Jesus as Dynamic Force and Communicator

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Any understanding of the leadership of Jesus as presented in John's gospel should begin where John does—in the beginning. In contrast to the synoptic gospels which begin with the genealogy of Jesus' earthly family (Matthew), the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke), or the ministry of the Baptizer in the desert (Mark), John begins his narrative in eternity past. Echoing the creation theme in Genesis, he declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). His gospel is founded on the premise that the life, lordship, and leadership of Jesus Christ can only be understood in its eternal context. The Fourth Gospel describes the arrival and influence of One who first spoke the universe into existence, then as Word-made-flesh arrived on the scene as a dynamic force and communicator. Simply put, he was a leader.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the leadership of Jesus in light of the Prologue to John's Gospel (John 1:1–18). Central to our understanding of that is the word John first uses to describe who Jesus

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was and what he did—*logos*. While the English translation ("word") falls flatly to a Western mindset, the concept has deep-rooted meaning in both Hebrew theology and Greek thought. Those traditions converge in the arrival of Jesus, the Word made flesh. To the Jew he embodied the Old Testament "Word of the Lord"—a dynamic force, powerful in his self-expression (Carson, 1991), to create, reveal, or order reality (Borchert, 1996). To the Gentile Jesus is the embodiment of the rational power of speech and thought and the means of persuasion and direction (Schrenk et al., 1964)—hence the manifestation of the power to communicate.

A PERSPECTIVE ON THIS STUDY

In light of the redemptive purposes of the coming of Jesus, examining him as a leader, particularly based on the Prologue to John, may appear extraneous at best and offensively trivial at worst. Nothing could be further from the truth. This study will show that Jesus was the perfect embodiment of a proper understanding of leadership. As I will show in more detail later, John defines the coming of Jesus as a change agent who creates (v. 3), gives life (vv. 4, 11–12), enlightens (vv. 4, 9), and overcomes resistance (v. 5). Jesus communicated as a reflection of His incarnation (v. 14): He identified with, associated with, and revealed God's glory, grace, and truth to the world (v. 9). John the Baptist referred to Jesus as having a higher rank (v. 15), and even the word for "declared" in v. 18 has as its root meaning "to lead out" (Bloomfield, 1840). All this and more is the stuff of leadership.

Another objection has to do with whether this can be any more than a futile academic exercise. As this argument goes, no one has the capacity to follow Jesus' example as a leader; he is literally a world apart. Yet Jesus himself offered an explicit example to be intentionally followed when he washed the disciples' feet (John 13:12–15). Moreover, his promises of the coming Holy Spirit and the resultant power make it clear that holding Christ up as an example of leadership is anything but futile (John 14:12). The leadership qualities Jesus demonstrated are not limited to being *inspirational*—through the power of the Holy Spirit they are also *imitable*, *impactful*, and *imperative*. He invites all who follow him to imitate his example, even though we may fall short of perfectly duplicating his effort. *Logos*-inspired leadership, rightly understood, carries great impact in any relational or organizational context. More than a good idea, for Christians in any context, it calls for nothing short of obedience.

How This Chapter Is Organized

Before delving into an exegesis of the Prologue, I will first briefly review the two tributary roots of the *Logos* concept—the Old Testament understanding of the "Word of the Lord" and the Greek personification and deification of the *Logos*—a rational, invisible force that communicates. These converge to present an Ultimate Leader who is the *Logos* personified—a dynamic force and a communicator. The exegesis will be organized accordingly. I will show that as a dynamic force, Jesus created all things (v. 2), gives life (vv. 4, 11–12), gives light to every person (vv. 4, 9), and overcomes resistance (v. 5). As communicator, Jesus identified with our human state (v. 14), associated with us freely, despite our unworthiness (v. 14), revealed God's glory, full of grace and truth (v. 14), and declared to the world what God was like (v. 18). Following the exegesis, I discuss a model of *Logos*-inspired leadership that reflects the eight leadership activities that Jesus demonstrated and trends in contemporary leadership research. The *Logos*-inspired leader follows the example of Jesus by innovating, enlivening, enlightening, competing, understanding, engaging, modeling, and sense-giving. The chapter concludes with a call for leaders to follow the example of the *Logos* made flesh.

Development of the *Logos* Concept

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore every theory in detail related to why John referred to Christ with a popular philosophical and theological term elsewhere not found in the gospels. The word itself is used in three ways in the New Testament: (a) the standard meaning designating a word, speech, or act of speaking, (b) the special revelation of God to people, and (c) the revelation of God as Jesus the Messiah (Estes, 2016). According to Schrenk et al. (1964), *logos* has the original sense of "counting," "reckoning," or "explaining." Thus, it came to mean "counting up" or "recounting," an "account" that includes the sum of individual words to form a comprehensive construct "speech," "language," "sentence," or "saying" (pp. 77–78). As usage continued to develop, the idea of accounting was extended to include a principle or law that can be calculated or discovered in calculation. This led to a reference to man's ability to think or argue rationally. In the widest and most varied sense, *logos* is used for "what is spoken"—hence, "word"—"rationally established and constructed speech" (Schrenk et al., p. 74).

Vincent (1887) states that *logos* is a collection of both things in the mind and the words by which they are expressed. "As *logos* has the double meaning of *thought* and *speech*, so Christ is related to God as the word to the idea, the word being not merely a *name* for the idea, but the idea itself expressed" (p. 32). Newman and Nida (1993) add that this is more than a lexical or grammatical unit used to build sentences. *Logos* "is more accurately understood as an expression with meaning; that is, it is 'a message,' 'a communication'… a type of 'revelation'" (p. 7). *Logos* is the means by which one makes his thought, feeling, and desires known. It carries the imprint of the character, intelligence, and purpose of the one who utters it (Dods, 1903).

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE USE OF *LOGOS*

Christianity was cradled in Judaism, but it was destined for the world (Barclay, 1979). John's gospel seems intent on communicating to that world in all its diversity. Many theories have emerged over the years to account for John's choice to use the term. Miller (1993) reviews nine of the most prominent ones:

1. The Old Testament *dabar*, which often represents the word of God as eternal, creative, sustaining, healing, redemptive, and prophetic.
2. The late Jewish *sophia*, "wisdom," which in the wisdom literature is personified and represented as the first of God's creations and the means through which God created all else.
3. Greek philosophy, particularly the Logos doctrines of Heraclitus, Epicharmus, and the Stoics.
4. Philo Judaeus who, in his synthesis of Hebrew theology and Greek philosophy, employed *logos* over 1200 times to designate the mind of God, the creative instrument of God, the bond and preserver of all existing things, the mediator between the creator and creature.
5. The Aramaic *memra*, translated "word," which, some have alleged, occurs in the targums of the OT as a divine hypostasis.
6. Rabbinic speculation on the Torah in which the Law is portrayed as interchangeable with "the word of the Lord."
7. Gnostic sources, in which the Word functions as an intermediary between the material and spiritual realms.

8. The Hellenistic-Gnostic redeemer myth, the Johannine Logos having been mediated through the tradition reflected in the Mandeans and the *Odes of Solomon*.
9. The view that the Johannine Logos represents the breaking of the divine silence.

Miller argues against all these, asserting that the meaning of John's use of *Logos* originates in his use of the terms *logos* and *rhema* throughout the Fourth Gospel itself. Bryant and Krause (1998) agree, asserting that the term emerged from Jesus' own preaching and ministering. The most common explanation, albeit without consensus, is that John's use of *logos* reflects the Hebrew emphasis as word-in-action *and* the Greek idea of logical, ordered communication reflecting the thought and the being of the communicator (Beasley-Murray, 1999). Below is a deeper exploration of these two streams of understanding.

The Old Testament "Word of the Lord"

John begins with language reflective of the creation of the world through the word of God in Genesis. Kim (2009) argues that John's prologue, as is the entire gospel, is immersed in Old Testament theology. Allen (1996) adds that John deliberately builds on Hebrew words and phrases because of the clear link of Jesus Christ to revelations of Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible. Gaston (2014) argues that the Fourth Gospel is inherently Semitic in character. This points to the Hebrew word *dabar*, typically translated "word" as is *logos*. Schrenk et al. (1964) trace two main elements to *dabar*—the dianoetic and the dynamic. From the dianoetic perspective, *dabar* always represents a thought and belongs to the field of knowledge. To grasp the *dabar* of a thing is to grasp the thing itself. The dynamic element is reflected in the power of a word. "Every *dabar* is filled with power which can be manifested in the most diverse energies. This power is felt by the one who receives the word and takes it to himself" (p. 92). That dynamic energy applies to any word, most of all to the word of God. Deeply rooted in Hebrew thought, the conception of any word is an effective and creative power (Barclay, 1979). Paterson (1954) describes the Hebrew spoken word as "fearfully alive. It was not simply a vocable or sound dropped heedlessly from unthinking lips. It was a unit of energy charged with power" (pp. 2–3).

The "word of the Lord" is the means by which God makes himself known, declares his will, and brings about his purposes (Youngblood et al., 1995). It is a means of divine revelation (Maruya, 1981) and demonstrated in creation (Barclay, 1979). The universe came into being because God spoke; his word effects its purpose and accomplishes his will (Isaiah 55:10–11). "God simply speaks, and his powerful word creates" (Carson, 1991, p. 115). Contrary to Western thought, the word is more than just an expression of thought—it was action. And God's word, specifically, is God in action (Beasley-Murray, 1999), the primary means by which He is present and at work in the world (Youngblood et al.). "The Word of God is God's power, intelligence, and will in expression; not dormant and potential only, but in active exercise… with creative energy, and communicating life from God, the Source of life and being" (Dods, 1903, p. 120).

DEVELOPMENT OF *LOGOS* IN GREEK THOUGHT

While John's gospel was clearly influenced by Old Testament teaching, it was probably written from Ephesus to reach a Greek audience. Barclay (1979) maintains that John used *logos* specifically with the Greeks in mind, and that it was steeped in Greek thought (cf. Beasley-Murray, 1999; Senior, 2008; Kim, 2009; Green et al., 1992). *Logos* has already been described as a term for speech, utterance, and revelation in the sense of "something displayed, clarified, recognized, and understood" (Schrenk et al., 1964, p. 80). But the Greeks used the term in philosophy and theology to describe a metaphysical reality.

> It is presupposed as self-evident by the Greek that there is in things, in the world and its course, a primary λόγος, an intelligible and recognisable law, which then makes possible knowledge and understanding in the human λόγος. But this λόγος is not taken to be something which is merely grasped theoretically. It claims a man. It determines his true life and conduct. (Schrenk et al., p. 81)

Heraclitus first introduced the *Logos* in the sixth century B. C. as the force that keeps the world in an orderly state in the midst of flux and chaos (Barclay, 1979). The *Logos* gives shape, form, or life—the eternal principle of order—to the material universe (Green et al., 1992; Barclay). To Heraclitus the *Logos* binds the individual to the whole and forms a

bridge of understanding between man and the world, between men in their political order, between man and God, and between this world and the world above (Schrenk et al., 1964).

The Stoics carried the idea further with the understanding that *logos* is the rational principle by which everything exists. It is the essence of the rational human soul (Carson, 1991). This grew out of the Stoics' fascination with the order of the universe. The *Logos* to the Stoic was the mind of God, creating and sustaining the universe (Barclay, 1979). It is the power which extends throughout matter and works imminently in all things, thus equated with the concept of God and the basis of unity of this world (Schrenk et al., 1964).

Philo, an Alexandrian Jew who lived at generally the same time as Christ, was the first to converge Greek thought about the *Logos* to the Old Testament teaching on the Word of the Lord. With more than 1200 references to the *Logos*, Philo taught that the *Logos* was created, but was incorruptible and eternal. God is the Father of the *Logos* and Wisdom its mother (Barclay, 1979). Philo distinguished between the ideal world, which he called the *Logos* of God, and the real or phenomenal world. *Logos* is the ideal man, the primal man, from which all material beings derive (Carson, 1991). Philo's *Logos* "is the image of God, the second God, between the begotten and the unbegotten. The *Logos* is the instrument of God in creation; the thought of God stamped upon the universe" (Barclay, 1979, p. 31).

The metaphysical reality so evident to Hellenistic thought, combined with the use of *logos* as speech, became the basis by which John begins to describe the life of Christ to a Greek-speaking world. The *Logos* is a form of God's self-communication (Senior, 2008), by which he breaks his silence and comes with words of grace and truth (MacLeod, 2014). God's communication in the Prologue first takes on the form of his word to human beings, who ultimately reject him. Rather than retreating, God communicates even more clearly with a new work, the incarnation of Christ (v. 14).

CONVERGENCE: THE *LOGOS* AS DYNAMIC FORCE AND COMMUNICATOR

It would be an unnecessary false dichotomy to insist that John's use of *logos* is either Jewish or Greek; as Senior (2008) points out, the term bridges the Semitic and Greek cultures.

As is often noted, "word" in Hebrew (*dabar*) has a dynamic force, implying not only communication but also action or creation. Through the force of "word," reality itself is created and shaped. In Greek thought, *logos* or "word" often connotes intelligibility or rationality and order, as in the derivative term "logic." Thus using the metaphor of *logos* enables John not only to speak of God's creative activity in the world but also to convey the power of communication and coherence that gives ultimate meaning to the world. (Senior, 2008, p. 307)

This convergence of the *Logos* concept as a dynamic force and a communicator is expanded in John's summary of the work and message of Christ, by which he describes the changes brought about by the *Logos* and the means by which he communicated. This provides the foundation for a model of *Logos*-inspired leadership. Table 1.1 provides a summary of John's description of the *Logos* and the typology of his work and message.

In order to make the model as clear as possible while staying true to the message of the text, the exegesis that follows will be arranged by category and typology.

Table 1.1   The dynamic actions and communication of the Logos

Verse	*Category*	*Typology*
All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made (v. 3)	Dynamic force	Creates
In him was life (v. 4a)	Dynamic force	Gives life
the life was the light of men (v. 4b)	Dynamic force	Enlightens
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (v. 5)	Dynamic force	Overcomes resistance
The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world (v. 9)	Dynamic force	Enlightens
And the Word became flesh (v. 14a)	Communicator	Identifies
and dwelt among us (v. 14b)	Communicator	Associates
and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (v. 14c)	Communicator	Reveals
No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known (v. 18)	Communicator	Declares

Exegesis of John 1: 1–18

It should be noted from that outset that the summary of qualities assigned to Jesus by John in the Prologue is further described in detail throughout the gospel in general (Carson, 1991) and reflected in the signs Jesus performed (Kim, 2009). All that Jesus did, He did as the Word-made-flesh. This is easily seen throughout the gospel through his signs, his encounters with seekers such as Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman, and his confrontations with hostile Jews and Romans. This is noteworthy as well in the terms John used in the Prologue to describe responses to the *Logos*. More than simply hearing what the Son of God declared, we beheld (v.14) and either received or rejected him (vv. 11–12, 16). This was a dynamic force and communicator who would not be ignored.

The Logos: *A Dynamic Force that Creates*

Not only did the world become a harmonic whole through the *Logos*, it was also created through his intervention, thus expressing his creative energy (Cansi, 2015). John states in v. 3 that every single thing that now exists traces its existence back to a *Logos*-driven beginning. "All things" reflects "every single thing," not "everything all at once" (Reynolds, 1909). The aorist *egeneto* ("came into being") indicates progress or a process of a creative order from nothing to something that could have taken place at any time (Lenski, 1961)—what Vincent (1887) refers to as "the unfolding of a divine order" (p. 36). The second part of the verse contains the Greek emphatic phrase *oude hen* ("nothing"), which would best be rendered, "not one single thing" (Borchert, 1996). Everything from subatomic particles to galaxies find their source in him (Gangel, 2000). Whatever one's view of the timing involved in creation, the *Logos* is the instrument through which God manifests his creative power. As a model of leadership, this reflects the leader's unique role to innovate, either through evolution or revolution, to achieve an envisioned outcome.

   Principle One: The biblical leader is a dynamic force that innovates in order to achieve a desired outcome.

The *Logos*: A Dynamic Force that Gives Life

"In him was life," John writes (v. 4), a term (*zoe*) he uses 36 times. While it can refer to life in any dimension, in this context it most likely refers

to "eternal life" (Newman & Nida, 1993). To state that "in him was life" is to affirm his life-giving, life-sustaining character (Kling, 2013), the physical, moral, and eternal fountain of life—its principle and source (Vincent, 1887). Says Gangel (2000), "Jesus Christ the Creator provides physical life; Jesus Christ the Redeemer provides spiritual life, and Jesus Christ the Savior provides eternal life" (p. 10).

Eternal life means more than just a never-ending existence, however. "For John *life* ('eternal life') describes a quality of existence, that is the kind of life that man has when God rules in his life" (Newman & Nida, 1993, p. 11). In the *Logos*—and only in the *Logos*—was "life in the fullest, highest sense, the eternal, blessed life of God" (Lenski, 1961, p. 38).

> It may fitly be said that Jesus came to change existence into life…. Jesus came to lift men out of a weary, drooping, defeated existence into a full, virile, victorious life… In Jesus Christ the mere task of living becomes the real glory of life. (Barclay, 1979, p. 43)

To change and to lift is to *lead*. As leader, the Word-made-flesh comes to do more than simply inspire or enlighten, though that has its place. As Borchert (1996) states, "*Behind light stands a 'life' reality*… The Johannine message may suggest that we ought to look for ultimate meaning not merely in our systems or in enlightenment but in the ultimate source of the universe—the Life-giver" (p. 109).

Principle Two: The biblical leader is a dynamic force that gives quality of life.

The Logos: *A Dynamic Force that Enlightens*

Inseparable from the previous phrase, the life that characterized the *Logos* was the "light of men" (v. 4). The concept of light evolved from something desirable and pleasant in the Old Testament to the NT concept of being equated with the power of good, engaged in a struggle with darkness and evil (Newman & Nida, 1993). The definite article suggests that Jesus is not just light in a figurative way—he is the true light (Conzelmann, 1964). The genitive construction ("light of men") means "light *for* men" (Newman & Nida, 1993, p. 11). Lenski (1961) adds that "light" equals truth, the reality of God's will, purpose and plans. The *Logos* reveals the life that is inherent in God and can be shared with humanity,

despite the prevalence of death and darkness in the world (Bryant & Krause, 1998).

Lenski (1961) notes that to "give light" (v. 9) is to bestow knowledge of the truth. This knowledge is never merely intellectual but affects one's entire being—a form of spiritual enlightenment. The emphasis in v. 9 is on the fact that Jesus is the *true* light—that which is real or genuine, as contrasted to that which does not exist or is an imitation (Newman & Nida, 1993). The focus of the word is on completeness and authenticity, steadfastness and faithfulness (Borchert, 1996). "Jesus, then, is the genuine light, the real light. Other lights may flash and fade, other lights may mislead and misdirect. He is the true light" (Barclay, 1979, p. 43).

No limitation or restriction is provided in the language of the text to the impact of the light Jesus gives; the enlightenment of the *Logos* is for every man. This speaks to an important leadership principle, that neither Jesus nor his follower-leaders are limited in their potential influence merely to the Gospel-receptive. *Logos*-inspired leadership brings understanding, truth, and clarity to any and all who are willing to receive it.

Principle Three: The biblical leader is a dynamic force that brings understanding, truth, and clarity to all who are willing to receive it.

The Logos: A Dynamic Force that Overcomes Resistance

John describes the light in v. 5 as actively shining in the darkness. As metaphors for moral conditions, darkness and light expose "a terrible antagonism, a fearful negative, a veritable opposition to the light, a blinding of the eye of the soul to the clearest beam of heavenly wisdom, righteousness, and truth" (Reynolds, 1909, p. 10). John hints that the coming of the Messiah would be met with intense opposition—something he enlarges on in vv. 10–11. The world did not recognize him, and his own people rejected him, because they are characterized by darkness (Kim, 2009). "Darkness in the thought of John is not merely lack of knowledge or illumination, it is a symbol of rebellion, conflict, and hostility. It signals an existence both external and internal that opposes God" (Brown, 1965). The present tense "shines" reflects the continuous action of the light, embracing both history and John's present time, having "gone forth continuously and without interruption from the beginning until now, and is still shining" (Vincent, 1887, p. 40). This reflects an ongoing conflict, though one the outcome of which has

already been decided. John is, after all, writing from a post-Resurrection perspective.

The word describing the response of the darkness to the light (*katelaben*) could be translated in several different ways, including "comprehend," "overtake," "seize," or "attain." Vincent (1887) notes that it is used in the sense of "laying hold of so as to make one's own," hence, "to take possession of" (p. 41) or "to lay hold of with evil intent" (Reynolds, 1909, p. 10). Delling (1964) adds that the word could be used in the negative sense "to overpower." The darkness inherent in being separated from God "has not been able to vanquish the power of His light. By the very existence of this light the whole sphere of night is overcome and deprived of its power" (p. 10).

Principle Four: The biblical leader is a dynamic force that overcomes resistance.

The Logos: *A Communicator Who Identifies*

In describing the incarnation in v. 14, Vincent (1887) explains that the phrase "became flesh" means more than assuming a human body, but rather human nature in its entirety. Jesus identified himself with all that is human—body, soul, and spirit. That includes the region of sensibility and visibility (Spence-Jones, 1909), man's creaturely weakness (Beasley-Murray, 1999), the transitoriness and mortality of human life (MacLeod, 2014), and "the frailty, limitations, and temporality of humans" (Waetjen, 2001). This suggests that both flesh and spirit are dear to God, and God did not hesitate to enter into that life (Barclay, 1979). This was a revolutionary idea to the Greek world—a world that approached their gods as apathetic and detached. John "pointed at Jesus Christ and said: 'Here is the mind of God; here is the expression of the thought of God…'" (Barclay, 1979, p. 34). Also, beyond the classic Hebrew conception of God as "other than," the *Logos*, God's very self-expression, clothed himself in our humanity and chose to make himself known in a real, historical man (Carson, 1991). The leadership implications of this are profound:

> Look steadily at the Incarnation, at the love which made Christ take our place and identify Himself with us; consider the new breath of life that this one act has breathed into human life, ennobling the world and showing us

how deep and lovely are the possibilities that lie in human nature; and new thoughts of your own conduct will lay hold of your mind. (Dods, 1903)

Principle Five: The biblical leader communicates by identifying with the humanity of those he or she leads.

The Logos: *A Communicator Who Associates*

John describes the *Logos* as one who, in identifying with us, communicated by dwelling among us. The verb means "pitched his tent," and evokes images of the Tabernacle, Israel's Exodus, and Christ fulfilling the hope of a second Exodus (Beasley-Murray, 1999). John thus implies that God has chosen to dwell among his people in an even more personal way—as the Word-made-flesh (Carson, 1991). The phrase suggests several themes that were reflected in the life and leadership of Jesus. First, similar to the OT tent of meeting, Jesus moved with his disciples as a Paraclete or Counselor—a manifestation of the reality of divine presence (Borchert, 1996). This was important enough to Jesus that upon announcing that he would be leaving them, he reassured them that he would send another Counselor or Comforter who would continue what he had begun (ch. 14–16).

The use of the term also suggests mobility. "Like the tabernacle of the Exodus it can move from place to place and coincidentally sanctify time and space. As a result, the boundary lines between the sacred and the profane are dissolved" (Waetjen, 2001). The *Logos*, in effect, moved where we moved, participated in our history, dined at our tables, and manifested his love in "all the routine and incident of a human life" (Dods, p. 122).

A third dimension of the phrase reminds us that the tenting of the *Logos* was in the context of community. The tabernacle reference is a reminder of the ancient Old Testament dwelling around which Israel as a nation clustered their tents (Dods, 1903). John makes it clear that he is one of many eyewitnesses; the story of Jesus is *our* story, not just his (Waetjen, 2001). Moreover, "us" is a reference to all of us, regardless of social status, race, or gender. Jesus lived among the lowest class of population, living as they lived. He "had no money to give, no knowledge of science to impart; He lived a sympathetic and godly life, regardless of Himself" (Dods, 1903, p. 122).

Principle Six: The biblical leader communicates by associating with constituents, regardless of status, ethnicity, or gender.

The Logos: *A Communicator Who Reveals*

John presents Jesus as the definitive revelation of God's nature and identity for us (Senior, 2008). The *Logos*, says Lenski (1961), is the final and ultimate revelation of God, embodied in Jesus Christ. "In him all the purposes, plans, and promises of God are brought to a final focus and an absolute realization" (p. 30).

Three specific terms characterize the revelation work of the *Logos*. The first, "glory," refers to the Hebrew description of the visible manifestation of God's self-disclosure (Carson, 1991). Bryant and Krause (1998) suggest that the word *doxa* could refer to (a) the sum of all God's attributes, (b) from Hellenistic Greek opinion or honor; (c) power or might; (d) a translation of the Hebrew *kavod*, which came to be associated with "lights;" or (e) an *epiphany* or *manifestation of the Godhead*. It doubtless points to Jesus' greatness, manifested not just in his miracles and teaching, but also in his humiliating death and resurrection. John repeats the word "glory" as if to say "glory indeed" (Lenski, 1961), and describes it as the kind a father grants to his one and only, best-loved Son (Carson, 1991).

The other two terms appear together on two occasions (vv. 14, 18). The *Logos* revealed the character of a God who was full of grace and truth (v. 14). Each comes with the article ("the grace" and "the truth"), and each supplements the other (Robertson, 1933). One of the great themes of the New Testament, though not thoroughly in John, grace (*charis*) fundamentally means "that which delights or causes joy" or "making glad with gifts" (MacLeod, 2014). Theologically, it is undeserved favor, the expression of God's pardon, justification, and adoption to childhood of those whose sin and guilt alienate them from God's love (Lenski). Truth is a much larger theme for John. *Aletheia* literally means "that which is not hidden," or "what has been made manifest." As such this applies to anything uncovered, whether by science or by divine revelation (Bryant & Krause, 1998). With John, the *Logos* reveals God as he really is, and became on earth what he was before his Incarnation—the light of men (v. 4) (MacLeod).

Principle Seven: The biblical leader reveals God's character through his or her lifestyle.

The Logos: *A Communicator Who Declares*

John's prologue ends with the aorist description of the *Logos* as a proclaimer and expositor. "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (v. 18). With the emphatic use of the pronoun, John declares that the only son of God himself (and only he) has declared him. The term *exegesato* is the source of our English word "exegesis." It is an old verb meaning to lead out, to draw out in a narrative, or to recount (Robertson, 1933)—suggesting that the Word-made-flesh is the ultimate narrator of God's story (Carson, 1991). But this is no mere sermon or parable—*Jesus made known the nature and character of God as an act of leadership.* He leads through expounding (Lenski, 1961), interpreting or translating (Vincent, 1887), making known or explaining divine secrets (Bryant & Krause, 1998), "drawing forth from the depths of God all that is possible that we shall see, know, or realize" (Reynolds, 1909). The historical aorist middle use of the term sums the work of Jesus in its entirety. That includes his words and deeds to be sure, but also his very coming and presence. "The Logos is the supreme exegete, the absolute interpreter of God" (Lenski, p. 101).

Principle Eight: The biblical leader communicates by making sense of God's story, grace, and truth.

A MODEL OF LOGOS LEADERSHIP

Thus far I have established that the nature and activity of Jesus the *Logos*-made-flesh reflect specific acts of love and leadership. Moreover, the acts described in the Prologue to John's gospel serve as a model for leaders in any situation, but particularly for those who by faith and commitment identify as followers of Christ. This model adds to our understanding of leading by identifying first and foremost as a follower. As Paul exhorted the Corinthians to "imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1), *Logos*-inspired leadership personalizes the leadership role as follower first, then servant, then as an agent of transformation and influence. As Jesus himself embraced his identity as dynamic force (John 14:30) and communicator (John 12:49) in the language of a follower of his Father, those who follow his example will do the same.

The specific action points of the *Logos* Leadership model reflect many current trends in leadership research. In fact, multiple books and bodies of research exist for each of the eight facets of the model, and the sheer

size of that is beyond the scope of this chapter. This model welcomes the discoveries, theories and concepts provided in the literature, but looks beyond that to the unique contribution of John's description of what Christ the *Logos* did as a dynamic force and communicator (and example to his followers). The model seeks to provide an answer to the question, How can leaders flesh out the incarnational leadership example of Jesus?

Table 1.2 shows the progression of thought and research leading to the actions of a *Logos*-inspired leader. Following our understanding of John's language, it begins with a sense of identity—that a "Word" leader is a dynamic force and a communicator. As reflected in the exegesis, the eight *Logos* acts of leadership are reflected in the second column. This is followed by a summary of the rich collection of theory and research relevant to that specific action. The fourth column then summarizes the eight actions of a *Logos*-inspired leader. The sections that follow explain this more specifically by showing how those actions reflect the Word-made-flesh and how they intersect with contemporary research.

A Logos-*Inspired Leader Innovates*

Burns and Stalker (1961) first called significant attention to the relationship between leadership and innovation. Since then a significant number of studies have explored the relationship more deeply (e.g., Karakas, 2007; Garcia-Morales et al., 2012). As Denti and Hemlin (2012) note in their review of the research, a leader performs two essential tasks in this regard: to facilitate innovation by supporting individuals and teams as they turn their creative efforts into innovations, and to manage the organization's goals and activities aimed at innovation. They conclude that (a) the strongest relationship between leadership and innovation takes place in organizations with a supportive culture for innovation and where organizational structures are de-formalized and de-centralized, and (b) when leaders influence creative self-efficacy they help stimulate innovation on the individual level.

Logos-inspired leadership looks to the creative power that was demonstrated before the world began. As the *Logos* was the means through which the world was made, and as humans were created in his image, those who follow Christ have the capacity to be a creative force in their own right. That usually begins with some sort of idea or vision of a desired outcome, combined with the creative energy to initiate, organize, and execute that vision to completion. Leaders who have the resources of an

Table 1.2 The relationship between the identity and actions of the Logos, modern leadership research, and the actions of a Logos-inspired leader

Logos *identity*	Logos *action*	*Research reflection*	*What a Logos-inspired leader does*
Dynamic force	Creates	Innovation and leadership	Innovates—Provides creative energy, order, and execution to the fulfillment of a vision
Dynamic force	Gives life	Servant leadership	Enlivens—improves the quality of life for those he/she leads
Dynamic force	Enlightens	Enlightened leadership	Enlightens—acts as a force for good to bring truth, goodness, and beauty to the world, beyond self-interest or organizational success
Dynamic force	Overcomes Resistance	Competitive leadership	Competes—outsmarts, outpaces, and overpowers competitive or hostile forces from without
Communicator	Identifies	Empathetic leadership	Understands—listens and communicates with constituents from a perspective of awareness of what makes them human—their ideas, feelings, desires, and frailties
Communicator	Associates	Relational leadership	Engages—freely and authentically associates, collaborates, and socializes with constituents
Communicator	Reveals	Authentic leadership	Models—embodies the values, mission, and desired behavior of the organization (leads by example)

Table 1.2 (continued)

Logos *identity*	Logos *action*	*Research reflection*	What a Logos-*inspired leader does*
Communicator	Declares	Sense-giving	Exegetes—narrates the story, makes known the purpose, interprets the nature, and/or translates the intentions of the organization, both inside and outside the organization

organization at their disposal have the added advantage of combining the creative energies of constituents to produce even greater outcomes by providing the resources, structure, and support necessary to realize the potential change. This is in contrast to a leader or manager whose view is toward maintenance of tradition or who champions efficiency devoid of purpose or fulfilled vision.

A Logos-*Inspired Leader Enlivens*

Contemporary study of Servant Leadership emerged from the writing of Robert Greenleaf (1977), who identified the test of a servant leader with this: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p. 27). Spears (2010) added that one of the identifying signs of servant leaders is a commitment to the growth of people. Servant leaders recognize the intrinsic value of people beyond their work contributions, and are deeply committed to the growth of every individual in the organization. They do everything in their power to nurture the growth of employees and colleagues. This idea, in a more spiritual context, is reflected as well in Reagin's (2018) *The Life-Giving Leader*, which he defines as one who looks beyond a posture that benefits them toward one that benefits others.

The *Logos*-inspired leader adopts a similar mindset, recognizing Christ as the source of all quality of life and leadership as the opportunity to be a conduit of that life to others. While it should go without mentioning that

constituents should be better technicians or even better managers because of a leader's influence, this model looks beyond that. An enlivening leader prioritizes people as people first, whether that involves their workplace lives or not. As such, a *Logos*-inspired leader seeks to add value to families, education, health, financial well-being, spiritual life, community relationships, and any other factor that elevates the quality of life for those he or she leads. This does not necessarily mean the leader is directly responsible for every facet of employee or volunteer life, but that the leader recognizes the ways in which he/she can be a hindrance or a help to the human potential of constituents.

A Logos-*Inspired Leader Enlightens*

Enlightenment is a multifaceted concept, but in its simplest terms it means raising awareness. Hoopen and Trompenaars (2009) distinguish between practical and ideal enlightenment. Practical enlightenment involves seeing things or people in a clear light. Ideal enlightenment is more ambitious; it "requires an inspiring vision, integrated in a coherent conceptual framework, and devotion to a self-transcending cause" (p. 35). While enlightened leadership is not a formal theory, as far back as John Owen in 1800, leaders have sought to improve the lives of their employees while still earning a profit. These enlightened leaders, according to O'Toole (2019), distinguish themselves by (a) identifying higher purposes for their businesses than simply making a profit, (b) making decisions guided by a strong moral compass to meet the needs of constituents, (c) demonstrating respect for all people and creating frameworks to facilitate the pursuit of happiness, and (d) maintaining commitment to their values through good times and bad.

Logos-inspired leaders reflect a similar mindset, adding a spiritual dimension to their roles. As the self-described Light of the World (John 8:12), Jesus was the original model of "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). Those who follow his model act as a force for good that transcends self-interest or narrow views of organizational success. The primary means of doing this is by serving as examples and conduits of truth. That certainly involves open communication regarding matters of organizational value but goes far beyond that. *Logos*-inspired leaders intentionally seek ways to add value to constituents' entire lives and, by extension, to their communities, regions, and the world. This approach to leadership seeks to bring multidimensional understanding, goodness,

deep happiness, and beauty into the world—beginning with those in closest proximity of relationship. The biblical word for that is "blessing"—the central theme of Jesus' first public teaching in Matthew's gospel.

A Logos-*Inspired Leader Competes*

In language ranging from friendly competition to conflict management to outright warfare, leadership has been conceptualized as an advance against some sort of resistance. Advocates of Great Man Theory—the first theoretical distinction between leaders and followers and by no means extinct—believe that regardless of the innate talents potential leaders may possess, without the timely emergence of situational forces they will not become leaders (Cawthon, 1996). Those situations inevitably lead to confrontation, competition, or conflict and the emergence of leaders who marshal the intelligence, energy, and moral force of constituents to face them. Today's competitive and innovative global environment calls for leaders and organizations who can create and sustain a competitive advantage (Manole, 2014). Petrick et al. (1999) propose a model that links such an advantage to leadership skills balancing four competing criteria of performance: (a) profitability and productivity, (b) continuity and efficiency, (c) commitment and morale, and (d) adaptability and innovation.

Logos-inspired leaders recognize the competitive, if not antagonistic environment in which their organizations or teams operate. The "light that shines in darkness" recognizes that such competitive or antagonistic entities engage along the same lines of John's *katelaben* in v. 5—comprehension, speed, advantage, or disarming. This is no soft place for feel-good aspirations. This level of external conflict calls for performance that outsmarts, outpaces, and overpowers competitive or hostile forces from without. Sometimes this involves equipping an organization to "play defense" against such forces, but the spirit of a *Logos*-inspired leader is more offensive—making advances against competing organizations or ideas much as light would dispel darkness. This calls for discernment to recognize the difference between antagonist and ally—a distinction that is often overlooked in Christian circles. Moreover, it calls for diligence. As the light *continuously* shines in darkness (v. 5), *Logos*-inspired leaders recognize the ongoing vigilance necessary to succeed in an ever-competitive environment.

A Logos-*Inspired Leader Understands*

Bell and Hall (1954) pioneered the exploration of empathy as a key leadership skill, defining empathy as the ability to perceive the needs of others by becoming aware of the other's phenomenological field. Rogers (1975) describes it further as entering into the private perceptional world of the other without prejudice and becoming thoroughly at home in it, laying aside one's own views and values. Pagonis (1992) identifies empathy and expertise as traits of effective leaders, while Garner (2009) traces the consistent emergence of empathy as a key component in leadership theory. Coffee and Jones (2000) distinguish between the soft kind found so much in the management literature and what they call "tough empathy"—giving people what they need, not what they want, and balancing respect for the individual with the task at hand. Leaders who demonstrate such empathy are those who care deeply about something and are not just playing a role.

All this and more are reflected in *Logos*-inspired leadership. As Jesus identified with all that is human, including sensibility, visibility, weakness, and mortality, this is anything but soft. Jesus understood the human heart (John 2:24), and as a great high priest he sympathizes with our weaknesses, having been tempted in every respect as we are, yet powerful enough to remain sinless (Hebrews 4:15). *Logos*-inspired leaders also engage in the work of identification and understanding. They listen and communicate with constituents from a place of empathy. This involves a soul exchange of ideas, feelings, and desires. Driven by a robust love and fueled by the pursuit of awareness, these leaders reject the notion of the aloof, uncaring authority figure. They also transcend empathy as a form of sentiment alone. *Logos*-inspired leaders intentionally enter into the world of those they lead, not just to feel with them, but to exchange understanding in all its dimensions.

The Logos-*Inspired Leader Engages*

Research in relational approaches to leadership date back to 1939 with Lewin's so-called Iowa studies in leader behaviors. This was followed by the Michigan and Ohio studies, then and Blake and Mouton's Managerial grid, which conceptualized performance orientation and relationship orientation as two variable dimensions of leader behavior (Busse, 2014). Relational Leadership Theory emerged as its own discipline around 2000, viewing leadership and organization as "human social constructions that emanate from the rich connections and interdependencies of organizations and their members" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 655). Hunt and Dodge (2000) note that relational leadership recognizes leadership wherever it occurs, despite formal roles. Uhl-Bien (2006) describes Relational Leadership Theory as an overarching framework for the study of the relational dynamics that focuses on the relational processes by which leadership is produced and enabled. Put simply, leadership takes place in the context of an ongoing, dynamic relationship, with or without formal roles.

At the heart of *Logos*-inspired leadership is an appreciation for this approach to relationships. Jesus turned first-century concepts of leadership on their head when he left all formal authority behind and "pitched his tent" among people with whom he yearned for relationship. Jesus was stirred with compassion for human needs he witnessed in the moment and took dramatic action to respond (cf. Matthew 9:36ff). This was possible because he moved freely among people that others in "leadership" took great pains to avoid. Much is made in the gospels of Jesus' socialization habits—a point of criticism among the Jews and fascination among the common people. *Logos*-inspired leaders follow a similar example, authentically associating with people regardless of social status, formal position, ethnic background, or lifestyle choices. This is more than meeting for lunch or drinks, however; it is out of this association, socialization, and even collaboration that *Logos*-inspired leaders find a vision and strategy for moving forward.

A Logos-*Inspired Leader Models*

Authentic Leadership emerged as a theory in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in response to a string of ethical violations in organizational life, global world terrorism, and an economic downturn among developed countries. It was fueled by the conviction among

advocates that existing leadership styles were inadequate to address those issues (Margiadi & Wibowo, 2020). It emphasizes self-awareness, self-regulation based on internalized moral perspectives, transparency, and leading by example (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Edwards, 2013). The main principle of authentic leadership is the ability to create a good and sustainable organizational performance (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). This is done through building a strong foundation for decision making through self-knowledge, behaving consistently with beliefs and morals, listening to perspectives outside their own, open communication, and building trust. Authentic leadership has been broadly linked to employee attitudes, behavior and outcomes, creativity, a positive work climate, affective commitment at a group level, and organizational performance (Margiati & Wibowo).

The world was in no less a desperate need for authentic leaders in the first century. Between legalistic religious leaders chasing power on the one hand, and a lord-it-over approach to secular authority on the other, the world yearned for a manifestation of grace and truth and found it in the person of Jesus Christ. He embodied the values, mission, and desired behavior of his followers by first revealing God's true nature. In other words, he communicated first with his life, then with his words. He now calls his followers to do the same. *Logos*-inspired leaders seek to model what Wood and Winston (2005) call leader accountability. This involves accepting responsibility for the leadership role, willingness to be openly identified with actions and words, and readiness to explain their beliefs, decisions, commitments, or actions to constituents. This approach to the leader-follower dynamic recognizes that leadership is first *beheld* (to use John's term), then heard and followed.

The Logos-*Inspired Leader Exegetes*

While not the first to use the term, Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) first gave structure to the idea of "sense-giving" in a leadership context to explain the use of vision, symbols, and hypothetical scenarios to introduce, support, and encourage organizational change. Sense-giving, according to Smerek (2009), involves giving meaning to a target audience in an effort to persuade or clarify. It is an intentional attempt to influence how people think (sensemaking) in terms of a preferred definition of reality. Sense-giving is largely viewed symmetrically with sensemaking, which is the actual meaning and sense that constituents make of those

change efforts. Researchers have identified various methods by which this takes place, including use of symbolism, metaphors, adapting explanation styles, narratives (storytelling), framing historical continuity, and emotional arousal (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Hill & Levenhagen, 1995; Rouleau, 2005; Steuer & Wood, 2008; Brunninge, 2009; Vuori & Virtaharju, 2012).

Logos-inspired leaders recognize the role of communication as an act of leadership. As their Ultimate Example used storytelling, metaphors, practical explanation, historical framing, symbolism, and emotions to declare transformational truth, those who follow his example approach leadership in a similar way. Their approach to sense-giving transcends persuasion for the sake of an organizational agenda, however. *Logos*-inspired leadership is about transformation of the heart and fulfillment of individual and organizational purpose. To that end, the leader *exegetes* the identity, mission, message, and vision of the organization and its people. He or she narrates the story, makes known the purpose, interprets the nature, and/or translates the intentions of the organization, both internally and externally. *Logos*-inspired leaders provide clarity, insight, understanding, and direction to those in their frame of influence. They help define reality, target a destiny, and light a path forward in ways that capture the imagination and arouse the commitment of those who make sense of their message.

Summary

This chapter presents a model of leadership built on the Apostle John's description of the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the Word (*logos*) made flesh. *Logos* was a term with an unmistakable connection to deity, reflected by the Hebrew "word of the Lord" who acted as a change agent—a dynamic force—and by the Greek concept of logic and communication—the Word. As a dynamic force, Jesus Christ demonstrated the capacity to bring creative change to lives, teams, organizations, and communities. While we may not share his ability to create something out of nothing, *Logos*-inspired leaders can follow his example of innovation, providing creative energy, order, and execution to the fulfillment of a vision. His identity as a life-giver gives leaders a vision for improving the quality of life for those he/she leads. By following his light, leaders can act as a force for good, beyond self-interest or narrow views of organizational success, bringing truth, goodness, and beauty to the world. And by answering his

call to enter the fray, leaders find in him the capacity to overcome resistance and compete in the world of ideas, ever-increasing speed, and the pursuit of power.

As a leader the *Logos* communicated as a reflection of his incarnation, starting with the fact that he identified with humanity. He understood what was in the heart of individuals, and those follow his lead do the same. They listen first and then communicate from a perspective of empathy and awareness of ideas, feelings, desires, and frailties. They freely and authentically engage on a personal, social, and professional level with constituents, just as the *Logos* freely associated with us. As Jesus embodied the values, mission, and desired behavior of a kingdom citizen, those who lead in his name are similarly challenged to lead by example and communicate with authenticity. And as Jesus became God's means of telling his story in a way that enables people to understand and participate in the story themselves, *Logos*-inspired leaders invite others to experience their story, purpose, passion, and vision in ways that make sense.

John's vision of Jesus in eternity past, who invaded the darkness on our behalf, serves as a gripping story of redemption, transformation, and hope. As this book will continue to show, the Fourth Gospel also reflects models and examples of leadership grounded in grace and truth. One thing is certain: Those who have encountered Jesus and "beheld his glory" have found in him to this day a profound source of change, and a life and leadership example to follow.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do leaders reconcile the notion that Christian leadership is built on timeless and unchanging truths with the call for organizations and their leaders to innovate?

2. What does it mean when someone describes a leader as "life-giving?" How have you seen that quality demonstrated in the leaders you have observed?

3. What is the difference between typical interpersonal sympathy and "tough empathy?" How does "tough empathy" strengthen a leader's influence?

4. While authenticity and leading by example seem to be obvious expectations constituents would have of their leaders, why do these characteristics often seem so difficult or fleeting?

5. What communication tools used by leaders have you found most effective to help make sense of the leader's desires, values, and str?

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