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From the Co-Editor

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On behalf of the Regent University's School of Business and Leadership and the editorial board of the *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, I thank you for your support of the journal.

This issue continues our mission of exploring, engaging, and extending the field of knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of leadership as found within the contexts of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. The response to last year's edition, along with the continued societal shifts of 2021, challenged us to continue the important conversation of "Biblical Perspectives of Unity and Diversity in Organizational Leadership."

This issue includes articles exploring the ethics of inclusion; decision making in a global pandemic; ecclesial polity; group decision-making; and, of course, diversity in organizational leadership. This issue also explores the use of modern-day instrumentation on historical leaders.

The JBPL is not possible without the guidance and leadership from our respected reviewers and the visionary support of Dr. Gomez and Dr. Winston at the School of Business and Leadership at Regent University.

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ.

THE DOORS OF THE CHURCH ARE OPENING: AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN A PANDEMIC

Michael Vincent Jenkins

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, social distancing restrictions were enacted, and many churches ceased religious gatherings. When the local church should re-open for in-person worship was a value judgment that created an ethical dilemma for every pastoral leader. The Christian church has a responsibility to act in the best interest of the greater community. Because of the far-reaching and high-stakes consequences this decision holds for internal and external stakeholders, it must be made with significant deliberation and prayer. The decision must be interpreted in the contexts of either shadow ethics with an accompanying critique paradigm or light ethics with a complimentary care paradigm. An analysis of these two approaches provides a model for pastoral leadership to use during a worldwide pandemic to examine the emotional impact, weigh the contributions of multiple voices, and exercise authentic leadership that is responsible, credible, and accountable. This framework provides an informed approach that helps pastoral leadership avoid harm, do good, and refrain from activities that have injurious consequences for others.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The world changed dramatically in December 2019 when a novel infectious disease broke out in Wuhan, Hubei province, China. When the disease spread, the World Health Organization officially declared it to be a pandemic and named it COVID-19. As of October 2021, there have been more than 235 million confirmed cases, and 4.8 million deaths (World Health Organization, 2021). The seriousness of the coronavirus resulted in the closing of businesses, schools, and places of worship. Consequently, church congregations had to reassess and evaluate the risks involved in worshipping in person by exploring virtual options. Church leaders, using the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, have designed and implemented varied initiatives to ensure a continuity of services that maintain a sense of community.

In 2020, in the United States, President Donald Trump and all 50 governors declared health emergencies to counteract the spread of COVID-19 (Gostin & Wiley, 2020, p. 2137). While the orders' degree varied, most local governments also issued "Stay-at-home Orders" to their populace and shut down businesses and non-essential services, including churches. These orders created a case of extreme necessity to curtail physical gatherings of more than ten people in a single place at the same time. As a result, churches across the country closed or created a framework for online worship with little advance notice. Norman and Reiss (2020) concluded, "The very nature of the advice being given…makes sacramental practice contrary to governmental guidelines…It is as if we have all been told 'Do not touch me' in response to our cry… They have taken my Lord away" (p. 579).

As the global pandemic infections surge, and daily death counts multiply, all with no definite end in sight, American church leaders were forced to make decisions about re-opening their churches. The American Church has weathered cases of extreme emergency before. However, the most difficult ethical question was whether to re-open the church for in-person gatherings. For some, the choice is a connexional decision, made by bishops or superintendents. For others, that decision is made at the local church level in committee or by a lone pastor. However, these decisions are necessarily ethical decisions that should include an examination of the emotional impact on the membership, weigh the contributions of multiple voices, and exercise authentic leadership.

II.   THE IMPORTANCE OF GATHERING

Hebrews 10:24-25 states, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (English Standard Version Bible used throughout this work unless indicated otherwise). König (2019) placed this passage among the calls to persevere in Hebrews; he maintained, "Almost as urgent as these warnings are the calls to persevere. It is obvious that the author fears that the readers may opt out of the faith and turn their backs on Christ" (Location 129).

Like Moore, the researchers have affirmed the necessity of replicating physical community at a distance. Lowe and Lowe (2018) noted that "much of what happens in a physical community can be replicated in a virtual community" (p. 78). Still, they stop short of affirming that all aspects of community can be replicated. The inability to experience a physical touch makes receiving a hug, the modern equivalent of a "holy kiss," especially tricky. While there are some churches that utilize moderated platforms and have staff dedicated to managing online interactions, this still does not address how the distant worshippers lend their voice to singing during the service or praying for their brother or sister standing alongside them.

Reciprocal Interactions

In Hebrews 10:24-25, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews directs believers to deliberate on how to stir up one another best to love and do good works and encourage one another. Lowe and Lowe (2018) commented, "Reciprocal interactions among connected members, produce reciprocal edification or spiritual growth" (p. 198). Similarly, Diggins (2016) contended that verse 24 demands that the believer "reflect deeply upon ways and means to bring out in fellow believers a spirit of love which naturally goes hand in glove with good works" (p. 195).

Both Diggins, and Lowe and Lowe, envisioned a community where reciprocal actions fulfill the "one another" statements of the New Testament without compulsion but out of a real sense of love and necessity. Anstey agreed and added the Old Testament perspective. Anstey (2019) affirmed that believers would not have mutual support –

> if we don't keep with 'the footsteps of the flock' (Song of Sol. 1:8). Since we are our 'brother's keeper' (Gen. 4:9), we have a responsibility to watch over one another's state, and to warn, if necessary, when one begins to stray (Prov. 24:11-12)" (Location 2118).

Mandatory Attendance

Verse 25 contains a mandatory attendance narrative; it states, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some..." (Heb. 10:25). Conversely, efforts to move community (and even worship) to virtual platforms create an optional attendance construct where believers are encouraged to participate in community in ways that seem to avoid physical presence. Diggins (2016) observed, "there should not be an attitude within us that forsakes or leaves brethren to their own devices. We can best stimulate each other as we physically interact" (p. 196). Physical presence engenders that reciprocal relationship and allows believers to move beyond faceless interaction to actually "greet one another with a holy kiss" (1 Cor. 16:20).

The inclusion of technology may transform community and formation while fostering deepened relationships but should not wholly replace physical engagement. Hall (2009) asserted, "virtual church, has a malforming effect because it's just communal enough to provide some of the easiest and most instantly satisfying pieces of community without the harder, more demanding parts" (p. 50). Additionally, Anstey (2019) warned, "Forsaking the gathering together of the saints is a sure sign of waning affections. It usually precedes a person's leaving the assembly altogether" (Location 2126).

Church Closures and Religious Liberty

Another important nuance is the disparate way that American states and local governments deemed in-person worship essential. In Texas, the governor and local governments issued conflicting orders, which led to confusion and amendments (Link, 2020, n.p.). On March 31, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott of Texas issued an executive order adding religious worship to Texas' list of essential services, but only allowing in-person gatherings in areas with low transmission rates. Link (2020) observed, "Abbott's order comes as several religious leaders have been arrested for defying social

distancing orders" (n.p.). Religious leaders in other states were arrested for similar infractions. Thus, the issue of social distancing created a political and legal stalemate between church and state.

Campbell (2020a) synthesized U.S. churches' resistance to governmental mandates to shutter their doors and the adaptation of technology for continued religious practice. For the pastors arrested (Link, 2020, n.p.), and others, the imposition of social-distancing requirements was an assault on the religious freedom guaranteed by the United States Constitution. According to Campbell, in some instances, law enforcement was dispatched to churches to issue fines to members, shut down parking lots, and advise parishioners of 14-day self-quarantine mandates due to their attendance in-person. Overall, the overarching conflict was the debate between every American citizen's constitutional right to freely exercise their religion, and the need to do so while protecting public health.

On the other end of Campbell's spectrum are those who overwhelmingly opted to move worship online. Whether maintaining the same look and feel of traditional worship online (transferred) or adopting a new talk-show style format (translated), an overwhelming majority of surveyed clergypersons moved to online-only worship. Campbell (2020a) advised that these groups made this transition to "continue what they see as their core functions as religious communities", and concluded that, "the use of ritual events as the basis for determining community membership or investment defines community primarily in institutional and place-based terms" (pp. 10-11).

Campbell (2020a) reported that both ends of the spectrum prioritized the act of worship over developing connections (community) within and among the membership of the church. Regardless of which end of the spectrum, a church fell, the institutional concept of church was omitting the value of community altogether. Consequently, she maintained that while the institutional perspective of community was lacking, the personal perception has changed. Campbell posited that, "for most people, community is something that is dynamic and changeable, holds multiple connections, and is determined by personal needs and choices" (p. 12).

The question of religious liberty and whether to close churches was not confined to the United States. In Poland, across all major denominations and faiths, clergypersons almost unanimously agreed to close their houses of worship entirely. In many cases, they did not even need to send directives to their members to abstain from the gathering because the faithful were members of a larger society, which was universally subject to the legal regulations barring the gathering (Sulkowski & Ignatowski, 2020, p. 254). Sulkowski and Ignatowski (2020) found that Poland's clergypersons, without regard to congregational size, dramatically reduced and eventually eliminated in-person services. Outside of the U.S., the religious struggle seemed to be more about how or whether to adapt spiritual practices for virtual observance or to curtail all activities outright.

Mental Health Changes

This section contains an exploration of the mental health challenges created as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, it includes a discussion of the lack of preparedness to address these challenges and the need for partnerships between churches and

physicians or mental health professionals. Last, it consists of the religious fervor development during crisis and detailed polling data to support the assertion that Christians turned to God during the pandemic.

The predominant issue with the mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic is that many of the "normal" social behaviors have undergone dramatic changes (Dein et al., 2020). While historically, the church played a role in responding to and helping people cope with epidemics and plagues, Dein et al. (2020) reported: "recent work contains negligible mention of religion in responding to and coping with the COVID-19 pandemic" (p. 1). This lack of participation is especially alarming because people are more likely to consult clergy for mental health treatment than seek services from physicians or mental health professionals. Consequently, most religious leaders are not equipped to provide it (American Psychological Association, 2020a, n.p.).

While Parish (2020) pointed out that churches were quick to adopt new media "to act as a conduit for religious belief, liturgy, and pastoral support during periods of social distancing" few have made strides to pipeline mental health services to their parishioners (p. 3). In the last few years, only 25 percent of religious congregations have developed partnerships to offer some form of mental health support (American Psychological Association, 2020a, n.p.). The American Psychological Association (APA) has observed that the lockdown created by COVID-19 has triggered depression, anxiety disorders, and adverse behavioral changes to the American people (American Psychological Association, 2020b, n.p.). These changes have unavoidably carried over into the socio-behavioral aspects of adherents. In Ireland, 55 percent of pastors said their members' mental health was the same, 40 percent experienced more difficulty than usual, and 21 percent had fewer challenges than usual (Ganiel, 2020, p. 24).

Adegboyega et al. (2020) used Game Theory to examine the socio-behavioral effects of social distancing on religious behavior. However, they stopped short of investigating the perceived and felt needs of adherents in community. Their study's focus was on the resulting psychological gains attained from Christians congregating (Adegboyega et al., 2020). Adegboyega et al. concluded, "our expectation is that churches will partner with mental health professionals to clearly understand educational and public health information that can mitigate and bend the curve on the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic" (p. 10).

There is some compelling evidence for a link between natural disasters and increased manifestations of religiosity (Bentzen, 2019). Despite church closures, a full quarter of U.S. adults have said their faith has become stronger because of the coronavirus pandemic, while a scant 2 percent say their faith has become weaker (Gecewicz, 2020). A Gallup report showed that 19 percent of Americans responded that their faith has intensified, while only 3 percent reported a decline (Dein et al., 2020). Despite the slight variance in improvement, both reports showed that American Christians have turned to God during this crisis and are more resolute in their faith as a result (Dein et al., 2020; Gecewicz, 2020).

While Dein et al. (2020) focused their research on the mental health implications of COVID-19 for religious adherents, they devoted an entire section to religious struggles. They defined these struggles as "tensions, strains, and conflicts around sacred matters" (p. 6). Their work adds a layer of complexity to the problem of mental health and COVID-19, namely that religious adherents experience the psychological

impact of religious struggle in addition to the already debilitating work to deal with the effects of social distancing. The added pressures include reconciling the belief that God is loving and allowing the suffering brought on by COVID-19, feelings of anger toward, abandonment or being punished by God, etc. Dein et al. predicted that, "we should expect a rise in COVID-19 related religious struggles among various religious groups and subsequent mental health-related problems, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidality" (p. 6).

III.   THE ETHICAL DILEMMA

Pazmiño (2008) provided the working definition for ethics, namely, "ethics is the study of value judgments and considers what is good or right" (p. 93). Moreover, "ethics is the study of moral principles and practices" (p. 101). In a Christian context, these values are steeped in a Christian worldview from which they cannot be divorced. Consequently, these value judgments are extended applications of the direct teachings of the Scriptures. For example, a sick believer should call for the elders of the Church, who will pray the prayer of faith so they might be healed (James 5:14-16). The widespread and ethical application of that principle is that the elders would not put that believer in a situation to become sick in the first place (1 Thess. 5:23).

Pasztor (2015) explained the necessary and determinate separation between ethics and faith, which is, "Religion essentially pertains only to those who choose to follow it. Ethics, on the other hand, pertains to everyone, and we should expect ethical behavior from everyone, no matter what field or profession they may be in" (p. 31). From this perspective, it becomes clear that any leader, in any faith group, could conceivably use the same ethical approach to make decisions in the best interest of their constituency, without regard to a common faith. Morrison's (2011) review of Johnson's "Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership" provides a way to interpret the two sides of ethical leadership, the beneficial or light ethic and harmful or shadow ethics. Pazmiño's value judgment is, therefore, categorized as a shadow (harmful) or light (beneficial) ethical choice.

Shadow Ethics

Craig E. Johnson coined the term, shadow casting, which is an analogy used for unethical leadership practices. Shadow ethics encompasses all leaders who seek to return the people to in-person worship without significant deliberation of the overarching impact of that decision on the health and longevity of the Church. Thiel et al. (2012) asserted, "leaders today are either ignorant of the ethical dilemmas present in complex organizations or that leaders possess values or internal codes that are 'less ethical'" (p. 49). Further, "the discretionary decisions made by leaders are inherently ethical because of the far-reaching and high-stakes consequences these decisions have for individuals internal and external to the leader's organization" (p. 52). This distinction is important because the decision seems to be a final decision that only affects the members of the Church. However, this decision has implications for everyone the members encounter. For example, a spouse who does not attend the Church but could become infected by the

spouse who does worship. Or a co-worker who is not even a Christian but comes into contact with the infected parishioner.

Embrace a Critique Paradigm. In 1824, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states have the power to police the activities within their borders. The justices ruled that under the Tenth Amendment, these police powers "include the ability to impose isolation and quarantine conditions" (American Bar Association, 2020). Most of the shadow ethics involved in the early decision making and fight against closure were based on the concept of critique of these kinds of judicial rulings. The premise is that the Church was unfairly targeted to remain closed or unjustly given more strict guidelines to re-open than other similar institutions. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) pointed out that, "critique provides a discourse for expanding basic human rights" (p. 30). Christian leaders saw the prohibitions as an infringement on their rights to self-govern and against their Constitutional rights, despite the clear guidance from the Supreme Court. Consequently, the high court has repeatedly refused to hear appeals for cases that could have re-opened the Church.

Blames Relativism. Arguments based on relativism continually spring up from those exercising shadow ethics. Demuijnck's work speaks directly to relativism, which is itself, the underpinning of the legal argument (e.g., critique) of closure. For example, the malls, schools, restaurants are all opening back up, and relative to those environments, the Church is no different. Demuijnck (2015) claimed, "the popularity of relativism is troubling because it discourages business people from combating questionable trends in business practices and, therefore, it may somewhat undermine business morality" (p. 819). This concept is essential to understanding why some people argue in favor of returning to in-person worship because other business models could. However, these leaders fail to recognize that the Church is unlike any other institution. There is little expectation that in a restaurant, people would be expected, with strangers, to hug, shake hands with, and stand close to each other in congregation. The act of fellowship includes touching strangers in ways that would be socially inappropriate in other settings that are re-opening.

Ignores the Impact on the Longevity of the Church. Moreover, practitioners of shadow ethics do not seem to consider how re-opening can potentially harm the Church's future longevity. Strobel et al. (2010) researched the role of ethical leadership in organizational attractiveness. They concluded, "Indeed, one of the most important precursors of successful employee recruitment is a positive employer image or employer brand" (p. 213). In a Christian context, their premise lowers the attractiveness of the Christian Church when its leaders behave unethically. For example, as previously shown, the Supreme Court has upheld the States' right to withhold constitutionally protected rights during a public health emergency. Still, Christian leaders continue to defy public health orders and assemble the people for worship.

As people continue to die from this continued exposure, it weakens the influence of the Church. Strobel et al. (2010) rightly conclude that "Ethical leadership behavior is both influenced by and a reflection of the internal ethical climate of an organization" (p. 215). In short, leadership actions are a direct reflection of the level of ethical behavior in the entire organization. Shoichet and Burke (2020) write that New York Lutheran "pastors report that 25-30% of the congregation is infected" with COVID-19. However, what they fail to address is how the institution is faring among people who turned to it

for hope during these distressing times and died. Rev. Fabian Arias had buried 44 members of his congregation when the article was printed, and the list was growing.

Dishonest Influence. As leaders in autonomous churches attempt to sway leadership teams to re-open, Barnes (2015) asserts "influencing someone to disobey a legitimate rule or law (one you are both aware of and, in essence, signed up to uphold) can be unethical" (p. 97). She says, "influencing someone to help you do something that would benefit you but could be harmful to him or her would be unethical, unless you were completely honest about the risks involved and the person had free choice" (p. 97). In this way, Barnes provides an ethical "out" for the leader who, without any deceit, leads people back into in-person worship, and transfers the accountability, to the membership. In this case, the people willingly accept the responsibility that, according to many other authors, belongs to the leader.

Warren et al. (2015) address the dissonance created when organizations have different ethical tones at the top. Warren et. al. defined top tones as "top management's attitude towards creating and maintaining an ethical culture in the workplace" (p. 559). This is an essential part of the ethical decision to be made because churches are complex organizations that can have multiple tops. There might be competing boards, centers of power, and unofficial power brokers with which to contend. Warren et al. acknowledge this fact, saying, "Perceptual studies of employees shed light on not only what constitutes the tone at the top but also difficulties in locating the top of an organization" (p. 560). As a result, people who exercise shadow ethics typically limit the voices included in the decision-making process.

Light Ethics

 In contrast to shadow ethics stands light ethics, which is utilized to insist on immediate re-opening, fight the initial and ongoing closure, and critique the justice ethics of a nearly 200-year-old and well settled Supreme Court decision. The focus of light ethics is primarily on the well-being of believers and the long-term credibility of the institutional Church in the world.

Embrace a Care Paradigm. While shadow ethicists typically gravitate towards a critique paradigm, light ethicists are drawn to the care paradigm. According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), care ethics encompass "the concept of the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (p. 33). Here moral decisions are made with the concern for the group before self, and the care paradigm values emotion heavily. An honest examination of the facts reveals that the leaders who decide to return to in-person will inevitably expose their membership to a mostly unknown virus.

MacLean et al. (2015) explored the consequences of decoupling their ethics program from implementation. They used Goldman Sachs as an example. The ethical framework created for the company does not match the daily practice. Wells Fargo Banks also discarded their ethical standards in favor of making money through opening fraudulent accounts and charging unfounded fees.

Conversely, Churches have an inherent ethical responsibility to act in the group's best interests (e.g., to employ care ethics). However, the return to in-person worship against public health officials and the government's recommendation could result in a psychological contract breach. MacLean et al. (2015) conclude that psychological

contract breach is an attitude shaped by social exchange violations, primarily unmet expectations. For example, the members expect leaders to make decisions according to the Bible and "obey the laws of the land" (Rom. 13:1-2). Failure to adhere to the mandates from governmental agencies is a violation of social exchange.

Examines the Emotional Impact. Additionally, that same leader will ultimately bear the weight of the consequences of that decision. For example, the leaders making the decisions will have to eulogize any members who die. As burying members is a wholly emotional and draining experience, this decision's emotional impact cannot be understated. Shoichet and Burke (2020) wrote a CNN article detailing the emotional anguish of Rev. Fabian Arias, who donned an N95 mask to bury 44 members of his congregation. They quoted Arias as saying, "The virus installs itself more in the most vulnerable places, and so it infects the most vulnerable people. This is the problem. The virus does not discriminate."

Invites Multiple Voices. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) concluded that care ethics require leaders to consider multiple voices in the decision-making process. These additional voices should include the Department of Public Health, government officials, and their congregations. Additionally, Jurkiewicz considered ethics from the perspective of the citizenry [constituent membership] as opposed to the leader's ethics. Her work blends with Hansen's et al. (2016) (explored later) to provide the perspective of the broader Christian community. Jurkiewicz (2012) asserted, "Plato (and Morse 1999) maintains it is the community's responsibility to educate its citizenry on the expected code of ethical behavior" (p. 245). Regarding ethics and the Church, the voice of the membership should outweigh the leader's view, as the group provides and enforces the ethical norms for itself and its leader, based on the principles of Scripture.

Exercises Authentic Leadership. The leader who can shepherd the Church through its response to this global pandemic is responsible, credible, and accountable. Stahl and Sully de Luque (2014), in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, emphasized the necessity of responsible leadership. They found that:

> Despite a lack of consensus on the definition of responsible leadership, there is overwhelming evidence that the perceptions, decisions, and actions of individual managers—particularly those at senior levels—have an impact on the social performance and long-term viability of their organizations. (p. 236)

> Moreover, they defined socially responsible leadership as leadership that avoids

harm, does good, and refrains from activities that have harmful consequences for others.

Where Stahl and Sully de Luque demanded responsible leadership, Malphurs (2003) demanded credible leadership, and stated, "research on credibility has shown that, when a leader attempts to influence people, they engage in a conscious and unconscious evaluation of the leader and will follow only if they deem him or her to be credible" (p. 50). Without this credibility, the leader cannot make useful decisions at all. According to Sampson (2011), "accountability is the ability to be liable, responsible, or answerable" (p. 182). As a bevy of believers died very early on during the coronavirus pandemic spread, accountability was sorely lacking. Sampson's accountable leader would find Barnes' accountability-shifting leader intolerable.

Leaders were able to excuse their intractable position of continuing to hold in-person services with platitudes about obeying God rather than man, and the unknown

nature of the virus. As knowledge of the pure virality has increased, there can be no more excuse for the wanton disregard for human life and insistence that believers continue to gather in-person, without accountability for the consequences. Sampson pointed out that, "moral accountability refers to one's ability to know right from wrong" (p. 182).

IV.   THE ROLE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) provided four paradigms for the analysis of ethical behavior, which are the ethics of justice, critique, care, and profession. Hansen et al. (2016) provided a three-fold inquiry. Lawton and Macaulay (2015) posited two ethical extremes. Their works all seem to argue against complete reliance on a single ethical framework as the solution to the need for ethical standards in an organization. Hansen et al. provided the contextual framework for the membership to consider before they return to in-person worship. They outlined a three-fold inquiry; namely, the members should look: (1) outward at how their organization and its decision impact the community, (2) upward to determine the ethicality of their leaders deciding whether to re-open the Church for in-person worship, and (3) inward at their propensity to trust others as they form their perceptions (p. 649).

This framework is the lens through which the followers should view their level of participation and determine whether the decision being made is ethical. Specific attention must be given to the upward look. Leaders who are known to be unethical will likely have personal or selfish reasons to insist that the members return (e.g., their salary has been impacted, and they have a higher value for financial contributions than safety). These selfish reasons are often couched in the dishonest influence espoused by Barnes (2015).

Lawton and Macaulay (2015) posited two extremes. The first is the reliance on some regulatory mechanisms, which in any autonomous church is virtually nonexistent and, therefore, not applicable. The second is a reliance on the personal integrity of individuals to act ethically, which is often the de facto ethical framework. While some deacons or elders might examine the decisions of the primary leader, the leader is primarily left to influence and make decisions on credit. That credit is based on their integrity, as it is perceived by the people they lead. The "upward look" of Hansen et al., requires Lawton and Macaulay's ethical management, which includes, "how individual managers behave with integrity, how they may set a personal example, and how they treat others both within and without their own organizations" (p. 107).

V.   CONCLUSION

Every expression of the Christian faith needs a Spirit-led, multi-voiced, and medically informed decision-making body to carefully consider the weight of the decision about when to return to corporate worship. In addition to when this group should prayerfully consider what mission looks like in a post-COVID world and provide recommendations for how believers should navigate the world around them. This group should be comprised of authentic leaders who are responsible, credible, and accountable. These leaders must view their tasks through the lens of care ethics that

considers the well-being of the members and those with whom they have a personal contact who might not be members.

If another pandemic, or similar public health emergency arises, the Christian mandate to walk in the light (1 John 1:7) must be the solution. All ethical choices should be the result of light ethics. Leaders must reject the temptation to cast shadows, especially when the result of the ethical choice at hand has life and death implications. As light consistently overwhelmed the darkness (John 1:5), so must light ethics swallow up shadow ethics.

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THE MUTE CHURCH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF MEMBER SILENCE AND SPIRITUALITY IN CHURCH DECISION-MAKING

Wayne E. Credle, Jr.

Can the church function while on "mute?" While there is considerable research literature that explores the presence and function of Abilene paradox theory in organizations, there is limited research that explores Abilene paradox theory in relationship to faith organizations. The issue with this gap is the wealth of information that could be amassed to expand group dynamics as it relates to faith organizations. This study explored whether spirituality contributed to member silence in the decision-making process of faith organizations. Within the study Abilene paradox theory, consensus theory, and spirituality were defined and from the literature of these theories, ten statements of discussion were derived to interview a focus group of seven leaders of the Baptist church, comprised of Pastors, Deacons, and Deaconess. Afterwards, a content analysis approach was used to synthesize the data, conceptually and relationally. The study concluded that Abilene paradox theory, influenced by spirituality, affects the decision-making process of group members in faith organizations. The study hopes to spark further conversation on the impact of spirituality and spiritual leadership on group dynamics in faith organizations.

IV.   INTRODUCTION

In the world of telecommunication and social media, one buzzword that has permeated the spaces of virtual culture is the word "mute" (Randall, 2020). Faced with the challenge of staying connected in a world largely impacted by the integration and normalization of social networking in the 21st century, the "mute" button has become a communal prerequisite for a individuals, groups, and organizations to hear and be heard by others (Randall, 2020, Weber et al., 2016). The "mute" feature used on meeting

forums such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and other platforms create a virtual sense of order, especially when decision-making is necessary. As the church has become one of the many entities impacted by the world of telecommunication, the church—like other organizations—have had to adapt to the world of "mute" to hear and to be heard. While silence can bring order and harmony to an organization, silence can also threaten the safety, security, and growth of an organization, especially if silence occurs amongst key leadership during a decision-making process (Donnelly, 2005; Taras, 1991; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). Whereas no organization can afford to function in silence, certainly the Church as a prophetic, unrelenting witness to the world, cannot afford to do ministry on "mute." Yet, if church membership is unable to voice their true feelings to their faith organization, they run the risk of jeopardizing the very spiritual and emotional well-being of the communities they serve. They run the risk of operating as a "mute" church.

If this is the case—if the mute church exists—there must be a contributing factor that causes and reinforces the silence. Thus, the research question is such: Does spirituality contribute to member silence—as a result of Abilene paradox theory—in the decision-making processes of church organizations? The research explores the function of Abilene paradox theory in the decision-making processes of church leadership and explores whether the concept of spirituality additionally contributes to its occurrence. The research also addresses a gap in Abilene paradox theory research and the church, which suggests that a larger gap exists between group dynamics literature and the church, also. Because church organizations vary in group dynamics, yet historically have contributed to group dynamics, a study of this magnitude not only provides more literature for theologians and pastors, but for organizational leaders and researchers (Cafferky, 2007).

Within this study, Abilene paradox theory, consensus theory, and spirituality have been defined and from those definitions, ten statements of discussion were derived to assess a focus group of seven Baptist leaders, male and female, within Pastor and Diaconate leadership. Lastly, this study conducted a content analysis on the data from the interview, specifically analyzing the data conceptually and relationally to determine meaning. The goal of the qualitative study was to (a) provide additional research literature on Abilene paradox theory as it relates to the church, (b) initiate further discussion on the relationship between Abilene paradox theory and Christianity, (c) explore its effect, if any, of Abilene paradox theory on churches versus other organizations, (d) and explore whether the definition of Abilene paradox theory needs to be expanded to include spirituality as a contributing factor. The next section defines Abilene paradox theory, consensus theory, and the concept of spirituality, which will serve as a driving point for the qualitative study.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Abilene Paradox Theory

The background of Abilene paradox theory is derived from a simple suggestion from the father-in-law of Jerry B. Harvey. 104 degrees in Coleman, Texas, the Harvey family is found engaged with a game of dominoes and refreshing, cold lemonade. During the game, Harvey's father-in-law proposed a family trip from Coleman to Abilene, Texas for lunch (Daniel, 2001; Harvey, 1988; Harvey et al., 2004; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). While the suggestion is internally dissented by Harvey's family, the family outwardly agreed to leave behind their lemonade and dominoes to make the hot, 53-mile trip in their 1958 Buick to Abilene (Harvey et al., 2004; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). Having had a horrible time, the Harvey family collectively confessed that none of them honestly wanted to go to Abilene and only agreed as to not disappoint each other (Harvey et al., 2004). Even Harvey's father-in-law, who originally suggested the trip, confessed to never wanting to leave Coleman and only offered the trip under the assumption that the family was bored (Harvey, 1988). Through conversation, the Harvey family discovered that if they would have been honest from the very beginning, the 106-mile roundtrip trek could have been altogether avoided (Harvey, 1988). It is through this event that Harvey developed and published what is known today as the Abilene paradox theory (Harvey et al., 2004; Wilson & Harrison, 2001).

The Abilene paradox theory is the inability of individuals, groups, or institutions to manage agreement within the decision-making process (Browne et al., 2018; Daniel, 2001; Harvey, 1988; Moosmayer et al., 2018; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2011; Sheingold & Shiengold, 2010; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). Abilene paradox theory occurs when one suppresses or sacrifices their internal wants to satisfy the perceived wants of others. The theory is characterized within group dynamics research as a paradox because it exposes the contradiction between perceived ideas or beliefs that are internal, versus the ideas or beliefs that are expressed (Gillette & McCollom, 1995; Smith & Berg, 1997). Abilene paradox theory has occurred or is occurring when the following five components are present: (a) an expressed public/mutual agreement contradictory to internal dissents, (b) ineffective communication that motivates the suppression or silence of individual dissent, (c) the inability of group members to interpret or name a false or fake consensus, (d) an outward resentment of the decision, the group leader and/or other group members after the decision is made and (e) the failure of a leader to recognize the occurrence of Abilene paradox theory so as to prevent its occurrence again (Harvey et al., 2004, pp. 215-226).

What is interesting to note about Abilene paradox theory is that it is centered around the concept of agreement, not conflict (Browne et al., 2018; Daniel, 2001; Harvey, 1988; Sheingold & Shiengold, 2010; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). Individuals, groups, or institutions that undergo the paradox—who suppress their true wants or silence their dissents in the decision-making process—do so to avoid conflict (Browne et al., 2018; Daniel, 2001; Harvey, 1988; Sheingold & Shiengold, 2010; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). This desire to avoid conflict and to ultimately remain silent stems from

the concepts of action anxiety and/or negative fantasies. Action anxiety is defined as the apprehension felt by members who desire to act but do not because they believe their actions will not be accepted by other group members (Browne et al., 2018). Negative fantasies are defined as the conceptualization of pessimistic thoughts that consume members mentally and emotionally, preventing them from voicing their concerns (Browne et al., 2018). When this occurs, members consumed with negative fantasies will constantly think of the worst that could happen if they express their internal dissents. Thus, when members are tasked to help make decisions and experience such anxiety or fantasy, they remain silent to alleviate their trauma.

Wholly, Abilene paradox poses a risk for managers and organizations in that it masks organizational problems while not providing true support for group leaders and/or other members (Brownee, Appan, Safi, & Mellarkod, 2016; Harvey et al., 2004). Organizations that contain members who silence their internal dissents may do so because of their inability to feel safe or empowered in the organization they serve. When this organizational behavior is normalized, it not only becomes detrimental to the decision-making process of an organization, but detrimental to the organization as a whole (Hannah et al., Seidel, 2018). Organizations that make decisions with the existence of Abilene paradox, meaning that members are arbitrarily agreeing to decisions they internally disagree with, must question the validity of consensus in the decision-making process. The next section will further define consensus as it relates to Abilene paradox theory.

Consensus

Centrally, consensus is defined as a deliberation that occurs between members of a group to reach a course of action that reflects the opinion of each group member and/or the core values of the organization (Pérez et al., 2018). It is a form of group decision-making where preferences are either consolidated or aggregated to arrive at the best set of alternatives (Zhang et al., 2018). Within this process, members from all backgrounds are invited to share input that aids in the decision-making process (Pérez et al., 2018). While each group member may not necessarily agree with every decision made, a group consensus should be one that all group members can live with and decisions that are absent of oppression (Pérez et al., 2018; Urfalino, 2014). While there is literature that supports group consensus, there is also literature that finds group consensus altogether impossible.

According to Harvey et al. (2004) consensus is an unrealistic dynamic for organizations, as it falsely presumes that all members of an organization are in full support of decisions made, without any reservations. Many times, this is not the case, as group members tend to remain silent in the decision-making process and not voice their true dissension to avoid judgement, alienation, or opposition from the group (Harvey, 1988). Again, when group members are not able to address their true concerns, group consensus will mask organizational problems, which is detrimental to the organization (Harvey et al., 2004). Consensus is also cited as problematic because the true dissension may be hidden behind a traditional voting process (Guan, 2014).

While voting may be a helpful tool to make decisions, voting—without true dialogue—can create a power dynamic that amplifies the voices of the majority, while silencing the voices of the minority. The result is voting that is sloppy, illegitimate and does not bring true but artificial consensus (Guan, 2014). Artificial consensus, or a consensus that appears united, but is truly conflicting then permeates an organizational culture that agrees, but never questions their organization (Roberto, 2005).

Understanding consensus is valuable to this study as the praxis of consensus must be explored as it relates to decision-making. Consensus is not necessarily bad in and of itself and likewise, the concept of consensus is constantly being changed and refined (Guan, 2014). Centrally, its exploration in the study raises the question of how agreement is defined. Whereas true consensus may not ever be possible, false consensuses can presuppose superficial agreement underneath the true feelings of members (Browne et al., 2018; Harvey et al., 2004; Daniel, 2001; Wilson & Harrison, 2001). In the next section, the concept of spirituality will be explored.

Spirituality

Rezaparaghdam et al. (2019) defines spirituality as the reconnection of the inner life, the embracing of values that transcend material and nature laws, and the empathic acceptance of others. Spirituality refers not only to the reconnecting of one person to a spiritual source, but it also encompasses the notion that all human beings are interconnected (Greenman et al., 2010; Hallowell & Thompson, 1993; Howard, 2018; Karakas, 2010). While some researchers cite that spirituality, without reason, can impose challenges to scientific investigation, other researchers cite that spirituality redefines for leaders and followers alike what it means to make meaning out of tasks (Bloomquist, 2014; Karakas, 2010). That is, leaders and followers embrace spirituality because they desire their tasks to serve as more than just an end to themselves, but to in some way impact others and make a difference in the world around them (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Karakas, 2010). The concept of spirituality has also found itself welcomed as an important aspect of workplace culture (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This is due to the normalization of spirituality language in society, the downsizing of local businesses and organizations, as well as a growing curiosity for the afterlife (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). When implemented into organizations, workplace spirituality has been proven to enhance employee well-being, create a sense of hospitality and sustainability in the workplace, improve organizational performance, and even influence decision-making (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Karakas, 2010; Rezaparaghdam et al., 2019).

More than just a concept to be studied, spirituality is engaged through a practice or discipline (Scorgie et al., 2011). For the Christian, as an example, such discipline could look like: a) Baptism (Acts 22: 16), b) The Lord's Supper or Eucharist (1 Cor. 11: 17-34), c) Private devotion (2 Tim. 3:16-17, d) Communal worship (Heb. 10: 25), e) Sabbath, f) Solitude and silence (Gal. 1: 16-17), and/or g) Prayer & fasting (Matt. 6: 5-6; 16-18) (Scorgie et al., 2011). The purpose of these disciplines is not to undertake a quest of morality or to establish a personal sense of piety but rather to develop a deeper

relationship with Spirit (Turner, 2013). In establishing this relationship with the Spirit, the believer is then compelled to also establish a deep relationship with other believers and with the community at large (Howard, 2018). Establishing a deep relationship with community then means being a prophetic witness to the world at large.

Centrally, the concept of spirituality is important for study because though it is facilitated through faith organizations, it can also influence the operation and culture of these same organizations (Fairholm, 1996). This is important because the ways by which individuals engage or mis-engage their spirituality may create unfair or unsafe power dynamics that contribute to how the organization functions. If the paradox of Christian witness rests in its ability to be vocal and prophetic in times of uncertainty and silence, the question becomes whether the very concept that the church facilitates—spirituality—can also work to suppress or silence its very voice (Cafferky, 2007; Malony, 1999). Thus, a qualitative study would be needed to explore spirituality's effect, if any, on church leadership and its implications. If indeed, spirituality can be leveraged within the decision-making process of faith organizations to silence other members, this will expand the classical understanding of Abilene paradox theory. It will also expand the understanding of group dynamics within ecclesial spaces. The next section provides details of the method used to create and institute the qualitative study.

III.   METHOD

The qualitative study was completed through the sampling of seven Baptist leaders, male and female, comprised of Pastoral and Diaconate leadership within a focus group. Originally, the goal was to include 3 to 10 individuals within the focus group, which is suggested by scholars (Cozby & Bates, 2018; Kitzinger, 1995). A focus group was chosen to best serve this study because focus groups allow researchers to capitalize on the various forms of communication data, eclectic experiences, and social dynamics that occur in groups which can take the research into new, interesting directions (Kitzinger, 1995; Miles et al., 2020). The participants were obtained through a mixture of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Because social media has made it easier to connect with the sample needed for the study, an official post went out on Facebook and Instagram social media platforms on November 4th to elicit participant support in the focus group (Weber et al., 2016). This allowed persons to voluntarily choose whether they would like to take part in the study while also reducing any potential bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kitzinger, 1995).

After the postings went out on both social media pages on a Wednesday afternoon, the participants had until Friday afternoon to respond. Participants that responded after Friday afternoon would be placed on a back-up list in the event any other participants were unable to make the study group. On Saturday, November 7th, all participants that met the eligibility to participate in the study were notified and sent a link via *Zoom.us* to participate. The means of assessing eligibility was created through an intake form created via *SurveyMonkey.com.* On that form, those seeking to participate had to indicate the following: (a) their name, gender, and race, (b) whether they were a member of a Baptist church in the United States, (c) whether they held the title of Pastoral leadership (Senior, Executive, Youth or Children's Pastor), a Diaconate title

(Deacon, Deaconess) or the title of a Trustee, (d) whether they were available to participate on Sunday, November 15th at 3:00pm, (e) whether they would consent to recording and g) consent to confidentiality for the safety of other participants (Surmiak, 2018). From SurveyMonkey, there were nine individuals who responded. Seven of them made the meeting on Sunday, November 15th, and all of them were either a Pastor, Deacon or Deaconess. There were no trustees. Only one of the participants was a female. All participants were of African American descent. The meeting began with a formal greeting and appreciation for the participants willingness to engage in the focus group. Participants were asked to introduce themselves without their title, to keep the space safe, were again asked to consent to recording and to consent to confidentiality (Surmiak, 2018). All participants cooperated with this. Participants were informed that they would be asked ten statements of discussion and were invited to give their reflections on these statements as it related to their experience.

The statements for discussion were all derived from the literature of Abilene paradox theory, consensus theory, and spirituality. They are listed below from A-J, followed by a brief discussion of the specific literature that influenced the statements of discussion:

a) I feel that reaching consensus or unanimous decisions within any organization is possible to do.

b) I feel that reaching consensus or unanimous decisions in my church organization is possible to do.

c) I feel that reaching consensus or unanimous decisions is easier to do in church than in other organizations that I am a part of.

Statements A-C were influenced by consensus theory, causing the participants to think through their personal feelings of the validity and reliability of consensus theory and to think through their experience of group consensus in church organizations and organizations outside of the church (Guan, 2014; Pérez et al. 2018; Roberto, 2005 Urfalino, 2014).

d) I have outwardly agreed to decisions made in my church organization that I inwardly disagreed to, simply because the suggestion came from a pastor or trusted leader.

e) I have thought about the worst thing that could happen if I spoke an opposing or unpopular view of mine at a church meeting, which caused me to remain silent.

Statements D-E were influenced by action anxiety and negative fantasies, which contribute to the silence of members' feelings, therefore leading to Abilene paradox theory (Browne et al., 2018).

f) I feel there is a visible or invisible culture at my church that directly or indirectly judges opposing or dissenting decisions, causing people to keep silent, rather than voicing their true sentiments.

Statement F was influenced by Wilson and Harrison's (2001) notion of combating Abilene paradox through the destroying of hierarchical systems that openly or secretly threaten the safety to share freely in organizations.

g) I feel there is an invisible or visible "rule" in my church organization that says, "to agree with the decision means to be more spiritual or in tune with God" and "to go against a decision means to be less spiritual or less in tune with God."

h) I have felt that people would judge my level of spirituality, question my title or authority as a leader, or my personal relationship with God if I presented an opposing view of thought in a church meeting; as a result, I stayed quiet.

Statements G-H were both influenced from spirituality literature that posits spirituality as not only a reconnection to the inner life but also an interconnection to the world around us, which also influences the decision-making process (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Karakas, 2010; Rezaparaghdam et al., 2019).

i) I have left my church organization regretting my silence in a meeting because through further discussion, I discovered that others felt the same exact way I did.

j) My church organization has faced consequences because of a consensus or unanimous decision, which could have been avoided if I or other members would have not stayed silent.

Statements I-J were influenced from Abilene paradox theory literature where group members, through reflection experience feelings of resentment or regret towards the decision and the group remained silent (Harvey et al., 2004; Harvey, 1988). Again, these statements were utilized to provide open-ended reflection for the participants as ecclesial leaders who engage decision-making in faith organizations (Cozby & Bates, 2018). The conversation was no longer than two hours, which is suitable for a focus group (Cozby & Bates, 2018). All participants again were thanked for their participation. The next section will explore how the data gathered from the group would be processed and analyzed.

V.   ANALYSIS

After the focus group was completed, a content analysis was implemented to examine and codify the data collected from the interview. Content analysis is a noninvasive approach to the study of human communication (Duriau et al., 2007; Williams & Moser, 2019). Commonly used within qualitative research, the method involves an analysis of texts or interviews, whether articles, interviews, or other sources, with the goal of understanding value, intention, thought, and attitude (Duriau et al., 2007; Williams & Moser, 2019). A content analysis can be performed in both

quantitative and qualitative studies, is relatively low in cost, and can help reduce the bias within a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Duriau et al., 2007).

Specific to this study, both a conceptual content analysis, which analyzes the frequency of concepts that appear within a source and a relational analysis, which analyzes the relationship of such concepts was used to extract meaning from the study (Duriau et al., 2007). To complete the conceptual analysis an audio recording of the interview was downloaded and transcribed into text using Microsoft Office's 365 transcribe feature. After the transcription, keywords or phrases used the most were highlighted, separated, and coded into a chart for further analysis. After this, those words underwent a relational analysis to determine if an underlying theme or relationship exists between the phrases (Flick, 2009; Strauss, 1998). Along with the transcription and the coding, field notes were also taken to ensure the further validity and organization of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The next section will provide a summary of the focus group interview, as well as the results from the conceptual and relational content analysis.

V.   RESULTS

Centrally, all participants thoroughly enjoyed the focus group interview. With many of them not knowing each other, the participants were quick to build rapport with each other through the sharing of common experiences. Much of the conversation was decorated with laughter, even when topics became difficult. At the end of the interview, participants sought networking relationships with others, exchanged contact information on their own, and even suggested having the discussion in the future. Most notable was the female participant, who did not feel as if she had to hold her own dissents or suppress her voice, being the only female in the room. The group appreciated how safe it was to share their experiences. The results will appear as follows: (a) a review of focus group statements A-I and summary of focus group answers to those statements, (b) a conceptual analysis that features the most frequently used words in the interview, and (c) a relational analysis that interprets the relationship between common themes from the interview.

Summary of Focus Group Interview

As a review, statements A-C were as follows:

a) I feel that reaching consensus or unanimous decisions within any organizations is possible to do.

b) I feel that reaching consensus or unanimous decisions in my church organization is possible to do.

c) I feel that reaching consensus or unanimous decisions is easier to do in church than in other organizations that I am a part of.

In response to the first three statements (A-C) that were derived from consensus theory research, all seven participants agreed that reaching consensus within any organization is possible, even if there are challenges within the consensus itself. Multiple participants defined consensus as an agreement that is formed through the majority and even when individuals may disagree in opinion, consensus can still be achieved. Participants went on to discuss that all consensuses may not necessarily be true agreements meaning that sometimes individuals will agree just to comply, even if inward conflict exists. They also mentioned that while agreements can be reached about ideas, consensus can also be reached to not discuss ideas, also. For example, one participant cited that gay marriage is not discussed at their church, due to the many conflicting opinions.

The group concluded that there are two factors that influence decision-making at their respective churches: (a) the history, reputation, and authority of family members and (b) the denominational polity of their churches. The group mentioned that the dynamics of church membership (the original "brick families" of the church and the role they play or played in building or sustaining the church) can create challenging power dynamics that affect group consensus. Some participants mentioned that these families can make voting processes difficult, which can stunt the growth and development of the faith organization. With their reputation, these families have the power to persuade individuals within their own families and/or within their spheres of influence to vote (or not vote) according to the desire of the family. Because these families are so loyal to the faith organization, they will stay despite the conflict and despite how problematic their presence may be for other members.

The group mentioned that denominational polity also influences decision-making in faith organizations, making consensus difficult. The group reasons that this is because though the polity—which is outlined in the church constitution—provides order and direction for the church, this same polity must be constantly reinterpreted and updated. This is because polity does not always evolve and change to fit new contexts. Thus, the church ends up applying old polity to new situations. When this does not work, the church must revise or debate the polity before they can even move forward in deciding anything. Because of how complicated this process can be, one participant offered that reaching consensus within the church is more arduous than reaching consensus in any other organization. When this was stated, the entire group agreed.

As a review, statements D-E were as follows:

d) I have outwardly agreed to decisions made in my church organization that I inwardly disagreed to, simply because the suggestion came from a pastor or trusted leader.

e) I have thought about the worst thing that could happen if I spoke an opposing or unpopular view of mine at a church meeting, which caused me to remain silent.

Statements D-E, which were derived from action anxiety and negative fantasy literature, further revealed that church protocol and church culture further influenced decision-making in the respective churches of the participants. When faced with a decision that they internally opposed, the group participants only expressed their dissenting views within their ministry and not to the larger congregation. Per church protocol and culture, this method is intended to allow ministry leaders to express their concerns only within a sub-group in the organization so that the individual ministries may appear united in the larger congregation. Additionally, the goal of this approach is for individual ministry leaders to not appear divisive due to their level of influence. Some participants believed that because of how influential their role is in their faith organization, this method is effective and can help to move the decision-making process forward, despite their own personal dissension. Another participant expressed that they preferred to silence their dissension because their dissension will not affect the decision-making process in their faith organization any differently. While many of the participants cited that they have no problem with speaking up, they also agreed that when speaking up, their views can fall on deaf ears. Some participants felt this way especially when the church has made up its mind regarding its stance on a decision.

As a review, statement F was as follows:

f) I feel there is a visible or invisible culture at my church that directly or indirectly judges opposing or dissenting decisions, causing people to keep silent, rather than voicing their true sentiments.

Statement F was derived from Abilene paradox literature and specifically on the need to address systems or power dynamics that silence decision-makers' voices. To this statement, all group participants agreed and reiterated that family dynamics within faith organizations can create cultures of power that can suppress the voices of others. All participants but one agreed that this culture is both visible and invisible at their respective churches. A visible display of such culture means that the oppressive system is overt, combative, and obvious. An invisible display of this culture means that the oppressive system may be more secretive, tactful, and done out of the public eye. The invisible culture of oppression may be just as damaging, if not more damaging, than the visible culture of oppression. Altogether, the feelings from statement F heavily correlate to the reflections from statements A-C.

As a review, statements G-H were as follows:

g) I feel there is an invisible or visible "rule" in my church organization that says, "to agree with the decision means to be more spiritual or in tune with God" and "to go against a decision means to be less spiritual or less in tune with God."

h) I have felt that people would judge my level of spirituality, question my title or authority as a leader, or my personal relationship with God if I presented an opposing view of thought in a church meeting; as a result, I stayed quiet.

Statements G-H were derived from spirituality literature. Here, most of the participants agreed that while it's not verbally expressed, there exists an underlying assumption of one's level of spirituality based upon the decisions they make in a faith organization. Conversely, all participants cited that they have not experienced other members judging their level of spirituality based upon a decision they made (or did not make) within their faith organization. The participants that agreed with statement G reasoned that in faith organizations, to be "spiritual" or to have a higher level of "spirituality" is to be right, or at the very least, to be on the right side of God. Thus, participants are prone to make decisions based upon what it means to be "right" or "righteous" even if they disagree with the decision internally. Some participants mentioned that members will even arbitrarily agree with a spiritual leader, simply because they assume that the spiritual leader is more spiritual or is more "right with God." Thus, members are caused to wrestle between what it means to be right with God and what it means to be real with oneself, and whether the two can coexist.

Further, the participants also agreed that within the protocol and culture of their faith organization, their respective pastors are heavily influential in the decision-making process. Succinctly, the participants shared experiences where the church made decisions purely based upon the suggestion of their pastor or spiritual leader. Even when individual or group dissensions were felt, because the pastor is the "seated authority" of the organization, members were compelled to "fall in line" to the pastor's suggestion. "Falling in line," cited by one of the participants is a means of agreeing—even if internally disagreeing—to bestow a level of respect to the organization, to the pastor, or even to God. Another participant cited that when a "falling in line" happens, the protocol of voting only becomes a formality that solidifies what a spiritual leader has already decided without the input of its members.

As a review, statements I-J were as follows:

i)   I have left my church organization regretting my silence in a meeting because through further discussion, I discovered that others felt the same exact way I did.

j)   My church organization has faced consequences because of a consensus or unanimous decision, which could have been avoided if I or other members would have not stayed silent.

With statements I-J, which pulled from Abilene paradox theory, none of the group participants cited a sense of resentment for holding their silence within their faith organization. Though the participants have experienced moments where they held their dissension, most participants noted that they generally do not have a problem with being vocal in their faith organization. Additionally, participants who have held their dissension did not feel as if the holding of their dissension negatively impacted the church in its decision-making. This may be because the participants express their dissents in their sub-groups or because the role these faith leaders play in their organization requires them to be vocal. Still, the participants believe that spirituality

plays a role in decision-making in faith organizations and can also create member silence for others within faith organizations.

When the discussion was complete, the participants each commented on the organization of the focus group interview. They were especially intrigued with how clear and engaging the statements were. One participant volunteered to do a future study if the same format was included and would even be willing to give up watching football to engage in such conversation. Other participants cited that the focus group conversation inspired them to pay more attention to what occurs during their church's decision-making process and even to how they function in that process. The participants lastly mentioned that the lessons gained through the discussion could be transferred across faith organizations and into other workplace settings. The next subsection will explore the results from the conceptual analysis.

Conceptual Analysis of Focus Group Interview

Table 1
A list of words used repeatedly from transcribed audio of group interview, ranging from greatest to least.

Key Words Captured from Transcribed Video	Repetition of Word Used in the Video
Church	156
Agree/Agreement	66
People	49
God	30
Pastor	29
Speak	29
Spirit/Spiritual	26
Decision	18
Disagree/Disagreement	13

The above table (table 1) presents a list of commonly used words transcribed from the focus group interview. It is important to note that Table 1 is presented here as original research. Likewise, Table 1 does not take any information from other authors or researchers. The analysis of word repetition is essential to conceptual content analysis because it causes the researcher to pay attention to the way language is utilized and articulated in the data, especially when specific words are repeated throughout the data (Dariau et al., 2007; Flick, 2009; Strauss, 1998; Williams & Moser, 2019). From this table, there are several observations that are noteworthy that will be presented in this section, with formal conclusions being drawn in the relational analysis section.

What is important to note about the results of Table 1 are the following: (a) The word "church" and the words "disagree" and "disagreement" are the most used and least used words from the focus group interview; (b) the words "agree" or "agreement" and the word "decision" are the second most used and unused words in the focus

group; (c) the words "God," "spirit" or "spiritual" are used as just as many times together as the words "agree" or "agreement;" (d) The words "Pastor," "God," "Spirit" and "Spiritual" are used more times than the word "agree" or "agreement;" and (e) the words "God" and "Pastor" are used more times than the word "people" and more times than the word "speak." These are noteworthy observations which will be explored in the relational analysis, found in the next section.

Relational Analysis of Focus Group Interview

The relational analysis component of content analysis attempts to explore central themes from the data and arrive at conclusions based upon the relationships found from the study (Duriau et al., 2007; Williams & Moser, 2019). In this section, the frequently used terms will be analyzed to determine what relationships may exist between them. It is through relational analysis that meaning is revealed and theories can be created (Williams & Moser, 2019). A brief review of items A-E will also be featured in this section. After this will follow a brief reflection of each item.

To review, item A concluded: The word "church" and the words "disagree", or "disagreement" are the most used and least used words from the focus group interview. The data found from item A in the previous section indicates a tense relationship between faith organizations and the concept of disagreement. Though Abilene paradox theory was never defined nor explained in the interview, the underutilization of "disagreement" in the interview suggests that in relation to faith organizations, "disagreement" is a taboo term. While astonishing, this is problematic in that it either suggests that disagreement within church settings has a negative connotation or that individuals are hesitant to disagree due to a perceived evaluation of their spirituality. This could also be due to the oppression experienced from other members. Either way, this is not to say disagreements do not happen within the faith organizations. Rather, it does call into question the degree of false consensuses that may occur within faith organizations and how many of those false consensuses may go under-addressed.

Item B concluded: The words "agree", or "agreement" and the word "decision" are the second most used and unused words in the focus group. For "agree" or "agreement" to be used over the word "decision," this could presuppose that agreement within faith organizations is necessary in the decision-making process. While agreement is important in essence, this notion would imply that the concept or the goal of agreement, itself, is the central goal in the decision-making process. Conversely, it also implies that disagreement is not beneficial to the decision-making process and should not occur within faith organizations. If this is the case, the question—again—becomes whether members agree because they truly believe a decision is right or whether they agree only to satisfy other members or even to "be right with" God.

Because items C, D, and E are all related to spirituality, they will be explored together. Item C concluded: The words "God," "spirit" or "spiritual" are used just as many times together as the words "agree" or "agreement." Item D concluded: The words "Pastor," "God," "Spirit" and "Spiritual" are used more times than the word "agree" or

"agreement." Item E concluded: The words "God" and "Pastor" are used more times than the word "people" and more times than the word "speak."

The data found in the items C, D, and E collectively suggest that spirituality not only plays a role in decision-making, but individuals who represent spirituality, such as a pastor, are also influential in the decision-making process (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Karakas, 2010; Rezaparaghdam et al., 2019). The correlation in item C suggests that spirituality and agreement are synonymous concepts. While spirituality may entail some level of agreement with Spirit, the data could imply that within faith organizations one's capacity to agree also indicates one's level of spirituality. If this is the case, item D would then expand this definition to include pastors as leaders with a higher level of spirituality than others, and thus leaders to be obeyed regardless of personal dissension. The implication of items C and D result in item E. If the words "Pastor" and "God" are used more times than "people" and "speak," this connotes that spirituality can be used as power dynamic that contributes to member silence and even diminishes the humanity of its group members. If not checked, item E is problematic on a theological, ethical, and organizational level. The nature of these levels will be explored in the discussion section.

VI.   DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore whether spirituality could be an additional contributing factor to Abilene paradox theory in faith organizations. The goal of the qualitative study was to (a) provide additional research literature on Abilene paradox theory as it relates to the church, (b) initiate further discussion on the relationship between Abilene paradox theory and Christianity, (c) explore its effect, if any, of Abilene paradox theory on churches versus other organizations, (d) and explore whether the definition of Abilene paradox theory needs to be expanded to include spirituality as a contributing factor. To assess this research question further, a qualitative study was created and conducted through a virtual focus group of seven Baptist leaders, male and female, who led within the Pastorate or the Diaconate ministry. From the transcription, a summary of the interview was provided, and a content analysis was performed to assess the data from a conceptual and relational perspective. Based upon this data, it can be concluded that within faith organizations, spirituality is another component that can contribute to Abilene paradox theory. Largely, this means that spirituality, when leveraged within faith organizations, has the capacity to create a "mute" church or a church that operates based upon false consensuses.

This is not to say that leaders and members should not seek agreement within their faith organization. Rather, it is to say that leaders and members should not dismiss disagreement, see disagreement as inherently sinful, or even leverage faith or spirituality to alleviate disagreement. Spiritually, this behavior disconnects the Body of Christ, more than it unifies it. The Body of Christ can disagree and still be in community. Disagreement does not necessarily sin, but rather—when facilitated appropriately—can provide new viewpoints to faith organizations. When faith organizations avoid

disagreement, they limit their possibilities and even limit God's ability to work within those possibilities. They create ethical, theological, and organizational problems.

Ethically, this behavior diminishes the humanity of a person. When spirituality is leveraged to persuade decision-makers, this is no different from "brick families" that leverage their reputation to do the same. Both influence group members to just "fall in line" which deprives members of their own social agency. This is also a problem theologically: If God—with all sovereignty—does not deprive men and women of their social agency, why should we? Leveraging spirituality within decision-making theologically contradicts the goal of spirituality. It creates a power dynamic that makes men and women into gods, versus teaching them how to become like Christ. While spirituality is necessary to consider when making decisions, believers must remember that even the most unfavorable decisions do not limit the favor of a sovereign God. This understanding calls the faith community to trust God's help in making the best of decisions, and to trust God's heart concerning us when we have made the worst of the decisions.

Organizationally, when Abilene paradox theory occurs in faith organizations, it contradicts the core values of Christian organizations in ways unlike other organizations. The core value of faith organizations is the Commission to be prophetic. That is, to be a voice to the voiceless (Prov. 31: 8), a cry in the wilderness (Jn. 1: 23), and a witness to the world (Acts 1: 18). Literally, the Church exists to speak, to cry loud and spare not (Isa. 58: 1). Without a mouth, there is no ministry. Thus, for the Church to function on "mute" is a direct contradiction not only to its values, but also to its very existence.

For Future Research

There are five ideas for future research. The first is to study the impact of spiritual leadership on decision-making within the church. According to Chen and Yang (2012), spiritual leadership is the approach of creating consensus within an organization, guided by a leader's values and beliefs. Spiritual leadership advocates that individuals can become a part of the organization through the agreement of those values and beliefs. It would be notable to evaluate the intersection of spirituality and spiritual leadership as it relates to group dynamics. Secondly, another idea is to duplicate the study with the presence of associate ministers since they traditionally work closely with pastoral leadership. This could also intersect with the concept of spiritual leadership. The third idea is to duplicate the study using a focus group of either more women or all women to see if the dynamic would change through gender.

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PAUL'S IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: AN IDEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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This paper aims to analyze leadership development from a Biblical perspective and compare it to contemporary leadership development and theoretical approaches. Examination of the leadership development of the Apostle Paul is used as the pretext for comparison. The exegetical analysis utilized to explore Pauline texts is ideological texture analysis. Using this method allows the study to focus on the people of the text akin to members of an organization. Unique challenges of organizational infancy and magnified cultural inflection and mitigation prove to be obstacles and impedances to Paul's leadership development. Paul's cultural intelligence and agility remediated these impedances. This article divulges the consideration and integration of collective attributes and antecedents into the total leadership system elevated Paul's leadership and moved more effectively than contemporary leadership development. Additional proficiencies in communication and trust attainment provided aid to the optimal leadership development model. The article also provides an equation for leadership development and several recommendations for future research.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership development is not a new concept to the corporate world or the business of salvation and building the kingdom of God. According to *Matthew 28:19-20* (*KJV*), the global expansion of Christianity and the Gospel through leadership development has been the church's mission since its inception. The execution of the full range of leadership development requires the development of leaders through a total leadership system inclusive of leaders, followers, situations, time orientation (past,

present, future), organization, and context (Sosik & Jung, 2018). There is no more remarkable example of the full spectrum of leadership behaviors and attributes than the Apostle Paul. In the quest to galvanize the Gospel, his success was contingent upon the ability to consider and incorporate everyone while simultaneously considering the characteristics each brought to the organization/church and the purpose of the church (Zhang & Cao, 2018). This paper will examine the disposition of leadership development from the theoretical thesis of Christ as the leader and Paul as the follower and Paul's development as a leader and the resulting contingency of leaders he developed.

Outlined in this article are the components needed for Paul to engage in leadership development and carry out the mission of the church. The elements to implement leadership development during the infancy of organization and the components required for global expansion of the church as Christ developed Paul, transforming him into an exemplary leader (Diaz et al., 2019). The resulting transformation yielded social capital then dispersed to the church and its members. Beginning in the book of Acts and throughout the examination of several New Testament texts written by Paul, this article will identify the necessity of being culturally intellectual, astute, and agile to reflect the values of his leader and create alignment with his followers (Lingenfelter, 2008). The secondary component of this essay is an application of Paul's leadership development tenants to contemporary leadership development theory and practice, highlighting potential areas for improvement based on Paul's work.

II.   METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the analysis of Paul's leadership development through the Pauline text is ideological texture. The premise of this method of (exegetical) commentary is people (Robbins, 1996). Location plays a vital role in understanding the ideological texture and quest to globalize the Gospel through varied interactions with different groups and subgroups of people (Robbins, 1996, p. 101). The consideration of the location and customs of the text is analogous to the situation, time, and context examined within the total leadership system as outlined by Sosik and Jung (2018). Ideological texture places into a global context recurring themes essential to discuss, such as the cultural nuances of Jews vs. Gentiles and geographic positions and how such challenges mitigate leadership development. It also examines the responses of Paul's followers as it relates to other human dynamics of ethnic, racial, economic, social, and gender lines that Christianity challenges and addresses in the Pauline text. This analysis interpretation focuses on semantics used secondary to the people and the acquired attributes of the system composition.

III.   ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Ideological Texture is a system of ideas or thought paradigm as it relates to the personal vantage point of Paul's development as a leader and those he encountered

and interacted with concerning fulfilling the mission and vision of Christ, his leader, to globalize the ministry of the church and bring salvation to the world. It also examines the cultural responses of various groups to Paul's mission and approaches beyond linguistic translation (Elliott & Boer, 2012). These groups include Jews, Gentiles, and diverse geographic societies. However, it also involves Paul's responses to his followers regarding willingness to follow Christ, their resistance to thought paradigm and practical implementation, and their inability to fully align with Christ's ordinances (Owen, 2007). The most prominent parallel behavior exhibited by Paul's leadership development barred against today's leaders and followers is the redaction of his culture as he develops into a leader and the remediation of culture from the followers' standpoint (Shah, 2010).

The key to understanding the ideological texture and analysis of Paul's depiction and role as an emerging leader in the early first-century church throughout the text of the New Testament lies in grasping what Duvall and Hays (2012) refer to as the historical-cultural aspect of the text; understanding how ideological texture reveals the critical themes of understanding the text from the original author and audience's perspective. Proficient comprehension of the organic archetype yields a greater transference of knowledge and application to contemporary leadership theory. Ideology is a system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms economic or political theory and policy (ideology, 2019) derive. Recurring ideologies of Paul's text were socioeconomic differences, the cultural and ethnic difference between Jews and Gentiles, and the geographic disparities that existed based on the physical locations of the followers such as Athens, Corinth, Rome, Philippi, Macedonia, and beyond all of which impacted how he developed as a leader (Malul et al., 2011). Conversely, the same antecedents preclude and predict the efficacy of current leaders (Shah, 2010).

Ideology and culture cannot be considered independent of one another, and ideological imaginations of culture can lead to demonization and negative projections of foreign culture (Holliday, 2010). Both elements are interwoven into every leadership system and context. Anderson and Adams (2016) postulate that leadership begins with a conversation. Therefore, leaders are unable to develop followers and help create other leaders without proficiency in communication. As with any organization, the church is a global and diverse entity that requires leaders to possess adequate skills to receive and transfer information to followers and throughout the leadership system. Intercultural communication is necessary for cultural agility (Landers, 2017). In its absence, leaders fail to understand foreign and external cultures and individual and cultural artifacts (Schein, 2017) from individual and groups' perspectives.

Within the Full Range Leadership Development theory (FRLD), as presented by Sosik and Jung, these artifacts are known as antecedents. Paul's proficiency in cultural agility, intercultural communication, and weaving together unknown ideology and culture is evidenced throughout the New Testament. He traveled from Rome to Greece, Macedonia, and Jerusalem, expanding the church and spreading the Gospel. Such agility provides a model example of a leader's ability to engage in the entire cognitive spectrum of the Full Range Leadership Development theory is contingent on their character's strength (Pickering & Garrod, 2013).

Because Paul was intentionally nomadic with his expansion of the church and in his quest to globalize the Gospel, his ability to flow between cultures seamlessly,

understand culture-specific rituals, and perhaps most importantly, transcend the Gospel beyond Jews to be fully inclusive of Gentiles required a great depth of understanding of the three levels of human uniqueness in mental programming (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). This ideology was indisputably the most important of his entrepreneurial quest: teaching and proclaiming God's love, equal and equitable distribution of salvation, and dispensation of grace to all humanity (Marsha, 2018). *Romans 2:11* states, "*there is no respect of persons in God*," and *Galatians 3:28*, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye all one in Christ*." The importance of values, beliefs, purpose, mission and the collective good of others are attributes of transformative leaders (Sosik & Jung, 2018). Such characteristics as love, honesty, and kindness allow for establishing deep and meaningful relationships between leaders and followers, thus allowing leaders to develop the full potential of followers (Maister et al., 2000).

Love, kindness, and honesty also breed humility and empathy, all of which are imperative to leading in all situations and through the entire spectrum of the FRLD (Morris et al., 2005). Thereby sustaining the original assertion there is no better example of leadership development than Paul. He possessed a unique sensibility of discernment between culture and human nature, which was necessary for his expedition. He continually responded to the various churches and followers with a human nature response, not a cultural response. Culture is learned and derives from specific environments; however, human nature is common to humanity (Hofstede, et al., 2010). Paul understood the critical necessity of this element of mental programming for himself and its role in fostering the edification and advancement of the church. Failure for followers to understand the integral importance of human nature would continue to allow ideological divisions based on Jews vs. Gentiles, social status, nationality, and gender differences (Ames, 2017).

As a leader, Paul was not solely looking to advance the church's mission but to revolutionize the socio-religious world. A perfect alignment between the leader and organization or confluence of leader, follower, and situation leads to this magnitude of leadership (Thoroughgood et al., 2001). However, leaders must be cautious and prudent of the behaviors displayed as the magnanimous influence can create positive or destructive leadership. Christianity challenged the status quo. This thought concept posed enormous risks for early-day Christians (Maxwell, 2018). Paul's success hinged on forming a trusted relationship with them to allow followers to take the necessary risk (Bellman, 2002). This trust was not initially easily garnered as Paul previously persecuted Christians and admits in *1 Timothy 1:15* (*KJV*) he was the chief of sinners.

Because values are cognitive transformations and representations of needs (Hultmann & Gellerman, 2002), they dictate the manifestation of right and wrong. However, through living the values of grace and redemption, he was able to exhibit the Gospel message in real-time and earn the trust of his followers. It is insufficient to pontificate leadership rhetoric from an etymological standpoint. Followers are intransigent to such disingenuous displays and exhortations. As with contemporary leaders who lose trust, humility is necessary to gain confidence, influence, and garner relationships (Morris et al., 2005).

Due to his proficiency in cultural responses, he was able to adapt to various cultures appropriately, understanding that attempting to eradicate centuries of traditions

and ritualistic practice would not occur immediately and would not bring people to salvation. Instead, he integrated culture (Yoon et al., 2017), as evidenced in Galatians chapters two and three, where Paul talks about adherence to the law. He does not discount the significance of the lineage of the people being descendants of Abraham. However, it stipulates that because of Christ, the dominion of the law no longer reigns. He further imputes that Abraham was found righteous by God, not due to the law, but faith and purports, "*the just shall live by faith*." The cultural agility to integrate the significance of the past with their current prerequisite and value of faith was tantamount to accomplishing and achieving his goal (Fokkema & de Haas, 2015). Understanding the intricate nuances and complexities of a leadership system translates to the ability to consider the elements of culture while considering time and environmental inflections on followers, Prudent the acquisition of this understanding is a leader's ability to have empathy and possess competencies in emotional intelligence (McNaney & Bradbury, 2016). All of which Paul displays throughout the New Testament, creating a template for contemporary leadership development.

The ideology of circumcision, its cultural importance to Jews, and its role in the Jews vs. Gentiles discourse interlaced throughout Paul's writings. Paul first admonishes Timothy to be circumcised in *Acts* chapter 16. However, beginning as early as *Romans* chapter 2, he begins to delve into the depth of the meaning and symbolism of circumcision concerning the law, spreading the Gospel, and expanding the church. The literal and metaphorical discourse of the issue continues throughout his writings and is found in the book of Philippians, Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Galatians. Ideological analysis reveals the Jews' response to any suggestions to disrupt the ritual of circumcision was thought to be disrespectful to culture and heritage (Neutel, 2016). However, further examination of this ideology reveals that Paul's stance on the issue had less to do with the concrete act of circumcision and more to do with the division and perpetuation of inclusion and exclusion of people and their access to God and the church (McClymond, 2016). His thought paradigm was a precursor of the modern-day diversity and inclusion initiatives. Moreover, through his endeavors to include all members of the system and incorporate their attributes and antecedents, emulate the composition of transformational leadership, resulting in increased productivity, performance, and follower well-being (Hannah et al., 2020).

IV.   APPLICATION

Contemporary leadership development theory purports that leaders seek to grow and develop their followers to maximum potential for followers' benefit and positively impact their organizations and the world (Sosik & Jung, 2018). Successful leadership development at every organizational level is contingent upon accountability, ethics, and trust, especially from a Biblical leadership development lens (Boyer, 2019). The rudimentary foundations of the global church beginning in factional clusters illustrate the necessity of Paul's aforementioned strategy. Moreover, leadership development from the Biblical lens requires a global context, thus producing global leaders who seek to resolve unsolved problems, ignored social injustices, or business opportunities that have gone unexploited (Cabera & Unruh, 2012). The business of the church is affected by the cot

Paul embodied the definition of leadership development as he sought to resolve answers to problems that had gone unanswered, specifically as it related to cojoining the Jews and Gentiles under one pedagogical body, the dispensation of grace through Jesus. Leaders who head businesses and organizations during mergers and buyouts face the same challenges as Paul. He understood the social, cultural, political, and religious differences and customs that separated people in the initial expansion of this organization (the church) (Cabera & Unruh, 2012). The social, cultural, political, and religious differences seen in the formation of the Christian church are the attributes infused in the total leadership system by members (Aktas et al. 2016). Modern-day leadership development formation and execution must consider every individual and collective attribute within the leadership system and understand its maximum and minimum mitigation rate to integrate into the system aptly.

Leadership development requires an astute cognizance of the remediation of the attributes and their influx and effects on an organization (Elkington et al., 2017). However, instead of allowing the differences and diversity to stifle the growth or derail the mission, he embraced it. He utilized it to his advantage, understanding that leaders value the diversity of thought and persons because it adds values and brings a different perspective to an organization (Swenson et al., 2016). This understanding is evidenced in *Romans 12* (*KJV*) and *1 Corinthians 12* (*KJV*), where he speaks of the body, being the church, having many parts, and each portion with a specific function; however, each part remains affixed to one body. Leadership development focuses on the cohesiveness of the organization, not individual ambition.

However, unlike contemporary leaders, Paul did not seek personal or financial gain. Paul, much like Christ, was unconventional in his approach to globalizing the Gospel. He was willing to cross ethnic, economic, and cultural boundaries to fulfill the mission of Christ and globally distribute and exponentiate the redeeming message of salvation. This aspect of leadership is often lost in today's religiosity and the organizational structure of Christianity (Fulop & Raboteau, 1997). The organic and original mission and vision for the existence of the church are lost by people in leadership positions who have become preoccupied with the lesser essential nuances and bureaucratic inertia of running buildings and organizations rather than embodying the mission and living Christ's values, so they are actual values, not espoused values (Hultman & Gellerman, 2002) that draw people to salvation instead of repelling the unsaved due to hypocrisy (Effron et al., 2018). Such displays of leadership generate tenants of destructive leadership, such as narcissism (Narayanan & Murphy, 2017) and the negative aspect of charismatic leadership (Aaltio-Marjosola & Takala, 2000).

Identical problems exist in every organizational category as the focus tends to human capital and the development of individuals, leader development. Whereas leadership development focuses on social capital and the development of with an intended goal *"promote an organizational culture in which leadership processes and emergence are fostered and supported and in which leadership can emerge from surprising places in unusual circumstances (Elkington et al., 2017 pp. 1039)."* As with leadership theories that predate servant and transformational leadership, leader development focuses on the leaders, whereas leadership development and approaches such as servant and transformational leadership focus on those being led (followers) for their betterment (Elkington et al., 2017), as Paul evidently showcased.

The same can be said of organizations where leaders no longer create alignment and congruence between the espoused values of the organization and the leader's actual values. The failure to develop and sustain this alignment impedes followers and employees from trusting leaders, establishing meaningful relationships, and aligning themselves with this organization (Sachsenmaier & Guo, 2017). Thus, resulting in several negative outputs for the organization, lower work satisfaction, higher turnover rates, fewer rates of successful followership, and ultimately, the organization's vision, mission, and goals are not accomplished (Magomaeva et al., 2014). Such imagery is contrary to the example Paul depicted on how to lead from a global standpoint. Leadership development must be able to develop meaningful and valuable relationships with followers predicated on trust and values-based behaviors to ensure that even in the leader's absence, followers continue to carry forth the directives and vision of the leader because of the leader's earned trust (Wibowo & Neuneung, 2019). Leadership development requires investing in the global manifestation of an organization's most considerable capital, its people. Also, mindful that an organization's leadership development hinges on its leaders' development.

A global mindset is a component of leadership development that consists of cultural intelligence and international business orientation (Story et al., 2014). Because of the complexity of the construct, the average member of an organization is not vested in developing a global mindset, nor is an organization committed to investing one in them. The global mindset construct has personal, psychological, and role complexity antecedents (Story et al., 2014) and four cross-cultural competencies of unique attributes, cognitive knowledge and skills, motivation, and resources for adapting behavior (Andersen & Bergdolt, 2017). Paul's qualities infused in the organizational culture of the early church are comparable to the consideration leaders must give to attributes brought by each member of the total leadership system. Each person, and their behavioral antecedents, impact and affect the complete leadership system, the development of leaders, and the ability for contextual factors to lead to organizational success (Li et al., 2012).

Thus, it is reserved for strategic and normative management levels. Paul's leadership depicted he was strategic in his approach to global expansion. Additionally, his leadership was normative. He sought to transform his organizational members' cognitive thinking and behaviors to one where they transcended from operating under the law to operating under grace (Neutel, 2016; Osserman, 2017). Today's leaders must seek to change the cognitive behaviors of followers by displaying cognitively superior behaviors such as love, humility, and trust.

Leadership development is a uniquely complex task for an organization and its members. It requires many various components. If given an equation to illustrate the necessary elements, it might be Leadership Development = Leadership, the ability to influence others to a shared goal (Northouse, 2018) + Cultural Agility, the capacity/competency to perform well in cross-cultural situations (Caligiuri, 2012) + Systemic Integration over time, need for leadership to be systematic and integrative over time (Suderman & Randolph, 2020; Youssef & Luthans, 2012), + Cultural Remediation and Redaction Understanding combined with intricate cognitive abilities throughout the full spectrum of behaviors and emotions (Neutel, 2016; Osserman, 2017; Pickering & Garrod, 2013). Leadership development requires employing all these

factors to be successful. Paul's leadership assuredly compromised all these factors as he led the church to the shared goal of globalizing the Gospel, which has endured over 2000 years. Consequently, contemporary leadership theory must seek to develop every member of the leadership system in tandem with developing the organization while fielding contextual factors.

V.   CONCLUSION

The globalization of an organization or business can be complex. Many challenges will be faced by those in leadership positions from the global context and the domestic sideline. However, Paul was able to globalize his organization in its infancy without the advent of modern technological advances and departments dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Moreover, the expansion occurred as he was transformed and molded into a transformational and servant leader (Caza et al., 2021). He accomplished it by understanding human nature, understanding and respecting the culture, and aligning himself with the values of his leader, Christ, and the church's mission, vision, and declaration. Anyone seeking to create and develop leaders within an organization or context must illustrate alignment, live the values, and articulate the organization's vision to generate buy-in from followers and form a comprehensive culture derived from didactic interactions and communications (Hung et al., 2010). Paul's proficiency in these areas was tantamount.

The alignment created congruency within an organization, which is the most significant predictor of success and thus allowed him to form trusting relationships with his followers and organizational members, thereby accomplishing the mission and goals of the organization and Christ (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Participants and benefactors of leadership development recognize the importance of cultural diversity and use it to the advantage of advancing the organization (Hayat, 2014). They are culturally agile, competent, and possess a wealth of global capital, which builds the social capital necessary to impact organizational culture and cultivate leadership development positively. Paul provides an optimal leadership development model. Recommendations for future research include examining how culture influenced the success rate of leadership development in the first century. Additional suggestions are for exploring the impact of Paul's leadership development on the contemporary church and how his use of inclusivity catalyzed rapid organizational expansion. A final recommendation is analyzing the interplay between leader development and leadership development in an organization and its correlation to church leadership.

About the Author

Khandicia Randolph is a fourth-year Doctoral Candidate at Regent University's School of Business and Leadership, Doctor of Strategic Leadership Program. A Chicago native, Khandicia holds a B.A. from the University of Missouri, an M.P.A. from Walden University, and an M.A. in Law from Regent University's School of Law. She has presented on the topics of effective communication in member-based organizations and effective communications in leadership development domestically and internationally. Her passion is helping non-profit organizations develop leaders and leadership pipelines and create and maintain well-functioning and thriving organizations. Khandicia is the oldest of eight children and currently has seven nieces and nephews.

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GALATIANS 5 - A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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This paper provides a biblical perspective of unity and diversity in organizational leadership as it relates to Galatians 5. It examines how Paul tried to mediate the fractional impact to the Christian community based on social identity norms. Also discussed is Paul's view of the Christian community, being a single cohesive group made up of people of different cultures. Paul felt that social norms were not problematic unless they were viewed as divisive tools to introduce gaps or separations in one's love for one another. This critical analysis is structured using the principles and guidelines for an ideological reading using a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Chapter 5 from Paul's letter to the Galatians. It further defines, formulates, and communicates Christian leadership theory as they relate to unity and diversity. The analysis applies Robbins' theory of socio-rhetorical interpretation. The strategies of an ideological interpretation were used to provide an exegetical interpretation of Galatians 5.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Galatians provides a history of the early Christian church and ministry from the perspective of Paul. Galatians 5 will be the focus of this research paper, offering a leadership view of how Paul was building and defining the Christian community through unity and diversity. This paper presents an ideological texture interpretation of Chapter 5 from the letter of Paul to the Galatians. Robbins (1996) stated,

> The ideological texture of texts features the arena between the implied reader and the narrator and characters. The particular way in which the narrator and characters evoke the message and the particular way in

which the implied reader and real reader/audience receive it concerns ideology (p. 36-37).

The analysis of the ideological texture of a biblical text provides insight into the complex theories or ideas in the written word of scripture. Robbins (1996) stated, "The investigation especially seeks to identify the intersection of ideas, ideas and social action and to detect the collective needs and interests the pattern represents" (p. 193). This paper provides that foundation and offers insight into Chapter 5 from Paul's letter to the Galatians through the use of socio-rhetorical interpretation as defined by Robbins.

Socio-rhetorical interpretation of biblical documents is an effective tool for gaining understanding of the intended message. In 1984, Robbins introduced this unique concept in the area of exegetical interpretation (Robbins, 1996). This critical analysis is structured using the principles and guidelines for an ideological reading using a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Chapter 5 from Paul's letter to the Galatians. It further defines, formulates, and communicates Christian leadership theory as they relate to unity and diversity.

II.   THE APOSTLE PAUL

Paul played an instrumental role in the development of the early Christian church. Through his guidance and wisdom, the early church weathered adversity and controversy to emerge as a beacon of God's word. Green (2008) asserted, "Of the 27 writings that make-up the New Testament, nearly half are attributed to Paul" (p. 4). Green's comments reinforce the pivotal role that Paul played in the formation of the Christian church. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he provided the early Christian community with the vision that each person must seek to live by the power of the Spirit. Living by the power of the Spirit means that earthly or unspiritual things must be put aside if they interfere with one's spirituality, that is his/her connection with God. Ukwuegbu (2008) stated,

> Although the Galatians live by the power of the Spirit, the moral life will entail intense effort on their part. They must crucify the flesh; that is, they must put to death that part of the self that works against the Spirit. (p. 551).

Ukwuegbu suggested that living by the Spirit is not an easy or inconsequential endeavor, but still it must become part of who you are, your being or essence.

It is important to note that Paul was not only Jewish, but he was also a Roman citizen. Paul's Hebrew name was Saul of Tarsus. Due to these facts, his conversion to Christianity was somewhat unique given the historical time period. Paul states in the Book of Acts Chapter 22:3, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers." (p. 1598). Paul's conversion was even more unlikely given that he was a persecutor of Christians, that is, until he had a vision during his mission to Damascus. In this vision, Paul interacted with Jesus whereby Jesus asked him why he persisted in persecuting him. Jesus then commissioned Paul to spread His word to the Gentiles. This vision was so moving that Paul converted to Christianity in obedience to Jesus' words.

Strom (2006) argued that Paul was an unlikely figure that would shape the future of Christian thought and society. Strom suggested, "He is arguably the leader who forever changed our expectations of leadership" (p. 2). His leadership was quite extraordinary given how loosely held together the Christian church was at that time. It was through Paul's leadership, and fellowship, that he led a culturally diverse Christian community toward unification and acceptance.

III.   PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

Biblical scholars and historians agree that the Apostle Paul was the author of the letter to the Galatians (DeSilva, 2004). As such, it is his perspective and words that provide insight into early Christianity as it grew and expanded around the world. Hughes and Laney (2001) stated, "The Pauline authorship of Galatians is confirmed by internal and external evidence. The author is named in 1:1 and 5:2. The early church fathers, from Clement of Rome on, affirm the Pauline authorship and authenticity of Galatians" (p. 577). Paul's unique perspective as a leader in the Christian church cannot be overstated as the early church looked to Paul for wisdom and guidance. Through his guidance, the gentiles were accepted into the Christian community though they did not share the same cultural norms or traditions of the earlier church.

Paul wrote his letter to Galatia, to provide guidance and direction to the early Christian church. Paul felt the Galatians were being misled by false teachers who valued traditions and rituals above faith (Packer et. al., 1995). Paul also felt that those false teachers were also attacking his authority. Packer et. al. stated, "While there, he heard from the Galatian churches that they were being troubled by persons who were teaching doctrines of a Jewish sort, insisting on circumcision for salvation. These persons were also attacking the authority of Paul" (p. 598). It was these types of teachings that drew Paul into the conversation with the Galatians. Paul wanted to make certain that the Galatians were not using the ritual and practice of circumcision to be used as tools to seek salvation. Paul felt that these teachings ran contrary to the Christian faith, and divisive to the community who may hold different or diverse traditions and rituals.

These false teachers and Jewish Gnostics were seemingly trying to place a wedge between Paul and the early Christian church. It is for this reason that Paul had to make clear that his authority was not from man but from God. Hughes and Laney (2001) stated, "Paul began this letter with an unusual description of himself. He described how he was commissioned as an apostle – not through men, but through Jesus and God. This immediately addressed one of the problems at hand" (p. 580). The false teachers had the Galatians wondering whether Paul was divinely authorized or merely sending a mortal message. Paul places this concern to rest in the opening lines of his letter. Paul believed that Christians should not have to adhere to Jewish customs for the sake of table fellowship or for the sake of salvation but for the fruit of the Spirit. Paul's style of leadership and directness was unique and actually quite revolutionary in religious communities at the time. These communities held their traditions, rights and rituals sacred and those who were disobedient to those traditions, rights and rituals were excluded from acceptance into their religious communities. It was through Paul's

authority and guidance that these communities were accepting of the gentiles into the Christian church.

A social structure of a group has the potential to impact its communication process. Keebler (2010), suggested, "Organizational leaders need to seek alternative methods to convey their messages in order to be effective communicators with their diverse employee base" (54). Depending on the social structure of a group the communication within the group may be negatively impacted. Groups are not inherently homogeneous, rather heterogeneous, meaning they have individuals with very different values, ideas, and backgrounds. As such, there are inherent differences that add to the complexities of developing effective communication within organizations. In Galatia the false teachers and Jewish Gnostics had fundamental differences from that of Paul, given that they were broadcasting a message to the early church that was not in the Spirit. Paul, as a Christian leader, sought to welcome these differences among the members of the church and to communicate a shared vision that every individual would embrace. Paul was trying to accomplish this through his communication and interaction with the Galatian community. He believed that once the Galatians learned how to effectively cross-communicate, outside of their small tight knit community to a wider more diverse community, they would provide for greater spiritual growth.

The inclusive philosophy that Paul was providing to the Galatians was ordained by the authority given to him from Jesus. Inclusive leadership boosts trust in a group and their psychological well-being, resulting in increased organizational citizenship behaviors (Huang et. al, 2021). In a sense, increased organizational citizenship behavior was the result that Paul was trying to achieve.

Paul provided clear guidance to the Galatians that met with the vision Jesus provided to him. Leaders, in the spirit of Paul, can positively influence individual perceptions of a group or organization by exhibiting ethical behavior, trustworthiness, respectfulness, fairness, and competency. Once an individual understands and accepts the vision and goals provided by a trusted leader, they will start to develop a positive perception of the group and strive for that vision. Paul was developing the Galatian community by providing the direction and vision they so desperately needed to gain the fruit of the Spirit.

IV.   GALATIANS 5

In Galatians 5, Paul speaks of the yoke of slavery. Paul was speaking of the ritual of circumcision and its association to the Jewish community and its culture. Mageto (2006) stated, "Paul makes a passionate appeal to the Christians in Galatia to embrace an ethic of shared responsibility so as not to abuse their newfound freedom and fall prey to the traps their opponents were setting before them" (p. 88). Paul believed that the Christian community had an identity of its own, one that consists of unity, inclusion and shared responsibility. Ukwuegbu (2008) stated,

> When read together with the metaphor of the law as a yoke of slavery
> (5:1), Paul's reinterpretation of the law in service of the question of identity
> becomes all the more clear. Understanding a foreign law as an agent of
> slavery, as opposed to the freedom of living under one's own law, was not
> uncommon in the Hellenistic culture of Paul's time" (p. 555).

Paul was trying to include both gentile and non-gentile into a Christian community that does not live by the flesh but one that lives by the Spirit. He was concerned that some in the Jewish-Christian community were using circumcision as a vice in which to exclude people from the Christian community. Paul believed that Jesus paid for our sins in the flesh and that circumcision would not hold any more value toward one's salvation. DeSilva (2004) stated, "Those who seek 'to be justified (dikaiousthe) by law' (Gal 5:4), to be 'brought in line with God's standards' by performing circumcision and observing other 'works of the Torah,' have grossly undervalued God's gift of the Spirit" (p. 517). Paul's meaning could not be any clearer, live by the Spirit not the flesh. The direction to unite by Living by the Spirit opened the church to a more diverse community with a common purpose.

The Bible is riddled with metaphorical phrases and stories. Jesus taught by the use of parables as a way to provide an understanding of his message. Blood (2004) stated "Metaphors can be profoundly true, even though they are not literally true" (p. 2). Paul's use of the "yoke of slavery" metaphor provided the Galatians with clear direction to use their new freedom and not be bound by the trappings of his detractors.

Galatians 5 provides a unique look into the leadership of Paul. Paul led the early church during a very chaotic time. As the leader of the early church, he provided guidance and direction to a loosely bounded group of early Christians who were culturally different with diverse social structures. Paul was aware of these differences and sought to strengthen the church through diversity and unity. Strom (2006) noted, "Every social structure has conventions which foolishly and often unjustly discriminate" (p. 9). In Galatians 5, Paul tried to mediate the fractional impact to the Christian community based on social identity norms. Paul viewed the Christian community as a single cohesive group made up of people of different cultures. Paul further believed that differing social norms were not a problem unless they were viewed as divisive tools to provide a gap in one's love for one another. Pulling the ideological thread of this texture, we can see how this idea is woven into the broader concept of unity and diversity.

Ukwuegbu (2008) stated, "Paul in Galatians, is concerned with maintaining the distinctive identity of his congregations ('of neither Jew nor Gentile')…Paul did not want a distinction made between so called ingroups and the so called outgroups" (541). He was in a sense, providing a shared vision that he wanted the Christian community to embrace. Paul believed that the social identity of the Christian church should be based upon the Spirit and not the flesh. Ukwuegbu (2008) argued,

> Here, as in most of its usages in the Galatian correspondence, the meaning of 'flesh' is that of a negative force that is defective, disqualifying, or destructive, especially when compared to the life of the Spirit with which the Galatian Christians began (Gal 3:3). To live or to seek to live in the realm of the flesh is to live apart from the dynamic power of the Spirit of God (p. 543).

Paul in his guidance to the Galatians did not reject the moral standards of the law, only the ritual of the law. He believed that the moral standards of the law could provide a life in the Spirit, thereby providing fellowship and acceptance of their law. Paul further suggested that they open their hearts to the word of God that he was providing to them and resist the false teachings of the Jewish Gnostics. Paul's message was, in a sense, the breaking of fallow ground to some in the early Christian community. Finney

(2021) suggested that the fallowed ground is not soil, but rather one's heart and mind as they relate to receiving God's word. Finney explained, "If you mean to break up the fallow ground of your hearts, you must begin by looking at your hearts: examine and note the state of your minds" (p. 1). Galatians 5 identified an important aspect of the Christian community and the culture Paul envisioned. Social and cultural understanding plays a considerable role in learning effectiveness (Keebler & Huffman, 2020). Through social and cultural acceptance, the Christian community would learn and grow. This new culture would be separate from some of the conventions and rituals that did not provide for a life in the Spirit. Strom (2006) stated, "This realignment of social behavior was critical. Paul was building something entirely new" (p. 4). In essence, Paul was uniting the Christian community into one church.

V.   SOCIAL IDENTITY

How we treat and act toward one another is a basic component of community, and whether we welcome each other's diversity is a personal choice. From a Christian leadership perspective, we should seek to embrace our community and value our diversity. Kim (2006) stated, "Diversity involves adopting flexible and inclusive management styles, acknowledging that people experience the working world in different ways, and creating a climate in which all employees feel safe, valued and recognized" (p. 72). Inclusive leadership varies from other leadership styles in that it helps to promote a positive impact on follower's attitudes and behaviors under diverse conditions as well as influencing organizational citizenship behavior (Wang et.al, 2020).

Paul demonstrated his wisdom by welcoming a diverse population and building a stronger and larger Christian community. Though he did not have a problem with circumcision in itself, he did have a problem with it if it was used as a tool to seek salvation. If the community wanted circumcision to be used as part of their cultural identity Paul did not object. As such, Paul embraced cultural identity and practices unless they were used as a way to seek salvation. Paul believed that a follower's deeds "the fruit of the Spirit" would keep them in good standing with the Lord.

Paul respected the diversity of the Christian community, and he viewed the church as a community of faith. Mageto (2006) stated, "The church, as a community of faith, is where all members are valued, and their individual contributions are respected" (p. 92). Each member should be treated as a valued component in order for that group or community to be successful. Paul's letter to the Galatians seems to have been initiated due to concerns of disunity among the church members. As such, Paul provided guidance and direction to the Galatians. Kim (2006) stated, "Managing diversity is more than simply acknowledging differences in people. It involves recognizing the value of differences, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusiveness" (p. 87). This comment can describe Paul and his view of the community of faith. Paul brings to account a sense of community while maintaining one's faith or values. Paul's actions demonstrated that he was truly modeling Christian leadership to the church.

Christian leaders should hold a similar position when dealing with cultural issues within their community. Kim (2006) suggested that individuals within organizations must feel that they can maintain their cultural identity while positively contributing toward a

shared vision or goal. Just as Mageto (2006) suggested, the church should work toward a common community identity while still valuing an individual's cultural identity. It should be the position of a group or community and its leaders to have the same philosophy.

VI.   FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5 identifies an important process, one in which reflection needs to have a critical link to one's spiritual wellbeing. Ukwuegbu (2008) stated, "Throughout the letter, Paul calls on the Galatians to bear the image of Christ and so to reflect the new ethos of the Christian community, in contrast to the identity of either Jewish or pagan society" (p. 551). Paul was in the role of both leader and mentor to the Galatians and the Christian community. Mentoring is one creative way of promoting personal development that leads to the process of self-actualization and growth (Talley, 2008). Mentoring provides a transformational experience for many followers, in this case seemingly the Galatians however Paul was reaching out to a much broader audience. The transfer of knowledge and the guidance given to the follower provide the dynamic in the relationship. The leader/mentor provides their knowledge and experience to guide the follower/mentee to develop and grow. Paul provided an opportunity for the Galatians to grow a Life by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-26, Life by the Spirit, provides a discourse on the sinful nature as well as the spiritual nature of humanity. These scriptural verses emphasize the understanding that faith and obedience go hand in hand with one another. Ukwuegbu (2008) stated, "The Christian community is the social embodiment of the self-giving and loving Christ, the fruit of the Spirit can be construed as 'dynamic extensions of Christ's own character and lifestyle, the means whereby Christ is embodied and performed'" (p. 550). It was Paul's charge to bring the entire Christian community, not just subdivisions of it, to the fruit of the Spirit.

The "fruit of the Spirit" provides a behavioral model that each of us should reflect upon and follow. This model can be used effectively from a spiritual as well as an organizational perspective. Carey (1988) stated,

> And it is power to be good, to grow into the fruit of the Spirit's life in us (5:22-26). This is a goodness altogether apart from the Law (5:18, 23)…A person can choose either to dig the barren soil of human effort apart from God, or take root in the fertile ground of the life in the Spirit and reap its richness (6:8) (p. 245).

Paul wanted the Galatians to open their hearts to accept a life by the Spirit. The false teachers and Jewish Gnostics were hardening the hearts of the Galatian community by rebuking Paul and his message. Finney (2021) mirrored Carey's thoughts. From Paul's perspective, if the Galatians were to listen to the false teachers and Jewish Gnostics they would become barren and fallowed ground. Finney stated, "Fallowed ground is ground which has once been tiled, but which now lies waste, and needs to be broken up and mellowed, before it is ready to receive grain" (pg. 1). Paul's message was authorized by God and provided the breaking of the fallowed ground for the community in Galatia.

The Book of Acts also provides an understanding of how God provided divine empowerment and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the development of the early

Christian church. Walton (2008) stated, "Several factors together suggest that Acts is about God: the verb subjects of the book, key verbs which imply divine action, the focus of attention in the speeches, the development of the Gentile mission…" (p. 292). This pattern provides some key interpretive messages. God provided divine empowerment through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, all people are able to receive the Holy Spirit regardless of their social status, race, or gender. Both the Book of Acts and Paul's letter to the Galatians breakdown some of the traditional boundaries established within the early Christian community.

Galatians 5 underscores the need for Christian leaders to provide vision and direction for one's spiritual growth. Christian leaders rely on faith to provide insight to complex cultural issues. Just as God provided divine empowerment through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christian leaders must develop a trusting relationship with their followers by building them, empowering them, and promoting shared responsibility. Mageto (2006) stated, "Paul's use of the motif of the faithfulness of Christ in 2:20 opens the way to his discussion of a Christian ethic of shared responsibility in chapters 5 and 6" (p. 87). Having a leadership style, like the Apostle Paul, that supports cohesiveness is extremely important to Christian leadership.

Divisive behavior can destroy the trust in a leader/follower relationship. The false teachers tried to discredit Paul and his message within the Christian community. Keebler (2018) stated, "Just as God provided divine empowerment through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, leaders must develop a trusting relationship with their followers by increasing communication, showing respect, being fair and predictable, and demonstrating competence (p. 95). Once the people in a group understand and accept the organizational goals and trust the leadership, they will start to develop a positive perception of the organization thereby fostering a positive organizational climate. Paul was trying to establish a similar relationship by providing the Christian community with his message and its authority.

Many organizations are turning toward empowerment philosophies due to the benefits gained in productivity and employee morale (Murray & Holmes, 2021). To try and build autonomous teams, organizations should allow the internal dynamics of an organization to be determined by the team members and not by the leaders alone. This will increase the level of personal pride and should provide a proactive and enjoyable work environment. Diversity must also be considered when developing teams. Keebler (2015) suggested, "Individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, and ideas may provide for greater organizational success if a safe environment to share their ideas exists" (94). Organizations should embrace diversity, understand the cultural differences of the organization, and build upon its strengths just as Paul provided in his mission in Galatia.

Through the actions, Jesus gained a great fellowship. Christian leaders must try to develop their abilities and demonstrate them to their followers. Certo stated (2000), "To enhance your career success, you must learn to be proactive rather than reactive. That is, you must take specific actions to demonstrate your abilities and accomplishments" (p. 14). Group or organizational behavior can be shaped or directed if an organization's climate is positive. Organizational climate affects the behavior of the workforce, and those leaders play an important, if not critical, role in the development of the value systems of groups or organizations which in turn impacts its climate (Burton

and Obel, 2004). Trust, conflict, and morale are just a few areas where Christian leaders need to develop their skill sets in order to build high performance organizations or teams. Gaining trust, limiting conflict, and boosting morale are key to a positive climate.

Mok and Yeung (2002) suggested that leaders must understand the social processes that affect their staff in order to foster an organizational climate that supports employee empowerment. DeSilva (2004) stated, "Christians faced pressure on two fronts. First, the sources record that the Jesus movement stood in tension with the parent body, the Jewish subculture, from the outset" (p. 105). Paul was trying to relieve the pressure on the Christian community by providing direction and breaking down the barriers to the Christian community that other false teachers were trying to put in place.

VII. CONCLUSION

The basic principles and guidelines of a socio-rhetorical interpretation were provided in this research paper. The use of socio-rhetorical interpretation of a biblical document provides an effective means for gaining a greater understanding of scripture. Through the use of Robbins' socio-rhetorical interpretation, this paper provided an exegetical interpretation of Galatians Chapter 5. Pulling the ideological thread from different perspectives in this texture, we can see how Paul's leadership in Galatians 5 is woven into the broader concept of unity and diversity.

Paul's letter to the Galatians provides a history of the early Christian church and ministry from the perspective of Paul. Galatians 5 provides a view of how Paul was building and defining the Christian community. Paul provides assurance that the word of God was intended for all people from all lands, Gentile and non-Gentile. Paul broke down some of the traditional boundaries that false teachers were trying to establish within the Christian community. Paul's message elevated the status of gentiles in the eyes of the Christian community where each has an equal place in God's plan of pouring out the Holy Spirit.

This ideological texture builds upon itself to provide a comprehensive interpretation that one may use to gain a deeper understanding of Paul's letter to the Galatians, Chapter 5. God fulfills the promise of spreading his word throughout the world for all people. Galatians 5 provides an identity and foundation for the Christian community as well as for Christian ministry.

In Galatians 5, Paul tried to mediate the fractional impact to the Christian community based on social identity norms. Paul viewed the Christian community as a single cohesive group made up of people of different cultures. The social norms were not a problem unless they were viewed as divisive tools to provide a gap in one's love for one another. Hughes and Laney (2001) stated, "Paul's critics claimed that the Law of Moses could save people from hell. But to imply that the law brought salvation denied the power of what God had done through Christ's death and resurrection" (p. 579). This statement as well as the ideological interpretation of Galatians 5 provides supports the conclusion that circumcision does not provide salvation. Paul described in his letter to the Galatians his authority and how salvation can be found, and it is through the life of the Spirit.

Paul did not have a problem with circumcision in itself, he did have a problem with it if it was used as a tool to seek salvation. If the community wanted circumcision to be used as part of their cultural identity Paul did not object. As such, Paul embraced cultural identity and practices unless they were used as a way to seek salvation. Paul believed that a follower's deeds "the fruit of the Spirit" would keep them in good standing with the lord. Galatians 5:22-26 provide the way that we as Christians should live. How we treat and act toward one another is a basic component of community, and whether we welcome each other's diversity is a personal choice. Leadership and Christian leadership specifically should seek to embrace the community and value its diversity.

About the Author

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THE ETHICS OF INCLUSION: A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ACTS 6:1-7

Leopold A. Kimo Richardson

This analysis of Acts 6:1-7 uses Robbins' (1996) protocol for social and cultural texture to discover how the ethical orientations of early Christian leaders contributed to their understanding and practice of inclusion. As leaders of all backgrounds are working in increasingly diverse settings, organizations are being challenged to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the communities that they serve and are equitable and inclusive to all stakeholders. Christian organizations and organizations led by Christian leaders are no exception. Drawing on an analysis of Acts 6:1-7, this paper proposes that three practices are critical for Christian leaders to develop and maintain an ethical orientation that supports the development of an inclusive community: examining the use of cultural symbols, framing issues from the perspective of the aggrieved, and viewing reform as an effort to maintain organizational culture.

I.   INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly diverse world, for-profit and nonprofit organizations alike are reckoning with how to ensure that they are truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive of all stakeholders (Grissom, 2018). Cuilla (2014) noted that organizations can so narrowly define their focus on one group of stakeholders, such as shareholders, that they become unaware of the implications of their actions on other stakeholders. Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) reinforced this idea when they suggested that leaders may not be as ethical as they believe themselves to be and may lead in ways that negatively impact others. For Christian leaders working to embrace the Scripture's call to reach every creature through their leadership, such a tendency can pose significant

challenges to their efficacy as a leader. To that end, understanding how to lead equitably and inclusively in ways that resonate with Christian conceptions of community is a critical ethical issue.

Given its explicit reference to cross-cultural conflict and its depiction of the role that the apostles played in responding to that conflict, Acts 6:1-7 serves as a particularly suitable conversation partner for understanding how a Christian leader's ethical orientation can play a role in shaping their response to inclusion. This paper will utilize Robbins' (1996) protocol for socio-rhetorical analysis to identify how ethics shaped the response of early Christian leaders to inclusion and surface key learning that can help modern leaders avoid pitfalls in implementing inclusion in a manner consistent with the Christian faith. It proposes that three actions are critical to having a Christian orientation towards inclusion, including examining the use of cultural symbols, framing issues from the perspective of the aggrieved, and viewing reform as an effort to maintain organizational culture.

II.   AN OVERVIEW OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

An essential step in determining the ethical implications within Acts 6:1 - 7 is to develop a broad understanding of the book of which it is a part. The Acts of the Apostles (Acts) is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke, and readers at the time would have seen it as parallel to Luke and a legitimate attempt to narrate past events as they occurred (Da Silva, 2018; Tyson, 1983). Da Silva (2018) proposed that Acts' main functions were to underscore the reliability of the Gospel, support an apologetic agenda, situate the Christian movement within God's unfolding work among his chosen people, and demonstrate a shift away from authority figures in Judaism to a new set of authorities and a new community (Da Silva, 2018).

Acts 6:1-7 describes Greek-speaking Jews (Hellenists) and Aramaic-speaking Jews (Hebrews) contending over the Hellenists' widows' treatment in the daily distribution of food. Scholars debate the extent to which the passage is indicative of a larger ideological rift between the Hebrews and Hellenists and the extent to which the incident described in Acts 6:1-7 is demonstrative of fully formed factions vying for position within the nascent community (Pao, 2011; Spencer, 1994). While the extent of the issue may be under debate, the story's inclusion demonstrates that a significant controversy developed in the community, generated, at least in part, by important cultural and gender-based differences within the group.

III.   SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE ANALYSIS

A critical step in drawing meaning from the text is identifying the framework through which the text will be analyzed. Robbins (1996) proposed socio-rhetorical criticism as a method of textual analysis that can systematically draw learning from the biblical text and use it in conversation with the social sciences. He proposed that several different textures are a part of a socio-rhetorical approach to interpretation, including inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Robbins, 1996).

This paper uses an analysis of the social and cultural texture of Acts 6:1-7 to discover the ethical expectations within the early Christian community and understand their implications on how early Christians framed and enacted leadership in a scenario in which cultural and gender-based difference was the focus. An analysis of a passage's social and cultural texture seeks to learn more about the presumptions that arise from an author and audience's worldview to drive the reader's understanding of the text (Robbins, 1996). It includes reviewing the specific, common, and final topics that play a role in informing that worldview (Robbins, 1996).

Specific Topics

According to Robbins (1996), the specific topics within a text reflected how any text with substantive religious texture talks about the world. He suggested that each of the topics reveals the kinds of cultures that the earliest Christians developed and that modern leaders can create (Robbins, 1996). Robbins (1996) proposed seven orientations that those cultures can take concerning how to fix the world. Those topics include the conversationist, revolutionist, introversionist, Gnostic-manipulationist, thamautalogical, reformist, and utopian orientations.

An examination of Acts 6:1-7 reveals a reformist orientation. The reformist orientation proposes that the world is corrupt because its social structures are corrupt and argues that to fix the world, you first have to fix the social structures in the world (Robbins, 1996). Henson et al. (2020) suggested that this change happens by using God-given insights to change the present system into one that functions to good ends.

In Acts 1:1-7, when the apostles received complaints from the Hellenists about the neglect of their widows in the daily distribution, they responded by prompting the congregation to select seven persons to oversee the function while the apostles remained focused on preaching. In addition to its identification of a set of ethical, spiritual, and temporal characteristics for the seven leaders proposed by the apostles, Pao (2011) suggested that the writer's decision to include this passage represented an acknowledgment of the need for successors to the apostles. Pao (2011) argued that this change represents a changing of the guard, fueled, in part, by the reluctance of Peter and the other apostles to seize the aspects of Jesus' mission that focused on the marginalized. Whether or not Pao's proposition is accurate, the apostle's inattention to the needs of the Hellenists' widows reflected a gap in their assessment of the community's needs and created a need to reform the system through new leadership.

Common Topics

In addition to specific topics, Robbins (1996) proposed that examining the common topics within a text was also critical for understanding the social and cultural texture. These topics clarify the relationship between things within a pericope and identify the values, codes, and patterns needed to function in society (Robbins, 1996). Robbins (1996) proposed eight common topics: honor/shame, dyadic/individualist, dyadic agreements, challenge-response, agrarian-based systems, peasant-landowners, limited goods, and purity. Acts 6:1-7 demonstrates an honor/shame, challenge-response, and limited goods orientation.

In honor/shame cultures holding honor brought the holder certain rights, but shame brought a sensitivity to what others did concerning one's honor (Henson et al., 2020). Participants in such cultures either sought to accumulate honor aggressively or were more passive and oriented to others. Spencer (1994) argued that while widows were regarded as outcasts throughout the Lucan texts, they were increasingly positioned as claiming or reclaiming their rights. In the Acts 6 passage, the Hellenists were the aggrieved and dishonored party compared to the Hebrews who hold the honor, as typified by their apparent control of the daily distribution (Pao, 2011; Spencer, 1994). Tyson (1983) underscored the critical role that diet played in demarcating insiders and outsiders within society. In noting the complaint by the Hellenists, Luke is not simply telling a story about who did and did not receive enough food. He is framing a positive view of leveraging humility to prompt ethical change.

In line with the honor/shame motif in Acts 6:1-7, the passage also includes the challenge-response topic. Robbins (1996) noted that the challenge-response orientation concerns itself with one's reputation. Henson et al. (2020) proffered that it was acceptable for a person with lesser honor to publicly challenge a person with greater honor to increase their standing. While the text notes that the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews as a group, the text provides a response from the apostles, not the unnamed believers who oversaw the daily distribution. In response to the complaint, the apostles suggest that the disciples identify seven men, and emphasize a set of characteristics that would have distinguished those who possess them as men of honor. Pao (2011) proposed that the seven were not unknown persons but likely leaders among the Hellenists whose honor and place of leadership were being publicly recognized. The fact that their honorable qualities were emphasized may be a critique of the apostles' and larger assembly's inability to acknowledge and bestow honor equitably (Pao, 2011). More broadly, it recognized the attempt of a marginalized group to challenge such inequitable and unethical arrangements where they existed in the community of faith.

A final orientation present within the pericope is a limited goods view of possessions. A limited goods orientation sees possessions as being in short supply (Henson et al., 2020). Greed, then, is not only immoral but has the potential to impact others significantly and negatively (Henson et al., 2020). That noted, the ethical issue being critiqued in this passage goes beyond greed. As previously alluded to, Spencer (1994) indicated that the control of food reflected more than the greed of a person or group. It was a way to demonstrate who was an insider or outsider of a community and the degree of honor they held within the community. Pao (2011) proffered that the unethical nature of the Hebrews' treatment of the Hellenists' widows is further clarified when the incident is viewed within the Lucan table fellowship motif. In this conception, by excluding the Hellenists from a daily allotment of food the Hebrews deprioritized them in the group's communal meal (Pao, 2011). When the events of Acts 6:1-7 are viewed in light of a worldview that sees goods as limited, it illustrates how the use of artifacts, in this case, food, demonstrates even communal symbols can be used as symbols of status to include or exclude various groups within a community.

Final Topics

Robbins (1996) noted that final topics were also a part of a text's social and cultural texture. Final topics identify the group that a person belongs to and how that group's thinking is distinct from other groups (Henson et al., 2020). Robbins (1996) proposed five cultural topics: dominant culture, subculture, counterculture, contraculture, and liminal culture.

The Acts 6:1-7 pericope demonstrates subcultural rhetoric. In subcultural rhetoric, a group mirrors the values and norms of the dominant culture but seeks to enact them better or change them to some extent (Henson et al., 2020). The elements that remain reinforce the status quo within the dominant culture.

In response to the Hellenists' complaint about the treatment of their widows, the apostles propose establishing an additional tier of leadership as a solution to the issue. Acts 6:5 portrays the entire assembly as being pleased with the decision. As such, in this scenario, the Hellenists seek to maintain communal bonds. In so doing, they enact a subcultural orientation that seeks and obtains some degree of change while keeping other elements. The subcultural theme also extends to the apostles' actions. Spencer (1994) argued that the apostles' focusing of the ethical issue at hand on whether it was right that they stop preaching to serve tables betrays a failure of the apostles to value caring for those who are unable to care for themselves with the call to preach. In so doing, Spencer (1994) argues, the apostles only moderately differentiate themselves from the scribes and Pharisees that the Lucan depiction of Jesus so regularly chides. Instead of directly intervening to ensure that all members of the community were cared for, the apostles delegate the task to others, and center the ethical issue on their rights and not those of the widows (Spencer, 1994).

Examining the subcultural rhetoric present within the text highlights the importance for Christian leaders to take pains to ensure that they consider the ethical implications of a situation from the perspective of the aggrieved group. In Acts 6:1-7, the apostles fail to do so. It could be argued that any attempt by the apostles to address the needs of the widows was a countercultural action that distinguished them from the dominant culture. But, insomuch as they remain aloof from direct action to include the outcast, their actions are only moderately better than those of the dominant culture and fail to meet the progressively positive and empowered depiction evolving in the Lucan texts (Spencer, 1994).

IV.   DISCUSSION

Drawing from an analysis of the social and cultural texture of Acts 6:1-7, three lessons concerning how Christian leaders should approach issues of inclusion ethically emerge. Leaders should a) examine the use of cultural symbols and resources to signal who is included and excluded from the community, b) consider ethical issues from the perspective of aggrieved persons, and c) view reform as an effort to maintain organizational culture.

Examine the Use of Cultural Symbols

The Hellenists' complaints centered on equitable access for their widows to the daily distribution. An analysis of the pericope's common topics suggests that access to

the daily distribution was not only neglectful of the widow's physical needs, it was also a means of clarifying their social standing within the community. Schein and Schein (2017) noted that symbols are critical tools for enacting and reflecting the values and assumptions at the core of an organization's culture. Newton and Hoyle (1994) argued that a change in organizational symbols is a critical part of changing an organization's culture. They warn, however, that a change in symbols without a change in substance is unlikely to amount to much of a change at all (Newton & Hoyte, 1994). In response to using such symbols to marginalize a group within the community, the apostles ask the assembled disciples to choose honorable men from among them who could take charge of the distribution. By doing so, they aim to rectify the harm that the neglect of the widows caused and introduce substantive change through leaders empowered with a symbol of their approval - the laying on of hands. With this in mind, Christian leaders should examine how their use of symbols includes and excludes those who are not in the majority and seek to redress unethical uses of symbols by employing equally substantive symbols and corresponding action.

Frame Ethical Issues from the Perspective of the Aggrieved

In response to the Hellenists' complaints about the neglect of their widows in the daily distribution, the apostles propose a meaningful solution but do so in a way that focuses the ethical issue on them rather than the widows who had been neglected. By doing so, they demonstrate an ethical orientation that prioritizes their experience of the situation. Fedler (2006) noted that it is not necessary to make ethics devoid of self-interest but suggested that it may lessen one's ability to act in the best interests of all stakeholders. In framing the issue in the manner that they did, the apostles limit the degree to which they can understand the matter as the Hellentists understand it, which, in turn, had implications for how they decided to redress the issue.

While the apostles' inability to see the issue from the perspective of the marginalized resulted in a solution that was pleasing to the multitude, it was still ethically inferior to the standard Jesus demonstrated and more aligned with the Pharisees and scribes that Jesus so regularly critiqued. Reflecting on instances like this, Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) argued that leaders can develop a bounded awareness that limits their ability to view the ethical dimensions of their decisions. To improve their ability to see the moral dimensions of their decisions, Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) proposed several actions, including debriefing decisions with a trusted friend.

Sibeko and Haddad (1997) expanded Bazerman and Tenbrunsel's (2011) proposal by emphasizing the need to engage marginalized groups directly. They suggested that different understandings arise when marginalized groups are engaged as dialogue partners (Sibeko & Haddad, 1997). West (1994) extended the point when he argued that such conversations are meaningful because they are instrumental in facilitating liberation or continuing oppression. With this in mind, Christian leaders would be well-served to frame ethical issues from the perspective of the marginalized by engaging them as dialogue and solution-making partners.

View Reform as an Effort to Maintain Organizational Culture

The Hellenists' reformist, subcultural, and shame-based orientation demonstrated that they were focused on reforming and not overturning the community. What is notable about that reform effort is that it was characterized by humility, a trait often presented as a countercultural idea in many places throughout the New Testament (Henson et al., 2020). In utilizing this approach to pursuing reform, the Hellenists position themselves against existing expectations within the larger culture. They reject aggressively seeking honor for themselves in consideration of their larger goal: equal treatment in the community of faith. This statement does not suggest that the apostles should have responded to the Hellenistists' claim only because of how it was brought to their attention. Instead, it highlights that even efforts characterized by values that the Scriptures esteem can be countercultural - a point Christian leaders should consider as they evaluate and react to such efforts.

Despite utilizing an approach grounded in humility, the Hellenists' actions were met with a measure of resistance. Schein and Schein (2017) noted that resistance to change is a common reaction to attempts to reform groups. Often that resistance is focused on preserving what is within one's interests. In framing the ethical issue as an assessment of whether it was right that they should preach or serve tables, the apostles passively resisted the Hellenists' request for change and fell short of the standard Luke portrays Jesus demonstrating throughout his writings (Spencer, 1994). Katoumbe (2018) noted that leaders play a critical role in ensuring collective capacity to create change. To this end, Christian leaders should seek to understand the impetus for prompts for reform and resist the tendency to implement responses that passively reject them by not appropriately defining the issue at hand.

V.   CONCLUSION

As Christian leaders seek to learn from the practices of early Christians to develop in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, this analysis suggests that focusing on one's ethical orientation and deepening skills at assessing situations from the perspective of the marginalized are critical. These conclusions are only a beginning, and more research should examine these assertions. Future analyses should examine how Christian leaders create an ethic that effectively determines when reforms should not seek to maintain but revolutionize organizational culture and how to pragmatically maintain a focus on marginalized groups in a majority group context.

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UNITY IN THE PRESENCE OF DIVERSITY IN THE BIBLICAL AND CONTEMPORARY US CULTURES: WHAT JESUS TEACHES ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION BASED ON MATTHEW 5:3-12

Alina Wreczycki

Relying on Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory, this work researched unity in the presence of diversity within the biblical and contemporary US cultures from the perspective of (a) self - awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior for sustainable social value. Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) verses were used to extract and analyze Jesus' traits relating to unity in the presence of diversity through the lens of social cohesion to make noteworthy inferences on how Jesus' teaching applies in the contemporary US culture to emanate forth onto the world. Extracts of Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech and January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s January 20, 2021, acceptance and April 29, 2021, "First 100 Days of Presidency" speeches were used to identify their traits, analyze them, compare them with Jesus', and discuss characteristics that contribute to unity in the presence of diversity.

Keywords: Deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, diversity, emotional maturity, emotional sovereignty, moral behavior, self-awareness, self-concept, social cohesion, unity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term diversity is derived from the middle English and means separate or varied. This term originates from the Latin word *dīversitāt*, which means separate or

different. Unity also originates from the middle English and means oneness. Its Latin root, *unus*, means one.

Diversity in English and Latin points at separation based on differences. From this perspective, diversity applied with low intent based on destructive traits within the social context can be misused by influential leaders to sustain autocratic environments. The opposing view would suggest that diversity applied with high intent based on constructive traits within the social context can be used to accept differences and empower people to celebrate them by engaging in moral behavior for sustainable social value. The latter approach is known as practicing the Golden Rule as reflected in Matthew 7:12 (NIV): "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." This teaching of Jesus of Nazareth is also known as the ethic of reciprocity or the law of reciprocity (Robertson, 1992).

Aristotle stated that humans are social animals and naturally seek group environments to (a) live, (b) interact, and (c) thrive (Cohen, 2010). With the desire for belonging, which is a natural need of humans, group dynamics (Arrow et al., 2000) are important. With this realization, the question of how to sustain group cohesion in the presence of diversity comes to the forefront.

II.   SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory emphasizes the importance of belonging to a social group where members find a source of (a) identity, (b) pride, and (c) self-esteem. Stetes and Burke (2000) posited that social identity is a person's level of self-awareness through the prism of belonging to a social group. Hogg (2018) interpreted Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory through the lens of self-concept in a group setting inclusive of the group processes and intergroup relations. Knowles et al. (2015) explained self-concept as being responsible for the social implications of personal decisions.

Diversity

Wreczycki (2019) interpreted diversity through John 14:2 (NIV): "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?" suggesting that humans are created in the image of God, but humans are endowed with the human condition. The human condition is characterized by the opposing spectrums of traits that are categorized as constructive or destructive within the social context. Gupta (2019) described diversity as inclusiveness and pointed at balanced diversity as equal parts of opposing traits in a group to make the group most efficient.

Diversity in the Biblical Culture of the First Century CE. Based on Genesis 1:28 (NIV): "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.," group culture during the first century CE was formed by patriarchal group leaders with God being perceived as a male. The goal of each group was to assist group members in acculturation to their surroundings for maximum functionality of the group. The purpose of human life was to procreate for

species continuation based on the utilization of human labor and natural resources for sustenance (Kirkegaard, 2006; Wreczycki, 2020).

Kirkegaard (2006) and Wreczycki (2020) described the composition of the biblical culture during the first century CE as (a) Romans, (b) Hebrew Jews, and (c) Hellenistic Jews. The Romans were occupants who (a) spoke Latin, (b) worshiped numerous Gods, and (c) used the military to control the existing territories while conquering new ones. The Hebrew Jews were orthodox Torah followers who spoke the Hebrew language and kept themselves isolated from the Hellenistic Jews and gentiles. The Hellenistic Jews were the ones from the diaspora and not as strict in their adherence to the Torah. Hellenistic Jews were good candidates to convert to Christianity.

The biblical culture of the region commonly known as the one walked by Jesus of Nazareth was (a) patriarchal, (b) tribal, and (c) isolated. The patriarchal nature of the societal structure was not a characteristic inherent in any tribe. Rather, social diversity within the context of patriarchal social structure supported isolation instead of unity (Kirkegaard, 2006; Wreczycki, 2020).

Diversity in the Contemporary US Culture. In the US, the term diversity is culturally used to point at ethnicity and race. According to the US Census Bureau, the union of 50 states is a highly diversified nation based on these two factors. Over six races are recognized.

Unity

Wreczycki (2019) interpreted unity within the context of an individual's personal relationship with God. This is consistent with Matthew 5:9 (NIV): "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." Unity, within this context, should not be misconstrued as uniformity but considered as an on-going reconciliation of social issues for social cohesion.

Clark (2011) stated that "The goal of a moral life is to be in the right relationship with God" (p. 415). Wreczycki (2019) commented on this divine relationship with God as loving God before anyone else. This love is not blind but recognizes and disapproves of sinful acts while at the same time morally loving the person who commits them. This act of loving morally (Winston, 2002) occurs for God's sake in the name of charity, considered as the divine connection between God and humans to establish friendship in unity with God as the source of grace.

Unity in the Biblical Culture of the First Century CE. According to Sinclair (2019), Jesus spent most of his time in the Galilee and briefly visited Jerusalem. These two regions were diverse based on rulership. While Galilee was ruled by Herod Antipas, a Jew subservient to Rome, there was more ethnic unity within the region due to (a) cultural unity, (b) lower taxation, and (c) at least some taxes benefiting the region. This does not mean that the Roman legions could not enter Galilee in case of social unrest. Pontius Pilate ruled Jerusalem. He was a Roman, and there was more ethnic tension there due to (a) cultural differences, (b) the constant presence of the Roman legions, and (c) heavier taxation benefiting Rome.

Stene (1940) explained that daily routines bind societies. Although the biblical society of the first century CE was diversified based on rulership, both Galilee and

Jerusalem were controlled by the Roman Empire. Galilee was controlled indirectly through a Jewish governor subservient to Rome. Jerusalem was directly governed by an appointee of Rome who was Roman. Although both regions had inhabitants represented by three social groups, their members maintained their daily routines and coexisted peacefully. According to Kraeling (1932) and Zetterholm (2003), Romans' acceptance of the local customs for as long as they did not cause social unrest was a factor.

Unity in the Contemporary US Culture. As 2016 and 2020 presidential elections confirmed, the key factor standing in the way of the country to function as a union of 50 states is political based on the two-party system – the Republican and the Democratic (Wreczycki, 2020). There are other political parties that do not have an impact on the presidential elections since historically in most cases either Republican or Democratic candidates get elected. According to Dimock and Wike (2020), during the one-term presidency of Donald J. Trump, the social tensions climaxed even in states with democratic leaning.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is consciousness-based knowledge of the self as (a) transitional emotions, (b) feelings, (c) motives, (d) desires, (e) thoughts, and (f) acts that result in social implications (Ivancevich et al., 2013). Cherry (2000) interpreted self-awareness as a psychological state of the self as the sole focus of brain energy and therefore attention. Wreczycki (2019) pointed at awareness, as flowing from self-awareness, while managing social justice issues.

Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity is constructively outgrowing childhood emotions generated and used to survive trying situations for which the child's psyche was not ready. The child assembles defense mechanisms to cope with emotionally charged situations. The child is expected to mature into an emotionally stable adult over time. Under these conditions, the true self as a composite of integrated transitional emotional selves (Ivancevich et al., 2013) oversees (a) cognitive interpretations of the incoming data from the social environment, (b) rational analysis of the data, and (c) the making of value-based decisions based on social responsibility or self-concept (Knowles et al., 2015). The true self consists of the transitional emotional selves that are integrated by self-compassion. The false self can lead a person (a) emotionally, (b) psychologically, (c) physically, and (d) spiritually astray (Gajda & Gajda, 2012). Emotional maturity liberates a person from victimhood into an others-centered existence (Winston, 2002).

Emotional Sovereignty

Emotional sovereignty is the state of being connected with a person's worth rather than seeking a confirmation of self-worth in the opinions of others, which can be fickle. Emotional sovereignty is achieved through sustainability of emotional maturity. Emotional sovereignty is the decision of a person's true self to function as a constructive

composite of the transitional selves based on core values reposited in the moral character and brought to a social context by self-compassion (Issler, 2012). Individuals who are not emotionally sovereign act from transitory emotions, which linger to create (a) moods, (b) temperament, and (c) personality (Ivancevich et al., 2013). Emotional sovereignty is a courageous stance within a social context. Emotional sovereignty allows an individual to emanate compassion onto others by sustaining self-compassion as the spiritual gift of mercy toward the self (Winston, 2002) without compromising the personal core values and accepting immoral behaviors stemming from others.

Self-Concept

Self-concept according to Knowles et al. (2015) is "being responsible for own decisions, for own lives" (p. 44). Knowles et al. (2015) interpreted that once a person assumes responsibility for their decisions and life, the self-direction manifests itself. It requires a group context to be perceived and acknowledged by other members of the group (Arrow et al., 2000).

Deliberate Ascent of Free Will to Abide in God

Deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God is the cornerstone of moral love that based on (a) moral principles, (b) duty, and (c) propriety inspire a person to do what is right at the appropriate time for sustainable value reasons (Winston, 2002). Free will while aligned with God's will ascends a person to what ancient Greeks referred to as in Entheos, God within. This term was used to describe inspired people. Within the context of the Roman Catholic tradition, an inspired person experiences Pentecost that is the breath of the Holy Spirit or pneuma (Winston, 2002).

Moral Behavior

Moral behavior is precipitated by an individual's self-awareness based on mature emotions and feelings in the body and thoughts in the mind that self-direct an individual to deliberately ascend the free will to abide in God to make moral choices (Issler, 2012; Winston, 2002). Winston (2002) and Wreczycki (2019) posited that constructive personal traits lead to (a) beliefs, (b) attitudes, and (c) behaviors. Winston (2002) and Wreczycki (2019) pointed at Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) as Jesus' teaching on archetypal traits that lead to moral character formation and sustainability to protect against "self-aggrandizement" (Winston, 2002, p. 14).

Group Cohesion

Wreczycki (2019) proposed that constructive traits reposited in the moral character (Issler, 2012) serve as pillars of national cultures. Wreczycki (2019) further explained that constructive traits exhibited in social context get amplified and aid group cohesion. Group cohesion is a social process shared by group members that pulls them together to accomplish unified objectives adding sustainable value to not only all group members but to the group's external environments (Arrow et al., 2000; Beal et al., 2003; Piper et al., 1983).

Qualitative Research Questions

The above literature review provided working definitions of (a) social identity, (b) diversity, (c) unity, (d) self-awareness, (e) emotional maturity, (f) emotional sovereignty, (g) self-concept, (h) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, (i) moral behavior, and (j) social cohesion to inform the below research questions:

1. What traits can be derived from Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) as Jesus' values reposited in his moral character to sustain unity in the presence of diversity (Issler, 2012; Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?
2. What traits can be derived from Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2016, acceptance speech (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?
3. What traits can be derived from Donald J. Trump's January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?
4. Is there consistency between Donald J. Trump's traits based on his two speeches and are the traits conducive to sustaining unity in the presence of diversity (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?
5. What traits can be derived from Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s January 20, 2021, acceptance speech (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?
6. What traits can be derived from Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s April 29, 2021, "First 100 Days of Presidency" speech (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?
7. Is there consistency between Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits based on his two speeches and are the traits conducive to sustaining unity in the presence of diversity (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

III.   METHODOLOGY

For this research, Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) qualitative analysis method was used. This method allows for immersion in the content studied. The qualitative data are presented in the left portion in the set of three columns. This method facilitates the emergence of themes in the middle column from the research subjects' words with social implications. From themes, codes flow in the right column as the progression of immersion into the qualitative data analysis via deductive and inductive logic to identify traits as the basis for words with social implications.

Qualitative analysis of Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) was expected to identify themes and codes from Jesus' teaching to serve as archetypical pillars for sustaining unity in the presence of diversity. The codes were expected to point at Jesus' moral character traits that according to Wreczycki (2019) contribute to culture formation for sustainability.

Within the context of the conceptual model based on (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior resulting in sustainable social value, Donald J. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits classified as constructive or destructive were compared to Jesus' moral character values to make noteworthy inferences whether their traits support or oppose sustaining unity in the presence of diversity. The codification of traits into the constructive and destructive categories was done using the two terms. Any trait overlapping with Jesus' moral character value set was identified as In Jesus' Set.

IV.   RESULTS

Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) also known as the Beatitudes, or the first half of the Sermon on the Mount served as the source for extraction of Jesus' moral character traits. These characteristics were then used as a benchmark to compare Donald J. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits as extracts from their selected speeches. Traits were characterized as constructive or destructive. Traits overlapping with Jesus' set of moral character values were identified as In Jesus' Set.

Study 1 – Jesus

The message contained in the Beatitudes transcends space and time. The message is archetypical in nature and applicable in any social setting at any time. Jesus' moral character values serve as an example to follow.

Table 1
Jesus' Traits Based on Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV)

Content	Themes	Codes
3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	To be open to receive pneuma/the breath of Spirit	Humility - Constructive
4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	To care for others	Care - Constructive
5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	To use self-discipline/self-restraint in dealing with others	Self-restraint - Constructive
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.	To cherish a divine relationship with God and others	Social justice - Constructive
7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	To use empathic imagination and compassion to be merciful	Mercy - Constructive
8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	To merge transitory emotions into an integrated self	Integrity - Constructive
9 Blessed are the peacemakers,		Cohesion - Constructive

for they will be called sons of God.	To establish and sustain group cohesion	
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	To maintain an unwavering commitment to value adding social causes	Commitment - Constructive
11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.	To persevere despite obstacles	Perseverance - Constructive
12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.	To share joy from successes across the group	Joy - Constructive

Research Question 1: What traits can be derived from Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) as Jesus' values reposited in his moral character to sustain unity in the presence of diversity (Issler, 2012; Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

Jesus' traits are (a) care, (b) cohesion, (c) commitment, (d) humility, (e) integrity, (f) joy, (g) mercy, (h) perseverance, (i) self-restraint, and (j) social justice. They are archetypal traits for establishing and sustaining constructive relationships with others by first sustaining a constructive relationship with God and the true self. Such unions, despite diversity, serve as a means of collaborative work and keeping the Garden of Eden for the next generations.

Based on the conceptual model used in this study grounded in (a) self - awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior for sustainable social value, Jesus' values are discussed as follows:

Care. Care flows from moral love, which is not based on conceptual conditions but is the moral imperative to (a) think, (b) communicate, and (c) act for the sustainable benefit of all group members. To care is to focus on and to explore the spiritual gifts of others. This caring does not ignore human frailties but pursues human development for the betterment of all.

Cohesion. Cohesion is synonymous with social unity. Cohesion within the context of the human condition acts as a socially binding agent based on social principles. Cohesion is others-centered with an understanding that a person exhibiting it in a social setting knows and feels as being an integral part of the social system with the focus on

the betterment of the system and all its constituents. Social cohesion is a moral community that is safe for all inhabitants and offers equal opportunities for all.

Commitment. Commitment is being dedicated to a cause or an action. Commitment goes together with self-restraint. It requires a person to be loyal to principles commonly accepted by a social group.

Humility. Humility is the state in which a person knows intellectually and experientially that they are not alone facing challenges to benefit the collective. This knowing-feeling paradox as part of the intellectual and rational process in collaboration with an appreciative heart guides a person to solicit support from others to resolve social issues for sustainable value. At the same time the humble person learns more about the self, others, and God.

Integrity. Integrity is cohesion of thoughts, words, and actions, even in the face of adversity. Integrity is commitment to moral character principles. Integrity is the alignment of moral character values with social behaviors. Integrity helps a person to be pure in thoughts and feelings rather than allowing them to fall to the destructive transitory emotions and act in self-interest rather than in social interest.

Joy. Joy is gladness of the heart. Joy can be described using John 14:27 (NIV): "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." Joy is an exalted phenomenon.

Mercy. Mercy is also known as compassion, which is acting with care for others in a social setting. Compassion is volition-based affection. Compassion is grounded in rational thinking with the simultaneous ability of feeling the emotions of others to assess how human interactions impact all in a social setting and to know the social implications.

Perseverance. Perseverance is being patient while pursuing a worthy cause. Despite social obstacles, perseverance is like a consistent plow pushing challenges away from the path of the others-centered goal. Although perseverance can be encouraged by others, its best expression originates from (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) ascending the free will to abide in God, and (f) acting morally to benefit the collective.

Self-Restraint. This trait is synonymous with using self-control to live a virtuous life. Self-restraint is living in accordance with the moral character values also referred to as spiritual principles. Self-restraint flows from self-reflection and knowing-feeling the impact of words and actions on others in a social setting.

Social Justice. Social justice is common sense applied to justice within a social context. Social justice is fairness and doing what is right. From the biblical perspective, social justice is practicing the Golden Rule for everyone to sustain equal treatment with a reciprocal moral obligation to ensure justice for all.

Study 2 – Donald J. Trump

Donald J. Trump was the forty-fifth president of the US. His one four-year term started on January 20, 2017 and lasted until January 19, 2021. The below are extracts from his January 20, 2017, acceptance speech and his January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally.

Table 2

Donald J. Trump's Traits Based on January 20, 2017, Acceptance Speech

Content	Themes	Codes
We the citizens of America are now joined in a great national effort to rebuild our country and restore the promise to all our people. Together, we will determine the course of the United States and the world for many years to come.	To express unity as a nation and unity of purpose	Cohesion – Constructive – In Jesus' Set
We are transferring power from Washington, DC and are giving it back to you the people. For too long a small group of people has reaped the rewards of government while the people have born the cost.	To express us versus them ideology	Division - Destructive
Today will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again. The forgotten men and women in our country will be forgotten no longer.	To express false promise	Demagoguery - Destructive
Everyone is listening to you now. You came by the tenths of millions to become part of historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before.	To interpret the election result with exaggeration	Self-aggrandizement - Destructive
We are one nation, and their pain is our pain. Their unity success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny. The Oath	To express unity	Unity – Constructive – In Jesus' Set

of Allegiance I take today is the Oath of Allegiance to all Americans. From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. I will fight for you with every breath in my body, and I will never ever let you down.	To express focus on the nation	Mission - Constructive
We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world. We will do so with an understanding that all nations have the right to put their interests first.	To express commitment to the people	Commitment – Constructive – In Jesus' Set
We will shine for everyone to follow. We will reinforce all alliances and form new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth.	To communicate global cooperation	Cooperation - Constructive
At the bedrock of our politics, it will be a total allegiance to the United States of America.	To express excellence	Excellence - Constructive
Through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other. When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice.	To communicate loyalty	Loyalty - Constructive

Research Question 2: What character traits can be derived from Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2016, acceptance speech (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

The qualitative analysis of Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech revealed the traits of (a) cohesion, (b) commitment, (c) cooperation, (d) demagoguery, (e) division, (f) excellence, (g) loyalty, (h) mission, (i) self-aggrandizement, and (j) unity. During the sixteen-minute presentation, Donald J. Trump mixed seven constructive and three destructive traits. The traits of cohesion and commitment are consistent with Jesus' moral character values. The traits of (a) cooperation, (b) excellence, (c) loyalty, (d) mission, and (e) unity are constructive. The traits of (a) demagoguery, (b) division, and (c) self-aggrandizement are destructive. Their presence in a short speech questions Donald J. Trumps' constructive traits as not moral character deep.

There were five constructive traits identified in Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech that fall outside of Jesus' moral character values. The traits were (a) cooperation, (b) excellence, (c) loyalty, (d) mission, and (e) unity and are described as follows:

Cooperation. Cooperation sustains goodwill through peace and unity of purpose. Cooperation is a humble and others-centered endeavor. Cooperation is a mind and heart phenomenon.

Excellence. Excellence is an outstanding quality of a person, product, or service. Excellence supersedes average. Excellence has a distinction on its own.

Loyalty. Loyalty stems from trust in a person. Loyalty is a mind and heart phenomenon. Loyalty is allegiance.

Mission. Mission is focusing on an important assignment. Mission can also be perceived as a calling to perform an action or to achieve a goal. Mission in contemporary US culture is used to navigate the organizational vision.

Unity. Unity is an antonym of separation. To sustain unity requires a humble leader. Unity is wholeness.

There were three destructive traits identified in Donald J. Trumps' January 20, 2017, acceptance speech. They were (a) demagoguery, (b) division, and (c) self-aggrandizement. The traits are interpreted as follows:

Demagoguery. Demagoguery is communication that stems from lower instincts and is deceptive in nature. Demagoguery uses prejudice to separate people into opposing groups. Demagoguery is not rational and can have severe social consequences.

Division. Division is an antonym of unity. Division is achieved through demagoguery. Division is a source of conflict among members of opposing groups.

Self-Aggrandizement. Self-aggrandizement focuses on promoting self-importance. Self-aggrandizement is the hallmark of self-centered people. Self-aggrandizement is an antonym of humility.

Table 3
Donald J. Trump's Traits Based on January 6, 2021, "Save America" Rally

Content	Themes	Codes

All of us here today don't want to see our election victory stolen by a bold and radical Democrat.	To express unfounded accusation with contempt	Contempt - Destructive
We will never give up. We will never concede. It does not happen. You don't concede when there is theft involved.	To express false promise	Hubris - Destructive
Our country has had enough, and we will not take it anymore. And this is what it's all about. We will stop the steal.	To express division – us vs. them and to entice violence	Division - Destructive
Today, I will lay out some evidence proving that we won this election and we won it by a landslide. This was not a close election. I have been in two elections, and I won them both. And the second one, I won much bigger than the first.	To misrepresent to mislead the public	Misrepresentation - Destructive
We have gathered in the heart of our nation's capital for one basic and simple reason – to save our democracy. Our country will be destroyed, and we are not going to stand for that.	To misinterpret the facts to mislead	Misinterpretation - Destructive
What we must go through, and you must get your people to fight. And if they don't fight, we have to primary the ones who don't fight. We are going to let you know who they are.	To imply that the American democracy was in danger	Demagoguery - Destructive
The media suppress thoughts and have	To incite violence	Violence - Destructive

become the enemy of the people.		
	To instill fear	Destruction - Destructive
We must fight much harder.		
You are sworn to uphold our Constitution. Now it is up to Congress to confront this egregious assault on our democracy.	To reinforce violence	Violence - Destructive
After this, we are going to walk there, and I will walk with you, we are going to walk down to the Capitol, and we are going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we are probably not going to be cheering much for some of them, because you will never take back our country with weakness. You must show strength.	To lead the angry crowd to the US Capitol without the ability to empathically envision the consequences	Recklessness - Destructive

Research Question 3: What traits can be derived from Donald J. Trump's January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

The above qualitative analysis of the extracts of Donald J. Trump's January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally returned nine traits that are destructive. The characteristics are (a) contempt, (b) demagoguery, (c) destruction, (d) division, (e) hubris, (f) misinterpretation, (g) misrepresentation, (h) recklessness, and (i) violence, which presented itself twice. The traits are described as follows:

Contempt. Contempt is rendering another person as not worth consideration in a social setting. Contempt places its author above the person perceived as unworthy. Contempt is a destructive trait with social implications.

Demagoguery. Demagoguery is communication from lower instincts and is deceptive in nature. Demagoguery uses prejudice to separate people into opposing groups. Demagoguery is not rational and can have severe social consequences.

Destruction. Destruction causes damage to others. Reckless individuals in the state of unbalanced emotions can destroy the reputation of others. Destruction is a two-edged sword that targets another person but through reciprocity undermines the author of destruction.

Division. Division is an antonym of unity. Division is caused by prejudice within the social context. Division can turn into violence.

Hubris. Hubris is excessive and not substantiated pride. This trait is destructive because it causes myopia in its author. Hubris accompanied by arrogance can have dangerous social consequences.

Misinterpretation. Misinterpretation is interpreting something incorrectly to deceive. Willful misinterpretation aims to alter the opinion of others about a subject or a person. Misinterpretation is biased by a personal agenda of its author.

Misrepresentation. Misrepresentation is like misinterpretation. Misrepresentation aims to provide false statements about a person or an event. Misrepresentation is lying.

Recklessness. Recklessness is disregard for the consequences of a person's words. Recklessness stems from low self-concept. Recklessness causes a person to pursue risky behavior without considering its social consequences.

Violence. Violence stems from an intense destructive emotion. Violence leads to the use of force to overpower another. Violence can have disastrous and irreversible social consequences.

Research Question 4: Is there consistency between Donald J. Trump's traits based on his two speeches and are the traits conducive to sustaining unity in the presence of diversity (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

The destructive traits of (a) demagoguery, (b) division, and (c) self-aggrandizement were identified in Donald J. Trump's acceptance speech in the presence of seven constructive traits. All traits extracted from Donald J. Trump's January 6, 2021 "Save America" rally were destructive. This suggests that the seven constructive traits extracted from Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech were not moral character deep at the time of presentation.

Within the context of Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech and January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally, his traits are initially a mix of constructive and destructive and then progress into the destructive characteristics. This suggests that Donald J. Trump's constructive traits exhibited during the January 20, 2017, acceptance speech were not deep in moral character. Donald J. Trump's traits are not conducive to sustaining unity in the presence of diversity.

Study 3 – Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. was sworn in as the forty-sixth President of the US on January 20, 2021. He was the US Vice President during January 20, 2009, through January 19, 2017, as part of the Obama Administration. Joseph R. Biden Jr. is an experienced politician and servant to the people.

Table 4
Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s Traits Based on January 20, 2021, Acceptance Speech

Content	Themes	Codes

This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope. Of renewal and resolve.	To express inspiration and hope	Inspiration - Constructive
So now, on this hallowed ground where days ago violence sought to shake this Capitol's foundation, we come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power as we have for more than two centuries.	To express unity while honoring the American's tradition and history	Unity - Constructive
Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this: Bringing America together. Uniting our people.	To express the unity of purpose	Unity - Constructive
Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, World War, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice, and setbacks, our "better angels" have always prevailed. In each of these moments, enough of us came together to carry all of us forward. And we can do so now. .	To reinforce the importance of unity	Unity - Constructive
And so today, at this time and in this place, let us start afresh. All of us. Let us listen to one another. Hear one another. See one another. Show respect to one another.	To express the importance of respect	Respect - Constructive
Here we stand looking out to the great mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream.	To express social fairness and egalitarianism	Egalitarianism - Constructive

Here we stand, where 108 years ago at another inaugural, thousands of protestors tried to block brave women from marching for the right to vote. Today, we mark the swearing-in of the first woman in American history elected to national office – Vice President Kamala Harris.		
Here we stand across the Potomac from Arlington National Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace. And here we stand, days after a riotous mob thought they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work of our democracy, and to drive us from this sacred ground.	To express respect for the deceased servants to the American democracy to honor them	Honor – Constructive
To all those who supported our campaign I am humbled by the faith you have placed in us.	To express appreciation for support and confidence in the current administration	Appreciation – Constructive
To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. And if you still disagree, so be it. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent peaceably, within the guardrails of our Republic, is our nation's greatest strength.	To express unwavering commitment to all Americans	Commitment – Constructive – In Jesus' Set

Yet hear me clearly: Disagreement must not lead to disunion. And I pledge this to you: I will be a President for all Americans.		
Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people were a multitude defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we love that define us as Americans? I think I know. Opportunity. Security. Liberty. Dignity. Respect. Honor. And, yes, the truth.	To express focusing on human values to resolve challenges in unity and unity of purpose	Unity - Constructive

Research Question 5: What character traits can be derived from Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s January 20, 2021, acceptance speech (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

The above qualitative analysis of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s January 20, 2021, acceptance speech revealed the traits of (a) appreciation, (b) commitment, (c) egalitarianism, (d) honor, (e) inspiration, (f) respect, and (g) unity, which presented itself four times. All traits are constructive, and the characteristics of care and commitment overlap with Jesus' set of moral character values. The traits that do not overlap with Jesus' moral character values are described below:

Appreciation. Appreciation is gratitude. It is being thankful for good qualities in another person. Appreciation brings joy in the one expressing it, and the joy is shared in their environment.

Egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is a belief that all people are created equal. Egalitarianism is social equality. To be egalitarian means to be socially just.

Honor. Honor is respect. Honor is adherence to what is right. Honor is a privilege.

Inspiration. Inspiration is the state of being mentally stimulated to create. Inspiration is being in spirit rather than being desperate. Inspiration is the breath of spirit to ascend from the ordinary way of thinking to become extraordinary but humble.

Respect. Respect is high regard for someone. To respect another human, the person must respect themselves. Respect is admiration of another for their constructive traits and their social impact.

Unity. Unity is an antonym of separation. Unity is the state of being whole. Unity calls for acceptance of diversity to thrive as a multifaceted group.

Table 4

Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s Traits Based on April 29, 2021, "First 100 Days of Presidency"
Speech

Content	Themes	Codes
We are the most diverse democracy in the world. There's not a single thing, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart, there's not a single thing we can't do when we do it together. So, thank you all.	To empower through unity	Unity - Constructive
I want to thank you, and I want to thank the American people because I think we've gotten a lot done. I promised even before I was sworn in that I would get, in my first 100 days, 100 million COVID vaccine shots in people's arms. We've lost over 550,000 Americans. Well, we delivered over 220 million COVID shots in the first 100 days.	To express consideration, appreciation, and achievement of a critical goal	Appreciation - Constructive
The American Rescue Plan would not have passed. So much have we gotten done, like getting checks to people probably would not have happened. So, if you ever wonder if elections make a difference, just remember what you did here in Georgia when you elected Ossoff and Warnock. You began to change the environment. And look, because of you, we passed one of the most consequential rescue bills in American history.	To express appreciation	Appreciation - Constructive

I'm most proud of the fact that we are on track to cut child poverty in half this year by having passed the Child Tax Credit. But as much as we've done, we got a lot more to do. That's why I proposed the American Jobs Plan. It's a once in a generation investment in America.	To express achievement and relief for children	Relief - Constructive
We also know that two million women have dropped out of the workforce during this pandemic. Because too often, they must choose between whether they can get care for their child and their family or go to work. In the 21st century, infrastructure is not just steel and concrete, its people, and it is time we start paying people who come to our homes and care for people that love them and going to take care of them.	To express consideration for women as life nourishers and caregivers	Consideration - Constructive
When a lot of people talk about climate, they forget to mention the most important word. I made a promise when I was down here running that I would, in fact, immediately rejoin the Paris Climate Accord on day one, which we did. And I would have, in the 100 days, a climate summit here in America, inviting all the world's polluters and all the	To express concern for climate change impacting the globe	Concern - Constructive

world's emitters, including the biggest nations in the world.		
And here's one final thing. I want to mention about the American Jobs Plan. We got a $5 billion investment in that plan for community violence intervention.	To express job growth to support economic recovery while recovering from the pandemic	Recovery - Constructive
But folks, we not only have to invest in America, but we also need to invest in our families. We need to invest in things our families need the most.	To express investing in the American families	Care - Constructive
So, my plan provides a universal preschool for every three- and four-year-old in America. Everyone, that's a game changer. It's a game changer. And it also provides two years of free community college. That's a game changer as well.	To express focus on education	Education - Constructive
So, folks it's only been 100 days, but I must tell you, I've never been more optimistic about the future in America. America is on the move again. We're choosing to hope over fear.	To express optimism for the American future, hope, truth, and continuous recovery in unity and the unity of purpose.	Hope - Constructive

Research Question 6: What character traits can be derived from Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s April 29, 2021, "First 100 Days of Presidency" speech (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

The qualitative analysis of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s April 29, 2021, "First 100 Days of Presidency" speech revealed the traits of (a) appreciation (twice), (b) care, (c) concern, (d) consideration, (e) education, (f) hope, (g) recovery, (h) relief, and (i) unity. All traits are constructive. The trait of appreciation was identified in Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s January 20, 2021, acceptance speech. The new traits' meaning is described below:

Care. Care flows from moral love, which is not based on conceptual conditions but is the moral imperative to (a) think, (b) communicate, and (c) act to add sustainable value to the collective. To care is to focus on and explore the spiritual gifts of others not by ignoring human frailties but pursuing human development for the betterment of all.

Consideration. Consideration is characterized by careful thoughts. To be considerate means to maintain self-concept, which calls for considering the consequences of thoughts that turn into words and actions with social implications. Consideration is others centered.

Education. Education is the process of developing a human by providing instructions. Education can be formal or informal. Education creates a body of knowledge that is best applied within the social context.

Hope. Hope is a feeling for a certain outcome. Hope is constructive in nature. Hope, faith, and love are the biblical three.

Recovery. Recovery is characterized by restoring balance. Recovery is returning to the state that is preferred. Recovery within the context of a human being has four aspects such as (a) emotional, (b) physical, (c) intellectual, and (d) spiritual.

Relief. Relief is a feeling that heralds liberation from an emotionally charging situation. Relief is a hope-based phenomenon. Relief can be individual, or others centered.

Research Question 7: Is there consistency between Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits based on his two speeches and are the traits conducive to sustaining unity in the presence of diversity (Winston, 2002; Wreczycki, 2019)?

All traits derived from Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s two speeches are constructive. This observation within the context of the conceptual model of (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascend of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior for sustainable social value confirms the presence and stability of constructive emotions, which create (a) moods, (b) temperament, and (c) personality. The traits of care and commitment overlap with Jesus' set of ten constructive traits derived from Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV). Constructive traits affirm unity in the presence of diversity.

Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits are constructive across the two speeches being 100 days apart. Two traits, care and commitment, match Jesus' set of moral character values extracted from Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV). Considering the nature of Joseph R. Biden Jr. 's traits and the presence of appreciation in both speeches, the traits are conducive to sustaining unity in the presence of diversity.

IV.   DISCUSSION

Jesus' ten moral character values derived from qualitative analysis of Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV) follow the structure of the conceptual model used in this research based on (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior for sustainable value Self-awareness is the knowledge of the true self within the social context, and it requires humility to present itself. Care and self-restraint are moral character values that effectively manage emotional maturity and sustain emotional sovereignty to draw self-worth from the true self. Care is self-compassion, and self-restraint ensures continuous integration of transitional emotional selves into the true self to eliminate a personality shadow. The moral character values of social justice and mercy support the self-concept to know and to be responsible for the social consequences of words and actions. The moral character value of integrity supports the deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God. The moral character values of (a) cohesion, (b) commitment, (c) perseverance, and (d) joy support moral behaviors for sustainable social value.

The set of Donald J. Trump's traits based on his two speeches performed four years apart reveal how personal traits can deteriorate and cause social unrest and loss of life. Although seven constructive traits were identified in Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech, there were also three destructive traits present, which question Donald J. Trump's constructive traits as not moral character deep. All ten traits derived from Donald J. Trump's January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally were destructive and socially harmful.

The set of Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits derived from his two speeches 100 days apart revealed constructive consistency. This suggests that Joseph R. Biden Jr. sustains (a) constructive self-awareness within the social context, (b) effectively manages his emotional maturity for emotional sovereignty, (c) sustains self-concept to know and feel the implications of his words and actions, (d) deliberately ascends his free will to abide in God, and (e) acts morally for sustainable social value to support social cohesion in the presence of diversity.

V.   LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research focused on extracting personal traits of Jesus, Donald J. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. Jesus' traits were extracted from Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV). Donald J. Trump's traits were derived from the selected extract of his January 20, 2017, acceptance speech and January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally. Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits were derived from the selected extracts of his January 20, 2021, acceptance and April 29, 2021, "First 100 days of Presidency" speeches. To extract more traits of Donald J. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. more content can be qualitatively analyzed.

This research used the conceptual model of (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior for sustainable social value as a human quest for self-development based on Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV). A person needs to be sufficiently self-aware to know how to be emotionally mature to draw self-worth from the true self to consider the social consequences of their words and actions and to dwell in God to act morally with others-centered motivation for sustainable social value. Since Jesus and Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits were constructive, but Donald J. Trumps were initially a mix

of seven constructive and three destructive traits followed by ten destructive traits derived from the second speech, it is worthwhile to study at what point in Donald J. Trump's presidency a breakdown of his (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior for sustainable social value have broken down to abandon constructive self-development with social implications to pursue self-destruction causing social unrest and loss of life.

VI.   CONCLUSION

Based on Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory, this work researched unity also known as social cohesion in the presence of diversity in the biblical and contemporary US cultures. The perspective taken was the conceptual model based on (a) self -awareness, (b) emotional maturity, (c) emotional sovereignty, (d) self-concept, (e) deliberate ascent of free will to abide in God, and (f) moral behavior with sustainable social implications within the context of Matthew 5:3-12 (NIV), which served as the source of extraction of Jesus' moral character values to serve as a benchmark to compare Donald J. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s traits to. The extracts of Donald J. Trump's January 20, 2017, acceptance speech and January 6, 2021, "Save America" rally, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s January 20, 2021, acceptance and April 29, 2021, "First 100 Days of Presidency" speeches were used to derive their traits and compare them to Jesus' moral character values to answer the research questions and identify the characteristics that contribute to social cohesion in the presence of diversity.

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UNITY IN THE DIASPORA: AN INNOVATIVE APPLICATION OF A VALIDATED INSTRUMENT TO BIBLICAL TEXT AND CONTEMPORARY IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERS

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The authors posit that a modern leadership framework can be applied to a biblical and historical leader to discover implications for contemporary leaders serving within an era of diversity. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was administered for Queen Esther, with observations made directly from the text of the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. In recent leadership literature, the LPI has been used in quantitative and qualitative studies to validate results. Likewise, the use of the empirical instrument in this study was supported by qualitative research methods to affirm Esther's leadership strengths and weaknesses, as discussed in Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership ® model. This study showed that the LPI could be utilized as a third-party instrument to assess leadership style based on written text as observer data. Queen Esther served in a time and place of diversity, where cultural unity was lacking; therefore, this research-oriented approach to investigating her leadership style uncovered modern implications for present-day leaders serving in a diverse and post-Christian culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

As a new generation of Americans is on track to become the most diverse generation yet (Fry & Parker, 2018), practical strategies for leaders are essential for developing the ability to apply knowledge to ever-changing real-life settings (Rausch et

al., 2001). But changing demographics are not unique to this time and place. When we look at the ancient story of Esther, we find her living in a city that underwent a major ethnocultural transformation when it became part of the Persian Empire (Kuhrt, 1982). This was a time when King Ahasuerus reigned over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia following the period when Jews were carried away from Jerusalem by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (English Standard Version, 2001, Esther 2:6). We find this context apropos to explore the phenomenon of leadership during a time of great cultural diversity, especially when viewed through the lens of a modern leadership framework. Therefore, this study extends research on the well-documented Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership ® model by applying it to Esther's historical and cultural context to uncover modern implications for contemporary leaders in diverse settings.

II.   THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership ® model is a transformational leadership model focused on the ability to mobilize others (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The authors studied specific points at which leaders were operating at personal-best capacity and, from their findings, identified five common leadership practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). More so than personality, the authors posited that behaviors are at the heart of the model. The following are the authors' descriptions of behaviors that correlate with each practice:

Model the Way	Inspire a Shared Vision	Challenge the Process	Enable Others to Act	Encourage the Heart
• Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared values. • Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.	• Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. • Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.	• Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve. • Experiment and take risks by consistently generating small wins and learning from experience.	• Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. • Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.	• Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. • Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

(Kouzes & Posner, 2017)

To further leadership research using a theoretical framework based on the five practices of exemplary leadership, the model authors developed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), and Posner (2016) investigated the reliability and validity of the instrument. Together, the model and inventory provide a conceptual framework to study the phenomenon of leadership. For each of the five leadership practices, the LPI contains a set of six one-sentence descriptions, each based on a behavior deemed consistent with the leadership model and each evaluated on a ten-point Likert scale (Posner, 2016). With scores consistently in the very good (i.e., above 0.80 for internal reliability) range, the LPI was deemed "robust" (p. 4). The author described results as accurate for a wide variety of respondent categories, population types, geographic locations, and for both the Self and Observer versions of the inventory. The original intent was to create an inventory for leadership development purposes (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Zagorsek et al., 2006), but the LPI has also been widely applied in empirical research studies (Bryant, 2017; Diaz et al., 2019; Egan et al., 2020; Emmanuel & Valley, 2021; Tran, 2020).

The LPI has been used as a validated instrument to bring about results in recent leadership research (e.g., Bryant, 2017; Diaz et al., 2019; Egan et al., 2020; Emmanuel & Valley, 2021; Tran, 2020). Bryant (2017) responded to a gap in the literature regarding transformational leadership training, specifically during a time of change. A quantitative ex post facto design was utilized to determine the impact of professional development using the five practices of exemplary leadership behaviors, which were measured using the LPI. Significant before and after results were determined using the LPI as a validated instrument. Diaz et al. (2019) focused on the benefits of having teachers use the LPI to determine practices of exemplary leadership behaviors in students. The authors noted the validity of LPI results considering different countries of origin. Egan et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative research study to determine the efficacy and transfer of leadership learning to work environments. The authors used the LPI to verify if and to what extent the five practices of exemplary leadership behaviors were evident in the workplace. Using Kouzes and Posner's (2017) leadership model as a framework, Emmanuel and Valley (2021) completed a qualitative case study to explore the leadership qualities of school principal leaders. Tran (2020) looked at leadership practices through the lens of generational preference and determined that there was no significant difference in preference based on the variable of generation. Tran used the LPI as one of two validated instruments to determine that it was the quality of the relationship, not a generational preference, which had the most significant leadership impact. In each study, the LPI was used to bring about valid and reliable research results.

The present study considered a theoretical framework based on a transformational leadership model, the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership ® model, and a conceptual discussion that incorporated the Leadership Practices Inventory as a valid and reliable instrument. The Observer version of the LPI was applied to Esther, and responses were categorized from biblical accounts. The authors of this study capitalized on the reliability and validity of the LPI as a scale that accurately assesses leadership behaviors (Posner, 2016). The authors posited that this conceptual approach would provide an enhanced understanding of leadership behaviors and influence the discussion regarding implications for contemporary leaders.

III.   ESTHER

The book of Esther is a ten-chapter book in the Bible's Old Testament, written circa 400 BC. The story was set in Susa, the capital of the vast Persian Empire, which, at the time, included 127 provinces spread from India to Ethiopia (The Lutheran Study Bible, 2009). After the destruction of Jerusalem, Jews had been scattered across many nations, including Persia, living a diasporadic life of tension. The Israelites, once from their own mighty nation, were now the minority living subordinately and precariously under Persian rule (Akinyele, 2009). In addition, Esther was especially vulnerable not only as a minority, but also as a female and an orphan within a landscape of systemic oppression (Akinyele, 2009).

As an orphaned, young Jewish woman living with her elder cousin, Mordecai, the beautiful Esther was brought into the Persian king's harem, wherein she did not disclose her Jewish heritage (Est 2). When it was her turn to come before the king, he loved her more than any other and chose her to be the queen (Est 2). When the king's chief adviser, Haman, issued an edict that all Jews be annihilated, Esther devised a plan to save them, knowing she could be putting her life at risk to do so since no one was permitted to come before the king without invitation (Est 3). Ultimately, the king redrafted the edict, and Esther succeeded in bringing about unity in the region (Est 8).

Esther has been studied across a variety of disciplines, including history, religion, literature, politics, feminism, and leadership. Queen Esther's character has been described as "obedient orphan, beautiful virgin, clever and courageous queen, savior of Diaspora Jews" (Summer, 2006, p. 144). Naturally, Esther has been described as a servant leader (Akinyele, 2009; Friedman & Friedman, 2012) due to her willingness to sacrifice herself for the greater good. What has only been touched on briefly is how Esther fits in Kouzes and Posner's leadership model. In reference to Kouzes and Posner's five exemplary practices, Akinyele (2009) stated,

> The literary figure of Esther effectively models the behavior she expects from all the Jews when she initiates the three-day fast (Est 4:16a). She inspires and instills a vision of freedom and salvation in the Jews with her willingness to appeal to Xerxes (Est 4:16b). She ventures out and is willing to challenge existing Persian laws for the greater good of her people in spite of the potential personal danger (Est 5:1). Esther makes it possible for the Jewish people to collaborate and act to defend themselves (Est 8:3) and encourages the hearts of the Jewish people through the generations by instituting the Festival of Purim (Est 9:29), which is still celebrated today (p. 77).

While this succinct exegetical analysis is helpful, it has not been empirically validated. We consider this a call for additional research and seek to provide evidence, through the LPI, to measure the precise nature of Esther's leadership practices and behaviors to discover modern leadership implications.

IV.   APPLICATION OF THE LPI TO ESTHER

Methods

The authors of this article purchased the Observer format of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) fifth edition from Wiley. While the Observer format is most often used in tandem with the Self format in order to compare the variance, thereby identifying areas for professional development in leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2017), the Observer version retains its merit even as a standalone assessment. Indeed, Posner (2016) examined various aspects of leader effectiveness, "utilizing only the responses from observers. Including only the responses from 'other people' about their managers provided relatively independent assessments and thereby minimized potential self-report bias" (p. 16). In this case, the authors of the present study fall under the category of "other people" as readers who have directly observed [read] Esther's behaviors. While the LPI suggests at least 7-10 observers, this study's limitation is that only one observer instrument was scored, which was the result of the two authors coming to intercoder consensus for categorization of the behavior data.

In order to observe the extent to which Esther engaged in the behaviors related to the practices of exemplary leadership, the authors used the actual scriptural text evidence of the book of Esther from the ESV version of the bible. The ESV was chosen for its word-for-word translation philosophy, making it an "essential literal translation" (Lutheran Study Bible, p. xv). However, the unit of qualitative analysis for this data was at the phrase or statement level or complete idea, not necessarily single words. The authors read the text, line by line, and anytime Esther personally did or said something, that piece of observation text evidence was categorized under the corresponding behavior(s) where applicable. Reliability for this study was enhanced through intercategorizer agreement due to the stability of responses when more than one categorizer analyzes data sets (Creswell, 2013). The authors independently categorized the text data under the LPI behaviors and then compared and discussed any differences in order to come to a consensus. Using this intercoder agreement provided phenomenological bracketing, a suspending of judgment, which lessens the influence of researcher bias (Creswell, 2013). The table below offers a sample of the bible verses from Esther that were categorized under the specific behaviors assessed on the LPI.

Verse	Behavior (Practice)
Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him (Est 2:20).	Follows through on promises and commitments (Model the Way)
Then Esther called for Hathach and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was (Est 4:5).	Actively searches for innovative ways to improve what we do (Challenge the Process)

Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish" (Est 4:15-16).	Sets a personal example of what is expected (Model the Way)
Esther answered, "My wish and my request is: If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said" (Est 5:7-8).	Treats people with dignity and respect (Enable Others to Act)
When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her (Est 2:15).	Develops cooperative relationships (Enable Others to Act)

Following the categorization of data, the authors were then able to score the 30 behavior statements. The scoring of 1-10 from "almost never" to" almost always" was conducted by the actual count of instances of observation text evidence. That is, if a behavior had three scriptural instances filed under it, it was scored as three. Behaviors with 10 or more pieces of evidence were scored as 10. Once the scores were filled in, the authors were able to tabulate the five practices per the LPI instructions. According to the instrument, the total responses for each of the five exemplary practices range from 6 to 60, which is the total resulting from adding the score for each of the behaviors related to that practice.

Results

As a result of the observer inventory completed with intercoder agreement of the categorization of text-based evidence, Esther's highest-rated practice on the scale of 6-60 was Challenge the Process (39), followed by Model the Way (36), Enable Others to Act (35), Inspire a Shared Vision (24), and lastly, Encourage the Heart (22).

Individually, Esther's highest-rated behaviors (score of 10) were as follows: Sets a personal example of what is expected (model); Develops cooperative relationships (enable); Follows through on promises and commitments (model); Treats people with dignity and respect (enable).

Esther's lowest-rated behaviors (score of 2) were as follows: Talks about future trends influencing our work (inspire); Expresses confidence in people's abilities (encourage); Asks "What can we learn?" (challenge); Tells stories of encouragement about the good work of others (encourage).

V.   DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

While none of the practices approached the top possible score of 60, indicating room for growth in all areas, Esther's strengths as a "Challenge the Process" leader are supported by existing literature. Research has shown that people with both a high propensity to trust and a weak quid-pro-quo conceptualization of interpersonal exchanges will engage in more "taking charge" behaviors (Chiaburu & Baker, 2006).

Likewise, how a person perceives exchanges is important for their subsequent engagement in taking charge behaviors (Chiaburu & Baker, 2006). This was clearly seen in Esther, who repeatedly took charge to ask the king for favors without offering anything in return (e.g., Est 8:5; Est 9:13). Consistently, she took charge to tell the Jews to fast and pray (e.g., Est 4:15; Est 9:31), and instructed or assigned Mordecai in his doings (e.g., Est 4:15; Est 8:2). In addition, research has indicated that people who internalize external socio-political events are more likely to take charge in challenging the status quo (Curtin et al., 2015). The impending demise of the Jews by the Haman-initiated edict was felt personally by Esther (Est 8:3). Though Haman's edict might not have affected her personally since her heritage was kept secret (Est 2:20), she still took it personally and was motivated to take action toward change.

Ironically, even though Esther ranked highest on the "Challenge the Process" practice overall, her four highest-scoring behaviors (10) did not include any "Challenge the Process" behaviors. This signals the importance of a balanced approach in working toward unity in diverse or underserved contexts. That is, Esther set a personal example (model), treated others with dignity and respect (enable), developed cooperative relationships (enable), and followed through on promises (model).

It is essential to note that Esther "treat[ed] others with dignity and respect" regardless of whether they were Jews or Persians, as all are created in the image of God. Moreover, she did not ask the Jews to assimilate into Persian culture but advocated for their Jewish religion and identity and even initiated a festival during which they could celebrate their newfound freedom (Est 9:29). Likewise, she did not force Persians to conform to Jewish culture. Recent counseling literature affirms the practice of treating others with dignity and respect by advocating for multicultural or religious identity (Mintert et al., 2020). Correspondingly, pedagogical studies have shown that the ability to understand and respect the values of others allows a leader to develop congruence with and engage successfully with diverse populations (Milner, 2011). Similarly, a leader with this kind of competence is able to validate individuals and lead in a respectful and non-threatening manner (University of Kansas, 2021). Esther modeled the way regarding this practice as she was immersed in the culture in which she was living, and therefore knew the risks and benefits of approaching the king, as well as the appropriate way in which to do so (e.g., Est 5:2).

A second crucial concept to consider is that Esther "develop[ed] cooperative relationships." She cooperated with Hegai, Mordecai, the Jews both in Susa and rural places, the king, and others (e.g., Est 2:15; Est 2:20, Est 5:2). These relationships allowed for a discursive and constructive space in which to listen, learn, and influence. Offering underrepresented populations access to these spaces and relationships invites them to define any issues that need to be addressed (DeLaRosa & Jun, 2019).

Thirdly, it is significant that one of Esther's four highest-scoring practices was "follows through on promises." Research has shown that those who mobilize Christians to action often have better success at the local or individual level, wherein participants are more likely to see timely and tangible changes than they might at a structural level (Todd & Rufa, 2013; Vondey, 2015). Where better to identify follow-through than in proximate contexts? For leaders desiring to bring about unity in diverse settings, it can be helpful to do so in the immediate context before working toward broader systemic changes.

Finally, Esther was a leader who "sets a personal example." Esther did not wait for someone else to do the work, she led by personal example. While some of her behaviors were simple and others were daring, she was consistent in modeling the way with integrity. Indeed, research shows that setting the example moves beyond any professional context and "into how one behaves and interacts in and outside the [workplace]" (Critchfield, 2018, p. 50), delivering on a biblical imperative to support the needs of others.

In light of these four most practiced behaviors, we have uncovered that the application of the LPI to Esther offers four valuable and practical insights for contemporary leaders serving and challenging the process in a time of diversity: (1) understand and affirm others' identity; (2) invite others into the conversation; (3) start proximately and follow through; and (4) lead by everyday example. These approaches span centuries and generations and give heed to the importance of leadership behaviors found to be effective in a time of diversity and when unity is lacking in the culture.

Leaders today should consider how exemplary practices of leadership serve as practical tools in bringing about both change and unity, as evidenced by Queen Esther. It is important for leaders to align actions with shared values and create a spirit of community and collaboration (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Christian leaders today are serving in a culture that is markedly post-Christian, almost a diaspora of sorts, in a similar way to how Esther was living in Persia. Christian leaders should be especially encouraged by the story of Esther and seek to emulate her leadership practices.

VI.   FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study focused on the similarities between Esther's context and a 21st-century context, there are also recognized differences. Future researchers could investigate this for a more effective and practical application for leaders. For example, one could observe how a 21st-century leader can be a principled person who is able to articulate their values and make decisions based on those values like Esther did, while at the same time adhering to the ethical codes or standards of their respective environments. This could be important in present-day situations, such as in interfaith forums that often lend toward pluralism, relativism or secularism (Vukic, 2018).

An important consideration for future research is that a larger scale third-party observer panel be administered again for Esther to meet the recommended minimum of 7-10 observers for the LPI. While the book of Esther was chosen, in part, due to its parsimony, the LPI may offer further implications by the study of biblical figures for which there exists a greater body of text to observe. For example, it may be enlightening to apply a longitudinal assessment on King David from his early years as a shepherd to his days as a mighty warrior, to his ultimate duration as a king. There are countless possibilities as to what we may learn from biblical and historical characters by applying any number of modern frameworks, whether related to leadership or even to other disciplines. For instance, researchers may want to investigate how the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCC) framework (Sue et al., 1992), or later iterations thereof, could be applied to Esther, or other biblical characters, in order to offer implications for contemporary counselors. Likewise, a conceptual framework for

culturally relevant pedagogy (e.g., Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011) could be applied to the apostle Paul or other biblical figures, whereby teachers might learn faith-based strategies on which to build cultural competence in diverse settings. However, considering the number of leadership models that exist in the literature today (e.g., team, shared, virtual, servant, transformational, integrative), researchers might consider using other validated instruments or models to assess the leadership styles and behaviors of biblical leaders to determine if and how they can offer contemporary insights. There is no shortage of what can be learned from the bible.

VII.   CONCLUSIONS

Leadership during a time of cultural diversity is not a new phenomenon, and the pursuit for exemplary practices can be enhanced by purposeful gleaning that draws from biblical and historical figures. This mindset gave rise to a methodical study of the book of Esther using a modern leadership approach involving Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership ® Model, along with their validated instrument, the Leadership Practices Inventory. With the intent to discover implications for contemporary leaders, the behaviors of Queen Esther, a biblical leader whose words and actions brought about unity in a divided culture, were categorized using qualitative and empirical methods. This application of a modern leadership framework generated discussion and direct implications for contemporary leaders, including four pivotal leadership practices that served the context well. As leaders in America embrace what it means to lead the most diverse generation in the nation's history (Fry & Parker, 2018), exemplars from the past can be studied using contemporary methods to bring about results that allow for modern application. The goal need not be the determination of one leader as best or ideal; rather, it is the careful study of practices that produce exemplary outcomes. Esther was a "Challenge the Process" leader who successfully sought unity during a time of diversity and thus, her behaviors translate into practical and insightful leadership practices for contemporary leaders to incorporate.

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THE NEED FOR UNITY OF DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:
AN INNER TEXTURE ANALYSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Tanesha Johnson

It has been said that the beauty of life and the uniqueness of business lies in the unity of diversity (Gorbachev, 2001). However, if diversity is not without conformity, how are leaders able to achieve such beauty (Coleman, 2001)? According to the transformational leadership theory, that beauty begins with purpose which is why an inner texture analysis of I Corinthians 12 confirms the need for unity through the Spirit of God to be one's guide through life.

Followers stand ready to share their unique talents and abilities with the world in order to achieve identified goals, but unless they remain under the inspiration and direction of a guided unity, the motivation to utilize such talents and abilities will dwindle. Because of this, leaders must walk united with their followers in purpose by utilizing idealized influence and inspirational motivation so that they can assign greater value to diversity which, in turn, increases their motivation to intellectually stimulate and express individualized consideration toward their followers. In doing this, leaders will follow the Holy Spirit's lead to live life guided always by purpose, thus transforming countless lives in the process.

I.   INTRODUCTION

For years, many have attempted to understand what it takes to be a great leader. It has been described as a combination of traits, behaviors, as well as skills which have all evolved into various leadership theories that have been developed for leaders to follow (Northouse, 2019; Preston-Cunningham et al., 2017; Sosik & Jung, 2018).

However, the leadership development process is multidimensional. Thus, it cannot be fully cultivated, unless, of course, it is controlled by a unifying source.

II.   LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A PRACTICAL LENS

One leadership theory that attempts to capture the intricacies of leadership development is the transformational leadership theory which recognizes that people come with varying "emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals" (Northouse, 2019, p. 163). Because of this, transformational leadership is both active and effective to influence followers to accomplish more than they originally intended to accomplish on their own (Northouse, 2019;Sosik & Jung, 2018). Transformational leaders must, therefore, unify followers by promoting a clear vision with supporting values and beliefs that inspire a purpose (Sosik & Jung, 2018). This is achieved through different components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Sosik & Jung, 2018).

Idealized influence, first of all, is centered around "values, beliefs, purpose, and a collective mission" (Sosik & Jung, 2018, p.11). Therefore, when leaders not only believe their values and beliefs but walk in them, they have the potential to be deeply respected by their followers which can enable them to be considered role models (Sosik & Jung, 2018). In turn, followers will be united in purpose with their leaders and have a desire to emulate their leaders' behaviors (Northouse, 2019).

Leaders can also inspire purpose in their followers through inspirational motivation since it reinforces the need for a shared vision (Northouse, 2019). This helps to unite and energize followers in their daily tasks because they understand how it relates to the bigger picture vision (Sosik & Jung, 2018). Knowing this, leaders often encourage diversity by stimulating followers to be "creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values" (Northouse, 2019, p. 171). This can be achieved by tapping into their rationality and intellect, also known as intellectual stimulation, which encourages followers to continue growing in their area of expertise so that they can take more ownership of their assigned tasks as they continue pursuing goal accomplishment (Northouse, 2019; Sosik & Jung, 2018). On the other hand, leaders can strengthen the leader-follower relationship through individual consideration, which is when leaders invest the necessary time to "listen, coach, and teach" to encourage followers to develop both personally and professionally; thus, underpinning the importance of diversity (Northouse, 2019; Sosik & Jung, 2018, p. 15).

To develop into a transformational leader, one must know the importance of unity and diversity since a shared purpose provides the foundation for followers to excel in their areas of expertise. Therefore, the question remains whether that way is consistent with God's way. An inner texture analysis of I Corinthians 12 utilizing the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible, which retains much of the same underlying Greek text that has been considered older and more reliable, was conducted to reveal the answer (Duvall & Hays, 2012).

III.   APPLYING INNER TEXTURE ANALYSIS TO UNVEIL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THEMES IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Like the intricately woven tapestry of leadership, a text contains complex patterns and images that must be interpreted (Robbins, 2012, p. 2). This is enabled through socio-rhetorical criticism which allows people to approach a text from various angles by utilizing different textures so that the reader can achieve a deeper level of understanding of the text as a whole (Robbins, 2012). One specific texture of socio-rhetorical analysis that is useful is inner texture analysis which is broken down into six elements: repetitive texture and pattern; progressive texture and pattern, narrational texture and pattern; opening-middle-closing texture and pattern; argumentative texture and pattern, and sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern (Robbins, 2012). Each element was evaluated against the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope to expose biblical principles needed for effective leadership development.

Repetitive Texture and Pattern

When utilizing repetitive texture and pattern, one of the primary goals is to take note of words and phrases that repeat (Robbins, 2012). Particularly, if there are multiple occurrences of "many different kinds of grammatical, syntactical, verbal, or topical phenomena," it may reveal a pattern that creates different sets of rhetorical topics or movements in the discourse as a way to unveil a deeper meaning of the text to the reader (Robbins, 2012, p. 8).

As this applies to the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope, there are two major topics displayed based on the multiple occurrences of words used: diversity due to several references to the word "members;" as well as unity since the words "all, one, body, and Spirit," which each define a combined unit, were repeated throughout the pericope. Specifically, in the same way that "all" was mentioned seventeen times (verses 6-7, 11-13, 19, 26, 29-30), "one" was also referenced seventeen times (verses 7-8, 11-14, 18-20, 25-26) (NKJV). Additionally, "body" was mentioned eighteen times (verses 12-20, 22-25, 27) followed by "members," which was used fourteen times (verses 12, 14, 18-20, 22-23, 25-27), and "Spirit" which was mentioned twelve times (verses 3-4, 7-11,13) (NKJV). See Table 1.
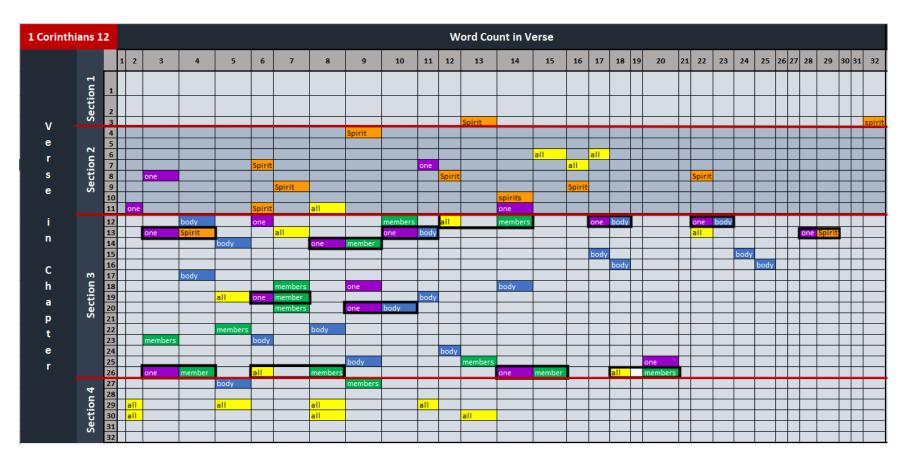
Table 1

1 Corinthians 12 Repetitive Texture and Pattern Analysis of Individual Words

1 Cor 12 Verse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
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2																																
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12				body		one				members		all		members			one	body				one	body									
13			one	Spirit			all			one	body											all						one	Spirit			
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While individual words were repeated throughout the pericope, there were also sets of words used that reinforced individual components coming together to include four references to "one body" and "one member," three references to "all members," and two references to "one Spirit" (verses 12-14; 19-20; 26) (NKJV). See Table 2.

Table 2

1 Corinthians 12 Repetitive Texture and Pattern Analysis of Sets of Words

Ultimately, repetitive texture and pattern reveal unity and diversity as two themes warranting attention in the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope.
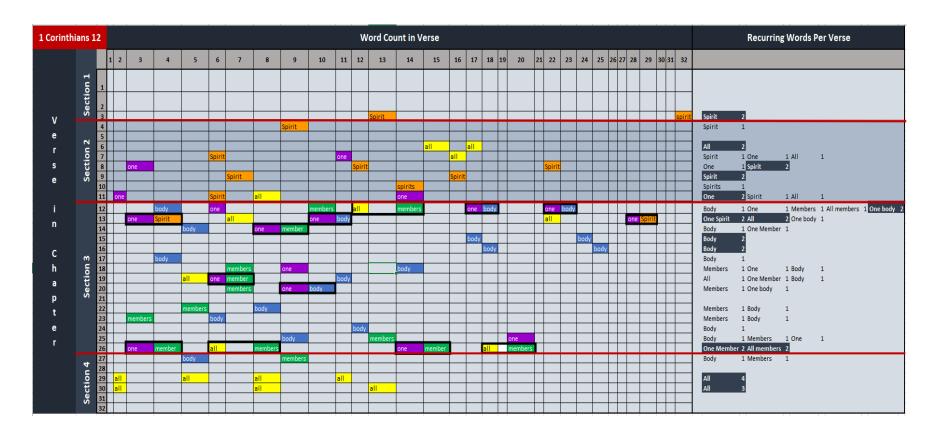
Progressive Texture and Pattern

Another element of inner texture analysis is progressive texture and pattern, which is a texture that "resides in sequences or progressions of words and phrases" for a specified discourse (Robins, 2012, p. 9). Progression is birthed out of repetition, so it is important for readers to not miss the patterns that are presented in a discourse because those patterns can begin to shed light into other patterns such as chains in the form of stepping stones or prerequisites to better inform the reader of the overall meaning of the text (Robbins, 2012). This was the case when examining the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope.

Particularly, after building upon the repetitions that were used in 1 Corinthians 12, the existence of repetitions revealed that the Spirit was what enabled the forward movement of the text. In 1 Corinthians 12, specifically, the highest number of repetitions in the introduction, or Section 1, of the pericope, which includes verses 1-3, was the word "Spirit" (NKJV) (See Table 2). This alludes to all spiritual existence being under the Lordship of Jesus Christ through God's Holy Spirit (Lee, 2006).

Then the words that were used most per verse in Section 2, verses 4-11, were "all," then "Spirit," and then the word "one" as if to say that "all" cannot become "one" without the presence of the "Spirit" [of God] (KNJV). Paul urges men in 1 Corinthians 1:10 to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind" knowing that a "city or house divided against itself will not stand" (Matthew 3:25, NKJV). Thus, it is advantageous for the Spirit to do its work of unifying the variety of gifts represented in the body of Christ for the purpose of accomplishing God's mission (Lee, 2006; Hartman, 2017).

Table 3

1 Corinthians 12 Progressive Texture and Pattern Analysis

Conversely, when the highest number of references were evaluated per verse at the beginning of Section 3, which includes verses 12-13, "one body," "one Spirit," and "all," reveal that "the Spirit "[of God] also enables "one body" to see "all" members of the body (NKJV). Here, readers get a clearer picture of the body of Christ as one that is completely enabled by the Spirit [of God] (Lee, 2006). Therefore, when the highest number of references were evaluated per verse for the remaining verses in Section 3, verses 14-26, which indicated that the most words used per verse were "body," "one member," and "all members," it alludes to the Spirit's ability to act as one member, a middleman, that makes individual members of the body aware of all members' value in the body of Christ (NKJV). From there, the focus on "all" in Section 4 of the pericope, which includes verses 27-31, reveals God's ability, through the Spirit [of God], to make all members of the body come alive as one living organism pulsating life so that the body functions at its optimal capability (Lee, 2006; Troupe, 2008).

All members of the body play a vital role in making the body of Christ effective, which reinforce the need for diversity. Therefore, not only is it God's intent to pour out His "Spirit" so that "all" can experience the benefits of unity in the same way expressed in Acts 2:1 when "all were with one accord in one place" after being filled with the Holy Spirit, but God also desires to increase members' awareness of the role other members play in the body of Christ (NKJV). This way, unity and diversity are both valued in the body of Christ (Craddock, 1983).

Narrational Texture and Pattern

Furthermore, narrational texture and pattern "resides in voices through which words in text speak" (Robbins, 2012, p. 15). With this element of inner texture analysis, a narrator acts as one who progressively moves the discourse forward as well as provides a closer look at different aspects of the scene to help readers navigate through the text (Robbins, 2012). This was represented in 1 Corinthians 12 because instead of expressing the dichotomy of diversity and the Spirit, Paul continues to show them working in harmony with one another in 1 Corinthians 12. From there, Paul digs deeper in verses 12-31 by allowing the human body to come alive; thus, explaining spiritual principles with things that can be seen in the physical world.

In 1 Corinthians 12:15, specifically, the foot comes alive and says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body" (NKJV). Then, in verse 16, Paul shifts to get the ear's perspective who gives the same response: "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body" (NKJV). Based on these responses, Paul challenges their thought process saying, "If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing… the eye cannot say to the hand: 'I have no need of you'" (1 Corinthians 12:17,21, NKJV).

Ultimately, diversity is necessary, but individual members must believe that it is by bearing witness to Christ as God uses other members of the body to strengthen the body as a whole (Charles, 1990). For this reason, Paul urges followers to believe that they together "are the body of Christ, and members individually; [thus], if one member suffers, all members suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26-27, NKJV).

Opening-Middle-Closing Texture and Pattern

The opening-middle-closing texture and pattern, or three-step narration, which represents another element of inner texture analysis, "resides in the nature of the beginning, body, and conclusion of a section of discourse" (Robbins, 2012, p. 19). While "repetition, progression, and narration work together to create the opening, middle and closing of a specified discourse," people may also have differing perspectives on where the opening, middle and closing begins and ends (Robbins, 2012). Because of this, the opening-middle-closing texture and pattern allows readers to recognize when the three-step narration exists to introduce and further explain key themes to focus on while navigating through the text.

In the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope, the "repetition, progression, and narration elements all work together to create the opening, middle, and closing" of the text (Robbins, 2012, p. 19). Specifically, in the opening of the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope, particularly verses 4-11, the text begins with emphasis on diversity through the Holy Spirit, the unifier of the body of Christ. From there, the middle, or verses 12-27, give examples of the different diversities that are reflected in the body of Christ (i.e., arms, head, eyes) since each member has a specific role in the body that other members cannot fill. Because of this, in 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, the pericope alludes to verse 11 by shifting focus back on the Spirit of God as the chief unifier who enables all diversities to work in harmony with one another for the benefit of the entire body. This shows that the Spirit, as beginning and end, plays a critical role in creating order by increasing one's awareness of others' value in the body of Christ so that all can begin to see the necessity of seeking God's help, through His Holy Spirit, to work together as one unit to enable God's mission to be accomplished (Hartman, 2017).

Argumentative Texture and Pattern

The argumentative texture and pattern of inner texture analysis, on the other hand, "investigates multiple kinds of inner reasoning" in a discourse (Robbins, 2012, p. 21). While some of the reasoning may be logical, or based on assertions that are directly supported with explanations that can be validated, other reasoning may be qualitative, or based on images and descriptions through the use of analogies or examples (Robbins, 2012).

When applied to 1 Corinthians 12, Paul concludes that diversity can only be effective through one's submission to the Holy Spirit. In order to support that argument, Paul then reasons that the human body functions like the body of Christ in that not only do many members make up the body, but when one member suffers, all members suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26). Consequently, all members of the body must operate under the same mind, which for the physical body is the brain.

In the same way, the body of Christ operates effectively in its gifts of healing, helps, administrations, and variety of tongues, when it operates under God's mind which is the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28). No member needs to conform to certain standards of acceptability or become a duplication of someone else in order to belong in the body of Christ (Troupe, 2008, p. 40). So, instead of promoting one gift above another, all must work under the authority of one mind to execute their own gifts for the

edification of the entire body. Thus, the effectiveness of diversity comes through the establishment of unity.

Sensory-Aesthetic Texture and Pattern

The last inner texture analysis type is sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, which is a texture that "resides predominantly in the range of senses the text evokes or embodies (i.e., thought, emotion, sight, sound, touch, and smell) as well as the manner in which the text evokes or embodies them (i.e.., reason, intuition, imagination, humor, etc.) (Robbins, 2012, pp. 29-30). This type of analysis adds color and tone to the text by utilizing parts of the body or body zones used to interact with the environment (Robbins, 2012). These body zones are called 1) the zone of emotion-fused thought, which includes eyes, heart, and eyelids to represent one's ability to see, know, and understand; 2) the zone of self-expressive speech, which includes the mouth, ears, tongue, and lips to represent the ability to speak, hear, say, call, or cry; and 3) the zone of purposeful action, which includes hands, feet, arms, fingers, and legs, which represent one's ability to do, act, accomplish, and intervene (Robbins, 2012, p. 31).

The zone of emotion-fused thought used the 1 Corinthians 12 pericope began in verse 16 which says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body" (NKJV). This reveals the member's ability to think and process information based on what it knows. Additionally, the zone of purposeful action was represented in verse 21 when Paul said "…the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (NKJV). While the ability to think is aided by sight, eyes cannot execute the outward human behaviors of walking and touching because they are executed by other members of the body – the hands and the feet. While this shows the need for individual expertise, or diversity in the form of one's God-given gifts, strengths, and qualities, to exist in the body, it also reveals the dependence of all members of the body to work with one another in unity to enable the body as whole to function effectively (Troupe, 2008).

IV.   DEVELOPING A DESIRE FOR UNITY AS A WAY TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY

In the same way that God underscores the importance of having unity in diversity by highlighting the beauty of differences only when they are under the submission of the Holy Spirit, transformational leaders use purpose to guide their followers in the process of development so that they will not only follow but lead in their area of expertise. Proverbs 29:18 says, "where there is no vision the people perish…," so when transformational leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future, talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished in pursuit of that vision, and express confidence that the goals concerning the vision will be achieved, which reflect three inspirational motivation behaviors, they, in turn, unify followers through a shared vision (Sosik & Jung, 2018, pp. 111, 113). Not only that, when vision is consistent from the top down, it builds followers' sense of purpose which is why values and beliefs must be traceable to the shared vision (Loon Hoe, 2007). Everyone has their own set of values and beliefs, so leaders must find opportunities to talk with their followers about their personally held

values and beliefs so that they can begin to understand how it may align to what is valued in the organization. In turn, the shared vision, values, and beliefs from the top down build trust in the leader-follower relationship as well as a sense of purpose knowing that everyone is unified in their quest towards goal accomplishment (Sosik & Jung, 2018).

When the organization's vision traces to values and beliefs that are held at lower levels of the organizational structure, leaders can empower their followers to work in their area of expertise in the same way that God encourages diversities to exist only when they are under the submission of one unifying spirit, the Holy Spirit (Corinthians 12:4-11). For this reason, once purpose is reinforced to employees through a clear organizational vision and related values and beliefs, transformational leaders then reinforce the importance of diversity by intellectually stimulating their followers to "think for themselves" as they encounter problems along the way (Sosik & Jung, 2018, p. 135). This is reinforced when leaders reexamine critical assumptions, seek different perspectives to solve problems, encourage nontraditional thinking, and rethink through ideas that have never been questioned (Sosik & Jung, 2018, pp. 137-38, 141, 144). As leaders do this, individualized consideration becomes an increasingly important behavior for leaders to display because it will begin to inform them on whether their followers have what they need as they continue working towards the achievement of goals. This is why transformational leaders are known to listen attentively to followers' concerns, help followers to develop their strengths to promote self-development, and/or spend time teaching and coaching in the same way the Holy Spirit walks side by side with believers, teaching them all things (Sosik & Jung, 2018, p. 170-171, 173-174; John 14:26).

Leaders must value purpose and diversity because at that point, followers will be energized by purpose, which is why Jesus, after spending time walking with and teaching His disciples all things, gave them the Great Commission to go out into the nations to equip them with the knowledge given to them by Jesus Christ, thus leaving much better off than before, having a knowledge of eternal life (Matthew 28:18-20). In the same way, leaders who stress the importance of being united in purpose and having an appreciation for diversity, will, in turn, commission their followers as one organizational body operating on one accord to make impacts not only for the benefit of the organization but for the world.

V.   CONCLUSION

According to 1 Corinthians 12, the two elements that stand out as key aspects of leadership development are unity and diversity, with a precedence on establishing unity first with the help of the [Holy] Spirit. This was also consistent when analyzing the transformational leadership, since the need for intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, which emphasized the importance of diversity, was birthed when all were united in purpose through idealized influence and inspirational motivation.

Indeed, the beauty of life and the uniqueness of business lies in the unity of diversity. Therefore, to remain in alignment with the biblical example God gives in which the body of Christ relies fully and completely on the Holy Spirit to enable all members of the body to see other members' value so that all can be united toward goal

accomplishment, followers need leaders to reinforce a shared purpose continually. Not only will it instill in them an appreciation for diversity, but that appreciation will then work to transform followers into leaders who, together, are motivated to develop their God-given gifts, strengths, and qualities to be fully equipped for every good work, as God intends (Troupe, 2008).

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Tanesha Johnson currently serves on active duty as an Acquisition Officer in the United States Air Force (USAF) and has managed a wide variety of programs in the space, aircraft, intelligence, and cyber domains at both the national and international levels. She also serves as a certified USAF Master Resilience Trainer and is actively involved in resiliency training initiatives which create an environment for leaders at every level to have active and sustained engagement with their people to foster a culture of communication, connectedness, and wellness. She holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Colorado State University, a M.S in Project Management from The George Washington University, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership from Regent University.

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ECCLESIAL POLITIES: EXAMINING UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF THE NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION MOVEMENT

Volker Krüger

There is a new understanding within the evangelical tradition of the apostolic role as a concept for deploying effective leadership. The so–called New Apostolic Reformation movement ('NAR') establishes an alternative approach within today's Christianity, or to be more precise the Pentecostal–charismatic context, one that is noticeably different from the traditional leadership models in Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, or the Evangelical traditions. The NAR model argues that churches need effective leadership models which are theologically grounded in the doctrine of the office of apostle, as described in the New Testament. The traditional Christian church polities are being challenged by this new model which contrasts the denominational landscape with a radical reconstruction. The current fierce debate on the apostolic role shows that there are very different views and opinions; the main areas and elements of distinction are therefore critically examined by using the traditional dominant church polities as lenses through which to view central elements of the NAR doctrine and to illuminate areas of unity and diversity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, Pentecostal and charismatic Christians are organised into thousands of local churches, official and unofficial networks, ministries, congregations, public corporations, associations, or other organisational forms. Each of these various forms require sound leadership models and management systems. Deploying and practising good leadership concepts has always been a crucial issue for organisations, whether they are business enterprises or Christian churches, for profit or for non–profit entities, secular or ecclesiastical organisations. In a paper produced by the global business consultancy Deloitte, London, U.K., the authors emphasise that effective leadership

remains the most important "issue facing organisations around the world, with 86% of respondents to the survey rating it 'urgent' or 'important'."[1]

This article argues that adherents of the New Apostolic Reformation ('NAR') movement propose the apostolic organisational leadership model as an alternative approach to that of the established church polities. Its fundamental concept is the understanding that the office of apostleship which has fallen into disuse, is being restored in the church today. Charles Peter Wagner (1930–2016) was the movement's acknowledged founder and scholarly father. He offers the following definition of the office of apostle: "An apostle is a Christian leader, gifted, taught, commissioned, and sent by God with the authority to establish the foundational government of the church within an assigned sphere of ministry by hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches and by setting things in order accordingly for the growth and maturity of the church and for the extension of the kingdom of God."[2] I assert that this apostolic model is a genuine church governance concept within the Pentecostal–charismatic tradition, which is distinct from the traditional structures, leadership mechanisms and hierarchies of the Presbyterial system, the Episcopal polity and the Congregational form. However, very little has so far been said in the theological literature about the understanding of the NAR church government.

The current fierce debate on the apostolic role shows that Christians appear to entertain very different views and opinions. Some theologians claim that the biblical evidence seems to strongly suggest a narrow concept of apostleship relating only to the first century apostolic era. According to Ferguson, there was no continuation of the office of apostles within the church. He stresses that, "In the nature of the case, the apostles had an unrepeatable ministry. With their passing, no one else could give the testimony that they could. Their witness to the life, teachings, and resurrections of Jesus made them the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20). In the reversed imagery of the apostles as laying the foundation, they equally belong to the beginning of the church, for such a task is chronologically limited."[3] Likewise, Bavinck argues, "The apostolic foundation of the church and its government does not mean a continuing apostolate."[4] Both reject the idea of a continuation of apostleship, as proposed by the NAR scholar Peter Wagner and are adherents of the theological teaching of *cessationism*. It is the idea that, "All the miraculous gifts and ministries died out with the first generation apostles and when the Scripture was completed."[5] This refers to gifts of the Holy Spirit like speaking in tongues and also includes the ministry roles like apostles and prophets. American pastor John MacArthur is arguably the most renowned theologian for cessationism today.[6] MacArthur bluntly criticises the NAR doctrine: "It is high time to

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[1] Adam Canwell et al., "Global Human Capital Trends 2014: Engaging the 21st-Century Workforce," in *Deloitte The Millennial Survey 2014* (New York, 2014), 8.

[2] C.P. Wagner, *Apostles Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 27.

[3] Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 306.

[4] Herman Bavinck, John Bolt, and John Vriend, *Reformed Dogmatics: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 326.

[5] Benjamin G. McNair Scott, *Apostles Today: Making Sense of Contemporary Charismatic Apostolates: A Historical and Theological Approach* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2014), 174.

[6] Ibid.

expose the New Apostolic Reformation for what it really is: a fraud. It is difficult to overstate the admixture of blatant arrogance and biblical ignorance that pervades the New Apostolic Reformation."[7] Because of this existing unity and diversity concerning the New Apostolic Reformation's doctrine, the main areas and elements of distinction are therefore critically examined in this article.

An analysis is conducted in this article by employing a comparison of different 'lenses'; the above mentioned dominant three church polities are used as lenses through which the New Apostolic Reformation doctrine will be viewed. This comparative lens approach is a tool to discover whether or not the NAR leadership model meets the expectations raised by the central proposition of this article.[8] It means that the traditional approaches are used as a framework for understanding the NAR model, in order to change the way it is viewed – just as looking through a pair of glasses changes the way somebody sees an object. Contrasting the core leadership principles will illustrate how the church polities differ.

II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE APOSTOLIC LEADERSHIP MODEL

This article proposes the central argument that the apostolic organisational leadership model embodies an alternative approach to the established church polities of the Presbyterial system, the Episcopal concept, and the Congregational form. The NAR movement suggests the necessity of effective leadership models being grounded in the doctrine of the authority of today's apostles. Its fundamental concept is the belief that the defunct governmental office of New Testament polity, namely the office of apostleship, as described in the New Testament, is being reassigned.

There is still a great need to explain the doctrine of the apostolic model. In fact, many Christians have only a very vague idea of the New Apostolic Reformation. Laitinen states that, "Although Wagner is a remarkable missiologist and Christian leader in the United States, he has not been studied by many systematic theologians."[9] It is considered that the type of lens style comparison used in this article, helps to illuminate such vague ideas and to challenge the stability of the New Apostolic Reformation leadership model, which does not yet seem to be sufficiently understood.

Hence, the focus is on those core elements of the New Apostolic Reformation doctrine that are related to leadership aspects. The examination of the NAR belief system is limited to five key elements, which I consider to be important: the understanding of the apostolic office, aspects of the relational leadership model, dominion theology, the controversy of accountability, and finally the question of authority in individuals.

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[7] John MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2013), 89.

[8] Robert P. Yagelski, *Writing: Ten Core Concepts* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2014), 207.

[9] Petri Laitinen, "Spiritual Gifts According to C. Peter Wagner" (PhD Dissertation, Åbo Akademi University, 2014), 20.

Examining the Apostolic Office in the NAR Movement

In this first section, the understanding of the Apostolic Office concept, as per the NAR movement's definition, is scrutinised in greater depth by using the lens of the 'Papal Office' as it is applied by the Roman Catholic Church which is used as one illustration for Episcopal polity.[10] The papacy leadership model is a central element of its church polity which is used to understand the concept of the apostolic office within the NAR belief system more clearly, by contrasting these two dimensions.[11] Thereby, the question of whether these two traditions, the Roman Catholic belief system and the NAR understanding, are talking about the same thing or two different approaches, is examined.

According to Roman Catholic tradition, the history of the papal office as leader of the global church spans from New Testament times to the present day. A literal connection to the early, post–biblical apostles is maintained through direct apostolic succession; it is argued that authority has continued to exist because it has been passed on, without interruption, through the laying on of hands.[12] This succession can be traced all the way from the current office holders back to the founding apostles themselves and thus, according to the Roman Catholic tradition, the apostolic line is considered to be authentic and alive. The apostolic office is handed over as an institutionalised office within the denomination.[13]

A new leader, the pope as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, is elected by bishops and consequently elevated to this office of authority qua appointment. The doctrinal argument for this is that Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:18 (NIV), "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church." The Roman Catholic Church's understanding is that it was clearly assumed that Peter was the spokesman for the first apostles and had a vital leadership role:[14] Peter's presence in Rome is historically confirmed and in the third century, both Tertullian, a prolific early Christian writer, and Hyppolytus, a bishop of Rome, regarded Peter as the primary person among the bishops of Rome.[15] "Ubi Petrus Ibi Ecclesia," "Where Peter is, there is the Church", is the famous quote from Ambrose of Milan, an Italian bishop who was an influential ecclesiastical church leader in the 4th century.[16] The Catechism of the Catholic Church states in paragraph 882,

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[10] It should be noted that the Roman Catholic Church does not understand itself to be a denomination; see e.g. M. Maxwell, *Biblical Truth or Church Tradition* (Fort Oglethorpe: Teach Services Publishing, 2015), 100.

[11] Frank J. Coppa, *Politics and the Papacy in the Modern World* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 13.

[12] Thomas Rausch, *The Roots of the Catholic Tradition* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2002), 136.

[13] Thomas P. Rausch, *Towards a Truly Catholic Church: An Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 211.

[14] Jean-Louis Leuba and Harold Knight, *New Testament Pattern: An Exegetical Enquiry into the Catholic and Protestant Dualism* (Cambridge: James Clarke Company Limited, 2002), 65.

[15] David L. Eastman, *The Many Deaths of Peter and Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 189.

[16] Todd D. Baker, *Exodus from Rome: A Biblical and Historical Critique of Roman Catholicism*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2014), 36.

> The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.[17]

The principal leadership mechanism is the understanding of papacy and an authority which is passed on as an institutionalised office of the church. Catholic scholars have commented on this directive and the Catholic Church instituted other supportive offices – as the pope is only one person – such as the papal chancellor and papal representatives. who have different tasks.[18] This statement makes an important claim and points to the papacy's essential centrality in relation to the unity of the Roman Catholic Church.

By way of contrast, the New Apostolic Reformation movement argues that the office of apostle in today's contemporary Christianity is a supernatural and sovereign appointment by God. It is a governmental office which is granted by Jesus Christ himself to an individual person through an ascension gift released by the Holy Spirit. The NAR scholar Wagner emphasises the gift of apostleship, arguing, "It obviously would be very difficult to understand the gift of apostle through the framework of the situational view. No one would have expected Peter or Paul or John to wake up some days without the gift of apostle…Both then and now, the gift of apostle, once given by God, becomes a special attribute of the individual."[19] According to Wagner's teaching, it is impossible for any congregation or its authorised representatives to organise an election process for selecting a new apostle and to reach a result by following a defined set of rules. Instead, it is Jesus Christ who assigns and allocates the gift of apostleship, outside of any denominational obligation or tradition.[20] This point is the beginning of a longer–term recognition process which starts with the person herself, followed at some stage by a confirmation by the local congregation and later, by other peer leaders and translocal ministries. The confirmation process is, however, not a clearly defined process but an evolution which can even take several years. Whilst the pope's authority is given qua institutionalised office, the NAR apostle grows through being acknowledged by the people around him, through recognition of a godly authority and through the supernatural anointing from the Holy Spirit, which equips and enables the individual for the office of apostle.

In the NAR belief system, there is no defined institutionalised process for an apostolic succession.[21] Whilst the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the office has been passed by literal apostolic succession during the centuries since New Testament times, the NAR instead teaches an apostolic succession of the function and continuation of the

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[17] http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P2A.HTM / Accessed on 8th May 2019.

[18] Timothy P. Broglio, "The Pastoral Dimension of the Office of Papal Representatives," *The Jurist: Studies in Church Law and Ministry* 75, no. 2 (2015): 297-311.

[19] Peter C. Wagner, *Apostles Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 56.

[20] McNair Scott, *Apostles Today: Making Sense of Contemporary Charismatic Apostolates: A Historical and Theological Approach*, 23.

[21] Daniel Juster, *Apostolic Ministry and Authority* (Raleigh, N.C.: Lulu.com, 2017), 55.

original calling of apostleship from New Testament times until today, through the apostolic anointing of the Holy Spirit as a gift.[22] In this sense, it is an apostolic succession which is transmitted across successive generations in the history of the church, but is impossible for any human to predict whom God will appoint next and thus is independent of any denomination, firm process or long tradition.

Comparing the Relational Model of the NAR Movement

In the following section, the New Apostolic Reformation movement's relational model is examined by contrasting it with the question of the pope's legitimate power in the Roman Catholic Church tradition, which is again used as a lens for comparison.

The head of the Roman Catholic Church enjoys his authority by virtue of the legal position to which he was elected.[23] The pope is not only the head of the denomination and equipped with papal infallibility, but also the monarch of a state. He is the supreme teacher of the Roman Catholic Church and cannot err when he teaches on matters of faith or morals. The proceedings of the first Vatican Council (1869–70) define the conditions under which a pope may be said to have spoken ex cathedra (i.e. from his position as the highest teacher of his denomination).[24] Since 1929, the pope has also been leader of the Vatican City microstate, a city–state enclaved within Rome itself. As with many former monarchies in which the legislative, executive and judicial authority of government resides in the crown, the office of pope comprises all three expressions. The pope is elected by following clearly defined legal procedures and is granted the powers of his office, both spiritually, as the head of a denomination and earthly, as the leader of a state, as a consequence of the application of such procedures.

In contrast, the NAR scholar Peter Wagner refers to the works of Max Weber in order to demonstrate how the inner mechanism of the apostleship model works.[25] He states, "I am using the term 'charismatic' here, not in the theological sense, but in the sociological sense. Max Weber, the German sociologist regarded by many as the father of modern sociology, defines the term charisma."[26] As Weber pioneered a path towards understanding how authority is legitimated as a belief system, Wagner uses his works, especially his idea of the routinization of charisma, to explain charismatic authority describing the phenomenon of new apostolic leaders arising whom Christians

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[22] Timothy K Williams, *The Spiritual Gifts (Part 1): The Ascension Gifts of Christ and the Functional Gifts of God* (Maitland: Xulon Press, 2003), 326.

[23] Klaus Schatz, John A. Otto, and Linda M. Maloney, *Papal Primacy: From Its Origins to the Present* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 155.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Max Weber, a German sociologist and philosopher, had a profound influence with his ideas on social theories that are used to study and interpret social phenomena, proposing a theory of authority that included three types. See Max Weber, "The Three Types of Legitimate Rule," *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions* 4 (1958).

[26] C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking up the Church as We Know It* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1999), 114.

are willing to follow.[27] The three types of legitimate rule which are proposed by Weber, are discussed briefly in the following, together with how Peter Wagner applies them to the New Apostolic Reformation doctrine.

According to Weber, *legal authority* is founded on a set of rules which are applied both administratively and judicially, according to basic principles. The executors of these rules are selected according to defined legal procedures and their superiors are also subject to the same rules. Broadly, the rules regulate their powers, distinguish their private lives from official tasks and require written justification in the form of documentation.[28]

Traditional authority, as Weber points out, is based on a set of rules according to which authority is legitimised because it 'has always existed' and thus a long tradition of actual practice can be demonstrated. People in authority often acquire that authority simply by inheriting it. Officials are either personal adherents or loyal personal associates. Their authority is usually similar to that of those who have power over them, but simply of a lesser extent, and they are also often chosen due to inheritance. [29]

Charismatic authority, as Weber states, is based on the charisma of the leading figure, who demonstrates that they possess leadership qualities due to magical powers, a very special appeal, spirit, fortitude, or boldness. An adherent respects this person's predestined right to lead due to their unique qualities and charisma, not because of any long–lasting traditions or legal requirements. Officials are those who have voluntarily demonstrated their devotion to the leading person, including those who may possess their own charisma.[30]

Wagner notes that his understanding of today's apostles has strong similarities to Weber's third concept, that of charismatic authority.[31] Other Christians or ministries respect a person's authority to lead apostolically because of a unique quality and charisma, instead of any long–lasting tradition or legal powers. The apostles carry an anointing on their lives which increasingly gives them a godly authority. In this context, Wagner stresses the important basic necessity of every apostle having an exemplary character.[32] They must meet the requirements for being a 'blameless' leader, as defined in the New Testament in 1 Tim. 3:2. Wagner argues, "Apostles are apostles not because they are perfect, but because they have met God's standards of holiness and humility."[33] And he adds, "Apostles who continue to see the blessings and anointing of God on their ministry have learned how to humble themselves. Yes, it takes time, but it

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[27] This is also common among other Pentecostal scholars; see e.g. M. M. Poloma and J. C. Green, *The Assemblies of God: godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 46.

[28] Reinhard Bendix and Guenther Roth, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 294.

[29] Ibid., 295.

[30] Ibid.

[31] C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Publishing Group, 2000).

[32] McNair Scott, *Apostles Today: Making Sense of Contemporary Charismatic Apostolates: A Historical and Theological Approach*, 70.

[33] Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 39.

gets easier with maturity."[34] He considers that being an apostle is especially and primarily a matter of exhibiting an exemplary character, above any other single quality. Wagner argues that, "According to Max Weber, there is a clear distinction between legal–rational leadership in which the position confers the power and charismatic leadership in which the person has been entrusted with the power."[35] In the Roman Catholic Church, this level of legal power is complemented by an outstanding tradition in which traditional authority as a set of rules, is legitimised because it 'has always existed'. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, very few other Christian denominations can look back on so many centuries of tradition. It appears that the pope enjoys authority which is especially legitimised by the Roman Catholic Church's belief system, through a set of rules that is applied administratively and judicially.[36]

Instead, according to Wagner, an apostle moves within a voluntary network of relationships, with the reputation and recognition only growing slowly over time, as more and more peers and churches acknowledge that the gifts of an apostle are at work. According to Wagner, apostles have a spiritual gifting and special job, combined with exemplary characters. An apostolic ministry is defined by central tasks, such as receiving revelation, transmitting a vision, pioneering, establishing a functioning polity, discipling, sending off, and activating God's blessings in others, as well as aligning generations and equipping Christians in local churches.[37]

Therefore, it has to be pointed out that, "Charisma must become routineised into standardised procedures and structures if the group is to persist beyond the life of the figure who triggered it."[38] I assume that sociological realities suggest that apostolic networks will eventually lead to some form of institutionalisation.[39] Relational leadership is an approach which values leadership as a process where the question of purpose is at the core of a relational model: "Relationships are at the forefront of this type of leadership."[40] Therefore, it has to be considered that relational bonds will develop and change over time between an apostle and followers based on the notion of their social exchange; strictly voluntary relationships may be influenced by formal aspects like contractual questions between pastors and congregations.[41] An apostle moves within a completely voluntary network, and since this role does not have any institutionalised authority and thereby, Wagner expects an apostle to have an extraordinary character and a very humble attitude, pointing out, "there is no doubt that holiness of character

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[34] Ibid., 44.

[35] Wagner, *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking up the Church as We Know It*, 118.

[36] Norman Tanner, *New Short History of the Catholic Church* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 1.

[37] Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 28.

[38] Paul Gifford, *Religious Authority*, ed. John Hinnells, The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 409.

[39] Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 207.

[40] Paige Haber, *Progressive Leadership: Models and Perspectives for Effective Leadership*, ed. Kathryn A. Agard, vol. 1, Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations: A Reference Handbook (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010), 316.

[41] Craig Johnson and Michael Hackman, *Leadership: A Communication Perspective*, 7 ed. (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2018), 98.

generates authority."[42] The position of an apostle may remain informal but is nevertheless a position that has an impact on formal positions.

Analysing the Dominion Theology in the NAR Doctrine

In this next section, the notion of 'dominion theology' which is another cornerstone of the New Apostolic Reformation doctrine, is examined by employing a comparison. The *two kingdoms* doctrine of the German Lutheran church as one illustration for Presbyterial polity is used as a lens to examine the NAR movement's doctrinal perspective on legitimate interference in all matters of society in order to achieve transformation of cities and regions, and for the establishment of actively Christian values.

The Lutheran tradition's two kingdoms approach claims that the state and the church are two separate and autonomous realms; and therefore the state should not interfere with the church and the church should not interfere with the state.[43] According to this doctrine, God rules the worldly kingdom through secular government and its representatives by means of law, and the heavenly or spiritual kingdom through the gospel and grace which are preached and practised by the church. The two kingdoms doctrine is indeed the subject of an important discussion in contemporary theological thought. Whereas Martin Luther seemed to draw a firm line between spiritual and temporal governance, and stressed that the two realms should under no circumstances be confused or mixed, this has been interpreted over the centuries as if he had unravelled the secularisation of modern–day societies and given a completely free hand to the state authorities.[44] Both kingdoms are certainly distinct but at the same time, they are inextricably linked with each other. The two spheres are not rivals; they belong to one another. Luther's different spheres of authority are interdependent since the Bible cannot maintain societal peace and justice in and of itself, nor can civil government enact any human being's spiritual salvation. It is certainly justified to say that the German reformer fought strongly against society's secularisation in his day.[45] Although this understanding granted North American Lutherans, for example, a rigid separation of state and church in the United States, it also led to Lutheranism making only limited efforts to penetrate and remodel societies' social and political orders.[46]

The weakness of Luther's doctrine on this point arguably became particularly evident more than four centuries later during Nazism.[47] When the German regime announced laws which were racially highly biased, and which also had a dramatic

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[42] Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 24.

[43] Tim Chester, *Good News to the Poor: The Gospel through Social Involvement* (London: SPCK, 2012), 160.

[44] Per Frostin, *Luther's Two Kingdoms Doctrine: A Critical Study* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994).

[45] William Henry Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 15-16.

[46] Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 6.

[47] Joel Oesch, *More Than a Pretty Face: Using Embodied Lutheran Theology to Evaluate Community-Building in Online Social Networks* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2017), 82.

impact on the churches, several Lutheran theologians accepted that the regime had the authority, per divine mandate, to do so. The political developments in Nazi Germany caused some prominent Lutherans, such as the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, to reconsider the traditional Lutheran view.[48] It seems as if theological interpretations might have allowed them to be led astray in the past by the politically opportune inclinations of the times, and to bend Martin Luther's two kingdoms belief system into a plea and alligation for secularisation.[49] I agree with Nygren who argues, "Where Luther drew a clear line between spiritual and temporal authority, and expressly emphasised that under no circumstances should these two realms be confused, this has been interpreted as if he had thereby opened the door to the secularisation of society and given a completely free hand to the State."[50] Luther rather anticipated that the secular realm would be governed by godly German princes who would listen to the church and accept its admonitions.[51]

By way of contrast, one of the central elements of the New Apostolic Reformation movement's belief system is the expectation that the global ecclesia is commissioned to bring the entire world increasingly under Christianity's positive influence and dominion, and to progressively apply godly principles in actual practice here on earth, before the rapture of the *bride* and the return of Jesus Christ.[52] It is part of Wagner's eschatology that Christianity has a divine mandate via the Holy Spirit, to take dominion of God's creation during the end times. Wagner expects to see cities, regions and even nations transformed to such an extent that the kingdom of God's values will increasingly be supported in those spheres. Within this theological understanding, Wagner emphasises the role of apostleship and today's apostles' need to also take their places in the workplace in order to achieve this transformation and dominion.[53] Wagner argues that until now, many Christian minds might have been influenced by the two kingdoms doctrine, to distinguish between these two spheres, consciously or unconsciously: the sacred versus the secular, the clergy versus laity, the spiritual versus the worldly or the church versus the world. It is a pattern which tends to compartmentalise life and does not integrate and connect all its spheres. Work might fall into the belief system's secular category, while Christian ministry activities fall into the sacred category. Instead, Wagner emphasises that, "I want to focus on the first commonality, persevering leadership, in an attempt to show that territorial apostles are essential for successful, proactive social transformation....City transformation will rise or fall on persevering leadership....If this is true (and I believe it is), then a central question becomes, who are

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[48] Michael P. DeJonge, *Bonhoeffer's Reception of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 82.

[49] Harold J. Berman, "Religious Foundations of Law in the West: An Historical Perspective," *Journal of Law and Religion* 1, no. 1 (1983): 3-43.

[50] https://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/931 / Anders Nygren, *Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms* /Accessed on 31 May 2021.

[51] Scott H. Hendrix, "Loyalty, Piety, or Opportunism: German Princes and the Reformation," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, no. 2 (1994): 211.

[52] Paul C. McGlasson, *No! A Theological Response to Christian Reconstructionism* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2012), 66.

[53] John Weaver, *The New Apostolic Reformation: History of a Modern Charismatic Movement* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2016), 145.

the God–appointed leaders or spiritual gatekeepers of the city?"[54] Wagner pledges to pursue a dominion theology. Transformation of cities and regions will be fostered and facilitated by regional apostles who accept their God–given authority.[55]

Criticizing the Accountability Dimension of the NAR Doctrine

In this section, another principle of Presbyterial church government is considered in order to criticise and challenge the NAR belief system regarding accountability of leadership. Presbyterial church government is a less hierarchical form of church governance; a concept that emerged mainly from the Protestant reformation in Europe in which reformers abolished the office of bishop and diminished the status of a single priest presiding over a congregation to that of an equal team member within the presbytery.

As Juster points out, "In classic Presbyterianism, the ultimate authority in human government in the Body is in the Presbytery,"[56] and not in the local church pastor or the general assembly meeting. Only a few decisions are made by single individuals and hardly any by the complete congregation voting. Most decisions about all aspects of a local congregation's life are made by the session. These questions range from providing for worship, spiritual training and teaching for adherents in the congregation, through to organising the church's property, building, insurances and managing the annual budget. If anything must be decided, then the decision is made by majority within the session, after an opportunity for discussion and discernment.

How the local congregation is set up and governed has a direct impact on the way that local churches address any conflict and can have profound consequences for whether or not conflicts are addressed successfully. For instance, in recent years, some local German Roman Catholic churches have been shaken by reports of abusive clergy.[57] Heresy and departures from a generally accepted doctrine, power struggles, or simple malicious gossip, also present challenges, not only in mainline churches but also in Pentecostal and charismatic congregations.[58]

In view of this, the Presbyterial church polity constitutes a representative form of government which expresses the closeness of the local congregation and includes spiritual supervision and church governance by a group of selected elders. This creates accountability, provides well–defined checks and balances and minimises abuses of church authority.[59] "Because of the fact that each elder and pastor has an equal vote in the church's governing assemblies (Session, Presbytery and General Assembly), the

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[54] Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 125.

[55] Wagner uses the terms regional and territorial apostles synonymously.

[56] Juster, *Apostolic Ministry and Authority*, 52.

[57] https://www.dw.com/en/german-catholic-church-covered-up-cases-of-sexual-abuse-by-clergy/a-56958055 / Accessed on 24 May 2021.

[58] https://nypost.com/2021/02/15/hillsong-founder-brian-houston-moving-away-from-current-role/ Accessed on 24 May 2021.

[59] http://lakeopc.net/2016/the–advantages–of–presbyterian–church–government/? / Accessed on 31.12.2019. Paul E. Engle and Steven B. Cowan, *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 73.

Presbyterian principle of a plurality and parity of elders helps to rein in domineering personalities and prevent the potential abuses of a one–man rule."[60] Presbyterial church government provides accountability of the leadership team, and as such, it aims to protect local members from spiritually malignant persons, while guaranteeing that the pastor does not become the local 'king', whose word is final and definitive.

In contrast, the question of accountability in the New Apostolic Reformation movement is a contentious, debatable subject. Cannistraci, in his early book, *Apostles and the Emerging Apostolic Movement*, addresses the question of apostolic accountability as follows,

> What we observe in the New Testament is this principle of mutual accountability where the 'generals' become accountable to one another. This principle mandates that people become accountable to their top–level peers as well as to their ultimate head. It creates an effective relational network whereby authorities (especially in positions of headship) maintain openness, communication and teachability with one another. Within this arrangement, submission to one another is practiced and abuses are avoided.[61]

Cannistraci's suggested structure is quite clear regarding the accountability of a local church leader: they are answerable to a pertinent apostle. But to whom are the apostles accountable in turn? With an apostle's level of authority comes the demand for appropriate accountability. It is a crucial aspect of the NAR polity.

Wagner proceeds from Cannistraci's standpoint and argues, "In my opinion, the peer–level accountability is the one level on which the future integrity of the New Apostolic Reformation will undoubtedly stand or fall."[62] Apostles who decide to join any apostolic network voluntarily, place themselves under the leadership of a specific, overseeing apostle and accept any accountability mechanism involved. Wagner refers to the biblical example of the epistles to Timothy and Titus, who were members of Paul's apostolic team. Titus was under Paul's accountability, who told him in Titus 1:5 (NIV), "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint[a] elders in every town, as I directed you." According to Wagner, Titus was an apostle who oversaw the pastors and congregations in Crete.[63] However, this does not answer the underlying question: to whom is the supervising apostle accountable?

The NAR advocates have not yet offered any clear solution to the lack of accountability criticised by the NAR's critics. It leaves room for abuse by the apostles' leadership. This was an important factor which motivated Wagner to establish the International Coalition of Apostolic Leaders, an organisation intended to provide accountability between apostles, although there is no evidence to suggest that such a

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[60] http://lakeopc.net/2016/the–advantages–of–presbyterian–church–government/ Accessed on 17 May 2019.

[61] David Cannistraci, *Apostles and the Emerging Apostolic Movement* (Ventura, Calif.: Renew Books, 1998), 151-152.

[62] Wagner, *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking up the Church as We Know It*, 122.

[63] Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 78.

network can completely strict accountability. The idea for the ICAL emerged in Singapore in 1999 where several apostolic leaders were discussing how a collection of global apostolic leaders could advance the kingdom of God. Peter Wagner accepted the position of Presiding Apostle effective 2001. ICAL's mission is "to connect apostles' wisdom and resources in order that each member can function more strategically, combine their efforts globally, and effectively accelerate the advancement of the Kingdom of God into every sphere of society."[64] Membership is voluntary, so members also have the option of detaching themselves from the network voluntarily. The apostolic peer–level network defines its goals as follows, "ICAL provides apostolic accountability. ICAL members are committed to maintaining the highest possible levels of integrity of personal character and operational methodology among its members. The ICAL Advisory Council gives oversight and enforces the code of biblical conduct required of each member to insure the standards of ICAL."[65] A central challenge for the NAR's apostolic leadership model is establishing effective accountability mechanisms, in order to avoid malfeasance and the abuse of power. As membership is voluntary, the most severe sanction is presumably expulsion which might attract some public attention and cause critical public debates.

Determining Authority in Individuals of the NAR Belief System

Finally, another conceptual pairing that is examined in the following section, is the aspect of authority in groups or in individuals. The Baptist tradition is used as one illustration for congregational polity and how this church polity's traditions can speak to the NAR movement's practice, is analysed. The congregational context acts as the lens through which the NAR doctrine is determined.

Congregational church government firmly recognises the authority of the local members to make the church's decisions and is thus a form of democracy at a basic level.[66] The local congregation forms the platform for organising its members' church lives through services, worship, house groups, Sunday school, youth groups, Christian scouting organisations such as Royal Rangers, finances, etc. A local church is often able to finance a full–time, ordained, senior pastor who was trained at a Baptist bible college, and sometimes the support of an additional, full–time, youth pastor. The highest authority for all the local church's principal decisions, activities and doctrine, rests with the general assembly meeting of the congregation. It is this church forum which decides and votes on all local church matters, including appointing a full–time pastor, by following a defined vocational process and a simple or absolute majority decision.[67] This *democracy* is a system of leadership in which the members of the local congregation exercise authority and power by voting. This principal leadership mechanism is highly valued in the Baptist tradition.

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[64] https://www.icaleaders.com/about–ical / Accessed on 22 May 2019.

[65] https://www.icaleaders.com/about–ical/prospectus / Accessed on 22 May 2019.

[66] Stanley J. Grenz, *The Baptist Congregation* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2002), 55.

[67] George D. Parsons and Speed B. Leas, *Understanding Your Congregation as a System: The Manual* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994), 31.

In contrast to congregational doctrine, the New Apostolic Reformation movement argues that a culturally rather than a biblically directed development of democracy is a factor that can weaken denominational churches over time.[68] Wagner assumes that in traditional denominations, "The locus of corporate trust is not the pastor…There is a general mind–set that individuals are not worthy of a great deal of trust on any level. Groups, somehow or other, appear to be safer."[69] The American Rick Warren, Senior Pastor of the evangelical Saddleback megachurch, expresses it in this way: "What do the words committees, elections, majority rule, boards, board members, parliamentary procedures, voting, and vote have in common? None of these words is found in the New Testament!"[70] Wagner stresses that apostles are first in the divine order for leadership of congregations, and argues, "In traditional denominations, the locus of authority is ordinarily found in groups, not in individuals. That is why we are accustomed to hearing about deacon boards, boards of trustees, presbyteries, general assemblies, and so on. In the New Apostolic Reformation, however, trust has shifted from groups to individuals."[71] His approach whereby power rests with apostolic leaders, results in a concept in which, at the local congregation level, a pastor now acts as the leader and the shepherd of the church rather than as a democratically elected employee of the congregation who is controlled by it. At the regional level, an apostle is a leading figure who has won the affection and trust of the local pastors and thus been granted authority by the network of church leaders and congregations. The local churches and their pastors willingly submit to the apostle's spiritual authority. According to Wagner, this extraordinary authority comes from a special God–given anointing of the Holy Spirit on this particular leader, in which the spiritual gift of apostleship entails supernatural signs and wonders. Reference is made to the biblical report by the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 12:12 (NIV), "I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles." The performance of supernatural manifestations, such as physical healing, can be a visible confirmation of apostleship. This doctrinal thought model of apostolic leadership is based on voluntary relationships between congregations and non–obligatory networks of churches, with unsolicited associations and free alignments.

III. CONCLUSIONS

As there is little constructive research on NAR church governance, the core leadership practices were analysed applying a lens comparison strategy, using the dominant church polities as lenses through which Wagner's concept was viewed.

Contrasting the understanding of key leadership elements in this article has illustrated the differences between the NAR doctrine and the dominant church polities. Concerning the understanding of the apostolic office, I have shown in this article that the

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[68] Wagner, *Churchquake! How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking up the Church as We Know It*, 89.

[69] Ibid., 81.

[70] Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 377.

[71] Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 23.

Roman Catholic doctrine is very different from the NAR belief system. Peter Wagner defines apostleship as a supernatural gift from God, which is related to the personal calling of an individual whom the Holy Spirit anoints as an apostolic leader, whilst the Roman Catholic Church's tradition arguably defines their leader's office as an institutionalised office, dependent on election by cardinals who themselves were elected to that office, papally appointed. It appears that the New Apostolic Reformation movement's terminology is incongruent with that of the Roman Catholic Church and their nomenclatures; thus, it is recognizably different in nature from the traditional structures, leadership mechanism and hierarchies of this particular polity.

The New Apostolic Reformation movement's relational model, as this article has highlighted, is unequivocally distinct from the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and its hierarchical system. In this church tradition, legal and traditional authority follow a pattern which is indeed different from the charismatic authority associated with the NAR's understanding of apostles with a godly anointing on their lives.

Moreover, by contrasting the classical tradition of a Presbyterial polity dimension and NAR understanding, this article has demonstrated that the core element of the New Apostolic Reformation movement, dominion theology, is noticeably different from the Lutheran church's tradition. The two kingdoms concept aims at a clear distinction between secular government and the spiritual kingdom, whilst the NAR concept claims to have a divine mandate through the might of the Holy Spirit, to recapture the dominion over God's earth, including having an impact upon secular government and other spheres.

Furthermore, in this article, a core leadership question about the NAR movement, the aspect of accountability, was contrasted with the Presbyterial system of church government, which has shown how these forms of church polity differ regarding this particular dimension. The Presbyterial church polity sends a strong message to the NAR leadership concept, because the NAR's teaching still lacks a clear and convincing answer regarding the challenging aspect of apostles' lack of accountability. It remains a contentious issue in the New Apostolic Reformation movement. With the considerable extent of an apostle's authority comes the demand that appropriate accountability mechanisms are defined.

Finally, the NAR movement's doctrine, that apostles are first in the divine order of congregational leadership, is significantly different from the tradition of congregational church government and actual democratic practices within Baptist church structures.

At the beginning of this paper, it was pointed out that the article proposition is the central argument that the apostolic organisational leadership model represents an alternative approach to the established church polities.

Table 1: Unity and Diversity of The Apostolic Leadership Model

Church Governance	Illustration	Core Lenses
Episcopal	Roman Catholic Church	Papal Office; Hierarchical; Succession in Office; Elected by Bishops; Authority by Virtue of the Legal Position; Canon Law
Presbyterial	German Lutheran Church	Representative Authority: Presbyteries; Accountability of Leadership Team; Two Kingdoms: State and Church
Congregational	Baptist Churches	Democracy at Basic Level: Local Congregation Decides - Authority in Groups
Apostolic	New Apostolic Reformation	Sovereign Appointment by God; Ascension Gift; Recognition Process; Acknowledgement by Congregations; Charismatic Authority; Voluntary Relationships & Networks; Relational Leadership; Dominion Theology & Transformation; Spiritual Authority in Individual

It has been argued that this model is a genuine church governance concept because it is distinct from the traditional structures, leadership mechanisms and hierarchies of the dominant polities.

Contrasting these core leadership principles has demonstrated the differences between the church polities and indicated that the New Apostolic Reformation movement is establishing an alternative approach within today's Christianity. This leads to additional considerations for future research, namely the question of the apostolic model's applicability in actual, real–world practice. If Christians decide for themselves that the NAR leadership model is a valuable theological concept, then there are still many practical questions to be answered: for instance, the process of becoming an acknowledged apostle, prophet, etc. at the present time, the experience of working together in a five–fold ministry team, the relationship between the team, local congregations and other Christian ministries, the practice of accountability, the question of money and how the apostolic ministry is financed, the appreciation of ecumenical endeavours and the challenge of regional collaborations beyond different doctrines. Is the NAR leadership concept really genuine, suitable for practical use and operable?

I argue that the academic literature does not yet contain many valuable, detailed case studies on the actual apostolic leadership practice. Helpful is research already

done, for instance, by William Kay on several apostolic networks in Britain.[72] It would be positive to undertake more case studies with the aim of testing the NAR model's suitability for practice. I suggest qualitative and quantitative research methods which can collect evidence about the lived NAR experiences. This question will have to be critically examined in further theological debates.

About the Author

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[72] William Kay, *Apostolic Networks of Britain: New Ways of Being Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007). William Kay, "Apostolic Networks in Britain Revisited," *Pneuma* 38 (2016).