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A Call for Biblical Leadership

Existing Research on Biblical Leadership

In the context of leadership studies, there have been several examinations of biblical leadership from the analysis of different texts of Scripture. These studies have revealed a rich fabric of leadership principles for the present issue of a biblical model of leadership. Some of these studies have developed separate models of leadership, while others have found principles for leadership and even leadership development. These studies include exegetical studies like the study from Bekker (2006), while others are longitudinal qualitative studies that include an analysis of leaders in the biblical text like the work from Clinton (2012). In addition, there are dissertations on leadership as taught by Jesus, Paul, or Peter as well as works on leadership characteristics from Old Testament figures like King David (Serrano, 2017).

Moving on in Biblical Leadership

There is a great amount of insight to be gained from these existing studies. Nevertheless, there is more to be gained from viewing these studies together for insights from convergence and distinction in these examinations of Scripture. Then, as was found in this study, there is more that can be gleaned from a close examination of the text to include issues of shepherding and character. How could these principles be used in a contemporary context? Are there any organizations that are using this way or concept of leading? These are important questions of application. There are several leadership principles here that can be located in a beginning model. This model would include issues like humility, the proper use of power, developing perseverance through suffering, developing character in life situations, steward leadership as well as servant leadership concepts.

In addition to these servant leadership components, there were also found in this study other important components of leadership that would expand into a biblical model of leadership that would include and interact with the biblical servant model of leadership or the other components found in the previous chapter. First among these components is the issue of vision. In servant leadership, the vision is for the followers but then there is a secondary goal for the organization and the community. However, in biblical leadership, as the study moves into the life of Jesus and the teachings of the New Testament, vision for the mission becomes very much a component of leadership in the life of Jesus and of Paul. This answers the question of vision in the servant leadership literature concerning organizational vision. The vision here in Scripture is vision for the mission that drives the organization. Jesus' vision was to make disciples in all ethnic groups on the earth. He repeated this in several ways and in different contexts. This was not a lone vision but a shared vision as well with billions of followers through the ages with this same vision. The result is the building of the church throughout the centuries. The result of His vision is the church is built against all odds. This is leadership. This is similar to the concept to inspirational motivation of transformational leadership.

The second component is that biblical leaders are encouraged to become models for others to follow in Hebrews 13:7. Then Paul and Jesus both use the mode of follow me in mentoring others for ministry resulting in legacy as mentioned in the last section. Peter even exhorts believers and leaders to "follow in His (exact) steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Nevertheless, it is also the way of leading in the present tense for biblical leaders as well. This modeling worked well for Jesus and Paul in multiplying leaders for the rapidly growing ministry and church. This is similar to idealized influence in transformational leadership.

In the third component is found a concept of developing strategy. This is found in Paul describing the qualifications of leaders when he includes a strategic portion in his description to Timothy. These qualified leaders must maintain a good reputation for those outside the church and to actively overcome the strategies set against them and develop proper strategies for the advance of the church. There is a strategic component here in two ways. One is overcoming problems and two is developing ways into the future for the expansion of the organization. Jesus in his leadership was helping the disciples and the nation to see old problems in a new way. He solved many puzzles and dilemmas for the disciples like how it was hard for the rich to get into the Kingdom. This was not a statement against wealthy people though it may be read this way through twenty-first-century cultural lenses. The problem for the disciples was they wrongly believed if one was rich, that person was blessed by God because they were closer to God. Conversely, if they were poor, they were far from God as evidenced by the lack of blessing. This is why they were astonished and responded to Jesus by saying, "Who can be saved" (Mark 10:26)? Yet Jesus was also challenging, pushing them to new ideas like the need for new wine skins in Mark 2:22 to receive the new wine of the gospel. The old wine skins were some of their old religious ways and these had to change to move forward with the Lord. Jesus was a problem solver and an innovator. This is similar intellectual stimulation in transformational leadership.
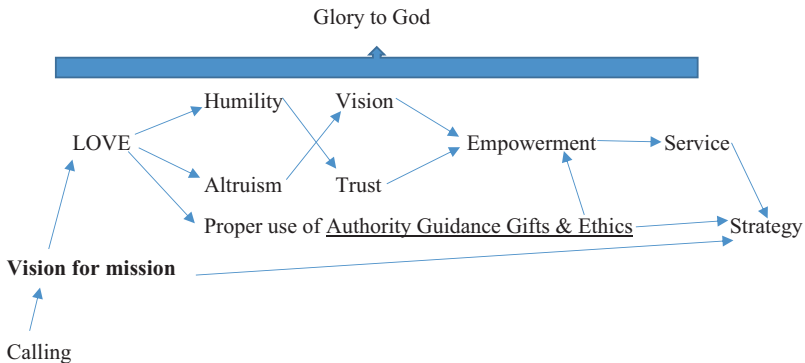
The fourth element of transformational leadership is individualized consideration, but this is clearly present in all of the discussions in Scripture concerning servant and shepherd leadership. However, there is a fourth component clearly present in both Old and New Testaments that ground biblical leadership in spirituality. Spiritual formation is

important and found in the practical aspect in the development of the internal issues of the person as found in the previous section. There is more though. Moses, Gideon, even Samson, Jesus, and Paul all had these personal encounters with the Lord that were very pivotal and real. This type of connection to the Lord continued through their lives and it manifest in issues like being able to change even in difficult situations but more than that it manifest in faith. It manifest in an attitude of confidence in God, an adjusted attitude of self-efficacy. In the purpose of God this can be accomplished was the attitude of each of these leaders and others as well. This gave these leaders the proper balance between confidence and humility. This is a difficult characteristic to develop in that it can become either arrogance or negligence. Arrogance in being overcome with pride and negligence in becoming inactive waiting for something to happen. The balance is confident humility.

This develops a robust model for biblical leadership. This model follows the biblical servant leadership model with three stages but with these additions mentioned above and some other aspects of Christian spirituality in both the foundation and the process of leadership in stages 1 and 2. The first two aspects of spirituality would be established in the foundation or stage 1. This is a robust faith and connection to and encounter with the Lord. This is found in leaders from Old to New Testaments and is of primary importance. Without faith and trust in God that others can imitate biblical leadership loses its vitality. This faith in the Lord Jesus Christ manifests in many externals but it is an internal foundational issue first and helps to develop the other important foundational internal issues. The second foundational issue found in many biblical leaders is that they were each servants to the Lord first before they were servants to the people. The biblical leader must develop an attitude like that of Jesus Christ Himself of being a servant to God first. In addition, in the foundational phase, there is the issue of learning to manage the family well, in learning to lead with authority in a proper way. The final addition is found in the process of leadership as found in stage 2. In biblical leadership, the goal or the end or the teleology of leadership is not just for service to others nor to meet the goals of the mission. The ultimate goal of biblical leadership is to bring glory to God. This means to not only bring honor to God in all that is done and even to look for ways to honor God,

but it also means to bring clarity to who God is and how He interacts with people. The biblical leader is to lead with the glory of God as the motive and goal in all of the processes of being and doing. The word "glory" describes the superlative honor that should be given to God by everything in the universe and it can also be the created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of Himself (Grudem, 1994). These are two definitions of the glory of God but can be seen together in that giving honor to God helps humans see this revelation of God. This then is the motive to bring honor to God and in the process help people grasp more fully the revelation of God. This glory of God is the manifestation of the excellence of God's character and greatness of being which we cannot fully comprehend, but we can stand in awe and worship (Grudem, 1994). Love in leadership then is not only the motive it is the goal in showing others about God's real love and care for people. This biblical model for leadership can be seen in Fig. 8.1.

Stage 3

Legacy

Stage 2

Glory to God

LOVE → Humility

Vision

Altruism   Trust

Empowerment → Service

Proper use of <u>Authority Guidance Gifts & Ethics</u> → Strategy

Vision for mission

Calling

Stage 1 Foundation	Learning to manage family well
Calling	Ontological development – through suffering
	Love matured by character
	Internal issues developed – character, forgiveness, integrity
	Faith in the Lord – Connections to God, Servant of the Lord first

Fig. 8.1 Biblical leadership

In this model, the process of leadership develops in the overall areas of glory to God, service to others, and strategic futures for the mission. This model could then be used for leadership development in these specific areas of life and leading.

Application of Biblical Leadership

This way of leading could be developed over time using mentoring concepts. Concerning leadership outcomes, many declare mentoring a proven method for developing people for leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & Mckee, 2002; Malpurs, 1999; Noe, 1999). Mentoring has positive effects for leadership development for individuals including ministers. O'Daniel (2005) found that a great majority (89%) of the ministers surveyed in the UPCI (United Pentecostal Church International) said they would not be in leadership and ministry if it had not been for their mentors. Mentoring is an important method for training as found in the Scriptures. A survey of biblical figures and Christian leaders underscores the conclusion that one of the major influences in developing a leader is a person or persons who have something to share that the leader needs, a mentor (Stanley & Clinton, 1992). Some biblical examples of this are Moses mentoring Joshua, Barnabas mentoring Paul, and then Paul mentoring Timothy. Mentors were important for leadership development in the church in its early form. Mentors are also important for the development of ministers for leadership in the modern context. Mentoring research has shown mentoring to be influential in developing leaders, and research in a large energy company found that leaders with significant levels of leadership strengths attributed their development to mentoring early in their careers (O'Daniel, 2005). According to Stanley and Clinton (1992), one of the important factors of leaders who finished well and continued in the learning and growth process was that of having several important mentors during their lifetime.

Many of these concepts for leadership have been used in Manna Church. This church has developed its own leadership pipeline with these issues of leadership in the heart of the training. This is one of the 100 largest and fastest-growing churches in the United States and was founded

in the 1970s but has not undergone leadership change due to failure of the leader. Many of the leaders are trained within the context of the organization. Then the organization works with a college in further developing these potential leaders in the areas of theology, life, and leadership. The application of biblical leadership can be done in this contemporary context though it will need to be done intentionally with careful consideration for proper development and with the understanding that in some ways it will be countercultural. This is a multilevel robust yet complex model for leadership. Nevertheless, it is biblical in nature and is a long process of preparation and it is living in leadership. The person becomes a leader with complex issues at work both internally and externally addressing the issues of Christian spirituality, self, motive, and the proper use of divergent areas such as authority and ethics. This complexity makes it difficult to conceptualize but not impossible. This complexity makes it even harder to do this way of leading but not impossible. With the proper vision for biblical leadership, it can not only be accomplished but it can grow and prosper in different areas beginning in the church and different ministries. It can also be taken into the business world as Christian leaders adopt this for themselves and then become leaders in many diverse business, education, and government organizations. In this way, we can see leadership from the divine perspective. In this way, we can develop Christian leadership to be able to lead in the leadership world. The way into the future for this way of leadership is for leaders in the church to begin to live this model then to set forth the example for the next generation of leaders in colleges and churches as well as in businesses. This is a process and not an immediate solution and it is costly on a personal level, but it is the way into the future for the church as the leaders follow Jesus' example of leading the church and teaching others to lead.

Biblical Leadership: Pioneers or Settlers

In the search for a biblical model of leadership, the material for research is vast and this study is not the conclusion of the matter; it is simply part of a very long journey of discovery and adaptation to the new concepts. In this search, there are issues that come to the surface that are not

addressed in leadership or ethical theories yet and need some discussion and study. One of these areas is found in the diversity of leaders in both the Old and New Testaments. This is not about the diversity of their cultural heritage or their connection to the tribal system of Israel. It is more about the kind or type of leaders and how they lead. It is about leadership but it is not about a model of leadership or the culture that is set by leadership or even the climate of a group in response to a leader or leaders. It is related more to the ontology of the leaders and who the leaders are not just in person or style but who they are in motivation and how they lead. This can be seen in Scripture in the different leaders and how they lead. Paul begins to explain this concept in 1 Corinthians. In chapter 3, Paul is discussing his ministry and the ministry of Apollos in connection to the Corinthians. In verse 5, he calls both of them servants through whom they believed. Paul and Apollos were both servants of the Lord and servant leaders to the Corinthians. Yet there was a difference. This difference actually was causing a division in the church. The people in the church were forming factions or siding with certain leaders against each other. Neither Paul nor Apollos were developing or endorsing this division but it was happening around them and their different leadership styles. This was not a difference in leadership models like a difference between transformational and servant leadership. Paul would have solved this issue differently. Instead, this was an issue in how they led differently and Paul addresses this issue directly.

Paul tells the Corinthians in chapter 3 verse 6 that he had planted and Apollos watered but it was God who gave the increase. Paul and Apollos had different aspects of leadership in the church but both were needed and both had value though this should not bring division. In this section of Scripture in chapter 3 verses 5 through 9, there are several repetitions of inner texture as well as a progressive texture. The repetitions include words like "God," "Paul," and "Apollos," "watered" and "planted." Then the progressive texture begins in verse 5 by asking the question of the identity of Paul and Apollos and ends with giving a definitive answer in verse 9. The progression begins by describing both Paul and Apollos as servants, then in the next section, it tells what they do through the analogy of farming, then it moves in the third section focusing on God as the source and finally in the last section unity is the issue and both types of

these leaders are needed to establish God's field (Bailey, 2011). These servant leaders have an important and special but different function with the purpose of building God's field, his church. It is the Lord who makes it work. They are equal and important but different. Does this difference matter? It does matter.

Paul then changes the metaphor to that of a building in verse 9 and he describes the work that he does as the one who lays the foundation of the building and then others (like Apollos) need to come and build upon that foundation. The farm or the building must be built well, and it takes specialists who are experts to build well. It is God working through them but you need a wise master builder to lay the foundation. Paul is the expert at laying the foundation. Apollos is the expert at finishing the building. There are those like Paul that lay a good foundation; these are wise builders that build the proper foundation. This word indicates that this person is both architect and chief engineer and Paul says this is according to the grace or gift given to him, this is a specific grace for this purpose of building the foundation of churches (Fee, 2014). Then there are those like Apollos and others who build on this foundation and the exhortation is to build properly. There are at least two areas seen here of a specific leadership area that transcends models of leadership. Some leaders plant and others water. There is no conflict or competition here between Apollos and Paul though there was between the Corinthian believers. This was the purpose of Paul's exhortation first to correct the Corinthians way of thinking about leaders. Paul and Apollos were not contrary to one another as servant leaders. They worked together in tandem to build the field of the Lord. However, there were others who tried to build on the foundation that Paul laid but unlike Apollos they were building incorrectly. The second reason for this exhortation was to instruct those who would lead in how to build correctly on the foundation.

Rather than foundation layers and builders, a more appropriate description would be pioneers and builders. Are there other examples of these different kinds of leaders in Scripture? This difference can be seen in James, the head of the church at Jerusalem as a builder, and Peter the pioneer, who established churches in many places even crossing cultural lines to do so. Timothy and Titus are sent and instructed by Paul to build where he had pioneered or planted. In addition, there are some who can

fill both functions and roles but this is not the norm. Paul did not change to become the builder, he worked with builders. Nehemiah was one who was a pioneer, getting the wall started and completed and he was a builder as well in establishing order and growth in Jerusalem. C. Peter Wagner introduced the concept in his early church growth books about leaders who were pioneers or settlers. The pioneers were the innovators and the growth leaders, whereas the settlers did not do as well in church growth areas. However, this biblical concept moves beyond this concept in seeing both aspects of leadership as effective but different. Is this seen in the contemporary context of leadership? In the church world, there are many small churches that have stopped growing and have hovered between 70 and 150 people in the churches. Some churches are small due to demographics but some possibly need a change from a pioneer leader to a builder leader. This could also be true in businesses and even nonprofits. Perkin and Abraham (2017) discuss a framework for business leaders that includes different types of leaders being pioneers, settlers, or town planners. This is a similar concept based in the business world. Pioneers develop uncharted land, settlers build understanding and make something useful for a larger audience, while town planners find ways to make things faster, better, and more efficient (Perkin & Abraham, 2017). It is possible that these town planners are really builders since builders includes more than the concept of settlers. In this scenario, builders would include both settlers and town planners.

How does this work? The pattern seen in Scripture is that the pioneer goes in and establishes the foundation but he/she also takes several others on that same team. Paul traveled with teams of over 20 people at times during his ministry. In addition, he was consistently leaving or sending leaders to other areas for short or long periods of time. Then he would continue to instruct leaders through writings about how to lead and develop other leaders. Could pioneers become builders and builders become pioneers? This is possible. Possibly, this is what has been seen in the megachurch movement in the United States. Pioneers have learned to become builders as well. It is also possible that these teams at these churches have a good combination of pioneers and builders with each having enough authority to impact the organization. This is an area that needs further research. The business world has seen several rapid successes

as well like Amazon or Airbnb. Airbnb is an example in that they own no real estate and they even rent their office space without owning it; yet, they have become a very successful organization. There are many more that could be added to this list like Google, Apple, and Uber. The leaders in these organizations have been able to pioneer and then convert to building rather rapidly. Is this just market forces? There is more here than market forces. It is about leadership.

Understanding this issue of pioneers and builders can bring forward momentum in all types of organizations from churches to schools to businesses. More research is needed both biblically and empirically. However, understanding these issues can bring help in the development of effective leaders for various contexts and callings. In addition, using this concept can help build teams that are very effective in pioneering and building quickly with insights from both the foundational perspective and the building perspective. It can help in the planning stages and of knowing when pioneer leaders are needed and when builder leaders are needed in the organization. Finally, with this understanding developed pioneers could possibly be trained to be builders and builders pioneers. In the early years of leadership theory, it was thought that effective leaders were just born with certain traits and very few could be changed. It would be a mistake to start this process over again concerning pioneers and builders without more research. This leadership concept could change the way business and even church is done and it could bring with it growth, success, and momentum that turns addition growth into multiply growth.

Conclusion

This is an opportunity for a new model of leadership that includes serving and concepts of servant leadership that is informed, critiqued, and expanded by concepts of biblical leadership. In addition, this concept of pioneers and builders working alongside of this model can create a context for more effective leaders on several levels of leadership bringing multiply-type growth to organizations and churches. Several models of leadership, including servant leadership, have served our organizations and our churches well. Nevertheless, there has been a dark side of leadership that

seems difficult to overcome. This soft underside of leadership is found in success. When the leader succeeds, she/he can develop such a self-focus that Narcissistic leadership develops. This form of leading brings destruction to the leader, follower, and the organization. Often the models of leadership do not include development in the internal areas of the person to overcome this narcissistic temptation. This issue in leadership is seen in all types of organizations from government, to business, to the church. The problem is that leadership studies view leadership externally from the results. This is a good beginning but leadership needs to also view the inside of leadership in the person of the leader. Scripture is uniquely qualified in this area since its first concern is the person who leads not just in leadership behaviors. Some models have begun to address this issue recently, but the Scripture gives keen insight into this area of life and leadership. This model of leadership includes several issues that are in the servant leadership model. However, biblical leadership includes other issues as well from the Old Testament shepherd model of leadership that moves beyond the servant mode to the mode of caring direction. It would also include some of the broad issues of New Testament leadership that are transformational and yet include internal issues of character development as well. This is from the principles of leadership as found in both the Old and New Testaments and forms a new model that moves past servant leadership to biblical leadership. This is a model that is ethical, effective, spiritual, and adaptable that helps overcome the human temptation for corruption and self-indulgence.

Both the biblical servant model and the biblical model of leadership can help move leadership studies into the future especially in the area of leadership and its connection to the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. This move to a biblical foundation is both important and helpful in seeing leadership from a divine perspective. This is from an outside perspective that takes us out of the human research circle of being both the researcher and the researched. These models though complex and developed in stages can help the research in both biblical studies and leadership research. In addition, they can be developed as models upon which to build leadership development programs and leader education. The way into the future for the human race is effective good leadership.

Our world is filled with divergent troubling issues and many of the solutions need effective, good leaders with a robust way of leading. Looking into the future, which can appear dark at times, is actually very bright. It is an opportunity for new ways of leading with new effective, good leaders to be developed and to rally many of the new effective leaders of the world to bring bright change into our world. In the church, there is a bright future. As the church faces opposition and trouble and even cultural rejection, this is an opportunity for good effective biblical leaders to rise to the surface in the church and ministries to lead in real advance for the Kingdom of God on the earth. These are dark times, these are good times. Frankly, these times inspire me and they should inspire you too.

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