



CHRISTIAN FAITH PERSPECTIVES IN  
LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS

# Biblical Organizational Spirituality

*New Testament Foundations for  
Leaders and Organizations*

—  
*Edited by*  
JOSHUA D. HENSON



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# Christian Faith Perspectives in Leadership and Business

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Joshua D. Henson  
Editor

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Joshua D. Henson  
Regent University  
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Christian Faith Perspectives in Leadership and Business

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# Introduction: Framing Biblical Organizational Spirituality

*Joshua D. Henson*

The term *spirituality* has long been studied and discussed among religious scholars and practitioners as a matter of religious praxis. Recently, however, there has been growing interest in spirituality within sacred as well as secular organizations (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2015). While spirituality can be studied in strictly religious settings, it is also found in leadership and management studies from three main perspectives: individual spirituality, spirituality in the workplace, and organizational spirituality (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2021). There is considerable disagreement regarding the definition of organizational spirituality and the lines that differentiate the individual, the workplace, and the organization. Fry (2003) defined spiritual leadership as necessitating intrinsic motivation of self and others such that they have a sense of spiritual survival

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grounded in calling and membership; however, Fry framed this definition within the broader goals of organizational commitment and productivity. Sass (2000) characterized organizational spirituality as having three characteristics: value alignment, personal spirituality, and relationship-based organizing. Herein, we find a commonality between Fry and Sass from which we can properly frame organizational spirituality. Organizational spirituality is intrapersonal (values), interpersonal (relationships), and organizational (organizing).

While the literature on spirituality is expansive and its definition within organizational settings is fleeting, it is clear that organizational spirituality transcends individuals, relational interactions among organizational members, and the organization as a whole. Crossman (2016) wrote that there must be an alignment between individual members and the organization such that spirituality brings connection between individuals, their purpose, and their communities. So then, organizational spirituality is:

- *Intrapersonal*—cultivating the inner spiritual development of values, purpose, meaning, and identity.
- *Interpersonal*—developing relational connectivity around shared values, purpose, meaning, and membership.
- *Organizational*—establishing a culture of organizational values, mission, vision, purpose, and community.

Occurring parallel to the growing interest in organizational spirituality is the *faith at work* movement. Miller (2007) wrote that changing societal, economic, and ecclesiastical environments of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have contributed to the rise of the faith at work conversation. While considered very popular in the 1980s, this rise of faith at work could be clearly witnessed at the turn of the century when the 9/11 attacks of 2001 resulted in an uptick of religion's influence in the daily lives of Americans even in traditionally secular venues such as Congress singing "God Bless America" on the steps of the Capitol Building or organizations creating prayer and meditation rooms for their employees. Hartig and Doherty (2021) wrote that in the days and weeks after 9/11, religion's influence in American life was its highest in four decades. While Hartig and Doherty conclude that this increase was short-lived, the conversation about spirituality in the workplace in the United States has been receiving increased scholarly attention since (Oliveira,

2021). There is, however, a tension that exists between the role of spirituality in private versus public domains (Zaidman & Goldstein-Gidoni, 2011). This leads to two questions. First, is there a place for spirituality in contemporary organizations? Second, what does it look like from a Christian perspective?

*Is there a place for organizational spirituality?*

Proponents of organizational spirituality have long asserted that people are searching for a connection between their work lives and their personal lives (Konz & Ryan, 1999). The integration of faith and work has been found to be positively related to life and job outcomes (Walker, 2013). Roundy (2009) found that there is a positive link between religious callings and job satisfaction in spiritual organizations while this relationship is attenuated or negated in non-spiritual organizations. Kolodinsky et al. (2008) concluded that managers who effectively develop and maintain organizational environments “characterized by spiritual values” are likely to enjoy more favorable worker attitudes while the establishment of a spiritual climate can foster worker perceptions and attitudes. Simply, spirituality in organizational paradigms results in a better workplace, improved quality of products and services, and a more satisfied workforce (Oliveira, 2021).

*What does it look like from a Christian perspective?*

McGhee (2019) summarized spirituality at work from a Christian perspective as having an active, living faith in the workplace. Further, McGhee asserted that by accepting Christ, Christians “assume a new purpose” and connect their labor to that of the wider community and of God’s creation (p. 436). Miller and Ewest (2015) identified five themes of Protestant faith and work: personal calling, stewardship, justice for the marginalized, lifestyles of modesty and generosity, and communicating one’s faith. Further, Buszka and Ewest (2020) wrote that the Christian faith combines three elements: faith (knowing), religion (doing), and spirituality (being). The Christian faith creates a community through which personal spirituality is formed, and this spiritual formation shapes believers’ character and behavior (Henson, 2015). It is a growing spirituality that provides motivation for believers to find ways to live out their faith

in all areas of their lives (Buszka & Ewest, 2020). Meaningful work is foundational to the Christian life as it emulates the creative work of God Himself (Selman, 2014). For believers, their work is an expression of their faith and worship that is grounded in biblical principles. Christians depend upon the favor of God to establish their work: “Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!” (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2016, Psalm 90:17). Christians serve their organizations as part of their service to Christ “whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2016, Colossians 3:23). Biblical organizational spirituality is framed around the centrality of Jesus Christ as the source of life and purpose. A survey of the literature on organizational spirituality and faith at work has yielded multiple themes that align with the three levels of organizational spirituality:

- *Intrapersonal*—spiritual identity, biblical values, Godly purpose, and meaningful work, dependence, faith, integrity, spiritual formation, and personal development.
- *Interpersonal*—service, sacrifice, stewardship, generosity, empathy, compassion, inclusion, diversity, justice, trust, mutual respect, love, teamwork, communication, and empowerment.
- *Organizational*—organizational values, collective mission, shared vision, common purpose, social responsibility, shared community, and collective commitment.

## THE SCOPE

*Biblical Organizational Spirituality* is another project in the *Christian Faith Perspectives in Leadership and Business* book series, and it may be the largest. Taking the lead of the series editorial board, this team of exegetical researchers laid the foundation for future research in biblical organizational spirituality. While this book is fully self-contained, it is part of a larger research project intent on developing a validated scale to measure organizational spirituality from a Christian perspective. Future phases include qualitative research guided by the meta-analysis of the principles provided in this book as well as a scale development with the hope of validating a new scale measuring biblical organizational leadership. The

authors of this text employed an intuitive hermeneutic to the exegesis such that we allowed the passages to speak for themselves.

This approach, however, comes with some limitations. First and foremost, this book was framed around New Testament perspectives while engaging Old Testament pericope as needed with the exegetical process. Not every book in the New Testament is represented in the book; however, we took care in choosing passages that represented a wide-ranging offering of New Testament perspectives. And, when passages were examined multiple times, the differing lens of each researcher provided a unique perspective. There is the potential for other interpretations of the exegetical data we provide, and the data may offer insights to other leadership theories and perspectives of organizational spirituality not explored herein. Further, we also recognize that there are aspects of organizational spirituality, faith at work, and workplace spirituality to which our analysis could have been applied. There may be opportunities for future research into biblical perspectives of organizational spirituality that include new pericope and additional theoretical lenses.

## THE METHODOLOGY

Our research began by emphasizing the necessity of approaching each passage with a fresh perspective. After a designated period of reflective thought and research, the contributing authors presented a proposal that provided potential passages to be studied. Each author was asked to allow their chosen text to speak for itself by beginning their exegetical analysis without diving too deeply into the theory related to organizational spirituality. Each chapter is structured in a way that best aligns with the content of the biblical text including a background of the selected pericope. It is important to note, however, that the introduction for each chapter was written after the chapter was concluded. This was intentional as we prioritized the passage over the theoretical lens, and, as such, the authors could only speak to the content of the chapter as a reflection of the final exegetical process.

The contributing authors employed grammatical-historical criticism, socio-rhetorical analysis, and narrative analysis methodologies as outlined by Henson et al. (2020). As an additional layer of exegetical research, many of the authors engaged in Greek word studies as well as research into the social and cultural practices of first-century Judaism. Lastly, the authors applied contemporary organizational leadership literature to the

themes and data extracted from their passages and developed principles for biblical organizational leadership. The final chapter of the book is a meta-analysis of all of the principles presented in the book providing latent themes from the totality of the New Testament analysis.

## THE CONTENT

Each chapter contains the following elements: (a) an introduction, (b) an overview and background of the passage(s), (c) an in-depth exegetical analysis of the text(s), (d) integration of biblical themes from the passage(s) and organizational leadership and spirituality concepts and theories, and (e) principles derived from each theme. The book is structured such that the chapters were ordered to align with the content and order of the New Testament.

Chapter 2 explores principles of biblical justice and shalom in Jesus' narrative of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. Chapter 3 considers the behaviors of Jesus in John 11 as a model for leading in crisis. Chapter 4 examines vulnerability in leadership through John's account of the Last Supper in John 13. Chapter 5 explores John 15 and how spiritual formation transforms personal behaviors and relationships. Chapter 6 researches the role of spirituality in navigating organizational change in John 20. Chapter 7 explores the role of spirituality in promoting unity, empowerment, and service through the lens of Acts 4. Chapter 8 examines the narrative of the Ethiopian Eunuch and Philip in Acts 8 as an exemplar of building multicultural relationships. Continuing an emphasis on diversity and inclusivity in organizations, Chapter 9 analyzes the role of women in leadership positions in Romans 16. Chapter 10 studies 1 Corinthians 2 and how Paul called for biblical leaders to embrace truth amid a pluralistic secular culture in Corinth. Chapter 11 reviews 1 Corinthians 9 as an exemplar of cross-cultural leadership. Chapter 12 explores the book of Ephesians and its applications to organizational citizenship behavior. Chapter 13 examines the role of forgiveness and unity in supporting organizational spirituality in the book of Philippians. Chapter 14 researches the Epistle of Philippians as a model for organizational maturity. Chapter 15 analyzes Colossians 3 and applies the content to scriptural work. Chapter 16 explores 2 Timothy 1 and its applications to mentorship and leadership development while Chapter 17 applies the same text to preventing burnout and compassion fatigue in the workplace. Chapter 18 considers Hebrews 12 and the impact of leader



endurance on organizations. Chapter 19 exegetes James 4 and applies the content to leader ethics and the just treatment of followers. Chapter 20 explores the true calling of Christian leaders as conceptualized in 1 Peter 5 while Chapter 21 applies the same pericope to consider how leader values facilitate change. Chapter 22 examines 1 John 1 in the development of a spiritual community. Chapter 23 conducts a meta-analysis of the principles contained throughout the book, identifying five themes. New Testament spirituality: produces healthy communities, is service-oriented, is future-focused, is value-centric, and is biblically sound.

While not a complete analysis of all passages or books in the New Testament, this book provides an extensive exploration of key texts throughout the New Testament. Each chapter provides practical principles for contemporary organizational spirituality while allowing the Scriptures to speak for themselves. Each chapter provides the practical application necessary for practitioners while containing a level of research that is appealing to academicians.

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# The Shalom-Making Leader and Organizational Justice: An Analysis of Luke 10

*Guillermo Puppo*

Before any political or philosophical definition of social justice, God established shalom as his ideal for justice on earth. Israel interpreted God's justice—shalom, as peace. The degree to which a society leans toward the biblical idea of justice or injustice is indicative of the presence of shalom or lack thereof (Puppo, 2021). Shalomic peace does not refer to the absence of problems but to the access to justice for all members of a society or organization (Puppo, 2021). In 1 Sam. 2:1–10, God's justice makes the feeble strong, feeds the hungry, raises the lowly, while it also breaks the weapons of the powerful, restoring the balance of powers (Yoder, 1987). While secular organizations typically think of organizational justice as a balance of punishment and rewards, God's shalom is

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restorative and empowering. Therefore, rather than the different philosophical, political, or economic theories, the foundation for organizational justice systems must be the model described throughout scriptures—shalom. In a shalom-making community, all members have access to opportunities to thrive in all areas, freely giving and taking God’s blessings (Yoder, 1987).

However, shalom does not happen spontaneously. It requires leaders to intentionally adopt and implement shalom-making principles that influence the organization toward God’s plan for it. Shalom-making leaders create environments where each member’s soul grows unrestrictedly to its full potential in the context of community with other souls, without reciprocal hindrance but mutual empowerment (White, 1973). In other words, shalom allows any member of an organization to achieve ambitious goals because power is available to everyone, but without hindering or taking from others. In contrast, in Jesus’ times, the Romans imposed the concept of Pax Romana, benefiting the upper-class Romans at the expense of the lower classes (Wengst, 1987). Anyone who dared to denounce or oppose the system became an enemy of Rome. Contemporary organizations share some of these imbalances in power and opportunity, creating systemic injustice for some sectors of the organization. Jesus came to present a kingdom that defied Pax Romana and proposed shalom instead. Thus, Christian leaders have the call and the opportunity to influence their organizations by pursuing shalom-making practices.

If shalom is God’s will for the earth and its organizations, breaking or neglecting it is sinning against God (Plantinga, 1999). Thus, any form of favoritism, privilege, or discrimination breaks the shalom balance of power and opportunity God extends to each and every member of the organization (Harper, 2016). These shalom-breaking practices may appear in the form of executive decisions, but also as procedural discrimination or systemic privilege.

In Luke 10, Jesus sent his disciples to proclaim God’s kingdom by showing shalom to the world (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 10:1–4). The Gospel would only be good news when materializes in acts of justice for everyone (Puppo, 2021). Jesus’ followers were the pioneers of his shalom community. They and the Church are the sign of what biblical justice means and feels like for every member. An absolute state of shalom may not be available on earth, but shalom-making leaders are the sign of what people may enjoy in God’s kingdom.

## ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

Similar to shalom, organizational justice consists of fair work practices at every level within the organization that is acceptable to all its members. These practices might be perceived by the individuals based on equality and organizational fairness. Social exchange theory is at the root of reciprocal behavior and shapes individual behaviors, attitudes, and actions in social interaction (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2019). In organizations, social exchange occurs between employees and employers or managers. When employees perceive their rewards (outcomes) are equal or greater than their efforts (contributions) organizational commitment and effectiveness increase (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2019). Organizations that value justice and balance use impartiality as a tool to motivate and retain employees. They believe that ensuring fair processes within the framework of justice mechanisms in organizations can potentially increase employee commitment, productivity, efficiency, quality of task, and pro-social behaviors (Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2019).

Greenberg (1990) identified three types of justice, namely, distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Distributive justice can be described as an individual's judgment or perceived fairness of resource allocation on the basis of received outcomes as compared to the estimated contributions (Greenberg, 1990). Procedural justice refers to an individual's perception of fairness on the basis of organizational procedures and policies. Interactional justice refers to an individual's perception of fairness with their organizational interpersonal communications.

Distributive justice addresses the fairness of the ends achieved (Greenberg, 1990). The theoretical concept is that employees measure their ratio between performance and rewards with their equals and discrepancies create an unjust environment, either beneficial or not. Procedural justice addresses the fairness of the processes to achieve justice from a systemic standpoint. In other words, whether systems provide an environment that is just for all participants. The self-interest approach posits that people pay attention to processes because they care about their impact in their lives (Greenberg, 1990). Interpersonal justice encompasses treatment and communication. Studies show that honesty, feedback, courtesy, and respect are important factors in interpersonal justice (Greenberg, 1990). Additionally, clarity in explaining how decision-makers apply policy and procedures increases the perception of justice significantly (Greenberg, 1990).

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: SOCIOLOGICAL AND HUMANISTIC

Luke's Gospel highlights the social aspects of Jesus' ministry more than any other. Such an emphasis is intentional. Johnson (2011) explained that ancient historians did not limit their writings to the mere description of facts like their contemporary counterparts. They wrote to shape history with moral examples and characters. Thus, Luke wrote to proclaim specific facts about God, the Gospel, and the world around it. Luke's writings are not a random or chronological account of Jesus' deeds. Rather, they are a selection of moments in Jesus' life in which Luke believed Jesus was establishing essential points on how God's kingdom works (Puppo, 2021). Such a selection highlights the importance of socio-theological dynamics in Jesus' ministry leadership (Fu, 2016). Acosta (2008) described Roman imperial worship and Pax Romana as the instruments through which Roman emperors imposed the regime's values and mechanisms upon all conquered peoples. The emperor's role in imperial theology evolved from intermediary to the object of worship, receiving sacrifices and offerings in exchange for political and economic favors. In contrast, Jesus introduced a countercultural ethical code that replaces the emperor as the center of worship and domination with Yahweh (Acosta, 2008). Luke invites his readers to engage in civic life with a critical mindset, obeying the law while challenging its values. Jesus' messianic message went beyond its theological significance. It confronted his followers with the decision to obey either Caesar or him. The theological question behind the crossroad is who the true Son of God was—Caesar or Jesus. But, for Luke's readers, the answer to that question would have social implications in the here and now as much as soteriological ramifications in the thereafter (Acosta, 2008). As a historian, Luke reminds the Church to keep a critical eye on the status quo. Christians may comply with what is right and just. However, they must be careful not to yield to a system honoring what is unjust, resisting the temptation of becoming the accomplice of privilege and oppression in exchange for imperial, earthly, or organizational power (Acosta, 2008). Further, the issue of charity in Luke is also socio-theological (Giambrone, 2015). Luke repeatedly connects the act of almsgiving to "the Law and Prophets" (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 10:25–28; 16:29–31). His views find deep roots in Old Testament literature and include the issue of shalom-making wealth management. Rather than his contemporaries' understanding of wealth as a sign of Yahweh's blessings, Luke interpreted

wealth in the Old Testament writings as one's opportunity to become a blessing to others and a test of faithfulness to Yahweh (Giambrone, 2015). Arguably, that is the reason for Luke's emphasis on Gentiles, lepers, the poor, and women—the outcasts of his time (Puppo, 2021). Luke highlights the outcast's status reversal through Jesus' actions and teachings (A. C. Miller, 2012). Pericopae such as Mary's conception, the Nazareth proclamation, the Sermon of the Mount, and the parable of Lazarus and the Rich show Luke's warning toward those in power and encouragement for the underprivileged (A. C. Miller, 2012). His audience knew the characters he presented and understood the need to review their attitude and behavior toward them. In the case of Luke's Gospel, the author worked as a historian who emphasized the socio-organizational implications of Jesus' teaching and deeds in his leadership. Luke's stories reflect the connection between social, theological, cultural, and political dynamics that make the arrival of shalom—God's kingdom on earth, to any culture, group, or organization.

## BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

The pericope begins with Jesus launching seventy disciples into every town to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Jesus' message was revolutionary and refreshing for Jews and Gentiles alike. His perspective in the Mosaic Law highlighted God's love and mercy rather than merit and punishment. As Jesus sets new examples on how to follow God's law, in his "Wows to the unrepentant cities" (v. 13–16) he exposes the Jewish religious traditions as a negative example. The attack on tradition and culture triggered the religious leaders' attempt to discredit Jesus in front of his followers. A lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" However, the lawyer's intent to discredit Jesus (v. 25) exposes the faulty assumptions of his religious traditions (Malina, 1993). When the lawyer asked Jesus about the main instruments for salvation (v. 26), Jesus pointed out that he would find them in the first two commandments: love God with all your heart, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as much as yourself (v. 26–27). By doing this, Jesus shows the lawyer that the dynamic of salvation is not self-centered but other-centered—either God or the neighbor. The Law does not allow individuals to care about themselves more than they care about their neighbors. According to Jesus, the Law connects God and neighbor as inseparable requirements for those who live in God's salvation (v. 28).

The connection facilitates shalom as a basic and yet all-encompassing system for social and organizational justice.

Again, the lawyer attempts to challenge Jesus by questioning the definition of neighbor (v. 29). The question implies that some people were the lawyer's neighbors while others were not. Based on the idea of first-century reciprocity (Robbins, 1996), the lawyer must maintain different levels of consideration for others. The neighbor was a tribal member or someone who could return favors, invitations, and gifts (Neyrey, 1991). Those who were not in a position to reciprocate were out of the social circle. The lawyer's question was completely acceptable to the audience and Luke's readers as part of their daily social dynamics. Jesus uses the images of a priest and a Levite—respected leaders in the Jewish community, to show the lawyer what was wrong with their idea of justice (v. 30–32).

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was abandoned and unprotected (Neyrey, 1991); transiting alone was dangerous. The man in the story traveled alone and suffered the impact of extant injustices in the form of violence, robbery, and crime (de Ford, 1984). Violent behavior involves physical force intended to hurt. Robbery consists of taking property unlawfully from a person. The robbers attacked the man. They stripped the man of his possessions. A crime is an action or omission that constitutes a legal offense against others. The robbers almost killed the man. Jesus uses the image of a priest (v. 31), one of the highest-ranked individuals in Jewish society (Robbins, 1996), to exemplify how respected leaders may break God's shalom in ways that are socially acceptable. Priests were spiritual leaders, role models, and social influencers (de Ford, 1984), yet his behavior modeled shalom-breaking practices. He was self-oriented—he belonged to a higher social class. He was self-centered—he did not share his resources with the wounded man. He was self-serving—there was no power or gain in serving the victim. The Levite exhibits similar behavior. The word "likewise" may indicate that the Levite followed the priest's example. He may want to "fit in" within the culture established by his leaders or he felt justified by his leader's actions to neglect the man's needs. Although not as high as the priest, a Levite also enjoyed one of the highest places in the Jewish purity rankings (Robbins, 1996). They both were highly admired and respected leaders. However, their behavior toward the wounded man exhibited shalom-breaking practices as socially acceptable to the Jewish community.



Next, Jesus introduces the image of a Samaritan (v. 33–35), an enemy of Israel, an outcast, a low member of society, as the example of a shalom-making individual. Three categories group the Samaritan’s actions: (1) share privilege, (2) share possessions, and (3) share power. The Samaritan shared his privilege or position by (a) paying attention to those in disadvantage, (b) acting out of compassion and interrupting his journey, and (c) focusing on the man’s needs rather than his own by providing bandages and cloth. The Samaritan shared his possessions by (a) freely pouring his commodities—oil and wine, in the man’s wounds, and (b) inconveniencing himself by sharing his animal while he walked. The Samaritan shared his power by (a) using his resources to introduce the man to the inn and (b) paying for all his expenses during recovery. His actions toward the wounded man provide a taxonomy for shalom-making leaders in contemporary organizations that go beyond concepts of organizational justice and contribute to the development of more effective leaders.

## ELEMENTS OF SHALOM-MAKING LEADERSHIP

In verses 33–35, Jesus describes the elements that made the Samaritan the ultimate neighbor according to God’s standards. There are three groups of principles that contain seven values. The groups are (1) share privilege, (2) share possessions, and (3) share power. The actions are (1) attention to the other, (2) compassion, (3) externally focused, (4) generosity, (5) sacrifice, (6) sponsorship, and (7) sowing.

### *Share Privilege*

Currently, *privilege* communicates how economic and class politics, complicated by intersections of various identities, especially race, gender, class, and sexuality, can precipitate forms of social exclusion and limitations (Harris, 2016). Tilghman-Havens (2018) argued that for effective leadership to heal the divides which plague local, national and global communities, leaders of dominant gender, race, and class must examine unearned privilege in order to actively lead organizations toward greater justice (p. 87). Although low-ranked in the Jewish’s eyes, at the time of the story, the Samaritan enjoyed privileges the wounded man did not have. In contrast with his contemporaries’ use of privilege, and even when

he did not have any obligation to share his, the shalom-making Samaritan's first three actions met the man's immediate needs and stopped the first problem.

*Externally Focused*

The Samaritan “saw” the wounded man. The others saw him too, but they passed by on the other side. He was moved to pity. Since shalom is harmony in power, wealth, peace, and opportunities, its absence in one sector of society prevents its balance of the whole. Thus, the balance must include all members of a group, society, or organization (Puppo, 2021). The book of Proverbs states that neglecting the neighbor breaks shalom while ensuring for the poor's welfare makes shalom (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Prov. 10:6; 11:19; 14:21; 24:1–2). The apostle James warned Christians from sinning of partiality to the rich at the expense of the poor (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Jam. 2:1–9). Jesus commanded his followers to look out for “the least of these” (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Mt. 25:40).

Blanchard and Hodges (2005) stated that Jesus shows that leaders must be “madly in love” with whom they lead. According to Fry (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2020), leadership through love is allowing people to be themselves and even make mistakes as they aim to make a difference. To love is to pay attention to the needs of others (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, 1 Co. 13:5). Shalom-making leaders pay attention and “see” those they lead through the eyes of God's love, regardless of their faith, condition, or position in the organization. While models such as LMX, transactional leadership, and situational leadership encourage the investment in specific relationships or situations, shalom-making leadership calls leaders to ensure every member of the organization attains equal access to unconditional love and attention. Servant leaders love people by serving them. Spiritual leaders love people by allowing them to be themselves. Shalom-making leaders love people by paying attention equally to each member of the organization.

*Principle One: Shalom-making leaders see each member equally through the eyes of God's love and pay attention to everyone as a carrier of the Imago Dei.*

### *Empathy*

The Samaritan was “moved to pity.” By feeling sorrow, association, and conviction to help, the Samaritan displays what loving with one’s heart, soul, strength, and mind (v. 27) truly means—something Israel’s religious leaders seemed far from understanding. Kreitzer (2015) explained that loving one’s neighbor as oneself means to hold not a part, not a half, but everything in common, and to enjoy as an equal benefit; otherwise, it is only a pharisaical, heathen, and false love, not a Christian one (p. 224). Priests and Levites were at the top of the Jewish purity rank (Robbins, 1996). They were the purest and most honorable members of Jewish society. Surprisingly, Jesus uses a Samaritan (v. 33) as the third man entering the scene. In the purity code ranking, non-Jews and Samaritans were at the lowest place, below children of prostitutes, eunuchs, those with deformed sexual features, and hermaphrodites (Robbins, 1996). The Jews considered them heretics because they did not worship or serve God correctly (González, 2010). Nevertheless, Jesus presents the religious leaders as lacking love and empathy for the wounded man while, in contrast, and despite the Samaritan’s alleged faulty theology, Luke presents the Samaritan as serving God properly. This idea was revolutionary for the lawyer, the seventy, Luke’s audience, and readers in the contemporary world of theological and organizational self-centeredness (Puppo, 2021).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined empathy as the ability to comprehend another’s feelings and to re-experience them oneself. Thus, empathy encompasses considering, sensing, and understanding others’ feelings and perspectives as part of their interpretation of reality (Goleman et al., 2002). Leaders gain followers’ trust as they display traits of empathy, compassion, sensitivity, relationship building, and innovation (Kim et al., 2018). A proper understanding of a subordinate’s situation and perception of responsibilities may help leaders to allocate the just amount of power and support for satisfactory performance (Yukl, 2013), increasing the perception of organizational justice and balance of power (Mahsud et al., 2010).

*Principle Two: Shalom-making leaders create just environments by understanding others’ needs and perceptions and providing the resources and opportunities for everyone to thrive at each level of the organization.*

### *Compassion*

He went to him; he interrupted his journey to help him. He bandaged his wounds; he used his cloth to produce bandages for the wounds, sacrificing his property to assist the needy man (Bock, 1994). The term “compassion” comprises a sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress along with the conviction to alleviate it. The Samaritan interrupted his trip, went to the wounded man, and bandaged his wounds. He directed his efforts toward the best interest of someone other than himself. His actions stopped the wounded man’s bleeding and potential infections, providing first aids and completing the first phase of his recovery. Arguably, this section of the pericope presents the sharpest contrast between the apathetic leaders and the “unclean” godly man. Empathy, the ability to understand others’ feelings, is only helpful when it generates compassion that pushes into concrete actions toward helping others—shalom-making actions that bring power into balance for all.

According to Perkins (2018), the call to Christian leadership is to restore the stabilizing glue and fill the vacuum of moral, spiritual, and economic leadership in unjust environments. It is a call to action toward balancing powers in ways that restore the dignity of all people. Thus, compassion is the loudest way to say, “I believe in you, I believe you are worth the effort.” Compassion is the embodiment of shalom. The apostle John explained that “the logos became flesh” (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Jn. 1:14), so that he could take action toward the restoration of humanity. Therefore, Jesus was the embodiment of God’s shalom-making compassion. Heroic leaders challenge the status quo to elevate each member to his or her maximum potential (Lowney, 2009). Allison and Goethals (2013) argued that heroes—like the Samaritan in Jesus’ story—are leaders. Their hero/leader theory offers supporting evidence for a new integration of theories of leadership and theories of heroism (Allison & Goethals, 2013). Leaders and heroes influence organizations with their vision and example (Bass, 1990).

*Principle Three: Shalom-making leaders are compassionate heroes who model values by acting to restore power to everyone.*

### *Share Possessions*

Along with creation, God reinforced the human earthly dominion in the Decalogue’s eighth commandment, “You shall not steal” (*New Revised*

*Standard Version*, 1989, Ex. 20:15), which provided for property rights as well (Kaiser, 2012). Thus, the principle of private property is not only biblical but a foundational element for shalom. Private property creates neighbors—the neighbors God commanded humans to love. However, a shalom-breaking development in the understanding of the acquisition of goods and possessions turned neighbors into people from whom one steals, even going to the extent of employing oppressive and murderous mechanisms. In contrast with current consumerist trends and self-centered values, the Samaritan’s second two shalom-making actions provided the man resources for his development out of his predicament.

### *Generosity*

The Samaritan poured his oil to soothe the wounds and his wine to disinfect them. Jewish religious regulations banned the purchase of Samaritan oil and wine due to purity reasons (de Ford, 1984). The Samaritan had two good reasons not to share his products with the wounded man. First, he knew Jews considered his products impure and lowly, but he took no heed on that. Second, he could sell his products for profit and benefit himself, but he chooses to help the man in need and do what is right in God’s eyes. Like in Lazarus’ story (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 16:19–30), the wounded man was at the mercy of others, incapable of helping himself financially or physically. The agrarian-based exchange systems of first-century Mediterranean society provide the context for understanding the New Testament’s reciprocity mentality (Robbins, 1996). Greeks, Romans, and Palestinians extended hospitality to friends from the same socioeconomic status; they measured power in terms of family allegiances (Stambaugh & Balch, 1986). However, Jesus is not condemning the religious leaders’ wealth but his callousness, self-consumption, self-indulgence, and uncaring posture toward the poor and the sick (Dicken & Snyder, 2016). Jesus is not trying to fix poverty with charity; he is trying to fix wealth with compassion (Puppo, 2021). Luke uses the language of possessions with great frequency to express man’s response to God’s visitation. How a man disposes of his possessions indicates the quality of that response, whether it is one of accepting or rejecting God’s presence in his life (Johnson, 1977). Throughout scriptures, God shows support for private property. However, he states that management of possessions must reflect God’s idea of love, generosity, and mercy toward others, and the command to not neglect or oppress the weak, the poor, and the needy (Johnson, 1981). Shalom does not

mean that the poor becomes equal with the rich but that the rich must ensure the poor's welfare (Johnson, 1981).

Generosity is often the symbol of abundance (Berry & Seltman, 2009). Nevertheless, generosity is also a key element for success. Organizations exist to create value for their stakeholders. The greater the value, the stronger the organization's influence in the market. In contrast, a scarce mentality limits organizations and their members to offer their best contribution and obtain their greatest outcomes. For Fry and Nisiewicz (2020), generosity is one of the deepest manifestations of altruistic love that expresses care, concern, and appreciation for all members. Generosity inspires a positive influence within organizations. However, this influence transcends the leader-member relationship and impacts customers, the community, and other key stakeholders (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2020).

*Principle Four: Shalom-making leaders provide value through generously extending power and resources to all members to generate a positive impact within the organization and beyond.*

### *Sacrifice*

The Samaritan put the man on his animal, deciding to inconvenience himself by walking to the inn (Bock, 1994). The central difference between generosity and sacrifice is the concept of lacking. While generosity freely provides others with resources, sacrifice extends the giving to the extent of resulting in one's lacking for the sake of the other. Jesus, the embodiment of God's shalom on earth, is the ultimate example of sacrifice. The apostle John explained that God loved humans with such love that he sacrificed his Son's life so that they could regain theirs (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Jn. 3:16). Further, Jesus understood that he came to give his life "in ransom for many" (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Mt. 20:28). The Samaritan in Jesus' story was willing to do something the religious leaders were not—to lose his resources so that others could attain some. By his sacrifice, he extended power and resources to another person and restored the wounded man's ability to recover from the attack. He restored shalom.

Throughout human history, leaders have been responsible for helping groups attain important goals. However, leaders can also use their power in the service of self-interest rather than effective leadership (Maner & Mead, 2010). Self-centered leaders practice shalom-breaking behaviors such as withholding information from the group, excluding high-skilled

competitors, and preventing a proficient group member from having any influence over a group task (Maner & Mead, 2010). In contrast, leaders' sacrificial behavior influences their effectiveness positively (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Sacrificial leaders can push subordinates to higher levels of effort, commitment, and performance than non-sacrificial leaders. Hoogervorst et al. (2012) argued that, since organizational goals often prescribe serving the interests of the organization, when leaders have a strong sense of belongingness, they show and demand sacrifice from leaders low in subjective power. Further, leaders high in subjective power should model sacrifice regardless of their sense of belongingness as a way to encourage the balance of power and resources among all members (Hoogervorst et al., 2012).

*Principle Five: Shalom-making leaders embrace and inspire sacrifice so that all members of the organization can attain their maximum potential.*

### *Share Power*

At the heart of the Servant-Leadership model are values that invite the servant-leader to lean into self-examination and action on behalf of those who are unheard or unrepresented by traditional power structures (Tilghman-Havens, 2018). Philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche (1989) paved the way for a leadership centered in power and control of others. In contrast, Hooks (2000) suggested the alternative that the human condition is collectively yearning for a loving, meaningful will to share power. By his last two actions, the Samaritan ensured that empowering alternatives allowed the man to fully recover his place in society.

### *Sponsorship*

The wounded man could not speak for himself; he could not contract a room or offer any assurance to pay for his stay. In other words, a place at the inn was out of his reach. The Samaritan used his power to speak, contract, and pay to provide the wounded man with access to resources and opportunities he otherwise could not afford. Jesus championed sponsorship. He constantly used his power so that others could have a voice or access into circles regulated by those who would not share it. He came so that the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed may enter God's kingdom (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 4:18–21). Among many other things, he healed the leper and sent him to

the priest to regain access to his village (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 5:12–14), allowed women to enter into service to God (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 8:1–3), called the crippled woman “a daughter of Abraham” (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 13:16), reestablishing her as a lawful member of the Jewish community, revindicated the status of children (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 18:15–17), invited a tax collector to become a member of his group (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 19:1–5), and reset the temple economic power (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Lk. 19:45–46). For Jesus, shalom was not a mere teaching but about bringing God’s power to earth to sponsor those robbed of theirs into his Kingdom.

It is a well-known fact that minorities (i.e., women, people of color, people with disabilities) are significantly underrepresented at the leadership level in organizations (Gray, 2021). For example, in their study, Singh and Vanka (2020) discovered that there were only 25 female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies in 2018, which is a meager 4.8 percent. In general, organizations struggle to identify, source, and promote diverse talent from all lines of business (Paddison, 2013). One of the key developmental strategies is mentoring. Mentoring is a relationship that involves guidance, knowledge sharing, and counseling by a senior and experienced person. However, underrepresentation at top levels creates a power circle that only allows for those like themselves. Outsiders need organizations to pursue innovative and action-oriented strategies that can complement mentoring (Singh & Vanka, 2020). Sponsors go beyond mentoring. They use their influence and experience to open doors of opportunity, advocate, and promote the skills of their proteges, promoting them to higher positions (Paddison, 2013). Mentors prepare their mentees to go to places; sponsors make sure their proteges do. They honor the assumed existing potential within those being sponsored and expend energy on targeted advocacy and networking exposure, the most crucial components of promotion.

*Principle Six: Shalom-making leaders use their power and influence to sponsor others into better opportunities for they believe in their inherent potential.*

### *Sowing*

The Samaritan paid for the wounded man’s recovery, using his money to pay for the equivalent of 24 days of lodging. He did not cover the minimum but went to the extent of assuming responsibility for any extra



cost since the wounded man was robbed and had no money with him (Puppo, 2021). Further, the Samaritan did not expect anything in return. The story shows no signs of him coming back to collect anything from the wounded man. In Christian leadership, sowing is not about the return but about Grace. When Jesus sent his twelve disciples to proclaim the arrival of the Kingdom (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Mt. 10:1–14), he gave them authority to perform signs such as curing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the leper, and casting out demons. He emphasized the fact that they were to do all this without receiving anything in return. He explained, “You received without payment, give without payment” (*New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, Mt. 10:8). As the disciples were to show the people how the Kingdom of God and his shalom works, giving without receiving in return was a central practice. The disciples already received from God freely; they should not expect anything from the people. The pericope does not justify freeloading but encourages Christian to empower those in dire conditions to restore them to a place of dignity and opportunity. For Jesus, shalom includes the gratuitous flow of blessings in the form of goods and services as a form of empowering people back into their place in society.

In a self-centered culture, leading with grace in our modern world may seem counterintuitive. Nevertheless, graceful leaders build gratitude, trust, and collaboration among colleagues and team members (Tysiac, 2016). To become graceful, leaders must first be grateful (Li et al., 2021). Grateful for the opportunities they received, either deservedly or undeservedly. Since leaders received undeserved opportunities, they now must extend them unto others as well. People are more than numbers or entries in a spreadsheet (Tysiac, 2016). Li et al. (2021) developed a model to link a leader’s trait gratitude to ethical leadership and leader-member exchange (LMX) and examine their impacts on followers’ felt psychological safety and thus creativity at work. Sampling 295 subordinates and 76 supervisors, their findings show that a leader’s trait gratitude was positively associated with ethical leadership at the team level and LMX at the individual level. Further, both ethical leadership and LMX contribute to followers’ felt psychological safety and ultimately improve creative performance at work (Li et al., 2021).

*Principle Seven: Shalom-making leaders are grateful individuals who gracefully sow in everyone without expecting anything in return other than bringing empowering opportunities to those who need them.*

## SUMMARY

In verses 36–37, Jesus established the Samaritan’s actions as those of the shalom-making leader who the lawyer and all Israelites must emulate. In a typical Lukan reversal (Dicken & Snyder, 2016) the outcast, lowly, unclean foreigner becomes God’s shalomic role model. The statement confronted the lawyer and the audience with shalom-breaking practices, which were completely acceptable in their social terms. By instructing the lawyer to “go and do likewise,” Jesus is indicating that the lawyer must imitate not his religious leaders but those who act based on God’s will. The pericope presents three social/organizational issues: violence as an attack to others, robbery as taking what belongs to others, and crime as unlawful behavior. These issues created three shalom-breaking attitudes: self-orientation (apathy), self-centeredness (greed), and self-serving (egoism). Jesus proposed three shalom-making responses to these situations: share privilege, share possessions, and share power. The results are distributive justice (just decisions), procedural justice (just systems), and interpersonal justice (just treatment). Table 2.1 summarizes the findings.

Jesus presents the Samaritan’s actions as the godly behavior that deserves and expresses eternal life. Salvation comes not when a person seeks who his or her neighbor is but when she or he makes a neighbor out of everyone. The highly religious Jewish culture utilized purity codes (Robbins, 1996) to discriminate between high and low-rank members, a shalom-braking practice. In contrast, Jesus exhorted them to use God’s love, like the Samaritan, to extend power and opportunity to everyone, a

**Table 2.1** Summary of organizational issues and shalomic responses

| <i>Organizational Issue</i> | <i>Shalom-breaking attitude</i> | <i>Shalom-making response</i>                             | <i>Shalomic trait</i>                      |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Violence                    | Self-orientation                | Share privilege (externally focused, empathy, compassion) | distributive justice (shalomic decisions)  |
| Robbery                     | Self-centeredness               | Share possessions (generosity, sacrifice)                 | procedural justice (shalomic systems)      |
| Crime                       | Self-serving                    | Share power (sponsorship, investment)                     | interpersonal justice (shalomic treatment) |

Source Guillermo Puppo

shalom-making practice, as a sign of God's kingdom on earth. In other words, by exposing the shalom-breaking culture of the Jewish leaders, Jesus establishes a shalom-making culture that allows leaders to use their privilege, possessions, and power to bring every member of the organization to his or her maximum potential. Instead of selecting who his or her neighbor is, the shalom-making leader must establish godly neighborliness to everyone as a sign of the Kingdom of God in organizations. Table 2.2 summarizes the seven traits for shalom-making leaders.

**Table 2.2** Summary of organizational shalom-making traits

| # | Trait              | Definition  | Action            |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | Externally focused | <i>Shalom-making leaders see each member equally through the eyes of God's love and pay attention to everyone as a carrier of the Imago Dei</i>   | Share privilege   |
| 2 | Empathy            | <i>Shalom-making leaders create just environments by understanding others' needs and perceptions and providing the resources and opportunities for everyone to thrive at each level of the organization</i> | Share privilege   |
| 3 | Compassion         | <i>Shalom-making leaders are compassionate heroes who model values by acting to restore power to everyone</i>   | Share privilege   |
| 4 | Generosity         | <i>Shalom-making leaders provide value through generously extending power and resources to all members to generate a positive impact within the organization and beyond</i>                                 | Share possessions |
| 5 | Sacrifice          | <i>Shalom-making leaders embrace and inspire sacrifice so that all members of the organization can attain their maximum potential</i>   | Share possessions |
| 6 | Sponsorship        | <i>Shalom-making leaders use their power and influence to sponsor others into better opportunities for they believe in their inherent potential</i>   | Share power       |
| 7 | Investment         | <i>Shalom-making leaders are grateful individuals who gracefully invest in everyone, without expecting anything in return other than bringing empowering opportunities to those who need them</i>           | Share power       |

Source Guillermo Puppo

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# Finding Legacy, Empathy, and Hope in Crisis: An Analysis of John 11

*Wayne E. Credle*

With many complex and unprecedented challenges that grip our world, there remains a call for leaders who can lead during a crisis. These are leaders who can influence and motivate followership while faced with intense and time constraining situations (Christensen, 2009; Garcia, 2015; Klann, 2003; Mitroff, 2004). Crisis leaders are some of the most effective leaders, due to their ability not to be the smartest leader, but the most adaptable leader. By preparing for the unforeseen, the adaptability of crisis leaders makes them the most effective leaders for organizations today (Northouse, 2013; Tortorella & Fogliatto, 2017; Valeras & Cordes, 2020; Van Eeden et al., 2008). Laced with crises throughout, scripture is a resource that can inform leaders on how to respond to crisis, while also providing leaders a foundational reference for the many historical and contemporary organizational concepts, themes, and theories used

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by organizations today. Specifically in the Lazarus narrative of John 11, Jesus faced a personal, time-intensive challenge as He battled the crisis of losing a close friend. Faced with despair, Jesus influenced His followers and His critics to see the gift of crisis, to feel the grief of crisis, and to experience the God of crisis. This chapter explores the Lazarus narrative in four parts: (a) the Death of Lazarus (11:1–16), (b) the Resurrection and the Life (11:17–27), (c) the Weeping of Jesus (11:28–37) and (d) the Raising of Lazarus (11:38–44). Within these four parts, the overarching theme of crisis leadership is intersected with the supporting themes of legacy, empathy, and hope. By weaving these themes together, this chapter presents a context of organizational spirituality amid crisis that speaks to faith organizations and the marketplace, at large.

### BACKGROUND OF JOHN

Hays (1996) stated “those who follow the Jesus of the fourth gospel will learn an ethic that loves not in words or speech but in truth and action” (1 Jn. 3:18; p. 156). It is through this truth and action that the fourth account of the gospel calls its readers into a world outside of its synoptic counterparts, while reinforcing the story of a “God who so loved the world, that He gave” (Jn. 3:16–17) (Dvorak, 1998; Moloney, 2017; Sosler, 2017). Though the authorship of the fourth gospel is classically attributed to John of Zebedee (Odeberg, 1951; Parker, 1962; Tasmuth, 2007), this attribution is up for debate as the name “John” may have been used only to ensure the survival of the text itself (Pierce, 1966). Still, what remains an overarching consensus among scholars is that the fourth gospel writer is undoubtedly the Lord’s disciple and the one whom Jesus loved (Jn. 20:20, 24) (Odeberg, 1951; Pierce, 1966).

Serving as an intersection between history and the revelation of Christology (Harriman, 2018), John offered to its readers: (a) messianic signs, (b) sacramentality, and (c) a doctrine of soteriology. Such in John was written to point to a Christ who bridged eternity and time (Jojko, 2019). Further, John provided the idea of a “realized eschatology” or that the resurrecting power and newfound hope experienced in the gospels was also present and available for its readers (Turner, 1976). This accounted for the multiple references to the “beginning” (Jn. 1:1, 3) or “hour” (Jn. 2:4; 7:6; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1–3) (Jojko, 2019). Within John’s Gospel, the concept of time is reconceptualized and reintroduced as a concept that bows to a sovereign God.



Within its book, the first twelve chapters of the John were categorized as the books of “signs,” while the remainder of the books were categorized as the books of “glory” (Brown, 1970; Kim, 2011). The “signs” in John were seven miraculous events that pointed to Christ as the Messiah (Crowe, 2018; Harriman, 2018; Kim, 2011; Köstenberger, 2018; Sosler, 2017; Turner, 1976). The term “signs” was traditionally preferred over “miracles” so that readers did not miss the Messianic message for the miracle, itself (Köstenberger, 2018). While scholars have debated which events counted as one of the seven signs, the popular consensus of the seven signs, in chronological order, was: (a) Jesus turned water into wine (2:1–11), (b) Jesus cleared the temple (2:13–23), (c) Jesus healed the centurion’s servant (4:46–54), (d) Jesus healed the lame man (5:1–15), (e) Jesus multiplied the bread (6:1–15); (f) Jesus healed the boy blind from birth (9:1–41), and (g) Jesus rose Lazarus from the dead (11:1–44) (Harriman, 2018; Kim, 2011; Köstenberger, 2018; Sosler, 2017; Turner, 1976).

Crowe (2018) cited a different listing from the above, substituting (b) the clearing of the temple in John 2:13–23 with the images of wine, water, and blood from crucifixion (19:17–37). Crowe’s replacement of John 2 was meant to emphasize the sacramental imagery found in John 19. For Crowe, those images remind readers of: (a) how Christ turned water into wine (Jn. 2), (b) how Christ’s body would be broken for man (Lk. 24:30–31), and (c) how His blood would be poured out for man (Mt 26:28) (Moloney, 2017). It is in this imagery, in the sacramentality that the Father becomes the most visible and transcendent figure in John’s account. This would remain important, especially when Jesus appeared forsaken on the cross (Jn. 19:16) (Filtvedt, 2017). Through the sacraments are signs of a Son who, through His Father, redeems a sinful world and becomes a pathway for abundant living (Torrance, 1989).

The book of “signs” ushers the reader into the books of glory, Chapters 14 to 23. The term “glory” denotes God’s greatness, grandeur, fame, reputation, superabundance, perfection, heaviness, or weight (Balthasar, 1991; Mahoney, 2011). Glory has also been defined as: (a) the divine in operation, (b) the praise evoked from the divine, or (c) the shared experience between God and man (Brown, 1970). This explains why death, whether of others (Jn. 11:4) or even His own (Jn. 2:4; 7:6, 8:20; 12:23, 27) is not solely a time of bereavement and lament, but also a moment of glory (Brown, 1970). John’s recollection consistently places the elements of grief and glory in tension with each other, especially with respect to

time, with the central theme that Christ is Lord over all (Jojko, 2019) (Jn. 10:28). Apart from the synoptic gospels which portray Jesus as the Suffering Servant (Mark), the Son of the Jews (Matthew), or the Son of Man (Luke), John's recollection identifies Jesus as the Son of God, who invites all to have life in His name (Jn. 20:31).

More than a moral compass for its readers, the book of signs and the book of glory in John cohesively established a doctrine of soteriology, or salvation, for believers (Shin, 2017). This doctrine encompassed four ideas: (a) Mankind, through Christ, is saved from death and eternal judgment, (b) mankind is released from the bondage and penalty of sin, (c) mankind is free to enter relationship with the Father, and (d) mankind, pardoned from sin, is now commissioned to spread the gospel message (Acts 1:8) (Turner, 1976). This may account for why John did not mention any demons in the fourth account (Van Oudtshoorn, 2017). In John's account, nothing was to overshadow the new life available to believers through the agony and victory of the cross. This idea of new life remained the central theme and macro-narrative for John, which lay in tension with the micro-narrative of earthly living. Such tension is central to the Lazarus narrative of crisis, bearing socio-cultural, religious, and organizational implications. The invitation, thus, is to see how Jesus intervened and handled the crisis and what themes can be applied today. To accomplish this, John 11 will be explored in four sections: (a) The Death of Lazarus (11:1–16), (b) The Resurrection and the Life (11:17–27), (c) The Weeping of Jesus (11:28–37), and (d) the raising of Lazarus (11:38–44).

### THE DEATH OF LAZARUS (11:1–16)

John 11:1–16 centered on the micro-narrative of Lazarus' death within the greater macro-narrative of the Passion story. What intertwined these two narratives was the crisis of Lazarus' illness, which appeared four times in the first four verses of the text (11:1–4). The repetition of this term reinforced its importance and thereby compelled John's audience to focus on the illness and how it could affect others in the narrative (Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). In John 11, the term "illness" is interchangeable with "asleep" which signified Lazarus' death. While these terms spoke to Lazarus' immediate crisis, John also used these terms to frame the Passion narrative (Kim, 2011). Here is where we see the juxtaposition

of the macro-narrative and the micro-narrative in John 11. In the micro-narrative, these terms referred to the physical state of Lazarus. In the macro-narrative, these terms referred to the spiritual state of the world, which is because of sin (Kearney, 2017; Kim, 2011).

Without question, John's juxtaposition of both narratives was not to diminish the gravity of Lazarus's suffering. Rather, it highlights the tension between both realities. This tension is first seen in the way Jesus responded to the news of Lazarus' death. Knowing the severity of the situation, Jesus intentionally delayed His travel to Bethany two additional days, which was as an odd response to a close friend in need (11:6). In response to Lazarus' physical illness (the micro-narrative), Jesus referred to His own death and hour of glorification (the macro-narrative) (Lk. 23:45; Jn. 11:9–10). As stated previously, Jesus equates death with glory. With no full understanding of Jesus' response to the news of Lazarus, the disciples found themselves in the center of the conflicting tensions in the John 11 crisis. The next section will further explore John 11 as a crisis narrative, its components, and Jesus' demonstration as a crisis leader.

### THE CRISIS OF LAZARUS' DEATH

The illness and inevitable death of Lazarus was, without question, a crisis. Scholars define crisis as a situation that contains a low probability, a high impact, and a time constraint (Christensen, 2009; Garcia, 2015; Klann, 2003; Mitroff, 2004). Within the narrative, Lazarus had a low probability of living (11:1), his death highly impacted his sisters (11:3), and by the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus was already dead (11:17–18). Crisis situations are highly characterized by myriads of emotion. Those who experience crisis may feel panic, doubt, uncertainty, distress, anger, or fear, which causes individuals to lose the will or desire to function (Rast et al., 2013). Many characters within the narrative experienced these emotions in light of Lazarus's illness and Jesus' lateness.

Faced with ridicule for His lateness on all sides, Jesus nevertheless operated as a crisis leader at Bethany (Beavis, 2013). Crisis leadership is a leadership approach that seeks to maintain control of a crisis through the heavy influencing and motivation of other leaders and followers (Garcia, 2015; Mitroff, 2004; Rast et al., 2013). This approach is not to be confused with that of crisis management. A crisis management approach seeks to manage followership during uncertainty, whereas crisis leadership influences followership despite it (Garcia, 2015; Mitroff, 2004). Crisis

leaders plan for the unforeseen, which prepares them for crisis, helps them to remain in control during crisis, and keeps them in control after the crisis event. Leaders who employ this approach: (a) present unified vision, (b) effectively communicate goals, and (c) demonstrate a high level of decisiveness (Anderson, 2018; Klann, 2003; McNulty et al., 2019; Saltz, 2017). Faced with the micro-narrative crisis of Lazarus' death at Bethany and the macro-narrative crisis of sin in the world, Jesus employed these three characteristics in the narrative to influence and motivate His leaders, followers, and skeptics. The next section will examine how Jesus maintained a unified vision, effective communication, and decisiveness while experiencing crisis.

### A UNIFIED VISION IN CRISIS

Christ demonstrated the first characteristic of crisis leadership, which is a vision that unifies followership. Though all the disciples were reluctant to return to Bethany due to their concern for Jesus' safety as well as their own (11:8), Jesus motivated all twelve disciples—including the sarcastic, reluctant Thomas (11:16)—to return to Bethany. Christ did this by announcing His awareness of the situation, His desire to sovereignly intervene in the situation, and His desire to obtain glorification out of the situation (11:4, 14–15) (Moloney, 2017). Through His vision, Jesus presented a clear plan of action that was followable, even though the disciples did not agree with the plan in its entirety. When followership is faced with crisis, even if they do not fully agree with the course of action, a strong, unwavering, and autocratic vision will call them to action (Rast et al., 2013).

Jesus' vision brought a command and reassurance that though the odds were not favorable for His team, the team would nevertheless be successful. This is important because in times of trial, followership may not be interested in the details of the crisis, but rather in the direction to navigate it (Rast et al., 2013). Conversely, followership may become so caught up in the details that they miss the direction or lose the motivation to go in the direction of the leader. This happened in verses 8–13 when the disciples became consumed by the details of the crisis, rather than being concerned about the directive. This may also explain why Jesus plainly indicated that Lazarus was dead, that Lazarus' death was for their belief, and that their course of action is to go visit him (Jn. 11:14). Altogether, the disciples—at the risk of their own lives—followed Jesus back

into Bethany, possibly believing that something would happen to Lazarus and to them as well.

Principle One: with a unified vision, crisis leaders can effectively lead their team into difficult places during difficult times.

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN CRISIS

Jesus, within the Lazarus narrative, demonstrated another characteristic of crisis leadership, which is effective communication. Although the disciples became consumed with the details, and had to be given a directive, Jesus—as a leader—nevertheless created space for the disciples to reflect on the crisis. Here, followership was able to express their concern for Jesus’ safety and their own (11:8). Likewise, they were able to suggest their own remedy for Lazarus’ healing, which was for Lazarus to get more sleep (11:12). Because they misunderstood what Jesus meant by Lazarus being asleep, Jesus helped to clear up the misunderstanding by telling them plainly that Lazarus has died (11:14). Jesus also informed the disciples that Lazarus’ death was important for their own faith, something they would not understand until later (11:14; 42; 12:1–2).

Although the disciples did not feel comfortable going back to Bethany, they felt comfortable enough to share those feelings with Jesus as their leader. The same disciples did not fully understand the plan of Jesus yet followed His direction. Not to mention, even after the discussion was had and the directive was given, this did not make going to Bethany any less dangerous. Though they are given no resolution for the threat that would await them, the disciples nevertheless followed Jesus to Bethany, regardless of their doubts (11:6). The key to the disciples’ honesty and obedience is the concept of safety. Leaders who can effectively communicate to followers, which entails listening to the concerns of followers, develop an environment and culture of safety for followership (Johannesen, 1974; Ryan & Oestreich, 1998; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). When followers feel safe around their leaders, they will be more inclined to commit themselves to the direction of those leaders. In between the micro-narrative and the macro-narrative, Jesus effectively communicated His vision, but also heard the views of His disciples.

Principle Two: With effective communication, crisis leaders can create a safe space for followership to address their concerns.

## DECISIVENESS IN CRISIS

Christ demonstrated the third characteristic of crisis leadership, which is decisiveness. Decisiveness is defined as the ability to make choices effectively, which may entail the consensus of other parties (Urfalino, 2014). Though a full consensus is ideal in any organization, this concept is difficult in practice (Harvey et al., 2004). The Lazarus narrative is no different as Thomas remarked “let us also go, that we may die with him” (11:16) before the disciples’ headed to Bethany. Thomas’ remark was problematic for a few reasons: (a) it did not provide an alternative solution to the crisis, (b) it could have brought down the morale of the team, (c) it was not mentioned to Jesus directly, but to the disciples, (d) it appears to have been mentioned when the discussion was over, versus while the discussion was occurring, (e) it misjudged the long-term impact of Jesus’ decision and (f) it sarcastically asserted the notion of death, which may have been insensitive to Lazarus’ death (Harvey et al., 2004). Within organizations, it is remarks such as these that can deter, hinder, or complicate the decision-making process. Still with this remark, Jesus—who heard it either physically or divinely—demonstrated a high level of decisiveness by not allowing Thomas’ sarcasm to prevent them from journeying to Bethany (Anderson, 2018; McNulty et al., 2019).

Thomas’ sarcasm did not sway the other disciples, either. Thomas’ remark was not addressed nor revisited by the disciples or by Jesus. This is because Jesus knew that Thomas’ doubt in the micro-narrative of Lazarus (11:16) would be transformed into an unwavering faith in the macro-narrative of the Cross (20:28). Perhaps, this accounts for why John ensured the remark was written in his account. It is through the Lazarus narrative that we see even the disciples individually wrestling with crisis. Altogether, Christ with good vision, communication, and effective decision-making, would stop at nothing to demonstrate a sign of resurrection at Bethany. This sign would serve both the macro- and micro-narrative, healing Lazarus, edifying the church, and redeeming the world (Filtvedt, 2017; Kearney, 2017; Sosler, 2017). The next section will explore the second section of the Lazarus narrative, found in John 11:17–27 and will uncover the theme of legacy leadership, which will intersect with crisis leadership.

Principle Three: During a crisis, decisive leaders can influence all followers, even those reluctant to follow.

## THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (11:17–27)

The second section of the Lazarus narrative is centered around the interactions between Jesus and Martha, one of Lazarus' sisters. At this point, Lazarus was officially dead for four days (11:6; 14–15; 17) (Hutton, 2008). When Jesus and His disciples finally arrived at Bethany on day four, Jesus was immediately met with Martha's grief and disappointment (11:20). John's record of Martha's approach is notable for four reasons: (a) First, in Jewish custom, it would have been normal for a grieving family to remain seated, yet Martha rose (11:20); (b) Second, in Jewish custom, it would have been traditional for women to have been called, yet Martha spoke first to Jesus (11:21); (c) Third, in Jewish custom, it would have been normal for the mourners to follow the grieving family members—as they did with Mary—yet Martha went to Jesus alone (11:20; 33), and lastly, (d) Martha approached Jesus without Mary who stayed home (11:20), though Mary is usually found at the feet of Jesus (Lk. 10:39–40) (Hanson, 2012). It is here in this moment that Martha became one of first women of the New Testament to approach Jesus in this way, sharing an intimate, private moment with Him.

John's record of Martha depicted her as more than just Lazarus' sister, but Christ's disciple, as she referred to Christ as her Teacher (11:28) (Hanson, 2012). Further, Martha's private interaction with Jesus elevated her status to that of Jesus' inner circle (Mt. 26:36–38; Mk. 9:2–3; Lk. 5:4–11). Sharing with her the macro-narrative, Martha's affirmation of Christ as the Resurrection and the Life in verse 27 became a contrast and a critique of Thomas' sarcasm in verse 16. While Thomas would eventually accept this new reality also (20:28), Martha is one of the first disciples who acknowledged Christ's power without proof (Hanson, 2012). The Johannine account of Lazarus was meant to showcase Lazarus as a sign, yet Martha—as a true disciple—was no longer in need of one (Crowe, 2018; Harriman, 2018; Kim, 2011; Köstenberger, 2018; Sosler, 2017). Though she was traditionally given a poor reputation for not being as meek as Mary, Martha became the first disciple—in crisis—to receive and accept the macro-narrative of the Resurrection and the Life (Harriman, 2018; Kim, 2011; Lagasse, 2018; Nesbitt, 1961). The next section will further explore this conversation between Martha and Jesus, specifically exposing how legacy leadership becomes intersected with crisis leadership at Bethany.

## LEGACY AMID CRISIS

Within leadership studies, legacy leadership is defined as a transference of expert knowledge from leaders to other leaders or other followers (Kan, 2019). This approach is like crisis leadership in that it entails the influencing of followership through effective vision casting, relationship building, and strategic planning which entails decisiveness (Nanton, 2011). This approach takes leader trust, emotional intelligence, clearly defined expectations, and commitment to be effective (Nanton, 2011; Whittington et al., 2005). While legacy leadership requires service, it also requires resounding faith (Leslie, 2012). At its best, legacy leadership liberates leaders, or experts, by transforming them into mentors who help followers reach their full potential (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Nanton, 2011). Simply put, legacy leaders create other leaders. Within the Lazarus narrative, Jesus became a crisis leader who uses a legacy leader approach in the micro-narrative to develop leaders in the macro-narrative. Note, Jesus does not trade a crisis leadership approach for a legacy leadership approach. Rather, as an expert and leader, Jesus intersected legacy leadership in crisis by presenting solutions that would develop crisis leaders. While Martha is the main character in 11:17–27, this distribution of knowledge becomes applicable for the disciples and the crowd, also. Legacy leadership is executed when leaders: (a) aid followers in sense-making, (b) help followers to navigate temporal barriers, and (c) create pathways for contexts to change (Kan, 2019). The next sections will explore how Jesus demonstrated the components of legacy leadership in the crisis narrative of Lazarus.

## SENSEMAKING IN CRISIS

Meeting privately with Jesus, Martha mentioned that if Jesus were present, her brother would still be alive and even still, in crisis, the Father could answer anything requested of Jesus (11:21–22) (Kearney, 2017). Both were two large statements of faith, which are affirmed through Jesus' declaration that Lazarus will live (11:23). It is here in crisis where Jesus offered Martha a gift. The gift was not a better understanding of resurrection. The gift was the revelation of a Son who embodied resurrecting power (11:25). Martha's invitation was simply to embrace it (11:26). With this embrace, Martha becomes much like the Woman at the Well, who met a Man that told her everything that she ever knew, changing her



resurrection theology and increasing her faith (Jn. 4; 11:27–28) (Hanson, 2012; Kearney, 2017).

Here, Jesus demonstrated the first component of legacy leadership. Through a private conversation with Martha, while faced with the crisis of her dead brother, Jesus—through the transferring of vital information—aided Martha in making an eternal decision. The decision that Martha made had nothing to do with Lazarus, but all to do with herself. In the crisis, Jesus did not control, lecture, or belittle Martha but created space for her to make sense of the trauma she experienced through information sharing and dialogue. In the tension of the macro-narrative and the micro-narrative, Martha is given space to wrestle with them both. Through sensemaking, Martha—in crisis—became the first disciple and first woman to accept the narrative of her brother and embrace the narrative of her Savior. Jesus did not invite her to choose, but rather to know that there is a new possibility that could help her make sense of both. Within organizations, leaders that effectively communicate in crisis can help their followers to see solutions within crisis. The next section will discuss how Jesus helped Martha to navigate temporal barriers in crisis.

Principle Four: In crisis, leaders can help followership make sense of their current reality and invite them to embrace new possibilities.

### NAVIGATING TEMPORAL BARRIERS IN CRISIS

In the same conversation, Jesus demonstrated the second component of legacy leadership, equipping Martha to navigate temporal barriers. In the conversation with Jesus, Martha asserts her own belief in the afterlife, knowing that in the “last day” she will see her brother again (11:24). When Martha accepted that Life and Resurrection both rested in the person of Jesus, Martha no longer needed to place her faith in ritualistic thinking, specifically in the resurrection event, to substantiate peace concerning her brother. The barrier that Martha navigated with resurrection (11:24) is very similar to the barrier the Women at the Well navigated regarding worship (Jn. 4:19). Jesus does not dismiss the ideas of the Women at the Well or Martha, but again through sensemaking, offered an idea that renewed both their ideologies. This offering allowed both women in the Johannine account to break through a religious barrier that would have otherwise held them back from a closer relationship with Christ.

Legacy leaders understand that to effectively create leaders, they—as experts—cannot engage in cognitive dissociation. Cognitive dissociation is the idea of disowning one narrative or an idea to embrace another (Bostdorff & Ferris, 2014). Within the crisis, Jesus did not choose the World over Lazarus, nor did He force Martha to forsake Lazarus to choose Christ. Rather, Christ wove together both narratives and in the height of her crisis, provided divine, expert knowledge that would develop Martha as a crisis leader. When leadership and followership are faced with crisis, legacy leaders build crisis leaders by helping them to make sense of where they are and to break the temporal barriers that could hinder where they can go. Centrally, this looks like allowing the barriers of the expert to be broken. Jesus, surrounded by men who refused to hear, broke protocol to encourage the one woman who would hear (Chisale, 2020; Clark, 2004; Sims, 2016). He allowed Martha to approach Him alone, and in her grief—which again was prohibited by Jewish culture—to give her a gift of new possibilities to share with her sister and the world.

Principle Five: In crisis, information sharing can help followership to navigate temporal barriers, meeting both personal and organizational needs.

## CHANGING CONTEXT IN CRISIS

Without rushing to the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus as a legacy leader in crisis was setting the stage to ultimately change the context. Through Christ, the context in the John 11 pericope would not only change from the grieving of Lazarus to the resurrection of Lazarus, which would incite joy and wonder among the Jews, but largely, the context would change from funeral to birth, from mourning to memory. This climatic sign would serve as a message that if Jesus could give life to the dead, then surely, He could resurrect Himself (Crowe, 2018; Harriman, 2018; Kim, 2011; Köstenberger, 2018; Sosler, 2017; Turner, 1976). This would not only change how people would see Christ or Lazarus, but it would forever change how people would see and remember Bethany. This context, and what it would become, is important to the Lazarus narrative.

While many scholars have challenged the geographic location of Bethany, theorizing the possibility of two Bethany locations: Bethany near Jerusalem and Bethany near Jordan (Earl, 2009), this location was considered a common place for Jesus' ministry (Lagasse, 2018). This

explains why Bethany was frequented at least 11 times throughout the gospel (Nesbitt, 1961). Bethany, along the Jordan, was where Jesus was baptized (John 1:28) (Hutton, 2008), the home of Simon the Leper (Mk. 14:3–10), the place where Mary anointed Jesus with her perfume (11:2), the place where the fig tree was cursed (Mk. 11:11–13), it served as preparation for the Triumphal Entry (12:12–19), the location where Jesus ascended (Lk. 24:50–51), and it also has eschatological significance (Zech. 14:4–5). Centrally, it was the home of Mary, Martha, and a dying Lazarus (11:1) (Beavis, 2013; Lagasse, 2018; Nesbitt, 1961). The illness of Lazarus is not foreign to Bethany, as it was characterized as a place of affliction, sickness, and challenge (Earl, 2009). Bethany certainly challenged Jesus, who was threatened to be stoned there (11:8) which again explains the hesitation of the disciples (11:12) and the reluctance of Thomas (11:16) to return. In this place of challenge, however, Bethany became the place where Jesus was seen in His humanity (Nesbitt, 1961) doing the ordinary (Sosler, 2017). Yet in crisis, Christ would do the extraordinary, which would forever change the context of Bethany.

Note that in the conversation between Martha and Jesus, Martha asserted that if Jesus were present in Bethany earlier, Lazarus would have not died (11:21). Mary would present the same conclusion to Jesus later in the text (11:32). It could be interpreted that the “here” Martha and Mary were referring to was Bethany. For them, it was something significant about being in Bethany, at the right time that would have changed the fate of Lazarus. Yet, it was just as significant for Jesus to arrive in Bethany—late—and to still proclaim that Lazarus, though dead for four days, would indeed live. As a legacy leader, Jesus as the expert exchanges new information that began to change the context of Bethany while in crisis. Though He arrived “late” to Bethany, Jesus is nevertheless present in Bethany. Further, Jesus is nevertheless “God” in Bethany, also. Through Christ, Bethany—in crisis—would no longer be known for its illness but for its possibilities. When the crisis is over, Bethany would forever be the sign that would usher Jesus to the cross (11:45). Leaders who effectively communicate in crisis can help change the context of crisis, even if followership is disappointed.

So far in the crisis narrative of John 11, nothing had happened to the body of Martha and Mary’s brother. Lazarus is still dead. Yet, through the intersection of legacy leadership in crisis, so much had happened. The disciples have been led to Bethany despite their reluctance and Thomas’ sarcasm (11:8; 16), the religiosity, soteriology, and eschatology of Martha

has been forever changed (11:23–27) and though Jesus was late (11:17), He continues to be present to the context (11:23). Before He moved to the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus moved through the crisis at Bethany by first moving through the theology of Martha. Next, Jesus would move through the tears of Mary (11:28–37) to which Jesus demonstrates empathy while in crisis.

Principle Six: Leaders who effectively communicate in crisis can help change the context of the crisis, even when followers are disappointed.

### THE WEEPING OF JESUS (11:28–37)

The third section of the pericope opened with Martha calling for Mary, after her confessional statement of faith (11:28). Again, it is noteworthy that Martha's zeal emulated that of the Woman at the Well (4:29), who compelled others to receive what she had just received. Also, it is noteworthy to reiterate that Martha called Jesus a teacher, which indicated her position as a disciple (11:28). The Jews were more attached to Mary, than Martha, which is evident in the way they followed her to meet Jesus (11:29–31). This could have meant two ideas: (a) in the micro-narrative, the Jews were attached to Mary because she may have exhibited more visible emotion than Martha and (b) in the macro-narrative, the Jews were meant to go with Mary to be eyewitnesses to whatever miracle Jesus performed (Hanson, 2012).

Present before Jesus, Mary exuded the same disappointment as Martha (11:21) believing that if Jesus had made it earlier to Bethany, Lazarus would be alive (11:32). Because this phrase is repeated in the narrative, it could be interpreted that this phrase is of great importance (Hanson, 2012; Osborne, 2006; Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). Coming from Martha, the phrase sounded more technical and analytical. To this, Jesus responded in a technical, analytical tone causing Martha to wrestle with her theology (11:21–26). Coming from Mary, the phrase is coupled with more emotion. To this, Jesus responded in an emotional tone, causing the crowd to take notice (11:33–37). While Jesus was empathetic with both Mary and Martha in different ways, it was in this place of the narrative where Jesus demonstrated emotional empathy in crisis. The next section will explore more of Jesus' empathy and its impact on Mary and the Jews around her.

## EMPATHY AMID CRISIS

Within the crisis narrative and the tensions that lied therein, Jesus displayed empathy. Empathy is defined as the capacity to conceptualize how others experience the world (Darwall, 1998; Duff, 2017). Further, empathy invites others to feel the feelings of others around experiences different from their own (Jahoda, 2005). Different from sympathy, which was introduced in the early eighteenth century, empathy is disciplined comprehension (Kugler, 2019). This means that learning to “feel one’s way into” someone or something is an act that comes by way of practice, time, and development (Darwall, 1998; Jahoda, 2005). Introduced as a psychological term in 1905 by Lipps, empathy makes possible the reconstruction of past events and motivates individuals to care outside of themselves (Darwall, 1998; Jahoda, 2005).

Though known for fostering prosocial behavior and establishing authentic relationships in organizations, empathy is often criticized in the workplace and in the world, citing that empathy not only is a sign of weakness, but it also interferes with decision-making (Duff, 2017; Holt & Marques, 2012). Holt and Marques (2012) however, posited that individuals who are unable to demonstrate empathy are often impulsive, narcissistic, and often create toxic environments for leaders and followers (Pederson & Pope, 2010). Within the Lazarus narrative, Jesus exercised the four components of empathy, which are (a) response decision, (b) emotional recognition, (c) emotional reciprocation, and (d) emotional perspective (Marshall et al., 1995). Through these components, Jesus’ demonstration of empathy within the crisis allowed Him to feel His way into the feelings and experiences of His followers, producing the right environment for a Messianic sign. Note that Christ does not sacrifice crisis leadership for empathic leadership. Just like with legacy leadership, Christ intersects empathy in crisis through the four components. These components will be explored in the next sections, revealed in scripture, and will discuss implications for leaders, starting with emotional recognition.

## RESPONSE DECISION IN CRISIS

A response decision is a course of action chosen based upon the emotions or perspectives of others (Marshall et al., 1995). Through Jesus’ conversation with Mary, Jesus now developed emotional empathy. At the heart of the conversation and at the center of the crisis, Jesus responded by

asking about the body of Lazarus (11:34). In response to this question, the Jews replied “come and see” which then drove Jesus to respond with tears (11:34–35). The phrase “come and see” is of large significance. In the micro-narrative, the phrase is an invitation to discipleship and relationship. Jesus first said it to John and Andrew (1:39), Philip then said it to Nathaniel (1:46), and it is again echoed by the woman at the well (4:29) (Harris, 2009). The second implication was that “come and see,” in the macro-narrative, was an invitation for Christ to walk (and feel Himself through) a path that would be like His own (Harriman, 2018). The decision to “come and see” in the micro-narrative served as a Garden of Gethsemane experience in the macro-narrative (Harris, 2009). It bid for Christ’s followers and skeptics to be a witness to what sign the Father would offer Lazarus and the world, in crisis.

Here again, John has woven the micro-narrative and the macro-narrative together. Within both narratives, Christ was forced to both think and feel His way through the crisis of Lazarus and the crisis of the world. His tears were not just for Lazarus, but also for what it would take to bring eternal life. While the dynamics of the empathy will be parsed out in the next sections, what is notable here is Jesus as a crisis leader did not attempt to hide His emotions. Rather, Christ made a conscious decision to display them so much that John recorded them. While Christ was not consumed by His emotions, He was not hindered by them also. As a leader, Jesus’ emotionalism did not weaken His influence, as some may believe (Duff, 2017). Through His tears, and through the crisis, His vision, voice, and decision-making ability was still clear and effective (Rast et al., 2013). Though filled with intense emotion, Christ accepts the invitation to come and see about Lazarus. Also, by accepting this invitation, His followers are invited to come and see about His Father.

Principle Seven: In crisis, leaders do not have to sacrifice empathy to make good decisions; when empathic, leaders can invite followers to come and see new possibilities.

## EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION IN CRISIS

Emotional recognition is the capacity of one to recognize the emotions of others (Marshall et al., 1995). This notion is important to the Lazarus narrative because within the crisis, there was an underlying conflict between Jesus and the mourners, specifically in the ways they responded

to Mary's grief. Within the narrative, Jesus' emotional response to Mary in verse 33 is commonly read as pure sadness for Mary and Martha's misfortune. The problem with this interpretation is, it assumes that Jesus' emotional response is only to Mary's grief, and it assumes that Jesus is only experiencing sadness. When translated correctly, the term "disturbed in spirit" in verse 33 connotes a feeling of anger and indignation coming from Jesus (Harris, 2009). It is suggested that the anger of Jesus is being caused by the mourners who surrounded Mary (Harris, 2009). This is indicated by verse 33 where Jesus' emotional response of sadness and anger is in response to the weeping of Mary and the weeping of the Jews.

Jesus may have had a problem with these Jews because they could be moriologists. Moriologists are those who have been paid to mourn at the loss of a person to indicate the value of a person (Mendoza, 2018). Thus, the more moriologists present, indicated the importance of the deceased to the community. Whether or not the crowd was paid to console Mary or even were moriologists at all remains to be discovered, but it was interesting how quickly the crowd turned from consolation to criticism (Hanson, 2012). Within their mourning, the crowd suggested that Jesus should have saved Lazarus the same way He healed the blind man (Jn. 9). Jesus' annoyance with this group was confirmed when Jesus, in response to those words, became greatly disturbed once again (11:38). The criticism of the crowd in Bethany foreshadowed the criticism that Christ would receive on the cross (Mt. 27:42; Mk. 15:31; Lk. 23:35).

What is important here is, Jesus as a leader, possessed such a high level of emotional intelligence that He was able to distinguish between the mourning of Mary and the cries and criticisms of the crowd. Though angry and sad, His anger did not get in the way of being present to Mary or present to Lazarus. Christ does not direct His anger toward Mary or toward the crowd. While He was frustrated at their inability to demonstrate true empathy, Christ remained effective in demonstrating empathy in crisis (Harris, 2009). When leaders can recognize the emotions of other leaders and followers, they can be better present to these groups, maintain a safe environment, and even recognize when followers appear to agree when they really disagree (Harvey et al., 2004; Marshall et al., 1995; Urfalino, 2014).

Principle Eight: In crisis, leaders must possess the emotional intelligence to discern the various emotions of followers and remain effective despite the criticism they receive.

## EMOTIONAL RECIPROCATION IN CRISIS

Within the John 11 pericope, Christ demonstrated emotional reciprocity, which is the ability to produce the same emotion as others (Marshall et al., 1995). While the reasons for Jesus' tears have been classically debated, what remains paramount is that in Bethany—the place of affliction—God emoted (Chung, 2015; Earl, 2009; Hanson, 2012; Harris, 2009; Lagasse, 2018; Nesbitt, 1961; Wardlaw, 2000). Across the micro-narrative and the macro-narrative, within His humanity and despite His divinity, the releasing of Jesus' tears connected the death of Lazarus, the disappointment of Mary and Martha, the criticism of the crowd, and the sting of His own death to come. Wardlaw (2000) concluded that love—though powerful—does not have the capacity to shield our loved ones from the dangers and limitations that life presents. Within the narrative, Jesus' decision to weep with Mary signified that the power of God's love is not only found in His ability to act, but in His capacity to suffer with mankind.

By emoting, Jesus pushed against a “royal theology” or the idea that emotion is unnecessary and should be numbed or silenced to be effective in leadership (Willimon, 1984). Instead, Christian leaders are to engage in a prophetic grief that forces them to fight against royal theology and teaches others to grieve as Christ did (Willimon, 1984). Through the grief, Jesus redefined strength in leadership (Duff, 2017; Holt & Marques, 2012). Further, through grief, Jesus redefined true strength during crisis. While crisis leaders must remain sound, their leadership does not have to be void of their cries (Rast et al., 2013).

Principle Nine: In crisis, leaders who practice empathy can remain sound without silencing their own emotions.

## EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVES IN CRISIS

The last component of empathy is emotional perspective, which is the ability to see the point of view of others (Marshall et al., 1995). Though fully God, Christ was not so spiritual that He was unable to see the grief of His friends (Beavis, 2013) (Heb. 4:15–16). Yet, as a crisis leader, Christ was not so earthly that He could not see the grief of His father (Jn. 10:30; 17:20–23). This, of course, is largely attributed to Jesus being the Incarnate Christ. As fully God and fully man, Christ could hold together



time and eternity, micro-narrative and macro-narrative, friendship, and Lordship, humanity, and divinity (Jojko, 2019; Torrance, 1989). Thus, Christ was able to understand the fears of the disciples (11:8; 16), the disappointment of Martha (11:21), the tears of Mary (11:33), and the criticism of the crowd (11:37).

While believers cannot become incarnate (Jer. 10:6), believers can become incarnational. To become incarnational is not to say that one must become God-like, but rather through the cross, believers can become like God. It denotes a willingness to step into the muck and mire, into flesh, and into the crises of people, and bring a new reality of hope (Torrance, 1989). It requires a willingness to take a risk, get messy, and to truly immerse oneself into the lives of people. Before Christ did this at the cross, Christ did it in Bethany. Christ, as a crisis leader, did not evade the tension. Rather, Christ maintained influence despite of it and even invited men and women, regardless of their perspectives, to see God in it. Because Christ immersed Himself in their feelings, He was able to influence their perspective.

Principle Ten: in crisis, leaders must become incarnational and immerse themselves in the feelings of followers to influence their perspectives of followership.

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS (II:38–44)

While the narratives of Bethany and Calvary can stand alone, it is through their intersection that both narratives are understood. With a broad lens, readers see the micro-narrative, where Lazarus battled with sickness and with a narrow lens readers see the macro-narrative, where Jesus battled with sin (Hanson, 2012; Harriman, 2018; Kearney, 2017; Kim, 2011; Podmore, 2011; Turner, 1976). The story of Lazarus at Bethany prepares readers for Calvary, while the story of Jesus at Calvary reminds readers of Lazarus at Bethany. Together, the narratives depict an incarnational God who was present to His friends, His followership, and His Father while battling the crisis of sin and sickness.

What largely connects the story of Jesus and Lazarus was the presence of stones. The significance of the stone was to secure the dead (Mt. 27:60), secure the stench of the dead (Jn. 11:39), and to ensure, especially in Jesus' case—that no foul play would occur (Mt. 27:63) (Harriman, 2018). These stones were heavy (Mt. 27:60; Mk. 16:4) and only meant

for them to be rolled once to close the tomb. Within both narratives, what surrounds and solidifies the resurrection of Lazarus and Jesus was the removal of their stones (Hanson, 2012; Harriman, 2018; Kearney, 2017; Kim, 2011; Turner, 1976). In the Lazarus narrative, Jesus orders the Jews to remove the stone (11:41) and in the Passion narrative, the stone is removed by an angel (Mt. 28:2). Having the stones removed causes the communities in both narratives to witness the irrefutable resurrecting power of the Father (Hanson, 2012; Harriman, 2018).

Prayer also connects both narratives. After the stone is rolled away in the Lazarus narrative, Jesus prays to the Father that those around Him would know that Christ had been sent by God (11:41–43). This prayer has several similarities across the micro-narrative and the macro-narrative: (a) Jesus' prayer here in 11:41–43 is identical to His prayer in John 17, (b) specifically the way Jesus lifted His eyes in 11:41 is identical to how Jesus lifted His eyes in 17:1, (c) and Jesus' prayer for others at Bethany is identical to His prayers for others at Gethsemane (Jn. 11:42; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25).

The cries of Jesus lastly connect both narratives. Jesus' loud cry at Bethany (11:43) is directly identical to Jesus' loud cry at Calvary (Mt. 27:50; Mk. 15:37; Lk. 23:46). Whereas the cry of Jesus at Bethany was to free Lazarus, the cry of Jesus at Calvary was to eternally free mankind (Podmore, 2011). The cry of Jesus at Bethany raised one man (11:44), whereas the cry of Jesus at Calvary raised many men (Mt. 27:51–52). It is through the stone, the prayer, and cries found within the narratives that an unwavering hope is found in the person of Jesus (Harriman, 2018; Moloney, 2017). During crisis, hope became a central theme that Christ uses to influence His followership and help them to see new possibilities. As with legacy and empathy, Jesus did not forsake hope in crisis, rather Jesus intersected hope within crisis. The next sections will explore the concept of hope, its components, its location within the Lazarus narrative, and its implications for leaders.

## HOPE AMID CRISIS

It is in the John 11 narrative that Jesus, as a crisis leader, intersects legacy, empathy, and lastly, hope. Hope is defined as a motivational, affective, and cognitive disposition of a person, which reflects how that person responds to a goal (Geiger et al., 2019; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Snyder, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991). Another definition of hope is any

expectation greater than zero when it comes to goal achievement (Stotland, 1969). Centrally, hope is the belief that a better future or a better outcome is possible (Leboeuf, 2019). It is a concept that is characterized by imagination, strengthened by courage, and is achieved through challenge (Gallagher & Lopez, 2017). Though depicted as a spiritual concept, scholars agree that hope is not blind optimism (Arnau et al., 2007; Gallagher & Lopez, 2017; Leboeuf, 2019). That is, hope is not an expectation of results without strategy. With a plan, hopeful thinking increases creativity, reduces depression and anxiety, benefits mental health, enhances life satisfaction, lowers procrastination, improves productivity, and produces better relationships (Arnau et al., 2007; Gallagher & Lopez, 2017; Geiger et al., 2019; Johnston, 2014; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Snyder, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991).

In the Lazarus narrative, hope became the central theme in Bethany. The disciples hoped that they would not have to go to Bethany (11:8; 16), Mary and Martha hoped that Jesus would have arrived earlier to save their brother (11:21; 32), the crowd hoped that Jesus who healed the blind man could also heal Lazarus (11:37), and even Jesus hoped that through the resurrection of Lazarus, men would believe He was sent by the Father (11:43). As a crisis leader, Jesus demonstrated the two components of hope, which are (a) agency thinking and (b) pathways thinking. In the next sections, both components will be defined and explored in the Lazarus narrative. Followed by this is a brief discussion of legacy, empathy, and hope.

### AGENCY THINKING IN CRISIS

Scholars define agency thinking as the act of sustaining an action to reach a goal (Arnau et al., 2007; Gallagher & Lopez, 2017; Geiger et al., 2019; Snyder, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991). As a component of hope, agency thinking secures the promise of a different possibility through persistence. Within the Lazarus narrative, Jesus asserted agency thinking by maintaining the idea that Lazarus would live again. He asserted this when He discovered Lazarus was sick (11:4), He mentioned it when talking to the disciples (11:11), He states it to Martha (11:23), He requested to see the tomb, though Lazarus has been dead four days (11:34), and He reiterates it again to Martha again before the resurrection (11:40). Through His persistence, Jesus presented an unwavering possibility of

hope that drives against the crisis at Bethany. This hope became infectious, to the point where it drove a community to embrace the possibility that a man dead for four days may live again (11:42, 45). So convinced by this hope, the community agreed to roll away the stone of a decayed man just to see if he would come out of the tomb he was placed in (11:41) (Harriman, 2018). Here, the Jews became more than mourners, skeptics, or critics, but witnesses in the resurrection of Lazarus. At its best, leaders who employ agency thinking in the workplace can motivate and influence followers to accept new possibilities (Arnau et al., 2007). Intersecting hope in crisis, Jesus brought the idea of resurrection to Bethany, before calling Lazarus out of the tomb.

Principle Eleven: leaders who demonstrate agency thinking will move followers from eyewitnesses to participants who can engage new possibilities.

### PATHWAY THINKING IN CRISIS

Pathway thinking is defined as the capacity to plan alternatively when obstacles arise to attain goals (Arnau et al., 2007; Gallagher & Lopez, 2017; Geiger et al., 2019; Snyder, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991). Understanding how pathway thinking occurs within the crisis means understanding how the tension exists between the micro-narrative and the macro-narrative. Within the macro-narrative, what is clear for Jesus is that the pathway to resurrection is through the Father (11:41). For Jesus, who is sovereign, there is no other alternative plan that can solve the problem of sickness and sin (Hanson, 2012; Harriman, 2018; Kearney, 2017; Kim, 2011; Turner, 1976). Seemingly, within the macro-narrative, pathway thinking is not applicable. To make it applicable would then assert that Jesus had another alternative outside of the Father, which would be theologically heretical.

However, within the micro-narrative, pathway thinking is found in verse 42. Here, Jesus mentioned that for the sake of the crowd, He prays for Lazarus' resurrection (11:42). This is the same crowd that contained false mourners and critics of Jesus (11:37). Earlier, it was mentioned that when Martha notified Mary of Jesus' arrival, Martha did so privately (11:28). It suggested that Martha did not want to draw any attention to Jesus. This was seemingly supported by Jesus who remained outside of the village away from the crowd (11:30). Thus, when the crowd follows Mary

out of the house, it could be hypothesized that this may have not been Martha's desire. As personal friends of Jesus, and knowing His plight, to draw that much attention to Him not only takes away from Lazarus but places Jesus back in a position to be stoned (11:8; 16).

It is here in the micro-narrative where Jesus demonstrated pathway thinking. As repeatedly discussed throughout this research, Jesus utilized Mary's relationship with the Jews to position them to be eyewitnesses to Lazarus' resurrection. It is because of their witness that many Jews began believing in Jesus, the name of Jesus spread throughout Jerusalem and through this attention, Jesus was taken to the cross (11:45–53). Bethany became a prelude to Calvary (Podmore, 2011). While Jesus knew all along what would happen, in the macro-narrative, His followers in the micro-narrative did not. When pathway thinking is applied, leaders may have to pivot their plans to accomplish their goals. Though Martha's intent may have been different, Jesus could still use the outcome to reach the cross.

Principle Twelve: leaders in crisis may have to pivot their plans to accomplish their goals.

## SUMMARY

This chapter began by offering the notion that effective leaders are those who understand the power of adaptability and can execute that adaptability within crisis

(Tortorella & Fogliatto, 2017; Northouse, 2013; Valeras & Cordes, 2020; Van Eeden et al., 2008). Next, it offered scripture as a resource that can aid leaders in responding to crises while also providing leaders a foundational reference for the many historical and contemporary organizational concepts, themes, and theories used by organizations today. From here, the crisis narrative of Lazarus in John 11 was explored with the intersections of crisis leadership with legacy leadership, empathy, and hope. These intersections were located in scripture with the components of legacy, empathy, and hope explored with implications for leaders. Through this journey, Jesus as a crisis leader gives His followers the opportunity to receive the gift of crisis, to feel the grief of crisis, and to experience the God of crisis. The Hebrew translation of "Lazarus" means "God has helped" (Podmore, 2011). Returning to Bethany, which ultimately led to His death and resurrection, Christ had helped indeed.

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# Vulnerability in Leadership: An Analysis of John 13

*Lance L. May and Joshua D. Henson*

John 13:1–20 contains an account of the last teaching of Jesus with his original twelve disciples in the evening before his arrest. The book of John conveys a history of the life of Jesus and records several events with corresponding lessons. In this pericope, John recounted the circumstances surrounding the Lord's supper and included details about Jesus washing the disciples' feet. The act of washing feet was a common occurrence at the time of the Fourth Gospel, and this study examines the various meanings of the act, especially as it relates to leadership. The chapter aims to conduct a socio-rhetorical analysis of John 13:1–20 to determine biblical themes pertaining to the role of vulnerability in leadership.

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## BACKGROUND OF JOHN 13

A thorough analysis of John 13:1–20 requires an examination of the passage’s background with questions concerning authorship, audience, cultural context, date, location, purpose, and details specific to the pericope. Also contained in this evaluation are the timing of the narrative, the events surrounding the text, and their application to modern contexts. Determination of the meaning of John 13:1–20 begins with an analysis of the author of the Fourth Gospel.

### *Authorship*

Although the author does not explicitly name himself in the book, there is a long-held belief in Christian communities that the Apostle John is the author of the Fourth Gospel (Brown & Moloney, 2017; Filson, 1966; Henry, 1991). Irenaeus and Polycarp were early voices that attributed this writing to John the Apostle (Burge, 2009). Verses within the Gospel indicate the author was an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus, including 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory”; 19:35, “He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth”; and 21:24, “This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things” (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2016). An eyewitness account would be consistent with Johannine authorship. In John 21:24, the author explained, “This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things” and refers back to the 21:20 identification of “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Carpenter and McCown (1992) noted that there is evidence consistent with the tradition of the Apostle John as the author, yet one cannot definitively name him as the author. Guthrie (1990) considered many of the arguments that someone other than John the Apostle may have written this Gospel, including the idea that it may have been a group of contributors, another follower of Jesus named John, Lazarus, or an unknown disciple. Several conflicting opinions contend authorship cannot be clearly attributed to the Apostle John. Still, a different unnamed person accepting this challenge would not reveal an author but simply deny that it was John the Apostle (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 1962). Among the many alternative opinions regarding a different author, no alternate idea has surfaced to gain

substantial support other than the Apostle John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee (Barclay, 1975).

### *Audience and Cultural Context*

Filson (1966) noted that existing early manuscripts were all written in Greek. However, some have conjectured that it may have been initially written in Aramaic or Hebrew and translated into Greek very early. The significance of the writing being in Greek means that the intended audience was likely Greek-speaking, and although Greek was the common language of the time, it was not the first language of most Jews (Filson, 1966). Brodie (1993) suggested that conflict between Jews and Christians in Chapter 9 indicates synagogue expulsion and contention between the groups. Yet, the text also offers a way for these groups to converge for the cause of Christ. The Fourth Gospel was likely not intended primarily for Jews that spoke Greek or Greeks in general, but rather Christ-followers that included both Gentiles and Jews who were predominantly Hellenistic (Barclay, 1975).

### *Date and Location*

In comparison to the other three Gospels, many consider John the last written, but Michaels (2010) noted that John does not rely on the other Gospels for information and may not regard the others. Several academics once argued that this work may have been written in the second century and could not have been Johannine. Still, later discoveries of Papyrus 46 and the Egerton Papyrus 2 heavily diminished the idea of later authorship (Burge, 2009). Most scholars now date the work before AD 100, and some place it much earlier and within the lifetime of the Apostle John (Robinson, 1985).

According to Burge (2009), two primary regions have gained the most support as the writing location, including Syria and Asia Minor. Some connect the Fourth Gospel to Ignatius of Antioch and the Odes of Solomon, suggesting that Syria may be the origin of the writing (Burge, 2018). An early church tradition attributed to Irenaeus proposed that Ephesus (Asia Minor) was where the Gospel was penned initially (Eusebius & Maier, 2007).

### *Purpose*

John 20:31 states, “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (ESV, 2001/2016). The purpose of the Gospel of John is like the other three Gospels in that it tells the story of Jesus and establishes how God has provided redemption. John differs from the other Gospels by focusing more specifically on the life of Jesus instead of his works (Zodhiates et al., 2008). The book gives special attention to both the divinity and humanity of Jesus. Some scholars have suggested that the purpose of the book is an argument against Docetism which contended that Jesus was God pretending to be human (Filson, 1966) or Gnosticism, another heresy akin to Docetism that did not ultimately see Jesus as fully human but rather an emanation of deity that had separated from God. The Fourth Gospel also contended with this pervasive belief (Barclay, 1975). The opening of John’s Gospel establishes that Jesus is the Word of God, or *logos*, and, in Jesus, we find the expression of God in humanity (Bruce, 1994). In the Gospel of John, Jesus is God’s Word, and the Word is a message of redemption through Jesus the Messiah, who is both God and man (Burge, 2009).

### JOHN 13:1–20 THEMES

John 13:1–20 recounts the final teaching of Jesus with all twelve disciples on the evening before his arrest and includes the details of a foot-washing not recorded in the other three Gospels. Thomas (1991) noted that although there has been speculation that John 13:1–20 may contain a redaction with attempts by later authors to change the meaning of the passage. De Jonge (1977) suggested that it is preferable and more accurate to examine a text without speculation of redaction unless there is significant historical evidence of such a change.

The combined research of two German authors, Lohse (1967) and Richter (1967), identified 11 proposed themes from various commentaries of John 13:1–20. The most prominent themes viewed foot-washing as an example of humility, a symbol for the Eucharist, a reminder of baptism, the forgiveness of sin and cleansing, as another sacrament, a soteriological sign, or as a replacement for baptism (Thomas, 1991). Additional points of emphasis in John 13:1–20 include sacrificial service, sanctification, confession, and loving one another. However,

little published research has explored applying these themes to a leadership context. This chapter seeks to answer two research questions: What lessons can be learned about the leadership of Jesus from a socio-rhetorical analysis of John 13:1–20? And what are the implications for a modern understanding of the role of vulnerability in leadership from the examination of John 13:1–20?

## METHODOLOGY

Exegetical analysis is a scientific or systematic approach to examining and interpreting scripture (Henson et al., 2020). The origin of the word *exegetis* is Greek, and the root connotes to “draw out,” and thus exegetical analysis attempts to draw out the meaning of the text, as opposed to *eisegesis* meaning “read into” (Osborne, 2010, p. 57). Researchers approach exegetical analysis in several ways, but socio-rhetorical analysis (SRA) focuses on the details of the text to explore both the original intent of the passage and the viable modern applications (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). SRA also incorporates linguistic examination to explore word meanings by observing sentence structure and social context (Cotterall & Turner, 1989). A socio-rhetorical analysis is an appropriate method for analyzing scripture because it addresses complex challenges such as authorship narrated by one person, written by another, yet inspired directly by God (Henson et al., 2020). Socio-rhetorical analysis in this study was completed in five texture categories as identified by Henson et al. (2020), including inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture.

## INNER TEXTURE ANALYSIS

Within the process of SRA is an exploration of the structure, parts, and message of a pericope to identify the underlying anatomy of the scripture, which is called inner texture (Henson et al., 2020). Inner textual analysis incorporates six different filters to examine a passage, including textual units, repetitive patterns, progressive patterns, opening–middle–closing patterns, argumentative patterns, and sensory-aesthetic patterns (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). Each of these six filters is valuable for the exegetical analysis of John 13:1–20.

### *Textual Units*

John 13 opens with a mention of the time that sets it apart from the previous event in John 12. The passage begins, “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Voorwinde (2005) noted a clear shift or change in the Gospel of John that begins in Chapter 13. Dodd (1968) acknowledged this shift as a move from an emphasis on the signs of Jesus to the passion of Jesus. Brown (1970) also notes a change in the Gospel of John beginning in Chapter 13 and calls it the beginning of emphasis on glory. Voorwinde (2005) combined the ideas of Dodd and Brown and called the shift starting in John 13 the “Book of Glory/Passion,” and this distinction was adopted by many scholars that followed (p. 74). Verse 21 states, “After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Although this section is strongly related to the first 20 verses, it marks a shift in the emotions of Jesus and indicates the beginning of a new direction (Talbert & Thomas, 1993). The foot-washing pericope of John 13:1–20 has three distinct Textual Units, including the introduction in 1–5, the dialogue in 6–11, and the discourse in 12–20 (Mlakuzhyil, 1987).

### *Repetitive Patterns*

Repetitive patterns in communication have become unnecessary as information has become available in mass quantities, yet repetition was significant for ancient cultures that relied on oral tradition and mnemonic devices to aid memory (Loubser, 2005; Henson et al., 2020). Two meaningful repetitive patterns appear in the foot-washing pericope of John 13:1–20, including an emphasis on time-specific words and a focus on the love of Jesus (Culpepper, 1983). Verse 1 includes details about the time and has two occurrences of the word love: “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). The verse’s content places the pericope’s setting prior to the Passover and mentions that his (Jesus) hour had come. The second verse notes that it was during supper and “when the devil had already...” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Concerning love, John 13 included references to love, but then repeated the emphasis of love in verses 34–35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love



one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (*ESV*, 2001/2016).

### *Progressive Patterns*

Progressive patterns help establish thematic emphasis within a passage through the discussion structure (Henson et al., 2020). Zorrilla (1995) noted that verses 1–5 introduce the text, but verses 6–10 and verses 12–20 are likely parallel expressions of the same point of emphasis. Compare verse 7: “afterward you will understand” with verse 12: “Do you understand” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Compare verse 8: “If I do not wash you” with verse 14: “you also ought to wash” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Compare verse 10: “not every one of you” with verse 18: “I am not speaking of all of you” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Compare verse 11: “he knew who” with verse 18: “I know who I have chosen” (*ESV*, 2001/2016).

Zorrilla (1995) also noted that John 13 might be a chiasm over the entire chapter with 18–20 and the commitment to Jesus as the central focus. Notice that the chapter begins and ends with love, and examples from the master are emphasized in verses 12–17 and 21–26. This chiasm highlights verse 20: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Through Jesus, the central lesson is from God to the disciples, and ultimately for all who follow.

### *Opening–Middle–Closing Patterns*

Although it may not always be linear, narrative communication typically follows a plot that includes an Opening–Middle–Closing (OMC) thought pattern (Henson et al., 2020). A notable example of OMC in John 13 is the theme of love emphasized in the first verse and repeated in verse 34 (Barnes, 1972). Within the text is the example of love that Jesus shares in the act of foot-washing bracketed on both sides with a description of how Jesus rose and removed his outer garment and then later “put on his outer garments and resumed his place” (*ESV*, 2001/2016).

### *Argumentative Patterns*

Robbins (1996b) noted that authors use the argumentative approach to present contrary opinions to dispute them. One of the key verses in the John 13 foot-washing narrative is an argumentative pattern that occurred when Peter asked Jesus not to wash his feet. Yet, Jesus used Peter's refusal as an opportunity to teach Peter (Blum, 1983). In verse 8, Jesus replied to Peter: "If I do not wash you, then you have no share with me" (ESV, 2001/2016).

### *Sensory-Aesthetic Patterns*

The final subtexture of inner texture is Sensory-Aesthetic patterns. Sensory-Aesthetic Inner Texture occurs when an author uses human senses such as sight, touch, smell, hearing, thinking, or emotions and applies these senses to a more complex thought such as imagination, intuition, reason, or humor (Robbins, 1996b). In verse 5, John described how Jesus washed his disciples' feet, "Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him" (ESV, 2001/2016). Jesus encouraged his disciples to do for one another what he had shown them and ended Chapter 13 by stating that they should love one another. John equated the action or touch of Jesus in this passage to the love of Jesus (Blum, 1983). This action from Jesus was met with a challenge from Peter, thus showing the unexpected nature of the action. The act of love that Jesus performed was contradictory to the culture of honor and shame that existed at the time (Domeris, 1993) and likely provoked strong emotions that made Peter feel vulnerable for himself and uncomfortable with the vulnerable action of Jesus (Jolliffe, 1997; Voorwinde, 2005).

### *Summary of Data: Inner Texture Analysis*

John 13 contains repetitive patterns, including several words related to units of time (Culpepper, 1983). Another heavily repeated pattern in the text is a discussion about washing, and twelve times from verse 5 to verse 15 are words translated as wash, bathed, and clean (Zodhiates et al., 2008). Feet are also mentioned eight times in these same ten verses. The declaration that Jesus was preparing to depart the world to be with the Father occurs in the first verse and again in verse 3. This shift toward a

prepared departure marks the beginning of this new section of the Gospel (Culpepper, 1983; S. Brown & Moloney, 2017). Verse 3 also declares that Jesus came from God, and verse 20 states, “whoever receives me receives the one who sent me” (ESV, 2001/2016).

John 13 also shows evidence of several progressive patterns. As noted, John develops a distinct sequence of events in this pericope by using specific time-related words, including before, when, during, already, then, etc. Blum (1983) recognized that the author used a connection between foot-washing and loving people when Jesus tells his disciples in verse 15, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you,” and later declares in verse 34, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you” (ESV, 2001/2016). This theme of love and the added portion of “one another” emphasizes the example that Jesus set for them (Barnes, 1972). Blum (1983) explained that the loving example of foot-washing that Jesus makes in this passage relates to his instruction to practice mutual confession, which is also repeated in I John 1:7 because John 13:14 expresses that the disciples should do this for one another.

An essential detail within the pericope representing an argumentative pattern is the answer that Jesus gave Peter in verse 7: “Jesus answered him, ‘what I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand’” (ESV, 2001/2016). This lack of understanding that Jesus noted is addressed again by Jesus in verse 12, “Do you understand what I have done for you?” (ESV, 2001/2016). This question sets the stage for comparing the example of mutual foot-washing with the later command that they should love one another (Wenham et al., 1994).

### *Application: Inner Texture Analysis*

The mutual love and confessional aspect of foot-washing noted by Blum (1983) is an essential concept for leadership. Jesus sets an example for his followers in this discourse and then tells them two times in John 13 to emulate his actions. In John 13:16, Jesus states, “Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him” (ESV, 2001/2016). Examining the inner texture of the pericope revealed a thematic element of mutual love, and this theme carries through the entire chapter of John 13 (Wenham et al., 1994).

Borchert (2002) noted that one of the critical issues addressed by the foot-washing example of Jesus is not just a humble act of love but an example of how a leader can break established shame and honor codes of society. Although shame and honor codes fit better in a discussion of intertexture, the inner texture patterns are already pointing to this theme of love and avoidance of shame. A leader's willingness to break such a societal code and practice shame resilience is referred to by Brown (2007) as an act of vulnerability. In John 13:10, Jesus declares that one that has bathed does not need a complete bath, yet they still require foot-washing (ESV, 2001/2016). Avolio (2011) expressed that followers perceive leaders as more authentic, transparent, and trustworthy when demonstrating acts of vulnerability. Jesus explains after he washes their feet, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (ESV, 2001/2016). Nienaber et al. (2015) asserted that several studies investigating trust in relationships have shown that trust is dependent on vulnerability between parties. Inner texture filters revealed a recurring theme of love in the pericope and exemplified vulnerability as a necessary leadership practice.

*Principle One: Leaders are motivated by love to model transparency and authenticity.*

*Principle Two: Leaders build trust by demonstrating their vulnerability by modeling humility.*

## INTERTEXTURE ANALYSIS

While inner texture refers to an analysis of the internal workings of a pericope, intertexture analysis is an exploration of external influences and how they relate to the text (Henson et al., 2020). Robbins (1996a) noted that intertexture gives attention to how the author includes and conveys the outside world related to the text. Within intertextual analysis, there are five filters, including four from the original SRA identified by Robbins (1996a, 1996b) as oral-scribal intertexture, cultural intertexture, social intertexture, historical intertexture. The fifth filter identified by Henson et al. (2020) is reciprocal intertexture.

### *Oral–Scribal Intertexture*

As Scripture expanded to include new writings, external texts and oral traditions often influenced these writings, and oral–scribal intertexture explores the relationship of the text to these influences (Henson et al., 2020). John 13:18 says, “I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me’” (ESV, 2001/2016). This scripture within the pericope is an example of an oral–scribal recitation, and the referenced scripture is from Psalm 41:9, “Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me” (ESV, 2001/2016).

### *Cultural Intertexture*

Cultural intertexture focuses on understanding the culture of the people through an examination of patterns, values, codes, scripts, configurations, and systems (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). John 13:10 includes a cultural reference to the tradition of foot-washing linked to Genesis 18:4. Baugh et al. (2002) noted that ritual washing was related to having a full bath and signified cleansing, but washing the feet and hands was a cultural ritual signifying periodic cleansing. Keil and Delitzsch (1982) showed that Exodus 29:4 and Leviticus 8:4 established cleansing rituals signifying the removal of filth so that the priest could approach God. Douglas (2002) recognized that cleansing rituals for feet and hands were standard ongoing practices that helped maintain general cleanliness and even basic hygiene. The ritual of foot-washing was culturally significant in several ways, including servitude, hospitality, hygiene, and ritual cleansing (Talbert & Thomas, 1993).

### *Social Intertexture*

Robbins (1996a) categorized social intertexture into roles, including social roles, social identities, social institutions, and social codes. John 13:1–20 contains several social roles or identities, including slaves and masters, teachers and disciples, and messengers and senders. Jesus expressed in verse 16 that a servant is not greater than their master nor the messenger more significant than the one who sent them. Baugh et al. (2002) expressed that the culture had an established understanding of the subservient relationships of slaves to masters and messengers to senders.

Verse 20 speaks about the disciples as sent with authority, and the culture of that time understood agent authority (Baugh et al., 2002). The culture of the Johannine audience included Greeks, Romans, and Judeans and each of these groups considered honor and shame to be a significant aspect of individual roles (Adkins, 1975; Malina, 2001). Jesus challenged the cultural concept that servitude is less honorable or shameful (Crook, 2009; Domeris, 1993; Neyrey, 1994).

### *Historical Intertexture*

Historical intertexture examines any events that the text mentions directly or indirectly (Henson et al., 2020). The significance of the foot-washing in conjunction with the meal before Passover was not only noteworthy as a cultural event but also provided historical context. John 13 begins by saying, “It was just before the Passover Festival” (ESV, 2001/2016). The passage indicates that the timing of the last supper was on Thursday of Holy Week, even though some commentators question if John presented this meal as a Passover meal (Carson et al., 2018).

### *Reciprocal Intertexture*

Reciprocal intertexture considers the interaction of the pericope across the greater canon (McConville, 2014). Bauer and Traina (2011) noted that there is a connection of text throughout the Bible that is complex, and God communicates a fuller message that spans the entire canon of scripture. Several other scriptures represent Jesus as a vulnerable leader. In Matthew 20:26–28, Jesus emphasized to his disciples that those who desire greatness must serve and follow his example: “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (ESV, 2001/2016). Paul’s letter to the Philippians emphasizes the example of Jesus as love and service and especially in 2:5–7, “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” (ESV, 2001/2016). Talbert and Thomas (1993) noted that Luke wrote about an argument between the disciples concerning greatness, and Jesus explained in Luke 22:27, “For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves” (ESV, 2001/2016). The imagery of Jesus

as an example of vulnerable authority is a powerful theme from reciprocal intertexture.

### *Summary of Data: Intertexture Analysis*

The pericope's cultural and social considerations included observations of the relationships between slaves with masters, teachers with disciples, and messengers with those who sent them. Each of the relationships contains a superior and a subservient role that would typically place the superior in the place of honor and the subservient in the position of shame, but Jesus challenged these roles by modeling leadership from the culturally lower station (Crook, 2009; Domeris, 1993; Neyrey, 1994).

Foot-washing is central to the pericope and was the method by which Jesus demonstrated love and explained that all people, whether leading or following, should reciprocate this action (Baugh et al., 2002). John 13:1 is historically significant for placing the time of the last supper and foot-washing on Thursday of Holy Week (Carson et al., 2018). Concerning reciprocal intertexture, foot-washing and cleansing are prominent throughout scripture. Additionally, the imagery of Jesus modeling leadership from a lower or more vulnerable position is also a significant recurrence in the Biblical text (Cooreman-Guittin, 2021).

### *Application: Intertexture Analysis*

Intertextual analysis of John 3:1–20 supported the key themes: the juxtaposition of baptism with foot-washing, the need for mutual confession, emphasis on sanctification, humility in leadership, and the message of love. Jesus gives an example of love in the foot-washing of John 13:1–20 that breaks cultural norms of vulnerability and demonstrates how a person in the place of authority should be willing to both serve and be served, love and be loved, or wash and be washed (Cooreman-Guittin, 2021). This idea of leaders and followers in a mutual relationship is consistent with observations from Fries-Brit and Snider (2015) that relationships between mentors and mentees within the work environment gain strength when both the leader and the follower practice mutual vulnerability. Leadership theories have also been shifting away from the perception that strong leaders must have dominating personalities toward an understanding that preferred leadership which includes open disclosures (Jemsek, 2008). Jesus encouraged leadership that does not presume

the traditional position of strength in John 13:16–17, “a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (*ESV*, 2001/2016).

From a cultural perspective, honor and shame were significant influencers for Greeks, Romans, and Judeans (Adkins, 1975; Malina, 2001). Brown (2015) noted that the practice of being vulnerable is the key to combating shame, and leaders that allow mutual vulnerability can break down the walls that cultures of shame and honor have created. In an analysis of the foot-washing of John 13, Cooreman-Guittin (2021) contended that the primary motivation of Jesus is to address the fear of shame that is attached to vulnerability. Peter expressed discomfort with having his feet washed, but Jesus insisted, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). The act of being vulnerable with another person is not easy, but it has proven to be very effective for solidifying relationships between leaders and followers (Brown, 2018).

*Principle Three: Mutual vulnerability provides an environment in which leader–follower relationships are solidified.*

## SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE

Virkler and Ayayo (2007) concluded that hermeneutical analysis requires examining the contextual and historical-cultural backgrounds to provide accuracy to an interpretation. Robbins (1996a, 1996b) identified that social and cultural texture considers what kind of person existed in the context. Robbins (1996b) noted that three aspects of social and cultural texture include specific social topics, common social and cultural topics, and final cultural categories. The question of social and cultural texture “is not what do we see or hear but the question is what did they see or hear in the moment of writing or hearing” (Henson et al., 2020, p. 125).

### *Specific Social Topics*

Specific social topics in religious texts include expressions of different worldviews that inform the people’s values, meanings, and actions that hold these views (Robbins, 1996a). Robbins (1996a) used sociological classifications first developed by Wilson (1973) to identify seven worldviews applied to the study of Scripture: conversionist, revolutionist,



introversionist, gnostic-manipulationist, thaumaturgical, reformist, and utopian. Conversionist and gnostic-manipulationist world views are most prominent in the pericope.

The conversionist worldview is the central language of the gospel message focused on transforming individuals, resulting in a new self, and engaging the world in a new way (Robbins, 1996a). In John 13, Jesus explained to Peter that he did not need a bath because he was already clean, but even those already clean need their feet washed. Bacon (1931) noted that Jesus was equating baptism and salvation in his discussion about the bath and identified sanctification with the practice of foot-washing as a sign of the ongoing conversion experience. Countryman (1987) speculated that foot-washing had become a practice in the Johannine community as symbolic of forgiveness of sins post-conversion. The early works of Saint Augustine identified that the purpose of foot-washing in the culture of the time would have represented a post-conversion action of confession not for salvation but for recognizing post-conversion sinfulness (Augustine, 2018). The conversionist view is present in the pericope in the form of washing, especially as part of the ongoing sanctification aspect of conversion.

Gnostic-manipulationist, according to Robbins (1996a), is an approach to salvation through transformed relationships accomplished by learning or knowledge. John 13:1–20 uses the word know or knowledge five times, and the word understand three times. Jesus explained in verse 7, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand” (ESV, 2001/2016). In verse 12, Jesus says, “Do you understand what I have done to you?” (ESV, 2001/2016). The problem of not understanding was present with the disciples and expressed by Peter in his refusal. The Johannine community understood the event in the context of knowing that Jesus would soon be crucified (Bultmann, 2014). Segovia (1985) indicated that the inclusion of the disciples not understanding emphasized the reader’s need to understand and that learning from the example of Jesus was a vital element of the event.

### *Common Social and Cultural Topics*

Common social and cultural topics concern the environment of the text, including the presupposed systems and institutions and common knowledge during the time that it was written (Robbins, 1996b). The study of common social and cultural topics in the text help to reveal a connection,

and there are six areas of study identified by Henson et al. (2020) in the exploration of common topics: honor, guilt, and rights culture; dyadic agreements; challenge-response (riposte); economic exchange systems; purity laws; and Old Testament laws.

Examination of John 13:1–20 revealed four recurring common social and cultural topics: dyadic agreement, challenge-response, purity codes, and honor, guilt, and rights culture. First, honor in the male-dominated society was related to social positions and cultural standings (Robbins, 1996a). The community often transposed the relationship of honor and shame to cultural functions, including men with women, teachers with students, and masters with slaves. John 13:1–20 included several of these relationships. With these social positions, the culture of the time would have assumed that the higher posts would be seats of honor and the lower would be positions of shame (Malina, 2001). The passage in John includes relationships that juxtapose the honor roles of Lord, master, teacher, and sender with the lesser roles of servant, disciple, messenger. The message in the text flips the role of honor into the place generally reserved for shame and removes the idea that rights belong to people based on earthly positions (Cooreman-Guitin, 2021).

### *Dyadic Agreements*

Dyadic agreements refer to the reciprocal giving and receiving of gifts or favors between people, especially in a culture of limited goods (Malina, 2001). Robbins (1996a) noted that these informal contracts could be between people of a different or equal class, and if the agreement was between different class levels, they viewed it as patron–client. Though the passage identified him as Lord and master, Jesus challenged the patron–client relationship by taking a servant’s position (Malina, 2001).

### *Challenge-Response*

Challenge-response or riposte occurs in cultures that believe that honor and shame are attached to a hierarchy of positions. A person can climb this hierarchical ladder through haggling within a defined social parameter (Malina, 2001; Neyrey, 1994). Peter was astonished by the actions of Jesus in John 13:6–8, and he initially forbade Jesus to wash him. Jesus replied by saying that Peter would “have no share with him” (ESV, 2001/2016). Peter understood the assumed contract to be broken and

then immediately responded with a reply of complete submission. Peter's reaction to the situation exposed his understanding of the challenge-response contract that he expected with Jesus. Peter did not want him to assume a lower or more vulnerable position (Cooreman-Guittin, 2021).

### *Purity Codes*

Purity codes speak to the existing cultural boundaries concerning the proper place and time for every person and thing, and anything misplaced is not pure in the cultural system (Malina, 2001). The story of John 13:1–20 emphasizes the idea of reclaiming purity. Jesus performed a ritual that was practiced by not only the Jews of the time but the Romans and Greeks as well yet washing one's feet would have usually been done by a servant or simply by oneself (Adkins, 1975; Malina, 2001). Bultmann (2014) noted that this act of Jesus further disrupted the purity code when Jesus chose to wash their feet in the middle of the meal. Jesus made a special effort to challenge the code and turn the code upside down in the eyes of the disciples and the Johannine audience.

### *Final Cultural Categories*

The third category for consideration in examining social and cultural texture is final cultural categories. The final cultural category concerns the position or location that the group or person identified with and how people distinguished this position from others (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996a). Five categories or locations of the final cultural categories of rhetoric include dominant culture rhetoric, subculture rhetoric, counterculture rhetoric, contraculture rhetoric, and liminal culture rhetoric.

The culture of the time of the writing of John included Judean, Roman, and Greek influences and an emerging Christian movement that was informed by all three. Some scholars identified John's writings as depicting hostility between the Christians and the Jews during the time of the Johannine community (Martyn, 1979; Trebilco, 1991). Hare (1967) insisted that anti-Semitic opponents exaggerated the reports of Jewish persecution of Christians during the time of the Johannine writing and that the expressions of Jews as the enemy in John were an overstatement of the tension. Kobel (2011) identified that the Johannine community might have had strained relationships with the Jewish community, but the

results were not widespread and long-lasting. The identity of the Christian community as an emerging culture that was first a subculture of the Jewish culture and later a liminal or transitional culture has been a popular and sustained belief (Wilson, 1967). Harland (2003) emphasized that classifying early Christianity as a sect of Judaism is a mistake that combines their identities too closely. Yet, it is also incorrect to devalue the influence of both Greek and Roman cultures on early Christianity. Each of these four cultures existed at the time, yet they all shared the same civic settings (Harland, 2003).

Examining the words contained in John 13:1–20 revealed dominant culture rhetoric. Prevalent terms included Father, God, Lord, teacher, and master. The establishment of dominant positions in the pericope helped identify the normative relationships associated with terminology. John emphasized these words, and Jesus demonstrated an unexpected action not anticipated in Judean culture. Peter addressed Jesus as Lord and asked if Jesus intended to wash his feet and then stated: “You shall never wash my feet” (ESV, 2001/2016). This statement by Peter was consistent with the dominant culture rhetoric of Judean tradition and identified the act of washing feet as inconsistent with the position of Lordship. Peter’s reaction after Jesus told him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me” (ESV, 2001/2016), was a radical change in rhetoric indicating that Peter was willing to abandon the established hierarchy of the Judean culture. Peter later said he was ready to die for Jesus and was prepared to take a contraculture position and become completely revolutionary if necessary. John 13 set the stage for Peter’s problem of obedience between these cultures, and his ultimate denial followed, despite his bold claims. The story in John 13:1–20 demonstrates the dilemma between the two cultures of Judaism and Christianity.

### *Ideological Texture*

Ideological texture deals with how readers interact with the text in their own biases and personal context. In John 13:1–20, John shares the story of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet as a radical challenge to the culture that influenced the disciples at the time. The primary confrontation arose from the existing thoughts concerning honor and shame. Jesus and the disciples were from the Jewish culture influenced by a blend of Greek and Roman culture, but each influence embraced the idea of honor and shame as a central concept. Modern readers in North America would not have

the same concept of honor and shame as the culture during the time of Jesus or the audience of John's writing (Malina, 2001).

When John wrote his account of Jesus in the upper room, the culture moved away from being a counterculture group identified initially as a subculture of Judaism (Wilson, 1967). Peter struggled between holding Jewish, Greek, and Roman views of honor and shame and accepting the radical example of Jesus washing feet (John 13:6–8). In this struggle, John identified a move toward separation and the development of Christianity as a liminal or transitional culture. At the time of John's writing, the burgeoning church would have been looking toward a new identity and agreed with gnostic-manipulation from John in light of the noted strain with the Judean community as noted by Harland (2003). The primary culture of North American churches in the early twenty-first century shows evidence of gnostic-manipulation, reformist, and utopian topics (Henson et al., 2020).

#### *Summary of Data: Social and Cultural Texture and Ideological Texture*

Data in this section of analysis included social and cultural texture and ideological texture. Data from specific social topics revealed that gnostic-manipulation was the most prominent view in John 13:1–20. The vocabulary of the passage expressed the central theme of knowledge multiple times with words such as understand, know, and knowing. A conversionist view was also present in the text as a secondary theme, with numerous mentions of foot-washing to maintain cleanliness after the initial event of becoming clean from a bath. Some commentators compare the bath and foot-washing with the initial confession of sin and the ongoing process of confession or sanctification (Countryman, 1987). There was evidence of introversionist, reformist, and thaumaturgical views, but references were indirect.

Common social and cultural topics in John 13:1–20 included dyadic agreement, challenge-response, purity codes, and honor, guilt, and rights culture. Honor, guilt, and rights culture were dominant themes for the time and were challenged in the pericope by Jesus's teaching. The text emphasized a reversal of the roles of honor and shame and removed the idea that the right of honor belongs to individuals based on earthly positions (Cooreman-Guittin, 2021). Dyadic agreement includes a patron-client relationship, and this agreement was challenged by Jesus when he

took the lower post to wash the disciples' feet, even though he was the Lord (Malina, 2001). The idea of challenge-response was accentuated in the text by Peter's challenge that Jesus should not wash feet. Purity codes were a prominent theme of the pericope and central to the message that Jesus emphasized. Jesus performed a ritual that the Jews, Romans, and Greeks practiced, but he defied the code by demonstrating that a leader could do this and not degrade their role (Adkins, 1975; Malina, 2001).

Data from the final cultural categories revealed that the identity of the Christian community was initially a subculture of the Jewish culture and later a liminal or transitional culture (Wilson, 1967). Jewish, Roman, and Greek cultures existed at the time, yet they shared the same civic settings (Harland, 2003). Examining the words in John 13:1–20 revealed the dominant culture rhetoric and illuminated the shock that Peter expressed. The ensuing teaching of Jesus and the later revelation of Peter demonstrated a contracultural or even revolutionary cultural position. The message from John revealed that there is a place between conformity and revolution and that reform may be possible where the cultures intersect. Still, the point of the foot-washing story was to highlight the misunderstanding between them.

Ideological texture reexamined social texture themes but included views from the contemporary audience. The context of this reading was as a twenty-first century North American. Some of the notable comparisons in this examination included the realization that the concept of honor and shame prevalent at the time of the writing is not the same today (Malina, 2001). The disciples' culture was emerging Christianity as a subculture of Judaism, but the culture championed by John was countercultural and liminal. Christianity has had a long history of influence in North America. It has been a dominant culture within the subculture but may move toward a liminal culture in the future (Henson et al., 2020).

### *Application: Social and Cultural Texture and Ideological Texture*

The study of John 13:1–20 through social and cultural texture and analysis of ideological texture yielded insights that inform the role of vulnerability in leadership. Gnostic-manipulation is a primary view that is evident in the pericope. John wrote about how Jesus identified the disciples' need to gain a new understanding, and the knowledge he offered was a challenge to the cultural sense of shame and honor. There is a common misunderstanding that being vulnerable is the same as being

weak. Brown (2015) offered that vulnerability includes uncertainty, risk, emotional exposure and emphasized that vulnerability is not weakness. Ito and Bligh (2016, p. 67) also noted that vulnerability is not weakness and defined vulnerability as a “subjective perception of uncertainty, risk, and insecurity.”

Jesus explained to the disciples that they needed to be willing to do this for one another and demonstrated that the disciples needed to wash and be washed. Countryman (1987) noted that this communal action demonstrated by Jesus could be equated with an ongoing need for Christ-followers to confess and receive confession. This process requires a willingness to be vulnerable. Brown (2018) noted that leaders’ vulnerability is paramount to changing an organization’s culture, and organizations that embrace a culture of vulnerability create trusting environments that are beneficial for all employees. When both the leader and the follower practice vulnerability, the relationship between mentors and mentees within the work environment is also strengthened (Fries-Brit & Snider, 2015).

The culture of the Mediterranean region saw honor and shame as an integral exchange based on hierarchical positioning, but Jesus demonstrated a principle that vulnerability is not shameful, and leaders can boldly take a perceived lower position (Neyrey, 1994). Bell (2005) suggested that organizations with vulnerable leaders are more likely to take risks without the fear of retaliation. Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) determined that candid communication between leaders and followers affects the entire organizational culture and benefits the camaraderie that permeates the institution’s culture. Jesus washing feet demonstrated leadership from a position of perceived vulnerability and exemplified how to overcome misconceptions of honor and shame.

*Principle Four: Organizations with cultures of vulnerability create trusting environments where risk-taking is encouraged.*

*Principle Five: Organizations with cultures of vulnerability create environments of camaraderie and communication.*

## SACRED TEXTURE

Sacred texture is the portion of socio-rhetorical analysis that considers issues in the text related to divinity (Henson et al., 2020). Duvall and Hays (2012) noted that examination of sacred text seeks the meaning

that God intended and not an interpreted application from the reader. It is essential to discover the voice of God in the text and not confuse God's voice with the voice of man (Ramm, 1999). Henson et al. (2020) identified eight different categories of sacred texture, including deity, holy person, spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics.

### *Deity*

This first category is deity and includes mentions of God directly or indirectly and can be about his nature or a revelation concerning God (Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). Jesus is a central figure in the passage, and God the Father is also mentioned twice in the first three verses: "Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father," and "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God" (ESV, 2001/2016). This opening information informs the reader that Jesus came from God the Father and would be returning. Verse 20 is the bookend to the opening revelation and a foreshadowing of the commission that Jesus would give the disciples, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me" (ESV, 2001/2016). Jesus emphasized that God sent the disciples in the same way that Jesus was sent (Thomas, 1991).

### *Holy Person*

Jesus demonstrated holiness for humanity by living and acting without flaw, and although he was completely God, he joined himself to human nature and the limitations of the flesh (Grudem, 1994). Jesus directly explained in verses 14 and 15, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you" (ESV, 2001/2016). There is no question that Jesus was giving his disciples a direct example of how to operate. Jesus later emphasized in verse 17, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (ESV, 2001/2016). It was the stated intention of Jesus to demonstrate holy action to the disciples and to encourage future holy action.



Peter opposed Jesus in verse 8, “You shall never wash my feet” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Jesus corrects Peter by saying, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). This exchange demonstrated an opposing human thought process. By receiving the foot-washing from Jesus, Peter received the cleansing from the world for ongoing failures. This picture of ongoing sanctification is very significant in light of the failure that Peter would soon experience (Zorrilla, 1995).

### *Spirit Beings*

Spirit beings are any beings associated with the spiritual realm and include angels, demons, the Holy Spirit, devils, spirits, or mentions of the cosmic battle between such forces (Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). John 13:1–20 mentions that Jesus would depart out of the world and identifies that Jesus would be going back to heaven. Verse 2 includes a direct reference to the devil: “During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Hein (1971) recognized the progression of the influence of Satan in the story of Judas and noted that John 13 explains that the devil already placed the idea of betrayal in his heart before he entered Judas in 13:27.

### *Divine History and Eschatology*

The passage begins with reference to the Passover and reveals that Jesus loved the world to the end. The original Passover event was an expression of God’s love and protection through the sacrifice of an unspotted lamb. Jesus with the disciples before Passover reminds the readers of the past and projects the coming crucifixion of Jesus on the cross (Bultmann, 2014). Concerning the movement of salvation toward end times, Jesus states, “I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Jesus quoted Psalm 41:9 in verse 8, and it is a Psalm of David recounting the betrayal of a friend (Stanley, 2009). Jesus’s statement connects the history of the Old Testament to the pericope and then forecasts the fulfillment of the betrayal yet to come.

### *Human Redemption*

Robbins (1996a, 1996b) noted that practices, rituals, and events in scripture denote the transfer of benefits from God to humanity that redeem individuals from evil and destruction. Henson et al. (2020) identified the feast of Passover as a redemptive human event, and the beginning of John 13:1–20 makes a direct reference to Passover. Carson (1991) noted that John records Jesus telling his disciples that they are clean in only this passage and John 15, thus showing that this act of washing feet during the Passover connects the redemption of the sacrifice with the Word of God expressed later in 15:3. Jesus uses this final lesson with all twelve disciples to not only remind them of redemption conveyed by a cleansing bath but ongoing redemption demonstrated through the washing of feet as an act of love (Weiss, 1979).

### *Human Commitment*

Text that emphasizes human commitment identifies ways that the followers of the Lord exemplify their commitment through their practices and responses to the divine (Robbins, 1996a, 1996b). In John 13, human commitment was demonstrated first by Jesus, and then Jesus charged the disciples to become examples themselves. John 13:15 states, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (ESV, 2001/2016). The passage builds from the concept that God sent Jesus as the perfect human example, but the disciples could also follow his example and then teach others (Waldstein, 1990). The commitment that Jesus emphasized was a commitment to both wash and be washed, or perhaps a willingness to both confess faults and forgive faults. The moment between Jesus and Peter in verse 8 established that human commitment to God includes a vulnerable willingness to submit to ongoing cleansing (sanctification process) after baptism (Cooreman-Guittin, 2021).

### *Religious Community*

The pericope of John 13 contains instructions from Jesus to the disciples concerning how they should act toward one another. In John 13:20, Jesus extends his exhortation: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who

sent me” (ESV, 2001/2016). Jesus set the example for the disciples and then added that it applies to “whoever” or anyone that might be willing to be sent. Jesus already proclaimed to the disciples that they should follow his example, and in John 13:35, Jesus emphasized, “By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (ESV, 2001/2016). John used the story to express his last lesson to his disciples, and that story included instructions about how to act toward each other and to demonstrate love to the greater community (Mathew, 2018).

### *Ethics*

The pericope includes specific instructions from Jesus concerning what the disciples should be willing to do: “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (ESV, 2001/2016). This revelation from Jesus immediately followed the exemplary action of Jesus, and it established the appropriate response for the disciples. The response was for them to depend on one another and regain cleanliness by washing each other after walking in the world. Jesus established that a full bath was unnecessary, but they would all regularly need to help one another maintain (Countryman, 1987).

### *Summary of Data: Sacred Texture*

Sacred texture analysis of John 13:1–20 yielded observations from each of the eight different categories, including deity, holy person, spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics. The pericope contains several references to Deity, including Jesus, Father, God, Master, Teacher, and Lord. John emphasized that Jesus was sent from God the Father to set the example for the disciples and ultimately whoever is willing to respond to God’s message. The text contains two holy person texture examples, including Jesus and Peter. John shows Jesus in his humanity as the one God sent as an example, and he demonstrates the action of holiness in the performance of the foot-washing. John gives the example of Peter in the scripture to display the incorrect reception of the holy action of Jesus. Spirit being references in the text include a discussion of Jesus coming from God but ready to depart from the world, and it mentioned the devil entering Judas.

A reference to divine history and eschatology in John 13 occurs in the opening passage with the mention of Passover. The pericope connects Passover with the act of Jesus washing feet and foreshadows the coming crucifixion. The text refers to Psalm 41:9, depicting David's angst about the betrayal of a friend. John 13 connects David's betrayal with the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and stands as an example of obedience and unfaithfulness. John joined the stories of Passover and foot-washing to reflect redemption accomplished in the sacrifice of Jesus and ongoing in the redemptive actions of loving one another (Carson, 1991).

Jesus exemplified human commitment in John 13:1–20 as an inspiration for the disciples. Jesus demonstrated what it looks like to show dedication first to God and then for one another (Waldstein, 1990). After Jesus demonstrated vulnerable love to his disciples, he included the community by stating that “whoever receives the one I send receives me” (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001). The example of Jesus in John 13 was ethical when he instructed that they should do just as he demonstrated. The action of Jesus was not simply the right thing to do, but what should be done by those that wanted to remain clean and to help others also maintain a right relationship with God (Countryman, 1987).

### *Application: Sacred Texture*

Sacred texture analysis of John 13:1–20 provided additional applications for the role of vulnerability in leadership. Beginning with an examination of deity, John emphasized that God sent Jesus as an example for humanity and Jesus' example in John 13 demonstrated vulnerability even though he held the highest authority. Jesus recognized that God had placed all things in his hands, yet he chose to use his hands to wipe the dirt from the disciples in an act of service. Bunker (1997) recognized that vulnerability is an attractive trait in leaders from a follower perspective, but it is often difficult for leaders to understand when and how to step out from their walls of emotional protection to express vulnerability truly. Jesus modeled mutual vulnerability with the disciples by charging them to wash and be washed and then telling them to extend this practice to others (Cooreman-Guittin, 2021). One of the most important results of expressing vulnerability in leadership is establishing trust because leadership is strengthened when it is relational, and the practice of quality leadership begins with an understanding of this human interaction (Brown, 2018).

Jesus washed his disciples' feet and explained that they would not understand until later, but he also told them in verse 19, "I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he" (*ESV*, 2001/2016). This historical foreshadowing by John established that the lesson of the foot-washing included the pain of betrayal. The lesson from John was not only for the disciples but for the Johannine community and the future church. Brown (2007) identified that acknowledging personal pain and sharing challenging experiences with another person has proven to be an effective method for individuals to process the shame that can otherwise compound emotional wounds, especially in the case of betrayal. John recorded how Jesus demonstrated the vulnerability of loving service even knowing that Judas would betray him. "Loving someone who may or may not love us back... who may be loyal to the day they die or betray us tomorrow—that's vulnerability" (Brown, 2015, p. 36).

*Principle Six: Leaders who practice vulnerability recognize that leadership is strengthened through relationships.*

*Principle Seven: Vulnerable leaders must acknowledge their pain.*

## SUMMARY

The two research questions in this study are as follows. What lessons can be learned about the leadership of Jesus from a socio-rhetorical analysis of John 13:1–20? What are the implications for a modern understanding of the role of vulnerability in leadership from the examination of John 13:1–20? The textual analysis yielded observations about the data and applications for the role of vulnerability in leadership, and these observations provided information to answer the research questions. The lessons from the pericope revealed five themes: the juxtaposition of baptism with foot-washing, emphasis on sanctification, the need for mutual confession, humility in leadership, and the message of love.

The comparison of baptism and foot-washing was relevant in several analyses and centered primarily on verse 10: "Jesus said to him, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you'" (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Baptism was a sign of justification, but Jesus offered foot-washing as a symbol of the ongoing process of sanctification. The

emphasis on sanctification was the second theme. Jesus explained to his disciples that even those who were clean (equated with initial salvation and baptism) need to continually return to each other to maintain cleanliness in the world (ongoing sanctification). As baptism can be related to an initial confession of sin and the profession that Jesus is Lord, foot-washing can be associated with the ongoing process of confession after salvation. The need for mutual confession is the third theme. Foot-washing was a vulnerable act for Jesus as a leader, and it required him to take a subservient post. The act was difficult for the disciples because the action contradicted the culture of honor and shame. The fourth lesson emphasized the need for leaders to take a stance of humility. Jesus emphasized humble leadership as willingly interacting with followers two times in John 13, explaining that the disciples should follow his example by washing each other's feet and later by telling them to love one another. The final theme or lesson is one of the most vital themes throughout Johannine literature: the message of love.

Each of these five themes is relevant for leaders. Jesus demonstrated that vulnerability is not a weakness in contrast to the culture of honor and shame. Foot-washing as a sign of ongoing sanctification can be practiced in mutual confession, and although this may be risky, it is an act of true love and humility. Finding a place to confess your ongoing needs as a leader is akin to finding a way to maintain cleanliness in the world. Jesus encouraged the disciples to wash and be washed willingly or to find a place to confess and hear confession or to love and be loved. Leaders need to find places to practice humility. Jesus demonstrated this with his closest twelve and took the risk even when he knew the betrayal and crucifixion were coming. There is no greater vulnerability recorded than the willing vulnerability of Jesus in the face of the cross.

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# The Fruitfulness of Organizational Spirituality: An Analysis of John 15

*Fitzgerald A. Reed*

There are two words to which Jesus' discourse in John 15:1–17 may be reduced to fruits verses 1–8 and love verses 9–17. First, Jesus' discourse on John 15:1–17 is a commentary on John 13:34, whereby He taught, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (*New King James, 1982, John 13:34*). Thus, Jesus encouraged His disciples to love Him and each other. Second, the disciple's faith and love would lead to a life of spiritual unity among the group. Third, as they continue to grow in Christ, their spiritual relationships would create a strong bond and establish a culture of love, respect, and compassion among the team. Finally, organization spirituality is formed because of the disciples' interaction with each other in which they have a code of values, attitudes, and behaviors to live. Thus, the disciples become the Spiritual leaders who have the responsibility to

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bore righteous fruit. The righteous fruit is twofold: Christ-likeness characteristics and Christian witness to the world. As they grew spiritually, they had the task of reaching out to others to bear more fruit.

## BACKGROUND ON JOHN

Jesus taught His disciples the value of staying in close communion with God. Before He engaged in His last fiercest strife against the prince of the world, He instructed His disciples through simple allegory the demands and conditions imposed on their discipleship if they desire to be effective (Tasker, 1988). On His way to the Garden of Gethsemane, He continued to instruct (Custer, 2011). The disciples were not to think of themselves as isolated individuals but as a group joined together by God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus framed this allegory by the language He used to describe that they are the New Israel. Israel had often been pictured under the description as a vine. Jeremiah called Israel a righteous seed (*NKJV*, Jer. 2:21). God brought the Vine Israel out of Egypt and planted it in a good land, but they failed to produce the fruits their Owner desired (Tasker, 1988). Moreover, God looked for Israel to bring forth good grapes; instead, they brought wild grapes (*NKJV*, Isa. 5:2). Furthermore, Jesus taught His listeners the parable of the Wicked Vinedresser, which the Israelites had on numerous occasions mistreated the messenger sent by God to collect what was His due (*NKJV*, Mark 12:1–10).

Jesus depicts Himself as the True Vine implies Israel had been a lousy foreshadowing of the perfection found in Him (Tasker, 1988). Jesus was what God called Israel to be, but they never became. Therefore, He was claiming to be authentic Israel (Bruner, 2012). Bruner (2012) believes this is the last and most impressive of Jesus' "I AM" statements because He claimed to be the genuine Vine. Jesus called His Father the Vinedresser, which some translation calls a Husbandman (Gill, 2003). The Husbandman is the one who planted the Vine of human nature and filled it with all the graces of the Spirit. He is the one who supported the Vine, upheld it, and made it vital for Himself, for His purpose, for His glory, and took delight in it, being a pleasant plant. Jesus referred to His followers as The Vine's Branches, the True Disciples of Jesus (Blomberg, 2001). However, like fruitful Vine Branches, they will be pruned to bear even more fruit (*NKJV*, John 15:2). These Branches represent people who are already cleaned (*NKJV*, John 15:3). The Branches had to stay connected to the Vine to live; they wither away and die if broken (*NKJV*,

John 15:4). Edwards (2004) records that any vine not planted in The Father is doomed to wither. Therefore, the disciples had to continue in His Word, abiding in the Gospel to be His disciples and loving one another and others, producing the fruit of righteousness.

Jesus encouraged His disciples to dwell in Him if they desired to produce righteous fruits. John 15:1–17 illustrated how this spiritual relationship is developed and cultivated. This process is spiritual formation. Teo (2017) defines spiritual formation as the ongoing process where believers learn and develop the right relationships with God, self, and others as they are formed spiritually to act and behave in Christ-likeness. Tang (2014) suggested three goals of spiritual formation, which he derived after examining the formative strands of spiritual formation as proposed by Reed (2010). The three goals are:

1. Believers acquiring a Christ-likeness at the personal level
2. Believers becoming a people of God at the community level
3. Believers establishing the Kingdom of God at the missional level

These three goals move God’s influence from the personal level to the community level and then to the missional level where God’s people will influence the greater environment. Spiritual formation is designed to affect the person, Church, and community.

As John 15:1–17 is examined, the eight principles that can be applied for organizational spirit formation: (1) Developing a personal relationship with Christ potentially cultivates a culture of spirituality, (2) Christian spiritual formation transforms spiritual relationships between organizational members (*NKJV*, John 15:1–7), (3) Spiritual leadership develops moral traits that establish organizational values, (4) Spiritual development transforms organizational culture through developing spiritual relationships between organizational members (*NKJV*, John 15:8), (5) Organizational spirituality develops a shared community concentrating on sacrificial love, mutual respect, and compassion (*NKJV*, John 15:9), (6) Organizational spirituality forms a shared community that potentially increases work performance and teamwork, (7) Spiritual leadership casts a vision of unity that inspires organizational spirituality, and (8) Spiritual leadership promotes organizational spirituality between members and develops a shared community (*NKJV*, John 15:9–17).

## HAVING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST

The word spirituality is accepted in many religious groups. It means having a relationship with a deity (Johnson & Moore, 2017). From African Animism to Zen Buddhism, various faiths express their relationships with a God as spirituality (Reed, 2019). Therefore, many would claim to be spiritual or have spirituality. Christianity is no different. Christians must have a personal relationship with Jesus by being born of the Holy Spirit, a spiritual connection with Him (*NKJV*, 1996, John 3:3–8). The believer dwells in Jesus the True Vine, a continued relationship with Him (*NKJV*, John 15:1–4). As the Branches are connected to the Vine to produce fruits, the believers abide in Jesus to sustain spiritual life and bear righteous fruits. Therefore, it is imperative to distinguish Christian spiritual formation from other religions (Reed, 2019). Christian spiritual formation is shaping the human Spirit to transform and mold into the characteristics of Christ (Willard, 2006).

The primary identity of a Christian is connected to the identity of Jesus. Therefore, the believer must keep their eyes on Jesus, who inspires and perfects their faith (*NKJV*, Heb. 12:2). The effectiveness of the believers' service is linked to their personal relationship with Him (Bennett-Carpenter et al., 2013). The secure basis of Christian leadership is to have a personal faith and love with Jesus the Lord. The personal relationship with Christ is supreme and unique compared to other relationships because the Holy Spirit fills believers with God's grace and provides spiritual care and guidance. The personal relationship with Jesus encourages confidence for services. The believer's faith overcomes the world because they are united with Jesus and sustained by His grace. The believers are cleansed by the Gospel, God's word (*NKJV*, John 15:3). The Gospel helps overcome challenges. God the Father "takes away" unfruitful fruits, and He "trim clean" to produce more fruits (*NKJV*, John 15:2). If a person dwells in Jesus, then Jesus' word lives in them (*NKJV*, John 15:7). Now the person shares in Jesus' spiritual relationship, whereby they grow spiritually. This spiritual growth leads to personal development that causes organizational spirituality to be formed—believers acquiring a Christ-likeness at the personal level.

Principle One: Developing a personal relationship with christ potentially cultivates a culture of spirituality.

Principle Two: Christian spiritual formation transforms spiritual relationships between organizational members.

## PRODUCING RIGHTEOUS FRUIT

Every believer should know three theological words: justification, sanctification, and glorification (Gallaty, 2017). These words shed understanding on the process God takes the believer through for spiritual formation. Justification is the act where God declares a person righteous and in right standing with God because they received forgiveness from sin through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*NKJV*, 2 Cor. 5:21). Glorification is the future work of God whereby He transforms our mortal bodies into our eternal bodies to dwell with Him forever (*NKJV*, 1 Cor. 15:53). Sanctification is the process whereby Christ lives His life through the believer. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer in the Lord through strength and power (*NKJV*, Gal. 5:16). The entire sanctification process from the start and to finish is God's work. God works in the believer through Jesus to produce good work (*NKJV*, Eph. 2:10). The Christian life is easy or impossible, it is impossible when the believer lives it in their strength, and it becomes more accessible when the believer yields to God's rule and reign over their lives (Gallaty, 2017).

Jesus said, "My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so, you are my disciples" (*NKJV*, John 15:8). God is the Spiritual Caregiver who plants and cultivates the vineyard; Christ is the Vine, which the believer depends on for strength (*NKJV*, John 15:1–2). Believers are expected to produce fruits, but a self-dependent branch is no different from an unfruitful believer. Believers should grow individually and as a group. The believer should personally seek to be sanctified by the Spirit and the word. Apostle Peter encouraged the believers to add to their faith. He admonishes them to add virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (*NKJV*, 2 Pet. 1:5–7). If the believers possess these characteristics, they would not be unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. These attributes are righteous fruits, which strengthen spiritual relationships. Jesus' Branches that bear fruits are filled with His Spirit, grace, and righteousness; they are purged by the affliction and temptations needed for their growth and fruitfulness (Gill, 2003). Righteousness is a lifestyle for Spiritual leaders, and each leader must bear fruit worthy of repentance (*NKJV*, John 3:8).



Bearing righteous fruit is having ethics. Ethics is concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or community finds desirable and appropriate (Northouse, 2013). In all situations, leaders must treat all people right. Whether in group work or community projects, leaders are responsible for treating all people with respect and dignity, being sensitive to others' interests, needs, and concerns. Moreover, the values and beliefs espoused by leaders have a significant impact on the organization's values. Therefore, ethics is essential to leadership by helping to establish and reinforce organizational values.

Principle Three: Spiritual leadership develops moral traits that establish organizational values.

## BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus called His disciples to be learners (Reed, 2019). His message to His disciples and the multitudes He taught was how to live in the Kingdom of God and how to be led by God's Kingdom's influence (*NKJV*, Matt. 5–7). The disciples were getting on-the-job training as they heard the Sermon on Mount, listened to Jesus' parables, and observed His miracles (Dale, 2006). Apostle John records Jesus' word about His disciples, "By this, My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit so that you will be My disciples" (*NKJV*, John 15:8). Jesus was teaching them how to be genuine disciples of His. Bearing righteous fruits is necessary for a disciple of Christ. It is a lifestyle, which a disciple chooses to pursue. The disciple righteously lives whereby they exercise faith and love upon Christ, holding to Him the head, cleaving to Him with the whole purpose of heart, desiring life, grace, strength, and nourishment through Him (Gill, 2003).

Moreover, the disciples must be Jesus' witness; they are responsible for spreading God's Kingdom messages. Therefore, after receiving all authority from God, Jesus commanded His disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching to observe all things that I have commanded you" (*NKJV*, Matt. 28:19–20). In other words, Jesus' disciples are followers who serve as an apprentice under the tutelage of a master (Allotta, 2013). The idea of taking students and turning them into apprentices who begin doing the master's work permeates the totality of

the New Testament (Shirley, 2008). Dempsey's (2008) definition of discipleship is the process of guiding individual disciples to grow in spiritual maturity and discover and use their gifts, talents, and abilities to fulfill Christ's mission. Barna (2001) looked deeper into the Biblical narrative to reveal what he believes to be six insights on what Jesus meant for a disciple to be, do, and understand. Barna wrote,

1. Disciples must be biblically assured of their salvation by grace alone
2. Disciples must be learned and understand the principles of the Christian life
3. Disciples must obey God's Laws and Commands
4. Disciples must represent God in the world
5. Disciples must serve other people
6. Disciples must reproduce themselves in Christ

Being a disciple is far more than just knowing the facts of the Bible. A genuine follower of Jesus live a godly lifestyle. Jesus demonstrated to His disciples what to say and do. His leadership style was not only impartation but also demonstration. Allotta (2013) noted someone could not merely explain the Christian life; it must be exemplified. First, spending time with others is essential for effective discipleship. Afterward, come the acts of delegation and supervision. Therefore, disciples are genuine followers of Jesus Christ who provide Spiritual leadership to others within the organization. In addition, they model the beliefs and practices that inspire organizational spirituality. As a result, now believers are becoming the people of God at the community level.

Principle Four: Spiritual development transforms organizational culture through developing spiritual relationships between organizational members.

## BUILDING A SHARED COMMUNITY

The process of coming together as an organized community requires planning and effort. First, it is having a plan and staying with the program. Next, the organizational leaders communicate the shared vision with the members, and the members buy into the idea and make it their own (Reed, 2019). Like an architect provides drawings for a building project, God provided His plan for building a community characterized by love.

Jesus carried that message to His disciples by teaching them to remain in His love (*NKJV*, John 15:9).

Jesus' message to His disciples was to continue in Christ's Love. In John 15:9–17, Jesus explained the epitome of sacrificial love that He would demonstrate on the cross and called His disciples to imitate (Blomberg, 2001). This sacrificial love about remaining attached to Jesus is equally crucial for Christians bearing righteous fruits. Therefore, the disciples are to pray and abide continually in the love of the Lord because they are the Beloved. In addition, Jesus desired for His disciples to build a shared community whereby the disciples expressed they loved the Father, Jesus, and each other. Keeping Jesus' commandments to love would be the expression of this sacrificial love.

Principle Five: Organizational spirituality develops a shared community concentrating on sacrificial love, mutual respect, compassion, and teamwork.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

Organizational spirituality received increasing attention in the organizational sciences (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003a, 2003b; Mitroff & Denton, 1999), and the implications of workplace spirituality for leadership theory, research, and practice make this a fast-growing area of new research and inquiry by scholars (Giacalone et al., 2005). Moreover, organizational spirituality seems to show benefits for personal outcomes that increase positive human health and psychological well-being and improved employee commitment, productivity, and reduced absenteeism and turnover (Fry et al., 2005; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003b; Malone & Fry, 2003).

Organizational spirituality happens within a shared community. Each person strives to individually bear righteous fruits by loving and caring for each person. The love is spread from person to person and permeates the entire organization. However, a shared community is formed by the Spiritual leadership setting the climate for the organization; they provide organizational standards such as spiritual guidance, organizational beliefs, vision, and mission; they are authentic and transformational leaders.

Spiritual leadership is effectively proven when related to spiritual value and practice (Reave, 2005). The organizations have higher employee

commitment, productivity, and customer satisfaction levels when employee's spiritual needs are met and aligned with organizational vision and values (Dushon & Plowman, 2005; Fry et al., 2005; Malone & Fry, 2003). Jesus desired His followers to love each other. Therefore, they commanded to love as He had loved them. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (*NKJV*, John 15:13). Organizational spirituality is an organizational culture in which Spiritual leadership leads followers to a more outstanding commitment and maximizes work performance.

Principle Six: Organizational spirituality forms a shared community that potentially increases work performance.

### SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Spiritual leadership involves motivating and inspiring workers through a transcendent vision and a culture based on noble values to produce a more motivated, committed, and productive workforce (Fry & Matherly, 2006). Thus, Spiritual leadership is a causal leadership for organizational transformation designed to create an essentially motivated, learning organization; it defines the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to naturally motivate oneself and others, giving them a sense of spiritual survival and well-being through calling and membership.

Moreover, creating a vision wherein leaders and followers experience a sense of calling in that life has meaning and makes a difference. Also, establishing a social and organizational culture based on the values of unselfish love whereby leaders and followers have a sense of association, feel understood and appreciated, and have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others. Jesus' words recorded in John 15:9–17 revealed His vision for a beloved community. Jesus shared His thoughts and ideas on this community. The followers' success is predicated on the willingness to continue in His love and words. If they continue with Him, unity is gained. If not, agreement is lost!

Principle Seven: Spiritual leadership casts a vision of unity that inspires organizational spirituality.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

All leadership is value-laden, and all leadership, whether good or bad, is moral leadership (Ciulla, 2014). According to Ciulla (2014), all leaders have a series of beliefs, plans, and values, and ideas that they desire to put forth. Then, the leaders present their proposal to the group, and the members gain interest when something is at stake. Next, the leaders practice what they preach, walk the walk, and their actions are consistent with their words. These actions help guide and shape the organizational culture (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Jesus provided the Spiritual leadership for His disciples whereby the organizational culture was established. Thus, organizational culture is the personality of the organization (Cameron et al., 2006). Soltani beliefs, faiths, norms, values, and fundamental assumptions as the cultural basics of an organization form its existential foundation and help to recognize the distinction point between the good and the bad. In addition, organizational culture is a framework that defines organizational values, the behavior of individuals, and the specific intents of that organization. Therefore, organizational culture determines a particular identity for the organization (Chuang et al., 2004). Organizational culture is considered the principal factor in its formation. It significantly affects the structure, plan, external and internal environment, technology, human resource, productivity, and strategy (Sherafati et al., 2015). Culture specifies what the organization will do or not (Christopian, 2008).

As Jesus' followers continued to grow together, they elevated from servant status to a friend. No longer will He call them servants, but they are friends (*NKJV*, John 15:14–15). The disciples had not accomplished much at this junction. The promotion from discipleship to friendship was grace. Thus, Jesus had passed on all things that He heard from the Father to the disciples. Now the disciples share in the truth, and they are more than servants; they have an Apostolic Friendship (Bruner, 2012). Jesus chose His disciples from out of the world and appointed them to bear righteous fruits: outreach ministry and prayer. The disciples had the responsibility of spreading the Gospel. They moved geographically to build and strengthen the Church. Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray with all confidence to know that their prayers were answered, and he would be with them as they went forth as witnesses for him (*NKJV*, Matthew 28:18–20). Believers were establishing the Kingdom of God at the missional level.

Principle Eight: Spiritual leadership promotes organizational spirituality between members and develops a shared community.

## SUMMARY

Jesus is the True Vine that connects the disciples' spiritual relationship with God the Father, the connection that is required for the disciples to stay in close union with Jesus. The disciples would not be successful with bearing righteous fruits if separated from the source. The separation would lead to total ruin. Jesus encouraged His disciples to live righteously by staying in love with Him and each other as they grew in love, respect, and compassion. Their interactions with each other would form organizational spirituality, which helps to establish the organizational culture. Spiritual leadership sets the organizational culture by modeling the values, attitudes, and behaviors for spiritual transformation.

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## Spirituality When Navigating Organizational Change: An Analysis of John 20:19–29

*Chad M. Minor*

For today's organizations, change is necessary to keep pace with an ever-shifting global marketplace, but challenges lurk around each corner that discourage leaders from moving their visions forward. Gover and Duxbury (2012) showed that organizational change could create influential social dynamics, which otherwise would have remained inoperative, highlighting the significant and potentially undervalued impact of organizational change. Lucas and Kline (2008) explained that when introducing change, an organization must determine and understand the various parts of the culture that can help or hinder what portions of group structures organizations can utilize for learning. Leaders fear change because of the impending challenges and the thought of "don't change what's already working." Today's cultural challenges that come with change within an organization are nothing new. Martin Luther King Jr. once

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said, “Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant, and to face the challenge of change.” This chapter will explore communicating change and navigating challenges through Jesus’ lens in John 20:19–22, and how He communicated, interacted, encouraged, and strengthened the disciples for the impending difficulties that they would face during change. The disciples’ lives would no longer be about living with Jesus but rather living for Jesus. The example of Jesus communicating a forward mission and vision during a time of difficulty provides a foundation for today’s leaders who are striving to move their organizations forward. Schruijer and Curseu (2014) detailed that change can jeopardize the balance of social systems, therefore highlighting that the development of the collective group emotions becomes a vital component of the organizational change process. When navigating change, leaders identify with Jesus’ communication style by standing beside, encouraging, challenging, and strengthening followers for the forthcoming change.

### BACKGROUND OF JOHN 20:19–29

Change is a difficult thing for any organization to navigate. Jesus understood the difficulties surrounding change and provided a blueprint for leaders navigating change and the challenges that come with its implementation. An exegetical analysis of John 20:19–29 and how Jesus stood beside, encouraged, challenged, and strengthened his followers for the impending issues that they would face during change highlights various methods of communication for leaders. Jesus provides leaders with a Biblical structure to successfully lead and support followers during organizational changes and challenges. As they navigate challenges, Christian leaders can successfully uphold the Biblical values that Jesus embodies during difficult times while continuing to move their organization’s mission and vision forward through the difficulties of change. As leaders begin to apply Jesus’ communication style during times of adversity due to change, they can impact both the organization and its followers.

According to Barclay (2001), Jesus commissioned the disciples in John 20:19–29, highlighting the importance of the Church to live out the mission of Christ, highlighting what Paul meant when he explained the Church as “the body of Christ” in Ephesians 1:23 and 1 Corinthians 12:12. Kruse (2003) stated that the disciples being commissioned to continue the mission of Jesus in John 20:19–29 is foreshadowed at

specific points of John's Gospel: Jesus challenged them to lift their eyes and see fields ripe for harvest (Jn 4:35–38); Christ explained to them that those who believed in him would live out what he had done and accomplish greater works because he was going to be with the Father (Jn 14:12). Jesus communicated that they were chosen and selected to go and bear fruit (Jn 15:16). Kruse (2003) detailed that the disciples learn from Jesus in John 20:19–29 how to forgive sins and maintain the ability to do so through communicating the good news of the Gospel and professing the effects of believing in the forgiveness of sins. Milne (1993) explained that the final two chapters of the Gospel of John highlight the post-resurrection mission of Jesus. The resurrected appearances of Jesus are significant to this thought because they balance the appearances by providing context to the greater mission of the community moving forward.

According to Lincoln (2005), John 20:19–29 highlights Jesus was formally giving authority to the disciples. He was giving them the power to move the mission forward, just as Jesus had been the Fathers' uniquely authorized representative. Barclay (2001) explained that Jesus details to the disciples that just as the Father sent Him, He is sending them to continue God's mission. Barclay (2001) stated that the sending of the disciples to live out the mission parallels the sending of Jesus by the Father. This relationship had as its foundation Jesus' perfect obedience, faithfulness toward the Father, and love toward the people. This account of Jesus's return and interaction with the disciples provides leaders with an opportunity to understand how to navigate communicating change. Knowing that change usually brings with it a host of challenges and issues, John 20:19–29 gives a roadmap for maneuvering through the various aspects of change and the challenges that accompany its implementation.

### SALUTATION (20:19)

Kruse (2003) explained that when Christ appeared to the disciples in John 20:19–29, He greeted them, "Peace be with you," showing them that He was not holding their past failures against them and was restoring them for the forward mission of the Church. According to Dods (1903), to remove any doubt about Himself, Jesus showed them His hands and His side. Leaders navigating change encourage followers by providing an understanding of the past without condemning. According to Govett (1881), Jesus begins His interaction with the disciples with "Peace be with you."

Even though they had deserted Him and fled, He would not hold their past failure against them because of it. The past was forgiven. Jesus brings peace to the disciples by beginning with forgiveness, as opposed to their failure and hardship (Govett, 1881).

According to Simeon (1833), the mission that the disciples receive from Jesus in John 20 mirrors the mission that Christ received from the Father in John 3:17: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” The commissioning of the disciples in John 20:19–29 also mirrors the sending of the Spirit by God and Jesus in John 14:26: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” Govett (1881) detailed that John 20:19–29 highlights Jesus sending the disciples as His witness to the world; just as the Father commissioned Jesus, the disciples are sent by Him with the Holy Spirit’s help to teach people about Jesus. Lock (1942) described that in His first appearance to the disciples, Jesus begins with the gift of peace and the gift of joy, and then He commissions them with the forward mission of the Church. Milne (1993) explained that the importance of the mission is understood through the resemblance between the Father sending Jesus into the world and Christ sending the disciples into the world to live out the great commission.

How are you welcoming people? When entering a space where the goal is to encourage and challenge people with the forward mission of the organization, should you focus on past failures or the possibility for future success. Annabel (2009) explained group dynamics as the emotional connection between the individuals in the organization, understanding that groups can help or hinder an organization’s ability to implement change successfully. Understanding the dynamics of the group, who you are talking to, is vital when communicating change. Koivisto et al. (2013) detailed that the way individuals perceive change has critical implications for organizations and specific followers. Lucas and Kline (2008) found that certain aspects of an organization’s culture, and groups within that culture, can persuade how individuals and groups perceive organizational change initiatives and how that subsequently shapes their learning. Annabel (2009) detailed that successful leadership during change demands delicate attention to group dynamics to ensure it does not sabotage the completion of the primary task. Schruijzer and Curseu (2014) detailed that change can jeopardize the balance of social systems, therefore highlighting that the development of the collective

group emotions becomes a vital component of the organizational change process. This section highlights how Jesus focused on His greeting, how the climate of the space was set by the way He entered the space. Where the organization is going, rather than continuing to identify past failures, is essential when communicating change of any kind.

Principle One: Spiritual leaders gracefully communicate change.

Principle Two: Spiritual leaders focus on the forward mission.

Principle Three: Spiritual leaders are welcoming.

### ENCOURAGE (20:20–21)

According to Kruse (2003), even though the Gospel of John provides the notion of sins remaining unforgiven (8:24; 9:41; 15:22, 24; 16:8–9; 19:11), John 20:19–29 is the only place in the Fourth Gospel where the forgiveness of sins is discussed, thus freeing the disciples from their past failures, and providing them with a blueprint of how to navigate the forward mission. Milne (1993) explained that the outcome of Jesus communicating to the disciples the importance of the forgiveness of sins becomes a community bound together by their universal participation in the Holy Spirit sent to share Christ's mission to the ends of the earth. Barclay (2001) articulated that Christ's message was for all people, and He soon would be returning to the Father. Hence, the message of the Church, to take the Gospel to all people, rested on the disciples' understanding and communicating this mission. Milne (1993) stated that how Jesus commissioned the disciples in John 20:19–29 provides a foundation for the character of the mission. Jesus is commissioning the disciples just as the Father commissioned Him.

Milne (1993) articulated that the mission that Jesus challenges the disciples within the upper room becomes possible through the solemn moment of commissioning the disciples for the forward mission. Westcott and Westcott (1908) stated that the apostles were commissioned to move forward the mission of Jesus, not begin a new mission, maintaining the connection between Christ and the needs of people. Lincoln (2005) articulated that the disciples living out the mission as a witnessing group of people and agency of Jesus' forgiveness receive momentum from their experience with the resurrected Christ, His commissioning, and His giving of the Holy Spirit.

Lucas and Kline (2008) revealed that communication patterns between groups and the behavioral construct were connected back to underlying values. The ability to successfully communicate change lies at the foundation of healthy organizational culture. Upon realizing that Jesus was not going to focus on past failure, the disciples were encouraged for the future mission. Selkirk (2016) detailed that an individual's fear changes because it takes a person out of their comfort zone, confronts their understandings, and makes them feel inadequate. Leaders of spiritual organizations encourage followers during change understanding that change is always emotionally difficult to navigate.

Stollberg et al. (2017) detailed that organizational change endangers followers' control and confidence and, therefore, can cause an individual to resist change. Selkirk (2016) explained that organizations and leaders who successfully maneuver through change navigate followers' fear of change. Sherratt (2017) explained that it is essential for a leader to understand why an individual resists change instead of focusing on the fact that they are resisting change. Successfully communicating change encourages followers for the forward mission of the organization. Many times, individuals are hesitant to accept change due to past emotional hurt when their failure was harshly criticized. Jesus, focusing on encouraging the disciples with the forward mission, emotionally builds them up for navigating any impending issues that will arise. Today's leaders, embodying Jesus' communication style, should encourage their followers by communicating the forward mission of the organization, successfully highlighting where the organization is going rather than where it has been.

Principle Four: Spiritual leaders encourage followers to prepare them for the future mission.

Principle Five: Spiritual leaders do not discourage followers by focusing on past failures.

### CHALLENGE (20:24–25)

Kruse (2003) explained that even though before the crucifixion, Jesus communicated to the disciples that they would be scattered and disown him (Jn 16:32) when Jesus was arrested, he told the soldiers to let the disciples go (Jn 18:8–9). Jesus was alone when He was condemned to death, and He did not communicate these past failures when He was communicating the forward mission. Westcott and Westcott (1908)

detailed that the mission Jesus communicates in John 20:19–29 is understood not from a historical fulfillment (sent) but in the perpetuation of its future effect (has sent). Dods (1903) articulated that after putting them at ease and removing their doubt, Jesus fulfills the purpose of His appearance by communicating the forward mission of the Church to the disciples, the “how” for moving forward, and their authority as disciples of Christ, which is the same mission as Jesus’, to carry out the work that He had already begun. According to Westcott and Westcott (1908), John 20:19–29 highlights that even though the design of how Jesus’ mission was to be carried out had changed, from Him to the disciples, the mission itself was going to be continued and powerful. Milne (1993) explained that the other aspect of Jesus’ communicating the mission was to highlight its cost, understanding that the risen Lord and Savior sent the disciples not by His kingly glory but rather through the marks of the cross and His love.

Milne (1993) described that in the upper room, Jesus mirrors the words in his prayer before the passion, “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18). This strengthens and establishes the commission he gives to the disciples. According to Kruse (2003), Thomas’ defiance in believing Jesus’ resurrection is articulated as a double negative (*ou mē*), which highlights that Thomas was insistent about the resurrection. Earlier references highlight Thomas’s steadfast commitment to Jesus (Jn 11:16) and forthright about his doubts (Jn 14:45). Thomas’s steadfastness highlights his personality and helps understand how adamant he was not to believe that Christ had risen until he saw him with his own eyes. Dods (1903) detailed that Jesus communicated to the disciples the forward mission all at once, not focusing on their past failures but conveying to them that He was with them while communicating the mission.

Stollberg et al. (2017) detailed that when individuals feel personally challenged by a loss of control, they align with in-group behavior to overcome the perception of personal helplessness. Gover and Duxbury (2012) showed that organizational change could create influential social dynamics, which otherwise would have remained inoperative, highlighting the significant and potentially undervalued impact of organizational change. Change is not usually received well; people struggle with anything that messes up their routine. Because change usually means a venture into the unknown, it is always going to be challenging. Poole and

Van de Ven (2004) explained that not all changes are gradual transformations; some changes happen spontaneously, bringing forth new styles of group behavior that are not attributed to any specific event in the group's embedding process.

Nickelsen (2017) explained that organizational change causes discord within group dynamics; however, this discord could be resolved. Stollberg et al. (2017) explained that the threat to individual control increases a person's willingness to behave as a group member, which indicates their heightened conformity to the salient in-group standard, but not the out-group standard. Knowing that change causes emotional stress and presents organizations with various issues, how the challenge for the forward mission is communicated is vital for the success of the change.

Principle Six: Spiritual leaders describe the challenges that come with change.

Principle Seven: Spiritual leaders understand how emotionally difficult change is for followers.

### STRENGTHEN (20:26–29)

Kruse (2003) explained that Thomas demanded proof from Christ before he would believe, and Jesus met him where he was, inviting him to feel the holes in his hands and side, but Jesus also challenged him at this moment by saying, "Stop doubting and believe." Lincoln (2005) stated that just as Jesus' mission surrounded loving others to the point of sacrificing Himself, the manner of His mission will be the foundation for the disciples since those who are sent are not above the One who sent them (Jn 13:15–16). Barclay (2001) detailed that without Christ, the Church does not have a mission, it has no authority, it has no great encourager during times of trouble, it has no forward momentum, it has nothing to strengthen and inspire the heart. Lincoln (2005) explained that the disciples' encounter with the resurrected Jesus encouraged them to carry out His mission. This incident becomes critical for the disciples' storyline within the Church's mission to the world.

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Bridges and Bridges (2016) explained that change of any kind, even though it might be justified in budgetary or organizational terms, succeeds, or fails based on whether followers will accept doing things differently. Schweiger et al. (2018) explained that when more resistant individuals participated in the change, more thought was given to the plan, more additional perspectives came to the forefront, more concerns were communicated, and thus, more possible obstacles to the proposed change could be detected.

Vakola (2013) detailed that group readiness for change was found in the collective understanding and assumption that the proposed change was necessary, the organization had the means to handle the change, the group would benefit from the change, and the group could deal with the demands that came with change. A leader knowing the limits of their organization and followers is vital for navigating change. The successful communication of a proposed change carries with it the ability to strengthen followers to navigate the challenges that come with change. Bouckennooghe et al. (2009) detailed that when readiness for change is present, the organization positively embraces change, lessening resistance. Followers are strengthened when organizations and leaders have a plan for the implementation of change. Jesus strengthened the disciples by communicating that they are called, just as He was called, to live out God's mission here on earth. Successfully communicating the "why" of the change is essential when communicating the forward mission of an organization.

Principle Eight: Spiritual leadership prepares for a proposed change.

Principle Nine: Spiritual leadership strengthens followers by providing the "why" behind change.

## SUMMARY

This exegetical analysis of John 20:19–29 highlights how Jesus stood beside, encouraged, challenged, and strengthened His disciples for the future mission and the challenges they would be encountering. Barclay (2001) detailed that Jesus could be God’s messenger only because He rendered perfect obedience and love to God. It follows that the Church is fit to be the messenger and the instrument of Christ only when it perfectly loves Him and perfectly obeys Him. Jesus provides an example of how to navigate challenges through this interaction with the disciples. Through the terms of the mission, the disciples are thought too overwhelming; thus, Jesus also points to the mission’s resources (Milne, 1993). The first has already been highlighted: Jesus Himself. He will continue to be the leader of the disciple community. As before, so now will the disciples go out under the leadership of Jesus and with the inspiration of His living presence.

Selkirk (2016) detailed that people fear change because it takes a person out of their comfort zone, confronts their understandings, and makes them feel inadequate. Selkirk explained that organizations and leaders who successfully maneuver through change navigate followers’ fear of change. Sherratt (2017) explained that it is essential for a leader to understand why an individual resists change instead of focusing on the fact that they are resisting change. Sohal and Waddell (1998) explained that it is essential for leaders to include followers in all portions of the change process and incorporate their feedback to each aspect of the change process. Still, if the directive is to continue previous policies, little change will happen. Yukl (2020) detailed that resistance to change is not the consequence of inexperience or stubbornness. Instead, resistance is a natural reaction by an individual who wishes to protect their personal interests and sense of independence.

Through an exegetical analysis of John 20:19–29 and leaders can identify how Jesus stood beside, encouraged, challenged, and strengthened his followers for the forward mission of the Church. This chapter highlights a Biblical structure for current leaders to successfully lead and strengthen followers before and throughout issues that arise within an organization. As they strive to maneuver through various challenges, Christian leaders can successfully utilize the Biblical principles Jesus demonstrates during challenging times while continuing to move the mission and vision of their organization forward. As leaders begin to apply the example of

Jesus during their times of adversity and implement His leadership style during these moments, they can impact both the organization and their followers.

Because Jesus does not focus on past failures and forgives them, He releases past negative issues while providing insight for the disciples to focus on for the forward mission. Kruse (2003) explained that the disciples, especially Peter, who had denied Him three times (18:17–18, 25–27), would have felt deeply ashamed that they had abandoned Jesus in His hour of need. Bass (2008) stated that strategic change usually happens when new leaders are brought into an organization to understand from an oversight committee or board of directors that they are enacting change. Feng et al. (2016) described that group leaders act as active contributors connecting the strategy for implementing change to the blueprint for its daily application. Koivisto et al. (2013) highlighted that the perception of an organization caring for its workers and the leadership method being utilized both play a vital role in understanding how followers perceive change. Milne (1993) articulated that Jesus did not come merely to assure them of His conquest of death and the triumph of His Kingdom. He came to instruct and prepare them for what lies ahead. By not focusing on past failures, Jesus devotes positive energy to what's next, the forward mission.

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# Organizational Spirituality as the Rebalancing of Society: An Analysis of Acts 4

*Carlo A. Serrano*

Organizations consist of people and systems. One could argue that the healthiest organizations are those in which the organizational systems serve to enhance the quality of life and the potential of the people. Nevertheless, more often than not, it is the people who end up serving the systems. This reality grows when the organization itself has all of the rights, privileges, and recognition of a *person* (Mintzberg, 2015a). Organizational injustice, mistrust, and unethical decision-making may indeed flow from a societal imbalance that overemphasizes either the collective or the individual at the expense of healthy interdependency (Azevedo & Gates, 2019; Azevedo et al., 2020; Mintzberg, 2015b; Sharma & Kumra,

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2020). Since the Christian church represents one of the most diverse and exponentially growing organizations in history, it seems essential to explore the church's roots from an organizational standpoint to gain insight into the nexus of spirituality, organizational life, and society. The fourth chapter of the Book of Acts documents a pivotal season in the early days of the church. In this chapter, issues of persecution (4:1–3), organizational growth (4:4), societal upheaval (4:5–20), social justice (4:21–22), and spiritual formation (4:23–31) find a form of resolution in a descriptive pericope of church life (4:32–35). In Acts 4:32–35, the early church demonstrates its ability to transcend societal complexities by focusing on a central message and operating from a unified ethic. In combination with their behavior, the results of their belief created a paradigm for living that has implications for the three sectors of society as defined by Mintzberg (2015a). Since the actions of the early church as found in Acts 4 take place in a context of organizational growth and environmental uncertainty, the principles extrapolated from the chapter should have broad application for the development of a biblical theology of organizational spirituality.

## BACKGROUND OF ACTS 4

Nostalgia is a tricky concept. While there is something warm and romantic about the days gone by, it is easy to look at the past without considering the complexities along with the pain of those experiences. This issue is genuine when exploring historical narratives such as the Book of Acts. The Acts of the Apostles is not an instructive epistle, a book of wisdom, or a prophetic/apocalyptic account of things to come. Instead, the Book of Acts is a historical account of the rise and expansion of the early church. Most scholars agree that it is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke (Barclay, 2003; Marshall, 1980; Peterson, 2009; Wright & Bird, 2019). However, just because Acts is a historical account, it does not mean that we cannot extract principles for modern-day living. Acts is the only historical account of the birth, expansion, and early development of arguably the largest organization in history—the Church of Jesus Christ.

Thus, it is paramount that when exploring Acts, one avoids jumping straight into finding principles since doing so would almost certainly involve eisegesis. It is also essential when studying Acts to differentiate between the descriptive and the prescriptive. Thanks to a wide

range of hermeneutical methodologies and the ever-increasing scholarship regarding biblical principles for leadership, it is firmly established that principles for leadership and organizational life exist within the Sacred text. Correctly mining those principles is the key. So, this chapter will follow some of the patterns already established in this book to “mine” Acts 4:32–37 for anything that may apply to organizational spirituality.

Acts 4 is one of several pivot points in the history of the church. It is here that the first generation of disciples finally experienced the promised persecution that Jesus mentioned during his many teachings (Matt 10:17, 24:9; Lk 21:12). Peter and John were arrested and imprisoned for preaching about Jesus and the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:1–3). One could argue that losing the top leadership at the beginning of the “startup” should negatively affect the organization’s growth potential. However, Acts 4:4 tells us that the church increased by 5,000 men due to the Apostle’s imprisonment and preaching. Wilson (2017) stated,

The narrator of Acts is intensely interested in the quantitative growth of the church through the conversion of new believers, and sympathetic readers of Acts will embrace the numerical growth of the church as a critical, God-given objective for their church contexts. (p. 330)

Not only did the church grow despite persecution, but the entire Jewish power structure began to unravel as Peter and John stood up to the scrutiny of the Sanhedrin (v. 5–20) rapidly. This type of confrontation not only mirrored the aggression faced by Jesus, but it would also serve as a pattern throughout the rest of the Book of Acts (Acts 5:17–19, 8:1, 12:1–5). Most of the expansion of the early church came as a result of a clash between the lived-out values of the church and the existing social structures of the day. Acts 4 took place in the context of social justice. In the previous chapter, a man disabled from birth received miraculous healing in his legs by way of the ministry of Peter (Acts 3:1–10). Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore Acts 3, it is crucial to consider that the healing at the “Beautiful Gate” is the first recorded instance of post-resurrection healing. This healing is the first time we read of Peter and John, outside of the Gospels, mirroring the healing ministry of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel accounts, we see that Jesus connected physical healing and feeding ministry with the advancement of God’s agenda on earth. Thus, we should not rush past the significance of seeing the Apostles follow directly in Jesus’ footsteps by serving the disabled man in Acts



3. The man asked them for money, but they knew that his real issue was more than financial or physical. His actual need was spiritual. Thus, by healing the man, they solved all three of his problems because now the man could work (financial), walk (physical), and participate fully in either the life of the temple or life in the new Christian community (spiritual). As a result, Acts 4:20–21 says all of the people who witnessed the event—Jewish and Christian—praised God because of the life change they witnessed. The crowd was so excited that the religious power structure had no choice but to release Peter and John. The world turned upside down indeed.

Acts 4 is such an important chapter because we see how social disruption, even “good trouble,” can lead to persecution, which further disrupts societal structures. Nevertheless, instead of the system staying stuck, it progresses to deepen the faith and missional resolve of those involved in the change (v.27–31).

One of the benefits of studying the organizational life of the early church through the Christian Scriptures is that much like the Hebrew Scriptures, the authors do not hide hard truths or focus on the highlights. In a day and age when Instagram highlights reels of organizational life often hide the messy middle, it is refreshing to see authenticity in the Scriptures. Acts 4 presents the church at the crossroads. As summarized in the final passage, Acts 4, the church’s life offers excellent insight into the power of organizational spirituality.

### COMMUNITYSHIP AS EVERYTHING IN COMMON (ACTS 4:32)

Western society tends to cringe at the thought of communal living, as described in verse 32 of Acts 4.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. (*English Standard Version*, 2001, 2016, Acts 4:32)

However, equating this verse to the socialism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is anachronistic and robs the reader of the richness found within the text’s application for modern organizational life. Scholars believe that of the summary sections on church life in Acts (Acts 2:42–47,

4:32–37, 5:11–16), this section is the most popular due to its placement between two challenging passages (Martin & Smith, 2006; Wright, 2008). What is striking is that the text says the “full number” or “full company” of believers were of one heart and soul. The words *heart* (καρδία) and *soul* (ψυχή) both speak to a person’s innermost being, decision-making center, and literal personhood (“Bible Word Study,” 2021). Luke’s inclusion of both words emphasizes the depth of unity that existed among all of the early church members. Augustine commented: “For ... the love that God puts in people makes one heart of many hearts and makes the many souls of people into one soul, as it is written of them that believed and mutually loved one another” (Martin & Oden, 2006, p. 56). This love then caused, as Chrysostom remarked, “he that had nothing to possess the things of all” (Martin & Oden, 2006, p. 56). When it comes to communityship, as expressed in verse 32, we tend to jump straight to sharing material goods. However, it is clear from the text that the most essential shared commodity of the early church was the personhood and collective will of the actual members of the church. One could argue that this type of shared personhood is only made possible by a deep sense of love for God and each other (Marshall, 1980). Simply put, before they ever shared a meal, property, or other possessions, they first shared a mission, a purpose, and a new identity in Christ.

This truth is evidenced by the fact that none of them said: “that any of the things that belonged to him was his own” (v.32). Again, this was not a denial of possession as much as it was an expression of stewardship. The early church members understood that “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Ps. 24:1). They believed that since everything was ultimately God’s, they had no right to claim any “good and perfect gift” belonging to anyone (Jas. 1:7). Some suggest that in this passage, Luke is drawing a circle around the early church as the proper fulfillment of covenant community as first teased in the Hebrew Scriptures (Wright, 2008; Wright & Bird, 2019). Others argue that Luke highlights the fulfillment of the great commandment and an answer to the prayers of verses 23–31 of Acts 4 (Marshall, 1980; Stott, 1994). Regardless, it is clear from the text that a unique community has once again emerged. It is important to note that the Essenes also lived a communal lifestyle of shared possessions during the intertestamental period. The Essenes believed that by following their “Teacher of Righteousness,” they could avoid the world’s trappings and preserve the sacredness of covenant relationship as contrasted with the corrupt Temple worship of the day (Wright, 2008).

However, unlike the Essenes, who embraced a form of isolation, the early church used the temple as an important gathering point for carrying out the ministry of Christ. The early church chose incarnation instead of isolation. They embodied the teachings of Christ and shared the lived expression of community in the middle of the marketplace as opposed to the wilderness caves.

The result of having one heart and soul along with a sense of stewardship was that the early church “had everything in common” (v.32). Again, this is not the first time that Luke has used a version of this phrase. The word translated “common” (κοινός) is the root for the well-known Greek word *koinonia*, which refers to shared participation or fellowship (“Bible Word Study,” 2021). From this phrase, we learn that along with a shared purpose and identity, the early church also had a shared friendship that manifested in a true community (MacArthur, 2011; Peterson, 2009). This deep sense of community is striking when one considers the size and scope of the organization up to this point. What started as 120 followers (Acts 1:15) grew to 5,000 men (Acts 4:4) and eventually “many thousands” (Acts 21:20). These numerical statements do not account for women and children or non-Jewish converts (Wilson, 2017). Thus, it is fair to estimate that there could have been at least 10,000–15,000 members of the church by the time we get to Acts 4. Modern leaders are well aware of the difficulty of getting a team of 10 to rally around a shared mission, purpose, identity, and friendship. Imagine the complexity of getting over 10,000 people to have all things in common.

Nevertheless, that is what the early church accomplished despite religious and political persecution. This raises a question: What was the “glue” that held this way of life together? The answer is simply profound: Common-unity.

Scholars typically divide society into various sectors: The Prince/The Merchant/The Citizen; Commercial/Volunteer/Government; or State/Market/Associations (Szabist, 2004). In his classic work on societal imbalance, Henry Mintzberg (2015a) argues that humans tend to swing between two seemingly opposed sectors: the public and the private. The public sector consists of government-owned organizations. The private section consists of for-profit businesses. These two sectors dominate cultural ideology, but they are also the center of cultural division and the fuel behind most revolutions. For example, the communist revolution was essentially a revolt by the public sector against the private sector (Mintzberg, 2015a). The American Revolution and the American

Civil War were both clashes of the private sector against the public sector. The problem with these types of revolutions or cultural swings is that they are imbalanced. Mintzberg states, “The trouble with revolution is that it usually replaces one form of imbalance with another. As some people among the disenfranchised gain power through force, they tend to carry their society toward some new extreme” (Mintzberg, 2015a, p. 1). The solution is not to shift between the private and the public but rather to be mindful of the third and often overlooked sector: the plural. The plural sector consists of entities that are neither owned by the government nor profit-generating executives. According to Mintzberg (2015b), the plural sector is: “any association of people that is neither public nor private-owned neither by the state nor by private investors. Some are owned by their members; no one owns others” (p. 29). Examples of the plural sector are cooperatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross or Greenpeace, voluntary hospitals, and most churches and religious orders (Mintzberg, 2015b). Most non-profit organizations fall within the plural sector as well. In many ways, the plural sector is *us*. The glue that holds the plural sector together is a collective sense of mission and shared ownership (Mintzberg, 2015a).

Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) state that the values framework for workplace spirituality includes: benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility, and trust. In this framework, humanism is a fundamental respect for every member of the organization (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). If organizational spirituality is all about one’s ability to find a sense of purpose and meaning from organizational life, it seems logical to conclude that a collective sense of mission would exist in healthy organizations (Fanggidae, 2018). Moreover, since most non-profit organizations are in the human service “business,” these organizations may well be better incubators of healthy spirituality. In Acts 4:32, we see a type of roadmap for communityship that brings balance to an otherwise unstable situation, and the starting place on that map is shared humanity.

Principle One: Spiritual organizations embrace shared humanity.

Principle Two: Spiritual organizations work from a shared identity.

Principle Three: Spiritual organizations embody a sense of community.

### ONE MESSAGE, ONE VOICE (ACTS 4:33)

Just four months before his death, the late United States Congressman and civil rights patriarch, John Lewis, said, “Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America” (Lipman, 2020, p. 681). Congressman Lewis was not advocating for nor inciting violence or flip-pant lawbreaking. Instead, he was reminding the gathered crowd of the power of the unified collective to make a lasting change by standing up to any power that would attempt to tip the scales of justice away from those most in need. I wonder how familiar Congressman Lewis was with Acts Chapter 4:33: “And with great power, the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.”

In this verse, we see the apostles boldly standing in rebellion against the edict from the Jewish religious powers who wanted no more preaching about the resurrection of the dead in Jesus’ name. Moreover, they were also standing in open rebellion against the Roman officials who claimed no King but Caesar (Jn 19:15). Horton (2001) points out that it was not just the Apostles who experienced the work of the spirit during this period. The phrase “and great grace was upon them all” implies that the gifts of the spirit were evident and active in the entire body of believers, not just the leadership (v.33b). MacArthur (2011) argues that the word “grace” in verse 33 implies the favor of God and the favor of the non-ruling class of people. This favor from the people was likely due to the love and unity that flowed from the lives of the early church (MacArthur, 2011). Cook (2007) suggests that, unlike the Greeks who believed that changed behavior would lead to changed hearts, the early church showed that the oneness of heart was the precursor to shared ownership of property. According to Ogilvie (2010), readers of verse 33 must consider the concept of loyalty implicit in the standard message, unity, and common property of the early church. However, this loyalty is not a public (Rome) or private (Greco-Roman/Jewish) sector. The Apostles, and by extension the whole company of believers, were willing to get into “good trouble” because they served a cause bigger than profit or policy.

One could also argue that they were willing to get into “good trouble” because they witnessed a life-changing power that brought people together despite their socioeconomic status. The word translated as power (δύναμις) in v. 33 is the same word used in Acts 1:8, and it implies something dynamic and supernatural (“Bible Word Study,” 2021). This

power, as displayed through the Apostle’s preaching and working of miracles, tipped the economic scales that ruled urban life in Roman ruled cities. If Jerusalem followed the pattern of other occupied Roman cities, then at least 55% of the population lived at or below a subsistence level (Wright & Bird, 2019). It is important to note that, contrary to popular belief, in the early church, “poverty was not encouraged neither was affluence discouraged” (Adelakun, 2010, p. 4). This is because the “power” of the early church brought together people from almost every level of socioeconomic status. Social order was a complicated construct to disrupt in Roman culture. Although one could climb the ladder through financial means (e.g., buying oneself out of slavery) or the occasional marriage, it was not as commonplace as Western Culture would have us believe (Adelakun, 2010; Wright & Bird, 2019). The miracle of the unified early church is that one powerful message, delivered via one collective voice and supported by collective action, tipped the scales away from the Roman centralized government and the Jewish Sanhedrin. Moreover, this new way of organizational life did not exist to make the rich richer or even bring the poor out of poverty. Instead, this new organization called the church leveraged its message and methods to serve the people instead of overthrowing the powers that be.

Principle Four: Spiritual organizations are loyal to their collective mission.

Principle Five: Spiritual organizations take risks for the greater good.

### COMMUNITYSHIP IN ACTION (ACTS 4:34–37)

The last four verses of Acts 4 not only serve as a snapshot of the ideal Christian experience, but they also show what is possible when a group of individuals unites and act in service to a cause that is bigger than power or profits:

There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet. (*ESV*, Acts 4:34–37)

Some suggest that these verses are not a prescription for church life but rather serve as a description of the “good ole days” of church life (McGee, 1995). Others suggest that these verses are many Lucan examples wherein the author connects the ideal Hebrew covenant community with the actualized Christian community (Wright, 2008). This is not the first time that Luke discusses the sharing of property among the early church, nor is it the first time that he closes a historical moment in the church’s life with a summary of how that event impacted the lived experiences of the believers. Much of the Gospel of Luke leans toward a focus on Jesus’ ministry to the poor and the societal outcast (Wright & Bird, 2019). Moreover, the birth of the church as articulated in Acts 2 finds summary in a passage that mirrors Acts 4:34–37:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (ESV, Acts 2:42–47)

The early Christians were not the first group to share property. The Hebrew covenant community, as codified in the law of Moses (Deut. 15:4), the Essenes, the Pythagorean school at Croton, and Seneca all mentioned or modeled a form of communal living (Wright & Bird, 2019). However, as stated earlier, this is not the same thing as twenty-first-century socialism or communism. According to Marquis (2015),

It would be simplistic and opportunistic to claim that Luke-Acts, much less the Bible as a whole, endorses one economic system. Acts 4 does not exclusively enshrine communism any more than later stories support, to the exclusion of other options, Paul’s evangelical entrepreneurialism. (p. 472)

Stott (1994) argues that the phrase “no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own” does not imply a rejection of personal property. According to Stott, “Although in fact and in law they continued to own their goods, yet in heart and mind they cultivated an attitude so

radical that they thought of their possessions as being available to help their needy sisters and brothers” (“The believers enjoy a common life,” para. 3). It was from a shared responsibility to each other that the early believers shared (Barclay, 2003). The early Christians sold and shared their property, not as a response to the ruling class or to give power back to the worker. Instead, the early church shared their property first as a devotional response to the power of the life-changing message of the Apostles and second as the only reasonable response for self-sustainment in Galilean society. Remember, to say “Jesus is Lord” at this moment in history was to welcome either Roman or Jewish persecution and societal ostracization.

We must be careful, though, as incredible as it seems, to avoid looking at the example of Barnabas as a prescription for Christian living (v. 35–37). McGee (1995) argues that it would be nonsense to say that we should try to put this living into practice today because modern Christians lack the spiritual depth of the early church. I disagree. While I do believe that this passage is descriptive as it relates to Barnabas, the theme of unity, communityship, and service toward all is prescriptive throughout the Christian Scriptures and should be the goal of any healthy organization (Acts 15:22–29; Gal. 6:2; Jn 13:34–35; Phil 2:1–4, Rom. 12:10). Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement, would play an essential role in the expansion of the church thanks to his ministry with the Apostle Paul. However, it may be that his first act of encouragement was to sell his land and donate the proceeds privately to the Apostles (Peterson, 2009). Again, this behavior runs contrary to the Greco-Roman social norms of the day but not contrary to the expected norms of one from the tribe of Levi. As a Levite, Barnabas (originally named Joseph) was forbidden by Jewish law to own property (Marshall, 1980). This statute was so crucial to Jewish law that it was mentioned twice:

And the Lord said to Aaron, “You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel. (*ESV*, Num. 18:20)

At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord to stand before the Lord to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. The Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord your God said to him. (*ESV*, Deut. 10:8–9)



However, we later learn that his family was part of the Jewish Diaspora in Cyprus, explaining his disconnect from a strict following of the law (Marshall, 1980). Another explanation could be that by the time of Jesus, and due to the exile and post-exile periods, most of the details of the Levitical day-to-day had long since been forgotten. Marshall (1980) argues that priests bought and sold property as early as the time of Jeremiah the Prophet. Nevertheless, in response to the Apostles' message, the unified purpose of the believers, and the lived-out examples of love and service, Barnabas responded with an act of devotion that was extraordinary. Barnabas, along with the other believers, seem to have not only centered their actions on the teachings of Jesus' via the Apostles, but they also seemed to live out the Law of Moses: "But there will be no poor among you; for the Lord will bless you lived-out that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess" (Deut. 15:4).

Since Barnabas spent time living in the diaspora, he likely was one of the more experienced believers regarding cross-cultural interactions. This is supported by the critical role that Barnabas eventually played as an ambassador between Jewish believers and Gentile believers (Acts 9:27, 13:1–3; Peterson, 2009).

What would cause a diverse group of people to let go of their "right to be right"? What would cause well-off and those who had struggled to pool their resources to ensure that everyone had enough? Mitchell (1992) argues that Luke's understanding of Greco-Roman principles of friendship implies that friendship played a central role in the believer's posture toward sharing property. Cook (2007) suggests that since there was no law mandating this behavior, one can only assume that the working of the Holy Spirit was the source of this behavior. While I concur with Cook, I think a practical explanation is found in the power of communityship in action.

Research shows a clear connection between service-oriented spirituality and organizational health. Post (2015) argues that the healing values of acceptance, home, community, nature, and the daily routine of benevolent work all serve as manifestations of spiritual formation within organizations. Furthermore, these values are clinically linked with recovery from depressive symptoms among those with heightened stress response (Brown et al., 2009; Post, 2015). Conversely, a lack of empathetic care for others often correlates with burnout, attrition, and increased stress, especially among leaders of care-focused organizations such as counselors, clinicians, and non-profit leaders (Post, 2015; Zuger, 2004). Since an

increase in service has positive benefits for an organization and a decrease in empathy has negative consequences for an organization, one could argue that communityship in action should improve employee output and the quality of organizational leadership. According to Dent et al. (2005), the sense of purpose behind spirituality produces several benefits for an organization. The sense of empathic purpose found in the early church benefited those who received benevolence and benefited the entire community. Indeed, it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Principle Six: Spiritual organizations share responsibility.

Principle Seven: Spiritual organizations take care of their members.

Principle Eight: Spiritual organizations benefit society.

### SOCIETAL AWAKENING AND ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

If society was out of balance pre-2020, it is fair to say that the SARS-CoV-2 Global Pandemic may have indeed accelerated the fallout from said imbalance. However, all is not lost. Healthy organizations, especially those with evidence of positive workplace spirituality may serve as the stewards of communityship. This is especially true of organizations within the plural sector. It is important to note that a call for plural sector-led communityship is not for the dismantling of the private or the public sectors. All three sectors are needed for a balanced society (Mintzberg, 2015a). However, the plural sector needs to take the lead because corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been treated as a “magic wand” to wave over societal problems for far too long. Since the research shows that a leader’s spirituality has an impact on follower spirituality, mental health, and performance, it is safe to assume that healthy leadership in the plural sector is a must (Afsar & Badir, 2017; Pawar, 2014, 2017; Sharma & Kumra, 2020). Of course, businesses should consider how their actions impact the environment and communities. Of course, governments should be in the business of securing and serving humanity’s best interests and well-being.

However, CSR is often “about public relations exercises CSR more focused on corporate image than corporate behavior” (Marques & Mintzberg, 2015, p. 9). If the Global Pandemic was a great awakening, then the private, public, and plural sectors must work together in order for there

to be lasting societal change (Marques & Mintzberg, 2015). Mintzberg (2015a, 2015b) argues that this can only happen if the plural sector is empowered and engaged by the private and the public sectors. The reality of Acts 4 and the church's long history as a force for good makes me disagree with Mintzberg on that point. For example, take the African American Church and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities system (HBCU). Both of these organizations classify as being in the plural sector, and both have fought to rebalance society, often in opposition to the private and the public sectors (Lowe & Shipp, 2014). Instead of sitting around waiting for "somebody" to fix this unbalanced world, "The somebody who will do something about our problems has to be you, and us" (Mintzberg & Azevedo, 2012). As supported by the powerful communityship displayed in Acts 4:32–37, I believe that organizations in the plural sector (especially ecclesial organizations) should take the lead by demonstrating the values of organizational spirituality in a way that moves society away from division and toward a global communityship.

### SUMMARY

As described in Acts 4:32–37, the early church is not only a picture of church growth but an example of the power of an organization that directly impacts societal norms for the better. Acts 4:32–37 demonstrates the power of the plural sector for the rebalancing of society. Furthermore, this passage offers insight into the application of organizational spirituality. The following themes and items should be further explored through case study, phenomenology, and eventually quantitative research methods:

Schneiders (1981) made a bold pronouncement 30 years ago that still has relevance today: Postmodern hermeneutics seems obsessed with finding meaning for the sake of immediate applicability. Such an exegetical approach has severe consequences for twenty-first-century biblical research in the social sciences. One of the most influential Christian communicators of the last 25 years has developed an entire methodology built upon the idea that practical application is an essential function of biblical communication (Stanley & Jones, 2006). While it is true that the final goal of hermeneutics should be life-changing proclamation, it is also true that one should never attempt to dissect the Scripture without grasping the totality of the narrative (Osborne, 2006). This hermeneutic has severe consequences for twenty-first-century homiletics. Thus, in this

chapter, I have done my best to follow the methodology of Henson et al. (2020) by exploring the various grammatical, textual, cultural, and social layers of Acts 4:32–37 without forsaking the primacy of spirituality in the Bible. I have tried to avoid sociological blindness, especially as it relates to the distribution of property. This chapter is not a call for socialism, fascism, capitalism, or communal living. Instead, I hope that this examination of Acts 4:32–37 shows us just how powerful a spiritual organization in the plural sector can be when its members are united in their humanity, promote a unified message, use empowering language, are service-oriented, and take risks for the greater good.

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## Crossing Boundaries in Multicultural Relationships: An Analysis of Acts 8:26–40

*Jane R. Caulton*

The concepts of diversity and inclusion continue to dominate discussions of the contemporary workplace as the workforce expands to include populations hitherto excluded. In addition to women and minorities, the workforce has gained a higher degree of workers holding varying levels of credentials, a variety of ethnicities and gender identifications, and religious perspectives (Akron et al., 2016; Daan et al., 2004; Hewitt, 2008; Hunt et al., 2015; Nancarrow, 2002, Pelled et al., 1999). While diversity describes the environment, inclusion addresses methods of ensuring participation and acceptance of all in the development of productive teams. The concept of inclusion is also a concern of our Creator, who carefully wove the biblical record to include all peoples—a move which

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was codified in the Gospels and the Book of Acts (Evans, 2016; Wilson, 2014; Yoon, 2016).

The Acts of the Apostles carefully recorded how the followers of Christ executed his instructions “in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (*KJV*, Acts 1:8). In the midst of the story is a lesson on building multicultural relationships that may help contemporary environments build inclusive relationships. In Acts 8:26–40, by the direction of the Holy Spirit a fledgling evangelist met an Ethiopian pilgrim returning home from the Temple in Jerusalem. The two men were from different backgrounds and stations in life, but because they successfully crossed their boundaries, countless lives were changed (The Ethiopian Church, 2020; Steele, n.d.). This chapter explores those concepts and discusses how they may be applied in contemporary settings.

## BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

Commonly titled the Acts of the Apostles, this fifth book of the New Testament is also referred to as the “Acts of the Holy Spirit” as it documents the development of Christianity after Christ’s promise of spiritual guidance at his ascension (Stringfellow, 1978; Acts 1:8). Though the apostles are mentioned approximately 23 times in the book, the treatise focuses on the apostles Peter and Paul, depicted in three sections with each focused on an area of expansion, an audience, and a leader (Nelson, 1985; Stringfellow, 1978). The first section (1–8:15) is set in Jerusalem and focuses on Peter, keyholder of the church doors (Matthew 16:19) and emphasizes the power and progress of the church (Nelson, 1985; Stringfellow, 1978). In the second section (8:15–12), the setting is Judea and Samaria, focusing on and depicting efforts to spread the Gospel, with the spotlight on the deacon Philip, often called the Evangelist (Acts 6:2; Henry, 1835; Nelson, 2019). Paul is the major character of the final section (13–28), wherein the church expands to Rome (Nelson, 1985; Stringfellow, 1978; Wright & Bird, 2019; Keener & Watson, 2016).

The author of the ancient historical work is generally regarded as the physician Luke, writer of the biblical book of Luke, the third perspective of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Wright and Bird (2019) note that there is some disagreement among scholars as to Luke’s authorship because of the lack of attribution, disputation over the authorship of two Pauline letters mentioning Luke, and a perception of a chronological discrepancy. However, Acts is often recognized as the second treatise written by Luke



to Theophilus, some even referring to it as Luke-Acts (Stringfellow, 1978; Wright & Bird, 2019; Keener & Walton, 2016). In fact, Luke attests to his authorship in verses 1–4 (*NIV*) of the first treatise:

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

It is a pattern that he repeats in the introduction of Acts 1:1 (*NIV*): “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.” While he carefully notes in Luke 1:2 that his knowledge is not first hand, he affirms that he is the writer (v. 3).

In this record of the church’s Christ-given mission (Acts 1:8), Luke communicated moral, political, and theological lessons. The factuality of Acts is corroborated by the letters of Paul and some other external sources (Keener & Walton, 2016; Wright & Bird, 2019). Scholars identify a number of purposes for the book, including to defend Jesus as Messiah and the church, to identify Christians as peaceful, to explain its rapid flourishing, and, possibly to lift Christianity above Judaism in the Western world (Wright & Bird, 2019). “In the end,” said Wright and Bird (2019), “Christians retain what pagans respected about Judaism (antiquity, homogeneity, monotheism, and ethics), while jettisoning what pagans found unattractive about Judaism (ethically based social separation and strange customs)” (p. 616). Luke emphasized the singularity of the Christian movement as spiritual rather than political, and therefore, not a threat to Rome (Keener & Walton, 2016; Wright & Bird, 2019).

It is the influence of that movement that this chapter explores through the encounter of a Christian evangelist with an Ethiopian eunuch. It is clear that the messenger is sent to expand the Ethiopian eunuch’s understanding of Jewish literature by using it as a springboard to introduce Christ. The eunuch represented a southern kingdom that is at the end of the known boundaries of the world in the first century A.D. (Yoon, 2016). As Ethiopia represented the end of the known world, the eunuch was the consummate geographical outsider of the period. His encounter

with Philip offers some principles that are applicable to contemporary globalization.

### EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF ACTS 8:26–40

That narrative in Acts 8 opened with the church's dispersal from Jerusalem as a result of persecution, landing Philip in Samaria, the second location in Jesus's mission description. After a successful experience of miracles and wonders in verses 4–25, the Holy Spirit directed the evangelist to head south of Jerusalem, where he was then directed to approach a traveler from the temple. Philip, unaware of the man's identity approached the chariot and heard the eunuch reading from a Jewish scroll, whereupon the evangelist engaged his attention, explained the text to him, and used it to lead him to Christ, ending with the eunuch's baptism.

The gospel of Luke is singled out for its message of inclusion of all peoples (Stringfellow, 1978). In Chapter 2:32, the devout Simeon noted that Christ was "a light to the Gentiles." Luke 4:25–27 described how God sent Elijah to a widow in the Canaanite city of Sidon and how He sent Elisha to heal the Syrian Naaman (Byers, 2010; Stringfellow, 1978). Luke noted the female disciples who traveled with Jesus (8:1–3) and in 14:13, the Savior's consideration of those with disabilities. He demonstrated that the Gospel breaks the barriers of social norms (Long, 2019).

The Book of Acts furthers the message of inclusion with the account of Philip's witness to the eunuch (Long, 2019). The eunuch, from a southern kingdom that is at the end of the known boundaries of the world, exemplified the marginalized, exempted from Temple aristocracy (Wilson, 2014; Yoon, 2016). During the period, Ethiopians were considered attractive and pious with a strong moral compass, though some first century writers equated dark skin with evil and identified Ethiopians with the adversary. Yoon noted the term "Ethiopian" literally meant "burnt face" and distinguished the Africans in a human color spectrum, ranging from less sunburned (Indians) to mildly dark (Egyptians) (p. 20). The term "eunuch" may refer to his status as a government official rather than an emasculated male (Shauf, 2009; Wilson, 2014).

The eunuch was a person of means as illustrated by his trip to Israel, method of travel, and possession of an expensive Jewish scroll (Long, 2019; Wilson, 2014; Yoon, 2016). Physical castration would have

exempted a eunuch from Jewish temple worship (Deuteronomy 23:1–2; Schauf, 2009; Wilson, 2014; Yoon, 2016); however, Luke clearly stated that the eunuch’s purpose for being in Jerusalem was worship. Still Wilson (2014) argued that Luke’s use of the term would have been interpreted as castration, especially since the eunuch reported to a woman and men who served women rulers were often such. Whether his status was physical or social, Luke emphasized the difference that the eunuch’s conversion brought to the Gospel as he was the first person of color identified to receive Christ.

The Ethiopian Church (2020) recognizes the baptism of this ambiguous eunuch as the initiator of its Christian faith. The church traces its inception from Jewish roots under King Menelik, son of Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Reportedly, when Menelik visited his father, he returned with a contingent of Jews led by the priest Azarias, son of the High Priest Zadok. Centuries later when the eunuch returned home, he introduced Christianity, which the Ethiopian Church claims to have practiced ever since. St. Irenaeus of Lyons (second century) supports this concept as he noted that the eunuch was “sent into the regions of Ethiopia, to preach what he had himself believed” (Book III, 12, para 8). His first stop would surely have been his home, where he served the queen.

Wilson (2014) noted that the eunuch would have been eschewed by Greco-Roman society, which would have aligned him with Jesus, the Suffering Servant, of the text he had been reading. Luke highlighted Jesus’s intention that the Gospel be shared with all humanity, regardless of gender or ethnicity throughout his first letter to Theophilus. He did not differentiate as God had indicated that diversity was His will from the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, where He promised that all people of the world would be blessed through the patriarch. Yoon (2016) opined that “Jesus depicts the eschatological banquet in a universalistic manner with the same theme. Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God” (p. 3). All through the Gospels, Jesus moved through and interacted with people of a variety of socioeconomic levels, gender, and ethnicities and invited all to partake of His ministry (John 4:5–42; John 12:20–22). He constantly challenged the biases of his time and ignored social norms “by associating with the defenseless, the powerless, and ostracized groups. ... [He kept company] with sinners, the poor, tax collectors, the physically impaired, the demon-possessed, women (especially widows), and Samaritans” (Yoon, 2016,

p. 4). The Savior, then, presented a model for engaging diversity that was easy for Evangelist Philip to follow.

Evans (2016) opined that diversity has always been the plan of God and, therefore, humanity should embrace differences. The Bible is a multi-cultural history of humanity, highlighting the interconnectivity of ethnic groups. It demonstrated that we are all one people in need of the saving power of Christ and an important reference in the global call for the recognition of diversity and inclusion (John 17:21). Philip's encounter with the eunuch evinced several themes that can be applied to diversity in the workplace, including listening to the spirit (8:26–29), being available (26–35), listening to others (8:27), asking for help (8:31), sharing knowledge (8:35), being open to learning (8:34–38), and letting go (8:39).

### DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The relationship between Philip and the eunuch is a model that can be applied to the workplace discussion of diversity as the two characters represented different backgrounds. The eunuch was a foreigner in Israel, while Philip was native (Acts 21:8). While the eunuch waited on the queen of Ethiopia, the evangelist waited on the tables of widows (Acts 6). The eunuch operated according to the needs of a monarch's court, but Philip operated by the Spirit of God. And, of course, they depicted two different hues of the color spectrum.

Difference is the key factor in the discussion of diversity, which refers to characteristics that distinguish members of a population. These include a variety of factors from physical attributes to educational and religious differences (Akron et al., 2016; Daan et al. 2004; Hewitt, 2008; Hunt et al., 2015; Nancarrow, 2002). Each of these groups, given proper considerations in the workplace and working in a synergistic manner, bring a rich bounty of skill and information which help to improve organizational function and performance. Leveraging the differences can help to alleviate negative interaction while enhancing positive outcomes.

A group's perception of its cultural diversity "shapes members' identity, intergroup relations, and the conduct of work" (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 266). This perspective sets the mental models that guide the way individuals see themselves as members of the group, how they interact with others, and how they accomplish their tasks, which in turn affects the

workplace perceptions of other members of the work group. These interactions influence whether people feel accepted, respected, and valued. Organizations who embrace a diversified workplace recognize the difference as a resource for accomplishing its mission, as diversity brings a variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hunt et al., 2015; Nancarrow, 2002). Such advocacy helps staff to understand and accept workplace norms, set expectations, clarify assumptions, and resolve conflicts.

Workplace diversity will be critical for organizations as ethnic populations in Europe and America are increasing; 2011 was the first year that more children of color were born than those with European ancestry (Hunt et al., 2015). The need for talent is also a factor in diversifying the workforce, as well as the composition of consumers—now mostly women and an increasing number of nontraditional households. In addition, some countries are establishing legal requirements for diversity targets, such as the UK’s Equality Act of 2010.<sup>1</sup> Hunt et al. (2015) theorized that diversified companies perform better as a result of “recruiting the best talent, stronger customer orientation, increased employee satisfaction, and improved decision making” (p. 9). Recruiting individuals from different backgrounds increases organizational resources by expanding the range of experience, talent, skills, and creative thinking.

Diversity expands marketplace access as a diversified staff means a greater range of knowledge to meet customer needs and expectations (Nancarrow, 2002). Employees perform better in a place where they feel accepted and respected. Philip and the eunuch demonstrate that people of different backgrounds can achieve successful working relationships, which is the strength of diversity.

Principle One: Effective diverse working relationships create an atmosphere of acceptance and respect that result in higher work performance.

## LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT

Listening is paramount in building a strong rapport with internal and external populations (Itani & Inyang, 2015). The most important voice

<sup>1</sup> The U.K. Equality Act of 2010 prohibits discrimination against consumers and employees by public, private, and nonprofit organizations. It mirrors and replaces earlier similar measures (Disabled World, 2019).

to be heard, however, is that of the Holy Spirit, and Philip models this in Acts 8:26–29 as he follows the direction of the Lord’s angel. Philip had been resting after preaching in Samaria when the Lord sent an angel directing him to head toward Gaza. Following those instructions, the evangelist met the eunuch as he traveled. Listening to the Spirit provides direction in uncharted areas. Pizzuto (2013) noted that it is important to seek God’s Spirit for guidance and direction, particularly in chaotic times, as God determines what will stand, what will fade, and what will emerge. Watson (2013) agreed that “the Holy Spirit will lead us down paths everyday if we are willing, often ones we would not choose on our own, providing the precise nutrition and exercise we need to grow and be whole” (p. 13). Listening to the spirit brings joy, peace, contentment, and confidence in dealing with life’s complexities.

The best way to hear from God is to ask God. Zechariah 4:6 encourages followers of the faith to look to God for guidance and direction, proclaiming “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.” White (2011) noted that people only pray about what concerns them. He said “if you don’t give a hang about something, then you probably won’t pray about it” (p. 12). The Holy Spirit, however, brings light to dark situations, exposing realities that move us to seek Him for answers. Sometimes, feelings may be absent but God must be sought about the illuminated reality. Personally, I have experienced God’s direction in critical times. Once while preparing for a meeting, He instructed me to focus on issues and avoid personal considerations. Because I followed his direction, I experienced a successful outcome. God is concerned about humanity in every area and wants to be sought so that He may provide direction for His purposes.

The greatest obstacle to hearing from God is identifying what voice we are actually hearing (Martin, 2021). Scripture tells us that humans are subject to four voices: the voice of God (Deuteronomy 28:1), the voice of the adversary (John 10:27), the voice of the flesh (Ephesians 2:2–3), and the voice of the world (1 Corinthians 14:10). Martin (2021) advises that paying attention to the feelings associated with the voice can help. We can be assured that feelings of hope, charity, kindness, and compassion are the companions of the Holy Spirit.

The voice of God will always align with His word. Contrarily, feelings of hopelessness, fear, vengeance, and dominance emanate from an evil source. The flesh will always tell us what is best for us and the

world will summon our desires to align with popular thought. Christians, however, seek to bring hope and comfort to a hurting world, and that requires commitment to prayer, seeking God's will (Simone, 2018). Maxwell (2002) said "leaders must be empowered before they can empower" (p. 1316). Listening to the Spirit of God provides leaders the power and wisdom that is needed to create a viable workforce.

Principle Two: Spiritual leaders bring hope and comfort to others as they seek to hear the voice of God.

### BEING AVAILABLE

Philip's commitment to ministry made him available to God first, and then to the eunuch, which is visible in verses 26–35. He does not balk at the angel's instruction to travel to Gaza on the other side of Jerusalem, almost a three-day journey, but he undertakes the mission (Bible Charts, 2021). He then makes himself available to the eunuch, at the urging of the Spirit, and does not hesitate to enter the latter's chariot when invited.

Being available equates to giving others our time and ourselves (Gill, 2017). It is being present physically and psychologically, and it is critical in letting people know that they are valuable and worthy (Gill; Goleman, 1998). Remembering names, details from past conversations, maintaining eye contact, asking questions, and naturally, focusing on the person are practices that show you are present and thereby, builds trust (Gill, 2017).

Gibb (1978) explained that building trust requires being personal, which means being true to who you are without facades, understanding that each person is unique. He said "I celebrate myself and each of us as persons who form our own constellations of reality and being. Thus when I relate to you, I come from my own private place and respect your private place" (Gibbs, 1978, p. 34). The relationship is strengthened by integrity and respect and making comparisons and classifications irrelevant (Gibb; Gill, 2017).

The ability to create successful relationships depends on social competencies—soft skills—such as understanding others, meeting their needs, encouraging them, cultivating opportunities and being politically aware. Such empathy requires self-awareness and will shape what Goleman (1998) calls a "social radar" that will help to overcome relational issues compassionately. Productivity increases when people feel embraced and accepted because they want to contribute to the mission (Jones, 1993).

Leaders who are available to their followers communicate acceptance and appreciation. Their presence expands their influence through connectivity and authenticity. The result is increased trust and motivation (Gill, 2017; Maxwell, 2002).

Principle Three: Spiritual leaders illicit follower trust and motivation by maintaining authenticity and connectivity.

## LISTENING TO PEOPLE

Upon receiving God's direction to approach the eunuch's chariot, Philip followed through with his mission. His first encounter with the eunuch in verse 30 was through listening. Listening, a high-order skill, is a key factor in gaining information, evaluations, and responding, all of which translates to interacting (Aggarwal et al., 2005; Helms & Haynes, 1992; Itani & Inyang, 2015).

Itani and Inyang (2015) explained that listening "has been described as being active, empathetic, interpersonal, verbal, and non-verbal" (p. 696). It is required for goal attainment and mission accomplishment; it takes up one-third of rank-and-file time and two-thirds of management time. However, effective listening does not come naturally. Organizational communications are weakened when managers withdraw because they are afraid of the subject matter or direction of the conversation, disagree with the speaker, or are busy formulating an answer to the query (Helms & Haynes, 1992). They may also pretend to be listening, which may cause them to miss important points or cues and may be detrimental to production.

Those who listen must make an effort to hear, focus and be attentive (Bentley, 1993). They must then make an effort to understand what they are hearing. Individuals may employ different levels of listening, depending on the situation that they encounter (Bentley, 1993). These include non-listening (distracted), passive listening (hearing words but not messages), judgmental listening (interpreting through prejudicial filters), attentive listening (focused), visual listening (perceptive), active/creative listening (suggestive), directive listening (subtly changing the topic), and reflective listening (confirming). Of the eight, attentive, visual, and reflective are the most productive as they allow you to hear, see, and confirm the messages received.



Effective listeners are attentive, they maintain eye contact, nod, and provide feedback (Helms & Haynes, 1992). Effective listeners are active listeners who engage participation, trust, and understanding. They are responsive—providing feedback, paraphrasing, and carefully probing. These actions help the speaker to feel that they have been heard, which increases their feeling of value and results in a higher level of organizational commitment and job performance. Furthermore, they may also become more efficient and productive for the organization. Active listening reduces uncertainty and facilitates trust and information sharing (Aggarwal et al., 2005). Listening is more than hearing what is being said, it is understanding what is being communicated. It requires extending oneself beyond personal boundaries to assess individual and organizational needs. Leaders who are attentive are also more effective (Bentley, 1993; Goleman, 1998; Maxwell, 2002).

Principle Four: Effective spiritual leaders actively listen for understanding.

### SHARING KNOWLEDGE

In verse 35, Philip takes the opportunity that listening has provided to share his knowledge of the Scriptures (Acts 8:30–35). Listening to the eunuch, Philip discerned the text that he was reading and asked him if he understood the script. The eunuch asked Philip of whom the prophet was speaking, inviting the evangelist to share his knowledge. In waiting to be invited to share, Philip created an atmosphere of trust that allowed the eunuch to receive the Gospel. This sharing of information transformed the life of a man, who is credited with introducing Christianity to his nation and a representative of those who are different (The Ethiopian Church, 2020; St. Irenaeus of Lyons, second century; Wilson, 2014; Yoon).

In business, it is important to create a trusting environment to facilitate knowledge sharing, a critical resource of organizational success as it fuels innovation (Hui, 2019; Liu, 2009; Ouakouak & Ouedragogo, 2019). Liu (2009) opined that knowledge must “be expressed, described, or represented in some physical way, as a signal, text, or communication.” (p. 8). Knowledge sharing is the “process through which information, opinions, ideas, theories and principles are exchanged or disseminated

among people or groups in an organization” (Ouakouak and Ouedrago, 2019, p. 24). It is critical to a sustainable competitive advantage and the organization’s ability to survive and prosper (Hui et al., 2019).

Leaders must, therefore, establish an environment where employees are comfortable sharing and collecting knowledge in their organizations (Hui et al., 2019). Such environments are built on trust—another important factor in effective teams as members accomplish goals by relying on their peers’ ability to uphold their responsibilities. Personal vulnerability, risks, and uncertainty can all be overcome through building social relationships.

Facilitating intra-team learning is the best method of creating, sharing, and utilizing knowledge to help organizations better innovate through duplicating competencies across its markets. Liu (2009) found that five dimensions support the process: employee motivation and commitment, management attitude and facilitation, leadership support, as an efficient mechanism for effective organizational intervention, and information technology. Knowledge is intangible, conceptual, and subjective and must be transmitted through standard communications tools, such as systems, and written materials.

Social networks, however, are critical to knowledge sharing and reputations are central to the activity (Ensign & Herbert, 2010; Liu, 2009). People are most likely to make decisions about sharing knowledge based on their past behavior, which builds or impairs trust. Knowledge sharing is also influenced by the length and frequency of interaction, which contribute to reciprocity and help to create predictability. The more favorable these situations, the more likely the possibility of sharing information. When business processes, organizational workflow, and performance instructions align with employee satisfaction, employees are more likely to be comfortable with sharing what they know (Liu, 2009).

Just as knowledge sharing was important to the propagation of the gospel (as exhibited in Acts 8:35–39), the sharing of information is critical to the contemporary workplace. Knowledge sharing promotes trust, innovation, and creativity (Hui, 2018). It is a primary factor in organizational effectiveness.

Principle Five: Spiritual leaders illicit trust, innovation, and creativity through effective communication.

## ASKING FOR HELP

Help is something that we all need, but oftentimes we are reticent about asking for it. Acts 8:30 demonstrates that the evangelist created a space in which the eunuch could comfortably ask for his assistance. He did not assume that the man needed help, but asked him if he understood the text. The eunuch responded, “How can I without some help” (Acts 8:31 MSG). Philip’s action of asking instead of assuming created a comfortable environment by communicating respect, which encourages people to ask for help, an essential skill in the workplace.

The ability to ask for help is a tool that helps one navigate life (Jack, 2020). Too often the idea of needing help is cast negatively as unprepared or weak, when in actuality it is a show of strength. Needing help is not a reason to be fearful (Stettner, 2008). People who ask for help receive a better reception than those who try to bluff their way through a project (Desk, 2015). Such tactics are a sign of arrogance and seldom produce any good fruit.

People who ask for help find they save time and are more efficient and everyone needs to pick someone else’s brain or borrow someone’s muscle (Vista Consulting, 2020). Most people want to help and are generally understanding and willing to provide the needed support (Baker, 2020). Stettner (2008) advised that communication style can influence results. The request should be intentional and, when possible, in-person, as such requests are more effective than email or telephone and people are less apt to refuse. Be friendly, make eye contact, and be direct to receive a positive response.

Organizations who create a comfortable working environment facilitate communication among employees. When employees can freely interact with each other, asking for help becomes natural. The workplace benefits as asking for help results in shared information, which boosts organizational effectiveness.

Principle Six: Effective spiritual leaders facilitate an atmosphere of interpersonal communication among followers.

## BEING OPEN TO LEARNING

Once one requests help, the requestor must be open to learning. The eunuch (verses 34–38) depicts an openness for learning by asking Philip

about the text and accepting the Gospel, culminating in his baptism. Kiewel (2020) noted that the biblical book of Proverbs advises paying attention to learning, which is a lifelong discipline leading to personal development and expanding one's ability to handle emerging challenges, to build abilities, to understand, to forecast, and to research (Kiewel, 2020; Senge et al., 1994). Second Corinthians 5:17, "old things are passed away ... all things are become new," an allusion to change, is an accurate description of the world in which we live. Things are constantly changing and the only way to keep up with the change, according to Senge et al. (1994), is to "focus on embracing and expanding ... collective awareness and capabilities," or in other words, to maintain a learning attitude (p. 5).

Maurer and Weiss (2009) opined the ability to learn and develop one's skills is quickly becoming a core career competency. Success and satisfaction are products of continuous learning and results in building self-awareness, acquiring knowledge, and changing perspectives which in the long term develops skills, changes behaviors, and increases productivity and goal achievement (Hennekram, 2015; Maurer & Weiss, 2009). Such learning is described as the ability to take on new knowledge objectively and readily and a tendency for personal mastery, the "discipline of personal growth and learning" (Hennekram, 2015; Senge, 1998, p. 412).

Contemporary organizations have found that employee development of personal mastery helps to expand capacity and technological development. Employees engage because they increase their self-respect and experience self-actualization. Senge et al. (1994) said "thousands of us are evolving together into a worldwide community, with enormously powerful potential" (p. 5). As the workplace becomes more global, it requires more independent, responsible, and creative individuals who are flexible, creative, and committed to serve the organization. These characteristics are not produced through academic preparation but through an aptitude for learning. Illeris (2003) describes learning as "a process leading to permanent capacity change" in the associated area whether physical or psychological. It requires social, cultural, and environmental interaction as well as cognitive and emotional acquisition processes developed through natural growth, which lays the groundwork for increasing employee responsibilities, thereby allowing managers to let go.

Being open to learning is a characteristic that has become a key factor for upward mobility. Employees who demonstrate this competence will

be sought after as they help organizations grow. In addition, they will find themselves more satisfied as they are able to achieve personal goals.

Principle Seven: Effective spiritual leaders are characterized by personal development including learning from the diverse experiences and backgrounds of others.

## LETTING GO

Once the eunuch was baptized (verse 39), the Holy Spirit whisked Philip away, marking the completion of the assignment. The text says that Philip never saw the eunuch again. Philip let go! The job was done and he moved on, as directed by the Spirit, to his new assignment. Henry (1835) noted that the evangelist continued ministering throughout Israel, finally settling in Caesarea. Though history records that the eunuch returned to his homeland and spread the gospel, there is no record that Philip ever connected with him again (The Ethiopian Church, 2020; St. Irenaeus, 2nd Century). Philip did not track his convert down to see if he prospered in his new faith, but continued in his vocation.

The most effective managers are those who recognize the importance of letting go of a project or assignment and allowing the team to handle the responsibility (Casey, 2004). Being a strong leader means being available to provide guidance and support, not hoarding power and giving directions. Leaders must be willing to allow their teams to own the job if they want them to take responsibility. Employees respond to leader cues (Weil, 2007). Most staff will not take what is not given to them. Leaders who permit their staff to own the mission will have more time to lead. Schaefer (2021) advised that letting go means getting more as holding onto things too long can get in the way of progress.

More leaders and managers should be considering their current role and whether it is time to release some responsibility through delegation. Schaefer said “Delegation is vital to free up your time. [It] is the act of letting go and it isn’t easy” (p. 1). Delegation not only allows leaders to free up time, but it also permits followers to grow in their knowledge, skills, and responsibilities. Casey (2004) opined “what keeps people performing at their best is the confidence that the boss will recognize their good work. When bosses feed the ‘fulfillment bug’ of their staff, they will see redoubled effort and long-term commitment to the organization’s success.” Leaders fuel this effort by such incentives as recognition

for successful efforts coupled with private guidance in challenging times. The result is an empowered team, willing to carry the banner for the leader and the organization.

Delegating also facilitates planning as it opens more time for conducting environmental scans to formulate strategy for the next level of performance (Wheelen & Hunger, 2008). Environmental scanning is the practice of assessing internal and external threats through monitoring and evaluating information and ensuring that key organizational personnel have what they need to accomplish the task. Wheelen & Hunger explained that environmental scanning helps organizations to position themselves ahead of the direction of the trends. Delegating helps to accomplish the task as information is transferred to those supporting and enforcing the mission.

Johnson (2012) opined that the less leaders do, the more they accomplish. Leaders fuel their teams' intellectual acuity, enthusiasm, and creativity when they harness their autocracy (Stewart et al., 1999). Letting go through delegating and allowing teams to own the task empowers the organization and fosters success.

Principle Eight: Effective spiritual leaders leverage the diversity of their teams through delegation and empowerment.

## SUMMARY

Throughout the Holy Bible, the Lord God demonstrated His will for all people to be included in living His command to love neighbors (Evans, 2016). In the Old Testament, He told Israel to be good to foreigners (Numbers 15:15–16:26; Deuteronomy 10:17–11:26) and in the New Testament, he emphasized that all are the same under the rule of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–30; Colossians 3:11).

More than the three other Gospels, Luke emphasized this concern for Gentiles, as well as God's covenant people (Stringfellow, 1978). Jesus welcomed outside of His culture, women, and people with disabilities (10:30–37; 8:1–3; &14:13). In Acts 8:26–40, Philip's meeting with the eunuch reiterated this inclusiveness, which is the end goal of the workplace focus on diversity, highlighting behaviors that will promote inclusion by building strong, productive relationships.

Behavior modification is a necessary consideration of the contemporary workplace, which is in a constant state of change as new populations

enter the workforce (Akron et al., 2016; Daan et al., 2004; Hewitt, 2008; Hunt et al., 2015; Nancarrow, 2002, Pelled et al., 1999). Women and minorities have been making headways for decades, but the workforce average age has increased as has the educational level and the number of people identifying as other than heterosexual. These distinctions have caused workplace unfriendliness, discomfort, and communication hurdles, in spite of the various levels of skills these populations have.

Diversity improves organizational performance and “tangible and intangible value, even if it requires working through the issues and costs that sometimes accompany it” (Nair & Vohra, 2015, p. 4) Inclusion is the practice of mitigating these differences by ensuring that all workforce members are involved in organizational practices and policies so that the need to consider differences—or individuals are no longer treated as outsiders but as part of the team.

Table 8.1 outlines the themes found in Acts 8:26–40, which are applicable to creating a safe, comfortable environment for all in the workplace. The key element in practicing inclusion is first receiving direction from the Holy Spirit, as Philip did. Being able to hear and follow the Lord helps to overcome biases and employ behaviors that draw people rather than push them away. Philip shows us the importance of listening to our neighbors as well as listening to God. Listening is a sure method of being available to others and a sign of being present. Philip’s presence makes him approachable and gives the eunuch comfort in asking for help, which then opens the door for the evangelist to share the Gospel. Knowledge is capital in the workplace and our environment, so being open to learning—as the eunuch was—enriches life. Finally, when the information

**Table 8.1** Multicultural encounter demonstrating diversity in Acts 8:26–40

| <i>Behavior</i>         | <i>Verse</i> | <i>Response</i>                               |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|
| Listening to the spirit | 26–29        | Philip obeys                                  |
| Being available         | 26–35        | Philip approaches eunuch                      |
| Listening to others     | 28–27        | Philip listens to eunuch                      |
| Asking for help         | 31           | Eunuch asks for help                          |
| Sharing knowledge       | 35           | Philip shares the Gospel                      |
| Being open to learning  | 34–38        | Eunuch is baptized                            |
| Letting go              | 39           | Holy Spirit whisks Philip to a new assignment |

*Source* Jane Caulton

has been transmitted and the assignment has been completed, it is a great opportunity to let go and allow others to complete the tasks. Delegating builds confidence and helps others to know that you trust and believe in them.

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# An Organizational Leadership Response for Women in Leadership: An Analysis of Romans 16:1–16

*Ca-Asia A. Lane*

The idea of female or woman in leadership is intellectually intriguing and an evolving concept in modern leadership discipline and academic culture. Research in various disciplines scratches the surface of women and leadership by identifying questions and themes for future inquiry (Kappeler et al., 2019). Women in leadership defined as a standalone lacks a quantifiable and qualitative theoretical framework. Yet women and leadership continue to be influenced in modern research, reflected in academic literature and novice representations that give thought and persuasion to descriptions and titling such as women in leadership, women and leadership, women doing leadership, female leadership style, and woman for leadership. Women in leadership researched within

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theological methodology is a developing approach that is inclusive to theologies, social justice, and feminist thought, yet exclusive to the totality of women in leadership in context, definition, and theory. This chapter seeks to assess an organizational leadership response that contributes to women serving in leadership roles. This includes cultural perspective and societal implications favorable toward women in leadership as a framework that is influential and conceptual. The chapter looks at five main principled areas that can shape a framework supportive of women in leadership through the lens of Romans 16:1–16. The five main principled areas include authenticity, emergent, culture, gender trends, and communication competencies.

### WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP UNDEFINED

An organization's professional development and path for women in leadership can be called into question (Ely & Rhode, 2010, p. 379). This leads to an understanding that there is no set definition of women in leadership as it relates to theory. One aspect of understanding women in leadership is to first have a sense of clarity and understanding of women in leadership. Over the past few years, women have made considerable leadership advances in executive and management positions within corporate, government, and technology industries both in the United States and globally (Schock et al., 2019). A great representation to this phenomenon is the 116th freshman elect of the United States Congress. According to the 2018 Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics report, the 116th Congress had the most diverse election of women in political history. Although leadership literature has begun to include studies on women and leadership, the preponderance of leadership theory is articulated by men based on male-dominant experiences (Fine, 2009, p. 181). The power of perception and framing messages about social issues centered around women illustrate how well they are reflected in contemporary leadership. One metaphor used that best describes women's quest for leadership is the labyrinth which suggests that the path of advancement, although challenging, is not impossible for women to master (Carli & Eagly, 2015, p. 525). Historically, researchers have focused on describing women in leadership with an essentialist point of view in which gender differences are ascribed to unchanging qualities of men and women (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Defining woman leadership should also include reviewing attributes and characteristics in which women as

leaders engage and exercise influence within groups is key in illustrating the leadership opportunity unique for and to women. A great example is a holistic approach toward women in leadership, developed within an organization that has a greater impact and influence on bottom-up services to the organization at large (Hassan & Silong, 2008, p. 369).

### LEADING WOMEN UNDER PAULINE LEADERSHIP

Throughout the New Testament, the woman's narrative has a special appeal that speaks to diversity in resources, work, leadership, and functioning with authority (Lane, 2021, p. 40; Muir, 2019, p. 8). Leading women such as Anna, the prophetess (Luke 2:36–38); Mary Magdalene, the leader of the women who followed Christ (Ricci, 1994); the four daughters of Phillip who prophesied (Acts 21:8–9); and Lydia, the founding member of the church in Philippi (Green, 2010, p. 755) all had exceptional evangelization roles. Deeper examination of the biblical text bears evidence of the roles of women in the early church, images of their emergence in worship, radical discipleship, and matters of influence within household culture (Guy, 2004, pp. 170–175). Even more, participation during the first-century church estimated approximately one-fourth of the co-workers mentioned in the Pauline epistles are women (Gehring, 2004, p. 211). Yet, despite women's involvement, a growing scholarly consensus recognized Apostle Paul, the leader of the first-century church, as patriarchal, yet inclusive, androcentric, yet supportive of women's leadership, and a proponent of egalitarianism over preferential treatment of greater honor toward others (Clarke, 2008; Elliott, 2003; Levine, 2004). Shaped by a spiritual formation of grace, Paul reconciled his own reality and spiritual formation of what he had been taught about women (Lane, 2021, p. 141). He regarded women as effective disciple makers within community and within house church roles. Some of the Pauline epistles similar to what is found in Romans suggest validity of Paul's regard for spiritual value and impact of women to connect with unbelievers (Gench, 2015). This would contradict the imposed injunctions on women leaders as a means of minimization of effective discipling at a crossroad of organizational development (Lane, 2021, p. 130).

Romans 16:1–16 draws a striking semblance of leading women under Pauline leadership. The women addressed in Romans 16:1–16 were assumed to be mentored by Paul, in the same spiritual formation as the men who followed and walked with him. An examination of leadership

roles of the early church contends a plural pattern of qualifications and responsibilities that were not always clear and not all were gender specific (Guy, 2004). This chapter takes a thorough analysis of Romans 16:1–16 with specific attention drawn to five principled areas that shape a framework supportive of a contemporary way of seeing and viewing women in organizational leading roles. The areas identified include authenticity, emergent, culture, gender trends, and communication competencies toward women as leaders represented within the analysis of Romans 16:1–16.

### WOMEN IN LEADING ROLES IN ROMANS 16:1–16

Scholars reference Romans 16 as, “a roster of potential campaign supporters” to pave the way for Paul to Rome (Jewett, 1988, p. 153). Of the twenty-nine people that Paul mentions in Romans 16, ten are women—Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus’ mother, Julia, and Nereus’ sister. This represents thirty-four percent of leading Christians addressed in Romans 16. Each of the women and their respective characteristics as an organizational response for women in leadership is identified below. Each briefly gives pause to the reality that women were principled leaders per principled roles identified by Paul in Ephesians 4:11–12.

#### *Phoebe, A Deacon*

Phoebe is the first woman mentioned in Romans and the only named deacon in the first-century church with an official community role and “a praiseworthy exemplar of a woman minister” (Clark, 2019, p. 5). Paul exhorted her as sister, deacon, servant, and a benefactor to him and to others in the faith (16:1–2). This acknowledgment of Phoebe affirmed commitment to his identification of her role in the Christian faith to the community of Rome. Phoebe and Paul possibly met in Cenchreae during Paul’s time spent in this small city outside of Corinth (Acts 18:18). Theodoret of Cyrus affirmed that although Cenchreae was a small city, the community was so large as to need a woman deacon (Marucci, 2016). Phoebe is referenced as deliverer of the epistle and a carrier of God’s message from Corinth to Rome (Newsom et al., 2012). It is notably striking that Paul mentions Phoebe’s willingness to travel



to a group of Christians that she did not know and sending her delivered conveyed a message that “a person should not be shown favoritism for being a man or a woman” (Abelard, 1969, p. 179). Deacon has biblical qualifications for a spiritual office conveyed in Timothy 3:8–13 as being serious, not double tongued; not indulgent in wine; not monetarily greedy; marry once; and management of one’s household affairs. Historically, evidence supported through epigraphs, letters, and chronicles in Western and Eastern churches suggests that women served in deacon roles during the early church (Karras, 2004; Macy, 2016). Ignatius referred to deacons as servants of the “mystery of Jesus” (Trallians 2:3 referenced in Shaw, 2013, p. 136). Yet, some scholarly works would seem to relegate Phoebe’s role as financial supporter and carrier; however, her setting creates significant interest in how women contributed to the creativity of leadership during the early church (Clark, 2019, p. 20). The opening with Phoebe as the woman-lead is crucial because it establishes that women *were* serving as spiritual leaders in the early church and that Paul not only approved but was a part of their spiritual formation support in leading roles.

### *Prisca, The Disciple-Teacher*

Paul mentioned Prisca first in Romans 16:3 as an influencer and encouragement to the other women who were being recognized in the preceding greetings (Lane, 2021). She was a leader in her house church in Rome (16:4) and undoubtedly an example for other women believers at the church in Rome. Cross-gender partnership is reflected in the husband-and-wife relationship of Prisca and Aquila (Sharma, 2020). Attributes of unity and sameness, humility toward others, use of relational gifts, and skills in profession and doctrinal understanding are ascribed to the couple in their introduction in Acts 18:2–3. Prisca—reflected as her formal name used in Pauline epistles—served alongside her husband yet was significant in her own right of the Christian faith. She was found active in demonstrating discipleship and accurate teachings of the way of God to Paul (Acts 18:26–28). Credited as literate and from a noble family, Paul may have presented Prisca first—four of six times before her husband (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19)—due to her community status and leadership activity (Lane, 2021). She risked her tentmaking profession as her missionary partnership extended beyond the house church in Corinth (Acts 19, 1 Cor. 16:19), to Ephesus and Rome (Lane, 2021). Prisca’s

contributions as disciple maker and legacy as teacher are so important to the first-century church that Paul references her in the final greetings at the end of 2 Tim. 4:19. Lastly, consideration of Prisca's life provides insight into the culture of gendered division of space within the household and thereby a women's leadership performed in hospitality and missionary responsibility to lead and arrange the house church for worship (Osiek & McDonald, 2006, p. 33).

### *Mary, The Laborer*

It is recognized throughout scriptures that Mary was a common Jewish name. Five other Mary(s) are mentioned throughout the New Testament all of whom labored much.<sup>1</sup> However, Mary in Romans 16:6 is the only Mary Paul ever mentioned. What is significant and notable as a takeaway about this Mary is that Paul referenced her labor not in vain and worthy to mention. The same Pauline reference, "who worked very hard among you," was often used in recognition of commitment and efforts of other first-century leaders (1 Thess. 5:12–13; Col. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:17). Particularly within Romans 16, Paul's frequent emphasis on greeting women who "work[ed] with me" (16:3) and "worked very hard among you" (16:6) is recognized as an honorable description of worth and value toward their faithful work in the Roman community, Mary included. Lastly, this Mary verbally identified by Paul serves as evidence that women during the first-century church without marital designation conducted authentic work for the sake of the Gospel, independent of male counterparts.

### *Junia, The Apostle*

Likened to Prisca and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia were partners in the ministry of Christian faith. Scholars have suggested they were of the earlier Christian believers before Paul's conversion and possibly present during the resurrection of Christ (Pederson, 2006, p. 82). Paul may have encountered the couple during missionary trips or shared imprisonment time (Mounce, 1995, p. 276; Pederson, 2006, p. 33). Romans 16:7

<sup>1</sup> Mary the mother of Jesus (Matt. 2:11, 13:55); Mary Magdalene (16:9); Mary of Bethany—sister of Martha (John 11); Mary, the wife of Clopas (John 19:25); and Mary, the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12).

is identified as the chief scripture of pivotal importance in determining women in leadership roles in the early Christian church (Epp, 2005). Junia is one of the most historically controversial women within the book of Romans because of her mentioned role as an apostle. Her name has been the source of discussion in determining the gender of Junia[s]. Her gender leads to the source of the Apostolic title that is given to her and its connection and issue of contemporary women and church leadership. Consensus among early Christian forefather theologians such as Origen, Chrysostom, and Abelard placed Junia as a female apostle (Epp, 2005, p. 21). However, during the thirteenth century, a commonly repeated intellectual architecture was initiated by Giles of Rome who developed the biblical context interpretation that identified Junia as Juniam or Juilam and eliminated Junia as female apostle altogether. However, the exegetical deep research analysis conducted by Epp (2005) tracked the evolution of change in biblical translation from male to female with no noted explanation. Albeit biblical history would reverse and return Junia in the King James Version. Hence, Epp's work concluded Junia was an apostle (p. 77). Paul's greeting puts it on record that he is calling them both apostles. He was very familiar with the functioning and weighted responsibility of the office. He attached himself to the designation, defending his own apostleship (Galatians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:13, 1 Corinthians 15:9). His message was more than likely clear as well as received within the congregation at Rome that Junia was an apostle.

### *Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis, Workers in the Lord*

The sisters, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, along with Persis are mentioned together possibly because of their proximity to each other in relationship. Scripture describes them as hard workers in the Lord (Rom.16:12). The language is not consistent with household traditional women roles such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, but instead communicates inclusion of Paul's companions within his core ministry (Lee, 2021, p. 105) whom he often esteemed "very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thess. 5:12–13). The three Gentile Christian women believers' names are culturally identified as feminine slave origin, yet they are charted as faithful women workers in the Pauline corpus associated with charismatic teaching and nurturing of other believers in the first-century church and under his leadership (Kruse, 2012). The authentic characteristic of each name identifiable by origin of slavery points to each of

women's resilience and tenacity to hold firm to Paul's conviction that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

*The Mother of Rufus, Wisdom, and Continuity of the Faith*

Pauline scholars contend that the identity of Rufus in Romans 16 is the son of Simon the Jewish Cyrenaic from the north coast of Africa who helped Jesus carry the cross to Golgotha (Mark 15:21–22; Mathew, 2013; Schreiner, 2016). “Chosen in the Lord” associated Rufus with “a class of believers who had a direct link with the historical Jesus” (Jewett, 2007, p. 969). In what way Rufus' mother acted as a support to Paul for him to call her “his mother and mine” is unknown. It could be inferred as a form of endearment characteristic of role ethics common within Pauline Christian groups and/or hospitality patronage extended to Paul from “mother” at some point in his ministry (Jewett, 2007; Kruse, 2012, Mathew, 2013).

*Julia and Nereus' Sister*

Barentsen (2011) recognized that the names in Romans 16:1–16 suggest at least five to seven house churches functioning throughout Rome (p. 182). One additional such house church husband-and-wife partnership is that of “Philologus, Julia... and all the saints who are with them” (16:15). Lampe (1991) conducted a thorough study of Romans 16:1–16 that revealed the building of religious community reflected in tenement churches of Arstobulus and Narcissus. Paul's reference to “the family of Aristobulus” and “the family of Narcissus” (16:10–11) is a testament to the gospel reaching household members—slave and free. Although the named patriarchs may not have been Christian believers themselves, research suggests that Arstobulus and Narcissus' households consisted of a community of slaves who were Christian believers (Jewett, 2007). Lampe further evaluated the formulation of household tenement congregations including a group that were slaves and freed(wo)man, strongly Roman in outlook, yet among the Gentile Christian majority (pp. 967–968).

## PRINCIPAL FOUNDATIONS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

There are five principled foundations gleaned from Romans 16:1–16 that shape a framework supportive of women in leadership as a contemporary way of seeing and viewing women in organizational leading roles. The areas identified include authenticity, emergent, culture, gender trends, and communication that are favorable and lend toward women as leaders represented within the analysis of Romans 16:1–16.

### *Authenticity*

“To thine own self be true” is the Greek philosophical origin of authenticity. It is the psychological art of “owning one’s personal experiences and expressing self in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Harter, 2002, p. 382). The art of authenticity is prevalent within womanist theologies and womanist leadership, which is textualized through lived experiences and relationship with God (Lane, 2021). Authenticity is also recognizing and not abandoning female characteristics and strengths in the process of adapting to a dominant behavior within an organizational structure. Instead, authenticity involves entrusting women to keep within the confines of their true authentic self, regardless of the leadership position. Authenticity also refers to leaders who are in tune with their basic nature of selves and can accurately see themselves through their lives and lived experiences (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 319). It is a continual process of being oneself even when dealing with others and in accordance with changing contexts (Goffée & Jones, 2005). Being authentic as a leader also means being comfortable with decisions being guided by an internal moral compass that reflects an ethical standard (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Principle One: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers the value of authenticity as a dominant characteristic intuitive to women kept within the confines of their true self, regardless of the leadership position.

### *Emergent*

Leadership emergence refers to an identity associated with someone or a group perceived or viewed as a leader (Hogan et al., 1994, p. 10).

Although studies reflect that women score higher on scales that test leadership characteristics and circumstances compared to men, differences in leadership emergence are induced by gender roles (Eagly et al., 2003, p. 578). The church at Rome was spiritually strategic for Apostle Paul because it represented an emerging concern of Christian doctrine. Due to its governance authority, Roman society in the first century developed a pattern of social hierarchy where high status was recognized and publicly honored and elements of such flourished within the congregation of the early church (Clarke, 2008, p. 249). Emerging women in Rome helps to explain the variables of social status, influence, and hierarchical prosperity among the women (Barentsen, 2011, p. 30). Paul's insight of emerging women within the church in Rome placed the traditional leadership model of power at a crossroads, no longer just emanating from the top, but having a juxtaposed women grassroots phenomenon. Organizations suggest considerable leadership advances in executive and management positions within corporate, government, and technology industries (Schock et al., 2019). This is visible within political structures, demonstrated within higher enrollment in educational opportunities for women and invested more in career preparation (Schock et al., 2019, p. 189).

Principle Two: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers the reality and insight of emerging women as valuable leaders within an organizational structure.

### *Culture*

Culture is a very peculiar topic of influence in society and organizations. Schein (2010) defines culture as a pattern of shared assumptions learned by a group through adaptation and integration (p. 18). Within organizational structures, workspace settings contribute to construction of culture (Walker & Aritz, 2015, p. 456). Traditionally, women culturally navigated social and organizational terrain differently from male counterparts in leadership (Ely & Rhode, 2010). An example is the historical, yet not often discussed in academic study, tribal roles of the American female Indian who were greatly responsible for war strategies and determining fate of captives, and did not relate leadership to governance (Fox et al., 2015, p. 85). The dynamics for women leaders to influence followers vary from culture to culture. This is due to varying stereotypes fostered against

females as leaders within cultures that still commit to a stereotypical mindset based on gender roles (Samo et al., 2019, p. 397). Cultural entitlement that condones masculinity over leadership intelligence contributes to the broader obstacles of women in leadership (Gouws, 2008, p. 24). Walker and Aritz (2015) indicated that male-dominant organizations may likely not recognize women as leaders regardless of ability (p. 474). However, additional studies predict the end to masculine leadership style and a more woman leader communication archetype preferred for the new global workplace culture (Cartwright, 2014). This predicted shift is in part relative to the favor of communicating transparency, collaboration, genuine dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds—all of which woman leaders are traditionally characteristic in culture and style. Lastly, a change in organizational culture is the key to increase women leaders and the recognition of women in leadership (Carli & Eagly, 2015, p. 521). It represents an understanding of the cultural environment and figuring out how to navigate it without compromising integrity, morals, and leadership authenticity. This also includes building a culture that is conducive of mentoring and coaching women leaders (Meister et al., 2017, p. 682).

Principle Three: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers an organizational culture in favor of transparency, collaboration, genuine dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds.

### *Gendered Trends*

The women discussed in Romans 16:1–16 had various roles in the development and shaping of the first-century church and were forerunners for women within the Roman Christian community to model. It would be appropriate to acknowledge that gender differences existed during the first-century church. A fundamental challenge to women in leadership is the barriers in traditional gender expectations, roles, and practices that are a part of some organizational structures that can potentially lead to additional challenges for female leaders (Ely & Rhode, 2010, p. 378). For example, a female leadership competency framework from the perspective of male leaders does not fairly assess or include a full woman model (Esser et al., 2018, p. 141). Researched evidence differentiating in gender-related leadership is mixed in exploring and findings of differences in

organizational settings (Kaiser & Wallace, 2016). Some research builds on gender role differences as the main reason for differences in gender leadership behavior. Applying a gender-neutral aspect to woman leadership, however, may collide with the authenticity of being woman (Hopkins & O’Neil, 2015, p. 3). This is referred to as role congruity, an inconsistency of authentic and true self and what Kernis (2003) proposes as a lack of true self-development through social norms within the organization. Gender and perceived leader characteristics affect perceptions of leadership potential and that oftentimes women are expected to enhance their self-awareness in or to adopt communal behavior to be used strategically within the organization (Schock et al., 2019, p. 190, 196). Lastly, lack of access to people, places, and things can be a barrier that precludes women from advancement within traditional male-dominant roles within an organization. Access increases the ability to influence others within organizational spaces. However, as a work around it may be encouraged that leaders within such structures encourage women to heighten workforce participation and support language from within that brings awareness and reinforcement of women as partners in the organization.

Principle Four: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers gendered trends that explore and encourage changes in leadership and support language from within that brings awareness and reinforcement of women as partners in the organization.

### *Communication*

The inclusion of women in the sacred text establishes their role as major participants in the building of the future church which required an amount of communication and formation. A positive element of gender trends in favor of women leaders is communication. Christian leading women in Rome at one point and time spent communicative time with Paul as their leader that indicated he trusted them, and he had confidence in their abilities in building community. Studies suggest the importance for women to maintain natural feminine authenticity and remain true to feminine qualities which are strengths and a key advantage to communicating with others (Esser et al., 2018, p. 152). This is displayed in Prisca’s warm greetings back to the women in Corinth communicated by Paul in 1 Cor. 16:19. This suggests a direct communication of influence that motivated and encouraged the women in Corinth. Sensitivity to nonverbal



communication and the natural understanding of feelings is somewhat of an ethnic language for women (Hochschild, 2019, p. 108).

Contemporaries suggest that women master the combination of appropriateness with authenticity that communicates a hard truth (Sandberg, 2013, pp. 138–141). In order to get around gender-related challenges, it is recommended that organizations devote more resources and proactively develop a culture that is supportive and collaborative in communications in order to create an environment where gender trending biases are reduced (Walker & Aritz, 2015, p. 474).

Principle Five: An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers communicative resources and a culture that supports collaborative communication that will create an environment where gender trending biases are reduced.

## SUMMARY

Leadership involves a process of social observations that can emerge from individual prototypes and contextual elements that in the case of organizational leadership can shape context toward women in leadership (Lord et al., 2001, p. 129). When women are not involved in leadership roles, the loss to societal advancement extends far beyond the lack of role models for both women and men (Longman & Anderson, 2016, p. 26). In review of Romans 16:1–16, five principled foundations emerge in support of a framework toward women in leadership as a contemporary way of seeing and viewing women in organizational leading roles. Table 9.1 summarizes the principles identified within this chapter that culminates in an organizational leadership response for women in leadership.

As public and private workspace expands, synthesized and concise research in the field of woman leadership will require further qualitative and quantitative studies in order to further the discussion of women as leaders at all levels and within all industries. Novice literature that speaks to areas of women’s development is great, but deeper research and analysis will be best served to assess how women lead and the development of women leadership as theory.

**Table 9.1** Integrative principles for an organizational leadership response for women in leadership

| <i>Integrative principle</i> | <i>Theme</i>  | <i>An organizational leadership response for women in leadership considers</i>   |
|------------------------------|---------------|--|
| One                          | Authenticity  | The value of authenticity as a dominant characteristic intuitive to women kept within the confines of their true self, regardless the leadership position                          |
| Two                          | Emergent      | The reality and insight of emerging women as valuable leaders within an organizational structure   |
| Three                        | Culture       | An organizational culture in favor of transparency, collaboration, general dialogue, clear values, and the alignment of words and deeds  |
| Four                         | Gender trends | Gendered trends that explore and encourage changes in leadership and support language from within that brings awareness and reinforcement of women as partners in the organization |
| Five                         | Communication | Communicative resources and a culture that supports collaborative communication in order to create an environment where gender trending biases are reduced                         |

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## A Tale of Two Worlds: An Analysis of 1 Corinthians 2

*Benjamin Crisp*

The Apostle Paul's first biblical letter to Corinth is a gift for contemporary leaders. The nuanced historical, geographical, theological, political, and sociological landscape mirrors the plurality and diversity present in the Western world and presents guidance for those who will take heed (Thiselton, 2000). Captivated by a ministerial charge from the resurrected, glorified Jesus (Acts 9:15–16), Paul embarked on his second missionary journey traveling around the Mediterranean to metropolitan areas such as Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus (Acts 15:36–18:22). Driven by the mandate of Jesus and the Holy Spirit's guidance (Acts 16:6–10), Paul faithfully proclaimed the gospel of Jesus with a strategic approach, ministering in growing metropolitan regions so diverse populations, in conjunction with tourists and merchants, could

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hear the gospel. This approach enabled the message to be carried around the known world.

Paul was a religious scholar, accomplished writer, tentmaker, itinerant preacher, missionary, mentor, and apostolic leader (Acts 18:3; Phil 3:4–6). He was instrumental in transforming the religious landscape of the first-century world and has much to offer us in the twenty-first century. Before a thorough exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 2, it is essential to explore the city of Corinth, the church of Corinth, and the circumstance of Corinth.

### THE CITY OF CORINTH

Corinth's geographical, political, and sociological norms are inextricably connected to Paul's message to the Corinthian church. Before its Roman control, Corinth was a thriving Greek city eclipsing the influence and prominence of Athens (Blomberg, 1994). Rome strategically attacked Corinth in 146 BC as they ascended to geopolitical dominance (Blomberg, 1994). By 44 BC, Julius Caesar determined its value and rebuilt Corinth, with its population quickly rising to nearly 80,000 people (Blomberg, 1994).

By Paul's time, Corinth was an epicenter of commerce, athletic competition, and religious exploration (Pathrapankal, 2006). Its "strategic position" on the Isthmus created somewhat of a land bridge and simplified exchange between Asia and Europe (Thiselton, 2000, p. 1). Sailors could drag their boats across the Isthmus, measuring four-and-one-half miles and narrower in various places (Verbrugge, 2008), rather than sailing "a considerable extra distance around the dangerous coastline of southern Greece" (Blomberg, 1994, p. 18). Corinth became unrivaled in its abundance of goods and manufacturing, being featured throughout Roman cities for its "pottery, lamps, roof tiles, and sculpture[s]" (Johnson, 2004, pp. 15–16).

Corinth's ascent in wealth among its neighboring Greco-Roman cities not only derived from manufacturing and trade but its recreational opportunities. Take, for example, the Isthmian games, only second in prestige to the Olympic games (Blomberg, 1994). Travelers came on a "biennial basis" to enjoy the festivities of the Isthmian games (Pathrapankal, 2006, p. 69). Additionally, Corinth provided a theater-style venue seating 18,000 people, with an additional concert area holding 3000 people for various forms of entertainment (Blomberg, 1994).

Various sociological and political factors contributed to Corinth's cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic demography. The edict of Claudius, promulgating the expulsion of Jews from Rome because of their connection to Jesus, increased Jewish Corinthian inhabitants (Thiselton, 2000). Partnered with the increasing Jewish population, numerous Greco-Romans found Corinth a desirable home due to its economic success, athletic competitions, religious plurality, and connectedness to Rome. As a Roman city and colony, Corinthian citizens had the right to vote and establish "elected city officials annually" (Johnson, 2004, p. 15). Furthermore, Corinthian citizens could own property and initiate adjudication for wrongdoing (Johnson, 2004). Corinth's ethnic plurality led to religious plurality where Corinthians could worship gods within the vast Greek mythological ether in numerous temples (Pathrapankal, 2006). Johnson (2004) describes the plethora of Greek gods at length:

Archeological and literary evidence shows that Corinth had temples or sanctuaries devoted to the gods Aphrodite (two varieties), Isis and Serapis, Artemis, Dionysus, Poseidon, Apollo, Helios, Pelagrina, Necessity, Fates, Demeter, Maid, Zeus, Asklepius, Hermes, Athena, and Hera Bunaea. (p. 17)

Additionally, Roman Corinth demonstrated its fidelity to the Roman imperial cult by expanding emperor worship while relocated Jews, and the established Jewish community, continued their allegiance to Judaism and Jesus, respectively (Pathrapankal, 2006). Religious plurality defined Corinth.

## THE CHURCH OF CORINTH

Corinth's cosmopolitan diversity and opulence may have appealed to the pagan world, but for those with a Judeo-Christian worldview, the city was "marked by the worship of idols, sexual immorality, and greed" (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 3). For the most part, Corinth's opulence was not experienced by the majority of Corinthian Christians. They found themselves in the lower socioeconomic societal echelon (Verbrugge, 2008). Corinthian Christians were not, however, monolithic. First Corinthians indicate wealthy individuals were part of the Corinthian church (1 Cor 11:17–22) as well as house servants (1 Cor 7:20–24). Aquila and Priscilla were manual laborers (1 Cor 1:16), while



Crispus and Stephanus held households (1 Cor 16:15; Thielman, 2005). Unfortunately, class diversity created the opportunity for sinful classism, which seeped into the Christian community (1 Cor 11:17–22; Verbrugge, 2008).

The spirituality of Corinth provided openness to the message of Jesus. However, its religious pluralism struggled with the exclusive claim of Christianity. Many Corinthian converts came from pluralistic, idolatrous religious pasts (Verbrugge, 2008). Because of this, the Apostle Paul recommended particular parameters to keep the Corinthians from shaming the gospel, reverting to idolatrous living, and creating stumbling blocks for fellow believers (1 Cor 8–10).

The moral laxity present within Corinth was known throughout Rome “so much so that a verb had developed in the Greek language that transliterates as ‘to korinthianize,’ meaning, ‘to live an immoral lifestyle’” (Verbrugge, 2008, p. 244). This moral laxity bled into the Christian community. The Corinthian church was riddled with ethical issues, particularly sexual sin (1 Cor 5; 6:12–18). They were engulfed with racial, sexual, and judicial problems. Not only that, but they also weaponized their spiritual gifts to demonstrate their superiority (1 Cor 12–14). All issues considered, Engels (1990) provides a compelling case for the centrality of the Corinthian church regardless of its prevailing problems: “Corinth was a logical place to establish a strong Christian church, for its numerous trade connections would assure the rapid propagation of the new religion, and quite soon it came to dominate the other churches of the province” (p. 20).

## THE CIRCUMSTANCE OF CORINTH

The archeological finding of “the Delphic letter of Claudius” relating to Lucius Junius Gallio’s Corinthian proconsulship enabled biblical scholars to chronologically locate First Corinthians between 54 and 55 A.D. (Thiselton, 2000, p. 32). During Paul’s second missionary journey, he laid the apostolic foundation for the Corinthian church (1 Cor 1:2) and subsequently invested eighteen months building upon that foundation (Acts 18:1–18; Ciampa & Rosner, 2010). On his third missionary journey several years later, Paul sent First Corinthians from Ephesus (1 Cor 16:8) mentioning a previous non-canonical letter that had not produced the desired results within the Corinthian ekklesia (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010).

Ciampa and Rosner (2010) contend that reports of sexual immorality, greed, and idolatry were the primary reasons for Paul's correspondence. These reports stemmed from valid oral reports "from Chloe's people ([1 Cor] 1:11) and Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus ([1 Cor] 16:17)," and written reports "from the church that Paul mentions in 7:1 consisting of a series of questions posed by the congregation" that demanded an apostolic response (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, pp. 3–4). The categories of sexual immorality (1 Cor 5:1–13; 6:12–20; 7:1–40), greed (1 Cor 6:1–11), and idolatry (1 Cor 8–10) have significant textual data to substantiate Ciampa and Rosner's (2010) claim. While similar to Ciampa and Rosner's (2010) proposal, Thielman (2005) provides broader categories that better address the letter's content. Thielman (2005) presents three critical reasons for Paul's canonical letter: "[1] peace within the church, [2] holiness in the world, and [3] fidelity to the gospel" (p. 278).

### *Peace Within the Church*

The most substantial contributions to this subject are found within 1 Corinthians 1:11–4:21 and 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1 (Thielman, 2005; Witherington III, 1995), where Paul addressed the divisiveness of the world's knowledge and wisdom versus God's wisdom and love (Thielman, 2005). However, there are supplemental dealings with peace regarding unity in corporate worship practices such as head-coverings (1 Cor 11:2–16), the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17–34), and spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:1–14:40) (Thielman, 2005; Witherington III, 1995).

### *Holiness in the World*

The Apostle Paul firmly believed that unity was not mutually exclusive from holiness (Thielman, 2005). In fact, holiness created parameters that established Christian unity amid pagan immorality. Paul was deeply troubled by the Corinthians' sexual promiscuity and immorality (1 Cor 5:1–13; 6:12–20; Thielman, 2005). Such sexual sin within the Corinthian Christian community soiled the gospel of Christ to non-believing Corinthians. Additionally, affluent Corinthian Christians were still relying on Roman litigation to settle civil disputes among believers (1 Cor 6:1–11; Thielman, 2005). Such public adjudication made affluent Corinthian Christians look petty and contradicted the message they

believed. Idolatry was another area of struggle for the Corinthian Christian community (1 Cor 10:1–22). With many struggling to leave their idolatrous practices behind, they shamed the centrality and exclusivity of the gospel amid their pluralistic society (Witherington III, 1995). Finally, Paul instructed them to carefully guard their partnerships in marriage and business (1 Cor 7:12–16). Paul believed that intermingling belief and unbelief set Corinthian Christians up for disaster.

### *Fidelity to the Gospel*

The Apostle Paul viewed bodily resurrection as a doctrine of supreme importance (Thielman, 2005). Although Greco-Roman culture offered a variety of views concerning the separation of body and soul at death, nevertheless, Paul viewed future, bodily resurrection from the dead as inextricably linked to the bodily resurrection of Christ and the promise of life forever (Thielman, 2005; Witherington III, 1995). If the dead are not resurrected, Paul explained to the Corinthians that their labor was in vain, and their faith was dead (1 Cor 15:13–19, 58). Thus, Paul penned an occasional “problem-oriented letter” directed at bringing the Corinthian Christian community into unity through God’s wisdom and love, holiness through sexual purity and public congruence, and fidelity to the gospel message through a commitment to supreme doctrines such as the resurrection from the dead (Witherington III, 1995, p. 73).

## EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF I CORINTHIANS 2 AND THE CORRESPONDING LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

To understand the textual tones present within the pericope, one must consider the broader context where the text is located. The outline below provides the text’s location (Blomberg, 1994; Verbrugge, 2008). Response to Reports from Chloe’s People Regarding Corinthian Church Division (1:10–4:21).

1. The Issue: Factions and Division in the Corinthian Church (1:10–17)
2. The Cross: Its Centrality and God’s Wisdom (1:18–2:5)
3. Wisdom: Derived from the Spirit (2:6–13)
4. Reception: Spiritual Versus Natural Persons (2:14–16)

## 5. Spiritual Immaturity: A Corinthian Case Study (3:1–4)

Corinthian divisions could not be mended by persuasive rhetoric. Paul's attempt at rhetorical finagling yielded little fruit in Athens (Acts 17:32–34); therefore, Paul abandoned his Athenian approach to rely entirely upon the wisdom and power of God through the message of the crucified Christ (1 Cor 1:18–2:5; Pathrapankal, 2006). The following analysis provides insight into the details of his approach while also considering their application for Christian leaders today.

### I CORINTHIANS 2:1–5

Robbins (1996) invites biblical exegetes to explore the text's inner texture concerning narrational progression, repetition, and contrast to better interpret the pericope. Through narrational progression, one can detect Paul's shift from the intellectualism of his Athenian approach. The Apostle's intellectual inadequacies, the Corinthian reception of the message, and the centrality of the Triune God's power exhibit clear narrational progression. Paul's abandonment of human wisdom in favor of the gospel's innate power occurs amid this progression as Paul contrasted lofty speech (1 Cor 2:1) with the Spirit's demonstration and power (1 Cor 2:4–5). In five short verses, Paul mentioned gospel proclamation five times through terms like “proclaiming” (v. 1), “testimony” (v. 1), “speech” (vv. 1, 4), and “message” (v. 4). Oke (1955) lauds “the manner in which [Paul] consistently introduced the gospel at Corinth (2:1–3), not humanly and self-confidently, but in an effacement of himself that allowed the Spirit to indicate His presence and power effectively” (pp. 85–86). Paul's philosophical shift was driven not only by the reproach he faced in Athens but by the Corinthians' adoption of prideful triumphalism based upon the resurrection that needed balancing with the message of the slaughtered Savior (Cousar, 1990). He, therefore, focused on the power of God at work through the gospel message of the crucified Christ rather than the competitive approach rhetoricians employed as they contended for their audience's approval and applause (Bullmore, 1995).

Paul did not attempt to create followers based on rhetorical skill because “he could not surpass or even equal the Greek world in its own kind of eloquence and wisdom” (Barrett, 1968, p. 64). Human wisdom, however, is incompatible with God's wisdom as God does not think as humans do (Pathrapankal, 2006; Isa 55:8–9). If God did,

His Christ would not have been crucified (1 Cor 1:21–24). Humans may outmaneuver one another linguistically, but God’s power cannot be outmaneuvered (1 Cor 2:4–5). Therefore, Paul trembled and came humbly before the Corinthians deserting the arrogant rhetorical style of the Sophists (Witherington III, 1995). Paul spoke in such a way that success depended entirely upon God’s power (Verbrugge, 2008). Paul wanted the Corinthians to experience the crucified Christ, not himself (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010).

### *Paul’s Intertextual Plea*

In addition to inner texture exploration, Robbins (1996) invites exegetes to consider the inter-texture of biblical texts to understand the New Testament’s contextualization of Old Testament texts. The themes of human dependency and divine strength found in 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 echo the prophet Zechariah’s famous prophetic declaration, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts” (Zech 4:6; Williams, 2001, p. 156). As impossibilities to rebuild the post-exilic Israelite community mounted, God sent a message through the prophet Zechariah to Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the governmental leader, to trust God’s power to accomplish the impossible. Similarly, Paul trusted God for the impossibility of astute Corinthian listeners receiving the salvific work of a slaughtered Savior through the gracious work of the Spirit from the lips of a sub-par orator. Paul’s humble approach relied on the power stemming from the humility of the crucified Christ (cf. Phil 2:1–5). The Bible teaches that humility and human weakness are fertile ground for God’s work: “Moses claimed lack of eloquence (Exod. 4:10), Isaiah had unclean lips (Isa. 6:5), and Jeremiah did ‘not know how to speak,’ for he was ‘only a youth’ (Jer. 1:6)” (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 117). With this reality in mind, Ciampa and Rosner (2010) view the contrast of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 as complete:

(1) not with (human) wisdom, but with (God’s) foolishness, (2) not with (the world’s) power, but with (Paul’s and God’s) weakness, (3) not to the things that are, but to the things that are not, and (4) not with a demonstration of rhetorical skill, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power. Zechariah 4:6, which Paul echoes in 2:1–5, serves as a fitting summary of this final paragraph of the section: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.” (p. 119)

### *Leadership Principle from 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 (Biblical Humility)*

Triumphalism and charisma are not leadership traits left in first-century Palestine. They are prevalent in today's leadership discussion and frequently celebrated more than humility. In fact, some scholars join the first-century Sophists and scoff at humility's role in leadership, perceiving humility as a weakness (Exline & Geyer, 2004). With the rise of social media, leaders are often associated with charisma, strength, and fame. Historical leadership icons, however, are those who focused on others rather than themselves (Morris et al., 2005). Take, for example, Mother Teresa. She was consumed with a longing to fulfill Jesus' thirst by serving others (Kolodiejchuk & Teresa, 2007). Mother Teresa pleaded, "Don't look for big things, just do small things with great love....The smaller the thing, the greater must be our love" (Kolodiejchuk & Teresa, 2007, p. 34). This level of humility eludes many today. Yet even business professionals understand that within large corporate organizations, humility is a distinguishing factor that takes businesses from "good" to "great" (Collins, 2001). Morris et al. (2005) defines humility "as a personal orientation founded on a willingness to see the self accurately and a propensity to put oneself in perspective...involv[ing] neither self-abasement nor overly positive self-regard" (p. 1331). Morris et al. (2005) rely upon three categories to describe humility in leadership: (1) self-awareness, (2) openness, and (3) transcendence. We will explore the contribution of these three areas in the broader framework of humility as the exegetical findings of 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 provide feedback and critique.

### *Self-Awareness*

Self-awareness is aptly described as one's ability to know and understand their strengths and weaknesses (Morris et al., 2005). Perhaps that is what makes humility the slipperiest of virtues. Once one believes they have humility, it vanishes. The ability to understand oneself moves one closer toward humility; however, it does not form humility. Biblical humility occurs when one understands themselves in light of God. Because of the grandeur of the cross and the beauty of Christ, one can understand their identity and subsequent responsibility (1 Cor 2:2, 5). From this view, biblical humility takes the posture of cruciform living—a life utterly dependent upon the suffering of Christ and His life lived through

the leader. When one understands themselves through this lens, they are postured to experience biblical humility in leadership.

### *Openness*

Humility invites one to see their imperfection and desperate need for others, enabling them to call for help (Kurtz & Ketcham, 1992). Openness to others' input breaks the chain of hierarchical, austere leadership and fosters a collaborative, interdependent approach (Lawrence, 2017). Humility finds its expression through collaboration. Inviting others into the process demonstrates a leader's willingness to accept others' strengths and insights. This is precisely what Paul did. After a poor reception at the Athenian Areopagus, Paul determined to rely entirely on God's power rather than his own perceived oratorical abilities. Paul's determination to know nothing except the crucified Christ exemplifies openness to changing methodology and God's direction (1 Cor 2:2). Christian leaders are open to the voice of God and the input of others.

### *Transcendence*

Humility is predicated upon the leader's ability to come to terms with the esoteric reality of transcendence, or one's ability to accept "something greater than the self" (Morris et al., 2005, p. 1331). Christian leaders understand God and His eternal purposes are "greater than the self" (Morris et al., 2005, p. 1331). Therefore, Christian leaders place their leadership in the context of God's eternal purposes and plans. When God's vast, eternal, and unknowable depths are juxtaposed with a leader's enterprises, they invoke humility. Paul's ability to lay rhetorical nuances aside exemplifies his grasp of transcendence. He did not assume he could outmaneuver the rhetoricians of first-century Corinth. Paul relied upon the transcendent God and His transcendent gospel. Paul's understanding of the transcendent crafted a humility that helped him become less egocentric and more theocentric (Warren, 2002).

Principle One: Biblical leaders connect with the humility of the crucified Christ to know themselves, trust others, and see the bigger picture.

## I CORINTHIANS 2:6–9

Contrasts drive this section of Paul’s address as he shifted from first-person singular to first-person plural instruction to include his fellow workers “in Corinth who instruct the congregation” (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, pp. 121–122; Orr & Walther, 1976). Unlike the world’s wisdom (1 Cor 2:1), Paul argued on behalf of God’s hidden wisdom imparted to the mature and kept from the rulers of this age (1 Cor 2:6). To better understand the contrasts in this passage, we will explore “the mature” versus “the rulers of this age” and “secret and hidden wisdom” versus “wisdom of this age” alongside Paul’s reconfiguration of Isaiah’s prophetic passages (Grindheim, 2002; Robbins, 1996).

*“Mature” vs. “Rulers of This Age”*

Verbrugge (2008) believes “the mature” refers to all believers. Contextually, this conclusion undercuts the broader distinction throughout 1 Corinthians between the spiritually mature and immature (1 Cor 3:2). For this reason, Ciampa and Rosner (2010) view “the mature” as those who “digest and appropriate...the full scope of God’s teaching on salvation and the Christian life” (pp. 122–123). This interpretation remains true to the linguistic understanding of “τέλειος,” being mature or fully developed (Rodrigues, 2014). Thus, the mature can receive intensified revelatory teaching beyond the basic Christian kerygma (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010).

While “the mature” refers to spiritually developed Christians, the “rulers of this age” are ambiguous. The nomenclature pulls heavily upon the ideological backdrop of Paul’s Judaistic theology, where earthly rulers and actions often correlate with demonic, spiritual beings (Caird, 2003; Dan 10:13). Paul’s Jewish training informed his eschatological understanding between the various ages and the actors within these ages:

The present age is characterized by sin and evil and is controlled by “the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit that is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Eph 2:2). The coming age, by contrast, is the age of the Kingdom of God, when all God’s enemies, including death, are destroyed at the return of Christ and God will be “all in all” (1 Cor 15:24–28). (Verbrugge, 2008, p. 276)



Paul accepted the role of supernatural rulers in concert with human leadership and wickedness.

*“Secret and Hidden Wisdom” vs. “Wisdom of This Age”*

Paul’s secret and hidden wisdom was not like the pervasive religious Gnostic cult and its focus on secret knowledge. The wisdom Paul referenced was secret because it “[had] only been disclosed at the turning of the ages, in the recent historical event of Christ crucified” (Barrett, 1968, p. 71). Only God had this information and systematically disclosed it at the appropriate moment in salvation history (Witherington III, 1995). God’s wisdom was also different from the societal cult of debate and intellectualism present within Greco-Roman culture. Paul employed the term, wisdom, seventeen times in 1 Corinthians, with sixteen of these usages coming in 1 Corinthians 1–3 to reframe their cultural understanding for a theological one (Thiselton, 2000). If the wise ones among the Corinthians convert and the demonic influences surrounding them perceived God’s wisdom, they would have never sought the crucifixion of Christ (1 Cor 2:8; Verbrugge, 2008). For in his crucifixion, they secured their eternal defeat. Only mature believers can fully receive and apply this wisdom God dispenses (Witherington III, 1995).

*An Old Testament Recontextualization*

Paul relied on the Old Testament to affirm his line of argumentation regarding the hidden wisdom of God in contrast to the wisdom of the age. When looking in the Old Testament for the exact citation of 1 Cor 2:9, one will not find it. This begs the question, where is this written? Scholars generally agree Paul loosely quoted from Isaiah 64:4 or “a series of texts that had already been linked together in Hellenistic Judaism” (Verbrugge, 2008, p. 278). Isaiah 64:4 seems likely as it describes the unknowable acts of God from times past. This recontextualization of ancient acts pairs well with Paul’s description of God’s hidden wisdom from times past recently revealed through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Without locating the text precisely, Paul skillfully recontextualized Isaiah’s prophetic description of God’s hidden activity (Robbins, 1996).

*Leadership Principle from 1 Corinthians 2:6–9 (Individualized Approach)*

Leaders often attempt to provide equal treatment to their followers to dispel notions of favoritism. Great leaders do not treat everyone equally. They connect with their followers uniquely. Elmore (2006) claims this is the difference between leadership checkers and chess. Leaders who treat everyone equally are playing organizational checkers, while leaders tending to followers' individual needs are playing chess (Elmore, 2006). Afsar et al. (2014) posit that an individualized approach encourages "greater creativity and innovativeness" (p. 1273). When Paul addressed the believers at Corinth, he did not offer the same content to every individual. To the spiritually mature, Paul imparted the hidden wisdom of God's plans and purposes revealed in Christ (1 Cor 2:6) while keeping the kerygmatic gospel proclamation simple for those who were immature or unreached (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010). For the sake of ease and continuity, leaders repeatedly attempt a one-size-fits-all approach. Paul's example invites leaders to adopt an individualized approach that will serve people well in increasingly globalized, diverse environments (Jung et al., 2009).

Principle Two: Biblical leaders tailor their approach to individuals and their unique needs

*Leadership Principle from 1 Corinthians 2:6–9 (Competency)*

When recounting Paul's narrative on the road to Damascus, readers regularly consider the Acts timeline without examining the larger biblical context. Therefore, it is communicated that Paul wanted to kill Christians one day, and the next day he made Christian disciples. A quick look at the biblical map dispels such notions as Paul spent three years upon his conversion in the desert of Arabia growing and developing in discipleship (Gal 1:17–18). Paul had an exceptional Jewish pedigree that placed him as a superior among his colleagues (Phil 3:4–7). Yet, he continued preparing to maximize the calling the resurrected, glorified Jesus put on his life. Paul's skillful recontextualization of Old Testament prophetic texts demonstrates a level of mastery and fluency of exegetical application for his listeners. He was competent in his craft.

For contemporary Christian leaders, social media has created a context of sensationalism that bypasses preparation. People are immediately thrust into the spotlight. Perhaps the plethora of leadership failures is connected to character flaws connected to a lack of true competency. As Paul demonstrated, intellectual competency is critical for a leader's credibility. It is not enough to inspire. Leaders must understand the nuances of the enterprise they function within (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003). A leader's knowledge directly correlates to their follower's success (Podgórska & Pichlak, 2019).

Principle Three: Biblical leaders develop competencies prior to carrying out their future calling.

### I CORINTHIANS 2:10–13

After referencing God's Spirit only once to this point (1 Cor 2:4), Paul offered Corinth an in-depth pneumatological discourse referencing the Spirit five times in four verses (1 Cor 2:10–13). God's Spirit is the agent who searches (1 Cor 2:10), reveals (1 Cor 2:10), and teaches (1 Cor 2:13) God's previously hidden mysteries. Paul's discourse relies on "Jewish apocalyptic literature (e.g., 1 Enoch 63:3; 2 Baruch 14:8–9; Testament of Job 37:6; 1QS xi 18–19)" to connect God's endless revelatory depths and undercuts the Sophistic pride of human wisdom to create a sense of wonder at God's gracious revelation (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 129; 1 Cor 2:10). The world's wisdom, communicated through gifted rhetoricians, cannot be compared to the Spirit's depths of revelation (Verbrugge, 2008).

Shrouded in divine mystery and hidden wisdom, it seems that Paul echoed Daniel's understanding of God's secrets "where secrets are revealed to the prophet (Dan 2:19–23), not by virtue of his superior wisdom (Dan 2:30), but because the Holy Spirit is in him (Dan 4:6)" (Grindheim, 2002, p. 697). This intertextual echo creates theological cohesion with God's Spirit being the revealer of divine mysteries. Such theological conclusions directly challenge the Corinthian factions regarding class, spiritual status, and preferred teachers (Grindheim, 2002). Only the Spirit can reveal God's mysteries that are "freely given" (1 Cor 2:12). Therefore, Paul and his apostolic comrades take what is taught to them by the Spirit and interpret them to the spiritually mature (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010; Van der Merwe, 2018; 1 Cor 2:13).

### *Anthropomorphic Analogy*

To describe a phenomenological, spiritual experience, Paul employed “the logic of minor to major” comparing a person’s inner thoughts with God’s thoughts and concluding “only God’s Spirit is privy to the profound plan of salvation which has been revealed to the apostles” (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 130). Thus, the Holy Spirit is viewed as an essential member of the Triune Godhead, disclosing divine mysteries otherwise concealed (Blomberg, 1994). Verbrugge (2008) concludes this created a particular pathway of communication for God’s wisdom. As humans communicate their inward thoughts by speaking with one another, so God reveals His thoughts by His Spirit speaking within believers (Blomberg, 1994; Eph 1:14). Thus, “God is known through God alone” (Barth, CD, sect. 27, 179). Paul urged the Corinthians to abandon their dependence upon rhetorical finagling and trust the Spirit of God they had received for the wisdom they desired (1 Cor 2:12).

### *Leadership Principle from 1 Corinthians 2:10–13 (Dependency)*

Copious amounts of leadership data address follower dependency without addressing leader dependency (Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013; Krell et al., 2013). If followers are depending upon the leader, who is the leader depending upon? Paul’s dependency upon the Holy Spirit addresses this gap in the leadership literature (1 Cor 2:10–13). Paul argued that “the rulers of this age” are incapable of receiving or understanding spiritual revelation because of their depraved and closed mind to the Spirit (1 Cor 2:11–12). Therefore, spiritual insight and revelation require total dependency upon the Triune God. Dependence is an expression of the leadership principle of humility mentioned earlier. However, its application is nuanced. Blackaby and Blackaby (2001) claim that the goal of Christian leadership is to move people onto God’s agenda. Leaders can only discover God’s agenda through spiritual insight (1 Cor 2:10–13). Therefore, they must be totally dependent upon God’s Spirit to understand the necessary path forward. Without spiritual guidance, Christian leaders cannot move others in the right direction. Perhaps that is why Jesus began His famed Sermon on the Mount like this: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3). Dependence upon God is the gateway for leaders to direct, develop, and disciple their followers.

Principle Four: Biblical leaders depend on God's Spirit to guide their path and subsequently guide others.

*Leadership Principle from 1 Corinthians 2:10–13 (Communication)*

Our world is facing a communication crisis. Social media has negatively imprinted upon in-person communication skills, leaving our world talking at each other rather than talking to each other (York, 2017). Increasingly, leaders struggle to find the words to say and how to say them. The lack of communicative creativity and empathy is alarming. Effective communication, however, does not rest entirely upon sophisticated rhetorical techniques. Paul made that abundantly clear in dealing with the Corinthians' fascination with eloquent speech (1 Cor 2:1). Paul did not attempt to compete with the rhetoricians of his day. Instead, he charted a different communicative path. He described esoteric, spiritual realities regarding divine revelation through a simple metaphor (1 Cor 2:11). In essence, Paul communicated that the same way the Corinthians had inner thoughts and conversations, God does too, and He reveals those thoughts by His Spirit (1 Cor 2:10). Paul's willingness to create an on-ramp for complex pneumatological concepts illustrates the difference between Christian and Sophistic communication. Biblical leaders are willing to sacrifice flashiness for clarity. They are willing to place profound truth in laymen's terms so that their followers can understand and apply truth.

Furthermore, biblical leaders keep communication clear and cogent. Had the Apostle Paul launched into a lengthy aside regarding divine thoughts and their impartation to humanity, the Corinthian community may have missed the point. Perhaps that is why contemporary communication texts herald the importance of simplicity and clarity when communicating with others (Stanley & Jones, 2006). Biblical leaders leverage clarity and simplicity to tell stories, share examples, and illustrate their point for the sake of authentic, lasting change (Denning, 2007).

Principle Five: Biblical leaders communicate truth creatively and clearly so that their followers can be transformed.

## I CORINTHIANS 2:14–16

Paul’s juxtaposition of spiritual and natural crescendos in 1 Corinthians 2:14–16 as Paul subtly addressed their factions and defended his apostolic ministry. The Corinthians had judged Paul’s apostolic ministry based on natural measures, and Paul reinforced the inappropriate application of human wisdom and procedure for spiritual teaching and ministry (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010). Furthermore, the Corinthians compared their leaders to one another and pitted the factions against each other (Van der Merwe, 2018). Paul warned against such factions noting that spiritual persons, i.e., “those who have accepted the message of the cross and thus have received the Spirit of God,” are able to accurately judge the deep things of God revealed by the spirit and the teachers who communicate the revelation (1 Cor 2:10; Verbrugge, 2008, p. 280). This does not license spiritual people to be subject matter experts on everything; however, they can discern all matters of life according to the Spirit and therefore serve the communities they reside within (Thiselton, 2000). Put simply, those who do not have a relationship with Christ do not have God’s Spirit and cannot offer “a comprehensive understanding of God’s acts in human history” (Verbrugge, 2008, p. 280). God’s revelatory insight through the Spirit should not, however, create elitism, but humility as these truths can only be grasped by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:14).

*A Recontextualization of Isaiah 40:13*

Paul concluded his line of argumentation from the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah: “Who has known the mind of the Lord” (Isa 40:13). With a large constituency of Gentile believers, Paul did not shy away from Scripture’s authority to validate his argument (Witherington III, 1995). He boldly employed its truth amid Corinthian factions and debates. Isaiah’s prophetic question, “Who has known the mind of the Lord” (Isa 40:13), recontextualized to the Corinthian audience had the expected answer, “no one” (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 137). In its original prophetic context, Isaiah’s question regarded God’s plan to deliver His people from the nations and their exile. Paul recontextualized this prophetic question to the Corinthians to affirm that no one knows the plans and purposes of God except the Spirit who reveals them to His people (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010). Therefore, only through Christ’s mode of thinking, i.e., “God’s profound wisdom regarding salvation through

a crucified Messiah which was hidden but is now revealed by the Holy Spirit,” can one discern the unknowable mind of God (Ciampa & Rosner, 2010, p. 138; Thiselton, 2000).

*Leadership Principle from 1 Corinthians 2:14–16 (Truth-Telling)*

Amid the diversity of Corinth’s political, economic, religious, and racial diversity, Paul did not back down from the truth. He told the inconvenient truth that Corinth’s pagan philosophy and dependence upon intellectual rhetoric was natural and disconnected from God (1 Cor 2:14). Regardless of their view of Scripture, he rooted his definitive argument in its authority and truthfulness (1 Cor 2:16). Today’s Christian leaders often shy away from difficult truths in the name of caring for those they lead. Nothing could be further from the truth. Biblical leaders care too much to leave people in their natural state of thinking. Biblical leaders seek solutions with grace and truth (Jn 1:14) to remedy their followers’ misaligned thoughts and actions. Scandal and deception among political, religious, and business leaders have created a renewed thirst for truth-telling (Hackett & Wang, 2012). People are searching for truth as distrust of mass media continues to rise (Brenan, 2020). Paul’s message to Corinth urges leaders to embrace truth and share truth no matter how inconvenient or confrontational it may be.

Principle Six: Biblical leaders care enough to tell the truth.

## SUMMARY

The plurality of Corinth mirrors our context today. After attempting to connect intellectually with the Athenians, Paul laid aside the garb of rhetoric to pick up the power of the crucified Christ. His iconoclastic approach challenged the presuppositions and prejudices of his audience; nonetheless, he continued onward. In an environment filled with divisiveness, sexual sin, and arrogant intellectualism, Paul offered contrasting correctives: arrogance exchanged for humility (1 Cor 2:1–5), triumphalism exchanged for cruciformity (1 Cor 2:2), immaturity exchanged for spiritual maturity (1 Cor 2:6–7), natural wisdom exchanged for divine wisdom (1 Cor 2:9–11), and natural living exchanged for spiritual living (1 Cor 2:14–16). Paul’s plea to the Corinthians calls out to us. Paul invites biblical leadership in exchange

for the fascination of quick-fix leadership. He invites us to adopt the following leadership principles:

Principle One: Biblical leaders connect with the humility of the crucified Christ to know themselves, trust others, and see the bigger picture.

Principle Two: Biblical leaders tailor their approach to individuals and their unique needs.

Principle Three: Biblical leaders develop competencies prior to carrying out their future calling.

Principle Four: Biblical leaders depend on God's Spirit to guide their path and subsequently guide others.

Principle Five: Biblical leaders communicate truth creatively and clearly so that their followers can be transformed.

Principle Six: Biblical leaders care enough to tell the truth.

These principles derived from Paul's connection to the Spirit and his commitment to Christ enabled him to carry the gospel to the known world successfully. Only God knows what will happen if we adopt and apply these leadership principles (1 Cor 2:9–10). The Spirit is ready to teach us these truths and strengthen our resolve to apply them.

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# Leading Across Cultural Boundaries: An Analysis of 1 Corinthians 9:19–27

*Tim Gregory*

As with all leadership, cross-cultural leadership has to do with the ability of a leader to influence others, and in the case of leaders who desire to successfully lead across cultural boundaries, it has to do with their ability to interface with another culture in a manner that allows them to inspire members to achieve a given mission and the varying goals of the company (Dorfman et al., 2012; Grisham & Walker, 2008; Tsai et al., 2019). Leaders who choose to cross cultural lines face challenges that other leaders may not have to deal with, challenges of cultural bias and prejudice, and overcoming the gap of trust that these biases and prejudices create between themselves and those they lead (Graen, 2006; House et al., 2004). Leaders should understand the cultural values of the people group they are charged with leading, with a realization that those values could easily be different from their own and will directly

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affect how their subordinates respond to their leadership (Flatten et al., 2015). Rao-Nicholson et al. (2020) highlight the need for cross-cultural leaders to consider the impact of national culture on the formation of their own perspective as well as that of their subordinates, understanding the role of culture on the perceptual process could be a foundational element in determining a leader's success. In the Apostle Paul, a biblical exemplar can be found who was able to overcome cultural challenges to successfully lead across cultural lines; an examination of his approach to cross-cultural leadership could prove beneficial to both Christian and non-Christian leaders alike.

### BACKGROUND OF CORINTHIANS

The city of Corinth served as the capital of Achaia and was made up of a cultural mix of Greeks, freedmen from Italy, retired Roman army veterans, Jews, and a diversity of businessmen from foreign lands (Johnson, 2004). Corinth was a Roman colony that enjoyed the rights and privileges of Roman citizenship, including the right to vote (DeSilva, 2004). The city boasted two ports and served as a central place of commerce, a cross-road for Europe and Asia, creating a cosmopolitan of diverse cultural belief systems intertwined with a robust financial market (Larkin, 1995). Corinth was known as a city of great wealth throughout the ancient world during Paul's time, and it was also known as a place where profiteers conducted business void of morals and principles, doing all they could to gain wealth (Johnson, 2004). The city of Corinth was a gathering place for the worship of many deities, as well as an established stronghold for the cult of the emperor, which surely helped to make the way for Nero declaring it a free city during the Isthmian Games (Belleville, 1995; Melfi, 2014).

Paul first went to Corinth on his second missionary journey where he met two Jews named Aquila and Priscilla who he joined with in the work of making tents to provide for his financial needs (Acts 18:2–3). As his custom had become, he first goes to the Jews of the area and shares the news of Christ with them, often debating with them over the certainty of his message (Acts 17:2). Paul had little success in debating with the Jews in Corinth about Jesus as the Messiah, which prompted him to go to the Gentiles of the city (Acts 18:5–8). Paul and his friends would stay in Corinth for a year and a half teaching and helping to establish the church there (Acts 18:11). Despite Paul's commitment of time and energy in

Corinth, his relationship with the church there would experience many challenges, and remained stormy throughout, with many questioning his apostolic authority (Belleville, 1995).

In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes to the church in response to various reports, both verbal and written, to problems the believers were having with one another in the church and with efficiently operating in a manner that would ensure their ability to successfully carry out their mission in a culturally diverse community (1 Cor. 1:7, 12, & 25, 8:1; 12:1, 16:1, 12, & 17; Godet, 1977). These problems, brought on by their immaturity, created division that affected the ability of the church in Corinth to fulfill their mission, so the Apostle wrote to them in hopes of bringing correction and order (1 Cor. 3:1–4; DeSilva, 2004). Because the church in Corinth was made up mostly of Gentile believers who had worshiped a variety of pagan deities and the city itself experienced a constant influx of merchants from other lands, the church faced many cultural challenges that other churches did not (Johnson, 2004; Larkin, 1995). The apostle is forced to deal with these cultural challenges in order to help the church reach a place where they could be successful in their mission (Belleville, 1995; Godet, 1977; Johnson, 2004). As Paul's letter to the church in Corinth is studied, specifically 1 Corinthians 9:19–27, seven cross-cultural leadership principles can be identified, which modern day organizational leaders could apply to their leadership style to successfully lead across cultural boundaries. Those seven principles include sacrifice (1 Cor. 9:19), adaptability (1 Cor. 9:20–21), humility (1 Cor. 9:22), mission-driven (1 Cor. 9:23), purposeful (1 Cor. 9:24), discipline (1 Cor. 9:25), and self-evaluation (1 Cor. 9:26–27).

## SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE SACRIFICIAL

Paul told the church in Corinth, “For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them” (1Cor. 9:19, NRSV). Paul was not only a Jew but also held Roman citizenship, which was a highly prized commodity of the time (Acts 22:27–28). Paul made a choice to value his mission over his liberty, and instead of looking for others to serve and honor him as an apostolic leader and a Roman citizen, he became a servant to others (1 Cor. 10:33). Paul, as a leader who was able to lead across cultural boundaries, found it necessary to live in a sacrificial manner, surrendering his rights to win others to himself and to further the mission of Christ (Aung, 2017).

Paul recognized that as a leader who was responsible for leading a diverse group of believers, he would need to make sacrifices to help the church move forward with the work of the Gospel (Barentsen, 2018).

Research has shown that leaders who are perceived as being willing to sacrifice for both the good of the organization's mission and for individual subordinates are more likely to be effective in their leadership, producing results and inspiring employees to make personal sacrifices for the good of the company, than leaders who are not perceived as sacrificial (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Employees who are willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of the organization, even embracing the mission of their company as their own, are more satisfied with their job and committed to their company than employees who are not sacrificial in their work behavior (Coetzee et al., 2019). As sacrificial leaders are able to inspire their subordinates to work in a self-sacrificing manner, they become a valuable and productive asset for their organization, producing committed and satisfied employees (Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004). While leading in a manner where employees perceive a leader to be sacrificial in nature, leaders are able to inspire followers to connect their identity with the organization they represent and with its mission (Ruggieri & Abbate, 2013). Self-sacrifice can serve as a powerful tool to help leaders to build trusting and productive relationships with their subordinates, making the way for them to successfully cross-cultural lines (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005).

*Principle One: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be successful in their leadership effectiveness should lead in a sacrificial manner, willing to make sacrifices for both the good of the organization and for their subordinates.*

## SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE ADAPTABLE

As a cross-cultural leader who was able to be successful crossing cultural boundaries, Paul found it needful to be adaptable in his labors, saying:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. (NRSV, 1 Cor. 9:20–21)

In his travels and ministry Paul found himself needing to make connections with people of other cultures, to do this he became adaptable, finding common ground instead of focusing on the cultural differences between himself and those he ministered to (Barentsen, 2018). Paul never compromised his moral values in his efforts to fulfill his mission, but he did not allow cultural traditions or personal preferences to hinder his work (Witherington, 1995; Zimmermann, 2012). Instead of allowing the cultural traditions and personal preferences of others to become a hindrance in his mission to spread the Gospel, Paul used them as a bridge to build relationships with others, so that he could connect them to Christ and to his mission to spread the Gospel and make disciples (Cunningham, 1992; Zimmermann, 2012).

The leaders' ability to adapt and adjust in the way they approach subordinates speaks of their capacity to interact successfully with members of another culture (Festing & Maletzky, 2011). Research has shown that leaders who lead according to the expectations of the culture they are operating in have a higher potential to successfully influence and guide organizational members in a productive manner that propels the company forward in its long-term mission and in reaching its short-term goals (Dorfman et al., 2012; Hanges et al., 2016). Cross-cultural leaders may find in-order to meet the challenges of leading an organization made up of individuals from different cultural backgrounds than their own, they will need to adapt to successfully meet the context and complexity of the challenges and conflicts they are faced with (Gibson & McDaniel, 2010). Hudea (2014) notes the need for cross-cultural leaders to be adaptable, willing to make changes when needed, flexible in their leadership and behaviors in order to maximize the potential of all individual members. Leaders who are responsible for leading in a cross-cultural setting can enhance their leadership effectiveness, successfully influencing their subordinates, by adjusting their behaviors to fit the cultural environment they are in (Festing & Maletzky, 2011; Hanges et al., 2016).

*Principle Two: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be effective leaders will adapt their behavior, in a manner that does not compromise their ethical values, to the cultural setting they are in.*



## SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE HUMBLE

As a cross-cultural leader, Paul found it necessary to lead with an attitude of humility, not attempting to exalt himself or to seek personal glory but rather choosing to stay focused on his mission and exalting the Gospel message of Jesus Christ (Aung, 2017). Paul told the church in Corinth, “To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). Choosing to live with an attitude of humility allowed Paul to connect with people who were socially and politically vulnerable, purposely not setting himself above them but bringing himself to a place where he could connect with them (Johnson, 2004). Armed with an attitude of humility, Paul was able to step beyond cultural boundaries to see and minister to the needs of others, helping them to step into a place of faith with Christ and to become productive members of the church (Fee, 1999).

Research has proven the power of a leader’s humility to both positively and directly influence those they lead in fulfilling the mission of their organization (Owens et al., 2013; Qian et al., 2020). Qian et al. (2020) found that leaders who were perceived as exhibiting high levels of humility had a positive effect on the organizational citizenship behavior of their subordinates and at the same time had a negative effect on their withdraw behavior, meaning, subordinates did not attempt to avoid their work task assignments, but rather performed them in a desirable and productive manner. Owens et al. (2013) found that a leader’s expressed humility was positively related to employee engagement and that when leaders expressed humility by acknowledging the strengths and contributions of their subordinates, and by demonstrating that they themselves were also willing to learn and were teachable, they were able to foster a positive atmosphere of employee engagement in the mission of the organization. Leaders who express humility and are perceived as genuinely humble are able to facilitate the participation of their followers in taking a personal interest in fulfilling the mission of the organization and even stepping into a role where they are willing, as well as desiring, to take on a leadership role (Morris et al., 2005). The honest humility of an organizational leader has the potential to move their company forward in their mission by strengthening the commitment and performance of subordinates (Wiltshire et al., 2014).

*Principle Three: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be effective leaders will demonstrate an honest humility, which is perceived as such by their subordinate, in the way they approach their leadership responsibilities and practices.*

## SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE MISSION-DRIVEN

As a leader who was able to reach across cultural boundaries, not being hindered by cultural biases, Paul stayed focused on his mission, keeping it the main thing instead of attempting to enforce or change cultural dogmas that did not interfere with the spread of the Gospel (Riesner, 1998). Paul said, “I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings” (1 Cor. 9:23). Paul understood that the mission of the church was to take a place of priority in the way he lived his life as well as the way he led the church, in ministering and leading with this philosophy he was able to take the attention off cultural differences and unite people under one specific missional purpose (Ware, 2011). Paul was able to successfully reach across cultural lines throughout his missionary journeys, leading and directing people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, for he was driven by the mission of Christ and did not allow himself to get entangled with cultural differences that had no bearing on the work Christ had called him to (Cunningham, 1992; Ware, 2011).

Research has shown that shared goals within an organization can help cross-cultural leaders to develop relationships with the subordinates they are charged with leading, which in turn has been found to help improve leader effectiveness, increase employee commitment, and foster future collaboration (Chen & Tjosvold, 2005). Leaders who portray the mission of their organization in the way they conduct themselves and carry out their duties will find themselves better positioned to impart the philosophies and principles of their company in a manner that enhances the ability of their subordinates to embrace and carry out that mission (Karatepe & Aga, 2016). Employee’s understanding of the mission of their organization is an essential ingredient to the success of any company, for it creates a sense of unity and belonging among members that promotes personal ownership and responsibility for the fulfillment of the organization’s mission (Kopaneva, 2019). Leaders who are mission-focused, concentrated on reaching specific goals, are able to facilitate open-minded discussion, bringing down cultural boundaries as they unite culturally

diverse individuals in a common purpose (Alper et al., 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

*Principle Four: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be effective leaders will allow the mission and goals of their organization to inspire their behaviors, moving them past cultural boundaries, creating productive and lasting relationships with their subordinates.*

## SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE PURPOSEFUL

Corinth was home to the famed Isthmian Games that took place biennial and were ranked just below the Olympic games (Joubert, 2001). The Isthmian games were different from other Greek sporting events, in that they were open to both men and women (Johnson, 2004). Among the athletic activities included in the Isthmian games would have been traditional Greek events such as leaping, throwing the discus, racing, boxing, and wrestling, also included would have been war chariot racing, and oratorical and musical contests as well (Godet, 1977; Johnson, 2004). Joubert (2001) points out that Paul would have been in Corinth when the games were taking place during his first trip there, which would have given him first-hand knowledge of the games and their significance to the people there. Paul's understanding of the significance of the games to the people of Corinth would account for his words, when he said, "Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it" (1 Cor. 9:24). Paul made it clear that he approached life and the mission of Christ intentionally, he was purposeful in his actions and words (Stenschke, 2015). Paul did not lead in a haphazard manner, but instead was strategic and focused on what he did, making him successful in leading across cultural boundaries (Ascough, 2002).

Cross-cultural leaders, as well as leaders in general, can strategically approach the way they behave and engage with their subordinates and others in leadership positions to maximize their leadership effectiveness across diverse cultural landscapes (Konopaske et al., 2018). A leader who strategically and purposefully chooses their actions has the ability to serve as a living example on how subordinates are expected to behave and perform (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Choosing to be intentional in their actions, versus simply responding out of instinct or haphazardly, can set

the stage for leaders to strengthen the desired organizational citizenship behaviors in their followers, making them more productive team members (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Well-chosen leadership behavior can have a direct impact on both teams and individuals, influencing them to make personal choices that positively affect the mission and goals of the organization (Yukl, 2013). Purposeful behavior can serve as a means of effective communication in which leaders can share their values, performance expectations, and even in the future outlook for the organization (Hackman & Johnson, 2009).

*Principle Five: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be effective leaders will choose their actions purposely and strategically, understanding they will have a direct influence on the performance of their subordinates.*

### SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE DISCIPLINED

Paul continues to use the Isthmian games as a point of reference when he says, “Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one” (1 Cor. 9:25). Paul was disciplined in his approach to life and ministry, exercising control over his behaviors and attitude (Joubert, 2002). Paul understood that an undisciplined approach in the way he led the church could lead to disaster, unhinging all he had labored so diligently for (Joubert, 2001). Leading and ministering across cultural lines called for Paul to exercise self-control, not to simply react to the cultural variances he experienced in his travels, but to consider his actions and words so that he could respond in a purposeful and productive manner (Berry, 2010). As a pharisee, Paul would have been well aware of the proverb that says, “Like a city breached, without walls, is one who lacks self-control” (Prov. 25:28) and chose to live a disciplined life, which helped to assure his success as a cross-cultural leader.

Disciplined leaders are able to regulate how they respond to individuals and to the circumstances they are involved in, they are able to strategically choose their behaviors, words, and even emotional expressions (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). For a cross-cultural leader, being able to strategically choose both their physical and emotional responses to an individual, group, or specific situation can be invaluable in winning people to themselves and creating an atmosphere of trust with their subordinates

(DeLuque & Javidan, 2004). Disciplined leaders are able to take into consideration cultural perspectives on leadership behavior and adjust their personal practices in a manner that enables them to interact successfully with the culture they are operating within, making them more productive and effective leaders (Gupta & Hanges, 2004). Cross-cultural leaders must be able to adjust to their cultural environment, distinguishing between their own cultural perspectives and the perspectives of those they lead, taking into consideration the ethical and unethical practices of leadership that may be culturally sensitive (Eisenbeiß & Brodbeck, 2014; Tsai et al., 2019). Discipline can be a valuable asset for cross-cultural leaders, giving them the ability to examine the effects of their behaviors, words, and emotions on the people they lead so that they can adjust them to correspond to the cultures they are operating within.

*Principle Six: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be effective leaders will discipline their behaviors, words, and emotional responses, strategically choosing them to fit the culture they are operating in.*

### SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERS ARE SELF-EVALUATING

Paul had traveled and preached to many people, leading them to know Jesus Christ and challenging them to live new and productive lives for the Kingdom of God, and he understood to continue his labors he would need to continually evaluate where he stood himself (Sumney, 2000). This is why Paul wrote to the church in Corinth saying, “So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:26–27). As an effective leader, Paul would need to make sure his actions spoke as loud as his words, if the believers were going to imitate his behavior as he desired them to, and to do that he would need to continually evaluate those actions (Clarke, 1998). Paul faced many enemies and false accusations in his efforts to spread the Gospel and strengthen the church, enemies that often followed him from town to town, so it was imperative that he continued to evaluate his own behavior and actions if he intended to be successful in his efforts to lead the church in diverse cultural settings to embrace and fulfill the mission of Christ (Clarke, 1998; Godet, 1977).

Self-evaluation not only allows a leader to reflect on where they currently stand in their leadership practices and values, but it also makes the way for them to create a positive psychological image of themselves, which in turn can help to empower them to live up to their desired leadership standards (Joo & Jo, 2017). Leaders who have a positive evaluation of their professional and personal leadership practices can be better suited to handle the stresses and challenges that come with a leadership position (Joo et al., 2012). Hu et al. (2012) found that the manner in which a leader evaluates themselves, how well they see themselves performing, has both a significant and positive effect on the way followers perceive them. Leaders stepping across cultural boundaries must understand the power of culture to influence perception on leadership performance, so that when they are conducting self-evaluations, they are able to do it not only from their own personal perspective, but also from the perspective of the culture they are operating in (Jiang et al., 2019). This form of self-evaluation has the potential to increase the leadership effectiveness of cross-cultural leaders by helping them to see through the culturally sensitive eyes of their subordinates (Cristofaro & Giardino, 2020; Graen, 2006).

*Principle Seven: Cross-cultural leaders who desire to be effective leaders will conduct regular self-evaluations to ensure they are remaining on the right track and to strengthen their followers' perceptions of them as a leader.*

## SUMMARY

Cross-cultural leaders have the unique opportunity to step across cultural boundaries to unite and lead a diverse people group in fulfilling the mission of an organization. An examination of Paul's letter to the church in Corinth has shown a path that leaders can follow to successfully step across cultural boundaries and lead in a productive and effective manner. Successfully cross-cultural leaders will show themselves to be sacrificial toward subordinates and the mission of the organization, they will be adaptable to the culture they are in, they will demonstrate an honest humility, they will be mission-driven, they will be purposeful and strategic in their actions and behaviors, they will exhibit discipline in all they do, and they will conduct regular evaluations of themselves. Stepping across cultural boundaries can be difficult and pose many challenges, but for the leader who is willing to adopt the strategies and wisdom of the Apostle

Paul, they will find themselves better equipped to successfully face those challenges and difficulties.

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# Leadership, Maturity, and Unity: An Analysis of Ephesians 4:1–16

*Elizabeth K. Hunt and Suzana Dobrić Veiss*

The flattening of organizational structures has prompted activity and engagement between leaders and followers which demands viewing organizational members as individuals rather than cogs in a machine (Kellerman, 2012; Wheatley, 2006). Rather each organizational member possesses a unique humanity which goes beyond their position or role in the organization. As such, organizations need to embrace members as holistic individuals, and that includes the spiritual components of being human.

In this chapter, Ephesians 4:1–16 is analyzed using sociorhetorical methods to examine the overarching narrational and argumentative

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patterns and the way social context and sacred meaning provide insight into the author's purposes (Henson et al., 2020; Osborne, 2006). The text, divided into four sections, provided four principles for use in supporting organizational spirituality. The first principle indicates that individual spirituality stems from calling and connection. The second principle indicates that organizational unity stems from individual dedication to the organization and completion of the assigned role. The third principle supports spiritual leaders as empowering followers through modeling the call to serve, the way to serve, and the dedication to serve. Finally, the fourth principle, organizationally modeled and supported spirituality empowers members to engage in behaviors that encourage unity.

### ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

The debate over defining organizational spirituality remains ongoing. Continued work in the area of organizational spirituality provides a way to continue the discussion related to what exactly organizational spirituality looks like within an organization. Some of the key areas of conflict in defining and conceptualizing organizational spirituality include attempts to polarize spirituality and religion, abstract and ambiguous terminology to describe components of organizational spirituality, and the influence of many cultural and contextual factors (Hicks, 2003). Regardless of the continued definitional issues, research supports the influence of organizational spirituality in terms of productivity, creativity, ethical behavior, personal fulfillment, and organizational commitment (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Pfeffer, 2010; Praveen Parboteeh & Cullen, 2010; Tepper, 2010). Organizations embracing spirituality mitigate negative work influences including impersonality, workaholism, burnout, downsizing, and underutilization (Evers & Reid, 2009, pp. 123–125).

Hill and Smith (2010) argued for religion and spirituality as similar avenues seeking the sacred. Over the last decade or so, spirituality has emerged as the preferred term for seeking the sacred in life and work (Hill & Smith, 2010). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2010) argued strongly that religion and its principles should not trump management practices. However, for the Christian leader all action and behavior, whether in personal life or the organization is informed by belief in Jesus Christ. As such, understanding biblical perspectives related to organizational spirituality emerges as an important research gap within organizational spirituality research.

Organizational spirituality, for the most part, emerges from the literature as an individual phenomenon (Giacalone & Jurkeiwicz, 2010). For example, Hicks (2003) argued for individual spirituality as a way individuals experience and process life, individual spirituality as linked to personal values and morals, and organizational spirituality as a way that people engage in communal life guided by their values. However, limiting the study of organizational spirituality to the individual limits understanding of the social contexts that influence the individual's experience of spirituality (Giacalone & Jurkeiwicz, 2010). As such, understanding the overarching culture and influences of leadership and the organization on individual experiences of workplace spirituality and the organizational as a whole remains an important component of organizational spirituality research (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2015).

Sass (2000) argued for three components of organizational spirituality including value alignment, personal spirituality, and relationship-based organizing. As well, Sass (2000) argued for the underlying desire for connectedness, tradition, and unity as factors affecting an individual's desire to experience spirituality in the organization. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) argued for three components of workplace spirituality, an inner life, a sense of community, and meaningful work (p. 137). In other words, individuals in an environment that supports understanding and expressing personal power, connection with others, and purposeful work, have the potential to experience workplace spirituality, or a connection to something greater than themselves (Ashforth & Pratt, 2010). Miliman et al. (2003) also identified meaningful work and connection as components of workplace spirituality but added values alignment or connection to the organization's mission and goals. As such, individual spirituality influences organizational spirituality, but at the organizational level spirituality requires an articulation of values and a striving for connectedness and unity.

The question then emerges, did the early church support organizational spirituality in the form of inner life, a sense of community, and meaningful work? If so, how did the early church accomplish this? What was the outcome?

## ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

Organizational scholars have begun to connect organizational spirituality to increases in organizational citizenship behavior (Charoensukmongkol

et al., 2015; Mehran, 2017; Tepper, 2010). Organizational citizenship behavior, or the “good soldier” phenomenon (Organ, 1988), encompasses behaviors by organizational members that go beyond required duties, which are directed toward benefiting others or the organization (Mehran, 2017). Much of organizational citizenship behavior rests in “attitudinal factors” adopted by organizational members which influence their commitment, feelings of support, and understanding of fairness (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2015).

Organ (1988) presented the first model of organizational citizenship behavior which included five components: altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and sportsmanship. He later added two additional constructs, peacekeeping, and cheerleading (Organ, 1990). Williams and Anderson (1991) created a model that differentiated between the direction of the citizenship behavior, individual or organizational.

The connection between workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior clearly emerges as research indicates that organizational members experiencing workplace spirituality experience an elevated sense of community which corresponds to “prosocial behavior” or concern for others (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2015). Meaningful work leads to feeling purpose and a better attitude about work (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2015). Finally, a robust inner life creates positive feelings about self, purpose, and connection (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2015).

In light of the research on the connection between organizational spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior, a line of inquiry rests in finding evidence or support for organizational citizenship behavior within the early church. If the early church supported organizational spirituality, was organizational citizenship behavior the result? If so, what did that organizational citizenship behavior look like or include?

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF EPHESIANS 4:1–16

A key to engaging exegetical analysis rests in understanding the historical, cultural, and social background surrounding the original author and intended audience (Keener, 2014). Knowledge about the original context provides the exegete with greater understanding of how the original recipients would have responded to and understood the information and helps to mitigate the chances of eisegesis or reading into the text (Keener, 2014; Osborne, 2006). Authorship, date of composition, audience, purpose,

and theme provide a solid foundation from which to begin understanding the original intent (Osborne, 2006).

### *Authorship, Date, and Audience*

The authorship of Ephesians belongs to the Apostle Paul, despite some questions (Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). Questions related to authorship center around word usage, the pace and structure of sentences, and its lack of specific addressees (Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). The best explanation for the lack of addressee lies in viewing the letter as a circular, or a letter intended to be copied and passed from one community to another without any specific congregation in mind (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). However, Ephesus as the largest port and capital of proconsular Asia was likely one of the congregations to receive the letter (Boice, 1997).

Scholars believe the letter dates to around 90 AD, while Paul was imprisoned in Rome (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). Since the letter remained unknown to the writer of the book of Acts, it is unlikely it can be dated much sooner than 90 AD. Paul penned the letter near the end of his life, which may account for some of the differences in word usage and tone (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976).

The audience of the letter would have been the churches near Ephesus. The tone and content of the letter suggests the audience to be those who have been converted to the faith for some time (Schnackenburg, 1991). deSilva (2004) argued for the Gentile believers as the implied audience but suggests that Jewish converts were also included.

### *Purpose and Themes*

The letter espouses two overarching themes, unity and maturity (Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). As a melting pot of diverse peoples and belief systems, the melding of different nations and ethnic groups within the early church speaks to the need for Paul to address the issue of unity within this letter (Boice, 1997; deSilva, 2004). The specific pericope under investigation, Ephesians 4:1–16, focuses on the responsibility of the Christian life, including growing in maturity which leads to unity (Boice, 1997; deSilva, 2004; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). While the focus rests on unity and maturity, Paul's central aim remains focused on who Christ is and what he has done for believers (Boice, 1997). The letter



challenges believers to become “members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25) by putting away old sinful ways, or to grow in Christian maturity (deSilva, 2004).

## SOCIORHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Robbins (1996) recognized the need for biblical scholars to connect biblical understanding to social science disciplines, providing a way for biblical truth to find application in the world (Henson et al., 2020). As such, Robbins (1996) developed the sociorhetorical methodology which provides a way for scholars in multiple disciplines to connect biblical wisdom to life today. Sociorhetorical criticism encompasses five types of textures: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996).

The current study utilizes three sociorhetorical textures, including inner texture, intertexture, and sacred texture. Inner texture provides a way for the exegete to identify patterns or markers within the text, such as shifts in time, focus, and perspective (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). Within inner texture analysis, this study will review narrational or textual units, opening–middle–closing textures, and argumentative textures to understand the author’s emphasis, idea progression, and argument (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). Intertexture provides the exegete with the ability to see and understand how the text relates to the outside world (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). In particular, the analysis will use social intertexture to illuminate its interaction with social knowledge of the time (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). Finally, sacred texture provides the exegete with tools to understand the connection or relationship between God and his people in terms of deity, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996).

The analysis of the chosen pericope, Ephesians 4:1–16 lends itself to first looking at the overarching structure and argument progression. As such, the initial section of the analysis for each section of text reviewed that structure and progression. Once the structure and progression were established, the text was reviewed in light of the opening–middle–closing inner texture, social intertexture, and sacred texture analysis to provide a look at the deeper meanings and intentions of the author.

## EPHESIANS 4:1–3—A CALL TO ACT AND BEHAVE IN A MANNER WORTHY OF CALLING

The first narrational unit presents a call to action (Boice, 1997; Lloyd-Jones, 1980; Mitton, 1976). The author urged the audience to walk in a manner worthy of their calling in Christ (Boice, 1997). The narrational unit coincides with the thesis of the argumentative texture. The thesis argues that walking in a manner worthy of the call to Christ creates unity and peace (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991).

### *Opening–Middle–Closing*

The opening–middle–closing texture provides a closer look at the call to action and argument thesis. The author urged the reader to walk according to their call (vs. 1), presented an overview of how to walk (vs. 2), and gave a call to seek unity and peace (vs. 3). Again, the narrational units and argumentative patterns indicated the theme of a call to action and the argument thesis of walking in a manner worthy of calling, creating peace, and unity (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). The opening–middle–closing textures support these movements.

### *Social Intertexture*

A key to understanding the social intertexture of the pericope lies in remembering the overall historical context of the time Paul wrote the letter. While the letter was written in later part of Paul's life (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991), the recipients of the letter, while having been a part of the church for some time, were still members of the emerging early church (Schnackenburg, 1991). Christianity, at the time, represented a new faith movement and, as such, required new ways of understanding personal and social identity within the new church and broader society (deSilva, 2004).

In this first section of text, the author addressed several social intertextures. Henson et al. (2020) argued that social roles were commonly understood, and, with that understanding came expectations for behaviors or social codes. Paul, throughout many of the New Testament epistles, provides members of the new faith argumentation and direction on the

expectations of social roles, codes, institutions, identities, and relationships. In many cases, as in this text, Paul embarks on a mission to redefine or create new understanding of social norms (Barentsen, 2011).

In the chosen pericope, Paul first presented social codes in his use of “prisoner of the Lord” (v. 1), “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” (v. 2), and the recitation of the manner of calling “humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with love” (v. 2). While Paul likely wrote the epistle as a prisoner in Rome, the significance of being a “prisoner of the Lord” rests in Paul’s devotion to the Lord and making disciples (Mitton, 1976). Paul’s devotion stems from the calling to follow Christ and subsequent response to work in service of God. The inner transformation of a believer through the Holy Spirit allows the believer to hear the call and respond in kind. Paul provided an explanation of the statement to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” but providing a list of virtues including humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with love. The list provides the members of the early church with specific direction for behaviors appropriate for their role as members and believers. It is important to note that the list of behaviors is not a requirement of salvation or membership in the church, rather, the behaviors are considered an appropriate response to membership in the body. Finally, Paul’s exhortation to “maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace” (v. 3) spoke directly to the members’ social relationships in the early church. In each of these cases, Paul purposefully addressed the need to redefine or clarify social understanding for the early church (Barentsen, 2011).

### *Sacred Texture*

Sacred textures focus on the identity of God and his relationship to believers and the relationship of believers to each other (Henson et al., 2020). The first section of the pericope addressed sacred texture in the form of deity (Lord) (vs. 1), human commitment (walk in a manner worthy) (vs. 1), ethics (humility, gentleness, patience, and love) (vs. 2), and religious community (unity of spirit, bond of peace) (vs. 3). The sacred texture reiterated the connection between God and believers and their relationship with Him and to each other, in the discussion of deity and religious community. The attention to how to “walk in a manner worthy” (vs. 1) and the result of walking in a manner (vs. 2) specifically address the outward result of the inner transformation that results from accepting the call and working in service to God (Boice, 1997).

### *Section Summary*

In the first section of the pericope, Paul highlighted several concepts. First, Paul encouraged the hearers to fully accept their calling and all it entailed, which included working in service to God and engaging in ethical behavior toward each other. The ethical behaviors outlined align with the extra-role attitudes and behaviors supported in organizational citizenship behavior (Mehran, 2017). Paul's teachings clearly established salvation as not by works, but by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). Therefore, the qualities listed here could easily be defined as extra-role.

Paul based his argument on first, the member's relationship with God, and, second, relationships to each within the church. Finally, Paul used relationship and connection as the impetus for acting in a manner that creates unity and peace. For the Christian, belief in Christ unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the source of the Christian inner life. The understanding of calling, service, and relationship espoused by Paul flowed from a source of inner power provided by devotion to the Lord. In sum, the text supported the concepts of a transformative inner life through the power of the Holy Spirit, connection to God and other members, and meaningful work in service to the Lord, as well as organizational citizenship behaviors in the form of ethical behavior toward each other.

*Principle One: Individual spirituality as experienced through a transformative, belief-guided inner life, rich connections to leadership and others, and the meaningful work that stems from calling and connection provides empowerment for specific behaviors and attitudes.*

### EPHESIANS 4:4–6—ONENESS (UNITY)

The second narrational unit presents a theme of oneness (Boice, 1997). Paul argued that walking in a manner worthy of calling creates a oneness of body and Spirit, just as there is one Lord, faith, baptism, God, and Father (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). Again, the narrational unit coincided with the rationale of the argumentative texture. The rationale argued that walking in a manner worthy of calling creates a desirable oneness and unity with others in the church (Boice, 1997).

### *Opening–Middle–Closing*

As seen in the first section of text, the opening–middle–closing texture provided a closer look at the theme of oneness and, in particular, the rationale of the argumentative texture. In this section of the pericope, Paul argued for oneness in one body of believers (vs. 4), one Savior and saving (vs. 5), and one God (vs. 6). The theme of oneness clearly emerged and provided a rationale for why believers would seek to walk in a manner worthy of calling, unity, and oneness (Boice, 1997; Schnackenburg, 1991).

### *Social Intertexture*

Paul further expanded the concept of oneness by utilizing both social institutions, one body (vs. 4), and social identities and relationships, oneness (body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God, and Father) (vs. 4–6). First, Paul used the body to describe the church as an institution. Henson et al. (2020) indicated that social institutions represent organizations with four properties: structure, function, culture, and sanction (p. 118). Describing the organization of the early church as a body provided Paul with the ability to metaphorically move the reader to understand the structure, function, and culture of the early church through the interconnectedness of each member to the larger body, hence allowing for the concept of unity and oneness to emerge. The church as body provided a picture of parts working as a whole, the organic growth of both the individual and the whole, and division as consequential to the parts (Boice, 1997). At this time, the early church, as a countercultural, new religious and social movement, and one which defied common understandings of faith and religion, would have needed a way to create its own definition as a social institution, which is one of the efforts Paul made in this pericope (Malina, 2001). Utilizing the body metaphor provided a way to bring understanding to how such seemingly diverse parts or people could come together, unite, and create a unified whole.

Mitton (1976) argued that the “unity of the Spirit” was given by the Spirit and that the “bond of peace” provides the ability to hold things that are very different together. As noted, the early church was a diverse church. Both Jews and Gentiles made up its membership (deSilva, 2004). However, Paul argued that the identity of early Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, trumped all other identities and provided the impetus

to “[break] down religious and ethnic barriers” (deSilva, 2004, p. 725). The litany of ones presented in the text presented the centralizing force of Jesus Christ. Through him, believers receive access to one Spirit or the source of the inner life, a common hope, one true faith, one baptism, and one God and Father (Boice, 1997, pp. 128–131). Again, the unifying force comes through belief in Christ, which then creates the bond of peace through unity of the Spirit.

### *Sacred Texture*

Sacred textures focus on the identity of God and his relationship to believers and the relationship of believers to each other (Henson et al., 2020). This section of the pericope addressed sacred texture in the form of deity (Lord, God, and Father) (vs. 1), spirit being (Spirit) (vs. 4), human commitment (faith, baptism) (vs. 5), and religious community (one body) (vs. 4). The sacred texture provided clarity related to the social relationships identified in the pericope. Hearers of the letter would have understood, based on previous experience and on Paul’s arguments within the pericope, the trinitarian connection between God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit (Boice, 1997). Connecting this understanding with the metaphor of one body and human commitment to Christ through faith and baptism would have provided the hearer with the ability to connect the dots from one God, to one Lord, to one Spirit, which creates unity within the body (Boice, 1997). The trinity provided the foundation on which the body experienced unity, where diverse parts may come together for the betterment of the whole (Boice, 1997).

### *Section Summary*

In the second section of the pericope, Paul highlighted the trinitarian influence on the church. The pericope emphasized the ability to walk in the manner worthy of calling, which creates oneness and comes through the power of the Spirit or the inner life of the Christian follower. Access to the Spirit came through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which then allows for access to God the Father. Thus, the interconnectedness or oneness of the church stems from the fulfillment of the roles of the Trinity and belief in Jesus Christ. Again, the text showed evidence of supporting the ideas of the inner life and a sense of community and understanding the roles played by individuals within the church.

*Principle Two: Organizational unity stems from members of the whole completing prescribed roles with an understanding of and dedication to the functioning of the whole.*

### EPHESIANS 4:7–10—RECIPROCITY

The third narrational unit presented ideas related to the measure of a gift (Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). Paul presented Christ's sacrifice through his death and resurrection as a gift of grace. Again, the narrational unit coincided with the testimony of antiquity within the argumentative texture. The testimony invoked a prophecy from the Old Testament in Psalms (139:7–12; 68:18) and Isaiah (66:1) to support the gift of grace which provided the impetus and means by which to walk in the manner in which the reader has been called.

#### *Opening–Middle–Closing*

In this section of the pericope, Paul referenced prophecy to establish that Christ's gift of grace fulfilled it (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). The pericope boasted an argument for grace as Christ's gift (vs. 7), a reference to Old Testament prophecy of the death and resurrection (vs. 9), and a reaffirmation of the death and resurrection to fulfill the promise (vs. 9–10). The testimony bolstered Paul's argument surrounding the hearer's ability, through the power of the Spirit given through Christ, to act in a manner worthy of calling, as it has been foretold and realized.

#### *Social Intertexture*

Paul utilized social codes by invoking the idea of "Christ's gift" (vs. 7). Ancient cultures held to a social code of gift-giving and reciprocity. Ancient Mediterranean cultures would have understood gift-giving in terms of the patron–client relationship (deSilva, 2004). Hebrew scripture often referred to God as the "Patron of Israel" and Jesus as a patron of the early church or as a mediator securing favor with God (deSilva, 2004, p. 134). deSilva (2004) argued that God's forbearance and mercy provided humanity with the ability to return the favor in seeking repentance. Appropriate responses to a patron include "honor, loyalty, testimony, and service" (deSilva, 2004, p. 136). In the case of the

Christian believer, these would include service to God and modeling the life of Christ. These ideas are explored further in the last section of the pericope.

### *Sacred Texture*

Again, focusing on the identity of God and his relationship to believers and the relationship of believers to each other (Henson et al., 2020), this section of the pericope addressed sacred texture in the form of a holy person (vs. 7 Christ) and history and human redemption (vs. 7–10, Christ’s gift and ascension and descension). Jesus, as a holy person in the text, acted as the gift bearer both in prophecy and in fulfillment of prophecy. References to the prophecy from Psalms (139:7–12; 68:18) and Isaiah (66:1) provided the historical sacred texture while inputting human redemption through its references to ascension and descension and fulfilling all things (vs. 10). Again, the role of Christ in the church and in providing the ability to walk in a manner worthy of calling was supported.

### *Section Summary*

In the third section of the pericope, Paul highlighted the role of Christ, as head of the church, in the realization of the prophecy, and as a model for believers. As the gift bearer, Christ served as a mediator for God as a patron. The text set up the idea that the gift given by Christ provided both particular gifts and also required an appropriate response, addressed in the remaining section of the pericope. Again, the text supported a sense of community and connection among the members of the church. Overall, the pericope supports meaningful work in the form of a call to service to God, the inner life in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit through belief, and a sense of community in its emphasis on relationships and connection of the body.

*Principle Three: Spiritual organizational leaders empower organizational members by modeling the call to serve in meaningful work, how to serve well, and dedication to serving others.*



## EPHESIANS 4:11–16—SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND EDIFICATION OF THE BODY

The last narrational unit presented spiritual gifts as a means by which to edify or mature the members of the body, building spiritual maturity and, subsequently unity within the body (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). Again, the narrational units coincided with the conclusion of the argumentative texture. The conclusion argued that through the granting and use of spiritual gifts, the body experiences a subsequent spiritual maturity stemming from the knowledge of Christ. Faith provided the ability of individuals to walk in a manner worthy of calling in service to God and the church body, which, in turn, allowed the church to find unity.

### *Opening–Middle–Closing*

In this section of the pericope, Paul built an argument for the giving of spiritual gifts to be used to equip believers to grow in the knowledge of God and build unity within the church. The text outlined the giving of the spiritual gifts of apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, shepherding, and teaching (vs. 11), the call to use spiritual gifts to equip all believers to know Christ and seek Christian maturity (vs. 12), and, finally, the ability of maturity to create unity within the body (Mitton, 1976).

### *Social Intertexture*

Paul utilized social roles in outlining the various church roles (role of leaders in the church—apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher; the role of believers [saints]), social institutions in showing how the church works (Christ as leader, officers—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds/pastors, and teachers—and believers), social codes or behaviors in attributing maturity to believers, and social relationships in unity and one body (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). While the church roles outlined here would have been in the developmental stage, members of the early church would have understood the concept that the roles outlined were spiritual gifts given by the Spirit and made available through Christ. The Spirit endows every believer with gifts; however, some have been endowed with gifts specific to the edification of the church membership (Boice, 1997), sometimes referred to as “office

bearers” (Schnackenburg, 1991). The commission of the “office bearers” (Schnackenburg, 1991) rests in “equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (v. 12). The “office bearers” (Schnackenburg, 1991) exist to serve the church members, edifying their faith and helping them to grow in maturity, which provides the foundation for unity (Boice, 1997). deSilva (2004) indicated that while some do occupy unique roles, the ministry of Christ belongs to all believers.

Paul addressed social codes by which members should engage with others in using language such as “mature manhood” (vs. 13), “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (vs. 13), “may no longer be children” (vs. 14), “tossed to and fro” (vs. 14), and “human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes” (vs. 14). As with any culture, there are established norms for appropriate behavior. Here, Paul connected Christian maturity with “knowledge of the Son of God” (vs. 13), which provided the ability to become mature withstanding the ebb and tide of social pressure and conformity. The maturity of believers stemmed from the edification provided by the “office bearers” in growing church member knowledge of the Son of God (Schnackenburg, 1991).

Finally, Paul indicated that the edification provided by the “office bearers” and subsequent maturity of the members leads to a closer relationship and understanding of Christ as the head or leader of the church and unity within the body (Boice, 1997; Mitton, 1976; Schnackenburg, 1991). References to the head, body, and joint continued to support the body metaphor, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the church’s individual members. The relationship between Christ and the members required continually seeking maturity to remain united.

### Sacred Texture

The sacred texture identified holy persons, human commitment, religious community, and ethics (Henson et al., 2020). The text identified several holy persons, including Christ, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, and saints (believers). Of significance to note, the text identified all church members as holy persons, once again emphasizing the interconnectedness of each person to the body.

Human commitment reflects how a text exemplifies followers of Christ (Henson et al., 2020). Following Christ also requires a commitment to other believers (Henson et al., 2020). Paul addressed human commitment in referencing the work of ministry (vs. 11), knowledge of the Son (vs.

13), and parts working properly (vs. 16). Knowledge of the Son of God provided understanding to complete the work of ministry and when all work according to their gifts and calling, the parts work together properly (Mitton, 1976).

Again, the religious community recognized specific ways believers are called to interact (Henson et al., 2020). Religious community received attention in the form of “unity of faith” (vs. 13), “whole body” (vs. 16), and “build up in love” (vs. 16). All three emphasized the relationship between individuals within the church.

Finally, Paul addressed ethics, or “the responsibility to think and act in certain ways” (Henson et al., 2020) in the form of “mature manhood” (vs. 13), “no longer children” (vs. 14), “speaking truth in love” (vs. 15), and “grow up” (vs. 15). Robbins (1996) argued that for believers, ethics are “motivated by commitment to God” (p. 129). The commitment to God creates a desire to act and behave in ways that honor and glorify him.

### *Section Summary*

In the last section of the pericope, Paul outlined the roles within the church, Christ as the head (leader), those with spiritual gifts for edifying the members (office bearers), and the saints (believers or members). In doing so, he established Christ as the leader, the role of the office bearers in providing the knowledge of the Son or edifying the members, and the role of the believers in the work of ministry done from a place of maturity. The ability to act from the knowledge of the Son provided the maturity needed to have every believer or part of the body working properly, which creates a united whole. Paul directly addressed the work of all members of the church, its purpose, and its meaning. He stressed the connection and sense of community within the church. Finally, he again referenced the inner life through faith and knowledge of the Son. In sum, the final portion of the text rounds the circle providing the reader with a conclusion as to how they can meet the call and walk in a manner, expressing humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing in love.

*Principle Four: Organizationally modeled and supported spirituality, including an inner life, meaningful work, and sense of community, provides empowerment for organizational members to behave and engage with each other in a manner that supports and encourages unity.*

## SUMMARY

The analysis presented here provided several insights into both organizational spirituality and its connection to organizational citizenship behavior. First, the analysis supported the concepts of the inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community within the organizational spirituality literature (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Tepper, 2010). Moreover, the analysis presented key principles related to how organizations and leaders may support individual workplace spirituality and utilize its outcomes to benefit the whole organization, particularly related to unity. Specifically, the analysis highlighted the role of leaders in empowering organizational members, modeling spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior, and providing instruction and knowledge related to spirituality. Several potential research streams emerge from here, including additional biblical support for the constructs within organizational spirituality, the role of Christian leadership in supporting organizational spirituality, and empirical research seeking evidence of support of these constructs within present-day organizations.

Second, the analysis indicated the outcomes of spirituality within the organization included behaviors that easily fall under the purview of organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988, 1990; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Moreover, the analysis highlighted the interconnectedness of organizational members and the connection between attitudes and behaviors and overall functioning. Some behaviors were specifically addressed, including humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, maintaining unity, speaking truth in love, and growing up (maturing). Further research related to these behaviors and others within the biblical context, as possible constructs within the organizational citizenship behavior research stream, would be beneficial.

Finally, the analysis clearly emphasized the outcome of individual spirituality as something that benefits the whole, not just the individual. As such, the analysis supports the idea within the organizational spirituality literature as a construct that bridges both individual and group contexts. Additional research exploring support of this concept within biblical texts would be useful. As well, further development of the reciprocal relationship between individual spirituality and organizational spirituality would prove beneficial.

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# Forgiveness and Unity Support Spiritual Organizations: An Analysis of the Epistle of Philippians

*Stuart W. Boyer*

At the time of Paul's ministry, during his 2nd missionary journey, the city of Philippi was mostly populated by Greeks and Romans. After the wars (42 BCE), many who retired from Roman service resided there (O'Brien, 1991). This provided an environment and culture within the city that boasted of its citizenship in Philippi—specifically for the liberty, freedom, and peace offered by a Roman colony. Organizations and citizens tend toward groups that support peace. Organizational Citizen Behavior (OCB) includes job attitudes, job satisfaction, and other attitudinal measures, including perceived fairness, organizational commitment, and leader supportiveness (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Dissension and distrust hinder peace and OCB. “Do not plan evil against your neighbor, who

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dwells trustingly beside you” (Proverbs 3:29 ESV). The Greeks, Romans, and Jews had adequate history involving dissension and wars. Nevertheless, selfish desires and unchecked ambition provide toward wars and dissension (James 4:1–2). “Civil dissension is a viperous worm that gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth” (Shakespeare, 1588, line 71). An unleashed, untamed tongue quickly brings destruction and discord. “A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends” (Proverbs 16:27–28 ESV).

Paul exhorts the Philippians toward standing fast in unity (O’Brien, 1991), encouraging each to remain in partnership with the gospel (1:5). Paul wrote this letter, in part, given the church presently experienced distrust, contention, and unforgiveness (cf. 2:1–4; 4:2–3). Perhaps the primary verse within the book, which echoes the book’s larger themes, calls for the Philippians to persevere while standing fast in unity conducting their lives worthy of the gospel (1:27). This notion remains riddled through portions of the letter (2:1–11; 14, 3:7–11; 4: 2–8). Paul provides specific admonition toward perseverance while standing fast in unity—seeking reconciliation and forgiveness by the letter’s end (4:2).

## CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPIANS

During the era just before World War II, American families were, by and large, tuned into radio shows in the evenings. On October 30th, 1938, H. G. Wells gained notoriety during the initial broadcast of his science fiction novel *War of the Worlds* due to the massive panic of the public. This happened mainly because some listeners tuned in late; others still fell prey to the dramatization—America and the world were experiencing a Martian invasion (History.com Editors, 2009).

The importance of context or surrounding conditions is recognized through this true story. Likewise, we need to know the context of scripture to interpret it properly, understand and apply it. The context of a particular scripture is found within the surrounding passages. The surrounding sections determine the context of a set of passages. The context of surrounding sections is determined by the book in which they are written. Further, the context of the book is determined by the sounding books—the Old or New Testament. Finally, the context of scripture is determined in light of the Bible as a whole. We need to look at the social, cultural, and historical context of the scripture.



### *The Setting*

The wind was at their backs and provided excellent sailing (Hughes, 1996) for the Apostle Paul, Luke, and the crew as they came to the shores of Neapolis or modern-day Kavalla (Barclay, 1976). The crew then walked inland some 8–13 miles (Hughes, 1996; Polhill, 1992) and arrived at the city of Philippi, in northeastern Macedonia (Polhill, 1992). This stop in Greece reveals the first place that Paul preached the gospel in Europe. Philippi was an ancient and historic city when Paul arrived. The beginnings of this Roman colonial city maintained an abundance of Roman citizens (Polhill, 1992), extending back to the fourth century BC (O'Brien, 1991). Philippi was on the site of the “Thracian village known by its Greek name *Krenides* (‘springs’). In 361 BC, an Athenian exile, Callistratus, together with a number of Greek settlers from the island of Thasos, took over the place” (O'Brien, 1991, p. 3). In 356 B.C. (Fee, 1995), Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, was motivated by the gold and silver mines nearby (Barclay, 1976; O'Brien, 1991) and began a new battle. “Again, in 42 BC the Battle of Philippi was fought... [involving] the Second Triumvirate (Octavian, Antony, Lepidus) and the Republicans of Rome (Brutus, Cassius) [and] the victory of Octavian resulted in Philippi’s being made a military colony” (Kent Jr., 1981, p. 95). Given this, the town was awarded the status of a Roman colony—answering directly to the Roman emperor—which provided for the character of Philippi in Paul’s day (Hughes, 1996). Thus, it was a Roman city yet free from stringent oversight which offered much liberty to the Philippians.

### *The Purpose*

At the time of writing this prison epistle (Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, Philippians), Paul was bound “which he describes no less than four times as ‘being in chains’ (1:7, 13, 14, 17)” in prison in Rome (Fee, 1995, p. 34). At this point, Paul was sending Epaphroditus—who came with the gift from the Philippians—back from his prison cell in Rome after his recovery from illness and, it appears Paul wrote the letter with four main purposes in mind.

1. An update of Paul's ministry to the Philippians (1:12).
2. A letter of thanks for the support Paul had received in his time of need through the Philippians (4: 10).
3. A warning about the Judaizing opponents who would be seeking to influence them (3:2).
4. An exhortation toward unity, standing firm in the gospel (1:27), and thereby toward settling a rift that was in the church (4:2).

### *The Author*

The style, doctoral support, and internal writings support the Apostle Paul as many church fathers do concerning the authorship or canonical authority of Philippians (O'Brien, 1991, p. 9). Paul's name is found within the first verse. "Most scholars regard the Pauline authorship of Philippians as indisputable" (MacDonald, 1995, p. 1957), given this adding just little report shall be sufficient. One challenge to this came "F. C. Baur of the Tübingen School in the 1840s," (O'Brien, 1991, p. 10), but finds no contemporary New Testament scholarship support (O'Brien, 1991). "More recently, A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman, [question authorship], on the basis of their computer analyses of the Pauline sentences," however the validity of this method remains questionable, and in debate (O'Brien, 1991, p. 10).

### *The Date*

Given Philippi was filled with retired military and otherwise Roman soldiers, it was known as "little Rome," and therefore was a little Roman experience for those who no longer lived there and longed for Rome. Philippi being more of a military city than a commercial one, did not maintain enough (10 male Jews) Jewish people to have a synagogue. Given this, on his second missionary journey (approximately 50 AD) Paul and his crew went down "probably to the Gangites River, looking for some fellow Jews. They discovered a small group—all women" (Hughes, 1996, p. 212)—who became the beginnings of the Philippian church. Paul visited again on his third missionary journey (Acts 20)—then departed to Jerusalem. During the visit in Jerusalem he was arrested, taken to Rome. It is in the Roman prison about 60–62 AD (O'Brien, 1991), probably closer to 62, that this letter was written.

### *Key Themes*

The letter was written at the same time that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were; during Paul's captivity in Rome, and often called the "Prison epistles." Amazement happens when we consider this background and Paul's chains while writing this letter—since the main theme is joy—some 15 times in various forms. Likewise, the source of joy, Jesus Christ is mentioned no less than 60 times. Of course, the source remains over and above the circumstance, Jesus our eternal, infinite source of joy. Joining with these themes, Paul exhorts the Philippians toward standing fast in unity (O'Brien, 1991), encouraging each one to remain in partnership with the gospel (1:5). The church presently experienced distrust, contention, and unforgiveness (cf. 2:1–4; 4:2–3). One primary verse within the book calls for the Philippians to persevere while standing fast in unity conducting their lives worthy of the gospel (1:27).

### I:I-II AFFIRMATION AND AFFECTION SUPPORT SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

A word of encouragement may make the difference between continuing and catastrophe. Said another way, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver" (Proverbs 25:11 ESV). An example of this may be found in the gospel of John chapter 21; Jesus affirms the restoration of Peter after he denied Jesus thrice. Another example happened to Paul himself. Paul experienced each time he had some success, that soon thereafter, many troubles and beatings would occur. In Corinth, God spoke encouragement to Paul at just the right time (Acts 18:9–10). A lack thereof may break the psychological contract. A psychological contract remains between workers and employers and concerns an unwritten statement of expectations (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2010). Additionally, employees desire to see leaders and organizations reveal an active interest in their personal lives, family situations, also including physical and mental health (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2010). Yet another way to attend to the psychological contract, follow "The Cardinal Rule of leadership: believe in your people" (Pearing, 2017, p. 119). Paul practiced this at the beginning of his letter, stating he remains thankful that God's work in them was good and he would continue that work (Phil. 1:6). Thankfulness concerning others reveals the loving aspect of acknowledging God's

personalized handiwork (Rom. 1:8, 9; 6:17; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:15, 16; Col. 1:3, 4; 1 Thess. 1:2; 3; 3:9; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Phile. 4, 5).

Perhaps Paul's practice of affirmation and affection began having received the same—during an unlikely time—through the Apostle Barnabas (Acts 9:26–27). Organizations which practice affirmation and affection boost Organizational Citizen Behavior (OCB). It fulfills a psychological contract and allows a glimpse toward authentic leadership including transparency and openness, (Gardner et al., 2005, p. 361). Pearing (2017) provides some pointers on believing in people. Choose wisely (Phil 1:5), carefully and prayerfully choose who you partner with. Think regularly (Phil 1:3); think about partners or subordinate strengths, gifts, and talents. Thank intentionally (Phil 1:3), from a grateful heart. Pray always (Phil 1:4), for those who partner with. Encourage humbly (Phil 2:1–7), if you put yourself above others, it's hard to believe in them. And finally proceed resolutely (Phil 3:13–14), even or especially during setbacks and difficulties (Pearing, 2017, pp. 124–133). The gospel promotes affectionate relationships (2 Cor. 3:2; 7:3; Gal. 5:6; 1 John. 3:14; Acts. 16:23–25; 20:23; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Col. 4:3, 18; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2:9; Heb. 10:33, 34) and Paul's affection for the Philippians remains linked with the love of Christ himself (O'Brien, 1991). Affirmation and affection remain foundations toward intimate relationships. Jesus provides the supreme example of revealing affection for those who love Him (John 15:12–13).

*Principle One: Leader and member affirmation and affection support spiritual organizations.*

## 1:12–14, 27 AN UNBOUND GOSPEL BENEFITS FOLLOWERS OF SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

Although, while writing the letter to the Philippians, Paul was chained and bound, the gospel was not (2 Tim. 2:9). Boice (2000) rightly posits that Paul's imprisonment and experience was not happening according to plan—since he had planned to proclaim the gospel in Spain, then Jerusalem, finally visiting Rome. The Philippians undoubtedly believed Paul's imprisonment effectively bound or hindered the gospel's propagation. Paul assured them the adversity did not bind the gospel; rather, “the adversity itself had turned out for the advancement of the gospel” (Silva, 2005, pp. 61–62). This recognition of spiritual leadership benefits

Paul, and the Philippians, as well as organizations today. Spiritual Leadership (SL) within organizations positively promotes health, productivity, lowered stress, security, turnover, ethicality, satisfaction, significance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Benefiel, 2005; Dent et al., 2005; Fry, 2003; Howard, 2002; Kriger & Seng, 2005; Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Fry (2003) defines SL “as comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (p. 694). Paul recognized; the gospel was going forth. Three portions of evidence confirm the continual propagation of the gospel.

The first reveals the gospel permeated throughout the palace guard (1:13). This occurred given the “imperial guard, the praetorium, consisted of 9,000 handpicked soldiers” (Hughes, 1996, p. 48) who were rotating guarding Paul—a great opportunity for the gospel. The soldiers would hear the gospel from Paul, then through his “conversations with his visitors” (Hughes, 1996, p. 48).

The second evidence involves the believers, who were now evangelizing (1:14)—not heretically but authentically, albeit perhaps with selfish motives (1:15). They were called to share the gospel (Matt. 28:19–20) and were followers, partnering in the gospel (1:5). Fry (2003) declared spiritual survival through calling and membership entails a sense of calling, which then produces efforts toward empowerment, as well as love, care, and concern. Sanders (2007) commented that SL concerns power from on high—divine power—SL remains effective only due to the Holy Spirit’s work within. Given this, SL provides toward connecting divine ability and personal cooperation, according to purpose providing organizational connection while fulfilling organizational goals. The gospel is not universal nor inclusive but rather exclusive as Jeffress (2016) clearly and articulately exclaimed. Morris (1995) noted Jesus’ statement “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 ESV) provides a threefold description emphasizing the way (vv. 4–6). “Jesus is not one among many ways to God but the only way to God. The early church was even called ‘The Way’ because of its insistence upon this point (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23)” (Dockery, 1992, p. 624). Interestingly, Toussaint (1985) noted “Saul referred to Christianity as the Way, a term used only in Acts (19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).”

The third evidence the gospel moved forward is provided to us through hindsight. The third effect is obvious only through the lens

of history—“the prison epistles” (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).

*Principle Two: Providing time and space for leaders and followers to embrace gospel principles benefits spiritual organizations.*

## 2:1–13 HUMILITY SUPPORTS SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

The letter to the people of Philippi was written at the same time that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were, during Paul’s captivity in Rome, and often called the “Prison epistles.” It’s astonishing considering Paul’s chains during writing this letter—the resounding theme of joy—some 15 times in different forms. Likewise, the source of joy, Jesus Christ is mentioned no less than 60 times. Although, the church presently experienced distrust, contention, and unforgiveness (cf. 2:1–4; 4:2–3), one primary verse within the book calls for the Philippians to perseverance while standing fast in unity conducting their lives worthy of the gospel (1:27). Selfish desires and unchecked ambition provide toward wars and dissension (James 4:1–2). On the other hand, humility chooses the betterment of others (2:3–4) rather than self-interest or reputation (2:7). Paul provides the account or early Christian hymn in support of humility (2:5–11).

This early Christian hymn about Christ Jesus is the most important section of the letter to the Philippians and provides a marvelous description of Christ’s self-humbling in his incarnation and death, together with his subsequent exaltation by God to the place of highest honour [sic]. (O’Brien, 1991, p. 251)

Scripture supports the attitude of humility (Ps. 45:4; Prov. 15:33; 18:12; 22:4; Zeph. 2:3; Acts 20:19; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 5:5). Elsewhere, Paul stated “for I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). The term used for *think* supplies extra insight toward Paul’s intent. Louw and Nida (1996) defined the word this way. ὑπερφρονέω: “to have an unwarranted pride in oneself or in one’s accomplishments, to be conceited, to be arrogant, to be proud, to think highly of oneself” (p. 764). Osborne (2004) stated thinking highly of

oneself refers to an overly inflated view of our own importance, whereas the humble remains with the divine perspective, we are slaves to God, in likeness of Jesus, and toward one another.

The spiritual organizations thrive with humble and submissive attitudes toward transformation into the likeness of Jesus, which glorifies God. Jesus lived to glorify God (John 17:4). Spiritual organizations succeed by glorifying God (Matt. 5:16; Mark 2:12; Luke 2:20; 23:47; John 13:31; 17:4; 21:19; Acts 4:21; 21:20; Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 1:24; 1 Pet. 2:12). Organizations nor leaders rarely, if ever, have perfect knowledge. Leaders' decision-making effectively remains in a place of bounded rationality. The effective spiritual organization, leaders and followers alike, practices strength of character and humble submission to the purposes of God—bringing glory to God.

*Principle Three: Top-down humility provides toward the glory of God and the betterment of spiritual organizations.*

## 2:14–30 AUTHENTIC LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS HELP SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS THRIVE

This pericope highlights the open, humble, authentic leadership of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus. Authentic Leadership (AL) is aptly termed, for the main focus of AL concerns leadership, which remains, real, genuine, and authentic (Northouse, 2013). Paul takes careful aim to remain open and authentic toward the Philippians, even when addressing their failures. The AL contemporary model, developed due to moral leadership failures, such as Enron, Worldcom, and Global Crossing (Avolio et al., 2004; Northouse, 2013). Paul stated the work (2:17) he is doing “could lead to martyrdom, but he was more than willing” (Silva, 2005, p. 129). Given Paul remained committed toward their betterment, he spoke the truth in love—even when the truth hurt (2:20–21), rather than speaking empty words or flattery (Prov. 29:5). In speaking about Timothy, Paul stated no one was as like-minded, all were self-seeking, expect Timothy. “Those words may have a double reference. Indirectly, they serve as an additional rebuke to selfish followers of the Philippian community” (Silva, 2005, p. 138). Nevertheless, “better is open rebuke than hidden love” (Prov. 27:5). AL includes positive leader values, which may influence followers' attitudes and behaviors (Avolio et al., 2004).

The transparent interacting with followers, along with optimism, confidence, hope, and decision-making, help encourage trusting relationships with followers (Gardner et al., 2005). The Philippians looked forward to a visit from Paul and Timothy (2:19, 24), given they were both present for the conception of the church (Acts 16), Paul would send back their own Epaphroditus soon. Epaphroditus was sent from Philippi to Paul with a gift (1:5), and to assist Paul, but became unable, having fallen sick (2:27), but now healed. Due to the leader–follower relationship emphasis, AL behavior is consistent with values and with follower values (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Four positive psychological attributes exist which “impact authentic leadership: confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience” (Northouse, 2013, p. 264). Therefore, authentic leaders focus on personal development and empower others toward developing positive attributes. Paul provided honest, open, authentic examples of three leaders of whom efforts focused on the Philippians’ betterment as a spiritual organization.

*Principle Four: Authentic leaders and followers help spiritual organizations thrive.*

### 3:1–6 AN ABERRANT GOSPEL DAMAGES FOLLOWERS OF SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

It may happen in equal or greater proportion—positively; providing time and space for leaders and followers to embrace gospel principles benefits spiritual organizations. Or negatively—an aberrant gospel damages followers of spiritual organizations. Paul knew the destructive nature of legalism. Legalism, produced through self-effort, seeks to atone one’s self before God. “The desire to be pleasing to God is commendable certainly, but the effort to please God by self-effort is not, for it assumes that sin once done may be undone, an assumption wholly false” (Tozer & Verploegh, 1984, p. 164). For Paul, a repeated warning about legalism was not tedious, but safe (3:1). Legalism, if not disclosed for what it is, may well have destroyed the Philippian spiritual organization. Another warning against legalism remains helpful (Gal 5:12; 2 Cor. 11:13–15; Phil. 2:17, 18; 3:1–3; 2 Pet. 1:12–15; 3:1). Believers rejoice in Jesus, not in legalism, given that working for God’s favor or salvation is not good news (Zep. 3:14, 17; Zech. 10:7; Mat. 5:12; Luke 1:47; Rom. 5:2; Gal. 1:6–9; 1 Thess. 5:16; Jam. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:6–8). Paul strived



toward revealing the heresy of the Judaizers, who promoted a worked based salvation/sanctification (Mat. 7:22, 23; 2 Cor. 11:13; Gal. 5:13; 1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 3:1–6; 4:3, 4; Titus 1:16). By contrast, the true people of God (3:3) are those who worship God in the Spirit (John 4: 23–24). They rejoice in Christ Jesus, as opposed to the legalist who likely rejoices in one’s self. Finally, they also put no confidence in the flesh—but put all confidence in Jesus. Legalism remains a problem. In the United States (US), and doubtless elsewhere, legalism and other cultural problems hinder spiritual organizations. Barna (2011) revealed only seven percent of the US public classifies as evangelical Christians, whereas one out of every 10 persons within the United States claims no religious faith. “The foundation of what we know and believe about the Christian faith is contained in the Bible” (Barna, 2011, p. 131). Yet only six out of 10 within the United States believe that the Bible is without error (Barna, 2011). “Protestants are 48 percent more likely to believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all the principles it teaches. Protestants are twice as likely to say that the Bible can be taken literally, word for word” (Barna, 2011, P. 134). Culture tends to affect behavior. Legalism or an aberrant gospel damages spiritual organizations.

*Principle Five: An aberrant gospel damages followers of spiritual organizations.*

### 3:7-II EXAMINED LIVES BENEFIT SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

It’s been said that the unexamined life is not worth living (Socrates). Socrates sought to live a virtuous life—full of self-examination. Not merely to focus on himself, but rather to make the most use of his life. For the Christian, this means examining our lives to assure we produce much fruit that remains due to Jesus abiding in us (John 15:1–5). It means careful consideration and regular examination in order and operate my life and ministry by the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22–23; Eph. 4:30; 5:18–21) and on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ, so that when the eternal judgment happens, I will pass the fire test (1 Cor. 3:13) and receive a reward (1 Cor. 3:11–15; 2 Cor. 5:10). Paul examined his own life and determined his life was only of worth in as much as he was knowing and growing in a relationship with Jesus (3:7–9). The basis of AL concerns psychology and psychological theories of self-regulation (Yukl, 2013). AL integrates

ideas of effective leadership with ethical leadership, and emphasizes the importance of consistency in leaders' words, actions, and values (Yukl, 2013). Therefore, the need for truth and honesty remains a primary factor. One of the chief principles of AL concerns self-awareness, pulling from Greek philosophy, or the concept of "know thyself" and "to thine own self be true" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 802). Authentic leaders' hope, trust, and positive emotions influence followers' attitudes and behaviors (Avolio et al., 2004). Paul had planted the church or spiritual organization in Philippi, and continued to provide training for the community. Northouse (2013) defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Leadership remains a "transactional event that occurs between the leader and followers" (Northouse, 2013, p. 5). Ivancevich and Konopaske also noted "you do not have to be in the formal leadership position to exert leadership behavior" (p. 440). Further, leadership development encompasses training leaders to effectively deal with unpredictable issues, as well as complex cognitive and behavioral adaptability toward wide range problems (Day, 2000). Additionally, leadership development is defined as "a measure of a leader's changing capacity to influence, in terms of various factors, over time" (Clinton, 1988, p. 245).

Organizations maintain specific training—information and skills—toward leadership development, according to organizational product and goals. Formal groups are established to the end that organizational goals are accomplished (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2010). Just prior, Paul wrote of seven things that once meant everything to him. "The first four items describe privileges that Paul acquired simply by virtue of his birth, while the last three focus on voluntary choices of his own" (Silva, 2005, p. 150). In effect, Paul was saying "Don't think I regret my decision—even now I continue to regard every one of those virtues as nothing" (Silva, 2005, p. 157). Paul found, as many others have, it's a waste to strive in life for anything but Jesus (Acts. 20:24; Rom. 8:18; Phil. 3:10; Mat. 11:25–27). The things that may have seemed as a gain for Paul in his own efforts, of whom he thought he wanted to be, he now recognizes as loss. The things that he thought made him better, he now recognizes that they were not just a loss—or rather a damaging effect—but actually destructive to his life. Paul examined his behavior, not only for his own good, but for the benefit of others. Authentic leaders remain "guided by the qualities of the heart, passion, and compassion as they are by qualities of the mind" with the major focus of empowerment and betterment of

others (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 806). Therefore, authentic leaders maintain a present focus and awareness of personal values and morals, while seeking positive development in their own lives, and the lives of others.

Paul found, there's no power to live a life pleasing to God in legalism. Paul in effect states that all the efforts in his life that did not bring him into a more intimate personal knowledge of Jesus, is but loss to Him. In an effort to know and grow in a relationship with Jesus Paul gave up family, career, status, security, friends, and favor. In the phrase (8), Paul uses accounting terms noting the final "heavenly audit" all would be in order (O'Brien, 1991, p. 384).

*Principle Six: Leaders and followers who live examined lives benefit spiritual organizations.*

#### 4:I-9 FORGIVENESS HELPS SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCCEED

Paul's language and choice of words within the letter represents some of the most endearing and affectionate he used in any other letter (Hughes, 1996), and piles it together at last (4:1). "This little church was his favorite. 'My joy' and my 'crown'—this is what they were to Paul as he exhorted them, 'Stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.' Paul wanted them to run hard after the full knowledge of Christ" (Hughes, 1996, p. 160). Paul seems to have combed through his vast mind to find the most loving and affectionate words and then poured them together. Paul pours his affection out and "piles up five distinct terms of endearment—my brothers, beloved, longed-for, my joy, my crown—before uttering the command. And after the command, he repeats the term 'beloved' so as to leave no doubt regarding his attitude toward them" (Silva, 2005, p. 185). I suspect the disagreement and disunity in his favorite church must have broken his heart. When life blood is poured into an organization or peoplegroup, the heart breaks when followers do not strive for unity and reconciliation as much as they do for preservation and self-interest. Paul implored both Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord (4:2). In effect, they are equally encouraged to settle the dispute—to end the conflict. It remains unknown how the conflict arose, or if one person was more responsible than the other—the main purpose is forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation.

Forgiveness is releasing them from our desire to see them punished. It is willfully clearing our heart of even the remembrance of the deed. Forgiveness is not a feeling. It's an act of the will. It's not forgetting; it's choosing not to remember (Isa 43:25). Forgiveness is not excusing. It is choosing not to hold someone to a debt; because God has forgiven you. Forgiveness is not permissiveness (Tripp, 2020). An accompanying portion of forgiveness is redemption.

Redemption concerns the notion of paying a ransom or returning something lost (Easton, 1893). "To pay a price in order to secure the release of something or someone...to liberate from oppression, enslavement, or another type of binding obligation. The redemptive procedure may be legal, commercial, or religious" (Norman, 2003, p. 1370). Forgiveness is best accompanied by redemption, but not always with reconciliation.

Reconciliation concerns the relational characteristics involving closeness and intimacy, previously not practiced due to enmity, or opposition. To put it another way, reconciliation concerns "restoration of friendly relationships and of peace where there had previously been hostility and alienation" (Elwell & Comfort, 2001, p. 1113). Full reconciliation may or may not be possible, or advised given the circumstance. For instance, there may be a conflict due to a minor automobile collision, where reconciliation remains probable. Another event might stem from violence or aggression in which the offender reveals no repentance or change. In this circumstance, reconciliation may not be wise.

Paul clearly knew the impossible idea of unification, or agreeing in everything, but "it is possible for us to submerge our petty, personal differences in order that the Lord may be magnified and His work advanced" (MacDonald, 1995, p. 1977). The call toward the whole church reveals Pauls' intent for corporate responsibility (Silva, 2005), and the importance of settling a rift. It may be at this point, it was best to take the problem to an independent third party (MacDonald, 1995). However, not all conflict is bad (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2010). One of the greatest, notable leadership conflicts in scripture positively influenced the formation, nature, and composition of the most influential and successful organization in history—the church (Acts 15). The type of conflict the early church experienced is called "functional conflict" whereas "dysfunctional conflict" provides organizational harm (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2010, p. 311). Given this, the idea or notion of conflict need not stir up negative emotion or stress. Consider this

perspective: conflicts remain, and are inevitable (Osterhaus et. al., 2005). Additionally, the conflicts are not the problem, but rather reveal relational faction between parties (Osterhaus et. al., 2005). Finally, good may come from conflicts: providing different viewpoints shared, dispels negative perceptions, and “leads to resolution of complex issues” (Osterhaus et. al., 2005, p. 16).

Conflicts are best handled according to the Biblical parameters set forth in the scriptures (Matt. 5:23–24; 18:15–20). Sande (2004) posited relationships before issues except after trust. In other words, relationships need to remain in a place of trust, before dealing with issues. People that do not trust one another, will have a terribly difficult time working through issues. That being said, conflict resolution ought to be extensively pursued and greatly encouraged. Conflict resolution is an exercise of scriptural authority for which the church is responsible (Matt. 18:17). The goals of conflict resolution are to honor God; to protect the purity of the church/organization; to guard others from being tempted, misled, divided, or otherwise harmed; and to bring fallen Christians to repentance (Matt. 18:20; 1 Cor. 5:12; 6:3; 2 Cor. 2:7). It is to be exercised with mercy, grace, and forgiveness (2 Cor. 2:8; Eph. 4:32). Conflicts remain, and provide teachable moments.

Ideally, all organizational disagreements will work toward functional conflict. The command of Jesus to forgive conflict (fear versus faith) within the apostles provides the desirable effect—faith in Jesus (Matt. 18:15–22), evidenced through church history. “Forgiveness serves, anger dominates and controls; it’s not hard to discern which of these is the way of the gospel” (Tripp, 2020, p. 65).

*Principle Seven: Forgiveness provides a place for redemption and reconciliation and benefits spiritual organizations.*

#### 4:10–16 GENEROSITY AND CONTENTMENT BENEFITS SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

Paul began chapter 4 by stating that Christian behavior ought to remain with forgiveness and reconciliation (4:2). Paul also reminded the rest of the church that if two people do not reconcile on their own, they may need the help of individuals and/or the whole church (4:3). He then reminded them that instead of arguing they ought to be rejoicing in the Lord knowing that His victory is our victory (4:4). Paul reminds the

Philippians that if they acknowledge that Jesus is very near, even at hand, they would act with gentleness instead of contention (4:5). Prayer ought to be the response of Christians during anxiety. Paul reminds, pray, instead of being worried about every little thing (4:6). Contention will cease, as prayer prevails (4:7). Christian behavior concerns not only prayer, but holy thinking (4:8). The Philippians could look to the example of Paul and the other leaders for their behavior (4:9). The final section reveals Paul's appreciation toward the Philippian support. This last section is a thank you card, including concern for consistent giving, while experiencing contentment, believing the promises of God toward Christian giving. Does Paul pronounce a subtle rebuke, because the Philippians financial care ceased? At first glance it may seem like a rebuke, yet Paul takes precision, and care of language in the next verse to correct the thinking that a rebuke was in mind. Loving care remained, while lacking opportunity (2 Cor. 7:7; 8:1–2; 11:9). Paul rejoiced in the Lord, not in their gift (Ps. 34:1, 2; Mat. 5:12; Acts. 5:41; 1 Th. 5:16–18; 1 Peter. 4:13). Our opportunity will one day cease, yet our care and desire will increase (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5; 1 Tim. 6:17; Tit. 3:8; Heb. 13:16). “Accordingly, K. Holsten, M. Dibelius, and others have spoken of Paul’s ‘thankless thanks.’ But his expression of joy communicates his thankfulness” (O’Brien, 1991, p. 517). While this may seem the case, this view neglects important cultural aspects. “The cultural difficulty is that all of us tend to identify gratefulness with a set of conventions that we are accustomed to” (Silva, 2005, p. 201). The view of the culture is that all goods remain in limited amounts, any improvement upon one person or family’s life position is not only at the expense of another family, but the entire community (Malina, 2001). Given this, the status of a person within a community likely would not change. This meant that status came with both prerogatives and responsibility, privileges we believe we have in our interaction with others and responsibilities others have toward us and respecting our rights. Philippi was a collectivistic culture. Most people within the collectivistic culture remained within status. This threat of attaining more of the limited good than a person’s status allows, would be an affront and harm to the whole community. Given this, honorable people never admit to initiating partnerships or friendships with other people unless they are asked. This is why, in the gospels the laborers had to be asked to work for the day, or they would lose their honor (Matt. 20:7). This is also why no one seeks out Jesus for discipleship, since that would be presumptuous and require a put down (Luke 9:57–58).

Additionally, honorable people never compliment others and they do not express gratitude to equals or two higher status persons unless a transaction is over (Malina, 2001). If a compliment is given there is denial that there is any reason for the compliment. For the person who compliments is guilty of aggression, of a negative challenge (Malina, 2001). To compliment others is to tell them to their face that they are rising above the level that spells security for all and to suggest that they may be confronted with sanctions (Malina, 2001). To express gratitude to higher status persons after some positive interaction means to stop the initiated, open-ended, reciprocal relationship (Malina, 2001). A heartfelt thank you signifies that our relationship of mutual obligation is closed and finished, since I cannot and will not repay you (Malina, 2001). Among equals, such gratitude is shameful, but with higher status persons is honorable, provided that no more interactions with those same persons are foreseen or expected (Malina, 2001). Since most people in the gospels do not thank Jesus after he heals them; rather they praise God from whom good health comes, further implying that they might have to interact with Jesus again should illness strike later (Mark 2:12; Matt. 9:8). So for Paul to directly say thank you, might have been understood as if he no longer desired a relationship with the people of Philippi. Paul remained thankful that God provides for his and the Philippians' needs. Paul provides principles that reveal current need never eliminates contentment in Christ (1 Cor. 4:11, 12; 2 Cor. 6:10, 8:9; 11:27).

We must keep in mind that this passage is flanked by a reference to the Philippians' anxiety over their needs (4:6–7) and by a promise that God will supply those needs (4:19). The Philippians needed to hear—and to see exemplified in the apostle—that the enjoyment of material abundance is not the basis for contentment. (Silva, 2005, p. 204)

Paul states that over a period of years, he has learned, been initiated into the secret, the rare jewel, living the life of contentment (1 Cor. 4:9–13; 2 Cor. 6:4–10; 10:1, 10; 11:7, 27; 12:7–10). Paul had been learning contentment since conversion until he penned this letter (O'Brien, 1991). "Contentment is rooted in the eternal God rather than in the temporal self" (Hughes, 1996, p. 183). Paul encouraged the Philippians to embrace the sovereignty of God, whether in lack or abundance; continue to rejoice and share with those in need (John 15:4, 5, 7; 1 Cor. 9:10, 11; 2 Cor.

3:4, 5; Eph. 3:16; Col. 1:11). How do leaders and spiritual organizations maintain generosity and contentment without burnout? Four tips include: “practice regular spiritual disciplines, get into a support network, practice effective generosity, and exercise exponential giving” (Pearing, 2017, pp. 152–153).

*Principle Eight: Generosity and contentment provide toward the betterment of spiritual organizations.*

## SUMMARY OF THEMES AND PRINCIPLES

The Apostle Paul authored the book of Philippians—likely his most beloved spiritual organization. Paul’s focus remained on four elements which include the following.

- An update of Paul’s ministry to the Philippians (1:12).
- A letter of thanks for the support Paul had received in his time of need through the Philippians (4:10).
- A warning about the Judaizing opponents who would be seeking to influence them. (3:2)
- An exhortation toward unity, standing firm in the gospel (1:27), and thereby toward settling a rift that was in the church (4:2).

Although some believe much research will drive one mad (Acts 26:24), I still believe much learning benefits and enhances truth and reason (Acts 26:25). Additionally, it remains a best practice to keep the word of God ever before us, reading, meditating, studying, and exploring (Joshua 1:8–9). This analysis was conducted through exegetical research, the following principles were developed, each of which might be further explored involving case studies, quantitative and qualitative research. This commitment comes in effort to provide encouragement and edification to both the researcher(s) and the reader(s) alike.

- Principle One: Leader and member affirmation and affection support spiritual organizations.
- Principle Two: Providing time and space for leaders and followers to embrace gospel principles benefits spiritual organizations.



- Principle Three: Top-down humility provides toward the glory of God and the betterment of spiritual organizations.
- Principle Four: Authentic leaders and followers help spiritual organizations thrive.
- Principle Five: An aberrant gospel damages followers of spiritual organizations.
- Principle Six: Leaders and followers who live examined lives benefit spiritual organizations.
- Principle Seven: Forgiveness provides a place for redemption and reconciliation and benefits spiritual organizations.
- Principle Eight: Generosity and Contentment provide toward the betterment of spiritual organizations.

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# A Model for Organizational Maturity: An Analysis of the Epistle of Philippians

*Tim Gregory*

The maturity of an organization speaks to more than just its ability to grow but also to its ability to sustain that growth; growth that specifically lines up with and is defined by the company's mission and values (Thompson & Cavaleri, 2010). Growth without maturity can be unhealthy for an organization, hindering the organization's ability to properly handle the growth they are experiencing in a manner that will ensure that growth is both sustainable and achieved in an ethical manner, which upholds the company's mission and values (Harjanti & Gustomo, 2017). Organizational maturity can be understood as the ability of an organization to systematically and consistently operate according to its mission and goals in an ever-changing environment, efficiently facing and overcoming the various challenges they are confronted with, in a manner that ensures their continued sustainable growth and advancement in both

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their sector and industry (Harjanti & Gustomo, 2017; Hradilek, 2020; Kalinowski, 2016; Konopaske et al., 2018). Organizational maturity goes beyond any belief system or philosophy a company may hold and transcends into their ability to be both resilient and productive at the same time, as they endure and prosper through the passage of time and circumstance (Armitage et al., 2006; Gracey, 2020). Organizations with high levels of maturity operate in a state where both managers and subordinates are capable of functioning at high levels of performance in an ever-changing environment, and the organization's structure is flexible enough to successfully adapt to those environmental changes (Falessi et al., 2014; Gunsberg et al., 2018). An examination of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Philippi reveals a model for maturity that he laid out for the church there; this model could be applied to any organizational setting today to help reach and maintain a state of maturity.

## BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPIANS

Philippi was a Roman colony that existed along the Via Egnatia; a major trade route that merchants used to travel that stretched from Rome to the East, which served to make Philippi a strategic location for commerce within the Roman Empire (Harmon, 2015). As a Roman colony, the residents of Philippi enjoyed all the privileges of being a Roman citizen, which was a prized commodity of the time (Hansen, 2009). Paul first made his way to Philippi during his second missionary journey with Silas and his other companions. Unlike many of the other cities to whom Paul had brought the Gospel, Philippi had no synagogue to speak of, which was normally where Paul began his work (Acts 17:2). Paul and his companions traveled outside the city on the Sabbath to the river, thinking they would find a place of prayer, and find a group of God-fearing women (Acts 16:13–14). God fearers were individuals who were not Jewish but believed in and worshiped the God of Israel (Larkin, 1995). One of these ladies was named Lydia, who was a businesswoman who sold purple clothing (Acts 16:14). The selling of purple was an industry that was regulated by the house of Caesar at the time (Melick, 1991). Lydia was potentially a wealthy businesswoman who would have had ties to the house of Caesar (Melick, 1991). Lydia heard the message of the Gospel and believed it, and as such, she and her entire household were baptized, giving birth to the church in Philippi (Acts 16:15). The church in Philippi would quickly be added to after Paul and Silas were arrested and their

jailer and his household believed in the message of the Gospel and were baptized as well (Acts 16:30–33).

Luke shows that Paul quickly begins a unique relationship with the church in Philippi when he records how Paul and his companions stayed in the home of Lydia, for it was not customary for Paul to take financial support or any form of aid from new converts (Larkin, 1995). An examination of Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi reveals the special relationship he had cultivated with this congregation, as they had joined with him in his efforts to advance the Gospel message (Ware, 2011). Paul acknowledges the spiritual growth the church in Philippi had experienced and was continuing to experience (Melick, 1991). Even though the church existed in the midst of a completely pagan culture, the church was able to experience a continued maturity that enabled them to press forward with the mission Christ had entrusted to His followers (Comfort et al., 2017). Paul presents several principles throughout his letter to the Philippians that would help them to sustain a pattern of maturity that was modeled after his own life, which would lead to the growth and expansion of the church in Philippi and throughout the world. Paul tells them, “Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind” (Phil. 3:15, NRSV). These principles could be applied to any organization, whether for profit or not, to help ensure an organization and its leaders move along a path of continued maturity. As we study Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi, we can identify at least ten themes that the Apostle puts forth to help them experience maturity as an organized group: sacrifice (1:12–26), unity (1:27–30), humility (2:1–11), mission-motivated (2:12–30), forward-focused (3:1–14), discipline (3:17–4:1), conflict management (4:2–3), constructive thinking (4:4–9), determination (4:10–14), and financial structure (4:15–20).

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES SACRIFICE

As the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Philippi, he finds himself imprisoned because of his efforts to spread the Gospel and fulfill the mission Christ had given him (Phil. 1:12–14). Paul had faced opposition and endured persecution throughout his efforts to advance God’s Kingdom, but accepted that opposition and persecution willingly, as he was doing it for Christ (2 Cor. 11:23–27). Paul knew sacrifice was necessary to fulfill the mission he had been entrusted with and he knew a sacrificial attitude would be necessary for the church to embrace if they

were going to experience a journey of maturity that would lead them to a place where they could successfully fulfill their mission and see the local church expand in a healthy manner (Rom. 12:1). The church in Philippi was experiencing its own difficulties and trials, some brought on by Jewish believers who promoted salvation by circumcision, and other trials came by living in a pagan society that they had once belonged to and participated in its customs (Phil. 1:28 & 3:2). The believers in Philippi had freely sacrificed for their beliefs and mission, and the Apostle Paul knew they would need to move forward with a sacrificial attitude if they were going to continue to grow and mature as a healthy organized church of individual believers (Fee, 1999).

Research has shown that the self-sacrificing behavior of organizational leaders creates a sense of loyalty in subordinates, motivating them to work harder and more efficiently, willing to embrace a sacrificial behavior themselves for the good of the company and its mission, which they hold as their own (Knippenberg & Knippenberg, 2005). Leaders who are willing to openly sacrifice for the good of their subordinates and the mission of the company have the ability to create a self-sacrificing attitude in those they lead, positively affecting their organizational citizenship behavior, which in turn promotes growth and maturity throughout the organization (Ruggieri & Abbate, 2013). Organizational members who embrace a sacrificial attitude continue on a path of growth and maturity, their behavior demonstrates an unrelenting stance of commitment to the mission of their company (Coetzee et al., 2019). When individual organizational members perceive their leaders and company as caring for them on a personal and professional level, a sense of attachment is formed, causing individual members to commit themselves to achieving the goals of their organization (Dawley et al., 2010). Organizations benefit when their members walk a path that leads to maturity, and an attitude of sacrifice within organizational members helps those members to grow and mature into fully functional citizens of the company (Joireman et al., 2006).

*Principle One: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere of self-sacrifice, starting at the top of the company and permeating throughout.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES UNITY

Paul encourages the church in Philippi to stand together, united as one, striving forward side by side in their efforts to advance the Gospel (Phil. 1:27). The church was to be united so that it could effectively work together as one unit with the same mindset and the same goals, with all the members of the church sharing the same desire to see the mission of the church worked out in their lives and efforts (Thielman, 1995). Thompson (2007) notes that Paul's reference to the Philippians regarding the concept of having the same mind points to Paul's desire to see the Philippian believers united with a loyal attitude toward one another and their efforts to fulfill the mission and goals of the church. Paul's address, as he opens his letter to the Philippian church, shows he was concerned for the entire body of believers, for he directs his comments not only to the leaders of the church but to all the believers (Phil. 1:1–3). Paul understood that the members of the church would be strengthened through a spirit of unity, making them capable of facing and overcoming the oppositions and struggles they would have in Philippi as they attempted to advance the Gospel message (Phil. 1:28–30).

Organizational unity speaks to the ability of unique individual members of an organization to function as one unit, practically and emotionally united by a shared purpose, vision, and value set to fulfill a common mission (Klagge, 1995). Aggerholm and Thomsen (2012) point out the ability of open and consistent communication throughout an organization as a means to create unity between a diverse group of individuals, along with transparent decision-making by leaders which serves to keep employees informed and connected. Unity within organizations creates an atmosphere where members are able to flex and adapt to unforeseen occurrences in the marketplace in a manner that allows the company to remain productive and profitable in turbulent times (Harung & Harung, 1995; Moldoveanu & Dobring, 2012). Organizations looking to grow and mature can promote unity that allows their company to be flexible and adaptable by including all members in decision-making, allowing teams to lead themselves, hearing and responding to the voices of its members, recognizing individual and group performance, and providing appropriate training (Moldoveanu & Dobring, 2012, p. 58). As trust is developed throughout an organization, individual members begin to unite and work to achieve the goals and fulfill the mission of their



company, operating as a mature organization that is able to experience lasting growth and stable productivity (Kujala et al., 2016).

*Principle Two: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere of unity, where diversity of ideas and cultures are honored and sought.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES HUMILITY

In Chapter Two of the Book of Philippians, Paul presents the example of Jesus as the humble servant of God in the Christ Hymn. Jesus serves as the ultimate example for the believers in Philippi to emulate, and it is His attitude of humility that is highlighted by Paul (Phil. 2:5). Chrysostom (1979) defines humility as “To be lowly minded. And he who is lowly minded who humbles himself, not he who is lowly by necessity” (p. 208). The apostle understands the humility that Jesus embraced allowed Him to empty himself, surrendering His own personal will to that of the Father, which in turn moved Him to die on the cross to fulfill His mission to redeem humanity, and led to Him being exalted by God (Phil. 2:6–8). Humility was often viewed as a shameful and weak characteristic in the Greco-Roman world, but Paul points to it as the distinguishing quality that propelled Christ forward in His mission, a quality that all believers should strive for (Martin & Nash, 2015). An attitude of humility would lead the Philippian believers to a place of maturity where they could willingly empty themselves of their own goals and ambitions, so that they could complete the mission of Christ who had redeemed them (Gregory, 2020).

Research has shown that expressed humility in organizational leaders can foster an atmosphere of humility that will permeate the entire company, motivating organizational members to go the extra mile to fulfill the mission and goals of the company, and to even perform beyond their own mental ability (Owens et al., 2013). When organizational leaders embrace an attitude of humility that is expressive and visible, it spreads to other members and has a direct positive effect on their behavior and performance, promoting an atmosphere where members can grow and mature as individuals and as a collective unit (Ete et al., 2020; Morris et al., 2005). When organizational leaders are perceived as humble in their attitude and behavior, a sense of loyalty is birthed in the minds of subordinates that causes them to embrace the mission of their organization as

their own and to mimic the behavior of their leaders, causing them to grow and mature into fully functional members of the company (Qiuyun et al., 2020). The behavior and performance of organizational members is negatively affected by low levels of humility, but in organizations where humility is a part of the culture of the company, that has been stimulated by the behavior of the leadership, employees perform at a higher level of efficiency producing greater outputs (Wendler et al., 2018).

*Principle Three: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere of humility, which is inspired by the behavior and attitude of the company's leadership.*

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES MISSION MOTIVATION

Paul instructs the believers in Philippi to live out their lives in a manner that would serve to advance the Gospel message (Phil. 2:12–13). The believers in Philippi had received the saving grace of Jesus Christ and were now to shine like lights in the midst of the pagan society they lived in (Phil. 2:14–15). The church in Philippi was to make the mission of carrying the Gospel to the entire world and making disciples of all people groups their motivational force in life; it was to be their purpose for existing (Phil. 2:16–18; Ware, 2011). Embracing the mission Jesus had left His followers would lead the church in Philippi to a place of maturity where they could live for a cause that was greater than their personal desires and ambitions (Silva, 2005). Being motivated by what has become known as the Great Commission would help the Philippian church to mature so that they could grow in a healthy manner, as they pushed forward advancing the Kingdom of their God.

Organizational strategies designed to create an atmosphere where individual members identify with the mission of the company and conduct themselves in a manner that helps to promote that mission can lay the foundation for an organization to experience healthy and sustainable growth (Alegre et al., 2018). Organizational leaders who actively live out the stated mission of their organization have the potential to influence their subordinates; research has shown that when individual members adopt the working philosophy of their managers, both their citizenship behavior and their work involvement is positively affected (Wang, 2011).

Karatepe and Aga (2016) found that organizational mission fulfillment and perceived organizational support had a direct and positive effect on the work engagement of individual members, and that in turn work engagement stimulated the job performance of organizational members, they concluded that work engagement fully mediated the effects of organizational mission fulfillment and perceived organizational support on job performance. Organizations can create policies that help to direct the company and its members in setting goals and objectives that line up with the mission of the organization, facilitating the way for individual members of the organization to feel a personal responsibility to help fulfill their company's mission (Kattel & Mazzucato, 2018). As individual employees take ownership of the mission of the organization, they perform and behave in a manner that is conducive to helping reach the goals of their company and fulfilling its mission, creating an environment where their organization can experience healthy and sustainable growth (Kopaneva, 2019).

*Principle Four: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere where the mission of the organization fuels and motivates the actions and behaviors of its members.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES BEING FORWARD-FOCUSED

Paul sharply and directly addresses the issue the church in Philippi had with Jews who were falsely teaching that Gentile believers needed to be circumcised like the Law of Moses had required in the past (Phil. 3:2–3). Paul then highlights his past heritage as a Jew and a Pharisee but makes clear he has left his past behind for the cause of Christ (Phil. 3:4–10). Paul had been given a great mission to fulfill by Christ, but he would be unable to complete that mission if he held on to his past, he would need to let go of the past, so that he could push forward with the future Christ had called him to (Phil. 3:12). Paul made it clear to the church in Philippi that he was forgetting what was behind him so that he could push forward; he had his eye on the prize (Phil. 3:13–14). Paul doesn't claim to have reached his goal, but continues to push forward, a mindset he looks to pass on to his converts, for this forward-focused mindset will help them to further mature into the image of Christ, so that they may indeed reach

the goal for which Christ has called them (Witherington, 2011). Paul had been called to spread the Gospel and advance the Kingdom of his God, and to do that he was going to have to be forward-focused, just as he desired the church in Philippi to be.

The way members of an organization think can make a drastic difference in their performance and behavior (Yamada & Nagai, 2015). Organizations who are able to create an environment where individual members have a positive outlook of their part in fulfilling the company's mission and how their work makes a difference, have the potential to outperform other organizations in their sector and industry, while creating a culture that promotes sustainable and healthy growth (Clore et al., 2012). Individual organizational members who have a positive outlook on their future in the organization and on the organization itself, have the potential to outperform organizational members who do not hold a positive future outlook (Bjärehed et al., 2010). Organizational leaders and organizational cultures that promote a forward-focused atmosphere, where individual members are focused on the finished line, can set the stage for those members to become high-level producers and achievers (Banks et al., 2020). Research has also shown that workers who hold a positive mood are more creative, enhancing their ability to be productive at a given task (Vosburg, 1998).

*Principle Five: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere that encourages members to look and strive forward, embracing a victorious attitude.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES DISCIPLINE

Paul encourages the church in Philippi to imitate the example of living that he had portrayed for them and all his converts to see (Phil. 3:17). Fee (1999) points out that Paul is concerned with both the thinking and behavior of the church in Philippi, for if they can keep the right mindset, a disciplined behavior will follow; a behavior that will help to propel them forward in their mission. Paul had seen some of his converts fail to mature, continuing to live according to the desires of their flesh; the results of their failure to mature and grow not only made them unproductive to the mission of Christ, but brought them to a place of being counterproductive, enemies to the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18–19; 1 Cor.

3:1–3). The church in Philippi was to take seriously and personally their new-found citizenship, which resided in Heaven (Phil. 3:20–21). The Philippian believers would have enjoyed Roman citizenship, which was a prized commodity of the time and influenced the way people behaved (Reumann, 2008). Likewise, their heavenly citizenship was to influence the way they thought and behaved, bringing them to a place of maturity where the work of their God could be carried out in their lives.

Organizational discipline could be defined as an attitude that is developed within the consciousness of individual members, that is promoted and honored by the company, which produces an inner dedication to the organization and its mission, which in turn motivates the organizational member to behave in a proactive way toward the fulfillment of their responsibilities within the company (Razak et al., 2018). Organizational members who possess a high level of discipline have been found to be more productive and loyal to the mission and goals of an organization than the employees who have a low level of discipline (Chrisnanto & Riyanto, 2020). Individuals who are disciplined and exhibit self-control are less likely to take an attitude of loafing at work, neglecting their responsibilities and failing to be productive (Restubog et al., 2011). Positive and productive disciplined behaviors that become normalized throughout an organization have the potential to help an organization to mature into an enduring productive company (Baker & Cheney, 1994). Organizational discipline that is held corporately throughout a company could serve to change the character of the organization, bringing it to a place of maturity where it can experience sustainable growth and flourish in its designated mission (Dyck & Wong, 2010).

*Principle Six: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere where self-imposed disciplined behavior is encouraged, recognized, and honored.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Paul confronts a conflict that had arisen in the church between two women who had committed their lives to Christ and served beside the apostle in his efforts to spread the Gospel (Phil. 4:2–3). The apostle does not confront these women as enemies of the Philippian church and the

mission of Christ, but rather as fellow believers who had labored together and who now needed to be reconciled to one another, before their personal conflict disrupted the work of the church in Philippi (Comfort et al., 2017; Fee, 1999). Unresolved conflict between the followers of Christ was a sign of immaturity, it was for this reason Paul tells the church in Corinth, “For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations” (1 Cor. 3:3)? Paul points out that both Euodia and Syntyche have their names written in the Book of Life, as he urges them to be of the same mind, the mind of a humble servant, which he had previously pointed to in the Christ Hymn. For this mindset would surely bring a humble attitude that would result in a mature behavior pattern that would lead to unification and the settlement of their conflict (Silva, 2005).

Both large and small organizations are likely to be made up of individuals from varying cultural backgrounds that they identify with, which can be a cause of conflict, with each group perceiving the reality they are working in from their own cultural vantage point (Arias-Valenzuela et al., 2019). Research has shown that creating a work environment where individuals from varying cultural backgrounds can begin to identify with the organization and its mission can deter much of the conflict caused by competing cultural perspectives and help to create a feeling of well-being (Arias-Valenzuela et al., 2019). Caputo et al. (2019) point out that trust is essential to manage conflict within the workplace; as individual members begin to identify with their organization and its mission, trust can be established, and conflict can be more proficiently managed. Organizations who refuse to simply ignore internal conflict between its members hoping that the conflict will simply go away, but rather choose to take a direct approach to purposely manage the conflict are shown to have more cohesion and effective relationships among their members (Tekleab et al., 2009). Organizations who implement strategies aimed at minimizing and resolving employee conflict will have the potential to become more productive and innovative, creating an environment where they can experience lasting and healthy growth (Zhang et al., 2015).

*Principle Seven: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere where conflict is directly managed through intentionally implemented strategies that help members to unite in a shared organizational identity.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES CONSTRUCTIVE THINKING

Paul addresses how the church in Philippi chooses to direct their thoughts when he tells them to “rejoice in the Lord always,” warning them to make a conscious decision about how they choose to think (Phil. 4:4). The believers in Philippi were facing difficult time because of the opposition that had arisen against them, but Paul looked for them to keep a positive perspective even in the midst of the challenges they had to endure, which would lead them to behave in a manner that lined up with their heavenly citizenship (Phil.4:7; Comfort et al., 2017; Silva, 2005). Paul wanted the believers in Philippi to be attentive to God and not their struggles; therefore, he instructs them to pray and give thanks, knowing that this will direct their thoughts away from anxiety and fear, which would surely keep them from advancing the Gospel message (Melick, 1991; Witherington, 2011). The apostle looked for the Philippian believers to intentionally focus their thoughts on the positive things that God was doing in their lives, knowing that the right thought pattern would lead the believers to live fruitful and productive lives for the Kingdom of their God (Phil. 4:8–9; Hanson, 2009; Harmon, 2015). Paul understood the believers in Philippi needed to have their thought life under control, intentionally choosing to focus their thoughts in a constructive manner, if they were going to continue on a path of maturity that would lead them to fulfilling the mission of the church (Comfort et al., 2017; Witherington, 2011).

Organizational members who maintain a positive mental outlook have been found to have a high level of job satisfaction, be dedicated team members who strive to reach the goals of their organization, and demonstrate an overall healthy emotional and mental attitude with minimal anxiety and job stress (Avey et al., 2011). Organizational leaders who can create a positive atmosphere where members feel they are free to fail without the fear of reprisal, but rather look to be rewarded for their efforts and success, have the potential to establish an environment where employees can grow into healthy and mature organizational members (Cangemi & Miller, 2007). When organizational members learn to purposely think in a constructive manner, they can become more efficient on the job and more satisfied and fulfilled with both their performance and with the company they are employed with, setting the stage for them to grow and mature into long-term productive team members (King & Grace, 2012; Luthans et al., 2007). Helping organizational members to

achieve a positive perspective about their job and their company is a vital step for organizations in facilitating the journey of their members to become committed and productive employees (Kidwell & Valentine, 2009). Organizations who have created a positive emotional and mental atmosphere where their members are constructive in their thinking will find themselves positioned for healthy and sustainable growth (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2007).

*Principle Eight: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster a positive emotional and mental atmosphere where members are purposeful and constructive in their thinking.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES DETERMINATION

As Paul speaks of the gift the church in Philippi had sent him, he reflects back on the many challenges he has had to endure throughout his labors to spread the Gospel (Phil. 4:10–12). Paul had an assurance within himself that Christ had called him to fulfill a special mission and he was determined to see that mission through, resolving in his heart never to quit (Phil. 4:13; Comfort et al., 2017; Fee, 1999). Paul saw the Philippian church had been facing opposition to the mission of advancing the Gospel message and that resistance would continue to plague the church, so the apostle provided them with a means to overcome the various obstacle and opposition they would continue to face in their efforts to fulfill the mission they had been entrusted with, a belief system that trusted in the power of Christ to push forward and endure all challenges (Hansen, 2009; Harmon, 2015). This system of belief embodied a determination that would not consider the idea of quitting or abandoning the mission, but one that was steadfast and resolved, that regardless of the challenge at hand or the opposition being encountered, the church would be victorious in the end (Harmon, 2015; Melick, 1991).

Determination, also known as grit, resolve, or fortitude, could be defined as the tenacious pursuit of a goal or purpose that dominates the thoughts and actions of an individual or a group regardless of opposition, challenges, or setbacks (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). Determination plays a key role in the success of an individual or a group in achieving a given task or mission, an even greater role than intelligence or the mere desire to do a good job (Duckworth et al., 2007). Strong attitudes of



determination can help to propel organizational members forward in their pursuit to achieve new lofty goals, helping their company to grow and thrive (Abuhassan & Bates, 2015). Organizations and their leaders who are able to generate an attitude of determination within the members of their organization will find those members to produce behavior patterns that are productive and desirable to the company (Güntert, 2015). Determination within the members of an organization is a powerful motivating force that can help the company to reach new and higher levels of healthy and sustainable growth (Duckworth et al., 2007; Güntert, 2015).

*Principle Nine: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere where members are encouraged and motivated to embrace a tenacious attitude of determination in all that they do.*

### ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY REQUIRES FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

The church in Philippi had helped to support Paul and his efforts to spread the Gospel, since they themselves had embraced its message, and they had continued to send financial support to the apostle throughout his journeys (Phil. 4:15–16). Paul commends the believers in Philippi for making the work of advancing the Gospel a financial priority, which he assures them was pleasing to God (Phil. 4:17–20; Briones, 2011). The church in Philippi had learned to prioritize the use of their financial resources so that they would fall in line with their overarching mission to spread the Gospel throughout the world, making disciples of all people groups (Witherington, 2011). They had reached a level of maturity where the church was able to structure their financial expenditures in a manner that was not confined to the social norms of their day and that would best help them to fulfill their mission (Briones, 2011; Fowl, 2002).

Organizations who strategically align their expenditures with their mission and goals have a greater potential to reach advanced levels of sustainable growth, with their members experiencing a sense of purpose and achievement, than organizations who fail to do so (Krug & Weinberg, 2004). Organizations must be able to connect profit and purpose, challenging their current way of doing business so that they may successfully unite money and meaning together in a way that generates value for investors, employees, and the culture they exist in (Bajer, 2013). Honest

evaluations, that are dependent on facts and not preferences or sentiment, must be made by organizational leaders to determine if their companies are using financial systems that help to advance the mission of their organization (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). Organizational leaders who desire to see their companies move toward a state of maturity, where they can experience healthy growth, should evaluate the system that has been set in place to direct the financial operations of the company and its employees to ensure they are in alignment with the mission of the company.

*Principle Ten: Organizations that desire to achieve organizational maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth should foster an atmosphere where financial systems are in place to keep the mission and the money of the company aligned.*

## SUMMARY

As organizations continue to seek growth and profitability, it will be necessary for them to also seek maturity. The maturity of any company will speak to its ability to achieve healthy and sustainable growth. Organizations that are seeking maturity that leads to sustainable and productive growth would do well to embrace the wisdom of the Apostle Paul, which is contained within his letter to the church in Philippi. The ten principles presented in this paper could serve as guiding philosophies to help organizational leaders to steer their companies toward achieving organizational maturity.

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# An Inception of Scriptural Work Instruction: An Analysis of Colossians 3:23–24

*Keith Gelarden Dayton*

This chapter utilizes a unique approach in examining a small passage from Christian Scripture, and its impact on work, and leadership, in an organization. Offered is an intertexture analysis of a small New Testament extract that follows the pattern of exegetical analysis of (a) oral–scribal intertexture, (b) historical intertexture, (c) social intertexture, and (d) cultural intertexture. The methodology used is from the work of Robbins (1996a, 1996b) through socio-rhetorical criticism in an exegetical interpretation. The examination starts with the pericope of Colossians 3:23–24, from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). The focus is to provide an understanding of the Christian cultural environment that calls for principles related to work that can assist in prescribing a necessary element of organizational leadership. Behavior that produces actionable dialogue of not just, “how to live or work competently” but “how

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applying the scriptural based work principles may be applied to enhancing leadership behavior” in organizations that contribute to successful leadership. Moreover, this chapter calls upon an examination of Old and New Testament related Scripture, to a level of work that extracts a behavior that yields specific principles that allows both secular and spiritual organizations to demonstrate the worthiness and value of work in Christian Scripture and practice.

## LEADERSHIP

Bass and Bass (2009) asserted that “Written principles of leadership go back nearly as far as the emergence of civilization, which shaped leaders as much as it was shaped by them” (p. 4). Leadership in ancient civilizations was very sophisticated and led legal, political, and social systems that were built into the culture (Yoffee & Cowgill, 1991). Stone and Patterson (2005) explains that “Our work, work environment, the motivation to work, leaders, leadership, leadership style, and a myriad of other work-related variables have been studied for almost two centuries.”

Giddens (2002) wrote that the complexity of globalization has created a runaway world: “For better or worse, we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt upon all of us” (p. 1). Shah (2009) talks about how leadership, especially the “spiritual aspects of leadership development are often ignored or not considered relevant to the ground realities of the contemporary corporate world” are ignored and what a greater impact the organizations would have if they integrated spirituality into the framework of organizational development.

And Hogan and Kaiser (2005) commented on the importance of leadership in dealing with today’s challenges: “Leadership is one of the most important topics in the human sciences and historically one of the more poorly understood” (p. 169). Yukl (1994) in offering definitions of leadership provides only one definition that includes a phase that points to “embodying values” (p. 3). If defining leadership lacks values, then what are leadership theories built upon that support their respective ability to carry through a leadership style that matters regarding creating an environment where Christian values can exist and flourish? Tuvin (1995) discusses the lack of leadership in suggesting that it has become reactive instead of proactive and most of the issues society faces today are due to

a lack of leadership based on basic principles. Lindsay (2010) introduced a “global compass” for business leaders.

Gardner (2011) illustrated that there is historical evidence that leaders facing the problems of the world are moved to lead. Garner wrote, “Greater awareness of global problems—for example, poverty, climate change, the treatment of disease, and corruption—and difficulties involved in tackling them brought to fore the need for skilled, informed, and fair-minded leaders” (p. xv). Bennis (2007) stated,

I am convinced more than ever of two things: The first is that we are learning more and more every day about this most important and urgent subject. Many of today’s leaders face global challenges. The second is my heartfelt conviction that the four most important threats facing the world today are: (a) a nuclear or biological catastrophe, whether deliberate or accidental; (b) a world-wide epidemic; (c) tribalism and its cruel offspring, assimilation (all three of these are more likely than they were a decade ago); and finally, (d) the leadership of our human institutions. Without exemplary leadership, solving the first three problems will be impossible. With it, we will have a better chance. (p. 5)

## INTRODUCTION TO WORK

Work is central to leadership in history (Donkin, 2010). Budd (2011) argued that “Work has always been a central feature of the human experience” (p. 4). Applebaum (1992) offered an interpretation of the human experience and work: “Work is like the spine which structures the way people live, how they make contact with material and social reality, and how they achieve status and self-esteem” (p. ix). Work is an essential component of the empirical study of leadership (Chemers, 2014). Heilbroner (1985) wrote, “Work is the inescapable starting point for all social inquiry” (p. 9).

Work in history is often associated with specific eras of events in the history of mankind. One of the reasons for that association is that those who worked were unlikely to have had the means to express themselves about working (Applebaum, 1992). Applebaum revealed that most of what is known about the early history of articulated work was based on the Ancient Greek and Roman societies. More recent archeological finds have dated the understanding of work for different civilizations even earlier. For the archeologist, “stages and periods are different kinds of

units used to organize archeological evidence so that it can be interpreted in terms of cultural change” according to Rowe (1962, p. 40).

Hodson and Sullivan (2011) pointed out the many facets that work includes: growth of work in history, classification, socialization, theory of work, satisfaction and alienation, gender, collective responses, and the occupations and professions of work. A more precise definition by Budd (2011) if work is a “purposeful human activity involving physical or mental exertion that is not undertaken solely for pleasure and that has economic or symbolic value” (p. 2). Of greater importance for the individual may be the value of work in the form of wages in the new global economy. The debate and complexity of how to assess wages and work are challenging as Volgy et al. (1996) described in a study of global economic well-being:

In moderate and weak worker power countries, changes in real wages were best predicted by levels of unemployment and changes in global trading. In strong worker power countries, changes in real wages were best predicted by changes in productivity and inflation, although in one case of a strong worker power country, a significant positive association occurred between global trading and real wages (p. 1233).

The idea of what work is or how work is viewed through culture is just as diverse. Kelly (2000) illuminated that:

The concept of work developed into modern times by way of a long march from the presumed original role of ensuring subsistence. But an assumption in those terms is itself hazardous since play—the essential verve of *homo ludens*—coloured the labour of primitive societies and assimilation into religious ritual was quite general. Rarely in human experience has work been understood as confined within purely instrumental objectives. (p. 6)

All the challenges, with many more types of economies, cultures, and work at play in a global system, contribute to a great deal of uncertainty surrounding work (Ekmekcioglu, 2013).

The world faces many challenges understanding work, both present and past, in the ever-expanding global environment from the type of work, academic investigation, and the worker. This is especially true when the type of work today is transforming, consisting of more technical jobs, or more likely to depend on contingent workers (Neumark & Reed, 2002). One writer, Rifkin (1996), even predicted the end of work as evidenced by shorter work weeks and the age of robotics. And Castells

(2011) suggested that the urgency in understanding the developments in the new network age of today may be impossible to grasp by just looking at what sufficed in the past which broadens the investigation of work in this new technical era. Cappelli and Keller (2012) proclaimed of the developing new study of work, “scholars are becoming increasingly aware that the organization of work and the broader context in which work takes place have tremendous implications for how we think about individual, managerial, and organizational outcomes” (p. 575). All the work of today has come far from its presumed historical role of providing subsistence to the individual (Kelly, 2000).

The instruction of work through historical Scripture provides a foundation to understand how Scripture plays an important role in leadership. De Silva (2004) stressed that an exegetical analysis of a historical setting:

connects us with the ancient texts precisely in the manner in which modern leaders, again in the face of the exigencies of particular situations, hear, interpret, and apply these texts to deeper discipleship, and to nurture and sustain meaningful and support relationships throughout the global Christian community. (p. 24)

Work that provides the connection of instructed work in Scripture and any implications for today. The starting point and understanding for this exegetical study start with work as defined in a New Testament small pericope.

## THE NOTION OF WORK

Applebaum (1992) took the conceptual meaning of work from Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome and compared the concept in contemporary society. Applebaum used an “historical and anthological” methodological approach to avoid “straitjacketing the material presented in this of the concept of work... using a chronological and historical period to organize and classify the data” (p. ix). This approach provided a comprehensive study of work without extraneous interference and with a wide range of material that supported understanding the concept of work more fully expressed elsewhere in Applebaum. Two themes emerged regarding the notion of work:

1. Throughout history, there was an obvious contempt by those who instructed or managed the work for those who did the work with the single exception for those involved in agriculture (farming).
2. Those who did the work through history had stories that often were not told and have a sense of pride or ownership in the work that they performed (Applebaum, 1992, p. xii).

Much of the early work in civilizations was reflected by ancient Greek and early Roman history. That work included a look at aristocracy, slavery, culture, religion, kinship, and politics. In describing work in a Homeric society, Applebaum related,

There was a unity between work and all aspects of culture in those early days that, in later centuries in the time of classical Greece, was fractured and ruptured. This unity was to never be restored in the history of Western civilization, except for perhaps the self-contained communities of monastic orders, the utopian experiments in nineteenth century America, or the kibbutzim movement in Israel. (p. 167)

The mention of both a Christian culture (monastic orders) and Jewish kibbutzim movement provides insight to this study's connection between culture and work. Applebaum's final takeaway for contemporary society was that individuals need to know what they are working for and that the human dimension of work should be considered.

Budd (2011) examined how people think about work. Based on the way work was conceptually thought about and what work may really be, Budd argued that

despite being such an important aspect in our daily lives, work is frequently taken for granted than thought about very deeply. It is just something we do. At the same time, scholars from an impressive breadth of disciplines in the social sciences, behavioral sciences, philosophy, and theology study work. But their provocative ideas and knowledge about the world of work are often segmented by discipline and separated by disciplinary specific concepts, jargon, methodologies, conferences, and journals. (p. ix)

To underscore the complexity of work, Budd opened with a discussion of the origin of the word and the multiple definitions of the word as both a noun and verb in the Oxford English Dictionary. Budd's definition of work was that work is "a purposeful human activity involving physical or

mental exertion that is not undertaken solely for pleasure and that has economic or symbolic value” (p. 2). Budd provided information on the ages of work, the importance of work, and concepts of work. However, Budd distinguished work throughout the book as everything from work as a curse to work as an identity to get an idea how people view and conceptually think about work. Budd’s final assertion was, “we need to think about work as a fully human activity that is complex and fundamentally important not only to better understand work, but also to value and structure works in ways that embrace its deep significance” (p. 186). Budd’s notion was to think about work differently in defining, and even implementing the future of work.

### A PRIMER: JUDEO-CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON WORK

The first understanding of work in Scripture, God at work, is provided in the Bible’s first verse, “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, *NASB*). Man working appears in the second chapter of the book of Genesis: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Gen 2:15). Man is presented as working at the start of the Bible.

Today Judeo-Christian work or “works” are distinctly different in the definitions they bring to the understanding and meaning of work. When Christians ask about calling, it is meant: Is God calling me to a particular job, profession, or type of work? This is a significant question because the work we do is important to God if we ascribe a professed faith. If work is important, it makes sense to ask *what* work God wants us to do. That association is defined as well from different cultures and beliefs including that of the Judeo-Christian faith.

Christian Scripture and writings have influenced the understanding of work throughout history, making that understanding more effective and knowledgeable according to Donkin (2010). Today and throughout history, the notion of work has influenced culture and leadership. The idea of “Protestant work ethic” has its secular basis with Weber’s (1905) work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Christopher and Zabel (2011) argued that Weber’s work, “first published in 1904, espoused that the success of capitalism and economic growth throughout Western Europe and North America was partly the consequence of Puritanical values such as a calling to one’s work and frugality with one’s resources” (p. 1). Delbecq (1999) in studying many contemporary business leaders

today maintained that a “major motivational element in the journeys of many Christian executives” (p. 349) is their respective Christian tradition. Scripture directs and illuminates work and the elements of labor that provide a richer understanding of how work can be more effective, more worthwhile to the individual and organization.

### THE EXEGESIS OF COLOSSIANS 3:23–24 (NASB)

In a broad analysis of identifying the correct process for interpretation, Lee (2007) provides multiple contexts for understanding, stating “it requires a heightened level of suspicion about the text, its culture, one’s own culture, one’s own biases, and postmodernism” (p. 47). So, in interpreting text, Stubbs (1996) may have put in best terms how this research will be conducted: “By text, I mean an instance of language in use, either spoken or written: a piece of language behaviour which has occurred naturally, without the intervention of the 2 linguists” (pp. 1–2), closely inspecting for any internal or external invalidation. This study is a foundation for a more thorough understanding of scriptural analysis that fits within a defined analytical approach for understanding the textual meaning of work. Working through the context of both an understanding of a text and methodology, this is a broadly and empirically accepted method that provides a solid foundation for work that will draw from scriptural text for any empirical reference or usage. These two verses serve as a starting point only in understanding the spiritual meaning and sophistication Scripture offers in the understanding of work.

Robbins (1996a) also referred to this exegetical approach as a thick tapestry that allows “different configurations, patterns, and images” (p. 18). For Robbins, this interpretive process provided a model for a systematic approach to analyzing a text (p. 40). Supporting a more structured methodology of textual interpretation, Watson (1998) wrote, “Vernon Robbins has now walked around the table, talked with each group of weavers, studied the texture of its work, and the work of its texture, and seen the ways in which each is related to the other designs and textures of the tapestry that is our common enterprise” (p. 71). De Silva (2004) called the methodology “a model for analysis that encourages interpreters to make use of the full spectrum of exegetical skill” (pp. 23–24). It is the structure of analysis developed by Robbins that shall guide this interpretation of the notion of work with these two verses. Robbins



(1996a) described the four kinds of intertexture analysis as oral–scribal, historical, social, and cultural.

## BACKGROUND OF COLOSSIANS

The book of Colossians is the twelfth in the New Testament. This letter was addressed to the ancient city of Colossae, Phrygia in Asia Minor, known as Turkey. The writer is identified as Paul the Apostle, born by the Roman name of Saul. Paul is mentioned first in Acts 7:58, “When they had driven him out of the city, they *began* stoning *him*; and the witnesses laid aside their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul” (NASB). Later in Scripture Paul conversion (Acts 9:1–22) occurred on a road to Damascus where he encountered Christ.

There is a debate on scriptural text attributed to Paul, Colossians is no exception. Waltke (2004) expounded that Proverbs in the Old Testament, is problematic in the world today, noting the book’s instructional nature, claims about authorship, and even the book’s place in Israelite orientation is problematic. One of the most difficult aspects of understanding an exegetical reference for the book of Proverbs is the disputed time frame associated with its authorship (Ruffle, 1977; Story, 1945; Waltke, 2004). Regardless of the debate, the implied message is in accordance with the oral tradition of Paul (Standhartinger, 2004). Paul would have penned this letter, or his amanuensis (scribe), approximately 60 A.D., while imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28:16:31).

The form of the letter itself is organized into an opening, prayer or thanksgiving, body, and conclusion, reflective of Pauline letters. For the intertexture analysis, Colossians offers two distinct parts, the first two chapters being the doctrinal element and the last two chapters the practical implications component. That practical component, or instruction, offers the context for contextual understanding of the notion of work and how it is directed by Scripture. Understanding the gap in knowledge of instruction of work by leaders is important for Judeo-Christian literature and any implications for today’s organizations instructing workers. All leadership styles, in the context of a work relationship, involve instructing work at some level. The intertexture analysis here deliberately develops an exegetical framework that positions future research to broaden the understanding of the instruction of work with historical foundation. The expanding intent is to conduct similar analysis focusing on instruction of work in all books of Scripture. And as Christians, reflects Paul’s call in

Colossians 3:17 to, “Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (NASB).

## ORAL–SCRIBAL

*Oral-scribal intertexture analysis* is based on this specific kind of intertexture defined as: a sub texture of intertexture, it involves a text’s use of any other text outside of itself, whether it is an inscription, a Greek poet, non-canonical apocalyptic material, or the Hebrew Bible. One of the ways a text configures and reconfigures is to use, either explicitly or without reference, language from other texts. There are five basic ways in which language in a text uses language that exists in another text: recitation, recontextualization, reconfiguration, narrative amplification, and thematic elaboration (Robbins, 1996c). Robbins and Watson (2009) asserted that setting the scene for analysis assists “in such a way that it invites modern audiences into your construction of the ancient audience’s experience of the text” (p. 9). The setting of the scene allowed for the establishing of the (a) context and (b) oral-scribal dimension in this chapter.

- a. Recitation is the transmission of speech or narrative, either from oral or written tradition, in exact or different words from which the person has received them (Robbins, 1996c). The phrases of “as for the Lord” or “serving the Lord” were cross referenced and reflected exact or different words (with the same meaning) found in Ephesians 6:6–7, Romans 14:8, 2 Chronicles 31:21, Psalms 119:34.
- b. Recontextualization is a dimension of intertextual analysis that does not require that wording, whether explicit or implied, stand written anywhere else. Instead, recontextualization covers a spectrum of words or phrases in Scripture somewhere else (Robbins, 1996a, p. 107). The notion was seen throughout the Old Testament. Work took on many meanings, not just the situation where an individual engaged in labor additionally the work of the Lord. Work among cultures was known and defined. As an example. Lives of most citizens, who were not Roman citizens, was the work life of manual labor or skilled trades and done by slaves Phillips (1985). Helyer (1994) states that earlier “Paul wanted to remind his listeners of something they received and were taught as part of their new faith in Christ (Col 2:6–7)—here, to work heartily for the Lord.

## HISTORICAL INTERTEXTURE

Historical intertexture analysis refers to the reference of historical events in a text (Robbins, 1996c). A piece of historical intertexture may be the only such reference to an historical event or may be one of many which are either dependent or independent from one another. Its trustworthiness as an accurate description of a historical event depends upon the nature of the data and the support it has in other sources.

According to Robbins (1996a), this type of intertextuality “‘textualizes’ past experience into a ‘particular event’ or a ‘particular period of time’” (p. 118). “Historical,” wrote Robbins (1996b), “is used in reference to events. Social (which includes political and economic) and cultural phenomena are integral to historical events” (p. 63). Robbins (1996b) noted that the researcher must understand (a) the multiplicity of the data and (b) the nature of the data (pp. 63–64). Multiplicity involves not only the amount of reference data but also agreements and disagreements regarding the data.

*Events*—The most significant event in the time of Paul was an earthquake or series of earthquakes in the Colossae region (Dunn, 1996; Piccardi, 2007; Reicke, 1973). Additionally, economic or commerce in the region such as its production of wool (McConnell, 2019).

## SOCIAL INTERTEXTURE

Social intertexture analysis refers to the use, reference, or representation of various forms of social knowledge (Robbins, 1996c). Social knowledge is information gained by every person in each region through day-to-day interaction with other people of that region. It includes information about social roles, institutions, codes, and relationships. Robbins (1996b) commented regarding social intertexture, “Social knowledge is commonly held by all persons of a region, no matter what their particular ‘cultural’ location may be” (p. 62). Social intertexture is accessible through general interaction and not behavior that is taught which would constitute cultural knowledge (p. 62). Social intertexture is for special events during specific periods of time (Robbins, 1996a, p. 118). It should be noted that social code is distinctly different from the other three dimensions of social intertexture. It is not a person, place, or thing; it is often the spirit of a culture. Moreover, social code is a dimension that is not always written but understood.

The nature of the data refers to the origin of the type of records or accounts that provide the source for interpretative analysis. Robbins (1996b) listed three relevant aspects in historical intertextual analysis that can provide source data.

*People, places, and institutions*—Often historical data is limited. Colossae was a very small city in southwestern Turkey unlike neighboring Laodicea mentioned frequently in literature of the era (Cadwallader & Trainor, 2011). The city did enjoy economic prosperity yet dwindled in recognition, size, and stature until the time of Paul. And while most reports diminishing Colossae as an important city in the era, Arnold (1996) writes that:

Although there is a limited amount of relevant local evidence, compounded all the more by the fact that the site of Colossae remains unexcavated, there is more local evidence that is relevant to this study than most biblical scholars realize. (p. 3)

According to Canavan (2012), the Lycus Valley was a “hub for textile production and notable in the first century CE for the excellent sheep with soft “raven-black” wool which brought “splendid revenues to Laodicea and Colossae” (p. 18).

*Customs*—The customs of the community of Colossae were in large part due as a reflection of Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic Jewish traditions “associated with moral and spiritual education. These customs would be very familiar to both Paul and Philemon, who had lived in Colossae” (Wilson, 1997).

## CULTURAL INTERTEXTURE

Cultural intertexture is the reference, allusion, or echo of the “insider” cultural knowledge that is known only by people within a particular culture or by people who have learned about the culture through interaction with it. This knowledge includes the values, scripts, codes, and systems of a culture (Robbins, 1996c). Cultural intertexture analysis is performed by way of (a) a reference or allusion and (b) an echo through text (Robbins, 1996b). Depending on data, in an older historical setting the allusion is sparser about data and offers a dimmer echo. What does exist is what Robbins stated points the researcher to a personage, concept, or tradition (p. 59). A discussion of allusion or echo in the text studied

was centered on one of the most debated (sometimes contentiously) among researchers focusing on instruction.

*Echo*—Possibly the strongest echo is the “*It is the Lord Christ whom you serve*” from verse 24. Serving Christ is mentioned in multiple New Testament passages (i.e., Matthew 6:24, John 12:26, Hebrews 9:14, Acts 20:19, Romans 12:11, Ephesians, 6:7, Galatians 1:10, John 12:26).

*Reference*—The phrase “*reward of the inheritance*” would have been widely known in an era where inheritance played a significant role. Inheritance was common especially in Roman culture where it was viewed as political in the sense of “who was entitled to the land and how it was distributed” (Forman, 2011, p. 13).

*Allusion*—Household codes were evident and reflective in the brief passage. The word work would be understood in households in Colossae and throughout the region in this era. These codes played a significant role in the era. MacDonald (2011) comments:

Built upon a firm foundation of past scholarship, the use of new methodologies and theoretical approaches is helping us to realize that household codes were heard by family members facing complex challenges and are themselves ideologically complex (neither purely culturally compliant, nor purely culturally resistant) expressions of the challenge of being the *ekklesia* in the Roman imperial world. (p. 90)

## INTERTEXTURE SUMMARY

This presents the results of the intertexture analysis utilized in the study. De Silva (2004) commented on utilizing the exegetical skill of intertexture, remarking that “the connections made between the new text and the traditions it incorporates, moreover, will have a direct bearing on how the new text is understood, what effect it will have and even how it acts back on the hearer’s understanding of the older tradition” (p. 800). Watson (2002) defined intertexture as “those points of intersection within a text with other textual (oral or scribal), social, cultural, or historical worlds that are not the immediate world that is created by the text itself. Intertextual analysis tries to determine the way the text configures and reconfigures phenomena from the world outside the text” (p. 2). The external sources interwoven or utilized in this type of study provide a greater depth of understanding of the written text. The prescribed methodology of intertexture analysis provides a construct by

which text can be interpreted as still relevant and internal to the text (Robbins, 1996a).

The second area of intertextual analysis focused on the concept of work drawing upon the Hebrew and Christian traditions for the context. Applebaum (1992) broadly defined the concept of work as complex and difficult to delineate. Applebaum's interpretation of the human experience shaped another boundary for the study in limiting the many interpretations of the notion of work: "Work is like the spine which structures the way people live, how they make contact with material and social reality, and how they achieve status and self-esteem" (p. ix). Amidst the array of different definitions for work, this study has focused on Budd's (2011) definition that work is a "purposeful human activity involving physical or mental exertion that is not undertaken solely for pleasure and that has economic or symbolic value" (p. 2).

Work is notably associated with the day-to-day experiences of individuals endeavoring to create a livelihood for themselves and their families. It was also connected to the resulting reward(s) for those efforts. Most importantly, for this specific analysis, ample evidence supports evidence of the notion of work from this very small pericope in Scripture.

## THEMES OF SCRIPTURAL WORK

Themes are utilized in qualitative research to categorize relevant information (Creswell, 2013). A theme arises from the collected data or information that provides a unifying central subject that can be discussed or analyzed. Creswell identified a theme as "broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186). Creswell stated that themes can also be called categories and noted subthemes may occur as the data is further examined. In this study, multiple underlying themes and associated subthemes were discovered in the intertextual through each of the four areas of intertexture analysis: (a) oral-scribal intertexture, (b) historical intertexture, (c) social intertexture, and (d) cultural intertexture. The results of that analysis were then applied in developing principles to organize the chapter discussion. Each principle followed both areas of interest in the study, instruction, and work. Moreover, each principle underscores, and is presented, with brief secular and spiritual referent commentary. All the principles listed are deemed critical in successful management as a leadership and elements that reflect high-performance individual work characteristics. Sub-themes underlying those

principles are the foundational components of work ethic, accountability, loyalty, and discipline. Moreover, this principle, and all principles listed, is grounded in Christian faith not following the example of instruction in education, where it has been more closely related to education than the Church (Smart, 1954).

## INSTRUCTION

Instruction is defined as the sharing or telling another individual or individuals of how something is to be done. According to Kraiger and Ford (2020), “Workplace training is a systematic approach to learning and development to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness.” Organizations routinely train employees from properly dressing a hamburger at the local McDonalds to sophisticated video gaming techniques in training airline pilots. Scriptural instructional types include instruction by an individual and not by God, or it was inspired by God in Scripture. For the Old Testament Bland (1988) stated, instruction was the responsibility of the Hebrew community to share to nurture future generations regarding the faith. The instruction provided in Colossians is viewed as a household code and the earliest scriptural text to have such an instructional list, in the New Testament (Sumney, 2008). In Colossians, Paul, who was trained in Jewish customs and laws, is instructing how work should be carried out. McDonald (2011) writes.

Built upon a firm foundation of past scholarship, the use of new methodologies and theoretical approaches is helping us to realize that household codes were heard by family members facing complex challenges and are themselves ideologically complex (neither purely culturally compliant, nor purely culturally resistant) expressions of the challenge of being the ekklesia in the Roman imperial world (p. 90).

*Principle One: Leaders must follow and provide responsible, accountable, inspired instruction.*

## REWARD-BASED

Lawler and Cohen (1992) state that, “Numerous rewards systems operate within *organizations*, often used as a key management tool that can contribute to a firm’s effectiveness by influencing individual and group behavior.” Organizations constantly seek out reward systems that will

attract top talent for the organization. “Reward systems that are not always simply monetary. Money and possessions are received as reward for obedience. This claim that runs throughout the Bible voices a robust quid pro quo connection between obedience and prosperity,” writes Brueggemann (2016, p. 3). Lawler and Jenkins (1990) states, “Pay systems are one of the most prominent and important features of any organization” (p. 3). Reward systems in Scripture are numerous in both the Old and Testament. In Genesis Joseph’s career resulted in many rewards. Wagner-Tsukamoto, (2008, p. 127) wrote of Joseph, “Because of his entrepreneurial and managerial skills, he received rewards such as land, a mansion and other riches” (Gen 41,41–51; 47,6). In Colossians, Paul doesn’t address reward as atonement in discussing work or the more traditional atoning almsgiving. Gregory (2017) states, “For Paul, there are several motivations for charity, one of which was the promise of reward, but the notion of atoning almsgiving is completely absent from Paul’s epistles.” In Colossians, the reward is identified as a reward in Christ Jesus.

*Principle Two: Leaders must identify the rewards that produce successful outcomes in the guidance of work.*

## (WORK) HEARTILY

The word heartily is seldom utilized in a secular work context settling on terms that reflect the employee’s affect, motivation, or job satisfaction. Choudhary et al. (2015) note other variables that increase the confidence of and employee to work heartily. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) identified inspirational motivation that may cause organizational members to potentially succeed because of that motivation. Aziri (2011) broadly defines job satisfaction as:

Job satisfaction is a worker’s sense of achievement and success on the job. It is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one’s efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one’s work. (p. 78)

Work in these contexts is focused more on the internal behavior that produces favorable work outcomes rather than spiritual behavior that



influences the internal behavior in the work performance. That influence ties heartily for the Christian, since heartily comes from the Greek, “out of the soul” recognizing that working heartily comes from the Lord. It is the Lord that is the instigator of the individual performing the work. The core of Paul’s message in Colossians was Christ, and Christ alone. That would include working heartily for Christ.

*Principle Three: Leaders must recognize and utilize the motivational elements that produce successful work outcomes.*

## PURPOSE

Broadly defining work, Steger (2017) wrote,

Meaningful work represents an opportunity to transition from organizational practices that seek simply to maximize effort and output – such as policies focused on incentives, engagement, and commitment – to practices that augment effort and output with improved welfare for a wide range of organizational stakeholders ranging from shareholders to employees to host communities. At its heart, meaningful work scholarship and application seeks to optimize occupational opportunities in such a way that employee motivation, effort, and productivity are enhanced, and that employees enthusiastically adopt attitudes of ownership, responsibility, and citizenship toward their organization, while simultaneously enjoying greater well-being, health, and belongingness. To access these qualities among its employees, organizations need to provide fertile conditions for the growth of meaningful work. (pp. 60–61)

Additionally, or organizations, purpose can serve as commitment to an organization-sponsored cause (Bingham et al., 2013). Yet, it appears that secular organizations lack central focus on what purpose is. Hollensbe et al. (2014) wrote regarding the struggle for organizations to define purpose:

Perhaps the answer lies more fundamentally in redefining organizations as purposeful, with *purpose* defining the remit and scope of business activity. An intentional and broadened focus on purpose—the reason for which business is created or exists, its meaning and direction can help address these challenges. (p. 1228)

Multiple reasons or multiple variables play a role. In the studied two small verses there is only one purpose, to carry out work for Jesus Christ (Osborne, 2016). That work for Christ is the only purpose in Paul's writings.

*Principle Four: Leaders must acknowledge and cultivate a worker's purpose to commitment in working for an organization.*

## SUMMARY

This chapter opens a myriad of opportunities for more research. The study of historical text becomes invaluable in understanding (a) current belief systems and (b) any application to contemporary organizations. Osborne (2006) clarified this understanding further, stating, "We cannot understand our present belief system without tracing its past roots, highlighting good models to emulate and poor models to avoid" (p. 352). To assist in tracing present belief systems, future studies could offer a broader analysis of Robbins's (1996a, 1996b) socio-rhetorical approach. Only the framework of intertextual analysis was utilized in this study. Future studies could consider the analysis frameworks offered by Robbins of inner texture, social-cultural, ideological, and sacred texture. A broader examination of work-related areas in Scripture could underscore any contrasts or similarities and provide more insights into the questions posed in this abbreviated study of work, by examining further the instruction of work, and the application to contemporary organizations. Investigation inclusive of Christian and Jewish history that blends new research methodology, that does not yield to secular influence, and that takes a leadership role in all types of empirical research to ensure theological soundness is deserving of consideration. Research that does not apologize for but advocates for the faith-based principles that can be understood and valued by the wider research community works to serve the entire research community.

Future research could further define the notion of work. Research could include more analysis of the language of work in Hebrew, oral traditions regarding work, and additional occupations beyond the primary style of work uncovered in this study. That analysis could assist in adding additional insights beyond traditional research of historical work that focuses more on work in Greek or Roman eras. Leadership and instruction of work presents options to explore, including (a) type of leadership and (b) how or who instructed work in an ancient era. Looking at

the number of different leaders or the genders of leaders in an ancient culture could dispel common perceptions that in ancient society women did not play any role, especially in families, with the delivery of instruction. The application of all three dimensions of the research questions could have significant impact in the application of those dimensions to contemporary organizations. By defining behaviors and outcomes associated with work, contemporary organizations could develop work ethic scales to assess current and prospective employees. Understanding the type of instruction that relates to a specific type of leader could help in managing employees. And all dimensions allow the opportunity for both qualitative and quantitative studies.

Finally, contemporary organizations yearn for a culture that internalizes values of sound work systems. An organization's culture is influenced to some degree by the leadership, organizational body, and external influences either singularly or collectively. An organizational culture can and does exist with multiple leaders and challenges from external pressures. A strong organizational culture with a possessed ability to manage challenges or change has more of an ability, with proper resources and leadership, to respond to external conditions. Hatch and Schultz (1997) made a case for leadership strengthening the internal culture to meet external challenges. Trevino (1986) discussed the need for strong ethical decision making which may be particularly true when applying external conditions across cultures. And Manz (1986) recognized self-leadership as a component in organizations to assist in combating undesired elements external to the organization. Schein (2004) pointed out that the position that the company holds or even communicates may be entirely different than what culture exists in the organization. And the organizational climate may be very different than the organizational culture created or developed within the organization (Schneider et al., 2013). In examining cognitive moral development regarding individuals in organizations, Treviño et al. (2014) explained, "they are looking outside themselves for guidance when making ethical decisions. When applied to organizations, this theory explains the powerful influence of peers, leaders, significant others, rules, laws, and codes, all of which can guide employees' ethical decision making and behavior" (p. 637). Steger (2017) comments that it's more a focus of simple realism and practicality for organizations:

Organizations frequently look to employee well-being as an engine for improved performance, motivated by the idea that a happy worker is a

better worker and by data suggesting that work well-being delivers impressive return on investment. Every dollar an organization invests into its employees' well-being provides a return of roughly three to five dollars (Goetzel & Ozminkowski, 2008; Rath & Harter, 2010). (p. 60)

For faith-based cultures, an adherence to principles and instruction drives individuals to perform successfully, regardless of the organization where an individual may work or the external challenges facing an organization. This would work to the advantage of an organization. In the end, Scripture tells us that the future of history is ahead of us, not behind us, to allow us to uncover the dust that contemporary society may comprehend history, better enlightening the knowledge and application of the notion of work, how leaders could instruct work, and how the principles of leadership and the role of leaders to instruct work from Scripture may, and should, apply to contemporary organizational leadership.

What is presented through Scripture is a “guidebook” that teaches us through centuries of informing us that all we ever need to know about leadership is already in our hands. When that “guidebook” is forgotten Haroutunian (1944) reminds us, “Man-centered religion is contrary to the genius of Christianity. It may be ‘natural,’ but it is misleading and degrading. Either man will attend to God and his truth, or he will be confounded by his own fabrications” (p. 361). Contemporary leadership for the Christian should become contemporary Christian leadership based on the fundamental instruction God has shared. About Colossians, the book, MacArthur (1992) sums up the same message of Paul, “From whatever angle one views our age, Colossians is up to date. Although written 2,000 years ago, its timeless message speaks to the dilemmas facing us today. To the problems and crises of our age, Jesus Christ is the answer” (p. 1).

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# Mentorship and Leadership Development: An Analysis of 2 Timothy 1

*Antony E. Daley*

Within organizations, mentorship is one of the key tools leveraged for multi-generational leadership (Rasheem et al., 2018). Mentorship plays a key part in seeing the value and the potential that workers have within various generations. In fact, the most valuable skills gained through training stem from mentor-mentee relationships (Anderson, 2018). Approximately 70% of Fortune 500 companies have mentorship programs that offer formal or traditional mentorship (Gutner, 2009). Lewis and Olshansky (2016) defined mentorship or the mentor-mentee relationship as hierarchies that align with institutionally defined pathways that lead to success within the organization. Allen et al. (2006) found a correlation between mentorship and systems theory where it is abstracted and seen as a system within an organization. Hanson (1995) noted that

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a system is “any two or more parts that are related, such that change in any one part changes all parts” (p. 27).

Some of the needs met by the mentor are the following: affirmation, guidance, correction, agency, and personalization (Montgomery & Page, 2018). Within a successful mentor-mentee relationship, there would also be signs of growth from the initial engagement of the relationship. Ergun et al. (2017) also noted that a successful mentor-mentee relationship should indicate signs of growth, whether professional and related to the mentee’s field or academically pertaining to increased knowledge. Commonly found signs of growth are often found in increased identity, efficacy, competency, and autonomy (Ramirez, 2012).

The Apostle Paul, who is the writer of most of the letters within the New Testament, wrote two letters to a young minister, Timothy, during the early stages of the church (Clark, 2013; Hauer & Young, 2013). Within these letters, Paul gave a wealth of advice to Timothy regarding his faith, ministry, leadership, and operational duties within the church (Constable, 2021; Miller, 2007). Scholars had also noted that Paul was a mentor to Timothy when these letters were written (Dale, 2009; DeSilva, 2004; Horrell, 2006). There is evidence of principles of the mentor-mentee relationship model found within these written letters. An exegetical and socio-rhetorical analysis will be leveraged to uncover these relationship models found within 2 Timothy 1 (Osborne, 2007; Robbins, 1996). This analysis will provide support for the mentor-mentee relationship model elements that are found within 2 Timothy 1.

## MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Studies found that mentorship is a critical component to organizational growth within organizations. Anderson (2018) conducted a study to understand better the effect of a multi-generational workforce with mentoring relationships. This survey consisted of 1,000 adults within the workforce. One of the findings of this study is that the older generation of leaders within a workforce often shares unique perspectives with the younger workforce, which assists in making the organization more productive. Ramaswami and Dreher (2007) also noted increased productivity and life satisfaction from mentoring relationships.

Mentoring is recognized as a valuable tool for leadership development (Hastings et al., 2015; Komives et al., 2009). One of these leadership development outcomes is self-efficacy (Chopin et al., 2012; Hastings

et al., 2015; Komives et al., 2009). Another common outcome found is an emphasis on reciprocity through the mentor-mentee relationship that develops important elements of the mentee's growths (Allen et al., 2006; Kram, 1985). Norris et al. (2017) found some ties between servant leadership traits and mentor-mentee relationship models such as empowerment, accountability, and authenticity.

## MENTORSHIP AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Several studies have also found aspects of the mentor-mentee relationship related to the social exchange theory due to a focus on dyadic relationships (Noe et al., 2002; Olian et al., 1993; Raabe & Beehr, 2003). The social exchange theory was extended into the leadership domain through the leader-member exchange theory, otherwise known as LMX (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). LMX relationships are depicted as centered around respect and trust (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Some of the attributes found within the leader-member exchange theory are the following: (a) strategic advice; (b) feedback with members; (c) social support; and (d) reciprocation with commitment and cooperation (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005).

## MENTORSHIP MODELS

There are various models of mentoring that are leveraged within organizations today. Some such models are as follows: (a) dyadic mentoring; (b) mentoring triads; (c) collective or group-based mentoring; (d) network mentoring; (e) multi-mentoring; and (f) nested or hybrid multi-mentoring (Montgomery & Page, 2018). Dyadic mentoring is the standard mentor to mentee relationship that is commonly found within organizations. This is seen as a more classic form of mentoring (Lewis & Olshansky, 2016; Yun & Sorcinelli, 2009; Yun et al., 2016). Mentoring triads is a model where there is an experienced senior mentor and a peer mentor supporting the mentee. This mentoring style can counteract the imposter syndrome that can sometimes be associated with dyadic mentoring (Driscoll et al., 2009).

Group-based or collective mentoring is a team-based mentoring approach with a community of mentors supporting a mentee. In the modern era, this is found online through social media platforms and other digital platforms and in-person platforms (Comer et al., 2017; Eby, 1997;

Martinez et al., 2015; Varkey et al., 2012). The mixed approach with both online and in-person is often common with this mentoring model as well. This approach is found particularly in conferences and short-term social engagements such as workshops (Grant, 2015; Martinez et al., 2015; Montgomery, 2017).

Network-based mentoring is a model that has a consortium of mentors or mentoring relationships. There has been an increase in this mentorship model (Long et al., 2014; Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007). Reciprocal mentoring often stems from this kind of mentoring model as well. A more common variation of this mentoring model is the mutual mentoring model, a more flexible network-based support model. These are often mutually beneficial mentoring relationships (Yun et al., 2016).

Nested mentoring or hybrid multi-mentoring is a mentorship model that is not hierarchical or peer to peer. Fouche and Lunt (2010) found this mentorship model to be of a “partnership model” for mentoring (p. 398). In this kind of mentoring model, the mentee has access to an entire team of mentors. It is not a top-down approach but rather a flat organizational approach within the mentoring relationships (Portillo, 2015).

## COMPONENTS OF MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIPS

There are several components that are found in a healthy mentor-mentee relationship. Some of these components are guidance, affirmation, correction, personalization, and agency (Ramirez, 2012). The personalization component integrates the identity of the mentee within the relationship interactions. This mentoring component is when the mentor looks beyond the mentee’s title, position, or hierarchical structure within the organization and looks at the mentee as a holistic person. This includes the mentee’s characteristics, environmental experiences, cultural backgrounds, past experiences, unique skillsets, interests, and values (Baker & Griffin, 2010; Hobin et al., 2014; Kirchmeyer, 2005).

Within the various mentoring relationship models, guidance is a core component that is needed. Guidance, rather than instruction, does not tell the mentee what to do but rather provides advice to the mentee in determining the best way to resolve or navigate a particular problem or path. The guidance component is often career guidance or guidance in decision making and leadership challenges that one may face (Gibbs & Griffin, 2013). Guidance takes into consideration the factors

that contribute to the identity of the mentee. This can include cultural, demographical, and hardship-related factors (Griffin et al., 2015).

Another component found in mentoring relationship models is affirmation. Affirmation entails recognizing the mentee's abilities and strengths. It also entails highlighting the mentee's accomplishments and encouraging them to affirm that they are on the right path. The affirmation component also helps the mentee become confident in his or herself and innate value instead of building confidence in one's position or leadership level (Montgomery, 2017).

Correction is another component found in mentorship models. Within this component, the mentee received feedback on areas of improvement that they could focus on. The correction component can also be seen as constructive feedback or constructive criticism, which can help the mentee change habits within the mentee's control. This component helps mentees understand what opportunities for improvement are available for self-improvement (Montgomery, 2018).

Another component that aligns with the affirmation component is agency. Agency as a component brings forth the notion that the mentee is responsible for his or her own path. In this same sense, agency also indicates that the mentee is responsible for what they receive from the mentor-mentee relationship. Agency also produces a similar outcome as affirmation, which is increased confidence in the mentee's intrinsic values and abilities (Montgomery & Page, 2018).

## ANALYSIS OF 2 TIMOTHY 1

Within 2 Timothy 1, several themes were found in relation to mentorship models, attributes, and outcomes. These themes are derived from prior literature where extensive research has been completed regarding these elements (Driscoll et al., 2009; Hobin et al., 2014; Montgomery, 2017, 2018; Montgomery & Page, 2018).

### PERSONALIZATION

Personalization is a key attribute found in a successful mentor-mentee relationship. This attribute integrates the mentee's identity within the interaction of the mentor-mentee relationship (Baker & Griffin, 2010; Hobin et al., 2014; Kirchmeyer, 2005). Within the text of 2 Timothy 1, the personalization attribute is often found. There are a few verses

that indicate this attribute. Paul, when greeting Timothy, greets him as “my dear son” (2 Timothy 1:2, *New International Version*). The use of the adjective “dear” references a sense of personalization regarding Paul knowing and understanding Timothy’s background on a personal level. As we travel through the text, additional personalization attributes are found. Paul references recalling Timothy’s tears (2 Timothy 1:4, *NIV*). Paul also references Timothy’s mother and grandmother within the text, which further shows the personalization attribute.

*Principle One: Leaders develop others through personal relationships.*

## GUIDANCE

Guidance is another attribute found within a successful mentor-mentee relationship. This attribute is where the mentor guides the mentee in how to resolve problems or navigate through challenges. This attribute allows the mentee to be equipped with the tools needed to choose the correct path (Gibbs & Griffin, 2013). There are two indications within the text where the guidance attributes. The first is in the greeting that Paul gives to Timothy, where the relationship between Paul and Timothy begins to be revealed within the text. Paul mentions serving God as his ancestors did and indicated to Timothy that he remembers him in his prayers. The inference here is that Timothy should continue to follow along the same path (2 Timothy 1:3, *NIV*). Additional guidance is provided by Paul when he encourages Timothy in the following passage:

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. (2 Timothy 1:13–14, *NIV*)

Within this text, there are two main elements of guidance that Paul provides Timothy. The first element is that he should keep what Paul has taught him as sound teaching. In other words, continue to remember the things that I have taught you and take the guidance that I have given you to heart. Paul then warns Timothy to guard or protect what he has been given and then provides further guidance on how to protect what he has received through the help of the Holy Spirit.

*Principle Two: Leaders develop others by offering guidance amid diverse challenges.*

### AFFIRMATION

Affirmation is also an attribute found in successful mentor-mentee relationships. This attribute is where the mentor recognizes the mentee's accomplishments and recognizes the mentee's strengths and abilities (Montgomery, 2017). Within 2 Timothy 1, there are also areas that align with the affirmation attribute found within various mentorship models. One of the first areas in 2 Timothy 1 that highlights this attribute is within verse five, where Paul states, "I am reminded of your sincere faith" (2 Timothy 1:5, *NIV*). Within this portion of the text, Paul recognizes the sincerity of Timothy's faith. As a leader within the early church, sincerity of one's faith was a good quality to have. Paul continues within the same verse and indicates that this faith that Timothy received has been passed down from his grandmother and mother (2 Timothy 1:2, *NIV*). This points out that Timothy is one that takes heed to instruction from those who have come before him. This is another characteristic or ability that Paul recognizes within Timothy.

In another portion of the text, Paul highlights the spiritual boldness and power that Timothy has received from God. He states, "...the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline" (2 Timothy 1, *NIV*). Paul, in this text, recognizes within Timothy and tells him that he has a spirit of boldness and power and not one of timidity. Paul goes further and points out that Timothy also has self-discipline. Self-discipline is a character attribute that is favored within leaders, especially within the early church.

*Principle Three: Leaders develop others by recognizing their potential, strengths, and abilities.*

### EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is an attribute found in a mentor-mentee relationship and within the servant leadership traits (Norris et al., 2017). The empowerment attribute is apparent throughout the text within 2 Timothy 1. The first sighting of this attribute is when Paul says, "For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying



on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6, *NIV*). Some scholars indicate that the act of laying hands empowers the individual and is also an impartation (Barensten, 2011). An example of this is found within the Old Testament, where Moses laid hands on Joshua and imparted a “spirit of wisdom” on him (Martin, 1997; Deuteronomy 34:9, *NIV*). In this context, Paul lets Timothy know that he has been empowered and encourages him to continue to grow and in the empowerment that he has received through the laying of hands on him.

As we travel a little further in the text, there are additional references to empowerment. Within verse 7, Paul indicates to Timothy that he has been given power (2 Timothy 1:7, *NIV*). In other words, Paul lets Timothy know that God has empowered him. Paul continues in the text and requests Timothy to join him in the work of preaching the gospel through the empowerment given by God. This is indicated when he states, “join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God” (2 Timothy 1:8, *NIV*). It is also important to understand that as a Christian leader within the structural organization known as the church, it is believed that the empowerment that one needs comes from God and the Holy Spirit (Kelly & Nelson, 2003).

*Principle Four: Leaders develop others by helping them to recognize that they are empowered by God to fulfill their purpose.*

## SOCIAL SUPPORT AND RECIPROCATION WITH COMMITMENT AND COOPERATION

In the leader-member exchange theory, there are attributes found that align with successful mentor-mentee relationships as well. Some of these attributes are social support as well as reciprocation with commitment and cooperation (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). Within 2 Timothy 1, the attributes of social support and reciprocation are also found within the text. In verse 15 of the text, Paul indicates a lack of social support and reciprocation among other mentors and mentees when he notes that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted him. Paul continues and mentions specific people such as Phygelus and Hermogenes (2 Timothy 1:15, *NIV*). Many scholars and theologians believe that referencing Phygelus and Hermogenes specifically was due to Paul having a mentorship dynamic with these two people where support for one another was

expected as Paul had supported them in the past. It has also been indicated that they deserted Paul when he was imprisoned in Rome (Bromiley, 1979).

This portion of the text in verse 15 is shown as a contrast to what a good mentorship relationship should entail where reciprocation and social support exist. An example of this good type of mentorship relationship is noted in verse 16 when Paul states, “May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains” (2 Timothy 1:16, *NIV*). The relationship with Onesiphorus shows the dynamic of a positive mentor-mentee relationship dynamic where there is social support and reciprocation. This is evident through the fact that Onesiphorus sought Paul while he was imprisoned. Scholars also believe that the social support between Paul and Onesiphorus existed because they both shared similar faiths for sharing the gospel as Paul in other biblical texts references Onesiphorus as losing his life while in ministry. Paul shared the same faith shortly after Onesiphorus’ passing (Bromiley, 1979; Whyte, 1901).

The commitment and cooperation attributes from various mentorship models are also found in verses 15 and 16. As Paul speaks of the relationship with Onesiphorus, it speaks to the commitment shown between them (2 Timothy 1:16, *NIV*). In verse 15, the contrast is shown where Phygelus and Hermogenes lack the commitment Paul has demonstrated to them (2 Timothy 1:15, *NIV*). The contrasts between these two relationships help to demonstrate what a healthy mentor-mentee relationship looks like when those attributes are exhibited. The attribute of commitment and cooperation aligns with the social exchange theory. This theory proposes that in a mentor-mentee relationship the leader or mentor exchanges resources such as social support, strategic advice, and feedback to the mentee who then reciprocates in commitment and cooperation (Sparrowe & Linden, 2005).

*Principle Five: Leaders develop others through reciprocal support, commitment, and cooperation.*

## ADDITIONAL ATTRIBUTES FOUND

There are various other mentor-mentee relationship attributes within the text that indicate signs of growth within a mentor-mentee relationship. Such attributes are increased identity and competency (Ramirez,

2012). Within verse 5 of the text, the increased identity attribute and the competency are found where Paul refers to components of Timothy's self-identity found from what he has received from his mother and grandmother. Within the same text, Paul denotes a competency Timothy exhibits which is sincere faith (2 Timothy 1:5, *NIV*).

*Principle Six: Leaders develop others through helping them better understand their self-identity.*

Autonomy is another attribute that indicates growth within a successful mentor-mentee relationship. Autonomy is displayed when the mentee can take the lessons and values learned from the mentor and become self-directed (Ramirez, 2012). Paul describes a sense of autonomy within Timothy when he indicates that Timothy has been entrusted with certain values and responsibilities as a leader. This shows that Timothy is worthy of the calling, and Paul directs him to guard what he has been given. There is an indication of self-direction through the help of the Holy Spirit to assist Timothy in guarding what he has been given (2 Timothy 1:14, *NIV*).

*Principle Seven: Leaders develop others by providing them a sense of autonomy.*

Verse 14 depicts the agency attribute found within a successful mentor-mentee relationship where the mentee develops an understanding that he or she is responsible for the path they take (Montgomery & Page, 2018). Within verse 14, Paul indicates the responsibility Timothy has as he walks the path he has been entrusted with (2 Timothy 1:14). This same text also depicts the strategic advice attributes found within mentorship models and the leader-member exchange model (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). Paul provides Timothy with strategic advice in this text when he instructs Timothy to garner help from the Holy Spirit to guard what was given to him (2 Timothy 1:14). This advice given to Timothy from Paul aligns with the agency attribute that is exhibited in successful mentor-mentee relationships, where the mentor helps the mentee to develop an understanding that they are responsible for the path they take or choose (Montgomery & Page, 2018).

*Principle Eight: Leaders develop others by challenging them to take responsibility for their future.*

## SUMMARY

2 Timothy 1 is a text that entails many attributes or components found within the various mentorship models. The alignment of these attributes shown throughout this chapter provides a basis for this passage of scripture to continue to add to the scholarly discourse of mentor-mentee relationship models. Additionally, this exploration of mentor-mentee relationship model attributes within 2 Timothy 1 provokes the question that should be asked when substantive correlations are found with a biblical text and a scholarly framework. That question is, if this text is further explored, what other correlations can be found? The second question that should be asked is what additionally the text can add to advance the framework that has already been established. To answer that question, it would be plausible to explore the remainder of the biblical book of Second Timothy and perhaps the book of First Timothy to explore further correlations that may exist.

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# Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue: An Analysis of 2 Timothy 1

*Christopher L. Clem and Joshua D. Henson*

Organizations of diverse industrial contexts face significant challenges as they grapple with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic as employees face unprecedented levels of burnout and compassion fatigue. Research shows that stress-related burnout is prevalent in other-focused industries such as social work, psychology, and pastoral ministry (Diaconescu, 2015; Hendron et al., 2012, 2014). While significant academic and media attention remains focused on some of these frontline workers, clergy burnout and psychological distress during the crisis remain largely overlooked (Greene et al., 2020). Although not involved in patients' medical care, the clergy provide a critical role in supporting individuals, families, and

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communities in coping with crises and traumatic situations. According to Taylor et al. (2006), most Americans turn to their faith to cope with traumatic situations and their aftermath.

Being a part of a faith-based community can be a protective component for psychological health following a disaster or crisis event (Milstein, 2019). As such, ministry leaders' spiritual, psychological, and physical health is a significant concern. Previous studies on clergy burnout note the tendency not to prioritize self-care, and ministers often experience work overload, emotional isolation, and the inability to rest due to ministry demands (Jackson-Jordan, 2013; Lewis et al., 2006). A Canadian military study found that heavy workloads and compassion fatigue contributed to clergy burnout, potentially leading to other disorders, including depression (Auld, 2010). Exposure to other people's traumatic experiences referred to as secondary or vicarious trauma (Hendron et al., 2014), exacerbates the issue. According to Baum (2014), the shared experience of a crisis compounds the strain on the minister as they try to help their parishioner while actively coping with their own experiences during the crisis.

The purpose of this study is to explore burnout from a biblical perspective by conducting an exegetical analysis of 2 Timothy 1:1–18. In this passage of Scripture, the Apostle Paul addresses the psychological trauma and emotional burnout experienced by Timothy, the church pastor at Ephesus. Paul states, “Recalling your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy” (*New International Version*, 2011, 2 Tim. 1:4). Timothy's grief and calamity may have reached Paul (Zondervan, 2019). In 2 Timothy 1:6–14, the Apostle recognized that Timothy faced significant challenges and urged him to stand his ground and endure suffering in ministry service. The Apostle acts as a mentor and provides the young minister with coping tools to remain effective in his leadership efforts.

## BURNOUT AND COMPASSION FATIGUE DEFINED

Burnout is a complex construct related to various intrapersonal interactions that influence one's ability to function within a professional role (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Maslach et al. (1996) define burnout as a complex set of symptoms that include emotional exhaustion, a high degree of depersonalization exhibited in adverse and detached reactions, and a low sense of personal accomplishment. After decades of disagreement on a universal definition of burnout, the World Health Organization

(WHO) in 2019 defined burnout as “a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” (Moss, 2021, p. 2). Additional consequences of burnout include cynicism, detachment, and a feeling of ineffectiveness in the workplace (Bakker et al., 2005; Bühler & Land, 2003; ; Leiter & Maslach, 2009; Leiter & Spence Laschinger, 2006; Peterson et al., 2008; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001).

The core symptom of burnout is emotional exhaustion, wherein an individual is emotionally drained and lacks the emotional energy to adequately fulfill their responsibilities (Bakker et al., 2005; Leiter & Spence Laschinger, 2006). Maslach et al. (1996) define emotional exhaustion as a feeling of emotional overextension and overtiredness in one’s work. Depersonalization in the burnout cycle is a state in which individuals have mentally distanced themselves from their work, including the people they interact with, influenced by the extent to which emotional exhaustion is present (Leiter & Spence Laschinger, 2006; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001). Characteristics of depersonalization include detachment, callousness, a negative attitude, and insensitive, dehumanizing interactions with people (Bakker et al., 2005; Bühler & Land, 2003; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001; Storlie, 1979). Further, feeling ineffective or lacking in accomplishment is subjective and is affected by depersonalization (Leiter & Spence Laschinger, 2006; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001). Personal accomplishment describes competence and achievement in the individual’s work (Maslach et al., 1996). Additional consequences associated with burnout include impaired job satisfaction, absenteeism, decreased productivity, reduced organizational commitment, impaired physical health, reduced quality of life, loss of purpose, emotional problems, loneliness, lowered self-esteem, marital conflict, and a substantial loss of closeness and enjoyment in relationships both personally and professionally (Ayala and Carnero, 2013; Guntapalli et al. 2014; Maslach et al., 1996, 2001; Melamed et al., 2006). In summary, according to Storlie (1979), individuals suffering from burnout feel that “no matter what you do or how hard you try, you cannot make a difference” (p. 2109).

Compassion fatigue occurs when a caregiver experiences natural behaviors and emotions resulting from a desire to help a traumatized or suffering person (Figley, 2002). Reexperiencing emotional trauma is a defining criterion of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Compassion fatigue can be a by-product of a caregiver’s experience from indirect exposure to trauma survivors (Craig & Sprang, 2010). According to Coetzee

and Laschinger (2018), compassion fatigue refers to the disengagement of caregivers from their patients, creating a reduction or inability to provide appropriate patient care. Craig and Sprang (2010) suggest that individuals caring for those with trauma are at high risk for developing compassion fatigue. In a study by Scott and Lovell (2015), burnout and compassion fatigue are firmly, negatively, and statistically related.

## BACKGROUND 2 TIMOTHY I

The purpose of Paul's letter to Timothy is unique among the other Pauline letters and does not address church order or Christian roles, making it "fully and truly a personal letter" (Witherington, 2010, p. 302). It is not clear that Paul's letter, unlike his other writings, was intended to be read aloud to a congregation. However, Paul continues the theme of suffering for the faith found in 1 Timothy 1:3–18 and reinforces Timothy's responsibility in the local church (Towner, 2006). This inner texture analysis of 2 Timothy reveals the text's progression pattern into three sections: the opening of the text in the greeting, 2 Timothy 1:1–2, the middle of the text body verses 2 Timothy 1:3–15, and the closing 2 Timothy 1:16–18. This socio-rhetorical analysis explores the Apostle Paul's efforts to reverse the emotional, mental, and spiritual strain under which Timothy pastored with the interpretive intent of discovering lessons that may apply to contemporary pastoral leadership burnout.

The book of 2 Timothy was written by Paul while imprisoned in Rome and after his first trial during the Neronian persecution, which began in A.D. 65 (Witherington, 2010). In contrast to his first imprisonment, where Paul lived in a rented home with more freedoms, he is now imprisoned and chained like a common criminal (Hindson & Mitchell, 2008). Thus, while Paul's death is not imminent, he knows it is near (Fee & Gasque, 1988). According to Gaius of Rome, also quoted by Eusebius, Paul's execution as a Roman citizen occurred in A.D. 67 (Witherington, 2010). During this period, Paul faces abandonment by followers, loneliness, apostasy in the churches, established congregations struggling, and his most beloved coworker, Timothy, seems ashamed of Paul's condition and possibly cowardly in accomplishing his ministerial duties (Fee & Gasque, 1988; Witherington, 2010). According to Witherington (2010), Paul's writing of 2 Timothy modified the epistolary convention to suit rhetorical ends, aims, and forms. Table 17.1 provides

**Table 17.1** Rhetorical Outline of 2 Timothy 1

| <i>Rhetorical section</i>                             | <i>Reference</i>  |
|---|-------------------|
| Epistolary prescript and greeting                     | 2 Timothy 1:1–2   |
| Thanksgiving prayer/exordium                          | 2 Timothy 1:3–5   |
| Propositio: Stir up the gift, draw on the power       | 2 Timothy 1:6–7   |
| Be prepared to testify, suffer, and guard the deposit | 2 Timothy 1:8–14  |
| Transitus/closing                                     | 2 Timothy 1:15–18 |

*Source* Christopher Clem

the rhetorical outline for 2 Timothy 1:1–18 as structured by Witherington (2010).

## 2 TIMOTHY 1:1–2: EPISTOLARY PRESCRIPT AND GREETING

Paul began the letter following customary practices for the historical period using the sender’s name as the first word in the letter (Collins, 2002). “Twenty of the twenty-nine words in the salutation in 1 Timothy are also found here” (Witherington, 2010, p. 306). Paul then referenced his apostleship and authority as coming from God and not from self-appointment, man’s will, or a heritable right (Bruce, 2008; Witherington, 2010). The object of Paul’s apostleship is the declaration of the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus. The “in-Christ” formula is consistent throughout the Pauline and Pastoral letters communicating the message of eternal salvation through Christ Jesus (Witherington, 2010). God promised that all who believed in Jesus would receive eternal life, and Paul’s apostolic mission was in harmony with that promise (MacDonald et al., 2008). According to Witherington (2010), there is a significant stress on eternal life in all three Pastoral Epistles. It is not surprising that Paul, possibly facing his imminent death, mentions this in his final salutation.

Paul transitions and addresses the reader, Timothy, as “my dear son.” The affectionate discourse arose from Paul’s instrumentality in Timothy’s Christian faith growth as a young man and the years of faithful Christian service shared by the two men (Bruce, 2008). However, according to Witherington (2010), Paul calls Timothy a “beloved child,” not a “loyal child,” as the focus in the letter will address Timothy’s behavior. Additionally, Paul’s reference to Timothy as a son carried the social significance

of intimacy and authority that a father held over a son culturally. Paul's greeting consisted of grace, mercy, and peace. When writing to churches, Paul would include the greeting of grace and peace; however, in the letters to Timothy, he adds the word mercy in the greeting, implying that God's loving-kindness is necessary for the minister (Macdonald et al., 2008).

In summary, the analysis of the epistolary prescript yielded the following themes. First, speak to the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Second, the Apostle extends his typical salutation of grace and peace by adding the term "mercy" (*English Standard Version*, 2 Tim. 1:3). The addition of mercy served the rhetorical intent of extending to the young Timothy's words of mercy. From the use of mercy in the salutation to the content in the following statements, it seems evident that Timothy was facing a crisis, and the Apostle sought to author an encouraging letter to him.

According to Scott and Lovell (2015), loneliness remains the most robust explanatory variable in pastor burnout; therefore, healthy intimate relationships remain critical to minister health. Accordingly, healthy close relationships for ministers can significantly reduce the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue. In studying physicians, Greenawald (2020) identified peer connections as essential to safeguarding against the harmful effects of burnout and social isolation. These relationships may include but are not limited to family, friends, mentors, and peers. Cree-Green et al. (2020) identified mentorship and peer-to-peer relationships as essential to providing support against burnout and reducing isolation. Further, Brooks et al. (2018) linked support systems and organization coaching such as collegial interactions and mentorship as essential to preventing burnout and fatigue.

*Principle One: Organizational Leaders Must Foster Opportunities for Healthy Relationships Such as Mentoring and Peer Networks to Reduce Feelings of Isolation in the Workplace.*

## 2 TIMOTHY 1:3–5: THANKSGIVING PRAYER/EXORDIUM

While the Apostle sought to extend mercy, it is also clear he wanted to challenge Timothy vigorously; therefore, the purpose is to establish rapport with his reader (Witherington, 2010). The passage is ripe with emotion-fused language as Paul appealed to the emotions of joy and love while additionally reminding Timothy of his family lineage

of faithful Christ-followers. Writing from a Roman prison and recognizing that his martyrdom is imminent, Paul reflected on his spiritual heritage and ministry, expressing thanksgiving and clear conscience of his efforts regardless of his current circumstance (Carson et al., 1998). Paul's recollection of his heritage is a source of thanksgiving and cause for prayer (Bruce, 2008). Further, Paul links Old Testament faith and New Testament faith through common Jewish ancestry that he and Timothy share, providing further indirect motivation to Timothy in his ministry (Witherington 2010).

Returning to an emotive tone, the Apostle Paul reminds Timothy that he always remembers him in prayer. Additionally, he reminded Timothy of the tears he shed at their parting and the joy Paul would experience at reuniting with his friend. These tears represent the demonstrative and uninhibited emotion Paul feels for his friend (Bruce, 2008). According to Carson et al. (1998), joy and tears may exist side by side when emotion is strong. Paul's emotion demonstrated love and esteem for his friend and spoke eloquently of his graciousness, tenderness, and humility (MacDonald, 2008). Timothy's tears indicated a timid but loyal man of sincere faith (Witherington, 2010). Paul remembers and reminds Timothy of his godly heritage and the genuine or unhypocritical (*anypokritos*) faith received from his mother and grandmother and continues in him. Paul's words conveyed concern again by implying that Timothy's relatives' faith lives in him also (Fee & Gasque, 1988). Paul deliberately appealed to that connection to encourage or possibly shame Timothy into action, implying that Timothy must bravely carry on the family tradition of faith (Witherington, 2010).

In conclusion, the following themes surfaced in the passages. First, Paul desired to extend mercy to Timothy; however, he recognized that hardship or shame had compromised his protege's potential and required forceful intervention from the Apostle. Second, the Apostle reminds Timothy of their strong relational bond, creating a foundation for corrective parenesis. Thirdly, Paul referenced both his and Timothy's strong spiritual heritage to motivate him to act decisively and reject cowardice in the face of opposition. Healthy family relationships positively impact a minister in their fight against burnout (Greene et al., 2020; Jordan-Jackson, 2013; Muse et al., 2016). In the first four verses, Paul references familial relationships of sonship, a shared heritage, and his mother and grandmother. Here the Apostle reminds Timothy that he is not

isolated but has people supporting him in prayer against ministry stressors. Further, research shows that peer-to-peer relationships in ministry bolster a ministers' health (Greene et al., 2020). Finally, Paul reminds Timothy of their shared ministry experiences and encourages him to follow his teaching pattern. Further, Leiter and Maslach (2010) posited that consistent communication between leaders and followers can be a robust defense against burnout.

*Principle Two: Organizational Leaders Must Foster Healthy Relationships that Allow Space for Honest and Challenging Conversations.*

## 2 TIMOTHY 1:6–7: PROPOSITIO

A rhetorical *propositio* reveals the rhetorical situation or exigence that must be overcome to improve the situation (Witherington, 2010). Paul's thesis was this: "Timothy is not fulfilling his ministerial calling as he ought, partly due to a spirit of fear or timidity, and so he needs some jump-starting" (p. 313). Paul transitions the conversation by reminding Timothy of his spiritual calling and the gift (*charisma*) bestowed upon him by God through the laying on of the Apostle's hands (Bruce, 2008). Culturally, church elders' laying on of hands occurred in front of the congregation, thereby publicly validating an individual's ministry call (Fee, 1988). Paul reminds Timothy that his ministry commissioning occurred by laying on of the Apostle's hands, further signifying their close relationship and providing further motivation to him in pursuing his ministry mission.

Thematically, Paul connects the theme of Power to the Holy Spirit and then to God, implying that ministry strengthening comes through divine agency (Towner, 2006). Further, the two verbs' unqualified past tense suggests that ongoing empowerment for ministry work exists through continued partnership with God and the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit brings Power (*dunamis*) to accomplish the mission, love (*agape*) without which service is valueless, and self-control (*sophronismos*) essential to all who would influence others for God (Bruce, 2008; MacDonald, 2008).

In verse six, Paul exhorts Timothy to "fan into flame" God's calling on his life for "God has not given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and self-control" (English Standard Version, 2 Tim. 1:5–6). Paul exercises both the familial and mentoring relationship between them to exhort Timothy



to regenerate his faith and accomplish his ministry. The encouragement to reignite his ministry passion indicated the danger of “spiritual dryness,” an emotional exhaustion indicator (Chandler, 2009). Also implied in the text is a resurgence of personal spirituality empowered by the Holy Spirit and activated through prayer. Research showed that prayer and spirituality connect ministers to God and form resilience against burnout and compassion fatigue (Jordan-Jackson, 2013).

In summary, timidity can foster shame or cowardice in the Gospel’s communication undermining the mission. Secondly, to combat fear and timidity, Paul instructs Timothy to act and rekindle his ministry calling. Third, ministry effectiveness requires an ongoing source of Power and connection to the Holy Spirit, God, and Jesus. People find strength and purpose through connecting with God, and thus, spiritual formation is essential to promoting spiritual well-being (Nelson, 2012). Renewing one’s calling and spiritual formation is essential to burnout prevention as spiritual dryness is a predictor of emotional exhaustion (Chandler, 2009).

*Principle Three: Organizational Leaders Encourage Their Followers by Validating Their Purpose and Encouraging Spiritual Well-Being.*

## 2 TIMOTHY I:8–14: TESTIFY, SUFFER, AND GUARD THE DEPOSIT

The overall structure of the rhetorical unit in this section is bracketed by the command “do not be ashamed” and Paul’s reminder to Timothy that “he is not ashamed” of the Gospel (Witherington, 2010, p. 316). Additionally, the Apostle reminds Timothy that what the world sees as culturally or socially shameful, i.e., suffering and imprisonment for the Gospel, Timothy must see things from God and the Apostle’s perspective in the context of eternal significance. Paul attempted to persuade Timothy to follow in his footsteps utilizing four paradigms, twice as many as he used in 1 Timothy and Titus. The increased number of paradigms underscores Paul’s attempt to have Timothy “revert to type” following the Apostle’s example (p. 316). This underscores the father/son relationship’s social and cultural texture and the apostle/pastor dynamic, where the former leads and instructs the latter.

According to Fee (1988), the missional calling is hard to accept and comprehend due to the heavy demands on a disciple, particularly regarding suffering for the mission’s sake. This assertion, combined

with Timothy's personality, explained his hesitancy to fulfill his missional calling. Therefore, Paul provides Timothy with specific advice on how to stay faithful by adhering to the sound pattern of teaching and behavior provided by the Apostle (Bruce, 2008). Additionally, Paul calls himself a prisoner of Christ and not of Nero (ESV, 2 Tim. 2:9), reminding Timothy that God's universal purpose extended to his calling (Witherington, 2010). Sharing the Gospel of truth, together with the divinely bestowed gift, comprises what God had entrusted to Paul; for their safe-keeping, Paul entrusts them to God and encourages Timothy to do the same (Bruce, 2008).

Paul is conscious of the false teachers' continued threat to the Gospel and is mindful of giving Timothy support to combat the danger (Carson et al., 1998). In verse 13, Paul is deeply aware that this can be achieved only through the Spirit's help, who is the faithful guardian of the truth (Carson et al., 1998). Therefore, in verse 14, Paul encourages Timothy to guard this deposit in partnership with the Holy Spirit, who dwells within him. Paul continued to use emotive language and imagery, suggesting that God gives power, love, and self-control when the world gives fear. Paul reminds Timothy that while he suffers in a dark prison and faces suffering and death, Christ appearing (*epiphaneia*) has abolished death and brought life, light, and immortality to Christians giving eternal hope (Bruce, 2008).

The Apostle Paul recognizes the danger Timothy faces dealing with burnout and compassion fatigue. Paul communicates a series of positive protective components to reduce and reverse the adverse effects of burnout, including healthy intimate relationships with family and mentors, the resurgence of personal prayer and spirituality, and reminders that he is not alone in his ministry. Further, Paul encourages Timothy to remember the Apostle's teaching as a source of ongoing education and encouragement as he pursues his ministry calling. These components created a robust defense against the effects of compassion fatigue and burnout in Timothy's life and ministry. In sum, Paul communicated four successful strategies to combat burnout and compassion fatigue identified in modern literature. These include healthy intimate relationships, prayer, spirituality, and organizational interventions and support.

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

According to Scott and Lovell (2015), loneliness remains the most robust explanatory variable in pastor burnout; therefore, healthy intimate relationships remain critical to minister health and productivity. According to Headington (1997), 70% of pastors reported not having a close friendship to provide support and edification. Therefore, fostering healthy close relationships for ministers can significantly reduce the effects of burnout and compassion fatigue and is an essential component of creating and maintaining minister well-being. These relationships may include but are not limited to family, friends, mentors, and peers.

Family and friend relationships for clergy provide a central support system for ministers to resist burnout and isolation. A study of American Protestant ministers by Meek et al. (2003) found that 62% of clergy members considered exemplars of ministry success referenced their family unit as an essential element of their emotional and spiritual health (p. 343). Further ministers cited their spouse as a critical factor in their psychological and emotional support as friends, prayer partners, and honest confidants. Extra-familial friendships for clergy provided a crucial element of support for ministers, with 42% identifying these relationships as critical to maintaining well-being. In summary, clergy families and friends provided positive connectedness that remedies social isolation and alleviates pastoral ministry stresses.

A study of clergy burnout and psychological health in the United States found that ministers with a mentor (26%) reported higher ministry satisfaction scores than their counterparts (Francis et al., 2013, p. 326). Out of the variety of support strategies investigated in the study, only mentoring relationships and education sabbaticals positively impacted ministry satisfaction prompting researchers to recommend mentoring relationships as a positive deterrent to burnout. A study by Meek et al. (2003) found that 45% of clergy in their study referenced mentorship as a critical factor in reducing burnout (p. 343). In summary, familial, peer-to-peer relationships, and mentors can bolster ministers' health, reduce isolation, and provide support against burnout (Greene et al., 2020).

*Principle Four: Organizational Leaders Should Encourage the Development and Maintenance of Healthy Relationships Which Bolster Emotional Health and Resiliency.*

## PRAYER

When challenged with extreme difficulty or stress, clergy often find strength and purpose through connecting with a higher power through prayer. Willard (1990) noted that prayer is conversing and communicating with God wherein the individual becomes a co-laborer with God to accomplish good things and advance his Kingdom's purposes. In the Christian tradition, prayer is one of the primary spiritual disciplines. A study of Christian ministers in the United States found that 66% of the respondents, identified as exemplars of clergy health and learning, practiced spiritual disciplines, including prayer. Through prayer, this group maintained a connectedness to a higher power, experienced spiritual health, combated stress, and increased personal effectiveness in their lives.

While analyzing prayer and spiritual disciplines, "psychologists have unfairly maligned these Christian beliefs in years past, but there now appears to be a growing recognition that these beliefs can be healthy." Additionally, pastors practicing spiritual disciplines tended to trust in the character and provision of God rather than their self-efficacy, thereby acknowledging their weakness in dealing with difficult situations and transferring their reliance on God and His capability to guide their actions. Further, when an individual converses with God through prayer, whether on their behalf or others, the effects are pervasive and strengthen all aspects of the person's personality (Willard, 1990).

*Principle Five: Organization leaders should encourage the practice of prayer, which creates and maintains a connection with God's transformative work, providing a protective barrier against burnout.*

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Spiritual formation and spiritual renewal are vital to pastor effectiveness, burnout prevention, and minister restoration (Gemignani, 2002; Nelson, 2012). According to McNeal (2011), spiritual renewal is the foundation of a pastor's personal and professional effectiveness. Historically, Christ-followers practiced specific spiritual disciplines or practices that deepened their faith (Foster, 1988). Chandler (2009) discovered that experiencing the love of God through life patterns and practices fostered spiritual renewal and created a connection with God's transformative work reducing the adverse effects of burnout.

In Christian discipleship, spiritual formation is the outgrowth of the application of spiritual disciplines facilitating the transformation of a Christ-follower into Christlikeness. Disciplines are defined as “any activity within our power which brings us to a point where we can do what we at present cannot do by direct effort” (Willard, 1998, p. 106). The spiritual disciplines transform the entire state of the soul by a renewal of the whole person from the inside involving thought, feeling, and character that manifests in outward behavioral changes. The general spiritual disciplines include solitude and silence, prayer, fasting, scripture memorization, regular corporate and individual praise, and worship.

In a study on clergy effectiveness, Chandler discovered that spiritual dryness positively and significantly contributed to burnout and was the single most significant predictor of burnout for ministers (2008). Of the clergy in the study, 29% referenced spiritual dryness as the primary source of burnout in their ministry demonstrated through the dimension of emotional exhaustion (p. 283). In summary, an ongoing relationship with God created and sustained through spiritual formation and renewal provides the most significant deterrent to burnout in the life of a minister.

*Principle Six: Organizational leaders should encourage spiritual formation through spiritual disciplines, which protect against burnout, enhance wellness, and increase effectiveness.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

According to Chandler (2009), intervention and training regarding burnout, its effects, and prevention at the organizational level could significantly and positively impact ministers. Unfortunately, many pastors experience a lack of organizational support and believe that their primary value to the denomination comes through church growth. “Pastors are asking their organizations to set the stage by first rethinking basic job requirements and then educating congregations and support staff about the many responsibilities and needs of the pastor” (para. 34). Since pastors traditionally train in Bible schools and seminaries, ministry training centers can assist clergy to develop healthy personal practices to reduce stress and burnout through focused curricular consideration (p. 285). Additionally, providing holistic self-care within ministry training contexts can contribute to personal self-care and foster positive engagement with self, church, family, and others, potentially reducing burnout

(Wuellner, 2005). In summary, denominations, ministry organizations, and seminaries can contribute to burnout prevention and reduction for ministers through education and training, potentially leading to healthier life balance, improved performance, overall well-being, and reduced early departure from ministry.

*Principle Seven: Organizational leaders should provide specific and ongoing training and support to educate, train, and strengthen their constituencies against the effects of burnout.*

## 2 TIMOTHY 1:15–18: TRANSITUS/CLOSING

The closing section of the pericope provides an account of two different responses to disloyalty and loyalty. Paul provided a rhetorical comparison of two scenarios that Timothy knew of Phygelus and Hermogenes’s abandonment compared to Onesiphorus’s sacrifice and commitment (Witherington, 2010). This section’s significance is that Onesiphorus is not ashamed of Paul’s situation, continuing the theme of commitment (Fee, 1988). Paul is hinting that Timothy should not be ashamed of Paul, just as Onesiphorus was not (Witherington, 2010). Further, Onesiphorus is presumed dead at this point (Fee & Gasque, 1988), as “visiting a serious criminal was taking a high risk in the first century,” and it appears that his visits with Paul cost him his life (Witherington, 2010, p. 325).

In summary, Paul, for the third time in the pericope, referenced shame as a distress factor and provided both positive and negative examples of healthy responses to the emotion. According to Fee (1988), this appeal again reminds Timothy that the Spirit residing in him does not lead to cowardice in the face of hardship but provides strength to endure suffering to accomplish the mission. Further, Paul reminds Timothy that he, following Christ, suffered in fulfilling his mission, and Timothy is invited to join with them in a worthwhile endeavor.

*Principle Eight: Organizational Leaders Must Address Burnout and Fatigue Such that It Reduces Personal Shame and Provides Renewed Purpose and Strength.*

## SUMMARY

Burnout and compassion fatigue poses real and significant barriers to the success of organizations and their employees. Further, ignoring burnout and compassion fatigue negatively affects employees, leaders, and the organizations they serve. Left unresolved, burnout, and compassion fatigue lead to high levels of turnover and low levels of organizational and career commitment. This chapter demonstrated that burnout existed in the life of Timothy, a first-century pastor. Further, the research revealed positive steps to mitigate or eliminate the challenge faced by this minister in 2 Timothy 1. Given the risks related to burnout and compassion fatigue for individuals, their families, churches, communities, and organizational denominations, systemic change is needed to promote personal and spiritual well-being.

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## Leading by Enduring: An Analysis of Hebrews 12:1–15

*Michelle Gonzalez Segundo*

The Apostle Paul equated the believer's journey to running a race (Croy, 1998) with his eyes set on Christ, “the founder and perfecter of our faith” (*English Standard Version*, 2001, Heb. 12:2), who endured hardship and shame realizing for whom He suffered and the joyous reward at the end of His mission, pleasing His Father and the salvation of mankind (Fitzgerald, 1988). Despite the many hardships Christian organizational leaders face, they will reap a plentiful harvest in due season if they endure and do not give up (Gal. 6:9). The concept of endurance leaves no room for quitting or failure especially for Christian leaders following Christ's example even unto death on the cross for the sake of His followers' eternal salvation (Laniak, 2006).

Man is on a quest of fulfillment in every aspect of his life including the workplace, and spiritual leadership based on biblical values such as

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endurance is necessary for the transformation and success of Christian leaders, their followers, and their organizations (Fry, 2003). Modern culture teaches that man's success advances the gospel in direct contrast to the Apostle Paul's declaring that sufferings serve to advance the gospel (DeSilva, 2018). Indeed, Christ gives strength amidst suffering which is why in His suffering Paul declared that he could do all things, meaning endure the suffering of all things, by the strength he receives through Christ (Phil. 4:13; Fitzgerald, 1988). Exploring the social and cultural context of Hebrews 12 provides broad insight into the system of exchange and benefit of living a committed religious life in the first-century Mediterranean world which is significantly distinct from postmodernity and individualistic, western ideology (Robbins, 1996).

The process of endurance encompasses a myriad of experiences and virtues outlined in Hebrews 12:1–15 of (a) endurance; (b) suffering (c) persecution; (d) discipline; (e) collective identity; (f) holiness; and (g) righteousness. Understanding the virtue of endurance from the first-century, Mediterranean worldview will enable postmodern Christian leaders to incisively translate first century Christians' response of faith and endurance into their current diversified cultures and organizations (DeSilva, 2018). The subject of endurance is significant for leaders as they have been tasked with an organizational mission; however, a biblical perspective of endurance challenges Christian leaders to not only fulfill organizational goals merely for the sake of the organization but also for the cause of Christ in building His kingdom and pointing men's hearts to the Father. The purpose of this exegetical analysis is to examine the biblical virtue of endurance and its implications for organizational leaders experiencing hardship as outlined in Hebrews 12:1–15 focusing on the recurring subthemes of (a) endurance; (b) suffering (c) persecution; (d) discipline; (e) collective identity; (f) holiness; and (g) righteousness.

## BACKGROUND OF HEBREWS

The authorship of Hebrews has been long debated as second-century scribes initially suggested the Apostle Paul as the author due to a reference to Timothy in closing greetings (Heb. 13:23); however, the writing style of Hebrews, its rhetorical finesse, and stylistic polish contrasts with the Pauline letters (DeSilva, 2012; Ellingworth, 1993), and the Apostle Paul's own salvation testimony as the Hebrews' author admitted to coming to faith by virtue of apostolic witness (Heb. 2:3,4) as opposed to Paul's

direct, divine intervention (1 Cor. 15:3–10; DeSilva, 2018). The Apostle Paul refused to use crafty or lofty words (1 Cor 2:1) or rhetorical ornament as he believed his audience’s response should be based on the working of the Holy Spirit and encountering God’s power through the gospel message rather than by his own doing (DeSilva, 2018). Barnabas and Apollos were also viable candidates namely Apollos for his rhetorical ability and knowledge of the Old Testament while scholars also suggested Peter, Priscilla, Luke, Jude, Stephen, Silas, Epaphras, and Aristion as possibly authoring Hebrews (Allen, 2010; DeSilva, 2018; Ellingworth, 1993); however, none were ever confirmed as the author of Hebrews but was very possibly of Diaspora origin and acculturated into the Greco-Roman environment (DeSilva, 2012). Origen rested in not knowing for certain who the author was but made a final statement regarding the Hebrews’ authorship asserting that only God knows the truth (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History. 6.25.14; DeSilva, 2018; Mathews, 1897).

The precise date Hebrews was written is also unknown (DeSilva, 2018; Ellingworth, 1993; Peeler, 2019). Because Clement of Rome was influenced by Hebrews as he referenced it in his own epistle forty-seven times (Bacon, 1900; Ellingworth, 1993); Hebrews was written prior to A.D. 96 and more specifically prior to A.D. 70 as the unknown author focused on the desert tabernacle rather than the Jerusalem temple and not mentioning its destruction that could have demonstrated the obsolescence of Levitical sacrifices suggesting authorship predating A.D. 70 (Church, 2017; DeSilva, 2018; Ellingworth, 1993; Heil, 2011). While it has been debated among scholars if Hebrews addresses Jewish or Gentile Christians, Ellingworth (1993) posited that no biblical text was specifically written for Gentile Christians, further positing that the purpose for which Hebrews was written was for a mixed crowd that would bring reconciliation to both Gentile and Jewish Christians while expecting the readers to be acquainted with Old Testament traditions, rabbinic procedures, institutions, and Mosaic law. Overall, Hebrews has no explicit grounding to an author, location, time, or community (Peeler, 2019).

In examining the epistle of Hebrews, the author’s overall message reflects on the person of Jesus and the significance of His death and resurrection, creating an awareness of Christ’s commitment to His mission challenging all believers to a deeper commitment to their faith and mission despite persecution from unsupportive family members and community (DeSilva, 2018; Monk, 2015). Hebrews further challenges believers to not take God’s grace for granted but to respond in such a way

that honors God and reflects the value of His favor and relationship with Him through the believer's faithfulness and obedience (DeSilva, 2018). Although Gentile Christians assumed Hebrews was primarily written for those in the Jewish tradition possibly serving as a mediator between Judaism and Christianity, the purpose of Hebrews is not only to reflect the continuity of God's people before and after Christ but also challenges believers to base their lives on nothing more and nothing less than Christ (Ellingworth, 1993).

Society acted to deter Christians from identifying with one God which was considered a diversion from proper piety and a danger to the well-being of society as a whole who credited their traditional gods with upholding social order, securing political stability, and providing good crops (DeSilva, 2018). The Hebrews author explains how newly converted Christians experienced severe sufferings (Heb. 10:32) such as insult, physical assault, public disgrace, imprisonment, and confiscation of goods and is concerned congregation members will grow weary and lose heart (Heb. 12:3), drift away from the gospel message (Heb. 2:1), and turn away from the living God (Heb. 3:12) thus forfeiting the promised rest and hope of eternal salvation (Heb. 4:1). The eternal perspective of endurance lies in the testament of God's redemptive plan of salvation.

### INNER TEXTURE ANALYSIS

Exploring the inner texture of scripture focuses on words and phrases as communicative tools through examination of repetition, sequence, pattern, structures, devices, and modes in the text, providing rich context for meaning and effects (Hamilton, 2020; Robbins, 1996). The divine nature of scripture speaks for itself through the use of the socio-rhetorical method of inner texture analysis (Rogers, 2006) by examining the six types of inner texture (a) repetitive; (b) progressive; (c) narrational; (d) open-middle-closing; (e) argumentative; and (f) sensory-aesthetic texture (Robbins, 1996).

### REPETITIVE TEXTURE AND PATTERN

Socio-rhetorical analysis provides values, beliefs, and convictions embedded in the text stemming from the intended audience and their cultural context (Robbins, 1996; Satterwhite, 2017). When words or

phrases are repeated at least twice in a text along with multiple occurrences of grammatical, syntactical, verbal, or topical phenomena, the result is a repetitive texture that helps to decipher the Hebrews writer's intention for the text along with important principles he wanted to emphasize considering the culture's oral tradition (McDonald, 2019; Robbins, 1996).

The author personalizes the text to the individual believer and his personal responsibility of endurance by addressing the reader as *you* or *your* 14 times throughout the pericope. It is the individual who must consider his part for the benefit of the whole even as Christ gave His life as a ransom for humanity (Matt. 20:28). This call to Christ is one of death (Bonhoeffer, 1959) and oftentimes solitude (Matt. 19:29), but such is the cost of discipleship (Matt. 16:24–26; Bonhoeffer, 1959). The Apostle Paul reminded followers of Christ to count all gain but dung (Phil. 3:8) that Christ, the prize, may be won (Phil. 3:14). The Hebrews' author predominantly emphasizes the sense of community not only by opening the passage and paralleling current believers with the great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1) but also by repeatedly referring to *we*, *us*, or *our* 15 times in the selected pericope. Addressing the community as a whole who were experiencing adversity through imprisonment, trial, reproach, and despoliation of property (Croy, 1998) builds a sense of a supportive faith community as partners in Christ (Heb. 3:14; DeSilva, 2004; Guy, 2004; Kahn et al., 2017) and partners in this heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1; DeSilva, 2004), challenging believers to care for one another and reinforcing group values by reminding each other of the reward that is theirs should they endure (DeSilva, 2004). The great cloud of witnesses as a supportive faith community is significant as the author references the patriarchs of the faith who have gone before such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who all lived and died by faith and endured not just for their own sake but for generations to come (Hebrews 11:13–16; Ellingworth, 1993). The author signifies to the reader that he is a part of a community much larger than himself with a rich history of endurance that Christ's mission would continue and others in this community of faith would be strengthened through others' commitment to endure (Guy, 2004; Kahn et al., 2017).

To put into perspective the individual who is part of the community of faith, the Hebrews' author references the terms *God*, *Christ*, or *He* 14 times in the pericope. Not only does the life of the believer not belong to himself for the sake of the collective, but his life also ultimately belongs



to his Creator (1 Cor. 6:20) and thus the need for repetitive reference to God as the believers' heavenly Father (Heb. 12:6,7,9). It must also be noted that Christ, although God incarnate, is acknowledged in His humanity as the Father's work was perfected through Christ His son making Him the exemplar of endurance and pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2,3; Croy, 1998; DeSilva, 2000, 2004; Hoekema, 1974). Persecuted believers must make every effort to seek the hand of God working in their lives so that endurance might be produced and developed to the glory of God first and then to the faith community (Croy, 1998).

The next word significantly repeated is the term *discipline* mentioned 12 times along with the corresponding term *Father* that is repeated four times in conjunction with the terms *children, son, and sons* being repeated seven times. This term would normally refer to punishment for sin (DeSilva, 2000); however, the author emphasizes discipline as a formative process rather than punitive, reiterating its necessity as "for our good, that we may share in His holiness" (*ESV*, Heb. 12:10; DeSilva, 2000). The author affirms the believers' communal identity as sons of the Most High God who disciplines His children out of love more so through teaching (formative) rather than correction (punitive) (Heb. 12:6; Ellingworth, 1993); otherwise, without the discipline of the Father, believers would be illegitimate, fatherless children with no opportunity to share in the Father's holiness or bear the fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:10,11). The Christian's call to endure chastening otherwise known as discipline as children of God is necessary for sanctification that produces holiness, righteousness, as well as a lasting heritage of faith (Rogers, 2006; Wallace, 2006).

This signifies the importance of the author's use of the corresponding terms *children, son, and sons* being utilized seven times throughout the pericope. The author contrasts the difference between the discipline of an earthly father who does as he sees fit and divine discipline that yields an eternal reward (Ellingworth, 1993). DeSilva (2004) asserted that *paideia* which is "the often painful education [training] all parents use to mold the character of their children" (pg. 797) is a prerequisite for God's adopted children to share in the rewards of heaven through Christ as they share in the experience of being disciplined (Heb. 12:8). Once again, the shared sense of endurance through suffering serves as a form of unity among siblings being disciplined by one Father.

The last series of repeated words in the pericope include *sin or weight* (3), *wearry, weak, or faint* (8), and *endure, endured, or endurance* (4). Growing weary is not just a measure of physical, emotional, or mental fatigue but growing weary, weak, or faint places the believer in jeopardy of losing the hope and promise he has in Christ. In the face of persecution, many first-century believers had their eyes more focused on the price than on the prize of following Christ causing them to succumb to apostasy (DeSilva, 2000; Thomas, 2006). Believers are urged to endure opposition not only for the sake of the faith community but most importantly for the sake of their own salvation (Guy, 2004; Kent, 1972; Kahn et al., 2017; Thompson, 2008). The author warns “those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come” (ESV, Heb. 6:4) that it is impossible for their repentance to be restored should they not endure and fall away which is comparative to once again crucifying Christ and holding Him in contempt (Heb. 6:4–6; Thompson, 2008). The combination of these terms being repeated in the text, *sin, weary, faint, weak, and discipline*, reflect the consequences of believers not enduring in their faith and commitment to Christ. Ultimately, to not endure is a sin as weariness can cause doubt in God’s sovereignty and goes against His will for the believer who is called to endure (1 Pet. 2:21; 4:1) through complete obedience to the Father (Lk. 22:42) and dependence on His sufficient grace (2 Cor. 12:9).

### PROGRESSIVE TEXTURE AND PATTERN

Because progression emerges from repetition, words and phrases written in sequential patterns serve as building stones for progression serving as a forward movement adding dimension to the analysis and exposing other phenomena in the text (Robbins, 1996). The most referred to terms in this pericope is a combination of terms referring to *God* (3), *Father* (4), *He, Him, His* and (7), *Jesus, He, Him, Himself* (4) totaling God being referenced 18 times reflecting the central role He plays in this pericope. This emphasis places the reader’s focus on God as a loving Father (v. 7), disciplinarian (v. 6), standard of holiness (v. 10) and righteousness (v. 11), giver of grace (v. 15), ultimate object of man’s worship (v. 14), as well as Christ as the exemplar of endurance (v. 2).

The combined terms *we* (5), *us* (6), *our* (2), *all* (1), and *witnesses* (1) are iterated 15 times next in line to the term of *God* signifying the

author's intent to first draw attention to God following the importance of the believer within the community of faith context and his responsibility to fellow believers. This also explains the references to *you* (8) and *your* (5) as personal responsibility for the whole. The progressive flow from God to the individual to the faith community coincides with the Great Commandment to love God and love people (Mk. 12:28–31). The sense of community is initially recognized at the forefront of the pericope as the author begins by reminding the reader that he is surrounded by “so great a cloud of witnesses” (*ESV*, Heb. 12:1) placing the individual as part of a kingdom larger than himself affirming not only that his life is not his own (1 Cor. 6:19,20) but also that suffering is not unique to the individual but is indeed universal notably to people of faith and religious traditions (Croy, 1998).

The text progresses to the author confronting the believer who has grown *weary* (2), *fainthearted*, *weak*, *struggle*, *fainthearted*, *fails*, and *drooping* admonishing him to look to Christ as the example of suffering (Ellingworth, 1993) who endured the cross, despised shame for the joy set before Him and is now “seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (*ESV*, Heb. 12:2; Spellman, 2016). The author highlights Christ through this pattern of weariness that the reader might identify with Christ first in His sufferings and then with His reward for endurance. Christ's suffering prepared and qualified Him to fulfill His role as High Priest (Allen, 2010; Thompson, 2008) as man's suffering will prepare him for holiness (v. 10) and qualify him for righteousness (v. 11). As Christ endured the shame of cross for the salvation of mankind (Spellman, 2016), man must endure suffering as a witness to his salvation lest he falls away from repentance (Heb.6:6) as well as for the sake of fellow believers and unbelievers as he is transformed into the likeness of Christ through his suffering (DeSilva, 2004; Niewold, 2008; Serrano, 2017).

## NARRATIONAL TEXTURE AND PATTERN

The voice of the Hebrews' writer is the voice of the speaker (Allen, 2010; Lane, 1991b) who moves the reader through a sequence of questions introducing a definition of God as Father and the believer as son. The first question, “and have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?” (*ESV*, Heb. 12:5), draws attention to the believers whose faith and identity as children of God are waning. Between the first and second question of the narrative pattern, the narrator introduces a written

text, “my son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives” (*ESV*, Heb. 12:5,6) which is an excerpt from the Old Testament found in Proverbs 3:12 correlating suffering with sonship (Thomas, 2006).

The author again refers to sonship and asks the second question in the narrative pattern stating, “it is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (*ESV*, Hebrews 12:7). When a person identifies with Christ as a son of God, discipline that comes through the aforementioned suffering should be expected because it is through this process of discipline, suffering, and enduring that believers are transformed into the likeness of Christ (Barton et al., 2014). Ellingworth (1993) asserted that the Greek tradition of *paideia*, or discipline, denoted education, whereas the Hebrew tradition of *paideia* was welcomed as a form of punishment or parental training from God bridging the gap between Old and New Testament believers under the headship of the same God who disciplines His children as an earthly father also does for the benefit of his children (Barclay, 1964; DeSilva, 2009; Ellingworth, 1993).

## OPENING-MIDDLE-CLOSING TEXTURE AND PATTERN

The importance of analyzing all sections of a text is vital in understanding how some endings are not actual endings but are just the beginning of a greater concept or event and often introduce a new topic just as the initial ending comes to a dramatic halt (Robbins, 1996). All three sections of the text, opening, middle, and closing are composed of the previously discussed literary tools of repetition, progression, and narration that work together to create the text as a whole (Robbins, 1996). Each section could possibly contain its own beginning, middle, and ending components providing unique textures within the overall structure of the text (Robbins, 1996).

The opening of the Hebrews 12:1–15 passage focuses on the first three verses that have their own opening, middle, and ending. Hebrews 12:1 presents an explicit exhortation to believers by reminding them of the community of faith from which they belong and the responsibility they have to those who have gone before in continuing the kingdom mission (Attridge, 1990). This focus on the collective benefit of the individual’s endurance reflects Christ’s individual suffering and sacrifice for

humanity. The Christian faith is not one of solitude but of a relational community (Jackson, 1903). The beginning exhortation also serves as a challenge to the suffering believer that if those who have gone before who are now considered heroes or fathers in the faith such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could endure suffering by faith whose lives now testify to the overcoming power of endurance (Thomas, 2006), they also can suffer and choose to endure for the sake of future generations (Hamilton, 2020). The middle section of the opening (Heb. 12:1b,2) acknowledges the spiritual exhaustion (Fanning, 1994) that comes with the believer carrying his cross (Matt. 16:24), equating endurance to that of an athletic event (Allen, 2010). A runner does not simply run a race for the sake of running and stopping as he chooses; however, the runner runs with the end goal in mind to attain a prize. The author's footrace imagery is not merely for the purpose of the believer running to put forth an effort with concern of speed or competition with other runners; rather, the author again places Jesus at the forefront of the runner's race standing as the reward for finishing the race but also to highlight the possibility of failing to endure that leads to separation from Christ (1 Cor. 9:24; Ellingworth, 1993). The ending of the first section of Hebrews 12:1–3 refers back to the athletic metaphor as a reminder to believers that their eyes are to be kept on Jesus as the pioneer and finisher of their faith (Heb. 12:2) who served as an example of how struggling in the flesh can be overcome by the Spirit (Ellingworth, 1993). Endurance embraces the eternal reality of Christ's overcoming power (Firth, 2019), and despite the running of the race, believers can take heart and rest in the finished work of Christ.

The opening of the middle section of the passage (Heb. 12:3–11) reiterates the purpose of Christ's suffering on the cross (Heb. 12:2) and endurance of hostility from both sinners and the religious (Thomas, 2006) that was for His followers that they might follow His example and not grow weary (Heb. 12:3) emphasizing collectivity and the believer's responsibility to the community of faith even as Christ came not for His own benefit but to seek and save those who were lost (Matt. 20:28; Luke 19:10).

The middle of the mid-section of the passage (Heb 12:5,6) is where *paideia* is introduced (Spellman, 2016) as it alludes to Proverbs 3:11,12, often a neglected referral of the Old Testament in Hebrews (Spellman, 2016), connoting the ancient Israel practice of corporal punishment which is an instantiation of the intimate relationship between suffering and learning (Fitzgerald, 2008). As the author reminds readers of the

physical pain caused by an earthly father's discipline, he simultaneously iterates that the discipline of their heavenly Father although not by physical beating (Heb. 12:6) will still be just as painful urging believers to accept this divine, spiritual discipline just as much if not more than discipline of the flesh (Exline et al., 2017; Fitzgerald, 2008; Holladay, 2005). Contemporary culture frowns upon and criticizes parents who resort to corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure for their children deeming it abusive and ineffective (Fitzgerald, 2008; Straus, 2005); however, in the ancient context, corporal punishment was ubiquitous, and parents who did not discipline their children and "spared the rod" (*ESV*, Prov. 13:24) were criticized for spoiling their children (Fitzgerald, 2008). Holladay (2005) posited that the author depicts the Hebrews as immature children just as the Apostle Paul did in 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2 as he addressed believers who were infants in Christ and given milk rather than meat or solid food; however, the Apostle Paul expressed his frustration over fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who should be matured yet still behave worldly as infants quarreling among each other (1 Cor. 3:3). Such is the necessity for discipline as it is used as a training tool for believers for the purpose of maturing Christians from spiritual infancy to adulthood (Heb. 12:11; Allen, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2008; Holladay, 2005).

The ending of the middle section (Heb. 12: 7–11) revolves around the concept of sonship (Spellman, 2016). The author exhorts believers who are in the process of suffering by affirming their legitimacy as sons of God who otherwise would be illegitimate, undisciplined children (Heb. 12:8). The ancient text refers to *paideia*, discipline, not only as a form of corrective punishment for disobedience but also denotes discipline as a form of training in obedience incorporating the notion of teaching along with active guidance (Spellman, 2016). The father-son image in this portion of the text is rather significant as seen throughout the Bible as fathers bear the weight of disciplining their children that comes in multiple forms combining "the nuances of training, instruction, and firm guidance with those of reproof, correction, and punishment" (Lane, 1991a, p. 420; Spellman, 2016) that their heritage will continue as one of faith. The Hebrews' author then asks the question "shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?" (*ESV*, Heb.12:9). The legacy that God as the heavenly Father is attempting to preserve by disciplining His children is not one "where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (*King James Version*, 1611, Matt. 6:19, 20) but is one of eternal value, of holiness and righteousness, that is

grounded in His perfect love through the completed work of obedience and suffering of His son. Christ's unity with God exemplifies the sonship theme where all children including God's perfect and blameless Son will most assuredly experience suffering through discipline (Allen, 2010; Lane, 1993; Spellman, 2016; Thomas, 2006).

The final ending section of the pericope (Heb. 12:12:15) concludes with a hortatory, suggesting that believers are taking the Lord's discipline lightly leading them to grow weary (Spellman, 2016) that could result in a complete rejection of the divine discipline which is ultimately a rejection of sonship and of God as Father and Jesus as savior. In the first half of the ending, the author admonishes the believer to lift his drooping hands, strengthen his weak knees, and make straight his foot's path (Heb. 12:12) and to strive for peace as well as holiness which is a requirement to see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). New converts experienced shame, alienation, and loss of land and family as a result of following Christ, but through their suffering in a predominant culture of honor (DeSilva, 2000; Malina, 2001a), believers could cling to the glorious, eternal hope with an alternative worldview of a new kingdom not made with human hands (2 Cor. 5:1; Firth, 2019). The author challenges the reader to strive for peace with everyone, echoing Christ's words at the sermon on the Mount when he said, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (ESV, Matt. 5:19). Not only is suffering a prerequisite for identifying as a child of God but being one who strives for peace is also a requirement. It is worth noting that the author is most likely exhorting Christians to attempt to live in peace not necessarily with everyone per se but with all believers whether strong or weak because striving for peace with non-Christians would be doubly improbable (Ellingworth, 1993). The end goal for Hebrews 12:14 is to admonish the reader to peace and sanctification for one is a prerequisite for sonship identity while the latter is a prerequisite to see God (Heb. 12:14; DeSilva, 2000).

The last half of the ending (Heb. 12:15) brings the reader back to communal responsibility for those sharing in the faith. The concern is for the effects of bitterness springing up within the community of believers that signifies suffering is taking place not only from external sources but also inwardly that are deeply rooted potentially causing believers to become defiled and turn away from the faith (Crowther, 2018; Ellingworth, 1993). The author is concerned that this defilement of bitterness is a chronic condition of inner weakness that could spread to the rest of the faith community threatening the community of believers' peace

and sanctity (DeSilva, 2000; Kahn et al., 2017; Potgieter, 2020) lest it is uprooted which only comes through the believer maintaining his focus on the enduring runners' reward, Christ, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27; Allen, 2010; Ellingworth, 1993; Firth, 2019). The progression from the beginning began with the believers' eyes set on those who have gone before and the legacy of faith they left behind to the middle section of the pericope reaffirming sonship identity, and now to the end of the pericope that leads up to the believer strengthening himself for others as the future of the gospel is to go forth for future generations. This is how Christians are to live. As sons of God, enduring suffering with Christ at the forefront leading the way to victory and living in community with fellow believers sharpening each other toward good works and holiness but most importantly toward the grace of God (Heb. 12:15).

The author's use of vocatives (Attridge, 1990; Guy, 2004) progresses from first person, plural pronouns such as *we* and *us* connoting community to second person, plural pronouns such as *you* and personal nouns such as *son* indicating a shift to personal responsibility and identity in Christ as adoptive children of God.

## ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTURE AND PATTERN

Inner reasoning throughout the discourse presented as assertions, supportive reasonings for those assertions, clarification through opposites and contraries, along with counterarguments make for an argumentative texture in the text cause the reader to think and act differently (Robbins, 1996). The narrative discourse in Hebrews 12:1–15 introduces three major syllogisms of (a) Christ as the endurance exemplar; (b) sonship; and (c) collective responsibility.

### Christ as the Endurance Exemplar.

**Unstated Major Premise.** Christ as the Son of God and perfecter of our faith endured suffering of the cross at the hand of hostile sinners, despised shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 12:2,3).

**Minor Premise.** Jesus endured suffering.

**Conclusion.** Therefore, Jesus attained the prize of unification with the Father (Heb. 12:2).



### Sonship.

**Unstated Major Premise.** God disciplines only His legitimate sons whom He loves that they might share in His holiness and reap the fruit of righteousness which is required to see God (Heb. 12:5–11).

**Minor Premise.** Only legitimate sons are disciplined by God.

**Conclusion.** Therefore, the sons who endure will share in God's holiness, reap the fruit of righteousness, and see the Lord (Heb. 12:11,14).

### Collective Responsibility.

**Unstated Major Premise.** Believers have a responsibility to endure for the sake of the fathers of the faith who also endured and now serve as a cloud of witnesses as well as for the sake of current and future generations ensuring none fail to obtain the grace of God by having roots of bitterness and quitting their race (Heb. 12:1, 15).

**Minor Premise.** Believers must endure on behalf of the collective faith community, past, present, and future.

**Conclusion.** Therefore, believers are responsible for each other as a community.

## SENSORY-AESTHETIC TEXTURE AND PATTERN

Texts that evoke or embody the senses such as thought, emotion, sight, touch, smell, and the manner in which the texts evoke or embody such as through imagination, humor, or reason add a sensory-aesthetic texture revealing embedded dimensions that provide tone, color, vivid imagery, or logic to the discourse (Robbins, 1996).

**Zone of Emotion-Fused Thought.** This zone's focus is on the eyes, heart, eyelids, pupils, love, hate, sight, affection, wisdom, folly, and intuitive concepts such as knowing, thinking, understanding, considering, and remembering (Robbins, 1996). The Hebrews' 12:1–15 author evokes readers' thought and imagination (a) to envision the cloud of witnesses and regard the completion of their endurance by faith (v.1); (b) to look to Jesus as the author and perfecter of their faith (v. 2); (c) to remember the forgotten sonship exhortation (v. 5); (d) to acknowledge the emotion of joy that was set before Christ (v. 2); (e) to not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord (v. 5); (f) to endure in order to share in God's holiness as a requirement to see the Lord (v. 10); (g) to respect earthly fathers who discipline their children (v. 9); (h) to avoid a root of bitterness that

sets into a person's heart leading to defilement (v. 1); and (i) to understand how earthly fathers disciplined their children as they saw or thought necessary (v. 10).

**Zone of Self-Expressive Speech.** This zone's focus is on the mouth, ears, lips, throat, teeth, and activities of the organs involving speaking, hearing, saying, calling, crying, singing, instructing, disobeying, and cursing (Robbins, 1996). The author asks the reader two questions in the pericope if (a) believers have forgotten the Proverbs' exhortation referring to them as sons (v. 5); and if (b) the reader knows of any sons whose fathers do not discipline them (v. 7).

**Zone of Purposeful Action.** This zone's focus is on the hands, feet, arms, legs, and activities of the organs that involve marching, walking, standing, acting, doing, sitting, kidnapping, building, as well as being quick, slow, or capable (Robbins, 1996). The pericope is significantly active and opens up with the author admonishing the reader to (a) lay aside every weight (v. 1); (b) equates the process of sanctification to an athletic event of racing (v. 1); (c) urges the reader to identify with the physical and mental strain runners experience while in a race (v. 1); (d) admitting that the reader although suffering has not physically shed blood meaning the reader has not been martyred (v. 4); (e) acknowledges that the reader struggles with sin that clings so closely (v. 1); (f) God reproves, chastises, and disciplines His sons (v. 5, 6); (g) discipline is painful (v. 11); (h) admonishes the reader to lift his drooping hands, strengthen his weak knees, and make straight paths for his feet (v. 12, 13); (i) Christ endured hostility; (j) Christ is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (v. 2); and believers grow weary and fainthearted (v. 3).

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE ANALYSIS

Examining the text through Robbins' (1996) socio-rhetorical approach of social and cultural texture provides insight into the type of social and cultural world the language of Hebrews 12:1–15 evokes inspiring Christians in the first-century Mediterranean world to endure in their faith amidst social and familial persecution as a community of unified believers. Considering the cultural context of Hebrews, the author seeks both to quell and to create fear by making dual moves with fear which readers must be aware by first acknowledging that God destroyed the enslaving fear of death through Christ's own death and resurrection, yet a second fear exists which is the fear of departing from God which was a possibility

considering the shame and persecution believers were suffering (Malina, 2001b; Peeler, 2018). The author of Hebrews responds to this fear by (a) admonishing the community of believers to pay attention, persevere, and run with endurance (Heb. 12:1); (b) reminding them of the community they have to aid in their endurance as well as their suffering (Heb. 12:1); and (c) assurance in the priesthood of Christ through His one-time sacrifice and active intercession on believers' behalf (Heb. 12:2,3; Kahn et al., 2017; Peeler, 2018).

### SPECIFIC SOCIAL TOPICS

The Hebrews 12 author's response to the world lies in an introversionist approach where the community of believers is discouraged to convert the world nor conform to it but rather separate from the world and be secure in their personal holiness (Robbins, 1996). Members of the introversionist society consider their personal experiences to be significant either for the group as a whole or for individual revelation assisting in the growth of personal piety and deepening their spirituality rather than widening it (Robbins, 1996). The introversionist society disdains those without holiness, nurturing their inner community of believers on an individual basis that discourages members from acting in mission outside of the group thus exhorting faithful members to be a law unto themselves apart from the world (Robbins, 1996).

The objectivist social texture of the Hebrews 12 discourse focuses on the world as an object to be dealt with where the introversionist community believes God has called them to abandon the world (Robbins, 1996). Although the author does not mention converting the world or completely abandoning the world, he does admonish Christians to "strive for peace with everyone" (*ESV*, Heb. 12:14) and reflects a second type of objectivist discourse, reformist, as it is rare for a text to only contain one type of social response (Robbins, 1996) by the author asserting a sense of communal rather than individual responsibility to "make sure no one fails to obtain the grace of God" (*ESV*, Heb. 12:15). The reformist social response to the world acknowledges the world is corrupt yet assumes evil can be overcome by means of supernatural insight by those who are attuned to spiritual influence (Robbins, 1996). As believers yield to divine discipline (Croy, 1998; Exline et al., 2017) they will share in the holiness of God and produce the sweet fruit of righteousness thus shining their light before men and pointing men's hearts to the Father (Matt. 5:16).

## COMMON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TOPICS

Challenge Response (Ripost) is a type of social communication that is a constant tug-of-war (Malina, 1993) where messages are relayed from a source to a receiver where the source is the challenger, and the message serves as a symbol, an event, or both that takes place publicly, ensuring a response from the individual where even a nonresponse is publicly interpreted as a response (Robbins, 1998). Challenge response in an honor society consists of three phases of (a) the challenge; (b) the perception of the challenge; and (c) the reaction of the receiving individual (Robbins, 1998).

**The Challenge.** The Hebrews' author does not necessarily enter the social space of believers; however, he reminds believers that Christ Himself entered their social space from another world that knows no end to share in the believers' space and gain a cooperative foothold in inviting them to be a part of the community of believers who have gone before who now serve as a great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1). The challenge is for believers to set aside every weight and sin that closely clings (Heb. 12:1b), run their race of faith with endurance (Heb. 12:1c), and to look to Jesus as the perfecter of their faith who led by His own example of endurance to the cross and ultimately death (Heb. 12: 2). Robbins (1996) posited that the challenger, the source sending the message which is not the obscure, unknown author of Hebrews, is indeed the Holy Spirit Himself as all scripture is God-breathed for the purpose of "teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (*ESV*, 2 Tim. 3:16) enters the space of the receiver as the Holy Spirit indwells (Jn. 14:17) and empowers (Acts 1:8) believers to endure (Heb. 12:7). Robbins (1996) further posited that a negative reason the challenger, the Holy Spirit, enters the space of the receiver who are first-world, Mediterranean Christians, is to dislodge the receiver from his social space as believers are growing weary and fainthearted in the natural world (Heb. 12:3), reminding them of their spiritual citizenship as disciplined sons of God (Heb. 12:5; Malina, 2001b). Although the Christians are suffering in body, in spirit, they are seated with Christ as joint heirs (Rom. 8:17).

**The Perception.** The challenge must be perceived and interpreted by the receiver and the public at large where the receiver must decide if the challenger is dishonoring his self-worth as the challenge primarily takes place among equals regarding the recipient as an equal or whether the

challenger implies equality while the receiver is either at a higher or lower social status. The author of Hebrews clearly points out that the receiver is at a lower, hierarchical position as son while God, the Father, is the disciplinarian; however, should the receiver remain faithful and endure suffering, the promise the receiver can anticipate is sharing in God's holiness (Heb. 12:10). Man will never be equal to God as one is the Creator and the other the created, but through the endurance of their faith and hope in Christ, believers are restored (1 Peter 5:10), regenerated (2 Cor. 5:17), and reconciled to the Father (Rom. 5:12).

**The Reaction.** The Hebrews author uses rhetorical skill to respond to the chaos and danger to believers in the community (Martin & Whitlark, 2018; Peeler, 2019), but the receiver of the message must now respond, enabling the public to determine whether the challenger keeps his own honor at the expense of the receiver or vice versa (Robbins, 1998). Hebrews shows a sense of collective responsibility from believers strong in their faith while others are on the verge of abandoning their faith and refers to strong and weak groups where some community members need more strength than others as some are teachers and learners or advanced teaching and elementary teaching (Ellingworth, 1993). Stronger community members of faith have a responsibility to ensure weaker members are growing to maturity in their faith lest they regress to an even weaker spiritual state than when they began their Christian walk and must continue faithfully to the end (Ellingworth, 1993; Guy, 2004; Kahn et al., 2017).

## FINAL CULTURAL CATEGORIES

New Testament literature brings to the forefront one's cultural location by the manner in which a person presents his arguments, reasons, and propositions by incorporating the counterculture or alternative culture rhetoric that is often considered heretical evoking a new future that includes mini-cultures of both sexes and a wide range of age groups to influence people over their lifespan with developed institutions to sustain the group (Robbins, 1996; Roberts, 1978). As believers are challenged to "lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely" (*ESV*, Heb. 12:1), they are entrenched and burdened in a dominant culture of sin where the author evokes their countercultural newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Jesus also was entrenched in the same sinful, dominant culture (2 Cor. 5:21), shamed (Heb. 12:2), and suffered hostility (Heb. 12:3) yet endured for

the sake of the joy He would obtain as the Son of God being “seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (*ESV*, Heb. 12:2).

The author reminds believers from whom they are being disciplined, God, the Father, (Heb. 12:5), and why they are being disciplined, as sons of God (Heb. 12:7), affirming their countercultural spiritual identity as sons of God rather than illegitimate children (Heb. 12:8) of the devil (1 Jn. 3:10). Those who refuse spiritual correction by avoiding affliction not only make light of sin but also make light of God (Henry, 1706). The discipline of earthly fathers, although much needed coinciding with the dominant culture (Heb. 12:9), produces short term benefits; however, the countercultural spiritual discipline of the heavenly Father produces an eternal reward of sharing in His holiness (Heb. 12:10) which is required to see God (Heb. 12:14) and produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:11) that evokes a better community of believers and members of the dominant society voluntarily seeking a better life (Heb. 12:14; Robbins, 1996). As leaders are able to empathize with followers through their own process of endurance, the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) suggests that leaders will develop a favorable relational exchange with followers by gaining followers’ trust as well as gauge followers’ needs to adjust their leadership that will fit the needs of their followers holistically (Browning, 2007; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Mahsud et al., 2010; Yukl, 2013) as it is a relationship-based approach to organizational leadership, focusing on the dyadic exchange between leaders and followers that begins with the Christian leader as a follower and God as the foundational leader of leaders.

## APPLICATION

Through the recurring themes of (a) endurance; (b) suffering (c) persecution; (d) discipline; (e) collective identity; (f) holiness; and (g) righteousness in Hebrews 12:1–15, organizational leaders can implement the biblical virtues that will contribute to leadership development and authentic leader-member exchange (LMX) that not only serves practical, organizational purposes but spiritual purposes as well. The spiritual significance of endurance and the virtues it encompasses far outweigh organizational implications as the emerging and accelerating call of spiritual leadership in the workplace not only produces committed and productive followers but more importantly taps into the needs of followers, providing

a sense of transcendence, meaning, and fulfillment in their respective workplaces (Fry, 2003).

## ENDURANCE

Rather than focus on a leader's one defining moment, it is the process and years of preparation, habits, values, and knowledge gained through his many failures that have contributed to the onstage, defining moment of his leadership (Lowney, 2005). Leaders persevere and have the courage and will to endure because they are "trusting, optimistic, foolish, and humble enough to hope and expect that the seeds of their efforts will blossom in times, ways, and places that they can neither predict nor control" (Lowney, 2005, p. 273). Motivating principles for Christian leaders include a spiritual compass that when discovered serves as a call to action of commitment and pursuit where the leader's life as well as his followers' lives are transformed from a succession of multiple episodes to a whole life of purpose (Lowney, 2005). The LMX theory (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen, 1976; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1994; Graen et al., 1982) serves as a prescription for effective leadership in developing mature relationships with followers that surpasses the mere task of accomplishing organizational goals but where both leader and follower mutually benefit from their relationship with each other (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The call of God to lead people whether ecclesially, corporately, or nonprofit organizationally implies stewardship and accountability from leaders who are aware of the overall mission that informs the destiny of his followers (Laniak, 2006). Embracing their work as a call of God, Christian leaders should be intrinsically motivated to endure and complete every task set before them that they might bring glory to God (Inauen et al., 2010). As Ignatius of Antioch believed his body was the mediator of his allegiance to Christ, Smit (2020) asserted that an element of the believer's victory in Christ is enduring hardship (Smit, 2020). Osborne (2006) explained that the truth of the gospel demands a response requiring believers to take up their own crosses that implies their own martyrdom whether it be a physical death or a dying to the flesh and of man's own will to the will of the Father (Niewold, 2008). Salvation is promised to those who endure (Matt. 24:12,13; 10:22; 2 Tim. 2:12). Enduring for the community of believers is the Hebrews author's perspective recognizing the virtue of endurance as a necessity lest the community of

believers relapse not from Christianity to Judaism but from Christianity to Paganism (Martin & Whitlark, 2018; Peeler, 2019). Organizational leaders must recognize their work as spiritual (Yukl, 2013) even when entrenched in a secular setting as God calls believers to let their lights shine that could serve as a testimony not only for their endurance but also for the glory of God (Matt. 5:16).

Principle One: Biblical leaders endure for the sake of bringing glory to God, for the sake of the community of believers, and for the sake of unbelievers.

## SUFFERING

Jewish tradition recognized suffering as redemptive and was to be expected (Ellingworth, 1993). The Hebrews author explains how the process Jesus endured to be qualified as the perfect High Priest entailed learning [*emathen*: Greek translation] obedience through the things He suffered [*epathen*: Greek translation] which is a celebrated type of Greek wordplay translating into the contemporary phrase of no pain, no gain (DeSilva, 2012). Greek teachers sought to prepare their students for the pangs of formative discipline knowing that they would be equipped “with skills, and carve into them the virtues that would discipline them to flourish in Greek culture and leave behind a praiseworthy remembrance of a life well-lived” (p. 11). Suffering is part of the process of leaving a legacy; furthermore, the Christians’ endurance of suffering for the sake of the gospel leaves an eternal legacy that cannot be destroyed with human hands just as Christ Himself could not be destroyed through His suffering but was resurrected and is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 12:2).

Second-century apostolic church father, Ignatius of Antioch, sought to be unified with God through suffering and martyrdom as he believed a faithful disciple endures suffering as a form both of allegiance to and identification with Christ (Niewold, 2008; Smit, 2020). Although Christ is the Son of God, He, too, learned from His own suffering through obedience (Heil, 2011) reflecting a positive leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship between God the Father and Christ, His son, that should also be reflected between organizational leaders and their followers as Christ is lord of the Christian leader’s life informing his leadership practices and relationships.



Principle Two: Biblical leaders embrace suffering as a formative process.

## PERSECUTION

The persecution that believers faced was intended to lead to life rather than destruction (Ellingworth, 1993). Henry (1706) posited that men persecute believers because of their commitment to Christ; however, God chastises because their commitment to Christ is not as it should be. The purpose of tribulation is to remind Christians of the future orientation of their faith not only for their personal salvation but for the salvation of future generations (Heil, 2011). Rather than the audience succumbing to victimhood through their tribulation and communal persecution, the Hebrews author transforms their perception to that of athletic contestants who through their suffering might partake in the festival gathering of God's city (Heb. 12:22–24; Koester, 2001; Monk, 2015). Believers are challenged to confront their present challenges with hope that they will one day partake in the full benefits of Christ's victory (Monk, 2015). Organizational leaders can apply the concept of persecution to their daily interactions with followers who might not understand the reason for the leaders' actions that are founded in truth and a standard upheld by their relationship with Christ. Leaders desiring positive outcomes in their relationship with followers must exhibit their own behaviors, attitudes, and techniques that will help to alleviate any leader–follower tension further serving as a testimony of their relationship with Christ (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Principle Three: Biblical leaders maintain their biblical values despite persecution.

## DISCIPLINE

The writer of Hebrews delineates hardship as a form of divine discipline that acts to reinforce and strengthen believers' commitment to Christ and develop their character positing to readers that if they endure God's painful discipline with endurance, they, too, will share in a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28; Ellingworth, 1993; Exline et al., 2017). While God may allow others to remain in their sin, it is His own children whom He corrects and disciplines out of His own affection and love as a Father (Henry, 1706). To live in sin without rebuke is a sign of

alienation from God where those children are bastards rather than sons (Henry, 1706). The discipline of earthly parents is short-lived and of less value when compared to God's discipline as man's discipline is fallible; whereas God's discipline is infallible because He, Himself, is infallible (Ellingworth, 1993). Human discipline, although beneficial, is temporal; however, those who submit to divine discipline will receive a permanent, eternal reward (Ellingworth, 1993). The Hebrews author asserts the need and benefit for discipline echoing a metaphoric chreia that has often been attributed to Isocrates and sometimes Aristotle positing that the formative root of education or discipline is bitter, but its fruit is sweet (DeSilva, 2012). The sweetness of the fruit, the benefit of discipline, is best reflected as the outcome of peace produced by righteousness (DeSilva, 2012). Origen in *Selecta in Exodum* (12.293 A) asserted that God's rod of correction (Prov. 22:15) is an instrument of divine mercy only used on those He deems as sons and daughters as His chastisement is a display of His love for His children that is not to be mistook for persecution (Croy, 1998). The believer who withstands discipline as offered through tribulation produces maturity and wisdom and serves as an equipping in discerning good from evil that will assist believers in taking an active role in the formation of new believers' progress as Christian disciples (Hebrews 5:11–14; Aristotle. *Rhet. Her.* 3.3.4–5; DeSilva, 2012).

Principle Four: Biblical leaders withstand discipline as it produces maturity and wisdom.

## COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Enduring suffering mediates communion with Christ and fellow believers (Downs, 2017). Hebrews emphasizes Christ's entry into their community on their behalf and the hope believers have in His perfection as their forerunner (Whitlark, 2020). The filial language in Hebrews 12 portrays God as Father, Jesus as God's Son and heir, and believers as children of God and fellow heirs (Peeler, 2014). The familial relationship between God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son, is foundational for Hebrews as God called Jesus to endure suffering causing Him to be exalted (Phil. 2:9) thus making Him heir of all things (Heb. 1:2; Peeler, 2014). Through Christ's heirship, believers are invited to join as heirs in the family of God (Rom. 8:17; Peeler, 2014). The author reaffirms the sense of collective community promising joint heirship as sons of God

whom the Father disciplines (Heb. 12:5–11) allowing believers to share in God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10) thus producing the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:11). Seneca’s essay *On Providence* (Prov.) asserts that God’s believers, as pupils, are instructed sternly by God similar to a strict father (Prov. 1:6) raising up a wise person such as a son or daughter (2.5) to be tested, hardened, and prepared to become God’s own (1.6) whom He toughens, examines, exercises, loves, and approves (4.7). The greater destiny asserted by Seneca is to share in God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10) as a legitimate offspring or true progeny (Prov. 1:6) rather than the contrary (Heb. 12:8; DeSilva, 2012). As the author of Hebrews admonishes believers to strive for peace with everyone (Heb. 12:14), he also highlights the importance of Christians’ role in the community who are not to neglect hospitality to strangers that will ultimately stir up love and affection that could lead to communal worship thus fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37–39) by loving their neighbor and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20) by expanding the kingdom of God through the gospel message and God’s plan of salvation (Heil, 2011). Theology done properly requires community, and Christian community done properly and authentically requires theology (Firth, 2019). It is the reciprocity between the Christian community and theology that challenges believers to endure suffering and persevere for the gospel’s sake and for each other (Firth, 2019; Guy, 2004).

Principle Five: Biblical Leaders Are Intentional in Building Community Among Their Followers.

## HOLINESS

The only way Christians are able to share in God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10) is through Christ as the heavenly High Priest who gave His own blood and body as a sacrifice as opposed to the blood of goats, bulls, and lambs that only cleansed the flesh, but Christ’s blood cleanses the soul from dead works allowing for humanity to partake in God’s holiness through the redemptive work and endurance of Christ (Heil, 2011). Ellingworth (1993) explained that believers’ reward for holiness is not only a unified community set apart for God which is the Hebrew author’s immediate concern but also to share with their fellow believers along with Christ in the life of God as He, Himself, is holy (1 Peter 1:16). The Hebrews’ author exhorts believers to first seek peace among all believers in the

Christian community (Heb. 12:14) whether strong or weak and then seek holiness as it is a condition for seeing God (Ellingworth, 1993). As God establishes the messianic kingdom through holiness (Ezekiel 28:25), so the enduring believer sharing in God’s holiness establishes the kingdom in his family, community, and organization (Barrick, 2012; Keehn, 2019).

Principle Six: Biblical leaders pursue a life of holiness by allowing the Holy Spirit to mold, shape, and sanctify their whole person into the likeness of Christ.

## RIGHTEOUSNESS

Enduring suffering proves faithfulness to Christ (Smit, 2020). Identifying with Christ’s bodily suffering allows for the perfecting of oneself as the second-century church father, Ignatius of Antioch, believed (Niederer Saxon, 2017). As affliction produces the fruit of righteousness (Heb.12:11), the fruit provides quiet and comfort to the soul (Henry, 1706). Spiritual virtues such as righteousness, honesty, truth, and excellence practiced in organizations can bring transformation to organizational members “through a clear commitment to its people, fair compensation, performance recognition, and growth opportunities, bringing about the best in their collaborators” (Montaudon-Tomas, 2019). Nel (2017) posited that by Jesus challenging His followers to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33), it is through righteousness that God provides food, clothing, and shelter. Seeking righteousness publicly is the call and priority of the disciples reinforcing the sense of community where the notion of *we* is greater than *me* (Kahn et al., 2017; Mcknight, 2015; Nel, 2017). The overall arching theme is thus unified by a paraenetic aim that focuses on the work and person of Christ (Croy, 1998; Firth, 2019).

Principle Seven: Biblical leaders exemplify righteousness by having integrity, a clear commitment to their people, fair compensation, performance recognition, and growth opportunities, bringing about the best in their followers.

## SUMMARY

Endurance is the ability to exhibit longsuffering and patience amidst trials without losing equanimity and showing constraint toward others when provoked (Crowther, 2017; Montaudon-Tomas, 2019); however, through a biblical lens, endurance is an act of (a) commitment; (b) worship; (c) obedience; (d) holiness; and (e) evangelization that Christian leaders should be practicing as a testament to their relationship with Christ and Christ's completed work on the cross and His continuous work within them (DeSilva, 2018). When practiced from a spiritual perspective, endurance not only benefits the Christian leaders' followers and the organization, but endurance also has an eternal effect of bringing glory to God where Christ is manifested through the believer's endurance through suffering (Williams, 2002). Christian leadership offers biblical principles throughout scripture as its foundation that easily merges business with spirituality and can be and should be expounded biblically to determine how Christian leaders can effectively lead their followers both naturally and spiritually.

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# Leader Ethics and Just Treatment of Followers: An Analysis of James 4:13–5:12

*Alex G. Wright*

There is a gap in the existing exegetical research for organizational leadership when it comes to the Epistle of James the brother of Jesus and cynic-turned-believer. This chapter examines James 4:13–5:12 for biblical insights into contemporary organizational leadership. The historical, social, and cultural background of the Epistle of James is discussed. Then an exegetical study of the selected pericope is conducted. This exegetical study yielded the following six principles: leader humility, just compensation of workers, patience, refraining from backbiting, endurance, and integrity. The ways in which each of these principles applies to contemporary organizational leadership are then discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

Greenleaf (1997/2002) argued that the top priority of any leader should be the well-being of his/her followers (p. 27). Similarly, when the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth were arguing about which of them was the greatest, Jesus instructed them that, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (Mk. 9:35, *New American Standard Bible*). Perhaps this focus on service and follower well-being is one of the factors which has led to the increased application of Christian spirituality to organizational settings in recent years (Mabey et al., 2016, p. 757). Whereas exegetical research in organizational leadership has been growing in popularity, however, the Epistle of James has been largely overlooked and thus represents a gap in the existing literature. According to Richardson (1997):

The Epistle of James would serve well as a companion piece to Jesus’ teachings recorded in the canonical Gospels. Its strong ethical nature is entirely consistent with the moral teaching of Jesus to his disciples as well as the sometimes harsh denunciations he uttered against religious hypocrisy. Like Jesus’ teachings, this letter is a source of both exhortation and comfort, of reproof and encouragement. (p. 22)

Osborne (2019) concurs with this assessment regarding the relationship between the Epistle of James and the teachings of Jesus, stating that “there are many implicit citations to the *Logia Jesu* (sayings of Jesus)... while Jesus is not explicitly named often in this letter, it is steeped in his thought world and draws from him at virtually every juncture” (p. 7).

Christian leadership scholars argue that Jesus is the embodiment of perfect leadership (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005, p. 4). If this is truly the case, then the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth should be carefully studied by leadership scholars. Because of the consistency between the Epistle of James and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, however, this Epistle presents an opportunity for organizational leadership scholars to study the leadership themes of Jesus’ life and ministry from a different perspective.

Much of the Epistle of James deals with the plight of those who are poor, oppressed, and taken advantage of by those in power. In James 4:13–5:12, which this chapter will examine, the author deals with several issues which apply to contemporary organizational leaders, especially as it relates to caring for followers: humility (4:13–17), justice in compensation

(5:1–4), patience (5:7–8), refraining from backbiting and negative gossip (5:9), endurance (5:10–11), and integrity (5:12).

## BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Before delving into the exegetical study, it is first necessary to offer some background information regarding the Epistle of James in order to provide context for the content. Perhaps the most pressing background issue to address is that of authorship. The writer of the Epistle only identifies himself as “James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1, *NASB*). According to scholars, the content and acceptance of this letter by the Church give four legitimate options for which “James” this could be (Moo, 2009, p. 27; Osborne, 2019, p. 7).

1. James, the Son of Zebedee and brother of John the Apostle
2. James, the son of Alphaeus, known as “James the lesser”
3. James, the father of Judas; not Judas Iscariot, but the other Apostle named Judas who is possibly the same as Thaddeus.
4. James, the brother of Jesus of Nazareth.

James the son of Zebedee was martyred in 44 CE, and it is unlikely that this Epistle was written that early, so James the son of Zebedee is eliminated as a possible author (Moo, 2009). James, the son of Alphaeus, and James, the father of Judas, have been deemed to be too obscure to have written an Epistle that was accepted as such authoritative teaching (Osborne, 2019).

Therefore, though there is some question regarding the authorship of this epistle, Early Church tradition and most present-day scholars agree that the best conclusion is that it was written by James the brother of Jesus (Blomberg & Kovalishyn, 2008, p. 27; Osborne, 2019; Moo, 2009, p. 32). Indeed, Hartin (2009) wrote, “James of Jerusalem, ‘the brother of the Lord,’ remains the most reasonable candidate for the authorship of this writing. All the evidence converges to support what did become the tradition of the Christian Church” (p. 24).

James, the brother of Jesus, had been a skeptic regarding Jesus’ identity during his earthly ministry, and it is possible that James only came fully to faith after a special appearance to him by the risen Jesus (Blomberg & Kovalishyn, 2008, p. 27). Therefore, James the brother of Jesus offers

the interesting perspective of an individual who went from a skeptic to a believer, somewhat akin to the Apostle Paul, but with the added benefit of having known and interacted with the earthly Jesus. These special circumstances necessitate that exegetical research regarding organizational leadership examine the Epistle of James for themes and insights.

If indeed the Epistle of James was written by James the brother of Jesus, then it must have been written prior to his martyrdom in 62 CE (Cheung & Spurgeon, 2018, p. 4). Since the Epistle does not reference the controversy of the Jerusalem Council, which met in 49 CE, it was most likely written before that date as well (Cheung & Spurgeon, 2018, p. 4; Vlachos, 2013, p. 6). Some scholars have argued that the Epistle's concern for the poor and oppressed reflects the conditions of the widespread famine that occurred in Judea in 46 CE (Cheung & Spurgeon, 2018, p. 4). Therefore, this Epistle was most likely written in the mid to late 40s CE (France & Guthrie, 2017; Vlachos, 2013, p. 5). Based on this date, the Epistle of James was most likely the earliest written New Testament document, as well as the earliest Christian writing of which we are aware (Blomberg & Kovalishyn, 2008, p. 35).

The Epistle of James was addressed "to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad" (James 1:1, *NASB*). The precise meaning of this salutation has been debated by scholars; some argue that it indicates that it was originally a Jewish document that was later filtered through a Christian paradigm, while others argue that the salutation simply refers to all Christians (Sleeper, 1998). The best interpretation lies somewhere between these two extremes: that this Epistle was written to Jewish Christians who lived outside of Judea (Sleeper, 1998). Moo (2009) further characterized the audience as "Jewish believers [who] were mainly poor people who were caught in a situation of considerable social tension" (Moo, 2009, p. 45).

The Epistle of James "is a pastoral letter written by one deeply concerned with the spiritual well-being of the flock. It is a letter both of encouragement and rebuke" (Doerksen, 1983, p. 10). Those to whom James was writing were facing oppression and persecution, poverty and lack of resources, and discrimination at the hands of fellow believers. The pressures of enduring these challenges caused discouragement that also resulted in dissension and backbiting (Osborne, 2019). Thus, this Epistle was written "to encourage the godly to live up to their faith and a rebuke to the backsliders to return to a productive faith... It is a challenge to live the Christian life, not just profess to it" (Doerksen, 1983, p. 10).

## EXEGETICAL STUDY OF JAMES 4:13–5:12

James 4:13–5:12 contains different warnings to rich oppressors and instructions to those who are being oppressed regarding how they should respond. Whereas this section may appear to just “be a hodgepodge collection of instructions and exhortations... it is ethical instruction and exhortation, much like the wisdom literature of the Old Testament – the book of Proverbs in particular – and much like Jesus’ ethical instruction” (Gaskins, 2000, p. 238). Therefore, the verses which comprise this pericope must be examined both individually and as part of the whole.

### JAMES 4:13–17

The first subsection of this pericope deals with presumptuous behavior. James began this section with the imperative, “Come now” (4:13, *NASB*). This is a prophetic expression of disapproval that implores readers to listen carefully because this warning comes from God (Osborne, 2019). This phrase resembles Jesus’ statement “Whoever has ears, let them hear,” which is a call for hearers—or readers—to closely examine what has been taught so that they can go beyond a superficial understanding and grasp the full implications of what is being communicated (France, 2008, p. 200).

At first glance, it may seem as though the type of behavior James was decrying is simply rational planning for the future: Planning when, where, and how business will be done and projecting profits (Gaskins, 2000, p. 238). The problem, as James saw it, is not planning for the future, though, but rather pridefully proclaiming what the future holds when no mere human—regardless of business acumen—can see the future. Therefore, the warning which James gave here was that businesspeople should not be boastful and arrogant about the type of business they will do, the success that business will have, or the profit they will gain.

Such arrogance and boasting are problematic because they will inevitably not be limited solely to proclamations about the future. Rather, this pridefulness will almost certainly mark every area of the individual’s life (Cheung & Spurgeon, 2018, p. 91). Pridefulness which causes quarrels among believers is an issue which James had addressed in the previous section of the Epistle, stating that “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (4:6, *NASB*) and instructing Christians to “humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord” (4:10, *NASB*). James

was warning that focusing on one's own significance in seeking commercial success is "arrogance, manifested in claims of self-sufficiency and self-importance" (Garrett, 2016, p. 301).

The type of behavior that James prescribed instead was for these businesspeople to humble themselves and submit to the will of God. James was not objecting to "the business nor even the making of a profit, but rather the arrogance of planning such activities without even taking into consideration God and morality and, we might add, without consulting God in prayer about such things" (Witherington, 2016, p. 522). Therefore, James' warning was neither a prohibition against planning for the future nor against seeking to succeed in business. Instead, it was an admonition—particularly for those who *do* find success in life—to live lives of humility.

### JAMES 5:1–6

The next subsection concerns rich people who have gotten ahead by depriving their workers of properly earned wages. This section once again begins with the imperative, "Come now" (5:1, *NASB*), signaling another prophetic warning. This warning is addressed to "you rich people" (5:1, *NASB*). It is unclear whether these rich people were individuals within the Christian community or outside of it. Indeed, contemporary scholars disagree widely on this question (Serrão, 2010, p. 158). Many scholars argue that these rich individuals were entirely outside the community (Osborne, 2019; Moo, 2009, p. 202; Peck, 1988, p. 294). Others have stated that there were most likely a few rich individuals within the Christian community who were being addressed but James' warnings were mostly for outsiders (Munn, 1986, p. 43). Still others surmise that these rich individuals were all inside the Christian community. Pak (2020) argued that James was solely addressing "false believers within the Christian community who were taking advantage of other believers" (p. 721). Serrão pointed out that James addressed the rich directly—"you rich" instead of "the rich"—which seems to indicate that these rich were among the intended recipients within the Christian community (p. 159).

Regardless of whether these rich individuals were inside or outside of the Christian community, however, the warnings and instructions remain the same. It is clear that these rich individuals had been living in luxury on the basis of wealth which they had fraudulently obtained. For this reason, James warned that judgment and punishment would certainly come upon



them. In fact, this judgment and punishment were so certain that, even though they had yet to happen, James used the present tense to describe their occurrence (Munn, 1986, p. 43). Indeed, there is no admonition to repent here, simply the proclamation that these rich individuals would receive the consequences of their evil deeds (Peck, 1988, p. 294). As their wealth rusts, corrodes, and rots away, these rich individuals would themselves fall victim to “the rusty poison of ill-gotten wealth” (Munn, p. 44).

The major offense of these rich individuals was that they were cheating their workers out of their hard-earned wages either by delaying payment or by stealing the wages altogether (Hartin, 1993, p. 60). These poor workers would have no recourse against the rich landowners; the workers would have been oppressed so harshly that they would simply resign themselves to their fate, hoping that the rich would eventually give them enough of a wage to stave off starvation for another day (Munn, 1986, p. 44).

For the Jewish recipients of this letter, this warning to the rich would undoubtedly have brought to mind similar admonitions from the Torah (Johnson, 1982, p. 394). In Leviticus, God’s people are instructed “You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of a hired worker are not to remain with you all night until morning” (Lev. 19:13, *NASB*). Similarly, in Deuteronomy 24:14–15, the people of God are commanded:

You shall not exploit a hired worker *who is* poor and needy, whether *he is* one of your countrymen or one of your strangers who are in your land in your towns. You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets – for he is poor and sets his heart on it – so that he does not cry out against you to the LORD, and it becomes a sin in you. (*NASB*)

God gave a similar warning through the Prophet Micah, saying, “I will come near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against... those who oppress the wage earner in his wages” (Micah 3:5, *NASB*). Moore-Keish (2019) noted that this illustrates the fact that James was reminding these readers of what they should have already known (p. 171). By reinforcing the words of the Prophets, James was also seeking to fulfill the three main objectives of the Prophets: powerfully proclaiming the will of God, encouraging the oppressed to persevere, and calling God’s people to the kind of life that is pleasing to God (Motyer, 1985, p. 65).

In addition to these references to the Law, James implicitly included two other fascinating Old Testament allusions in this portion of the Epistle which contemporary Western readers might easily miss. In Jewish literature, Cain had become an archetype for unrighteousness. According to Byron (2006), “Beginning with the writings of Josephus and Philo and continuing through to the Midrashim, Cain was portrayed as an archetype for those who oppress the poor and the righteous for self-gain” (p. 261). The noted Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (93/2009) argued that Cain was the inventor of weights and measures and was thus responsible for humanity’s shift from simple generosity to the craftiness which seeks to take advantage of others (Book I 2.2). Byron argued that James was implicitly referencing the story of Cain here and that this would have been apparent to his readers:

Just as James accuses the wealthy of using dishonest means to retain the wages of the poor, so also Cain was accused of increasing his property and possessions through robbery and force. [These accusations] represent an indictment against the wealthy and declaring that they are guilty of the sin of Cain. (p. 261)

Indeed, the narrative of Cain and Abel is the earliest Scriptural account of the oppressed crying out; Abel’s blood cried out to God for justice (McKnight, 2011). In this way, the sin of the rich in hoarding wealth stolen from their laborers is equated with murder (Alana, 2003, p. 302). After the account of Cain and Abel, the theme of the oppressed crying out to God re-emerges in the narrative of Sodom (McKnight, 2011). This is the second allusion which James was making. Contrary to the popular understanding regarding the evils of Sodom, Scripture states, “This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had arrogance, plenty of food, and carefree ease, but she did not help the poor and needy” (Ezek. 16:49, *NASB*). James was putting the evil actions of these rich individuals on the same level as the evil for which Cain was cursed and Sodom was destroyed (Hartin, 1993, p. 60). It is no wonder these rich are told to “weep and howl” in response to the charges being made against them!

### JAMES 5:7–12

In the final section, James transitioned from addressing the rich oppressors to addressing those who were being oppressed. James told these oppressed individuals to “be patient.” The message here is that these oppressed believers should restrain their emotions, anger, frustration, and discouragement (Hart, 2018). This is not a message of hopeless patience, however, but rather of expectant waiting with the assurance that oppression will end when the Lord sets all things right (Martin, 2015). James compared this patience to a farmer who waits for the rains to come so that his field will yield its crops; the farmer does not wait hopelessly, but rather with the assurance that his patience will result in a rich harvest (Campbell, 2017, p. 129). As part of this patience, the believers were instructed to strengthen their hearts (5:8). This instruction means that believers were to demonstrate “a firm adherence to the faith in the midst of temptations and trials. As they wait patiently for their Lord to return, believers need to fortify themselves for the struggle against sin and difficult circumstances” (Moo, 2009, p. 213).

After the admonition to be patient, James warned the believers against complaining against one another. The people to whom James was writing were under such immense pressure that they had become quick to attack one another (Hughes, 2015). Just as these believers were to patiently wait for the end of their oppression, they were also supposed to be patient with one another (Klassen-Wiebe, 2012, p. 76). Osborne (2019) noted that the complaining which James addresses here recalls the complaining of the Israelites against God in the wilderness. The reason which James gave for his warning against complaining about one another is so the believers would not be judged. To complain against one another implicitly puts one in the position of the judge against another and, as James pointed out earlier in the letter, there is only one Judge (4:11). Choosing to complain against each other not only divides the community against itself but also places the complainers in danger of divine judgment (McKnight, 2011). James used the imagery of the Judge standing right at the door to indicate the imminence of judgment against those who complain against one another (Osborne, 2019).

James then presented the prophets and Job as models of endurance to be emulated in the midst of trials (Serrão, 2010, p. 171). By using the prophets and Job as examples, James was once again referring his readers back to their Scriptural foundations as a guide for their lives as Christians

(Brown, 2019, p. 535). The prophets were persecuted because of their calls to repentance and cries for justice (Osborne, 2019). This comparison makes sense because the believers James was addressing were being oppressed for their righteousness. Job, in contrast to the prophets, may seem like an odd choice to serve as an exemplar of endurance; after all, Job *did* complain about his circumstances, proclaim his innocence, and question God. However, Job is the *locus classicus* of the righteous individual who endured unjust suffering (Serrão, 2010, p. 172). Despite his complaining and lack of comprehension, Job maintained his faith (Moo, 2009, p. 216). The story of Job also includes Job's vindication at the end of the story, the type of ending which James was encouraging his readers to anticipate (Isaacs, 2002, p. 242). Brown noted that James had now described a progression from patience to strengthening of the heart to the endurance of suffering (p. 535).

To conclude this section, James instructed these believers not to swear, in the sense of swearing an oath. James introduced this warning with the phrase, "Above all," which seems to indicate that this might be the most important admonition in the letter, but this is not the case. This phrase in this context simply means, "Finally," indicating that James is closing this section of the letter (Osborne, 2019). According to Blomberg and Kovalishyn (2008), the issue which James was addressing was the fact that believers were making reckless or unworkable promises which they would then break, thus tarnishing their own character and that of the Christian community. In the ancient world, people would often invoke the names of the gods to solemnly affirm a given statement or promise (Osborne). James was instructing his readers that they were to be so known for their honesty and integrity that they were taken at their word without needing to swear. Indeed, "those who are perfectly honest have no need to swear oaths to back up their promises" (Cheung & Spurgeon, 2018, p. 104). Once again, James stated that those who failed to heed this warning were in danger of judgment, indicating that a lack of integrity is a sin against the God who demands that God's people be known for their honesty (Osborne).

This exegetical analysis has yielded the following themes which will now be examined in relation to the context of organizational leadership: (a) leader humility, (b) just compensation, (c) patience, (d) avoiding backbiting, (e) endurance, and (f) integrity.

## LEADER HUMILITY

James chastised those who were so prideful and self-assured that they arrogantly proclaimed how successful they were going to be in the future. There is certainly no shortage of individuals in contemporary organizations who display these types of behaviors. The opposite of these types of behaviors and attitudes, the virtue which James was advocating, is humility. Humility is one of the key components of servant leadership (Patterson, 2003, p. 14). Indeed, Morris et al. (2005) noted that humility is “*the* marker of a leader’s intrinsic desire to serve” (p. 1324).

In the groundbreaking work *Good to Great*, Collins (2001) described the successful leaders in the study—whom Collins labeled *Level 5 Leaders*—as those who combined “extreme personal humility with intense professional will” (p. 21). These were the leaders who were able to take good organizations and help turn them into great organizations. One of the major reasons that these leaders were able to do this was because, rather than seeking praise and attention for oneself, the humble leader relentlessly focuses on the well-being of the organization.

Humility is often equated with a sense of unworthiness or lack of self-regard (Tangney, 2000, p. 70). However, humility does not mean having low self-esteem; instead, it means making an accurate assessment of oneself and being focused on others rather than on oneself (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005, p. 602). Leaders demonstrate humility when they deflect credit and attention to others when a task has been successfully accomplished (Van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1233). This willingness to take a step back from accolades contrasts sharply with the arrogance of the individuals whom James was addressing.

In a world that values charisma and bravado, there is sometimes a tendency to view leader humility as a weakness (Exline & Geyer, 2004, p. 95). Are leaders not supposed to be bold, confident, and tough? Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez (2004) argued that, in reality, the true weakness that can plague leaders is a *lack* of humility (p. 393). Humility is not only a virtue, but it is also a competitive advantage for organizations because it positively affects organizational learning, service to stakeholders, and the development of organizational resilience (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004, p. 406). Self-aggrandizing behavior by leaders may be great for gaining media attention and hits on social media, but it puts organizations at a competitive disadvantage. When leaders fail to be humble, then, they

are actually weakening their organizations and making life more difficult for their followers.

The humble leader is willing to admit that he/she has limitations and weaknesses and is thus willing to seek the help and advice of others (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004, p. 395). The businesspeople whom James was addressing were overconfident and self-assured, unwilling to consider that success was due to anything other than their own abilities. Though James was advocating the need to seek and submit to the will of God, this principle of humbling oneself and acknowledging forces outside one's control is a tenet that applies to all leaders whether they consider themselves religious or not.

Principle One: Leaders must demonstrate humility.

## JUST COMPENSATION

Of all the warnings which James issued in this short portion of his Epistle, the warning to those who withheld fair wages from their workers was the most severe. James equated such individuals with murderers and residents of a city that was destroyed as a show of divine wrath. The severity of the warning for this behavior was because, by withholding wages or paying workers less than they deserved, these greedy rich individuals were endangering the lives of the workers.

The concept of a *living wage* has been a popular topic in political and economic discourse recently, but it is by no means a new idea (Butner Jr., 2019, p. 66). In *Wealth of Nations*, the fundamental text in economics, Adam Smith (1776) outlined the importance of paying the poorest workers a wage that would allow them to provide basic necessities for their families. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* on the topics of capital and labor in which he wrote, "Each one has a natural right to procure what is required in order to live, and the poor can procure that in no other way than by what they can earn through their work." Similarly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations in 1948 states that, "Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and for his family an existence worthy of human dignity."

A famous real-world example of an organizational leader demonstrating concern for workers receiving a living wage is Dan Price, the CEO

of Gravity Payments. Price (2020) became convinced that the compensation dictated by the market was not at a level that was fair and adequate for Gravity's employees to be financially secure (pp. 5–6). Price took the bold step of slashing his own salary by more than \$1 million and raising the *minimum* salary at Gravity Payments to \$70,000 from the average of \$48,000 it had been previously (Sammer, 2015). Price's actions do not need to be blindly followed of course, but this consideration of the well-being of workers beyond the minimum wage or market dictated wage is instructive for leaders who wish to heed James' warning.

The income gap between the richest and poorest continues to widen in the United States (Smith, 2015, p. 559). This is because those in power have deliberately created policies that directly contribute to stagnant compensation and increased inequality (Brooks, 2007, p. 441). It is psychologically damaging that workers are "expected to stomach the demeaning contradiction between full-time work in a profitable industry and a paycheck that no one can live on" (Smith, p. 563). Does this not sound *exactly* like what James was warning against?

However, would not the increased cost of paying wages that are higher than those dictated by law and the market be detrimental to the organization? On the contrary: "Improving the quality of life and working life through decent wages and household incomes can be a means to improve employee capabilities and thereby deliver sustained competitive advantage" (Carr et al., 2016, p. 33). Salary satisfaction has a significant positive effect on job enthusiasm, commitment, and effort, all elements that are in the best interest of the organization (Lee & Lin, 2014, p. 1577). In the five years after Price (2020) announced the massive pay increase at Gravity Payments, the organization's revenue *tripled* (p. 12). Therefore, ensuring just compensation is both a moral and organizational performance issue.

Principle Two: Leaders must ensure that followers receive just compensation for their work.

## PATIENCE

James was specifically instructing his readers to patiently wait for the Lord to reverse the oppression that they were experiencing. Had the individuals to whom James was writing chosen to act out impatiently against their oppressors, it would have been to their personal detriment as well as to the detriment of the community of believers. Whereas this

specific experience of oppression may not apply to many contemporary organizational leaders, patience is a valuable characteristic in a variety of organizational leadership circumstances. Lack of patience could lead to negative results for both the leader and the entire organization. Perhaps because of the potentially damaging personal and communal outcomes of acting rashly, patience is seen as a virtue in many of the largest world religions. However, patience as a key quality in organizational leadership has been widely overlooked in the existing literature (Haque et al., 2017, p. 111).

Much like humility, patience is often thought of as a leadership weakness (Eich, 2017, p. 1). Leaders are expected to be able to make quick decisions and move swiftly to take advantage of opportunities. Is patience a potential liability for organizational leaders? Llopis (2013) noted that, “leaders that are unable to practice patience will also find their careers short-lived. The marketplace demands it, and employees see patience as a sign that their leaders are more compassionate, open-minded and willing and able to manage every circumstance.” Indeed, Schnitker (2010) found that “too much” patience is not detrimental and that it is not to be equated with passivity or inaction (pp. 167–168). Therefore, leaders should not be afraid to be characterized as patient.

Ulrich (2017) noted that, especially in turbulent times, leaders must navigate the paradox of making quick decisions with patience; taking too long to make decisions leads to missed opportunities while impatient responses lead to bad decisions (p. 6). It is during turbulent times when people are prone to poor judgment and bad decisions, so demonstrating patience during these times is essential (Benefiel, 2008). Studies have shown that patience leads to higher quality decisions and to be more effective in complex decision-making situations (Haque et al., 2017, p. 115). If leaders choose to impatiently charge ahead in their decision-making in an organization, they are not demonstrating bold leadership but are instead endangering the reputation and success of the organization.

When leaders demonstrate patience, not only does it improve individual decision-making during turbulent times, but it is also beneficial for the organization as a whole during both turbulent and calm times. Organizational benefits of patience include increased quality, long-term viability, higher productivity, and more ethical behavior (Comer & Sekerka, 2014, pp. 9–10). Additionally, when leaders practice patience, it helps to develop a culture of collaboration, business growth, and the



achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Haque et al., 2017, p. 120). The old saying holds that “patience is a virtue,” and this is certainly true for organizational leaders.

Principle Three: Leaders must demonstrate patience in decision-making and in interactions with others.

### AVOID BACKBITING

James warned his readers not to fall into the trap of complaining or grumbling against one another; due to the immense pressure which they were experiencing, the believers had become quick to attack one another. Once again, whereas contemporary organizations may not experience the types of oppression faced by James’ readers, organizational life is fraught with different types of pressure. In the midst of such pressure, all members of an organization—and especially leaders—must resist the trap of backbiting and complaining against others.

To a certain extent, gossip can actually play a positive role within the organization if it reveals behaviors that will adversely impact the organization (Hafen, 2004, p. 229). Waddington (2016) argued that gossip should be reframed and viewed as a form of organizational communication that “can provide fresh insights into professional practice, decision making and relational leadership” (p. 810). Indeed, it is probable that James was only able to address certain issues with his readers because these issues were brought to his attention by others.

However, there must be a distinction made between the communication of important issues in the form of *gossip* and the types of backbiting and canards about which James was warning. According to Burt and Knez (1996), “Third parties seem more alert to negative information or prefer negative gossip to positive” (p. 83). In other words, those who are not subjects of the gossip generally prefer to receive negative as opposed to positive gossip. This type of gossip has a negative effect on members’ organization-based self-esteem (Kuo et al., 2018, p. 96). Ellwardt et al. (2012) found that the targets of negative gossip experienced a form of victimization which led to difficulties in feeling a sense of membership and belonging within the organization (p. 193).

Burt (2007) found that those who experienced negative gossip had struggles in establishing cooperative workplace relationships with colleagues and tended to leave the organization sooner than those who

were not targets of negative gossip. Negative gossip and canards are detrimental to relationships. If Individual A is gossiping about Individual B, Individual B and his/her friends will not see Individual A in a positive light. In an organization, this can cause problems if those individuals need to work together in order to accomplish organizational goals.

The presence of such negative gossip may also be a sign of distrust and lead to the types of conditions in which organizational conspiracy theories are generated and spread (Douglas & Leite, 2017, p. 495). When gossip turns into rumors and conspiracy theories, organizations become divided against themselves, often leading to suspicion between workers and management. In this way, such gossip is not only damaging to individual reputations and careers but also to entire organizations. Leaders are responsible for the well-being of both their organization and their followers; allowing or, even worse, participating in gossip threatens both. Accordingly, organizational leaders themselves must *always* avoid negative gossip and backbiting, train their followers to do the same, and seek to ensure that negative gossip does not become normalized within the organization.

Principle Four: Leaders must create an organizational environment that discourages backbiting.

## ENDURANCE

James instructed his readers to practice endurance, looking to the Old Testament Prophets and Job as models. Whereas these believers were to be patient in their waiting, they were also supposed to stand strong in their beliefs, convictions, and practices in spite of the difficulties they were facing. In contemporary organizational settings, endurance is necessary to continue to work toward positional and organizational goals in the midst of challenges.

Şeşen et al. (2019) defined endurance as “continuing the struggle to achieve success when faced with problems and negativities” (p. 184). Similarly, Fry et al. (2007) stated that endurance is marked by persistence in pursuing a task regardless of obstacles or discouragement and steadily staying on any course which one has begun. When organizations, or the members which comprise them, are faced with difficult circumstances, individuals may be tempted to decrease their performance. However, endurance has been shown to help individuals maintain effort

while facing adversity (Gonzalez-Mendez et al., 2020, p. 7). The organizational benefits of this result of endurance are obvious: Even in the midst of difficulties, leaders and followers with endurance will continue to persevere to the best of their abilities.

Beyond the task-based results, endurance has also been shown to have positive physical and psychological effects. Kipp (2016) discussed a construct called *effective endurance*, which is defined as “the ability to face long-term challenges and adversity while maintaining physical, emotional, and mental well-being” (p. 6). Individuals lacking endurance are more likely to experience anxiety and use negative coping mechanisms (Wang et al., 2019, p. 95). This is important for organizational performance because employee well-being has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on productivity and to decrease staff turnover (Krekel et al., 2019, p. 2). Even more important, though, is the fact that follower well-being should be the top priority for every leader (Greenleaf, p. 27).

Endurance allows people to grow from the challenges which they overcome. Stanford Economist Paul Romer once said, “A crisis is a terrible thing to waste” (Chisholm-Burns, 2010, p. 1). If an individual simply gives up during a crisis, or even if they persist but fail to learn from the experience, the crisis has been wasted. People who demonstrate endurance are not only able to overcome challenging situations, but they are also able to be more resourceful as a result (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Endurance helps individuals face crises and emerge better on the other side.

Just as James told his readers to look to Job and the Prophets as examples of endurance, organizational leaders should serve as the models of endurance for the followers within the organization. Kouzes and Posner (2002) wrote, “Exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others” (p. 14). Therefore, since endurance has been demonstrated to be in the best interest of both the organization and its members, it is incumbent upon leaders to model endurance and encourage followers to demonstrate endurance as well.

Principle Five: Leaders must model endurance and seek to develop endurance in their followers.

## INTEGRITY

James ended this section of the Epistle with the command to not swear but rather to be true to one's word. This goes beyond simply not lying and includes only committing to things one intends to do and actually following through on stated promises and convictions. James' concern was that individual believers would make promises to do outlandish things and then, upon failing to follow through, the reputation of both the individual and the entire community would be marred. The same danger faces contemporary leaders and organizations.

Greenleaf (1977, 2002) wrote, "If you don't have a fundamental commitment to the truth and telling the truth, you can't lead. And telling the truth is so much more difficult than just not lying." In other words, integrity is essential to effective leadership, and there is so much more to integrity than just not telling lies. When leaders are dishonest, they lose their impact because followers come to see them as unreliable (Northouse, 2013, p. 435). This is because honesty is one of the key elements of credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 27). Studies have consistently linked honesty with perceived leadership effectiveness (Brown et al., 2005, p. 118).

Those with low levels of honesty are more likely to engage in negative work behaviors, experience greater stress, and experience decreased job satisfaction (Wiltshire et al., 2014, p. 235). These are obviously all negative outcomes both for the individual and the organization. This demonstrates that, while it is essential for leaders to demonstrate honesty and integrity, it is not enough. Followers too must be people of integrity. For this reason, leaders must ensure their followers are consistently honest and acting with integrity.

It has been demonstrated that, when followers perceive leader integrity to be high, the followers have lower intentions of committing unethical acts (Peterson, 2004, p. 7). When followers believe that their leaders are honest and act with integrity, the followers are more likely to demonstrate integrity and thus less likely to be tempted to be involved in anything unethical. This, of course, protects the organization, the leaders, and the followers from the potentially devastating fallout and crises that can result from unethical behavior. This is consistent with James' concern that lack of integrity by individuals could cast the entire community in a negative light.

Martin et al. (2013) demonstrated that consistency between words and actions is an expectation across cultures (p. 445). Lack of behavioral integrity—consistency between words and actions—by leaders has been shown to lead to organizational cynicism by followers (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012, p. 165). Leader behavioral integrity has been shown to have a significant positive effect on follower trust, task performance, organizational citizenship, and organizational commitment (Simons et al., 2015, p. 821). Therefore, as with the other tenets gleaned from this exegetical study, since integrity is essential for the well-being of both the organization and its members, leaders must act with integrity and train their followers to do the same.

Principles Six: Leaders must consistently demonstrate integrity in both their words and actions.

## SUMMARY

The Epistle of James was, according to church tradition and the majority of contemporary scholars, written by James the brother of Jesus to a community of oppressed believers who were part of the Early Church. The selected passage deals with several issues that are pertinent to contemporary organizational leadership. James told successful individuals to demonstrate humility rather than self-assured boasting. He told the wealthy to ensure that they are paying living wages to their workers. The believers were instructed to be patient, to endure their difficulties while standing firm in their convictions and behaviors. James warned his readers against backbiting and told them to act with integrity lest the entire community fall into disrepute. Each of these tenants is instructive for contemporary organizational leaders.

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## The True Calling of Christian Leaders: An Analysis of 1 Peter 5:1–11

*Jeremy L. Pickwell and Joshua D. Henson*

Though researchers have identified shepherding leadership and other leadership principles from the Bible, these studies possess certain deficiencies (Gunter, 2016; Köstenberger, 2002; Resane, 2014). First, many studies do not contain an in-depth exegesis of Scripture to unlock all the nuances of shepherding (Adams, 2013; Quasten, 1948; Swalm, 2010). It would behoove scholars and readers to use a more robust socio-rhetorical method (Henson et al., 2020) when examining the shepherding metaphor. Next, while exegetically sound, other studies focus on the shepherding metaphor's validity without first recognizing its centrality to Christian leadership (Neyrey, 2001; Quasten, 1948; Skinner, 2018). This

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issue is essential because there first needs to be an understanding of why shepherding leadership needs to be central to the Christian leader's focus.

Whereas there is a lack of socio-rhetorical analysis of the shepherding paradigm in the Bible (Adams, 2013; Quasten, 1948; Swalm, 2010), and whereas there is a lack of understanding of the purpose of church pastors (Mein, 2007; Naus, 1995), this study will frame a clear understanding of Scripture's mandate of Pastors and key personnel within the church through a vigorous exegetical exercise. While 1 Peter 5 is generally understood to contain directions for pastoral leaders within the church context, Crowther (2012) argued that the principles of 1 Peter have implications for both the church and organizational leaders. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the principles of 1 Peter 5 and their applications to contemporary organizational leadership contexts.

### THE PERSON OF PETER

Peter had a unique relationship with Jesus (Harmon, 1898). Often seen as the brash disciple (Krentz, 2010), Peter was the one brave enough to exit the boat to walk on water (Matt 14:22). Peter gave the grand statement of Jesus' identity at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:16). Peter cut the ear off the soldier in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10). Peter was with Jesus in the courtyard of the high priest Caiaphas when he denied Jesus three times. However, Peter was also sought out by Jesus (John 21) and restored on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Shepherd, 2010). For these reasons, many have pursued to understand Peter's theology. More apropos to this study, it is crucial to understand Peter's pastoral theology.

Undeniably, Peter saw the role of the overseer, the person who was to shepherd God's sheep, as something to be taken seriously (Culpepper, 2010; Krentz, 2010). Peter wanted overseers to want the role (Brown et al., 1984; Walvoord & Zuck, 1983). However, he wanted the pastors to understand that they should not seek out dishonest gain, as those wayward leaders of Ezekiel 34 (Exell, 1905; Schreiner, 2003). Moreover, Peter asked the pastors to think of the sheep first and foremost, not of themselves (Wright, 2011). They were to protect the church from outside forces (Schreiner, 2003). In the pericope, the commands given to the church's leadership align perfectly with the shepherding metaphor. They were to be examples (v. 3) and serving (v. 2). The shepherd position was juxtaposed with a lion who intended to devour the sheep (Schreiner, 2003). A shepherd would be one who protected the sheep and guarded

against predators who wanted to destroy the flock (Exell, 1905; Schreiner, 2003).

## SOCIO-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 PETER 5

The methodology for this study will be a socio-rhetorical analysis of 1 Peter 5. Socio-rhetorical analysis is a method of study well-documented by Robbins (1996) and expanded by Henson (2020). Of note to this study, the bias of the chapter is such that it communicates that Scripture is inspired by God and the primary way God speaks to the world. There is no discussion of authorship or authority in this chapter as it is understood that Peter is the author. Further, the authority of Scripture, both the pericope and intertextual elements, is divinely inspired and authoritative to the church eternally, meaning that the pericope contains the same mandate for the church both for those who originally received it as well as today's readers. Moreover, socio-rhetorical analysis explores the texture of texts in such a way that it gives the reader multiple layers of evaluation and study (Robbins, 1996). Socio-rhetorical analysis of Scripture will typically use the layers of inner texture, intertexture, social texture, cultural texture, and ideological texture (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996).

### *Inner Texture Analysis*

The first layer of the socio-rhetorical critique is inner textural analysis. Later advanced by Henson et al. (2020), inner texture analysis includes identifying textual units, repetitive and progressive patterns, opening-middle-closing patterns, argumentative patterns, and sensory-esthetic patterns. Inner texture analysis explores the text within the pericope to find patterns, structure, and stylistic textures (Robbins, 1996).

### *Textual Units*

According to Henson et al. (2020), textual units allow the reader to differentiate flows of thought without identifiable paragraphs, chapters, or punctuation. This first examination of the pericope looks for transitional words that identify it as a new narrative unit. 1 Peter 5 begins with the Greek *Ouv*, a transitional word meaning “*therefore*.” Curiously, Peter continued in Chapter 5, even though verse 4:19 is a climatic summary of the entire epistle to this point (Helm, 2008). Here, Peter linked the

previously described struggle and persecution of the church (4:12–19) with the burden of leading the new ecclesia (Schreiner, 2003).

Peter not only transitioned the passage based on the previous scriptures; he also transitioned to whom he is directing his instruction (Laniak, 2006). The entire passage of 1 Peter exists in the context of suffering, and Peter wished to directly address those who oversaw the flock of God (Davids, 1990). Peter did return to the subject of suffering within the context of the church's leadership in verse eight. However, he ended this section with a promise and an "amen," concluding his thought process.

### *Repetitive and Progressive Patterns*

Second, repetitive and progressive patterns allow the reader to recognize specific themes and the development of these themes in the pericope (Henson et al., 2020; Loubser, 2005; Robbins, 1996). In 1 Peter, there is a clear emphasis on the author's audience. Peter's words of instruction used "you," "your," and "yourself" fourteen times within these eleven verses. This repetition highlights Peter's intent to cause action and awareness of the audience with clear instructions (Schreiner, 2003). Additionally, within the text, there is a linking of position between Peter, his audience, and Jesus, using the terms "Elder," "Shepherd," "overseers," and "Chief Shepherd." Schreiner (2003) noted that the progression of these titles indicates that an elder oversaw the church and was not merely an aged person. Last, within this pericope, "eager" and "willing" are used to denote the elders' posture. Peter asked those in an oversight position to have a deep desire to lead God's flock (Holmquist, 2018). The word *hekousiōs* can also be translated as "eagerly" (Schreiner, 2003). Using this translation, eagerly appears twice, stressing the need for the elder's correct motives. Peter asked the elders to serve because of a deep desire to care for the congregation, not because they felt they had to serve (Grudem, 2009).

Additionally, there is a progressive connection pattern in the pericope as Peter moves from elders to those younger, to all the church. Each is to have a posture of humility, a word that repeats three times within three verses. Peter also makes a connection between the protective shepherd (vs. 1–4) and the devouring lion (v. 8) (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Ironside, 1947). These instructions culminate in verse 10 with the promise that God will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish (Helm, 2008).

### *Opening, Middle, and Closing Patterns*

The opening-middle-closing patterns of texts allow readers to identify particular structures and plot features in the pericope (Robbins, 1996). There is a clear opening in 1 Peter 5, as the author addresses “the elders among you” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:1). Schreiner (2003) posited that Peter begins concluding this portion of the text with the final greetings of verses 12–14. One can assume that verses 1–11 address both leadership and followership within the church. This change marks a shift from addressing those in influential positions (leaders and followers) to addressing the church body as a whole (*NIV*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:5). Moreover, verse 11 marks a clear doxology to end the passage with praises to God (Grudem, 2009).

### *Argumentative Patterns*

Next, the reader would evaluate argumentative patterns in the pericope (Henson et al., 2020). Argumentative patterns are styles of persuasion used by the author to reason a particular point (Robbins, 1996). First, and most prominently, Peter directly appealed to those in the position of eldership. Notably, Peter used his like position to petition this request (Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). Peter does not want to appear as casting judgment on those he is writing but instead highlights their shared burden (Grudem, 2009). Second, Peter used contrasting language (Schreiner, 2003) to make the point that elders should not feel obligated (v. 2), not serve for the wrong reasons (v. 2), and not be domineering (v. 3). Instead, elders are to be willing, eager, and examples to those who are entrusted to them (Schwenk, 2020). Additionally, Peter appealed to a higher calling by pointing out that the people the elders are leading are part of God’s flock, not their own (Holmquist, 2018).

### *Sensory-Esthetic Patterns*

According to Robbins (1996), emotion-fused thought, self-expressive speech, and purposeful action are types of sensory-esthetic patterns in inner texture analysis. In this section, Peter repeatedly uses the imagery of the shepherd to relate to the elders who oversee the church (Schwenk, 2020). Unique to this passage is the use of the word *archipoimenos*, or Chief Shepherd, only used in the New Testament in 1 Peter 5:4 (Schreiner, 2003). It is to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, that the shepherds (elders) are responsible. This posture contrasts with an autocratic posture or lording over the people (Schreiner, 2003). Peter also used the reward

system of gaining a “crown of glory” in verse 4 in return for shepherding well (v. 4). The crown of glory is imagery borrowed from the athletic field to represent the glory shared by leaders in the second coming of Christ (Walls & Anders, 1999).

Peter also used the imagery of a roaring lion in verse eight. Peter used strong language to stir up a sense of urgency and preparation (Walls & Anders, 1999). A lion that instantly gulps its prey down is something that strikes fear into the heart of man (Schreiner, 2003; Wright, 2011). The enemy is not silent and passive but instead is roaring and roaming, actively at work to disrupt and devour the body of Christ (Arichea & Nida, 1980).

### *Intertexture Analysis*

The second layer of socio-rhetorical analysis is intertexture analysis, in which one identifies relationships between the text and other mediums outside of the pericope (Robbins, 1996). Several intertexture analysis methods include oral-scribal, cultural, social, and historical intertexture (Robbins, 1996). Henson et al. (2020) stated “Central to the relationship between a text and outside sources is the communication of meaning” (p. 105). How does 1 Peter 5:1–11 interact with outside sources?

#### *Oral-Scribal Intertexture*

Robbins (1996) stated, “One of the ways a text configures and reconfigures is to use, either explicitly or without reference, language from other texts” (p. 40). There are several ways an author might use external sources in their writing. The first of these methods is recitation, where the author directly quotes another text (Henson et al., 2020). Second, recontextualization occurs when an author uses a different work without referencing the original source (Henson et al., 2020). Finally, an author may reconfigure a passage to fit a new context or elaborate a previously established theme (Henson et al., 2020).

The only recitation within this pericope comes in verse 5, where Peter stated, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). According to Henson (2020), recontextualization does not have any direct reference to the Scripture used. However, the word *hoti*, meaning “because,” precedes the passage, which can also be understood as “for Scripture says” (Arichea & Nida, 1980). Scholars generally believe this is a quotation from Proverbs 3:34 (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). James 4:6



also quoted Proverbs 3:34 in such a way that is more similar to Peter's wording than the Septuagint's version (Mason, 1928). Thus, there is a strong sense that Peter either quoted James' version of Proverbs 3:34, or both passages quoted an accepted wording of Proverbs 3:34 that was part of a popular Christian catechetical of the time (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Mulholland & Osborne, 2011).

In the pericope of 1 Peter 5, there exist several instances of recontextualization. First, Peter alluded to Psalm 55 in verse 7 when he stated, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). Psalm 55 aligns with the theme of 1 Peter in that the author is imploring God for help in the time of persecution (Schreiner, 2003). The psalmist stated, "Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken" (*NIV*, 1978/2011, Psalm 55:22). A better translation of 1 Peter 5:7 would be "casting all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (*New American Standard Bible*, 1960/2020) because of the use of the participle (Schreiner, 2003). This instruction informs the listener on how to humble themselves, which was the instruction of verse 6 (Adams, 1996; Arichea & Nida, 1980; Grudem, 2009).

Reconfiguration is a method of using previous Scripture in a new context (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). This communication method is not new to Peter, who regularly used the Old Testament in the book of Acts (Henson et al., 2020). Additionally, thematic elaboration occurs when the author builds an argument upon a theme (Henson et al., 2020). Much of 1 Peter 5 is a reconfiguration and elaboration of the shepherd metaphor used by Ezekiel (Helm, 2008).

To begin, one must look back to 1 Peter 4:17, "For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household..." This passage references the judgment and cleansing written by the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 9:6, "...Begin at my sanctuary" (*New International Version*, 1978/2011). Several scholars agree that 1 Peter 4:17 is an allusion to this Ezekiel passage (Helm, 2008; Schreiner, 2003). Peter then stated, "[Therefore] to the elders among you..." (*NIV*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:1). The next portion of Ezekiel 9:6 matches clearly, "So they began with the old men..." (*NIV*, 1978/2011). Peter is setting up an argument transposed from Ezekiel that the elders will be held accountable (Helm, 2008; Schreiner, 2003).

Continuing with the argument, Peter borrowed from Ezekiel again, when the prophet stated, "Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only

take care of yourselves!” (*NIV*, 1978/2011, Ezekiel 34:2). Peter juxtaposed that behavior with a new command not to “pursue dishonest gain” (*NIV*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:2). Again, the contrast happens in verse 3, “not lording it over,” compared to Ezekiel 34:4, and the shepherds who treat the flock “harshly and brutally” (Mulholland & Osborne, 2011; Schreiner, 2003). God entrusts the flock to the elders (v. 3), and in Ezekiel, they are God’s sheep (v. 12). Further developing the theme, Peter made mention of the “Chief Shepherd” (v. 4), an apparent reference to Ezekiel 34:11–24, where the true shepherd will care for the scattered sheep (Holmquist, 2018; Köstenberger, 2002; Mulholland & Osborne, 2011; Resane, 2014; Witmer, 2010).

Of note, the grounds on which Peter can make these inferences is the person of Jesus Christ himself (Anum & Quayle, 2016; Kanagaraj, 2004; Köstenberger, 2002; Wright, 2011). It is through Jesus’ words and actions, primarily in Luke 14:3–7 and John 10:1–16, which give the shepherding imagery of Ezekiel 34 much more weight (Köstenberger, 2002; Neyrey, 2001; Wright, 2011). Further, John 21:15–19, and the reinstatement of Peter echoes back to Ezekiel 34, and now Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, is asking Peter to feed his (Jesus’) sheep (Helm, 2008; Resane, 2014; Skinner, 2018; Wright, 2011). Not only this but Jesus “defines Himself as the only person through whom the pastoral office is legitimately bestowed in the kingdom of God” (Quasten, 1948, p. 158).

### *Cultural Intertexture*

Culturally, there are a few references and allusions within the pericope of 1 Peter 1:11. First, the shepherd position would have been a well-understood position within society (Borowski, 1998; Laniak, 2006; Mein, 2007). Shepherds tended to their sheep, cared for them, and protected them (Borowski, 1998). Peter mentions a “crown of glory that will never fade away” (*NIV*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:4). Readers would have remembered the crowns rewarded athletes for a competition (Schreiner, 2003). However, these crowns are different from the leafy crowns made of the amaranth flower that faded over time (Mulholland & Osborne, 2011; Schreiner, 2003). Last, Peter speaks of a roaring lion (v. 8). The lion that would have been familiar to the reader is now extinct (Borowski, 1998). However, the animal was prevalent in all parts of the country (more so than the leopard) and was feared most of all because of its terrible roar (Borowski, 1998; Exell, 1905; Grudem, 2009). This analogy bears a stark contrast to the imagery of a caring, protective shepherd (Grudem, 2009).

*Social Intertexture*

Aside from shepherding mentioned earlier, Peter also presented the elder's social role in 1 Peter 5. There is much debate about the elder and younger verbiage within 1 Peter in that some see it as positions of authority (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003), where others see this as possibly addressing those who are older and younger (Himes, 2017; Marshall, 1991). Most likely, the elders mentioned in the first verse have positions of authority (Carson et al., 1994; Elliott, 2001; Marshall, 1991; Mason, 1928; Schreiner, 2003; Tidball, 2012). For the early church, the elders, most likely acting in the context of a plurality, were acting in a function of oversight of the new congregations (Carson et al., 1994; Elliott, 2001; Grudem, 2009; Marshall, 1991).

*Historical Intertexture*

Within the chosen pericope, there is one passage that references a historical act. Peter stated, "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings" (*NIV*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:1). Peter witnessed Christ's sufferings in that he was present during the ongoing persecution of Jesus' ministry by the governing religious authorities (Schreiner, 2003). Of note, Peter did not mention the resurrection nor the transfiguration. Instead, he focuses on the moment of his greatest weakness when he deserted Christ at his persecution (Grudem, 2009). There is debate whether this reference to being a witness indicates Peter was an eyewitness to the crucifixion or instead was only referring to the ongoing persecution of Jesus (Carson et al., 1994; Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003). Nonetheless, this reference to the suffering of Christ reveals that Peter believes Jesus has restored him from his most significant moment of weakness (Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003).

*Social, Cultural, and Ideological Texture Analysis*

According to Robbins (1996), social and culture texture is a means by which interpreters investigate a text by examining the world of the writer and receiver of the pericope. The world of the text can include the writer's worldview, perception, and shared social and cultural topics (Henson et al., 2020). Moreover, the reputation the text has gained over time, how it was received, and the interaction with Scripture is an exercise in analyzing the ideological texture of the text (Henson et al., 2020).

Whereas social and cultural texture explores the world of the author and audience, ideological texture analysis is concerned with those interpreting the text (Robbins, 1996).

### *Social Texture*

First, a conversionist worldview believes that the world and people are corrupt yet can be changed (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). In the first verse of chapter five, we see that Peter referenced a future glory. Grudem stated, “The fact that Peter is also *a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed* shows that full restoration from sin is certainly available through Christ” (Grudem, 2009, Elders section, para. 5). Peter believed salvation through Christ was possible and that, though suffering was present, a future age would come when God would reward the believer (Exell, 1905; Marshall, 1991). This worldview could also closely align with a utopian view as Peter saw a future absent of evil (Henson et al., 2020; Schwenk, 2020). Not only that, but God will also restore and repair whatever is damaged and make steady those who are suffering (Helm, 2008).

Second, Peter also took a firm revolutionist posture when he warned against an enemy who sought to destroy the believer in verses 8 and 9. However, instead of presenting the language of overthrowing a current system, as the revolutionist worldview posits (Robbins, 1996), Peter asks the readers to resist the devil (v. 9). This stance is not a passive resistance but an active posture (Schreiner, 2003). In light of the current theme of suffering in the epistle, Peter is likely encouraging the church to actively keep the faith in light of growing persecution (Carson et al., 1994; Exell, 1905). This language is a similar posture given by James when he stated, “resist the devil, and he will flee” (*NIV*, 1978/2011, James 4:7). Both passages imply “active, determined opposition, often through confrontation” (Grudem, 2009, 3.g.2 section, para. 1).

### *Cultural Texture*

Next, this layer of socio-rhetorical analysis examines the cultural context of the pericope. Two significant cultural phenomena are happening during the writing of 1 Peter. First, the church had established itself and was being recognized as a unique group separate from the rest of society (Schwenk, 2020; Wright, 2011). Previously, Christianity was considered a subset of the Jewish religion (Shelley, 2013). Now, elders were being appointed in newly formed churches in Asia minor (see Titus 1:5), and

Peter sought to address these elders and remind them of their role (Schreiner, 2003). Paul established these churches with Peter's assistance, hence the receivers' familiarity with Peter (Harmon, 1898; Mason, 1928). By the time of Peter's writing, the letter from James was already widely circulated, and possible catechesis was established (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Mulholland & Osborne, 2011). All of these facts point to a church that is becoming more established and formal in leadership, representation, and recognition (Schwenk, 2020).

Second, Peter was writing to churches experiencing severe persecution—one of the many reasons for penning the letter (Carson et al., 1994; Schreiner, 2003). At the time, the persecution was not state-sponsored but rather sporadic, and Christianity was gaining a footing in the area (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Carson et al., 1994). Though the receivers have been enlightened to the faith of Christianity, their surroundings were largely pagan and hostile to the new message of Jesus (Arichea & Nida, 1980). 1 Peter 4:19 is considered a summary of the entire previous four chapters when Peter stated, "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good" (*NIV*, 1978/2011). Hence Peter wishes to address leadership amid this persecution and uses "therefore" to transition into chapter 5:1 (Helm, 2008; Schreiner, 2003). There is a sense of struggle, establishing something new, and standing up to forces that wish to crush the new work (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Carson et al., 1994; Elliott, 2001; Helm, 2008; Schreiner, 2003).

Within this cultural battle, Peter uses the imagery of sheep and a shepherd, carried from the Old Testament passages of Psalms 23 and Ezekiel 34, among others, and Jesus' assertion that he was the good shepherd in John 10 (Köstenberger, 2002; Mulholland & Osborne, 2011; Schreiner, 2003; Wright, 2011). Shepherding was a prevalent enterprise in the Old Testament cultures and the New Testament world of Israel and Asia minor (Borowski, 1998). Shepherding in those cultures was a clear metaphor for leadership and followership (Akin & Pace, 2017; Anum & Quayle, 2016; Laniak, 2006; Witmer, 2010). Jesus invoked Ezekiel 34 in his John 10 teaching (Gunter, 2016; Wright, 2011). Jesus used shepherding imagery when reinstating Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). Peter continues this imagery when addressing the churches in Asian minor, asking them to tend to the flock (Grudem, 2009).

### *Sacred Texture Analysis*

Sacred texture analysis is a unique exploration of the text's relationship to deity, holy persons, spirit beings, divine history, redemption, human commitment, community, and ethics (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). In sum, Robbins (1996) stated sacred texture explores "the relation between human life and the divine" (p. 120). Within the text, there are four occurrences of sacred texture: between the text and God the Son and God the Father, the text and the divine history of Christ's sufferings, the text and community and commitment, and the text and redemption.

First, in the pericope, God the Father is mentioned in verses five and six, as Peter wrote that God rewards humility and asked those reading to humble themselves under God's power (Himes, 2017). Peter also interacted with the person of Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd (Schreiner, 2003). Peter explained that the Chief Shepherd has the authority to reward those elders who serve the congregation faithfully (Grudem, 2009). In relation, the suffering of Christ is a divine history that Peter uses to base his authority in the first verse. Scholars are unsure if this passage refers to the crucifixion or rather the persecution Jesus faced during his ministry (Carson et al., 1994; Schreiner, 2003).

Next, Peter asked for commitment from those who were leading the church in the first few verses of the pericope. As mentioned, the church was an established entity, and these churches were formed by the Apostle Paul (Mason, 1928; Schwenk, 2020; Wright, 2011). The elders were written to as leaders of these church communities (Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). Closely related to this sacred texture, Peter addressed the church community as a whole, appealing not only to the Elders, but those who were younger, and the entire congregation (Grudem, 2009). Peter asked the leaders to lead a certain way (vs. 1–3), the younger to submit (v. 5), and everyone to stay humble (vs. 5–6).

Last, Peter addressed the redemption story by stating, "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast" (*NIV*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:10). Schreiner (2003) stated that this verse was meant to remind readers that the final salvation was near at hand. The reader understands this because the promise of a future glory is juxtaposed with the suffering that will only happen for "a little while" (Marshall, 1991).

### *Summary of Analysis*

The exercise of socio-rhetorical analysis provided critical layers of study within the chosen pericope. This method reveals the importance of understanding the setting, culture, and context in which Peter is writing. Second, these layers allow the reader to pick up on certain themes present which should be integrated into organizational leadership just as Peter expected it to be present in the organizational leadership of the church.

#### *Leading in Adversity*

Peter's purpose in writing the letter to the church was to address the severe persecution the people were facing (Carson et al., 1994; Schreiner, 2003). Though sporadic, the persecution had the potential to disrupt the establishment of this new movement (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Carson et al., 1994). Peter wrote to a culture and context hostile to the new Christian movement and to people who were fragile in their young faith (Arichea & Nida, 1980). As stated earlier, Peter understood there was a struggle in establishing this new work and wanted to encourage the leaders to stay strong despite the opposition (Carson et al., 1994; Elliott, 2001; Helm, 2008).

Holding a conversionist worldview, Peter knew that God would restore everything to himself and make right the world (Helm, 2008). He reminded the church of the future glory that awaited them if they could persevere while suffering (Grudem, 2009). At the same time, Peter knew that what the church was facing was an enemy's attack and required active resistance (Grudem, 2009).

Moreover, in addressing the elders of the church, he reminded them that, even though the church was young and was in its infancy, they still had the mandate from God to shepherd or tend the flock responsibly (Gunter, 2016; Schreiner, 2003; Wright, 2011). This mandate is housed within the context of Peter's initial opening statement in the pericope "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed" (*New International Version*; 1978/2001; 1 Peter 5:1). The command to shepherd God's flock well was framed within the understanding of the suffering servant Jesus Christ (Bailey, 2014). When the new church needed leadership most, Peter returned to a simple shepherd metaphor to remind the

leadership that their responsibility was to think first about the flock's well-being even though they might have been suffering as well (Bailey, 2014; Wright, 2011).

Thus, this concept of shepherding is critical in the context of stressful leadership where there is struggle, opposition, and suffering. Shepherding leadership finds its identity in the metaphor of the shepherd, where the leader's responsibility is the care, leadership, and protection of the people (Laniak, 2006; Resane, 2014; Tara, 2020). Just as the shepherd is hired to protect and provide for the flock, so too are pastors called to protect and provide for the people (Nel, 2005).

*Principle One: Leaders must demonstrate care for their followers even amid adversity.*

### *Integrity*

The primary concept in the 1 Peter 5 passage is the position and role of a shepherd. Peter is harkening back to the Ezekiel 34 imagery of a shepherd (Köstenberger, 2002; Mulholland & Osborne, 2011; Schreiner, 2003). Moreover, this imagery is made possible by the teaching of Jesus in John 10 and the reinstatement of Peter in John 21 (Wright, 2011). Peter is, in a sense, using the Ezekiel 34 warnings of holding elders accountable, via the Chief Shepherd references of Jesus in John 10, to make the point to the new leaders of Christ's church that they are to hold themselves to a higher standard (Grudem, 2009; Wright, 2011). In sum, Ezekiel prophesies that God holds the elders to a higher standard and that a true shepherd will appear to care for God's flock. Jesus picks up this imagery in John 10 in claiming he is the good shepherd. Further, Jesus reinforces this notion by asking Peter to "feed my sheep" in John 21. Through this lens, Peter now carries the mantle of shepherding by warning the new elders, shepherds, and overseers to tend or care for the flock entrusted to them.

This appeal to be good shepherds contrasted with Ezekiel 34's bad shepherds is a matter of integrity. Shepherding is also a useful paradigm to minimize leadership abuse and oppression (Boloje, 2020). In essence, Peter is giving instructions on how to live up to a higher standard prescribed by God through the Old Testament metaphor, giving them the ability to be examples to the flock (v. 3; Laniak, 2006).



*Principle Two: Leaders demonstrate integrity by holding themselves to a higher standard.*

### *Posture*

Peter wrote in a contrasting fashion to address the posture of those in leadership, using correct versus bad examples. Elders are to be eager, not serving out of obligation (v. 2). When understood in context, the text clarifies that the shepherd elder's role is challenging with struggles, suffering, and persecution (Schreiner, 2003). Elders are to be examples to the people, not autocratic in their style (Schreiner, 2003). The motive cannot be a dishonest gain because this might lead to a domineering leadership style, using authority to seek power (Grudem, 2009).

Additionally, shepherds are to take on the role with passion and enthusiasm (Bailey, 2014). This posture is needed because the role of the shepherd requires vigilant watching and oversight of the flock (Laniak, 2006). Potential shepherds were to find this eagerness and willingness to serve by personally experiencing the grace and love of the true shepherd (Clowney, 1988). This is in contrast to a domineering posture where poor shepherds reveled in authority and held sway over those they led (Wheaton, 1994). Though the shepherd role possessed a measure of authority, the leaders were to carefully wield that authority with no pretense and with humility (Clowney, 1988; Laniak, 2006; Wheaton, 1994).

*Principle Three: Leaders motivate followers by leading with a posture of humility.*

### *Stewardship*

Peter's address of posture is closely related to the concept of stewardship. The recipients of Peter's letter were in positions of authority over the people God has called into the church (Schreiner, 2003). The people are God's flock, and Peter clarified that the position the elders were in was entrusted by God (v. 2). There is a clear appeal to those in leadership and a clear emphasis to whom the people belong (Arichea & Nida, 1980). Peter clarified that the leaders are indeed to shepherd or tend to the flock (Schreiner, 2003), but they are called to a higher purpose because the flock does not belong to them but rather to God (Arichea & Nida, 1980). God is entrusting the elders with His family and is asking the elders to care for the flock with eagerness and humility.

There can be little doubt that Peter's tone is laced with the recollection of his personal calling on the shores of Galilee (Clowney, 1988). Peter used the term *poimainō*—the same term used by Jesus in John 21:16. In each of Jesus' questions to Peter in John 21, He referred to the sheep as "my sheep" and "my lambs." Here, in 1 Peter 5:2, Peter reminded the recipients that those they tended were not their own, but rather the possession of God Bailey, 2014).

*Principle Four: Leaders serve as stewards of their organizations and have been entrusted with its leadership.*

### *Calling*

Peter wanted to address those who were in the leadership of the church—the elders. Those who are elders are also shepherds (Laniak, 2006). They are overseers of the church (Grudem, 2009; Schreiner, 2003). It is evident within this section that the elder position is one of leadership and one in a shepherding style, as contrasted with lording over (Grudem, 2009). Peter even appealed as a fellow elder (v. 1). He also linked the role of shepherding to the Chief Shepherd (v. 4). There is a clear connection to the calling of being a shepherd to the author of that calling, Christ Jesus. As shepherds, the elders should be examples as Christ Jesus is an example to them (v. 3). This is an example of humility and self-forgetfulness, where the elders are not looking out for their own interests, but rather, the interests of their flock (Laniak, 2006; Latourette, 1945; Tolmie, 2006).

There is also an appeal of Peter to the conscience of the elders. Peter urges them to serve in the position, not out of obligation, but out of a willingness to care for others (V. 2). They should be eager to live out an exemplary life to the flock, serving, and being examples (Bailey, 2014; Laniak, 2006). All of these requirements are possible because of the standard of shepherding Jesus presented to the disciples and Peter specifically (Grudem, 2009; Laniak, 2006).

*Principle Five: Leaders are called by God and should be willingly to serve.*

## DISCUSSION

Within this short pericope, there are several critical points of application regarding the research questions. First, Peter viewed the elder/pastor role

as one of a shepherd (Marshall, 1991; Schreiner, 2003). Peter would have understood the shepherding language given by Jesus in John 10 and at his restoration of John 21 as reflective of the Ezekiel language (Marshall, 1991; Skinner, 2018). Within this context of shepherding, Peter explained that part of the shepherd's role is to oversee the flock (Culpepper, 2010; Krentz, 2010). This does include aspects of leadership. However, it is under the umbrella of the calling of shepherding. As the text makes clear, throughout Scripture, the crucial analogy for the oversight of the nation of Israel and continuing with the church was the metaphor of the shepherd (Köstenberger, 2002; Mein, 2007). Ezekiel prophesied to the elders about shepherding (Gunter, 2016). Jesus embodied shepherding, then passed that mantle to Peter (Adams, 2013; Quasten, 1948; Schwenk, 2020; Skinner, 2018; Swalm, 2010). Peter continued to communicate this metaphor to the churches in Asia (Schreiner, 2003).

Second, as stated by Lapsley (1991), "Pastoral theology is the theological inquiry into the care of persons in an ecclesial context, or by ecclesial representatives outside that full context" (p. 116). Shepherding was and still is understood as the exercise of caring people and looking out for their best interests (Brodie, 2016; Helm, 2008; Schreiner, 2003; Siew, 2013; Wright, 2011). Peter clearly instructed the elders to "shepherd God's flock" (*New International Version*, 1978/2011, 1 Pet. 5:2). Jesus had set a new example and pattern of shepherding for the pastor/elder role (Ajayi, 2018; Manala, 2010; Mavis, 1947; Skinner, 2018). Indeed, Pastors are responsible for the care of individuals, and this care comes with an attitude of service and self-forgetfulness (Latourette, 1945). As elders are asked to shepherd, they must follow the Good Shepherd and the example that he set (Tolmie, 2006).

Third, history reflects two important phenomena occurring at the same time. First, society and church leaders were recognizing the church as a separate movement from Judaism (Schwenk, 2020; Shelley, 2013; Wright, 2011). Second, society was persecuting the church because of its revolutionary posture (Arichea & Nida, 1980; Carson et al., 1994; Schreiner, 2003). Peter needed to address this persecution by reminding the elders of their role in the oversight of the church (Schreiner, 2003). Juxtaposed with the imagery of the lion, it is clear that Peter wanted to communicate a posture of care and protection for the elders (Schreiner, 2003; Wright, 2011).

## SUMMARY

Elders are called to be overseers of the church. Peter, though, makes clear that this oversight must be done in such a way that aligns with the shepherding metaphor that had guided the cultural landscape for centuries. This is not an exercise in semantics but rather a shift in focus. As pastors have admirably focused on how to become better leaders, they have lost focus on the calling that Christ made clear and passed on through Peter. Yes, shepherds are leaders and overseers of the flock, but they are more. This article has posited that leadership falls under the shepherding mandate. Though researchers have explored the concept of shepherding leadership (Laniak, 2006; Resane, 2014; Witmer, 2010), there is a dearth of research that explores the model of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. It would behoove the church community to not only heed this calling of shepherding, but also embark on further research which explores the concept further. Elders who focus solely on leadership as their mantle short themselves on all that God has called them to be. Church leaders must shift their focus to the broader and higher calling of shepherding. Only then will they achieve the leadership qualities they seek.

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# Using Leadership Values to Minimize Resistance and Facilitate Change: An Analysis of 1 Peter 5

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Organizational change is a dynamic process affecting numerous stakeholders. Change process dynamics always include at least one significant reality—resistance to change. Resistance is a follower reaction often continuing throughout the change process due to specific change impediments. Much effort has been expended addressing these impediments in

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order to streamline the change process. A classic model addressing resistance and change is Lewin's three-step model. Lewin's model involves three phases known as unfreezing, change, and refreezing (Petrescu & Dinescu, 2010). Certain leadership values, characteristics, and actions are conceivably very effective in minimizing resistance in the change process. In that vein, the purpose of this study is to consider the leadership values of *voluntary, integrity, participative, humbleness, ethical, supportive, and delegation* as derived from an inner texture analysis of 1 Peter 5:1–5.

Change impediments and the corresponding resistance do not disappear after unfreezing. Conner and Meyer (2004) state leaders' ideas for change must be "sold, resold, emphasized, and monitored throughout the change management process" (p. 11). Burnes (2004) further notes "without reinforcement, change could be short-lived" (p. 986). The leadership challenge, therefore, involves an ongoing effort in addressing impediments and thereby minimizing resistance in order to solidify the change. One conceptual answer is found in the leadership values derived from 1 Peter 5:1–5. These values are demonstrated by distinct leader characteristics and behaviors that positively contribute to the change process. Organizational leaders possessing the seven values found in 1 Peter 5:1–5 will display positive characteristics and effective behaviors which minimize routine resistances and successfully freeze the desired change.

### INNER TEXTURE ANALYSIS I PETER 5:1–5

According to Robbins (1996), inner texture analysis considers the relational aspect of "word-phrase and narrational patterns" that produce "the context for the 'networks of signification' in a text" (p. 46). This analysis of 1 Peter 5:1–5 primarily focuses on the inner texture methods of opening-middle-closing and repetitive-progressive to identify important leadership values. These values emerge when analyzing the significant interwoven patterns of the passage.

#### *Opening-Middle-Closing Analysis*

The text's opening, middle, and closing sections consider "the span of the rhetorical unit" (Robbins, 1996, p. 50). Peter's narrative opens with verse 1, the middle contains verses 2–4, and the closing is verse 5. The opening use of *therefore* indicates a transition from the previous narrative. Hiebert (1982) notes this transition "indicates a logical thought

connection” (p. 330) with previous statements but begins a new focus. Peter’s opening serves three purposes. First, he states his credentials as a fellow elder, a direct witness of Christ’s sufferings, and a shared partner in glory. These powerful credentials underscore Peter’s credibility and are given more forcefully than anywhere else in the entire epistle (Hiebert, 1982). However, Peter delivers his credentials collegially as an exemplar of the values he further proposes (Elliott, 2001). Second, Peter indicates his purpose in writing is to provide encouragement. Third, he names his addressees, the elders, referring to those advanced in age being the natural leaders of the church (deSilva, 2004).

The middle verses 2–3 provide the thrust of Peter’s leadership narrative with a series of repetitive-progressive statements detailing the positive attributes that should characterize elders. These verses identify the positive values of a shepherding leader who voluntarily oversees followers by encouraging participation while demonstrating integrity and ethics (Holderread, 1979). Middle verse 4 is a reminder that the ultimate reward for modeling those values is received in Christ’s glorious return (Lynch, 2012). The closing verse 5 transitions from the elder perspective to focus on the younger men and the entire community (Elliott, 2001). The closing contains a reasoned argument, summarizing God’s will and reward, to persuade all Christ’s followers to display humbleness (Holderread, 1979). Verse 5 demonstrates humility as another important leadership value (Breed, 2016). Table 21.1 provides a visual representation of the opening-middle-closing pattern of 1 Peter 5:1–5.

### *Repetitive-Progressive Analysis*

Repetitive-progressive texture analysis considers the “integrated patterns of repetition and progression” (Robbins, 1996, p. 46) found in the text. These integrated patterns emphasize the attitude or action the author desires to implant on readers (deSilva, 2004). The repetitive-progression found in middle verses 2–4 clarifies the leadership values Peter desired the elders to model. Shepherding and exercising oversight are given first as the primary function of the leader (Breed, 2016). After indicating the elders’ primary purpose, Peter modifies those purposes with a series of positive and negative statements (Hiebert, 1982). Elliott (2001) notes this “triad of negative–positive antitheses... is unique in the New Testament” (p. 555). This repeated progression involves three “not...but” statements (see Table 21.2) providing a framework of good and bad.

**Table 21.1** 1 Peter 5:1–5 open-middle-closing texture

| <i>Pattern</i> | <i>Verse(s)</i> | <i>Text</i>  |
|----------------|-----------------|--|
| Opening        | Verse 1         | Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed  |
| Middle         | Verses 2–4      | Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory |
| Closing        | Verse 5         | You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble   |

*Note* Scripture text is from NASB

*Source* Mark Bell

**Table 21.2** 1 Peter 5:1–5 repetitive progressive texture

| <i>Pattern</i> | <i>Verse</i> | <i>Text</i>                |
|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Repetitive     | Verse 2      | Not under compulsion       |
| Progressive    | Verse 2      | But voluntarily            |
| Repetitive     | Verse 2      | Not for sordid gain        |
| Progressive    | Verse 2      | But with eagerness         |
| Repetitive     | Verse 3      | Nor yet as lording it over |
| Progressive    | Verse 3      | But proving to be examples |

*Note* Scripture text is from NASB

*Source* Mark Bell

These “not...but” statements illustrate the distinct contrast between the positive and negative attributes (Elliott, 2001). Peter persuades these elders to *shepherd* with supportive guidance and *exercise oversight* of followers with willingness or *voluntarily* and not *under compulsion* or as a requirement. Further, they are to lead with *eagerness* or an excited desire but *not for sordid gain* or unethical profit while *proving to be examples* of integrity and not *lording it over* or dominating their followers. Peter

provides a persuasive argument for Godly leadership values supported by the contrast between good and bad (Lynch, 2012).

Analyzing the opening-middle-closing and repetitive-progressive inner textures of 1 Peter 5:1–5 demonstrates Peter’s narrative as persuasive argumentation for certain leadership values. The opening provides validity in Peter’s credentials. The middle provides the purposeful leadership values of shepherding and oversight while demonstrating the values of voluntary, integrity, participative, ethical, and supportive leadership through a repeated progression of modifying statements. The closing section adds the value of humility. Peter’s argument for these values is threaded throughout the passage.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND FOLLOWER RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Lewin’s original change process theory, the force-field model, is commonly known as the three-step model (Petrescu & Dinescu, 2010, p. 136). Lewin conceived change in three phases: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. In the unfreezing phase, entrenched behaviors/mentalities are perceived as invalid. In the change stage, new behaviors/mentalities are introduced and perceived as improvements. In the refreezing stage, the change is fully implemented, and the new behaviors/mentalities are solidified and perceived as routine. Essentially, the three-step model extracts the old, moves to the new, and then solidifies the new behaviors/mentalities (Burnes, 2004, pp. 985–986). Lewin’s change model is reviewed more thoroughly in the following section as it is an integral aspect of the *CHANGED* organization model.

Even though Lewin’s three-step change model is simplistic in its design, implementing the process is more complex. While Lewin’s focus was on group change (Burnes, 2004), an underlying critical factor impacting the complexity of any change process relates to the basic tendency of human nature to resist change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). In fact, Avey et al. (2008) suggested employee resistance is one of the biggest barriers to organizational change. Empirical testing shows resistance to change can be attributed to dispositional tendencies, such as disbelief in the change, poor self-confidence, and resentment of control (Oreg, 2003, 2006), or organizational issues, such as lack of trust in the leader, fear of failure, and threat to job status and security (Dent & Goldberg, 1999;

Kreitner, 1992). Follower resistance to change is also reviewed more thoroughly in the subsequent sections because of its overall importance in the *CHANGED* organization model.

### LEWIN'S THREE-STEP MODEL OF CHANGE

Kurt Lewin is considered by many as the founding father of change management (Cummings et al., 2016). The focus of Lewin's work revolved around the psychological aspects of social conflict. Lewin believed a key factor in resolving conflict was to enable learning and understanding to change people's perceptions (Burnes, 2004). Even though over the years Lewin's model has been criticized (Burnes, 2004), the model has been widely embraced as the foundational basis for change management as demonstrated by various textbook authors, including Robbins (1993), Wren and Bedeian (2009), and Burke (1982), as well as extant literature from academic journals. A major reason for its popularity has been the support for "leading" and "managing" employee perceptions and behavior during organizational change efforts (Santhidran et al., 2013). Lewin's change model is composed of three critical steps.

Lewin (1946) proposed the first step in changing behavior was to "unfreeze" existing perceptions and situations. In this step, there must be some recognition of the need for the change (Kaminski, 2011). If there is little group recognition of the need for change, the change agent is challenged upfront (Burnes, 2004). The presence of either driving forces or restraining forces must exist for any motivation to change (Calder, 2013), as well as the understanding of the crisis or event triggering the desire for change (Lavasseur, 2001). An important component of this step is to prepare organizational members for the change (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999), which involves early planning and involvement of institutional stakeholders (Manchester et al., 2014). During this process of preparing for organizational change, clear communication throughout the organization is necessary. Although communication from the top is important in bringing about successful change, it is not the only critical factor. Each organizational member must support and participate in the change effort (Calder, 2013; Kaminski, 2011; Lavasseur, 2001). In addition, training employees by providing the knowledge and skills needed is another important component (Calder, 2013). Other strategies may involve negotiating with employees to emphasize what the change can do for them or, in the worst-case scenario, using coercion (Calder, 2013).

Step two of the change process involves the actual change. This step also is referred to as “moving” or “movement” (Sarayreh et al., 2013; Manchester et al., 2014) and involves evaluating all of the forces at work as identified in step one and developing options (Sarayreh et al., 2013). To bring about change successfully, leaders must understand the human side of the equation and recognize that human capital is as important as other resources and infrastructures that may exist in the organization (Bakari et al., 2017). Therefore, during this period, change agents attempt to change attitudes and decrease resistance (Manchester et al., 2014) and to gain commitment from employees (Bakari et al., 2017). Employees are more likely to adopt organizational change more easily if organizational leaders have prepared employees for the change in order to achieve employee commitment (Santhidran et al., 2013). Part of the employee preparation for change involves leaders removing or minimizing barriers to change (Lavasseur, 2001) with emphasis on removing the fear factor and breaking old habits (Calder, 2013). One effective way in removing change barriers is to involve employees in the planning and implementation of impending change. Employee involvement is a long-recognized strategy for implementing change and this involvement will be most effective if organizational members feel empowered—both in authority and responsibility (Hussain et al., 2018). This empowerment comes as a result of strong leadership in terms of motivating employees and sharing knowledge at the individual level (Hussain et al., 2018). Even so, change will happen only when all group members buy into the process. For example, there will be early adopters of the change and others who lag behind. The reluctant employees must identify cognitively and psychologically with the early adopters before change can happen (Schein, 1996).

Step three of the process relates to “refreezing.” This step recognizes the new behaviors and attempts to stabilize the environment (Sarayreh et al., 2013) with the “new normal” by developing strategies to enhance and boost the new practices (Manchester et al., 2014) and by creating supporting culture for the new behavior. Group members must be able to personally “refreeze” by recognizing how the new behaviors benefit them or how they can fit the change solutions into their own new normal (Schein, 1996). A major part of the post-change support calls for leaders to remain actively engaged by participating as part of the team, while continuing to provide information and updates on the change effort

(Lavasseur, 2001). Among other factors, this reinforcement requires feedback through organizational rewards for employees who exhibit the desired behaviors (Calder, 2013; Kaminski, 2011).

## DISPOSITIONAL TENDENCIES TO RESIST CHANGE

Research suggests much of the resistance to change can be attributed to an individual's general dispositional tendency to resist change (del Val & Fuentes, 2003; Oreg, 2003, 2006). Specifically, Oreg (2006) found that "some employees are more likely to experience negative emotions and more likely to act against organizational changes because of their dispositional inclination, independent of the particular nature of the change at hand" (p. 92). A sample of dispositional tendencies leading to resistance to change includes disbelief in the need for change, poor self-confidence, and resentment of perceived control due to organizational change.

One of the primary reasons for resistance to change is disbelief that the change is necessary (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). Disbelief can develop due to several factors including cognitive rigidity (Oreg, 2003). Some individuals are simply "dogmatic" as characterized by rigidity and closed-mindedness. These individuals might be unwilling to accept and adjust to new situations and, as a result, feel change is unnecessary. Individuals who find it difficult to adjust to change may develop feelings of anger or anxiety leading to a feeling that change is not necessary (Oreg, 2006). Also, a preference for low levels of stimulation and novelty may persuade some individuals to maintain the status quo. In other words, they have no desire or need for novelty or change in any way (Oreg, 2003). Often, denial that change is necessary is caused by a distorted perception or by not fully understanding the strategic implications of the change, which is sometimes due to an increase in communication barriers and untrue assumptions about the change process (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). If the organization fails to communicate the need for the change, as well as the strategic benefits, then employees may not have the information necessary to readily adopt the change initiatives. Also, if the proposed change is incongruent with the organizational values, then individuals may not see that such a change would be beneficial, thus increasing the resistance to change (de Val & Fuentes, 2003).

Employees with poor self-confidence may be prone to resist change as well, potentially leading to a lack of psychological resilience (Oreg, 2003). Individuals who are not resilient due to the fact they do not believe

in themselves may not be able to cope with change because to do so could mean admitting past practices were faulty or they could have feelings of losing face (Oreg, 2003). The perceived notion of a capability gap between the tasks before the change and the tasks after the change will negatively affect a person's self-confidence and, therefore, might increase the resistance to change.

Resistance to change may increase as the resentment of loss of control increases (Oreg, 2003). Research has shown individuals resist change and uncertainty when leaders dictate the changes especially when the changes do not seem feasible, and employees are not given control of the situation (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). Employee involvement is a long-recognized strategy for implementing change, and this involvement will be most effective if organizational members feel empowered and in control of their work environment—both in authority and responsibility (Hussain et al., 2018). Individuals may feel they have lost control over their life situations and that change is being forced upon them rather than their own initiation of the change. For example, if individuals perceive the change involves more work, even for the short term, they may feel learning and adjusting to new tasks is undesirable (Oreg, 2006), and this lack of control over the work environment might lead to an increase in resistance to change. In this same vein, employees may be reluctant to adopt new habits that are forced upon them (Oreg, 2003). Some individuals may be comfortable with the status quo and experience stress and frustration when their old habits do not fit with the change. This kind of resistance occurs when employees have predispositions and preferences that are not rational (e.g., preferring not to move offices or not wanting to learn new technology, etc.). However, even the smallest act reducing employee control can lead to resentment and a resistance to change.

## ORGANIZATIONAL TENDENCIES TO RESIST CHANGE

Often individuals resist change due to issues specific to the organization. The cornerstone of these issues is the uncertainty change brings to both organizational systems as well as organizational members (Aldag & Stearns, 1991; Griffin, 1993; Schermerhorn, 1989). Three primary organizational issues leading to resistance to change include lack of trust in the leader, fear of failure, and threat of job status and security.

An alternative view posits resistance to change may have nothing to do with individual predispositions or organizational strategies, per se. Rather,



how employees are treated by the organizational leaders throughout the change process may dictate how they respond to the proposed change. Thus, leaders who foster a trusting environment could influence successful change. Conversely, when organizational members do not trust the leaders, resistance to change may increase (Dubrin & Ireland, 1993; Kreitner, 1992; Oreg, 2006). For example, Folger and Skarlicki (1999) suggest perceived organizational fairness may be an important factor. If people believe they are being treated fairly, they will be more likely to respond favorably to change. Likewise, Ford et al. (2014) propose similar ideas by suggesting leaders can cause employee resistance by breaking psychological contracts and thus violating the trust of individuals in their leaders and the organization as a whole. These researchers agree when people see themselves as having been treated fairly, they will develop attitudes and behaviors that support change. However, if leaders are perceived to engage in favoritism and fail to treat individuals fairly, resistance to change may increase (Waddell & Sohal, 1998). Lack of trust in leaders can also stem from poor management style (Waddell & Sohal, 1998). For example, if a leader lacks creative responses to change or has an inadequate strategic vision then resistance to change will be present (del Val & Fuentes, 2003).

Another organizational cause of resistance to change is fear of failure of the change (Aldag & Stearns, 1991; Dubrin & Ireland, 1993; Griffin, 1993; Kreitner, 1992; Schermerhorn, 1989). Sometimes employees have low motivation to accept change because of past failures of change initiatives creating a financial crisis within the organization by increasing cost while also negatively affecting the morale of the workforce (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). For example, Coch and French (1948) found employees who experienced organizational change within their department reported feelings including “frustration, loss of hope of ever regaining their former level of production and status in the factory, feelings of failure, and a very low level of aspiration” (p. 516).

Additionally, the threat of job status and security can negatively affect the acceptance of change (Aldag & Stearns, 1991; Griffin, 1993; Kreitner, 1992; Schermerhorn, 1989). However, some theorists (e.g., Dent & Goldberg, 1999) suggest resistance to change is actually a misnomer. They contend people do not resist change, per se, but rather, they resist things such as “loss of status, loss of pay, or loss of comfort” (p. 26). Oreg’s (2006) study evaluated the three-dimensional model of resistance

to change by examining many variables including context change variables such as power and prestige, job security, and intrinsic rewards. Oreg found both affective and cognitive resistance to change had the most significant relationship to outcomes such as job security and threats to power and prestige as well as threats to intrinsic rewards. Other empirical evidence has tied resistance to change with more social psychological factors. For example, Jost (2015) suggests major factors involve the “self,” social validation, and ideology. People are motivated by self-interest, personal significance, and vested interests (Jost, 2015). Often, employees’ titles and securities are measures of personal significance. Therefore, if an employee perceives job security or job status would be negatively affected by change then the likelihood of resisting such change would be greater.

## LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR *CHANGED* ORGANIZATIONS

The basic explanation of follower resistance to change and Lewin’s three-step model was given to provide relative context for the leadership values analysis. The following sections analyze each of the seven values (*voluntary, integrity, participative, humbleness, ethical, supportive, and delegation*) derived from the inner texture analysis of 1 Peter 5:1–5. A conceptual leadership wisdom statement, or principle, related to each value is also presented.

### *Voluntary Leadership*

Voluntary leadership has significance as a leadership value. Leading voluntarily requires a willing desire for the task rather than the detested undertaking of an undesired chore (Heyns & Rothmann, 2018). The leadership value *voluntarily* is found in the middle verses, and its significance as a positive modifier of the leadership function is derived from the repetitive-progressive texture. deSilva (2004) notes Peter’s use of *voluntarily* is meant to generate an attitude within the elder where he treats leadership “as an invitation to work with God” (pp. 862–863). However, as Hiebert (1982) mentions, this invitation is irrelevant if the elder is unwilling or reluctant to accept (p. 335). This premise has applicability for contemporary leaders as they must engage the leadership task with a willing spirit. Leaders must display the willingness to lead in order to

create willingness for change (Mallén et al., 2015). The willingness for change begins in the unfreezing stage (Calder, 2013). Communicating the vision, need, and benefit of change in a convincing manner is a characteristic behavior of a voluntary leader (Heyns & Rothmann, 2018). Therefore, the value of voluntary leadership is the foundation of the first principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle One: Create willingness for change in followers through voluntarily leading with vision.*

### *Integrity in Leadership*

The value of integrity in leadership is substantial. Leading with integrity requires one to exhibit honesty, trustworthiness, and consistency between words and deeds (Engelbrecht et al., 2018). The leadership value of integrity is the final positive modifier found within the repetitive-progressive texture of the middle verses. Peter implicates integrity's importance by stating elders should be *proving to be examples* for others (Breed, 2016). Elliott (2001) captures Peter's meaning as indicating the elders must "walk the talk" (p. 556) by leading with inspiration and discipline. An elder must "stand out as a distinct representative" (Hiebert, 1982, p. 338) or exemplar of integrity. The value of integrity is certainly important for today's leaders as followers are keenly aware of a leader's integrity and react accordingly. Leaders must prove themselves as honest examples of integrity, so their followers develop trust (Engelbrecht et al., 2018). Trust becomes a reciprocal reality between leader and follower (Russell & Stone, 2002). However, the leader has the responsibility to initiate the relationship. Distrust of a leader is always detrimental but develops into a serious resistance problem in the unfreezing stage (Lavasueur, 2001). The value of leadership integrity provides the solution. Therefore, the value of integrity provides the foundation for the second principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle Two: Honesty and integrity in leaders who are proving to be examples creates trust in leaders of change.*

### *Participative Leadership*

Participative leadership has importance as a leadership value. The participative leadership approach is inclusive and anti-dominant involving followers in decisions and soliciting feedback (Yukl, 2013). The value of participation is derived from the negative modifier *nor yet as lording it over* found in the middle verses' repetitive-progressive texture. Elliott (2001) claims Peter's statement to not lord over followers conveys how elders are to remain "ever mindful of the fact that the flock is not theirs to dominate" (p. 555). Hiebert (1982) furthers the point stating elders were encouraged against the rule, control, or mastery of followers with "a heavy-handed use of authority" (p. 337). Participative leadership is applicable in the contemporary context because followers desire involvement and an inclusive atmosphere (Busse & Regenberg, 2019). Leaders must utilize an anti-dominant and participative approach to foster inclusiveness (Odoardi et al., 2019). In the change stage, inclusiveness creates a learning atmosphere where followers motivated by new self-interests will commit to the change (Santhidran et al., 2013). To that end, minimizing resistance from the threat impediment is best affected by an anti-dominant and participative leadership approach. As such, the value of participative leadership underpins the third principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle Three: Anti-Dominant leadership is not Lording it over followers but encouraging participatory change.*

### *Humble Leadership*

A humble approach to the leadership task is a timeless value. Humble leadership requires a leader's noticeable recognition of personal limitations and weaknesses (Bell, 2019). In the closing narrative, Peter gives the leadership value of *humility* as a persuasive argument. In this regard, Peter's unmistakable clarity indicates God's opposition of pride and offer of grace to the humble (Lynch, 2012). To be most effective, humility as a leadership value must be recognizable or noticeable by followers (Winston & Fields, 2015). As Elliott (2001) states, Peter contended that everyone should display humility and "exemplify [it] in their lives" (p. 556). Followers easily recognize both pride and humility in leaders and develop leader perceptions as a result (Bell, 2019). Leaders must display

noticeable humility in order to create follower confidence during the change process (Hussain et al., 2018). Leaders' recognition of personal limitations promotes followers' active willingness to develop new skills and behaviors needed in the change stage (Manchester et al., 2014). The value of humble leadership is most effective when easily recognized by followers who are then encouraged in their own abilities. Therefore, the value of leadership humility is at the core of the fourth principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle Four: Noticeable humility in leadership strengthens followers' personal confidence during change.*

### *Ethical Leadership*

Ethical leadership is an important leadership value and, although reminiscent of the integrity value, it is viewed separately. This separation primarily relates to the leader's internal intentions regarding leadership action (Avolio et al., 2004). Ethical leadership is demonstrated by a governing ethical intent (Northouse, 2019). The ethical leadership value is derived from the middle verses as a negative modifier when Peter uses the *not for sordid gain* phrase. Hiebert (1982) qualifies Peter's meaning concerning sordid gain in an elder as being a fondness for gain "procured in a base and avaricious manner, producing shame if uncovered" (p. 336). Those are powerful descriptors of greed that can characterize a leader not governed by ethics. Ethical leadership has contemporary relevance as leaders must ethically govern their own actions, desires, and intentions (Northouse, 2019). Leaders must demonstrate their intentions are ethically governed (Avolio et al., 2004). Leaders motivated by unethical personal gain, financial cost concerns, and relative cost concerns are serious change impediments (Oreg, 2006). The value of ethical leadership minimizes resistances allowing the leader to effectively facilitate the change. Thus, the value of ethical leadership is at the heart of the fifth principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle Five: Governing leader ethics being not for sordid gain minimizes followers' cost concerns in change.*

### *Supportive Leadership*

The value of supportive leadership has critical implications for effective leadership. A supporting leader must provide personal and organizational support and guidance by the proper provision of resources, direction, and feedback (Caldwell & Canuto-Carranco, 2010). The supportive leadership value is found at the beginning of Peter's middle verses' narrative when he encourages elders to *shepherd* the flock. This value speaks to the leader's purpose, function, and behaviors (Walsh et al., 2018). The metaphorical use of a shepherd to describe leadership support and guidance is common and significant throughout both the Old and New Testaments (Elliott, 2001). Hiebert (1982) describes the shepherding metaphor as designed to communicate the acts of "guiding and guarding, feeding and folding" (p. 334). Shepherd can be used as a noun or verb indicating its contemporary application both as a function and an action. Leaders must ensure support and guidance for followers so that successful long-term change is perceived feasible (Caldwell & Canuto-Carranco, 2010). Convincing followers of the feasibility of long-term success solidifies confidence in new behaviors and mentalities contributing to solid refreezing (Schein, 1996). Supportive leadership guides new skill development, ensures the availability of resources, and provides followers protection. Hence, the value of supportive leadership encompasses the concept of the sixth principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle Six: Ensure leader support and guidance as a shepherd of followers solidifies confidence in change.*

### *Delegation in Leadership*

Delegation is an important leadership value. Leaders that effectively delegate empower followers by enabling a perception of task ownership (Reyes-Cruz, 2019). The value of delegation in leadership is derived from Peter's use of the phrase *exercising oversight* as the second function or purpose of an elder in the narrative of the middle verses. Hiebert (1982) indicates an aspect of Peter's meaning is overseeing with care, and Elliott (2001) adds the responsibility to see "that something is done in the correct way" (p. 553). Therefore, Peter contends that elders should ensure accuracy but with consideration for those involved in carrying out the activity. Effective delegation in leadership today could easily be

described in a similar fashion (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Leaders must delegate effectively in order to negate resentment associated with control and interference (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Committed followers are produced by leaders who delegate change implementation processes and procedures (Kreitner, 1992). Committed followers are empowered by a sense of ownership and contribute improvements to the change (Reyes-Cruz, 2019). Delegation in leadership is effective when used as a method to care for followers and ensure the most correct outcome. As a result, the value of delegation in leadership forms the basis of the seventh principle of a *CHANGED* organization.

*Principle Seven: Delegation in leadership is exercising oversight to empower followers' commitment to change.*

Peter's argument for these leadership values is not limited to his original audience. In fact, these values have a significant contemporary application as expressed in seven leadership principles. Figure 21.1 demonstrates these principles using the acronym *CHANGED*.

### THE *CHANGED* ORGANIZATION ACTION PLAN

The leadership values derived from 1 Peter 5:1–5 serve as a model of effective characteristics and behaviors for contemporary leaders. These leadership values describe a willing leader that is honest, humble, ethical, and anti-dominant and understands the leadership function as empowering followers with supportive guidance. Although originally written by Peter as guidance for church elders, today's leaders are well served by modeling these values. Although applicable in all leadership capacities, these values are demonstrably effective in managing the resistance impediments inherent in an organizational change process. Resistance does occur throughout the change process, and these seven values aid the leader in managing the change through the unfreezing, change, and refreezing phases. The following action plan is based in view of a corresponding change impediment, the characteristics and actions of a leader modeling the leadership value, and how those elements relate to the overall change process in Lewin's three-step model.

|   |
|---|
| Leadership Principles ~ <b>CHANGED</b> ~ Organizations  |
| <b>Create willingness for change in followers through <i>voluntarily</i> leading with vision.</b>             |
| <b>Honesty and integrity in leaders who are <i>proving to be examples</i> create trust needed for change.</b> |
| <b>Anti-Dominant leadership is not <i>lording it over</i> followers but encouraging participatory change.</b> |
| <b>Noticeable <i>humility</i> in leadership strengthens followers' personal confidence during change.</b>     |
| <b>Governing leader ethics being <i>not for sordid gain</i> minimizes followers' cost concerns in change.</b> |
| <b>Ensure leader support and guidance as a <i>shepherd</i> of followers solidifies confidence in change.</b>  |
| <b>Delegation in leadership is <i>exercising oversight</i> to empower followers' commitment to change.</b>    |

**Fig. 21.1** Leadership principles: CHANGED organizations (*Source* Mark Bell)

### *Create Willingness*

During the unfreezing stage, a significant impediment to change, expressed as a disbelief in the need for change, is often demonstrated by followers. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) state followers often resist change because “they assess the situation differently from... those initiating the change” (p. 4). Individual follower resistance develops from the differentiation in assessment, and, as a result, resistance continues as followers remain unconvinced of the need for change (del Val & Fuentes, 2003). Different assessments among followers result from a lack of relevant facts or a misunderstanding of the change’s desired outcome (Oreg, 2003). Disbelief in the change is an impediment that must be addressed by leaders’ communication efforts.

The value of voluntary leadership is expressed by the leader’s characteristics and actions. The voluntary leader generates willingness for change in followers by demonstrating an active willingness to lead the change process. Conner and Meyer (2004) state active leadership



requires “ceaseless sponsorship and ongoing internal selling” (p. 11). Therefore, active leaders willingly engage a communication strategy to minimize resistance and encourage belief in the need for change (Mallén et al., 2015). Communication of the organization’s vision regarding the change must be comprehensive in order to convince followers (Schein, 1996). Leaders who approach their tasks in a demonstrably voluntary fashion will communicate vision most effectively by doing so verbally and non-verbally.

An effective communication of vision contributes to the unfreezing process. An important aspect of the unfreezing stage involves the removal of follower prejudices against change (Burnes, 2004, p. 35). When follower prejudices such as disbelief in the change are removed, the unfreezing process is less hindered. Successful leaders’ communicated visions are powerful and compelling. Bramer (1992) makes the point that a compelling need for change is one “on which most people agree” (p. 35). It is difficult for the organization to proceed when the majority of people do not share the goals of the change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). When using verbal and non-verbal means of communicating a compelling vision, the leader will unfreeze prejudices, minimize the disbelief in the change resistance, create shared goals, and more effectively facilitate the change.

### *Honesty*

Followers’ distrust of their leader impedes change during the unfreezing step. When distrust occurs among followers, significant change resistance evolves (Dubrin & Ireland, 1993). Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) mention the resistance dynamic develops “when trust is lacking between the person initiating the change and the employees” (p. 4). The reasons for distrust vary, but distrust certainly occurs when the leader’s actual attributes are dissimilar to those that characterize a disciplined, trustworthy, and honest leader (Engelbrecht et al., 2018). When followers fail to trust their leader, they inevitably fail to trust the motives, processes, and promises associated with the change process and react with resistance (Russell & Stone, 2002). Therefore, distrust is a serious change impediment that leaders cannot ignore but must work to eliminate by being exemplars of integrity.

Honest and trustworthy leaders demonstrate the characteristics and actions of integrity well and being an exemplar of integrity is the most

effective method for demonstrating the value (Russell & Stone, 2002). Many classic characteristics of integrity have been mentioned in describing the associated leader actions, but O'Toole (1999) describes leadership integrity as acting “on the inherent dignity of those they lead” (p. 18). This premise is valuable in describing leadership integrity as also being exhibited by a display of respect and trust for followers. As an exemplar of integrity, the leader demonstrates important traits such as honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness while offering respect, dignity, and trust to followers.

As an exemplar of honesty and integrity, the leader positively impacts the change process during unfreezing because distrust is a prevailing impediment in this step. Burnes (2004) states followers must acquire feelings of safety during unfreezing “before they can accept new information and reject old behaviors” (p. 985). Followers are unable to develop feelings of safety and reassurance if impeded by distrust (Dubrin & Ireland, 1993). As an exemplar of integrity, the leader creates an atmosphere where feelings of safety can develop (Engelbrecht et al., 2018). In return, followers develop trust in their leader and demonstrate this trust with loyalty (O'Toole, 1996). Loyalty among followers is the reward for an exemplar of leadership integrity. Integrity is critical in developing follower feelings of safety and loyalty, minimizing resistance due to distrust, and facilitating the unfreezing step and the ultimate change.

### *Anti-Dominant*

As change is implemented, followers display resistance resulting from feelings that their values, ideals, status, and power are threatened. This threat to job status and security impediment has significance in the change stage. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) describe this threat impediment simply as followers “think they will lose something of value” (p. 3). Followers attribute intrinsic worth to their values, ideals, status, and power and desire to protect them (Ford et al., 2014). If left unaddressed, this resistance causes follower behaviors which are unsupportive of the change endeavor (Ford et al., 2014). This threat is marginalized when followers actively participate in the change because they feel some ability to protect and involve their interests.

Participative leadership values are demonstrated by leaders' actions in soliciting follower feedback, encouraging involvement, and promoting participation (Yukl, 2013). This approach does not dominate followers

but features an inclusive aspect. O'Toole (1999) states inclusiveness is demonstrated by the leader's active communication effort, sharing of information, and creating an atmosphere that promotes followers' contributions. Anti-dominant and inclusive leader behaviors allow followers to develop a sense of protection for their ideals, power, and status minimizing this threat impediment.

An anti-dominant and participative leadership approach is effective once the change enters the change stage. During the change stage, followers are effectively motivated by a learning atmosphere (Burnes, 2004, pp. 985–986). In a learning atmosphere, followers are motivated by learning and derive satisfaction (Waddell & Sohal, 1998). New learning leads followers in developing new conceptions of their values, ideals, power, and status (Griffin, 1993). As the threat to self-interest is removed by the aspects of a participatory leadership style, followers replace old self-interests with new. New self-interests cause follower commitment to the change. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) note an important advantage of participation is “people feel more committed to making the change happen” (p. 1). Participative leadership minimizes the resistance from the threat impediment, ensures commitment to change, and therefore, more effectively facilitates the change.

### *Noticeable Humility*

Another significant impediment found in the change stage involves how followers fear a lack of personal ability. This fear causes followers to resist the change. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) claim powerful resistance to change occurs when people “fear they will not be able to develop the new skills and behavior that will be required of them” (p. 4). Followers may lack self-confidence in their abilities when a change implementation occurs (Aldag & Stearns, 1991). Followers are strengthened in personal confidence, however, when led by a noticeably humble individual (Aldag & Stearns, 1991). The humility of the leader eases the fear impediment as followers attribute strength to recognition of one's limitations from which they also derive strength.

The value of humbleness in leadership is characterized by the leader's active recognition of personal limitations. This action has legitimate warrant as a leader cannot implement change alone. O'Toole (1996) notes that regardless of organizational type, size, or scope, all leaders will necessarily depend on others and will specifically depend on those persons'

skills and experiences. This premise is valuable when considering the need for humility. Humble leaders recognize their dependence on followers, and when displaying noticeable humility, they create a reciprocal relationship of mutual dependence (Bell, 2019). Therefore, leaders that approach their role humbly benefit most from the leader–follower relationship.

In the change stage of Lewin’s model, humble leadership plays an integral role. Learning of new skills and behaviors occurs in the change stage generating the fear impediment and the corresponding resistance (Sarayreh et al., 2013). According to Burnes (2004), effective learning in the change stage is the “move from a less acceptable to a more acceptable set of behaviors” (p. 986). To facilitate this move, humble leaders first recognize their need for learning is equivalent to their followers, and second, the leader must invest in the necessary training and education of all involved parties (Winston & Fields, 2015). Bramer (1992) clarifies the benefit of this investment for followers as “increased self-worth for the worker” (p. 36). Increased self-worth increases confidence in one’s ability to develop new skills and perform new behaviors. Noticeably humble leaders effectively facilitate the transition to increased self-confidence by equalizing perceptions of learning needs and investing in training and education.

### *Governed by Ethics*

In the change stage, followers are impeded by cost concerns associated with the change. These cost concerns include the potential for personal financial loss, organizational financial loss, and relative costs such as inconvenience or incompatibility (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). As Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) state, followers may “see more costs than benefits resulting from the change” (p. 4). Follower attribution of unethical leader intent compounds the cost concern impediment (Avolio et al., 2004). Followers’ cost concerns are magnified and resistance increases when they detect the change will cause the leader to derive an unethical personal gain (Kreitner, 1992). In combating this cost concern impediment, leaders must be governed by ethical intentions, so their actions are deemed legitimate. Ethical leadership involves moral values. O’Toole (1996) claims “the only way to overcome resistance is leadership based on moral values...” (p. 1). Governing ethical intent cascades through the organization, and followers will inevitably model the characteristic behaviors.

Ethical leadership is a vital element in the Lewin model change stage. During the change stage, the change process becomes solidified through reinforcement (Burnes, 2004). When minimized in the change stage, cost concern impediments do not hinder the change from becoming solidified. Governing ethical intent demonstrated by the leader legitimizes the value of the change in followers (Northouse, 2019). Conner (1992) mentions that people must know “that the price for the status quo is significantly higher than the price for transition” (p. 34). Ethical leadership solidifies this belief in followers minimizing their fear of financial and relative costs. By demonstrating governing ethical intent, leaders minimize cost concern impediments, develop an ethical organizational culture, and solidly legitimize the change.

### *Ensures Support and Guidance*

In the refreezing stage, another relative impediment exists when followers doubt the feasibility of the change’s long-term success. These doubts stem from timing concerns, environmental realities, fear of unknowns, and skeptical long-term leader and organizational commitment (O’Toole, 1996). With these fears of failure, followers will not likely support the change and resist the freezing effort (Avey et al., 2008). Conner (1992), noting the risk of this impediment, states leaders “need to ensure strong commitment among those sponsoring the change” (p. 35). Leaders demonstrate commitment by actively guiding new skill development, ensuring financial and tangible resource availability, and protecting followers from environmental dangers (Walsh et al., 2018). With these supportive leadership attributes in place, followers express less doubt for potential long-term success contributing to their ability to commit.

Solidifying the change’s new behaviors and mentalities must occur in the refreezing stage. As noted by Petrescu and Dinescu (2010), refreezing is successful when followers are convinced of the existence of a “new status quo of the organization” (p. 136). Convincing followers of the change’s long-term success will foster recognition of a legitimate new status quo (Kaminski, 2011). Supportive leadership contributes to this recognition as followers feel the necessary resources are available to facilitate success (Caldwell & Canuto-Carranco, 2010). Speaking of facilitation and support, Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) note “no other approach works as well” to minimize resistance and deliver an adjustment to the

change (p. 7). A supportive leader's characteristics and actions demonstrate his or her willingness and ability to support, guide, and protect. Consequently, followers fully commit to the change in an atmosphere where long-term success is deemed realistic.

### *Delegation*

Followers are impeded by a resentment of control and interference in the refreezing stage. This resentment leads to resistance in developing the new skills and behaviors necessary to freeze a change (Kaminski, 2011). This resistance results from followers being convinced that their ways or methods are best (O'Toole, 1996). Followers tend to resist the change if they do not consider the new skills and behaviors to be their own (Manchester et al., 2014). Delegating leaders combat this resistance by allowing followers to take charge of certain aspects of the change implementation (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). This fosters feelings of ownership and empowerment. Followers are valuable human resources and can offer significant contributions. O'Toole (1999) notes these contributions are best realized when leaders "decentralize decision making" (p. 18). Followers with active decision-making roles concerning the change, skills, and behaviors are less likely to resist the change process. This active role creates commitment to the freezing of new behaviors but is only accomplished if the leader delegates.

In the refreezing stage, the change process is less inhibited when followers actively participate. Followers' resentment of control and interference affects the refreezing stage because followers must develop "continuity for new behaviors" (Petrescu & Dinescu, 2010, p. 4). Establishing continuity for new behaviors and skills is best accomplished by empowering followers to take ownership of the implementation (Calder, 2013). Bramer (1992) adds "people will also do more when we empower them" (p. 36). Bramer's point indicates that not only will continuity be established by empowered followers, but the overall process will be improved. Leaders who delegate effectively empower followers' commitment, improve the change process, minimize resistance, and solidify the change in refreezing.

## ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

The seven leadership principles form the foundation of the *CHANGED* organization action plan. The purpose of this action plan is not to convey a sense where one views the seven distinct impediments as occurring only in the corresponding change phase. Rather, the action plan demonstrates the likely impediments of each stage matched to change phase results which are seriously hindered by the associated impediment. Likewise, one should not take from this action plan a sense that other important leadership values are unable to positively impact an organizational change process. To that end, the action plan is a framework model which demonstrates how these seven leadership values can be most effectively implemented. However, because resistance is a recurring phenomenon, leaders should incorporate the values cumulatively into their leadership style in order to affect the most positive outcome. The interwoven pattern of the action plan is reminiscent of Peter’s interwoven delivery of these important leadership values. Figure 21.2 represents an ideal action plan where common impediments are marginalized by the seven values resulting in success in each change stage. To that point, contemporary

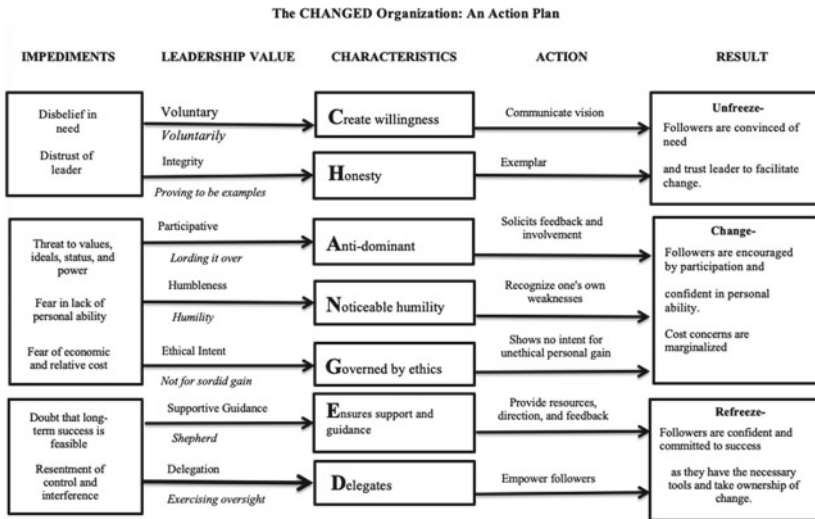


Fig. 21.2 The CHANGED organization action plan (Source Mark Bell)

leaders should model their action plan around the seven values found in 1 Peter 5:1–5 to successfully author a *CHANGED* organization.

## SUMMARY

The seven leadership principles derived from the inner texture analysis of 1 Peter 5:1–5 are multi-faceted as they consider common impediments, leader behaviors and characteristics, and the effect of minimizing change resistance. Although minimizing resistance is the desired result, the characteristics and behaviors of the leader take precedent. The leadership values have little intrinsic worth without expression through the actions and demeanor of the leader. The inner texture analysis of 1 Peter 5:1–5 is an appropriate analytical method because it demonstrates the behaviors and characteristics of the leadership values. Peter's demonstration is designed effectively as a contrast between good and bad. Thus, the method reinforces how the worth of the seven values is truly realized only through the leader's actions. Therefore, the principles are designed with a central theme focused on the leader's behavior as the primary exemplar of the values' positive effect on the organizational change process. Peter provides an excellent rendering of seven important leadership values. Contemporary leaders are constantly involved in organizational change processes. Change is a challenging dynamic and requires leaders to regularly reinforce the change. The utilization of these values is beneficial in each change stage as described in Lewin's model. Therefore, the applicability of the seven values is most apparent. Contemporary leaders are well served by committing to the seven leadership principles as described and implementing them in an action plan that will deliver the desired result—a *CHANGED* organization.

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# Creating Spiritual Community: An Analysis of 1 John 1:1–10

*Joseph Pastori and Joshua D. Henson*

When Simon Peter exclaimed that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2016, Matt. 16:16), Jesus responded with a declaration that such divine revelation would provide the basis for ongoing fellowship with God and other believers (Matt. 16:18). By this, Jesus meant that the expression of the Christian faith would continue to take place in the context of revelation and fellowship with a community of like-minded people joined by mutual faith (Ferguson, 2004; Martens, 2008). The Apostle John likewise explained that the eyewitness account by which he experienced the living Christ provided authoritative grounds for affirming that basis for fellowship

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among believers (1 Jn. 1:1–4). The Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*, means a “close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship” (Danker et al., 2000, p. 552). The pattern established for Christian worship, first by Jesus and then by the Apostles as demonstrated in Acts 2:42–47 (Dawn, 1989), included the development of the spiritual community through which the believers would engage in fellowship (Peters, 2018). This foundational principle continued to reflect the heart of God toward a people called out to identify with Christ (Garrison, 2015; Overdorf, 2012). The Apostle John emphasized the importance of this spiritual community since it served as the means by which believers would experience ultimate joy through personal fellowship with the Father and the Son, as well as the body of believers (1 Jn. 1:3, 6–7). Yet, in his affirmation of this principle, the Apostle John also addressed challenges that threatened to undermine *koinonia* in the faith community. This problem required him to exert apostolic leadership to maintain the unity of fellowship in the church and confront those causing the disruption of *koinonia* (Stott, 1988; Westcott, 1902; Loader, as cited in Witherington, 2006).

Spiritual leadership theory offers an approach to leadership that appears well suited for adaptation to leadership within the Christian context (Washington, 2016). According to the model developed by Fry (2003), intrinsic motivation fueled by the leader’s values, attitudes, and behaviors serves as a catalyst that integrates vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love to promote a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership. This approach to leadership leads to positive personal outcomes, such as ethical and spiritual well-being, as well as preferred organizational outcomes, such as vision and values congruence, increased organizational commitment, greater productivity, and reduced stress levels (Fry, 2005).

Initially developed to incorporate the benefits of spirituality in the marketplace, spiritual leadership theory places emphasis on spiritual development, while avoiding sectarian divisions that could arise in a pluralistic environment (Fry, 2003). Although spiritual leadership theory deemphasizes religion in secular contexts, it does not preclude its application in religious settings. In fact, its development stems from established principles that have a basis in theology and religious practice (Fry, 2005). Moreover, the theory has a growing body of empirical data that has measured its success in a variety of organizational contexts (Mubasher et al., 2017; Zachary, 2013).

Because of its incorporation of spiritual practice and potential for team building, facilitation of organizational commitment, and concern for the spiritual well-being of followers, spiritual leadership theory offers a plausible model for ministry application. Its promotion of vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love align well with the values of New Testament teaching. Furthermore, as Fry (2003) noted, “Spiritual leadership theory is not only inclusive of other major extant theories of motivation, but... it is also more conceptually distinct and less conceptually confounded” (p. 696). As such, it has demonstrated compatibility with such leadership approaches as authentic leadership (Fry & Whittington, 2005), servant leadership (Fry et al., 2007), and transformational leadership (Washington, 2016).

## THE BACKGROUND OF I JOHN

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct an exegetical analysis of 1 John 1:1–10 using socio-rhetorical analysis to examine the leadership of the Apostle John and compare the leadership themes that emerge with spiritual leadership theory. According to Fee and Stuart (2003), the goal of proper interpretation of Scripture lies in finding the intended meaning of the text. However, differences in culture, language, time, and circumstances can present a challenge to arriving at the plain meaning of the text (Duvall & Hays, 2012). Those differences notwithstanding, God’s word has lessons that transcend culture, time, and context to speak to our current circumstances (Duvall & Hays, 2012; Fee & Stuart, 2003). Socio-rhetorical analysis offers a method for analyzing Scripture using inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996) to consider all the various underlying factors influencing the meaning of the text. Furthermore, it offers a method that is scientific, systematic, and holistic (Henson et al., 2020).

### *The Implied Author of 1 John*

A rigorous debate surrounds the authorship of the epistle of 1 John, as well as the other works in the Johannine corpus (Akin, 2001; Brown, 1982). A significant number of scholars, among them Brooke (2004), Brown (1982), Bultmann (1973), Culpepper (1998), Smalley (1984), and Strecker (1996), doubt the traditional view that the Apostle John



wrote the epistle. One view considered among critical scholars ascribed the work to a member of the Johannine community such as John the elder or “presbyter,” the author identified in 2 and 3 John and considered by some to be distinctly different from the Apostle John (Smalley, 1984, p. xxii). Others proposed the possibility that the Johannine corpus represented the collective efforts of this community or “school” (Brown, 1982; Culpepper, 1998; Edwards, 2001; Strecker, 1996). They attributed the similarities of style to the scholarly ideas common among that community, which could account for subtle stylistic variations as well (Strecker, 1996). However, Streeter (1924) stated that the internal evidence that links the three epistles with the Gospel places the onus on critics to provide decisive evidence supporting their claims.

Other authors made the case that undeniable internal evidence of style and theme exist between the Gospel and the epistles, especially 1 John (Akin, 2001; Comfort & Hawley, 2007; Hiebert, 1991; Kruse, 2000; Westcott, 1902). Westcott (1902) proposed that a comparison of John 1:1–18 and 1 John 1:1–4 demonstrates that only the same person speaking from personal experience could communicate the same theological depth in two different contexts with such subtle nuances. Likewise, Comfort and Hawley (2007) maintained that the similarities of style between the Gospel and the epistles could not possibly represent the work of different authors. They also attributed this similarity to an eyewitness account that must point to the Apostle John. This would account for the tone of apostolic authority that characterized these writings (Akin, 2001; Comfort & Hawley, 2007; Westcott, 1902). Yet, the writings, which reflect that of an older man (Akin, 2001; Brown, 1982; Hiebert, 1991; Marshall, 1978), have an affectionate, fatherly character also.

Considerable external support also lends strength to the Apostle John as the author of the epistle (Stott, 1988). From early on in church history, the book was ascribed to the apostle, with no alternative propositions suggested (Edwards, 2001; Guthrie, 1996). Furthermore, ancient witnesses such as Irenaeus of Lyons, the Muratorian Canon, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, to name a few, ascribe authorship to John, the apostle (Edwards, 2001; Kruse, 2000). As Guthrie (1996) explained, the alternative theories do not present as convincing a rationalization as the traditional view of authorship. Based on internal and external support, sufficient evidence exists to accept the traditional view that the Apostle John wrote this epistle (Akin, 2001; Hiebert, 1991).

### *The Intended Audience of 1 John*

Some proponents of the Johannine school theory viewed the writings from the Johannine corpus as instructions intended for their worship and fellowship as part of the Johannine community (Culpepper, 1998; Pate, 2011; Smalley, 1984). However, D. A. Carson (1981) argued that the qualities that characterize such a community could also apply to a church. Kruse (2000) suggested that the recipients of the epistles, for example, could represent a fellowship of related churches. He rejected the notion that the writings of the corpus were intended for an exclusive community of worshipers, believing that they had applicability for the church at large. Since the Apostle John was reported to have settled in Ephesus later in his ministry, the most plausible explanation would include the church at Ephesus (presumably his home base) and several associated churches in the vicinity (Comfort & Hawley, 2007; Hiebert, 1991; Kruse, 2000; Westcott, 1902).

### *The Dating of 1 John*

Little internal or external evidence can identify a specific time; consequently, one cannot date the epistle with any precision. Since John's Gospel was generally believed to have preceded 1 John (Brown, 1982; Hiebert, 1991) that helps to offer an approximate timeframe. Even so, scholars still differ in their assessment of an estimated window of time for the writing. J. A. T. Robinson (1985) favored a date as early as 60–65, and some others offered speculation dating at various points throughout the second century. However, most scholars suspected the latter part of the first century, with some offering a range dating from 60 to 90 (Marshall, 1978). Since the writing would likely have taken place during the Apostle John's latter days while living and ministering in Ephesus (Pate, 2011; Westcott, 1902), a more likely date would fall between 80 and 100, with the probability leaning toward the last decade of the century (Akin, 2001; Brown, 1982; Guthrie, 1996; Hiebert, 1991; Kruse, 2000).

### *The Purpose of 1 John*

Because the writing is both pastoral and polemical (Stott, 1988; Westcott, 1902), the apostle wrote to address a concern over the spiritual well-being of the body of Christ (Hiebert, 1991). A clash had disrupted the unity of

fellowship among the believers, apparently due to the doctrines and practices of false teachers (Culpepper, 1998; Kruse, 2000; Stott, 1988). John wrote to correct the doctrinal errors of his opponents, while encouraging the believers to exercise their God-given discernment (Hiebert, 1991). The heterodox teaching likely involved a theology that denied the actual incarnation of Christ and neglected righteous living and love among the believers (Culpepper, 1998; Stott, 1988). Ultimately, the false teachers and their followers left the fellowship, endeavoring to cause a split by establishing their own work, prompting the apostle to urge those who remain to “test the spirits” (*ESV*, 2001/2016; 1 Jn. 4:1–6) by way of the “anointing” (*ESV*, 2001/2016; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27), the inner direction of the Holy Spirit that enables believers to discern between truth and error (Culpepper, 1998; Marshall, 1978).

Scholars speculate that the group in opposition represented an early form of Gnosticism that embraced a dualism, which viewed existence as a struggle between the earthly realm of the flesh and the spiritual (Brown, 1982; Smalley, 1984; Stott, 1988). According to Smalley, “Esoteric ‘knowledge’ for the initiated was all-important, the material dimension was regarded as an evil to be transcended (the response of rigid asceticism), or, more frequently, despised (with unethical behavior as a consequence)” (p. xxiv). The false teachers that John denounced in his epistle possibly included followers of Cerinthus (Brown, 1982; Kruse, 2000), whom the apostle was reported to have identified as “the enemy of truth” for his heretical views that, among other things, denied the deity of Jesus (Kruse, 2000, p. 20). However, Docetic teachers, who rejected the incarnation of Christ, offer a likelier target of John’s polemic (Brown, 1982; Kruse, 2000). Although one may offer conjecture regarding John’s opponents, he clearly intended to correct the errors of false teachers that undermined the church’s *koinonia* (Hiebert, 1991).

## INNER TEXTURE ANALYSIS

### *Textual Units*

Very little agreement exists among scholars regarding the structure of 1 John (Bigalke, 2013b). As van Staden (1991) put it, “Although no logical order according to modern criteria exists, the structure of the document possesses a kind of power in its own right” (pp. 488–489). Even so,

Bigalke (2013a), far from viewing the epistle as a collection of disconnected teachings without a rational flow, identified a macrostructure that reveals a logical thought process to the book. This analysis will begin with a discovery of the inner texture of a portion of 1 John to better understand how the parts relate to the whole. The pericope under analysis, 1 John 1:1–10 (ESV, 2001/2016) contains two thematic units: verses 1–4 and verses 5–10. Verse one begins with “That which was from the beginning” and serves as an introduction (or prologue) that establishes apostolic authority for the epistle’s instruction. As an eyewitness of the life and ministry of Jesus, the Apostle can testify with conviction regarding the depth of his personal experience with Christ. That intimate experience also provides a trustworthy position to initiate fellowship. “This is the message” transitions to the next thematic unit by introducing the principle that establishes the relational and spiritual grounds for fellowship with God and one another.

### *Repetitive Patterns*

Repetition stands out as a distinguishing characteristic of 1 John. According to Watson, “The highly repetitive and emphatic nature of 1 John is one of its most striking, yet unappreciated features” (p. 99). This repetitive style demonstrates a feature of Greco-Roman rhetoric used for amplification and emphasis to make a point (Coombes, 2009; Watson, 1993). Such epideictic rhetoric was used to reinforce the shared values of the writer and recipients (Watson, 1993; Witherington, 2006). The pericope alone includes 23 different repeated words and/or ideas, several of which highlight common themes in the Johannine literature. The use of “we” and “us” stands out among the repetitions with each word repeated 21 and 6 times respectively. The overall use of these repetitions serves to emphasize certain ideas as they work toward a conclusion. In some instances, John repeats contrasts such as “light and darkness” and “truth and lying” to emphasize his points.

### *Progressive Patterns*

The pattern of repetition also reveals a progression of ideas, with the overall development of the pericope consisting of two smaller progressive units, verses 1–4 and verses 5–10, respectively. Verses 1–4 also include a mini progression in verse 1 within the larger progression of the unit.

It provides the thrust of the Apostle's authoritative claim. Here John used rhetorical devices that lend strength to his words. For example, Witherington (2006) commented on his use of exordium:

An exordium is a piece of rhetoric that serves to establish the ethos and authority of the speaker to speak to this particular audience, and we see this clearly enough in the claim here that the speaker is a witness, by ear, eye and even touch, to the reality of Christ, the Wisdom of God come in person. (p. 437)

Likewise, the Apostle uses asyndeton, which also magnifies his words by way of the accumulated effect of his personal eyewitness account (Watson, 1993). The God who existed at creation ("That which was from the beginning), about which they have heard about throughout their lives as members of the Jewish community ("which we have heard"); John and his associates knew directly in the person of Jesus Christ ("which we have seen"), whom they have had opportunity to observe in a variety of contexts ("which we have looked upon"), and with whom they had intimate contact unlike any others of their time ("and have touched with our hands"). With this progression, John established his credentials to address the issues of concern that had arisen in the church.

Coombes (2009) proposed that the Apostle, rather than using lengthy constructions, instead communicates ideas using smaller units. According to Bigalke (2013a), the theological macrostructure of 1 John consists of such ideas joined by chiasmic units. For example, he asserts that verses 1 and 3 are similar ideas with like grammatical structures that frame verse 2. The larger progression contained in verses 1 through 4 delivers the substance of the apostolic testimony: through their intimate knowledge of the Lord, they invite their fellow believers to experience personal fellowship with one another and with the Father and the Son. Verse 4 serves as an encapsulation of this dynamic, signaling that the culmination of their shared fellowship results in joy made complete.

The next unit of progression, verses 5–10, characterizes the believers' spiritual journey and fellowship with the Father and with others in the body of Christ. Using imagery that contrasts light and darkness, sin and righteousness, and truth and deception; John challenges the believers to assess the integrity of their hearts. The key to this progression lies in an alignment of their words and actions with the truth. As Brown (1982) noted, the "if" statements use "protases" and "apodoses" as

rhetorical techniques to set the conditions for measuring their alignment with the grounds for fellowship (*koinonia*). These statements are directed toward John's recipients using the rhetorical device "exposito" (Witherington, 2006), which is a way of speaking about the same topic using the slightly different words to give the effect of communicating something new (Watson, 1993). Using the word "if," John leads the believers through a self-examination process that challenges them to assess their relationship with God and the church by their positive association with light, sin (repentance), and truth.

The overall progression in the pericope shows a connection that characterizes the believers' relationship with God through the "word of life/his word." The words "we/us" (repeated 28 times) and "God/Father/He/Him" (repeated 9 times) provide a direct link that connects believers and God in right relationship by way of their connection through the word. The progression leads to an encapsulation implied in verse 10. A positive confession regarding sin (repentance) demonstrates fellowship by way of God's word in the believers.

### *Opening-Middle-Closing Patterns*

This same progression also illustrates an opening-middle-closing pattern. The Apostle shared his credentials for proclaiming his message of fellowship with God and other believers—a connection to God's word as revealed by intimate relationship with the Son. Dodd (1946) called attention to a rhetorical device John used that creates a common bond with his audience:

The first-person plural, on the contrary, is very frequently used in a way which includes author and readers in one class. It is what we might call the preacher's "we." This form of speech is common in homilies of all periods. (pp. 9–10)

As suggested before, by creating a mutual association between himself and his audience (using "we/us") and "God/Father/He/Him," He offered an invitation to engage in fellowship with God and the church. However, sin and deception threaten to undermine that fellowship. Ultimately, walking in light and truth by way of repentance restores believers to a right standing with God and others.

### *Argumentative Patterns*

As previously mentioned, the “if” statements in verses 6–10 provide the basis for the Apostle’s argumentative pattern. If people claim to walk in the truth, yet fail to confess their sin and unrighteousness, they continue in darkness and self-deception. Conversely, if believers walk in the light and repent from sin, they advance in light and truth. Ultimately, walking in humility and repentance characterize the believers’ positive relationship with light and truth, which serves as the basis for fellowship with God and the body of Christ.

### *Sensory-Esthetic Patterns*

The pericope provides rich sensory-esthetic imagery. The Apostle, who is identified in the Gospel of John as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20), depicts his intimate relationship with Christ by a progression that develops from an acquaintance with historical fact to hearing, seeing, observing up close, and finally personal contact through touch. Furthermore, he describes continued relationship and fellowship in terms of walking (a journey or pilgrimage). Also, believers receive forgiveness, which he characterizes as cleansing—washing and making clean—not with water, but with the blood of Jesus.

### *Summary of Data from Inner Texture Analysis*

John wrote this epistle to proclaim with authority, the gospel message that establishes the basis for fellowship among believers (Bigalke, 2013b). His personal account of intimacy with Jesus established his credentials to challenge and instruct his audience and offered a call to others to desire and experience their own personal, intimate encounter with the living Christ (van der Merwe, 2018) so that they may share the same sense of wonder and awe that eternal life in him offers (Hiebert, 1988a). Such an encounter creates a mutual basis by which believers can experience fellowship with God and one another. The result is a shared sense of overflowing joy.

Furthermore, the fulness of fellowship arises from the mutual bond that they all share individually, creating a dynamic by which they experience God collectively also (Hiebert, 1988b; Witherington, 2006). As Westcott pointed out, “Life is manifested in fellowship; and in regarding

the end of his message, St. John looks at once to a twofold fellowship, human and divine, a fellowship with the Church and with God” (p. 11). However, John also established the shared values that make genuine fellowship possible. Believers have an obligation to evaluate their standing with God and the body of Christ. As Watson (1993) explained, “Fellowship (*koinonia*) with God and Jesus Christ depends on accepting the values of the Johannine tradition-bearers and entering into fellowship with them and the faithful community” (p. 120). Those who do not live in keeping with the church’s values are deceived (or even worse, they are liars) and have no claim to fellowship with God or the church.

### *Application of Analysis*

Acting in his Apostolic capacity, John demonstrated characteristics that align with Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT). The basic principles of SLT involve creating intrinsic motivation in followers by promoting a vision that appeals to their sense of calling and by creating a culture that incorporates hope/faith and altruistic love (Fry, 2003). According to Sweeney and Fry (2012), spiritual leadership “facilitates development of the social awareness, self-motivation, and core values and self-identity components of character development. Spiritual leadership emerges from an interaction of a leader’s vision, deep caring for group members (altruistic love), and hope and faith” (p. 100). Rather than threaten his flock, John acts in a pastoral capacity by seeking to motivate them intrinsically with a vision for a vibrant biblical community whose members are called to intimate relationship with God as well as fellowship with the body of believers.

*Principle One: Spiritual leaders seek to intrinsically motivate their followers by communicating vision while demonstrating care and concern.*

Spiritual leadership promotes the needs of both the leader and follower for spiritual survival, which refers to a sense of calling and membership, so that together they experience greater commitment and productivity (Fry, 2003). As such, Washington (2016) considered SLT a good fit for a church context. The quality of altruistic love resembles the biblical virtue of *agape* love as taught throughout John’s epistle, which means “to have a warm regard for and interest in another, cherish, have affection for, love” (Danker et al., 2000, p. 5). In the pursuit of a common vision, altruistic love creates a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of appreciation



and understanding among members, which coincides with the biblical concept of *koinonia*. As Zachary (2013) observed, “Spiritual leadership theory incorporates the values, attitudes, ethics, and actions which remain indispensable to intrinsically motivate oneself or others” (p. 771). Such qualities seem to match well with the Apostle John’s pastoral approach to guiding his followers.

*Principle Two: Through vision and altruistic love, spiritual leaders create a sense of belonging and appreciation among followers.*

## INTERTEXTURE ANALYSIS

### *Oral-Scribal Intertexture*

A further examination of 1 John 1:1–10 reveals some vivid oral-scribal intertexture. The prologue in 1 John, much like that in the Gospel of John, represented distinctive elements of the major Johannine literature (Brown, 1982). Given the likelihood that the Gospel of John preceded this epistle, verse 1 offered a reflection of the Gospel’s prologue: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—” (ESV, 2001/2016). In other words, John clearly referred to the prologue of his Gospel (Brown, 1982; Smalley, 1984). Much like its predecessor, it signified a recontextualization of the act of creation (Kistemaker, 1986; Stott, 1988; Witherington, 2006). The Apostle wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (ESV, 2001/2016, Jn. 1:1). In John’s case, the Word referred to the Son, who was fully God, a partner in creation, and appeared in the person of Jesus Christ (Akin, 2001; Comfort & Hawley, 2007; Ladd, 1993). A comparison with Genesis 1:1–2, which stated, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (ESV, 2001/2016), recontextualized the creation account to feature the prominence of Christ—the Word—in the act of creation (Henson et al., 2020). Ladd (1993) proposed that John intentionally referred to a concept widely known among people in Jewish and Hellenistic cultures.

This pericope likewise harkened back to the Gospel as it recontextualized another aspect of creation (Brown, 1982; Stott, 1988; Strecker,

1996). Verse 5 stated, “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). This recalled what John wrote in the Gospel: “In him was life, and the life was the light of men” (*ESV*, 2001/2016, Jn 1:4). Compare this verse with Genesis 1:3–4, “And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). Associating God with the light (while also disassociating him from darkness) evoked his creation of light, thereby identifying God as the embodiment of light, since He is its source (Witherington, 2006). Likewise, the association of God with light and life, as in John 1:4, offered a recontextualization of Old Testament passages referring to light, such as Psalm 36:9: “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light” (*ESV*, 2001/2016), an example of an Old Testament theme that John reintroduced (Dodd, 1946; Kruse, 2000; Marshall, 1978). Dodd also saw the use of light as a reference to Christ’s teaching in the Synoptic Gospels. For example, Luke wrote,

Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. Therefore, be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light. (*ESV*, 2001/2016, Lk. 11:34–36)

Likewise, other literature also made use of the light/dark dualism. For example, it was a common motif in the Qumran community (Brown, 1982; Kruse, 2000; Ladd, 1993). Other non-biblical writings also make use of its imagery (Brown, 1982), such as *Didache* (Holmes, 1999) and *Philo* (Philo of Alexandria, 1995).

Another example of recontextualization included a reference involving obedience to God’s using the metaphor of walking, an association of one’s spiritual walk with pilgrimage. Pate (2011) observed, “The term ‘walk’ (*peripateō*) already had a long history in the Old Testament, with reference to one’s way of life” (p. 255). John wrote, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (*ESV*, 2001/2016, 1 Jn. 1:7). This recalls the psalmist’s declaration: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers” (*ESV*, 2001/2016, Ps. 1:1). Jackman (1988)

explained that a feature of John's writing included applying doctrinal truth to daily living. Walking in obedience to God also alludes to Enoch, who "walked with God" (*ESV*, 2001/2016, Gen. 5:21, 22). These Old Testament references provided a basis by which John equated the believer's life of faith, service, and obedience with a walk or pilgrimage.

Verse 7 offered another instance of oral-scribal intertexture. Fellowship and community also figured prominently in the Old Testament (Pate, 2011). The echoes of the Old Covenant Jewish community came through in John's references to the fellowship of believers (Dodd, 1946). One could also make a case for the concept of fellowship (*koinonia*, as referenced in verses 3, 6, and 7) as containing a reconfiguration of the kind of unity David depicted in the Psalms. He wrote, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes" (*ESV*, 2001/2016, Ps. 133:1–2). This passage served as a precursor to the kind of unity John called for in fellowship. However, he characterized this unity with a cleansing of blood rather than an anointing with oil. Not only did *koinonia* signify spiritual sharing and community in the church (Witherington, 2006), outside entities, such as the Qumran community placed a priority on spiritual community (Pate, 2011).

One other instance of oral-scribal intertexture occurred in verses 5–10 in the form of thematic elaboration. John presented the theme that God is light, equating it with a commitment to the truth (Dodd, 1946; Hiebert, 1991; Kruse, 2000). The "if" statements in verses 6–10 presented an argument that supports John's rationale. Specifically, those who walk in darkness are liars who have no truth in them. Likewise, those who claim to be without sin are self-deceived, make God a liar and do not have His word in them. However, those who walk in humility and confess their sins receive cleansing and dwell in God's light. The cumulative effect of the "if" statements served as the core of John's argument that those who walk in the light and confess their sins are in good standing in their fellowship with God and the body of believers. Contrarily, those who say they have no sin walk in darkness and do not practice the truth, putting them outside the bounds of fellowship with God and the church (Kistemaker, 1986).

### *Cultural Intertexture*

John’s assertion that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin” (*ESV*, 2001/2016, 1 Jn. 1:7d) contained an instance of cultural intertexture. It served as an allusion to the Old Testament practice of offering sacrifices to make atonement for sin (Bennett, 2021; Pate, 2011; Westcott, 1902). The Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch, offered numerous references to the various sacrifices that God required the people to make for their redemption. For example, Exodus 12 gave the ordinances for the celebration of the Passover. The blood of the Passover lamb made atonement for the household members, as recorded in the Law of Moses:

The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. (*ESV*, 2001/2016, Ex. 12:13)

However, New Testament teaching, as presented in 1 John 1:7, proposed that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross made atonement for all people, for all times, eliminating the need to continue ceremonial observances associated with various animal sacrifices (Bennett, 2021; Smalley, 1984).

### *Social Intertexture*

This pericope does contain some measure of social intertexture in the form of the church as a social institution. With that, it also hinted at social roles, social codes, and social relationships. To participate in the fellowship of believers meant to adhere to the biblical values of the spiritual community (Brown, 1982; Kruse, 2000) and abstain from false teaching (Dodd, 1946). John’s argument related to the basis for biblical fellowship in verses 6–10 served to highlight the expectations associated with membership in the body of Christ. Dodd (1946) pointed out that the experience of *koinonia* in the spiritual community made the people “partners or shareholders in a common concern” (p. 6), which means they had the associated responsibilities that accompany inclusion in the community.

### *Historical Intertexture*

Some previously mentioned events also hint at historical intertexture. References to the creation and to the earthly life of Jesus call attention to historical incidents. Although some would deny the creation as a historical account, others would see it as offering a plausible faith declaration regarding events the Scriptures reported as fact. Even so, the life of Jesus served as a clear, undeniable historical reference to which John bore witness (Hiebert, 1991; Stott, 1988). The significance of this lies in the Apostle's refutation of claims by Docetics, who alleged that, although Christ appeared to be human, he was, in fact, divinity without human form (Akin, 2001; Ladd, 1993). As Ladd put it, "While John uses dualistic language—light and darkness, God and the world—he is not dualistic in thought but stands squarely in the center of Christian tradition" (p. 661).

### *Reciprocal Intertexture*

The most profound instances of reciprocal intertexture take place in relation to the common themes communicated in this pericope as echoed in the rest of the Johannine corpus. Clearly, 1 John refers to common themes in the Gospel of John (Smalley, 1984; Van Staden, 1991), and an examination of the Johannine literature would reveal several recurring motifs. Specifically, John's emphasis on the Word (Jn. 1:1, 14; 1 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13), life (Jn. 1:4, 11:25, 14:6; 1 Jn. 1:1–2; Rev. 2:7, 10, 3:5, 20:12, 22:1–2), the contrasts between light and darkness (Jn. 1:5–9, 3:19–21, 8:12, 9:5, 12:35–36, 46; Rev. 21:23–24, 22:5), truth and lies/deception and error (Jn. 1:14, 17, 4:23–24, 8:32, 44–46, 14:6, 18:37–38, 19:35; 1 Jn. 1:6, 8, 10), and sin and confession/righteousness (Jn. 1:29, 8:7, 11, 21, 34, 15:22, 24, 16:8–9; 1 Jn. 1:7–9; Rev. 1:5, 18:4–5; 19:8, 11, 22:11). Although the individual writings have different purposes, each of these recurring images contributes to the overall unity of the Johannine corpus.

### *Summary of Data from Intertexture Analysis*

In this epistle, John intended to clarify doctrine from his Gospel that false teachers distorted to the detriment of the church's unity (Brown, 1982). Those teachers caused division and eventually left the fellowship, which

put the body of believers in need of reassurance and guidance (Witherington, 2006). John was able to speak to their situation with authority and conviction. After all, he was an eyewitness to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, having had prolonged, intimate fellowship with the Lord (Kistemaker, 1986). He wrote to them to share the reality of life in Christ, the reality of the person of Christ, and his personal testimony with Christ (Witherington, 2006). That richness of relationship he could pass on to his followers with an overflow of joy (1 Jn. 1:4).

John also addressed vibrant themes that would speak clearly to the people, using familiar images (Brown, 1982). References to light and dark, truth and deception, and sin and righteousness helped to communicate a bold message of biblical insights that stood in stark contrast to the enemies of truth (Stott, 1988). His message had something his adversaries did not have—life! Witherington (2006) communicated the essence of eternal life by stating that it “refers not just to life everlasting, though that is meant as well, but furthermore to a different quality of life, an unending spiritual life that has unlimited potential and is full of *joie de vivre*.” (p. 443). This reality of life he invited them to share in fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the community of believers (1 Jn. 1:3–4).

### *Application of Analysis*

In his exercise of apostolic leadership, principles of spiritual leadership emerge as characteristics of how he endeavored to fulfill his responsibility as the presiding elder. Because of the centrality of Christ in John’s life and his personal communion with God, his spiritual life served as the catalyst for his leadership (Pawar, 2014). Schein (2017) proposed that the character of an organization mirrored that of the leader. More than having it reflect his own style and personality, John endeavored to build and maintain a spiritual community that reflected the glory of God in the image of Christ. This meant that he recognized the necessity to address issues of concern in the interest of establishing the appropriate biblical foundational values (Fairholm & Gronau, as cited in Nguyen et al., 2018).

*Principle Three: Spiritual leaders recognize the vitality of spiritual life and seek to build and develop spiritual community.*

Fry et al. (2007) also emphasized the importance of casting a vision that would inspire shared values in the organization and motivate unity

and commitment. The ability to inspire is an essential quality of the spiritual leader (Samul, 2020). By presenting the promise of intimate fellowship with God, John sought to establish the values that served as the basis for fellowship. This challenge stemmed from his own “inside-out” experience of first living out the faith he expected others to embrace (Pawar, 2014). The success that followed the Apostle’s leadership stemmed from common spiritual principles that have stood the test of time (Fry, 2016) and have the support of empirical research (Mubasher et al., 2017).

*Principle Four: Values-centered spiritual community results in organizational unity and commitment.*

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE

Although the wealth of information available in Scripture may lead one to move hastily to make immediate application, Duvall and Hays (2012) caution against drawing hurried conclusions based on partial information. Giving proper attention to social and cultural issues will cause lessons to emerge that otherwise would remain hidden without careful inquiry (Robbins, 1996). Appropriate attention to this texture will bridge the gap separating the biblical milieu from contemporary culture allowing discovery of the Bible’s timeless truths (Duvall & Hays, 2012).

### *Specific Social Topics (Worldview)*

In terms of social and cultural texture, 1 John 1:1–10 has less to offer. The pericope under consideration contained suggestions of a conversionist worldview, with its assumption that repentance and spiritual conversion provide the way for faithful believers to escape the world’s corruption (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, n.d.). As stated in verse 5, God was presented as light, suggested by a contrast with the darkness of this world in verse 6. Early gnostic adherents supposed that they walked in the light, and even used such terminology, yet John stated emphatically that they remained in darkness (Marshall, 1978). Ladd (1993) explained that John’s use of dualism did not mean that he subscribed to gnostic thought. Quite the contrary, genuine spiritual understanding did not flow from so-called “secret knowledge,” or mystical experience associated with dualism (Hawkin, 2002). Instead, God revealed knowledge and understanding to

those who walked in the light of biblical truth. Also, the godly virtue of truth in verses 6 and 8 is contrasted with lies and deception in verses 6, 8, and 10. Verse 9 highlighted the key to the conversionist outlook presented: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (*ESV*, 2001/2016). John emphasized this perspective to combat the errors promoted by false teachers, who assumed they had fellowship with God in their condition, claimed to be without sin, and denied their sinful nature (Brooke, 2004; Jackman, 1988; Smalley, 1984; Stott, 1988).

Consequently, gnostic-manipulationist also serves as an underlying worldview that appeared in the pericope. Those who advocated doctrines contrary to the Johannine teaching claimed they did so based on special knowledge or revelation (Ladd, 1993). John refuted their assertions by making his own gnostic-manipulationist appeal to the truth—authentic, trusted knowledge based firmly in accepted, authoritative Christian doctrine. His personal experience as an eyewitness of the living Christ gave him an authoritative claim to refute the argument that Christ did not appear in human form (Akin, 2001). John could testify that Jesus was fully divine and fully human.

### *Common Social and Cultural Topics*

The father/son relationship as part of family life emerged as a common social and cultural topic, demonstrating the principle of honor (Robbins, 1996). John specified that for believers, “our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (*ESV*, 2001/2016, 1 Jn. 1:3c). In the first-century family, the father operated as the central figure in the household (Robbins, 1996; Westcott, 1902). John’s emphasis on this family dynamic created a sense of order in the church, God’s household (Westcott, 1902). First, it distinguished between the role of the Father and Son, recognizing their distinctly different roles (Pate, 2011). The Father, as the authority figure, initiated the revelation of his Son, “which was with the Father and was made manifest to us” (*ESV*, 2001/2016, 1 Jn. 1:2d). The Son acted as the redemptive figure through whom the believer received atonement by way of his sacrifice.

Those in right fellowship with the Father and Son approached him as dearly loved children (Westcott, 1902). This also defined the basis for *koinonia* among the church’s members. To honor the Father meant to be in fellowship with the Father and his Son, in fellowship with the other



children in God's household, receive atonement through confession by way of the Son's sacrifice, and walk in the light of truth (Ladd, 1993). Furthermore, reference to cleansing through the Son's blood sacrifice also hinted at a purity code in operation (Henson et al., 2020). In this case, rather than referring to ceremonial cleansing, it applied the sacrifice in terms of spiritual purity.

The previous mention of the gnostic-manipulationist specific topic also suggested a challenge-response dynamic. The Docetists, by assuming superiority over those deemed to have "lesser knowledge," offered a challenge to the church's orthodox teaching regarding the person and work of Christ, which caused a disruption in the fellowship of believers by instigating division (Marshall, 1978). John's polemical response served as the reaction to the challenge, as ultimately evaluated in the fellowship of believers (Kruse, 2000). According to Lenski (1966), John's eyewitness personal encounter with Christ presented too formidable an argument for his opponents to refute.

### *Final Social and Cultural Categories*

Although the church functioned as a counterculture within the larger first-century Roman Empire, the dominant culture (Schein, 2017), within its own organizational structure it represented an independent cultural entity (Henson et al., 2020). As such, John adopted dominant cultural rhetoric in the pericope since he spoke from a position of apostolic leadership within that structure. Those in opposition, by way of their resistance to orthodox doctrine, operated from a contracultural position (Robbins, 1996).

### *Summary of Data from Social and Cultural Analysis*

An examination of the social and cultural issues at hand in this pericope gives a fuller understanding of additional factors at work that the reader could miss. This texture allows an entry into the world of the first-century church to better understand the issues at hand (Henson et al., 2020). It also brings to light the kinds of conflicts that result from differing perspectives among those represented in the pericope (Henson et al., 2020; Robbins, 1996). The conversionist worldview that the Apostle advocated in this pericope maintained that a right relationship with God involved repentance and cleansing through Christ's

atonement death (Marshall, 1978). However, this mindset presupposed that those who seek forgiveness recognized their need for purification. Failure to recognize the need for forgiveness or claiming to be without sin represented error that John confronted emphatically (Hiebert, 1991). However, Brown took it further when he stated,

To recognize that one's actions are wrong but to say that wrong action creates no guilt in a child of God is worse than being a liar; it is to choose to deceive oneself and thus voluntarily to be on the side of the Spirit of Deceit. Worse still is to deny that one's wrong actions are wrong; this is to make light darkness, to make falsehood truth, to make God the devil who is a liar. (p. 236)

Ladd (1993) offered a sensible perspective by explaining that even mature believers, no matter how dedicated, never reach sinless perfection on this side of eternity. John recognized that the disruption of *koinonia* would interfere with the joy to which he hoped the believer would aspire (Kruse, 2000). Ultimately, his confrontation of the error in their midst demonstrated his pastoral concern and his desire to see the believers maintain fidelity to the truth (Ladd, 1993).

### *Application of Analysis*

In line with the principles of spiritual leadership, John led others as directed by his value system, motivated by his desire to please the Lord (Samul, 2020). This meant that he was willing to use his authority in the service of God, for the good of the fellowship (Benefiel, 2005). Spiritual leadership practices have been found to contribute to ethical behaviors and a sense of calling and membership among followers (Fry, 2005). As Fry (2003) proposed, by exercising strong personal leadership and authentically living the values, attitudes, and behavior of altruistic love through the care, concern, and appreciation of themselves, team members, and strategic leaders, participants have the experience of membership and ethical well-being, which is a necessary condition for spiritual well-being.

*Principle Five: Spiritual leaders foster ethical and spiritual well-being through leading authentically and altruistically.*

Wahyono et al. (2020) found that spiritual leadership was effective in improving workplace sustainability and improving employee job satisfaction, thereby minimizing the effects of workplace deviant behaviors. This shows the potential that spiritual leadership can have in addressing organizational conflict, even as John had to face in his context. Even so, addressing such challenges can prove difficult (Fry & Whittington, 2014), demonstrating the need for a motivational vision. Such motivation can serve as a source of life in the organization (Baykal, 2019), just as the first-century church was characterized by life. Still, a positive environment is maintained through a consistent adherence to the shared values of the organization. The potential for the development of spiritual leadership into a more well-defined paradigm (Samul, 2020) holds out promise for its future development as a model for effective church leadership.

*Principle Six: Spiritual leaders foster a positive environment that results in workplace sustainability and job satisfaction.*

## SACRED TEXTURE

The result of each layer of analysis should guide the process to answer questions of ultimate importance (Duvall & Hays, 2012; Henson et al., 2020). All the prior observations have been working toward the end goal of discovering what the text reveals about God and His will for humanity (Henson et al., 2020). As Duvall and Hays (2012) observed, “Keep in mind that our goal is to grasp the meaning of the text God has intended. We do not create meaning out of a text; rather, we seek to find the meaning that is already there” (p. 41). Therefore, the cumulative effect of this investigation should result in an emerging message from God to humanity that reveals Himself, His heart, and His plan to the reader. Sacred texture, then contains the spiritual truths that answer the questions of ultimate importance regarding God and his message to humanity.

### *Deity*

To summarize previous observations of God’s involvement in this pericope, John presented God as the Father, who existed in eternity with the Son (1 Jn. 1:1–2). The Apostle equated God with light and truth (Witherington, 2006). Light represents God’s holy nature (Hiebert, 1991). As Witherington (2006) noted, “To describe God as absolute ‘light’

presupposes that God and darkness (error or evil) are mutually exclusive” (p. 448). Because believers must walk in truth and humble repentance that comes from a sincere self-analysis (Pate, 2011), John reminded his hearers that those in divine fellowship do so from a posture of cleansing through the blood of Jesus. This standard for the biblical community highlighted God’s holiness (1 Jn. 1:5).

### *Holy Person and Human Redemption*

John presented Jesus as the primary focus of the pericope, the central figure in the gospel message (Jackman, 1988). His striking prologue introduced the personal revelation of the Son that he received and passed on to his audience so that they may experience Christ as a living reality (Kruse, 2000; Witherington, 2006). This emphasis also served to highlight the genuine humanity of Jesus, as well as his deity (Kruse, 2000). Although he existed with the Father in eternity, he appeared in human form and walked among his disciples as a flesh-and-blood person. John presented Jesus as an accessible figure with whom the redeemed could readily share fellowship, along with the Father. Yet, he referred to him as “Jesus Christ” (1 Jn. 1:3). Christ (*Christos*) means the Anointed One. Pate (2011) observed that the same term was used for the kings of Israel, suggesting that this was a subtle reference to the Messiah, who would sit on David’s throne. This sense of greatness and glory clothed in humility revealed Christ’s multidimensional character. Added to that, He also served as the means of atonement for the believer (1 Jn. 1:7). The blood of His sacrifice made redemption possible (Marshall, 1978). The believers’ honesty regarding their human frailty would lead to a confession of sin, which put them in right standing with God and served as the basis for divine fellowship (Akin, 2001).

The Apostle John also stood out as a holy person who remained in a special relationship with the Lord. The description of his encounter in verse 1, not only served to remind the reader of his prolonged, personal contact with Christ in a variety of contexts, but also hinted at the special relationship that he shared with Jesus (Marshall, 1978). His apostolic authority flowed from his personal standing with Christ (Jackman, 1988; Pate, 2011; van der Merwe, 2018). Those familiar with the Gospel of John would recognize him as the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (Jn. 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20).

### *Human Commitment*

Believers who belonged to the body of Christ had a responsibility to dwell in the light of God and his word (Ladd, 1993). This required a right relationship with the truth, a willingness to embrace what it revealed about God and his will, and what it exposed in the believer's life in terms of sin and corruption (Kruse, 2000). Ultimately, God's people are expected to live in right relationship to truth, making them responsible to maintain a life of obedience and humble repentance (Kruse, 2000; Lenski, 1966). John suggested that walking in the light involved a lifestyle of regularly seeking cleansing through the blood of Christ (Bennett, 2021). Their continued commitment to this practice provided the foundation for fellowship with God and the church (Marshall, 1978; Witherington, 2006).

### *Religious Community*

As mentioned before, John's purpose in writing was to correct doctrinal errors promoted by some with heterodox beliefs. The corrupt doctrine perpetrated by these false teachers undermined the fellowship God intended the body of Christ to experience. John sought to reestablish the grounds for *koinonia*—fellowship among the Father, Christ, and the community of believers (Bennett, 2021). In addition to an emphasis on maintaining fidelity to the truth, Hiebert (1991) noted that John emphasized the necessity to preserve right vertical relationships (fellowship with God) as well as right horizontal relationships (fellowship with the body). The Apostle's teaching suggested that biblical fellowship does not mean having one or the other; fellowship with the Father and Son, as well as the community, represented *koinonia* as God intended (Brown, 1982). Spiritual community involved both fellowship with God and the church (Kruse, 2000; Marshall, 1978; Witherington, 2006).

### *Summary of Data from Sacred Texture Analysis*

An analysis of sacred texture highlights the priorities embodied in John's message to the church. The Father, who dwells in eternity, is characterized by light and eternal life (Akin, 2001), the very antithesis of darkness and death. He made reconciliation possible and established the basis for continuing fellowship by sending his Son, through whom believers

could receive forgiveness for their sins in response to their sincere, humble confession (Akin, 2001; Comfort & Hawley, 2007; Stott, 1988). Through faith in Christ alone, believers are granted fellowship with God and the body of Christ (Akin, 2001; Jackman, 1988). The *koinonia* God offered to those who walk in truth, light, and humility, extended a sense of ownership in the spiritual community (Hiebert, 1991). Furthermore, they contributed their own investment in the fellowship by way of gifts, resources, and commitment (Kistemaker, 1986). John, who knew well the blessings of intimate fellowship with God (Lenski, 1966), presented this invitation to those who would enter fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the body of Christ so that they would also know the fullness of joy that it bestowed (Akin, 2001).

### *Application of Analysis*

John demonstrated apostolic leadership that found its effectiveness as empowered by his spiritual life (Pawar, 2014). Fry attributed the success of spiritual leadership theory, in part, to theological practice (2005). He attributed this to the practice of altruistic love, a biblical priority for practicing believers. One of the results of altruistic love, as embodied in spiritual leadership (and biblical Christianity) is a sense of spiritual well-being through calling, contributing to a sense of purpose (Benefiel et al., 2014; Nguyen et al., 2018). Furthermore, spiritual leadership has demonstrated a positive link with influencing organizational commitment (Baykal, 2019). The values the Apostle promoted in the pericope had an underlying goal of influencing commitment to the fellowship of believers.

*Principle Seven: Spiritual leaders practice altruistic love that positively influences organizational commitment.*

Consistency and congruence with one's values also contribute to positive organizational outcomes (Fry et al., 2007). This could equate to the directive given in the pericope to "walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:7). Leaders must regularly demonstrate an inner alignment with their values (Fry, 2005). This would compare with the imperative to walk in (or practice) the truth (1 Jn. 1:6). According to Fry (2016), the sense of well-being that spiritual leadership provides should result in a greater sense of organizational commitment, productivity, and life satisfaction. The qualities

of vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love (Fry & Whittington, 2014) align well with the principles that promote fellowship in the church.

*Principle Eight: For spiritual leaders, values alignment is essential to positive organizational outcomes.*

## SUMMARY

One theme that emerged from analysis of the pericope was that John clearly demonstrated a pastoral heart. The tone and purpose of his writing indicated a pastoral concern for a flock that wrestled with division caused by false teachers (Akin, 2001; Hiebert, 1991; Marshall, 1978; Westcott, 1902). He wrote with a genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of this congregation under his care (Smalley, 1984). This prompted him to act to protect his flock from doctrines that undermined the *koinonia* intended to unite them with overflowing joy (Kruse, 2000). As such he sought to give them a correct understanding of the biblical principles that should guide their lives (Hiebert, 1991). This leadership quality aligns well with spiritual leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of focusing on the well-being of followers (Sweeney & Fry, 2012). The impetus for this caring for the well-being of members springs from altruistic love (Benefiel et al., 2014; Sweeney & Fry, 2012). The feeling of well-being among members develops as they experience joy, peace, and serenity as part of the organizational culture (Fry, 2005). This provides an atmosphere that supports *koinonia* among its members.

John also communicated a compelling vision. He shared in vivid terms the quality and depth of fellowship that believers could experience through mutual communion with the Father and the Son, resulting in an abundance of shared joy (1 Jn. 1:3–4). Furthermore, he clearly explained the path that facilitated that richness of fellowship (1 Jn. 1:5–10). The capacity to inspire a shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2012) figures prominently in the implementation of spiritual leadership theory (Fry, 2003). This quality contributes to a sense of calling and membership to the organization and inspires deeper commitment in its members (Fry, 2003, 2009). These outcomes also prove instrumental in the building and maintaining of biblical fellowship in the body of Christ, since they have altruistic love as a foundational feature (Fry, 2003).

John also put forth clearly articulated values. He explained in vivid terms the qualities that members should demonstrate—a commitment

to embracing truth (1 Jn. 1:5), living out the truth by walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:7), and maintaining fellowship with God and the body through an attitude of humility and repentance (1 Jn. 1:9). Furthermore, in keeping with spiritual leadership theory, John's own example of vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love served as a model for the fellowship to embrace (Benefiel et al., 2014; Fry, 2003). These values unite members in applying practices that make for unity and give them a greater sense of identity with their organization (Fry, 2003; Sweeney & Fry, 2012; Yang et al., 2020). These outcomes also serve to promote the building of biblical fellowship.

John displayed a deep spiritual capacity. This served as the wellspring from which his leadership flowed (Pawar, 2014). However, his spirituality did not flow from some higher form of esoteric knowledge, as his opponents promoted (Smalley, 1984). Instead, his intense, personal connection to Christ fueled his spiritual passion (1 Jn. 1:1–3). This modeled genuine spirituality and contributed to the spiritual development of his followers, a key feature of spiritual leadership theory (Baykal, 2019; Fry, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2018; Sweeney & Fry, 2012). Genuine spirituality would result in the unification of believers with the Father, Son, and with one another in *koinonia*. This stood in contrast to the division that John's gnostic opponents instigated.

As Bennett (2021) observed, the challenges that confronted the Johannine community were not unique to them. Today's leaders address the same concerns. Contemporary churches have the same need to promote and develop *koinonia* in biblical community as the first-century church, perhaps even more so as the church faces challenges associated with life in a post-Christian culture. As Washington (2016) noted, "The application of spiritual leadership theory may lead to a solution for the deficit of effective leadership in Christian churches" (p. 5). Ample opportunity exists to further develop this theory and establish it as a workable theoretical paradigm (Benefiel et al., 2014; Fry, 2016; Mubasher et al., 2017; Samul, 2020). So far, the research has provided encouraging support for this model (Mubasher et al., 2017; Zachary, 2013). This opportunity may serve as the impetus to further explore the possibilities of spiritual leadership theory as a model for the church today (Washington, 2016).



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# Biblical Organizational Spirituality: A Meta-Analysis

*Carlo A. Serrano*

## BIBLICAL ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

Exploring the Christian Scriptures is not an easy task because the Christian Bible is not a monolith. Its authors came from a variety of backgrounds and their works are varied in genre, intention, and prose. Yet, for all the complexity found within the structure of the Bible, the art and science of hermeneutics allows us to find the unity that exists within this great body of work. Moreover, the exegetical arts allow the Christian researcher and practitioner to extract modern-day meaning and principles in a way that does not compromise the ancient intent of the biblical authors.

Each author in this book on New Testament Spirituality faced the difficult task of starting with the scripture and then allowing the text to speak into various principles regarding organizational spirituality. There are moments within the book where the principles seem as varied as the

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New Testament itself. There are discussions of justice, diversity, and the role of women in leadership right alongside conversations on burnout, ethics, and change. The topics of community, followership, and empathy share space with the broad topics of spirituality, Christian leadership, and biblical leadership. However, despite the diversity of subject matter, there are common threads that weave the entire book into a cohesive argument for New Testament organizational spirituality. Thus, this chapter applies the basic principles of qualitative meta-analysis to clearly summarize the findings within the book while pointing a way forward for future research and practice relating to organizational spirituality. Qualitative meta-analysis allows a researcher to find a cohesive meaning from multiple studies by systematically describing the various studies and assessing their similarities, differences, and methods of research (Timulak & Creaner, 2013). Please note that this chapter does not give in-depth analysis of each individual chapter. Instead, this chapter explores and analyzes the extracted principles from each chapter as guided by two questions:

1. What are the common themes from the principles for New Testament Organizational Spirituality?
2. What are the implications of these themes for organizational leadership?

It is important to note that this book covered 13 of the 27 books that make up the New Testament. Missing from this volume are Matthew, Mark, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. However, it is encouraging to see that, apart from Revelation, all the genres within the New Testament find representation in the book. Another value of the book is that the biblical authors who spoke the most on the subject of leadership find representation within this volume. The words of Jesus, Luke, Paul, and Peter inform much of this book. Four of the chapters cover sections of the Gospel of John and one chapter covered a passage from 1 John. The teachings of the Apostle Paul make up 9 chapters within the book, which makes sense due to his authoring most of the New Testament. Finally, the writings of Luke make up three chapters of the book. Thus, 80 percent of the book discusses leadership and spirituality from a Pauline, Petrine, or Johannine perspective. Yes, the four chapters from the Gospel of John exegete the words of Jesus. However, it is important

to recognize the unique voice of the Apostle John as separate from the synoptic accounts of Jesus' life and teachings. Although it would have been preferable to examine every book in the New Testament, it is not safe to assume that every chapter of all 27 books of the New Testament speaks directly to organizational leadership or organizational spirituality. The result of this book is a volume that covers a wide variety of leadership topics with data extracted from a balanced representation of the New Testament scriptures, resulting in 154 unique principles for New Testament Organizational Spirituality.

### COMMON THEMES

Bias is a tricky thing in qualitative research. All the authors of this book approached their chapters from their established worldviews and examined the scriptures while “wearing” a diverse set of interpretive lenses. Therefore, every author followed a form of exegetical analysis that considered the various grammatical, textual, cultural, and social layers of their respective passages in a way that limited eisegetical biases. As a contributor to this volume, I too had to account for my bias when conducting the meta-analysis. Thus, I used an inductive and text-driven form of analysis to explore the themes from the 154 principles, which demonstrates how various qualitative methods such as content analysis, hermeneutics, pattern analysis, and theme analysis are often interchangeable (Patton, 2014). Simply put, examining the pre-extracted 154 principles allowed me to simplify the summary of the collective work from the book by focusing on the actual words before jumping to meaning or application.

For the meta-analysis, I ran the 154 principles through ATLAS.ti and found at least 329 words or phrases that have commonality. I then reduced the 329 words and phrases down to 155 words and phrases by grouping certain terms and phrases together based on redundancy or repetitive usage. Those 159 words or phrases were then analyzed and grouped into the following 15 codes:

- Biblical
- Change
- Communication
- Community
- Empowerment
- Follower Awareness



- Humility
- Love
- Others Focus
- Resilience
- Spiritual
- Transformational
- Trust
- Values
- Visionary

For example, phrases and words such as, “pay attention to everyone,” “empathetic,” “immerse themselves in the feelings of others,” and “serve well” were combined to create the code “Others focus.” I used this type of process for all 154 principles. The codes “Others focus” (34 times), “community” (28 times), “visionary” (21 times), and “communication” (21 times) had the highest frequency of use in my study. None of the applied codes appeared less than 12 times. I then reviewed the 15 codes for connection with the existing literature on organizational leadership, spirituality, and other concepts as developed within the individual chapters of the book. This step allowed me to extract themes from the codes without adding additional literature research to the chapters within the volume. For example, several of the authors made a connection between empowerment, an awareness of follower’s needs, and a shared sense of mission (Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, etc.). Others discussed the importance of trust, humility, integrity, and ethics in healthy organizational life (Chapters 12, 15–17, etc.). All these concepts find application within the broader field of organizational leadership. Yet, the appearance of these concepts within various exegetical studies demonstrates a unique New Testament Spirituality that may inform organizational leadership theory and practice.

### SUMMARY OF THEMES

The following 5 themes summarize the 154 unique principles on New Testament organizational spirituality.

*Theme 1: New Testament Organizational Spirituality Produces Healthy Communities.*

The sense of purpose found within most frameworks of organizational spirituality may indeed stem from healthy communities. A healthy community is one where members have a shared purpose, mutual trust, and actualized empowerment. According to our book, New Testament organizational spirituality not only fits the descriptors of a healthy community, but it also produces new healthy communities. These communities are diverse, empowering, and justice seeking.

*Theme 2: New Testament Organizational Spirituality is Service-Oriented.*

Since Jesus is the exemplar of leadership in the Bible, then it makes sense that New Testament organizational spirituality models the central theme of Jesus' life and work: self-sacrificing service. Within this framework, leaders maintain a posture of service that orients toward others for the sake of the collective good. In this framework, service is not a means to an end, but rather, a way of life that never ends.

*Theme 3: New Testament Organizational Spirituality is Future-Focused.*

The transformational aspects of New Testament organizational spirituality are communication, vision, purpose, and mission. New Testament organizational spirituality does not get lost in the chaos of the moment. Instead, organizations and leaders within this framework are constantly looking forward, communicating forward, and inspiring others to move forward toward a greater future.

*Theme 4: New Testament Organizational Spirituality is Values Centric.*

Organizations within this framework teach and model resilience, service, humility, trust, empowerment, unity, diversity, and love at both the leader and follower level. These values create the culture wherein service-orientation and a future-focus transform organizations into healthy communities. These values are the collective "true north" for organizations within the New Testament organizational spirituality framework.

*Theme 5: New Testament Organizational Spirituality is Biblically Spiritual.*

The Christian scriptures have much to say on spirituality. New Testament spirituality is not a vague or generic sense of purpose or community that one finds within their workplace. It is not a feeling of contentment or acceptance that comes from one fulfilling their life's purpose in a vocational context. New Testament organizational spirituality is biblical in that its means and end flow from a biblical perspective of purpose, community, and service unto others in fulfillment of the mission of God.

### VALUES AND BEHAVIORS IN NT SPIRITUALITY

The meta-analysis revealed several specific values and behaviors that undergird New Testament spirituality. Above all, "love" stands out as the predominant value in all the chapters. This love is not emotional affection, but rather, a deep sense of care for others that does not stem from a leader's personal motives. This love manifests itself explicitly in Theme 2 and implicitly in the other themes. Another value that stands out is "vision-casting." Over half of the chapters explicitly discuss vision-casting as a quality and behavior of healthy leadership (Theme 3). Moreover, the ability to envision a better way forward for both the organization and its followers also connects with Theme 2. Vision-casting implies speaking life into struggling team members with inspirational and motivational communication. It also implies modeling the biblical values of love, humility, kindness, patience, service, and development as a type of "pilot" for future communities. Loving and vision-casting leaders may indeed serve as a catalyst for better organizations, which in turn may lead to a better world. None of this is easy. Thus, resilience serves as a linchpin value in New Testament spirituality. As stated in 12 of the 21 chapters of this book, leaders must demonstrate humility, care, endurance, patience, spiritual discipline, maturity, tenacity, and a positive attitude, even when faced with adversity. This resilience also implies a measure of emotional awareness, situational awareness, and a never-ending concern for others that manifests in healthy communication, honesty, and trust-building. It is important to note that many of the themes and values overlap with each other. This overlap is encouraging because it demonstrates consistency in the applied exegetical methodology of the book, and it reinforces the fundamental and cohesive values, traits, and behaviors of biblical Christianity. Table 23.1 provides an overview of the themes,

**Table 23.1** Summary of meta-analysis

| <i>Theme</i>         | <i>Chapter</i>                | <i>Values/Behaviors</i>                           |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Healthy communities  | 1, 3–4, 6–8, 11–16, 18, 20–21 | Love, empowerment, diversity, patience, awareness |
| Service-Oriented     | 1–2, 4–13, 15–16, 18–19, 21   | Love, trust, sacrifice                            |
| Future-Focused       | 2, 4–11, 13–15, 19–21         | Vision-casting, resilience, healthy communication |
| Values-Centric       | 1–21                          | Love, humility, resilience,                       |
| Biblically spiritual | 3–5, 9–13, 15–21              | Love, humility, sacrifice, service, discipline    |

*Source* Carlo Serrano

values, and behaviors of the New Testament. Spirituality as explored in the meta-analysis.

## IMPLICATIONS

A follow-on volume exploring the other 14 books of the New Testament could help deepen the exegetical strength of this book, but as stated earlier, that may not be necessary. It may also prove helpful to develop follow-up case studies using the original 154 principles to develop qualitative questionnaires or quantitative items for further research. The New Testament has much to say regarding healthy community, service, and our collective responsibility to be agents of positive change. A fascinating result from this volume is that organizations led by leaders who take spirituality seriously have the greatest opportunity to impact society beyond the important metrics of financial growth and market productivity. If *changed* people change people, then there is great potential for the field of organizational leadership to advance by digging deeper into the broad effect that New Testament spirituality may have outside of the established literature.

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