthy, but I just think we've grown comfortable with the kind of build it, and they will come... we have to re-engage in the culture and look for ways as some previous leaders have said to continue to be conservative in our theology but very liberal in our practice.

Participant 6 also shared,

I think we need to get back to that passion in the Church of the Nazarene. Planting churches, starting ministries, personal evangelism, encouraging people... help us re-engage with our culture with the message, with the witness, the love of

Christ.

The seven respondents indicated there are rapidly changing social issues impacting society and the church. Participant 3 said,

Our culture's continually changing. Even [for] pastors, who move from one church to another, the context tends to be very different. Communities are very different. And the ability to discern how to relate to a culture or how to navigate a culture, how to express the gospel in various cultures becomes paramount.

Participant 7 shared, "I think just our culture is moving away from God. Although, there's a real movement to God. But just, generally, culturally, very anti-, you know, religion which presents a set of issues that we have to work through."

Participant 7 also said, "There's going to be a challenge with denominational connection as more and more people are disassociated with denominations."

Participant 4 talked about people not wanting intermediaries anymore and the church is an intermediary.

You come to church and we're going to create a place for you. Have social interactions. We're going to create a gathering place for you to worship. And we're going to create a place you where you can learn biblical information from 'the parson' because 'the parson' knows.

This respondent continued by indicating that people don't want or need the village parson. He asked,

What does the world need the church to be? And if it needs the church to be something different than how it is currently packaged, how prepared are we to be what the world needs us to be if they don't need it to be what we've been?

According to Participant 5, “The role of pastor is no longer an honored profession. Pastor is no longer the authority in a community and a looked up to person. It is just another one to be criticized and judged.” There is no loyalty, and the pastor needs to understand “the nuances of navigating and keeping your head above water and learning how to be self-aware and not destroyed by things. [This] can also be incorporated in the preparation.”

A common sentiment expressed by study participants was that changing culture is a driving force for reevaluating styles and methodology. The church needs to reengage with its community and culture. Pastors need to learn to exegete culture and their churches. They need to equip and empower their congregations. The church needs to reengage in social interactions by moving beyond their walls. Participant 4 said,

Way too often what happens is we as churches have a tendency to assume what the people need and tell them here’s what you need before we’ve ever figured out what they’re really needing. So understanding the culture around you is going to be an important piece of being able to send people to do mission work because it’s going to be more mission work.

Participant 5, when talking about millennials stated, “They just come at life differently. So, if that’s wrong, we’ve got a problem. We just got to say, okay, these are different times, and they think differently so how can I connect with your thinking processes with the gospel”? He continued that as Wesleyans, “We can be a people of hope and of help to the culture.” Participant 1 said, “We really need to give attention to how an individual assesses a community and assesses the church they pastor. How do you help a church move forward?”

**The financial commitment that will be needed to maintain aging facilities and pastor salaries.** A second subtheme identified by study respondents is

aging church facilities and the significant financial planning needed to update these physical structures. Participant 7 shared,

We've got a lot of churches with old buildings and younger people don't care about buildings so much. You know, they're costing us a lot of money to put new roofs on, new air conditioners, new furnaces, new carpet, and new pews, and new parking lots.

Participant 4 asked the questions, "So, we will sell property? Will we maintain property? If we sell property, what will we do with the money from the sale of the properties? Will we put it in the bank and hold it?" He did not think laypeople "would give money in an offering to an organization that has a lot of money in the bank." Participant 4 said, "If we sell it, what will we do with the money? That's a challenge for the next generation".

Participant 7 shared, "Finances are difficult as education keeps getting more expensive and lives are not getting much cheaper. It just costs a lot of money. A lot of churches just can't afford a big salary package so I think that's going to be an issue in the next 10 years." Participant 4 said, "We're going to have to address the issue of how can we do creative ministry? How can we have ministry supported by means other than just simply the offering plate?"

**An aging pastorate and a shortage of those preparing for ordination.** Study respondents expressed concern about the number of pastors between 50 and 60 years of age who are retiring and the potential shortage of clergy. Participant 1 stated, "We are going to be seeing a number of those pastors retire and it is going to be a tremendous

challenge for our church to find the leaders that we need.” Participant 7 expressed concern about the declining number of individuals called to the ministry,

There doesn’t seem to be a lot of young people called. I think many districts are facing that so I’m trying to encourage my pastors to be on the lookout for people in your church that might have a call they don’t recognize yet and just encourage them and mentor them.

Participant 2 shared,

I think the church is really going to have to help our young people address that [changing culture] and also listen to where they’re at and how they understand culture and stuff that’s going on right now. I think that’s really a big challenge so we don’t have a disconnect between our young clergy and those who are currently serving because many of our churches right now are really filled, you know heavily, with folks from a totally different generation and our young pastors coming into those are finding it difficult to have an audience with them. They’re speaking a different language. They understand life different and culturally, and it’s pretty challenging. Both for the congregation and for the pastor, so I think that’s one of our greatest challenges going forward.

### **Recommendations for Clergy Preparation to Meet the Needs of the Church of the Nazarene 2019-2029.**

Participants were asked if there are there any areas of elder preparation that programs should add to or remove from the current curriculum to address current and emerging challenges. Participants expressed that local and district licensed clergy need to understand the doctrines and structure of the Church of the Nazarene, exegete the

culture, and be given opportunities for personal development and honing the skills necessary to fulfill the duties of an elder in the Church of the Nazarene. The district superintendents listed theology, missional training, Wesleyan theology, holiness, missional theology, artificial intelligence, history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene, and knowing about God as areas that should be added or emphasized in the current curriculum to prepare the Church of the Nazarene clergy to address the challenges they will face between 2019 and 2029. Participant 4 said, “I think theology is still going to be important. I think Wesleyan theology is well prepared to be effective in coming years. I think some other theologies are likely not [going] to survive, but Wesleyan theology will.” He also said, “Help them figure out what they need to know about God.” Participant 3 said every clergy member needs “Missionary training and maybe more on holiness or more on the history of the Church of the Nazarene.”

The seven study respondents indicated that with the rapidly changing culture, pastors need to learn to exegete and understand culture and their communities.

Participant 7 said,

I think helping students know how to exegete culture continues to be a need. Figuring out who they’re trying to reach and how they’re going to reach them, what the trends are in the community, and what trends are in culture, politics and media and all those things and how the message we have can impact that. So, there needs to be, in my opinion, something in the training that helps...almost a sociology part of it study of people, study of behaviors of people.

Participant 2 said,

Something that helps us to focus on what’s happening in culture right now and



how we do some practical things. How do we help congregations to see that and embrace what's happening so we can continue to be missional. So yeah, I think missional. Missional work in the preparation is going to be really critical.

Participant 4 stated, "Being able to sociologically exegete where you are. Being able to understand what the community needs." Participant 5 shared,

There's just some things we've got to let go of if we're going to reach the culture, but you've got to learn as you go. And I think that middle part is really significant for us. We've got to keep learning. We've got to keep assessing our culture. We've got to keep understanding people and we've got to learn how to listen to them and not just talk to them.

Study participants consistently talked about mentoring, apprenticeships, and adaptive learning with personal development and skills development in order to be prepared to be elders in the Church of the Nazarene. The 4 C's (content, character, context, and competency) of the Church of the Nazarene were also mentioned as one way the current course of study addresses personal development. Honing skills for every local and district licensed pastor will promote the development of a relationship with a mentor or coach that will be "deep and helpful" (Participant 5).

Personal development, including learning how to think, and personal relationships were also mentioned by study participants as necessary components of clergy education for the challenges they will face. According to Participant 5,

We've got to teach people how to think, not just how to fill a notebook of ideas. I just think we've got to continue to work really, really hard to help our pastoral candidates, women and men, be prepared for this complex world.

According to Participant 7, family life and marriage enrichment should be a component of the course of study.

Additional skills study participants perceived should be in the course of study curriculum included business, leadership, evangelism, and preparation to be bi-vocational or co-vocational pastors. Participant 7 said, “I also think bringing business into the curriculum because I think we’re going to face more bi-vocational pastors or co-vocational pastors.” He thought it would be beneficial “if students came out of college or somehow in the course of study that they had a trade.” This would help them support themselves while pastoring the church. Participant 4 said, “The whole business aspect of the church has been something that probably we haven’t focused enough attention on.” For the second career candidates, Participant 1 said, “We’re going to need to figure out how to help people transition into ministry as a second career and find ways to not only train those people on the job in some ways but then mobilize them into pastoral assignments.” Participant 3 emphasized a need for relational leadership, “By that I mean leading a church board or leading a church in mission with objectives, building consensus, casting vision. Those kinds of things.”

All study participants discussed the need to formalize mentoring for all candidates for ordination and increase adaptive learning for all of the ability statements and not just those designated for competency. Participant 6 talked about Bolsinger’s (2015) book, *Canoeing the Mountains*. He shared how Bolsinger differentiated between technical and adaptive learning. Participant 6 stated, “Adaptive learning is something that seems a little more practical and more helpful. It requires kind of on the job training. Almost mentoring, apprentice type of stuff. More than just learning in the classroom.” He

continued,

We need to allow them to have more of a head seat at the table while in a safe environment where they're loved and can make some mistakes and know they are still loved and support can grow from them without being tossed to the wolves out there all alone, on their own.

Participant 7 framed adaptive learning or mentoring in a four-step process: "I do - you watch; I do - you help; you do - I help; you do - I watch."

Study participants indicated that in order to prepare clergy to address the challenges the church faces between 2019 and 2029, the Church of the Nazarene needs to help candidates understand the doctrines and its structure. Candidates need to learn to exegete the culture. Finally, candidates need personal development and opportunities for honing skills under the guidance of a trained mentor or coach.

## **Summary**

Seven Church of the Nazarene district superintendents were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry as Elders and challenges facing clergy between 2019 and 2029. The results of the analysis of the data collected through interviews were presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes the interpretation and recommendations for the study that provides a study summary including an overview of the problem, purpose statement and research questions, review of the methodology, and major findings. In addition, findings related to the literature and conclusions that articulate implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks are addressed in the final chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Interpretation and Recommendations

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry as Elders. The first section of this chapter includes a study summary that presents an overview of the problem, purpose statement and research questions, a review of the methodology, and major findings. The second section relates study findings to the literature. The third section provides the researcher's recommendations for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

#### Study Summary

This section provides a summary of the study including an overview of the problem. The purpose statement and research questions utilized in the study are identified. This section concludes with a review of the methodology and the major findings.

**Overview of the problem.** Church of the Nazarene district superintendents have questioned the need for higher education and the preparation received at the denominational seminary, Nazarene Theological Seminary (Raser, 1995). With the rising costs of higher education, increased educational debt (Miller, 2014), and decreased giving by local churches to the World Evangelism Fund (Warrick, 2017), individuals must think about the avenues for fulfilling educational requirements for ordination as an elder. There is little expectation of a substantial income upon graduation to pay education debt accrued during both undergraduate and graduate education. In addition, the Church of the Nazarene has multiple paths for ministers to fulfill the educational requirements for

ordination as an elder (Church of the Nazarene, 2016b). With multiple paths to fulfill educational requirements for ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene, it is unclear whether U.S. district superintendents perceive that individuals are adequately prepared to perform the duties of pastor now and in the next decade (2019 – 2029) as determined in the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (Blevins et al., 2017).

**Purpose statement and research questions.** This study examined perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry. The first purpose was to examine perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. about current pastoral ministry preparation. The second purpose was to identify district superintendents' perceptions about what should be included in the approved course of studies to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry. The third purpose was to examine district superintendents' perceptions regarding the greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029. These three purposes were developed into the three research questions utilized in the study.

**Review of the methodology.** A qualitative phenomenological research design using semi-structured interviews was selected for this study. The seven participants who were interviewed at the time of this study were Church of the Nazarene district superintendents. The interview protocol was reviewed by the researcher's major advisor, research analyst, and three subject matter experts (SMEs) who provided feedback for validity, relevance, significance, and clarity of the questions of the research protocol. Two pilot interviews were conducted with district superintendents who were from educational zones other than the North Central and Northwest educational zones. The

two individuals who participated in the pilot interviews reviewed the interview questions, provided potential responses, and provided suggestions for conducting the interviews. Interviews of the seven study participants were conducted over the phone and audio recorded for transcription. Through member checking, each participant was sent a copy of the interview transcript and given an opportunity to review it for accuracy. No substantive corrections were received. The researcher conducted in vivo coding for each transcript and then compiled the data by each interview question into an Excel spreadsheet. Once the data were compiled, the researcher clustered repeated words and phrases into categories and sub-categories. The researcher then reviewed the categories and sub-categories to identify themes and sub-themes organized around the interview questions. Two coding auditors reviewed and substantiated the researcher's coding procedures. Both auditors agreed with the data coding, theme identification, and findings.

**Major findings.** All seven district superintendents who participated in the current study indicated satisfaction with the 44 Church of the Nazarene course of study ability statements candidates must demonstrate prior to ordination. However, all also cited preparation issues. Four participants expressed a desire to have a more consistent assessment across districts of ministry candidates' knowledge about the ability statements prior to ordination. A need for emphasis on preparation that emphasizes dialog and active practice in practical ministry in real world settings was a common thread among interviewees. District superintendents expressed concern about the amount of time involved for a candidate to achieve credentialing and ordination. They agreed that preaching, knowledge of classical disciplines, theology, history, and scripture are

strengths of current ministry candidates. Respondents also differentiated strengths of second career candidates citing maturity and practices. Several struggles of current ministry candidates were mentioned by district superintendents. All seven participants agreed that the struggles differ based on the individual. However, practices (including understanding the role and responsibilities of a pastor) and relational leadership were cited as challenging for most clergy candidates. District superintendents also differentiated specific struggles of second career candidates. These included understanding finances, how to transition to bi-vocational and co-vocational ministry, and knowledge of classical disciplines. No single ministry preparation option emerged as a preference among the district superintendents. All of the district superintendents acknowledged a need for mentoring, coaching, or apprenticeships as a component of the ministry preparation process. There was consensus among the district superintendent interview participants about the challenges the Church of the Nazarene will encounter 2019 – 2029. These included committing to a core identity and finding ways to engage today's culture in the core identity, the financial commitment that will be needed to maintain aging facilities and pastor salaries, an aging pastorate, and shortage of those preparing for ordination. District superintendents also had consensus regarding what needs to be included in clergy preparation to meet the needs of the Church of the Nazarene 2019 – 2029. Areas that need to be stressed include: theology, missional training, Wesleyan theology, artificial intelligence, history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene, emphasis on cultural understanding, how to think, business and finance, relational leadership, evangelism, and preparation to be bi-vocational and co-vocational

pastors. All superintendents in the current study expressed the need for formalized mentoring, coaching, or apprenticeships as a part of ministry preparation.

### **Findings Related to the Literature**

Raser (1995) wrote that an educated ministry was a desire of the Church of the Nazarene since its early days as a movement and then as a denomination. All seven participants in the current study concurred with the importance of an educated clergy. The Church of the Nazarene designed the course of study to provide options for their ministers who did not have the funds or time to attend formal institutions (Ingersol, 2013). Participants in the current study verified that multiple options for ministry preparation still exist. Participant 5 shared that “One of the strengths of the church is that we do have options.” Miller (2007) shared that Bible and Training schools were created because seminaries were not preparing ministers. Raser (1995) described General Superintendent Chapman’s argument that young ministers should fulfill educational requirements for ordination with college and seminary. However, in the current study, there was no clear consensus on what preparation venue was ‘best’ for ministry preparation. All participants in the current study emphasized preparation should occur in a setting that emphasizes dialog and active practice in practical ministry in real world settings.

Raser (1995) also stated that in the early days of the Church of the Nazarene, few ministers could afford to attend college or graduate schools. Concerns about affordability of ministry preparation were also noted in the findings of the current study. Participant 7 stated, “Finances are difficult. Education keeps getting more expensive and lives not getting much cheaper.”



Miller (1990) indicated that even though seminaries prepared clergy, denominations need pastors and the length of time to prepare clergy with college and seminary took longer than denominations could wait to fulfill the clergy needs of local churches. Four district superintendents in the current study discussed their concerns regarding the length of time for candidates to be ordained and the shortage of candidates preparing for ordination. Participant 4 described losing individuals to organizations that are able to deploy quickly. “One of the reasons we are struggling momentum-wise right now is partly because of the process we are using for credentialing and ordination”. The current preparation process was viewed by study participants as complicated in comparison to other denominations that can ordain and deploy quickly.

Raser (1995) described that an issue in the Church of the Nazarene in the late 1970s was terminology for Holiness theology. Holiness theology was not mentioned by participants in the current study as an issue confronting the Church. However, there was consensus from participants in the current study about issues facing the Church for the next decade. These include committing to a core identity and finding ways to engage today’s culture in that identity. Finances, an aging pastorate, and shortage of those entering the ministry were cited as current issues.

Miller (2014) stated evangelical theology is appealing to the world. All seven participants in the current study concurred that the doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene is still relevant today but needs to be articulated to reach the world. Participant 5 stated, “I think Wesleyan theology is well prepared to be effective in the next coming years.”

Brown (1934) wrote that colleges and seminaries could not prepare their students isolated from the church. All seven participants concurred with Brown’s statement and

discussed the importance of churches and schools working together in clergy preparation. Participant 1 stated, “We’ve got to find the best way and right now we’re working to bring the people who can help us together to say how we can best address the educational delivery so that we hit those targets.” Participant 5 shared,

I think being sure to find ways to keep working together, listening to one another, sharing best practices. DSs [District Superintendents] talking to faculty and faculty listening and then faculty talking to DSs and DSs listening. I think it goes both ways.

Foster et al. (2006) indicated the bridge between the seminary and the local church is field education programs. As early as 1953, Butts and Cremin described the value of apprenticeships. Hillman (2008) stated the collaboration between schools and local churches cultivates leaders who are prepared doctrinally and practically. Blevins (2017) upheld the importance of mentoring as part of ministerial training. Although only four superintendents in the current study have a mentoring program, all agreed with the importance of mentoring, coaching, or apprenticeships as part of the ministry preparation process. Participant 5 stated, “I think we’ve got to get our institutions of higher learning connected to our districts.”

## **Conclusions**

Church of the Nazarene district superintendents from two regions participated in qualitative interviews that focused on their perception about current pastoral ministry preparations and the strengths and struggles of current ministry graduates, elements of the course of study and venue in which it should occur, and challenges the church will face in the coming decade (2019-2029). The data analysis identified eight themes: satisfaction

with the 44 ability statements currently included within the course of study, preparation issues, strengths of current ministry candidates, struggles of ministry candidates, lack of a consistent view regarding what preparation is ‘best’, a need for mentoring as part of the preparation process, challenges the Church will face during the next decade, and clergy preparation to meet Church needs during the coming decade. The study’s participants shared detailed responses to questions and articulated their perceptions related to ministry preparation now and in the immediate future as well as anticipated church challenges.

**Implications for action.** District superintendents endorsed the 44 Church of the Nazarene course of study ability statements and the competencies that ordained pastors should possess. However, they indicated that assessments of the acquisition of the ability statements should have greater commonality across districts. The Church of the Nazarene could implement a repository of syllabi from the validated course of study programs. A repository would allow the sharing of book lists and assignments across districts. The Church of the Nazarene could create a training program for district superintendents and individuals currently serving on the credentials board of each district to ensure the consistency of the ordination process. Another action the Church of the Nazarene could implement for commonality is the use of the Church of the Nazarene’s Student Information System (SIS) created for some of its higher education institutions as the tracking mechanism for the credentialing process for each local and district licensed clergy and continuing education for elders. The SIS could provide access to all pastors to track their education progress and continuing learning through data provided by district secretaries in individual student portals. The SIS would also provide the general Church of the Nazarene with data for tracking local and district licensed pastors for assessment of

the course of study and necessary coursework needed across the denomination for clergy preparation.

The need for mentoring and apprenticeships was mentioned by all district superintendents. Currently four of the seven districts represented in this study have a mentoring or coaching process. The district superintendents from these districts are encouraged to share the process used in their districts with district superintendents from all 80 districts in the USA/ Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene. Another action related to mentoring in the Church of the Nazarene is to create an official mentoring program for every district in the U.S. Qualified mentors or coaches within each district would be eligible to provide leadership for the mentoring program. These mentors and coaches should have an annual assessment by each mentee and an overall assessment at the time of the ordination of the mentee. Once the district has an approved list of trained mentors or coaches, each mentor or coach should have up to three mentees at any given time. Each local and district licensed clergy should select a mentor or coach from the approved list. The Church of the Nazarene should create a contract between the mentor or coach and mentee completed and signed by both parties and the district superintendent. The mentee should be responsible for arranging meetings a minimum of once every three months with the mentor or coach completing an evaluation at the end of every year during the ordination process. Evaluations should be submitted to the credentials board for the annual interview of the mentee. Participant 3 said,

And I tried to model it as well by having a mentor myself. So, in church pastor relationship reviews every four years when I meet with churches, when I meet with church boards and pastors, on my agenda would be the question, ‘Who are

you mentoring and who is mentoring you?’ Which, I think, helped raise the awareness of the priority.

If the Church of the Nazarene would commit to a mentor or coach for each local and district clergy member and use the SIS to track implementation, then it would be possible to add a competency component tracked through the portfolio to the course of study. The SIS could be used to track not only the coursework of completion but conversation summaries with the mentor or coach and experiential learning within the context component (Appendix H).

The Church of the Nazarene should consider the necessary length of the service requirements for ordination. Participant 1 asked, “What’s the length of time that a person needs to be in an educational environment to be prepared?” A critical question is whether they should consider if a paid ministry assignment has more value added than a strong mentoring program. The Church of the Nazarene should consider the possibility that an ordination candidate being mentored by a trained mentor/coach with required contact and in-ministry assignments for each ability statement could replace the required three-year paid service requirement.

Another implication for action is related to the district superintendents’ concerns about maintaining theological identity and the impact of an aging denomination. A program could be created to identify children and youth with a call to ministry. Once the individuals are identified, early mentoring and education could be provided to explore and develop their call to ministry. The Church of the Nazarene could also provide financial assistance to help support college and seminary attendance to invest in preparing an educated clergy.

In order to address the concern about the changing culture and maintaining theological integrity, the Church of the Nazarene needs to be intentional in training its clergy and laity to exegete the culture and communities in which they serve. Each local church should identify specific actions to express the gospel as a Wesleyan denomination. The Church of the Nazarene needs to explore and develop education and practices which identify ways to relate the gospel to its younger generations.

**Recommendations for future research.** The current study involved district superintendents from two regions – North Central USA and Northwest USA. One recommendation for future research is to conduct a study similar to the current study with all district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene. Finding commonality among perceptions of the ordination process and mentoring or coaching across districts may lead to discussion and dialogue about issues and concerns that can be approached collegially. A second recommendation is to study local and district licensed clergy perceptions about preparedness to be elders in the Church of the Nazarene. A third recommendation for future research is to conduct a longitudinal study beginning with first year college students through their ordination process to determine clergy candidate perceptions regarding their preparation for ordination as elders and Church of the Nazarene challenges they expect they will encounter once they are ordained. Clergy candidate perceptions about preparedness and church challenges could be compared to perceptions of district superintendents expressed in the current study. A fourth recommendation for future research is to study the perceptions of lay persons in the Church of the Nazarene about the preparedness of pastors who have been ordained fewer than five years to determine if congregation member perceptions are similar to those expressed by the

district superintendents in the current study. The final recommendation is to study districts that have structured mentoring programs to determine if mentoring or coaching programs have impacted perceptions of clergy about preparedness. A study on this topic could also determine if mentoring or coaching influences tenure in local church and pastoral longevity.

**Concluding remarks.** This study contributed to the literature as it is the first in the Church of the Nazarene to examine the perceptions of district superintendents about the preparedness of women and men for ordination as elders in the denomination. The preparation of women and men for ordination is part of the history of the denomination. However, the Church of the Nazarene is at a critical juncture in its history and needs to have pastors fully prepared to meet the challenges articulated by the district superintendents in this study.

Maintaining a core identity in a changing culture as the church also addresses financial concerns and an aging pastorate requires the Church of the Nazarene to identify and prepare the next generation of ordained clergy. Participant 5 stated, “We [Church of the Nazarene] have to work really hard to help our pastoral candidates, women and men, be prepared for this complex world.” The Church of the Nazarene may want to intentionally and creatively consider the ordination process for leaders who are able to shepherd local churches in varied cultural values and expectations. In spite of the challenges, all seven district superintendents believed strongly that the doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene will continue to impact and change lives.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A: Church of the Nazarene Ability Statements**

## Church of the Nazarene Ability Statements

### CONTENT: 14 Ability Statements

#### OLD TESTAMENT

CN1 Ability to identify the literary structure, the theological concepts and main storyline of the Old Testament.
CN2 Ability to describe the historical and cultural contexts of the major sections of the Old Testament.

#### NEW TESTAMENT

CN3 Ability to identify the literary structure, theological concepts and main storyline of the New Testament.
CN4 Ability to describe the historical and cultural contexts of the New Testament including an ability to Biblically affirm pastoral leadership of men and women within the Church.

#### INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

CN5 Ability to describe the development of the canon and the historical and theological influences resulting in contemporary translations.
CN6 Ability to exegete a passage of Scripture using contextual, literary, and theological analysis.

#### THEOLOGY (General)

CN7 Ability to articulate the Nazarene Articles of Faith.
CN8 Ability to demonstrate an understanding of theological reflection, including its sources, its historical development, and its Wesleyan contemporary expressions.



## DOCTRINE OF HOLINESS

CN9 Ability to articulate the doctrine of holiness from a Wesleyan perspective.
---

## CHURCH HISTORY

CN10 Ability to tell the story of Christian history and the development of creeds and major doctrines.
--

CN11 Ability to describe the mission and practice of the Church throughout its history.
---

## THE HISTORY AND POLITY OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

CN12 Ability to identify the formative influences of the American Holiness Movement and the Church of the Nazarene.
---

CN13 Ability to identify and explain the significance of the major events, and male and female figures in the Church of the Nazarene.
---

CN14 Ability to identify the directives of the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene that pertain to the organization and ministry of the local, district, and general church.
---

## COMPETENCY: 14 Ability Statements

(Using one ministry emphasis listed below)

## ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

CP1 Ability to communicate publicly through multiple methods (oral, written, media, etc.) with clarity, and creativity, utilizing gender inclusive language.
--

## MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, FINANCE, AND CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

CP2 Ability to oversee ministry using management skills including servant leadership, conflict resolution, administration, and team building.
---

CP3 Ability to cultivate, cast, and strategically implement vision.
---

CP4 Ability to lead congregations in the biblical stewardship of life resources.
--

## ANALYTICAL THINKING

CP5 Ability to reason logically for discernment, assessment, and problem solving.
---

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE AND COUNSELING

CP6 Ability to provide pastoral and spiritual care for individuals and families, discerning when referral to professional counseling is required.
---

## EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP

CP7 Ability to lead evangelistically through preaching, modeling and equipping others.
--

CP8 Ability to lead in discipling and assimilating new converts into the Church.
--

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CP9 Ability to describe and apply knowledge of human development in leading people to Christian maturity.
---

CP10 Ability to envision and implement Christian education in the local church.
---

## WORSHIP

CP11 Ability to envision, order, and participate in contextualized, theologically grounded worship and to develop and lead appropriate services for special occasions (i.e. wedding, funeral, baptism, and Lord's Supper).

## MINISTRY EMPHASIS (Preaching/Chaplain)

CP12 Ability to prepare, and deliver biblically sound sermons using appropriate techniques and skills demonstrating cultural sensitivity.

CP13 Ability to develop sermons in various forms (evangelistic, pastoral care, doctrinal teaching, lectionary, etc.).

CP14 Ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of current homiletical models in light of enduring theological and contextual perspectives.

## MINISTRY EMPHASIS (Christian Education/Children/Youth/Adults)

CP15 Ability to prepare and lead discipleship ministries that are biblically sound, age-appropriate, intergenerational, and culturally sensitive.

CP16 Ability to assess contemporary approaches to ministry in light of enduring theological and contextual perspectives.

## MINISTRY EMPHASIS (Compassionate Ministry)

CP17 Ability to prepare and lead compassionate ministries that are biblically sound and culturally sensitive.

CP18 Ability to exegete a community utilizing a Wesleyan paradigm for hospitable engagement.

### MINISTRY EMPHASIS (Music)

CP19 Ability to prepare and lead a music ministry that is biblically sound, utilizing appropriate techniques and skills demonstrating cultural sensitivity.
CP20 Ability to assess contemporary approaches to church music in light of enduring theological and contextual perspectives.

### MINISTRY EMPHASIS (Administration)

CP21 Ability to manage and implement biblically sound church administration utilizing appropriate techniques and skills demonstrating cultural sensitivity.
CP22 Ability to assess and implement contemporary approaches to administration in light of enduring theological and contextual perspectives.

### CHARACTER: 8 Ability Statements

#### CHRISTIAN ETHICS

CH1 Ability to apply theological and philosophical ethics to nurture faithful living in the Christian community.
CH2 Ability to discern and make ethical decisions in the midst of a complex and/or paradoxical context within a Wesleyan framework
CH3 Ability to practice a moral pastoral leadership, informed by philosophical and theological ethics.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION

CH4 Ability to pursue holy character (Christlikeness) by practicing faith formation and the classic Christian disciplines as means of grace.
CH5 Ability to locate, understand, and use resources for individual and corporate spiritual formation.

## PERSON OF THE MINISTER

CH6 Ability to articulate his or her call from God to ministry as affirmed by the Church.
CH7 Ability to demonstrate a realistic self-understanding including personal strengths, gifts, weaknesses, and areas of needed growth.
CH8 Ability to practice holistic stewardship (mutual submission in gender relationships, sexual purity, marriage and family, personal finance, professional conduct, practicing Sabbath, etc.).

## CONTEXT: 8 Ability Statements

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

CX1 Ability to understand, appreciate, and work sensitively with cultures and subcultures.
CX2 Ability to identify and apply the principles of cross-cultural communications.

## CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

CX3 Ability to discern sociological dynamics, (including the power dynamics of gender, age and ethnicity) and to apply that information to specific ministry settings.
CX4 Ability to analyze and describe congregations and communities.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

CX5 Ability to place the ministry context in light of the large schemes of world and national history.
CX6 Ability to analyze and describe the ministry context in light of its local history.

## MISSIONS

CX7 Ability to understand and articulate the biblical, historical, and theological bases for Christian mission.
CX8 Ability to describe basic missiological principles and to apply them to the development of ministry in the local church.

(Church of the Nazarene, 2016b, February, pp. 11-14)

**Appendix B: USA Institutions and Validated Course of Study Curricula**

### USA Institutions and Validated Course of Study Curricula

EDUCATION PROVIDER	ROSTER OF VALIDATED COURSE OF STUDY CURRICULA
Eastern Nazarene College	Children's Ministry Christian Ministry Youth Ministry
MidAmerica Nazarene University	B.A. Intercultural Studies (Ordination Concentration) B.A. in Ministry B.A. in Youth and Family Ministry
Mount Vernon Nazarene University	Children's Ministries Program Educational Ministries Program Intercultural Studies Program Pastoral Ministry Major Urban Ministry Major Worship Ministry Major Youth Ministries Major
Nazarene Bible College	Administration Chaplaincy Christian Education Compassionate Ministry Pastoral Leadership Pastoral Ministry Youth Ministry
Northwest Nazarene University	Biblical Studies Minor Christian Ministry Major with Children's Ministry Minor Christian Ministry Major with Christian Education Minor Christian Ministry Major with Missions Minor Christian Ministry Major with Parachurch Ministries Minor Christian Ministry Major with Pastoral Ministry Minor Christian Ministry Major with Worship Leadership Minor Christian Ministry Major with Youth Ministry Minor Church History Minor Intercultural Ministry (Missions) with Christian Min. Minor Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry Online Christian Ministry Major Youth Ministry Major/Christian Ministry Minor



Nazarene Theological Seminary	Master of Arts in Christian Formation & Discipleship
	Master of Divinity
Olivet Nazarene University	Children's Ministry
	Church Ministry
	Youth Ministry
Point Loma Nazarene University	Christian Ministry Major
Southern Nazarene University	Theology and Ministry Major
Trevecca Nazarene University	Religion with Children's Ministry Minor
	Religion with Pastoral Ministry Minor
	Religion with Youth Ministry Minor
	Worship Arts Ordination Major
REGIONAL	Modular Education Program

Retrieved from:

<http://nazarene.org/sites/default/files/docs/Clergy/USACanadaRegionCOS.pdf>

Posted by Global Clergy Development, March 2017 (Next update: March 2018)

Edited By Pamala J. Asher

**Appendix C: Baker University IRB Letter of Approval**



## *Baker University Institutional Review Board*

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Pamala Asher and Tes Mehring,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at [npoell@bakeru.edu](mailto:npoell@bakeru.edu) or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,

*Nathan Poell*, MA  
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee  
Scott Crenshaw  
Jamin Perry, PhD  
Susan Rogers, PhD  
Joe Watson, PhD

**Appendix D: Global Ministry Center Request for Address/Contact Information  
with Correspondence to the Study Participants**

## REQUEST FOR ADDRESS/CONTACT INFORMATION

### **PERSON REQUESTING INFORMATION:**

NAME Pamala J. Asher DATE 05/17/2019

ADDRESS 11209 Grand Ave., Kansas City, MO 64114

PHONE NUMBER / EXT. 816-332-3236 FAX NUMBER n/a

EMAIL ADDRESS pamalaasher@gmail.com

### **TYPE OF LIST** *(DS LIST, PASTORS WITHIN A DISTRICT, CHURCHES OVER 1,000 ETC.):*

United States District Superintendents

**TYPE OF INFORMATION:** MAILING ADDRESSES ☐ EMAIL ADDRESSES ☒ OTHER       

**FORMAT:** Your addresses will be emailed to you in an Excel file format.

### **DETAILS ON HOW INFORMATION WILL BE USED:**

*(PLEASE INCLUDE SEPARATE ATTACHMENT OF ANY CORRESPONDENCE TO BE SENT)*

Is this a solicitation for money? Yes ☐ NO ☒

If so, is this primarily for church participation or individual? CHURCH ☐ INDIVIDUAL ☒

### **DETAILS ON HOW INFORMATION WILL BE USED:**

There is currently no research about the perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene regarding the fulfillment of educational requirements for ordination as an elder in that denomination. This study will focus on their perceptions about current pastoral ministry preparation, what should be included in the course of study curriculum to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry, and greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029. The requested information will be used to contact district superintendents for this study.

The data will be collected through face-to-face or phone interviews which will be audio recorded. The audio recordings will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The interviewees will be sent a copy of their transcript to review for accuracy. The research will be compiled and analyzed for a dissertation for completion of an Ed.D. in Leadership in Higher Education at Baker University in Kansas.

Please find attached the invitation to participate in the study, interview protocol, consent form, and thank you for participation.

## **Invitation to Participate**

[Date]

Dear Rev. [District Superintendent's Name]:

You are receiving this email because I am a doctoral student completing my dissertation at Baker University in Kansas. I have selected the district superintendents in the North Central USA educational zone as my sample for a qualitative study regarding the perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene about the educational preparedness of licensed ministers to elder's orders and the ability to perform the duties as determined in the manual of the Church of the Nazarene. The Baker University Institutional Review Board has approved this study and the General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene has provided the contact information for the North Central USA district superintendents. The interview questions and an interview informed consent form are included with this email.

Your participation in this study will involve approximately 45 to 60 minutes of your time. The interview includes the 17 questions included with this email. Interviews will be conducted using the phone or face-to-face. Interviews will be audio-recorded. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time or indicate that you do not want to respond to one or more questions. The consent form should be returned prior to our interview.

Please feel free to contact me at [pamalajasher@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:pamalajasher@stu.bakeru.edu) if you have any questions about the study or interview process.

Thank you for your time and assistance with completing this study.

Sincerely,

Rev. Pamala J. Asher  
Ed.D. Candidate  
Baker University

## CONSENT FORM

**Purpose of This Study:** The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene in the U.S. regarding the preparedness of women and men for ordained ministry in the Church of the Nazarene.

**Participation Interview Process:** The researcher will ask each participant 17 interview questions. Additional questions may be asked to clarify responses. Each interview will be audio recorded, transcribed, and saved to a secure database. Once the interview is transcribed, the researcher will send the transcript to the interviewee for review and additional comments/corrections.

**Confidentiality:** All feedback provided for this study will be confidential. Your data will be anonymous which means your name will not be linked to the data. Your name will be assigned a neutral code (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) to preserve your anonymity.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

**Right to Not Answer Any Question from the Study:** You may choose to not answer any question in this study at any time.

**Right to Withdraw from the Study:** You may withdraw from this study without penalty at any time. Your audio recording will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw from the study.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If during the interview process, you wish to withdraw, please inform the researcher you wish to stop the interview. If you would like to withdraw prior to the interview or after your consent form has been submitted, please contact the researcher at [PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu). There is no penalty for withdrawing from the study.

**Compensation:** There is no compensation for participating in this study.

### For Questions Regarding This Study, Contact:

#### Principle Investigator:

Pamala J. Asher  
11209 Grand Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64114  
816-332-3236  
[PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu)

#### Academic Advisor:

Tes Mehring, Ph.D.  
School of Education, Baker University  
7301 College Boulevard, Suite 120  
Overland Park, KS 66210  
913-344-1236  
[tes.mehring@bakeru.edu](mailto:tes.mehring@bakeru.edu)

**Agreement:** ☐ I agree to participate in the study or ☐ I decline to participate in the study described above. If I agree to participate, I understand the interview will be audio recorded.

**Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the signed consent form via email to Pam Asher at: [PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu).

## Interview Protocol

1. Please identify your age range: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+, or I prefer not to disclose.
2. Please identify the district where you were ordained
3. When did you complete your course of study for the ministry?
4. How did you complete educational requirements for ordination as an elder in the Church of the Nazarene: modular course of study, district training center, NBC alliance district training, Nazarene college or university; Nazarene bible college, Nazarene Theological Seminary, non-Nazarene institution; combination of more than one; other preparation process?
5. How many years did you serve as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene?
6. How many years have you served as a district superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene?

The Research Questions are listed below with the interview questions used to address each listed after it.

**RQ1. What are the perceptions of Church of the Nazarene district superintendents about current pastoral ministry preparation?**

*IQ1a.* What is your opinion about current pastoral ministry preparation?

*IQ1b.* What, if any, typical duties of an elder have been strengths for these individuals?

*IQ1c.* What, if any, typical duties of an elder have been a struggle for these individuals?



**RQ2. What do Church of the Nazarene district superintendents perceive should be included in the validated course of studies to better prepare individuals for pastoral ministry?**

*IQ2a.* What aspects of the current course of study, including college programs, should continue to be included in preparation programs for elders in the Church of the Nazarene?

*IQ2b.* In your opinion, are there any areas of study that should be added to curriculum of the current course of study to prepare elders for the range of duties they will be expected to perform?

*IQ2c.* What role, if any, should mentoring play in the preparation of women and men for Church of the Nazarene ministry? Describe characteristics of the mentoring program if one exists in your district.

*IQ2d.* As you consider the current options for settings where elder preparation takes place (e.g. seminary, bible college, etc.) what venue do you think best prepares individuals for ALL of the duties of an elder in the Church of the Nazarene?

**RQ3. What do Church of the Nazarene district superintendents perceive as the greatest challenges facing the Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029?**

*IQ3a.* In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing Church of the Nazarene clergy between 2019 and 2029?

*IQ3b.* Are there any areas of elder preparation that programs should add to the current curriculum now for Church of the Nazarene clergy to be prepared to address these challenges?

***IQ3c.*** Are there any areas of elder preparation programs should remove from the current curriculum to prepare Church of the Nazarene clergy to address these challenges?

***IQ3d.*** Do you have additional thoughts or concerns about clergy preparation that were not addressed in the interview questions?

**Thank you for participation email**

[Date]

Dear Rev. [Name],

Thank you for your participation in the research study regarding perceptions of district superintendents about the preparedness of licensed ministers for ordination. Completing this study will enable me to finish earning my educational doctorate in Leadership in Higher Education from Baker University. Your leadership in the Church of the Nazarene and perceptions regarding clergy preparation has strengthened the quality of the study.

Your time and assistance with this study are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or further comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Pamala J. Asher  
Ed.D. Candidate  
Baker University  
[PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:PamalaJAsher@stu.bakeru.edu)

**Appendix E: Global Ministry Center Request Approval**

from: **Rich Houseal** <RHouseal@nazarene.org>

to: Pamala Asher <pamalaasher@gmail.com>

date: May 28, 2019, 8:21 PM

subject: FW: contact information request

Hi Pam,

Gary has approved your request. I can work on this next week when I am back in the office. I will setup a web form where DS's can enter their contact information: name, district, email, phone. Anything else? Then I will email them your consent form with one or two sentences saying that I am contacting them in order to get their consent on your behalf. Where there certain districts/regions you wanted to start with, or just send it to all DS's?

Thanks,  
Rich

Rev. Richard Houseal, Ed.D.  
Research Services, director

*Resourcing Nazarenes Everywhere with Timely, Accurate Information*

Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center

17001 Prairie Star Parkway

Lenexa, KS 66220

Direct: 913-577-0652 • Toll free: 1-800-306-9928

[rhouseal@nazarene.org](mailto:rhouseal@nazarene.org)

[www.NazareneResearch.com](http://www.NazareneResearch.com) • [www.twitter.com/nazresearch](https://www.twitter.com/nazresearch) • [www.facebook.com/nazarenerearch](https://www.facebook.com/nazarenerearch)

**From:** Gary Hartke <GWHartke@nazarene.org>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2019 5:21 PM

**To:** Rich Houseal <RHouseal@nazarene.org>

**Subject:** RE: contact information request

Hi Rich,

I am ready to move forward with this as you outline below. Please proceed when you are ready.  
Thanks!

Gary

**Rev. Gary Hartke, Ed.D.**

*General Secretary*

Church of the Nazarene, Inc.

17001 Prairie Star Parkway

Lenexa, Kansas 66220-7900 USA

Office Phone: 913.577.0607

[www.nazarene.org](http://www.nazarene.org)

**Appendix F: Email to Prospective Participants**

from: **Rich Houseal** <RHouseal@nazarene.org>

to: Pamala Asher <pamalaasher@gmail.com>

date: Jun 12, 2019, 3:45 PM

subject: Study of Nazarene clergy educational preparedness

I am sending this email on behalf of Pamala Asher, a Nazarene deacon and doctoral candidate at Baker University. The General Secretary is implementing a policy not to distribute contact information to third parties; therefore, your contact information will only be sent to Pamala by using the link provided below. If you have any questions about the procedure, please feel free to contact me.

Grace and peace,  
Rich

Rev. Richard Houseal, Ed.D.  
Research Services, director  
[rhouseal@nazarene.org](mailto:rhouseal@nazarene.org)

-----  
Dear [DS name]:

You are receiving this email because I am a doctoral student completing my dissertation at Baker University in Kansas. I have selected the district superintendents in the North Central USA and Northwest USA fields as my sample for a qualitative study regarding the perceptions of district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene about the educational preparedness of licensed ministers to elder's orders and the ability to perform the duties as determined in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. The Baker University Institutional Review Board has approved this study and the General Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene has approved my request to contact district superintendents. The interview questions and an interview informed consent form are attached to this email.

Your participation in this study will involve approximately 45 to 60 minutes of your time. The interview includes the 17 questions (see attachment). Interviews will be conducted using the phone or face-to-face. Interviews will be audio recorded. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time or indicate that you do not want to respond to one or more questions. Please use the following link to indicate whether or not I may contact you directly: <https://surveys.nazarene.org/s3/Asher-Dissertation>

Please feel free to contact me at [pamalajasher@stu.bakeru.edu](mailto:pamalajasher@stu.bakeru.edu) if you have any questions about the study or interview process.

Thank you for your time and assistance with completing this study.

Sincerely,

Rev. Pamala J. Asher  
Ed.D. Candidate  
Baker University

**Appendix G: Email from Houseal with District Superintendent's Acceptance to Participate in the Study**



from: **Rich Houseal** <RHouseal@nazarene.org>  
 to: Pamala Asher <pamalaasher@gmail.com>

date: Jun 24, 2019, 3:02 PM  
 subject: FW: Dissertation Survey Consent

Hi Pam,

You have another consent.

Rich

**From:** Research Services <[noreply@surveygizmo.com](mailto:noreply@surveygizmo.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 24, 2019 2:59 PM  
**To:** Rich Houseal <[RHouseal@nazarene.org](mailto:RHouseal@nazarene.org)>  
**Subject:** Dissertation Survey Consent

Good News!

You just got a new response to 'Consent to Participate - Asher Dissertation Research'!

Please indicate whether or not you agree to participate in this dissertation research:  
 Yes

Name:  
 First Name Last Name

Please provide your contact information:  
 District  
Email  
 Phone Number

Comments:  
 I would be available on June 27-28, July 2.  
 Other dates may be available after my District Assembly that is on July XX.

**Appendix H: Sample SIS Format to Document Course and Mentoring or Coaching Completion**

<b>CONTENT: 14 Ability Statements</b>		
<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b>		
CN1 Ability to identify the literary structure, the theological concepts and main storyline of the Old Testament.		
Course Work/Date:	Conversation/Date:	Experience/Date:
CN2 Ability to describe the historical and cultural contexts of the major sections of the Old Testament.		
Course Work/Date:	Conversation/Date:	Experience/Date:
<b>NEW TESTAMENT</b>		
CN3 Ability to identify the literary structure, theological concepts and main storyline of the New Testament.		
Course Work/Date:	Conversation/Date:	Experience/Date:
CN4 Ability to describe the historical and cultural contexts of the New Testament including an ability to Biblically affirm pastoral leadership of men and women within the Church.		
Course Work/Date:	Conversation/Date:	Experience/Date:

(Church of the Nazarene, 2016b, February, pp. 11-14);

Portfolio Designed by Pamala J. Asher 10-01-2019