



journal of biblical
perspectives
in leadership

Volume 12, No. 1 | Spring 2022



The Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership
is a publication of the Regent University School of Business and Leadership
1000 Regent University Drive | Virginia Beach, VA 23464 | 757.352.4550
jbpl@regent.edu | ISSN 1941-4692 | © 2022



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From the Co-Editor

Joshua D. Henson, Ph.D.
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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. We begin 2022, with a special issue of our journal that stems from our 2021 Regent Roundtables on biblical diversity. The presenters from the roundtable were invited to submit their manuscripts for consideration of this special issue.

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.



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Hospitality in Gospel Leadership: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Diane J. Chandler, Ph.D.

This paper explores the role of hospitality in gospel leadership, defined as the act of presenting the person, character, and work of Christ to others through the power of the Holy Spirit. With hospitality entailing a warm welcome and meeting the needs of the stranger or outsider, the paper first examines the John 4:4-42 narrative where Jesus engages the Samaritan woman in a hospitality tandem, all designed to draw her into a saving knowledge of himself. The historical background regarding the animosity between Jews and Samaritans serves as a backdrop to their interaction. A brief literary analysis of the John 4 text highlights the hospitality theme, extending to the townspeople whom she beckons to meet Jesus. Second, the paper highlights other instances in the New Testament where hospitality demonstrates gospel leadership in the four gospels, Acts, and the epistles. The third section of the paper offers practical applications connecting the theme of hospitality to gospel leadership. The paper concludes by highlighting the necessity of the Holy Spirit in guiding genuine hospitality initiatives to nurture relationships with the other—all in hopes of being Christ's heart, hands, and feet for gospel advance.

Hospitality in Gospel Leadership: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the Sychar well demonstrates the power of hospitality in gospel advance and the transethnic telos of his leadership. John's gospel recounts that "he had to go through Samaria" (Jn 4:4), suggesting Jesus' explicit intention to interact with this particular Samaritan woman who would subsequently encourage many in her town to meet and receive Jesus.¹ Since Jews and Samaritans maintained a hostile relationship, their unlikely encounter highlights Jesus' determination to bring salvation and life transformation to all, including the marginalized. Jesus crossing culturally laden ethnic and gender boundaries demonstrates gospel leadership through the vehicle of hospitality.²

This paper places the John 4:4-42 narrative in conversation with contemporary culture regarding establishing relational, transethnic connections nurtured through the vehicle of hospitality.³ I argue that both Jesus and the woman offered each other hospitality—she being asked to provide him with a drink at his request and Jesus offering her living water (Jn 4:10). Through their providential meeting, Jesus demonstrates how encountering the other without judgment can lead to spiritual transformation and gospel advance regardless of social location, including ethnicity and gender.⁴ Thus, the John 4 narrative exemplifies that racial reconciliation is both possible and necessary for the gospel to be called into effect for all races, ethnicities, and cultures, with Jesus as the exemplar (Mt 28:18-20).⁵

Biblical hospitality refers to welcoming of the stranger.⁶ In Greek, the word hospitality, or *philoxenia* (φιλόξενοϛ), is comprised of two words: (1) *phileo* (φιλό), meaning "brotherly love" and (2) *xenos* (ξενοϛ), meaning "stranger."⁷ Thus, hospitality entails participating in God's warm welcome and meeting the stranger's physical, social, and spiritual needs, the outsider, the poor, and the disenfranchised.⁸ In an ancient Mediterranean context, hospitality extended to travelers who needed lodging,

¹ All biblical references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

² I define gospel leadership as the act of presenting the person, character, and work of Jesus Christ as the perfect reflection of the Father to others in humility and grace through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

³ Andrew E. Arterbury, "Breaking the Betrothal Bonds: Hospitality in John 4," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72 (2010): 73-83.

⁴ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel according to John*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1953), 176.

⁵ See Diane J. Chandler, "Spiritual Formation: Race, Racism, and Racial Reconciliation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 13, no. 2 (2020): 156-75.

⁶ Thomas W. Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 7. The opposite of *philoxenia* is *xenophobia*, meaning the fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers.

⁷ See Benjamin Corey, "True Biblical Hospitality: Loving Immigrants, Strangers, and Enemies," *Sojourners*, 2013, para. 8–10, accessed March 14, 2022, <https://sojo.net/articles/true-biblical-hospitality-loving-immigrants-strangers-and-enemies#>; Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 31.

⁸ Amy G. Oden, ed., *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 14.

protection, and provision, with public inns a rarity and financial means often scarce.⁹ Rather than a gracious solo act, biblical hospitality connotes a heart posture, or “an orientation that attends to otherness, listening and learning, valuing and honoring,” whereby we discern God’s redemptive purposes in and for the other; and in so doing, further God’s mission to those before us.¹⁰

This paper begins first by describing the historical background of the John 4:4-42 narrative where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman. This section includes two subsections: (1) the historical background regarding the relational hostility between Jews and Samaritans, and (2) a brief literary analysis of the John 4:4-42 text relative to hospitality, where Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well and the ensuing effect upon her town. Second, the paper moves to a discussion of the practice of hospitality as evidenced in other New Testament passages. Third, the paper offers practical application of the text to today, suggesting that enacting genuine hospitality becomes a cross-cultural gospel conduit demonstrating gospel leadership. Finally, the paper concludes by highlighting the Holy Spirit’s role in hospitality encounters as conduits for sharing and embodying the gospel in transethnic contexts.

Jesus Encounters the Samaritan Woman

Historical Background of John 4:4-42

Jesus engaging the Samaritan woman at the well could not have been more culturally scandalous.¹¹ Historically, Jews and Samaritans shunned one other. The underlying reason for their hatred relates to the Samaritans being descendants of two groups: (1) the Israelites who remained in the Northern Kingdom of Israel after the Assyrian captivity in 722 B.C., and (2) the foreign colonists from Babylonia and Media whom the Assyrian conquerors brought into the Samaritan region as inhabitants.¹² 2 Kings 17:23-31 affirms this historical reality, including the new inhabitants bringing with them their pagan deities. What resulted was religious syncretism, whereby Samaritan inhabitants worshiped their gods alongside worship of the living and true God (2 Kg 17:32-33).

Eventually, the Israelite remnant in the region intermarried with the imported foreigners, resulting in what the Jews regarded as ritual and ethnic impurity. Over time, the belief system and worship of Samaritan inhabitants morphed through sustained ritualistic and theological modification when compared to the Judaism practiced by the Jews.¹³ For example, the Samaritans rejected the writings of the prophets and some

⁹ Andrew Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting* (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 14-15.

¹¹ Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 4 (Sacra Pagina Series) (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 117.

¹² Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel of John I-XII*, vol. 29 (Anchor Bible) (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 170.

historical accounts such as 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, along with wisdom literature found in Proverbs and Psalms. Samaritans rejected these canonical writings by repudiating their emphasis on Judea and David's genealogical line centered in Jerusalem.¹⁴ Consequentially, Samaritans focused almost exclusively on the Pentateuch (i.e., Genesis through Deuteronomy).

Other sharp divisions also arose. First, Samaritans refused to worship in Jerusalem and established their religious center at a new temple built on Mount Gerizim.¹⁵ Mount Gerizim was where God through Moses pronounced blessings on the Jewish people before crossing the Jordan to take possession of the land (Dt 11:29), blessings repeated by Joshua during covenant renewal (Jo 8:33). Second, Samaritans thwarted the restoration of Jerusalem led by Zerubbabel following the Babylonian Captivity of the Southern Kingdom in 597 B.C. Third, when Alexander the Great and his Greek generals dominated Palestine around 330 B.C., they enlisted sympathetic anti-Jewish Samaritans to build their base in Samaria, further distancing their Jewish counterparts. Fourth, in the 2nd century B.C., Samaritans helped Syrian leaders in their wars against the Jews.¹⁶ Fifth, in 128 B.C., the Jewish high priest led the Jews to destroy Shechem and the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, punctuating Jewish antipathy toward Samaritan worship practices.¹⁷

With this contentious history, animosity between Jews and Samaritans continued to simmer. However, what did draw them together was an expectation of one to come. For Samaritans, their belief was tied to a prophet-like figure called the "Taheb," one like Moses who would restore and rule as a messianic figure.¹⁸ Rooted in the promise of Deuteronomy 18:15-18, Samaritans believed that God would raise up a prophet like Moses as "the Coming or the Returning One" and put words in his mouth to which the people were to listen.¹⁹ The exchange between Jesus and the woman highlights the woman's understanding of a messianic figure to come but not his actual identity. Given this historical background, discerning the significance of the exchange between Jesus

¹³ Gary M. Burge, *John* (The NIV Application Commentary) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 140-41.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁵ Located in the West Bank south of Nablus and close to the biblical site of Shechem, Mount Gerizim consists of three peaks, considered collectively by Samaritans as a sacred mountain. Today, Samaritans comprise a Palestinian community of "a few hundred people." See "Mount Gerizim and the Samaritans," UNESCO (n.d.), accessed March 14, 2022, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5706/>.

¹⁶ Brown, *The Gospel of John I-XII*, 170.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 610, 619.

¹⁹ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, rev. edit., *Word Biblical Commentary* (vol. 36) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2005), 65.

and the Samaritan woman relative to hospitality becomes clear. The next section reviews the interaction between them.

Literary Overview of John 4:4-42

After learning of the Pharisees' concern regarding his growing ministry, Jesus leaves Judea to return north to Galilee (Jn 4:3). Rather than take the eastern bypass route through Perea, common among Jews to avoid the more direct route through Samaria, Jesus "had to go through Samaria," (4:4), an intentional decision linked to his divine mission of the One who sent him (cf. 4:34). After arriving in the town of Sychar, Jesus sends his disciples to secure food in the nearby town, leaving him alone at Jacob's well at noon.²⁰ Jesus traveling through Samaria to encounter this Samaritan woman accentuates the extent to which God loves one individual.²¹ His masterful interaction with her evidences the Father's care and concern for a single soul whose ethnicity and culture differed from his own.

Typically, women drew water together at an earlier, cooler time of day rather than at noon. Yet, this lone woman comes to draw water during the heat of the day, likely to avoid the presence of other women, augmenting moral suspicion. At the well, she encounters Jesus, who is tired and thirsty from the journey. Demonstrating gospel leadership, Jesus sensitively stewards a reciprocal process of extending hospitality to reach the Samaritan (and eventually those in her town) through seven exchanges—with each exchange threaded with hospitality.

First, as guest, Jesus asks her, as host, to give him a drink (4:7). Sherri Brown notes that Jesus puts himself "in the role of a supplicant requesting hospitality for a basic need" and that the Greek text is in the imperative: "Give me a drink."²² Kenneth Bailey observes, "Jesus understand profoundly the need to be a receiver," thus engaging in a hospitality interchange.²³ Asking a stranger for a drink, especially if an urgent need, would not have been considered unusual in this Middle Eastern context. Given hospitality norms, providing hospitality, even for strangers, was part and parcel of Mediterranean culture.²⁴

²⁰ Located at the foot of Mount Gerizim, Jacob's well is 250 feet from Shechem, which is why some commentators believe that Sychar refers to Shechem (see Brown, *The Gospel of John I-XII*, 169). The Samaritans identified as descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh—grandsons of Jacob and sons of Joseph. See Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary* (New Testament Library) (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 98.

²¹ Cullen I. K. Story, *The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose, Pattern, and Power* (Shippensburg, PA: Ragged Edge Press, 1997), 96-97.

²² Sherri Brown, "Water Imagery and the Power and Presence of God in the Gospel of John," *Theology Today* 72, no. 3 (2015): 294. She notes that the Greek text is actually an imperative: "Give me to drink," rather than a question.

²³ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 205.

²⁴ John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 15-20.

On the other hand, ancient Judaism cautioned men against conversing with a woman, especially when alone, to avoid sending the wrong message.²⁵ Crossing the gender barrier only deepens when Jesus asks the *Samaritan woman* for a drink, laden with countercultural perplexity, prompting the woman's surprise. Receiving food or water from Samaritans or using their vessels would bring immediate defilement to Jews. Yet, Jesus crosses social, cultural, ethnic, and gender boundaries to move this woman from this awkward cultural space to reception of living water through a methodical interchange.²⁶ In response, the woman asks a question, highlighting the inappropriateness of Jesus' request by identifying their ethnic differences ("How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?—v. 9).

Second, Jesus comments that if she knew the gift of God and who was requesting a drink, he would have given her living water (v. 10).²⁷ Jesus now moves from the position of guest to hospitable host by offering a gift, which also draws on Mediterranean hospitality expectations.²⁸ In response, the woman questions two things—his lack of means for drawing water ("Sir, you have no bucket," v. 11) and his identity ("Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well . . . ?," v. 12). Jesus whets her appetite for eternal realities, which appear to be overshadowed by pressing earthly ones. Essential for living, water needs to be drawn. Metaphorically, the woman needs to draw from Jesus in this dialogical exchange to find the true source of life. F. F. Bruce comments, "Here the water in Jacob's well, symbolizing the old order inherited by Samaritans and Jews alike, is contrasted with the new order, the gift of the Spirit, life eternal."²⁹The "gift of God" as living water is indeed God's salvation, "life mediated by the Spirit sent from the (crucified and exalted) Revealer-Redeemer."³⁰

Third, to deepen his role as host in satisfying his guest's needs, Jesus affirms that "everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (vv. 13-14). Whereas well water comes from below, the water Jesus provides springs up into eternal life. As mentioned above, the true gift that Jesus alludes to earlier (v. 10) is explicitly identified here—eternal life. In response, the woman now asks for this water so she will not thirst again and need to draw more water (v. 15). Jesus has led her to see her physical need but not yet her

²⁵ Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 596-97.

²⁶ Keener notes that Jesus crosses four hurdles to reach this woman: (1) social boundaries (John 4:6-9), (2) the moral barrier (4:7-8), (3) the gender barrier (4:7-9), and (4) the ethnic barrier (4:9) in *The Gospel of John*, 591-601.

²⁷ What was Jesus referring to when he mentions "living water?" Brown suggests that living water refers to Jesus' revelation or teaching or the Spirit communicated by Jesus (*The Gospel of John I-XII*, 178-79). Marianne Meye Thompson contends that living water suggests eternal life and God's Spirit (*John*, 101).

²⁸ Arterbury, "Breaking the Betrothal Bonds," 77.

²⁹ F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 104.

³⁰ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 60. Interestingly, according to Augustine, the gift of God (living water) refers to the Holy Spirit in Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *Ancient Commentary on Scripture, John 1-10* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 148-49.

spiritual condition. However, Jesus skillfully shifts the dialogue from physical water to her personal life, which he uses to draw her to a deeper understanding of his true gift as the gift-giver.

Fourth, the interchange seemingly shifts midstream when Jesus asks the woman to “Go, call your husband, and come back” (v. 16). Jesus widens the circle of hospitality by asking the woman to call her husband, fully realizing her chequered past.³¹ Acknowledging having no husband (v. 17), the woman circumvents a complete answer, most likely resulting from a sense of shame. Jewish teachers forbade women from marrying more than twice, three times at the most.³² Jesus does not allow this exposé to sever the relational interchange and continuing hospitality, nor does he return to it after her admission.

Fifth, in not condemning the woman, Jesus affirms her honesty—that she has no current husband but has had five, while the man she is currently with is not her husband (vv.17b-18). Changing the subject perhaps to deflect attention from herself, she suggests that Jesus is a prophet (:19), as her curiosity and spiritual thirst deepen. Despite her past, the Samaritan woman still has “religious questions and yearnings.”³³ Interestingly, Samaritans rejected prophets after Moses, anticipating that the final messianic Moses would one day appear (cf., Dt 18:18).³⁴ She raises the contentious issue of legitimate worship location, whether Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem (v. 20). Samaritans viewed Mount Gerizim as the holiest of mountains, leading to conflict with the Jews who established Jerusalem as their worship center. Interestingly, Arterbury sees her theological challenge as “testing the stranger” before extending further hospitality.³⁵ Nevertheless, she remains curious and tries to reconcile this Jewish “prophet” with her religious worldview.

Sixth, Jesus bypasses the religious worship center debate altogether (v. 21). Had Jesus adamantly upheld that Jerusalem was the superior place for worship, she likely would have rejected him as a false prophet.³⁶ Jesus avoids this possibility to ensure continued hospitality. By upholding the culminating message of salvation through spiritual hospitality that he has been patiently building, Jesus upholds Judaism as superior: “salvation is from the Jews” (v. 22), “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him,” and “God is spirit” (vv. 23-24a). The coming hour

³¹ Arterbury, “Breaking the Betrothal Bonds,” 77.

³² See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 61; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, vol. 1, trans. Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 433.

³³ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 433.

³⁴ Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 610.

³⁵ Arterbury, “Breaking the Betrothal Bonds,” 78.

³⁶ Ben Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 121.

includes “the cross, the resurrection, and the outpouring of the Spirit . . . that [seeks] true worshippers out of Jewry and out of Samaria and out of every nation.”³⁷

The life-giving Spirit blows where it will (cf. Jn 3:8), even to those outside the Jewish community, by extending the gift of hospitality and invitation. As Bruce suggests, the question is not *where* people worship God but *how* they worship him.³⁸ God's genuine worship cannot be tied to location or people group but rather to a singular heart devotion to the living God. The woman responds by acknowledging that she knows that the Messiah is coming and “when he comes, he will proclaim all things to us” (v. 25).

Seventh, having tapped into her inner spiritual thirst, Jesus announces, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you” (v. 26). The disciples' arrival with food interrupts further response from the woman. Their seeing Jesus speaking with the woman reinforces Jesus' esteem for women. William Hendriksen observes, “Thus, quietly and without ostentation, Jesus gives these men [disciples] a lesson in the true, spiritual emancipation of womanhood. Without changing any creation-ordinance regarding the proper place of woman, the Lord indicates that before God the soul of a woman is not less precious than that of a man.”³⁹ The hospitality exchange culminates in Jesus' confident declaration as Messiah.

Jesus' declaration causes her to leave her water jar and return to her town, beckoning the villagers to come to meet the man who told her “everything I have ever done” (v. 29), catalyzing an extension of godly hospitality to her townspeople. Interestingly, Witherington notes the irony of the woman leaving her water jug to return to her town to witness about Jesus, while the disciples have left Jesus to find food.⁴⁰ Keener observes, “The disciples had gone into a Samaritan town with apparently little effect on the populace; Jesus had ministered to one woman and brought the entire town to himself.”⁴¹ Hospitality received manifests in hospitality extended.

In summary, the woman never does offer Jesus the water that he has requested. She doesn't need to. The hospitality extended by Jesus has met its telos—inviting the woman into a saving knowledge of himself—defying all artificial social, cultural, ethnic, and gender barriers. Through genuine hospitality characterizing his sensitive gospel leadership, Jesus interacts with the woman to draw her into a relationship with himself. His hospitality creates a ripple effect, as the woman enthusiastically invites the townspeople to meet Jesus for themselves (v. 29). The result? “Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’” (v. 39). As Barrett emphasizes the disciple's task is to bear witness, he further adds, “The woman joins with John the Baptist as witness, and in fact

³⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come: An Exposition of the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 53.

³⁸ Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 109.

³⁹ Hendriksen, *The Gospel according to John*, 176.

⁴⁰ Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 121.

⁴¹ Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 624.

precedes the apostles."⁴² By choosing this woman, in effect, Jesus elevates the position of all women, including Mary Magdalene, who witnesses to the disciples of the resurrected Lord (cf. John 20:19).⁴³

The ripple effect of hospitality continues, as the townspeople invite Jesus to stay with them, which he obliges for two days (v. 40). The length of a guest's stay is noteworthy. The *Didache*, a Christian manual developed before 300 A.D. referring to the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, states: "Let every apostle who comes to you be welcomed as the Lord. But he should not remain more than a day. If he must, he may stay one more. But if he stays three days, he is a false prophet" (*Did.* 11.4-5; cf. 12.2).⁴⁴ Jesus seems to have abided by traditions of hospitality so as not to overstay his welcome but long enough to ensure that the conversion is assured. He fully receives the Samaritans' hospitality by dwelling and eating with them.

Many more Samaritans become believers "because of his word" (v. 41). They not only know Jesus for themselves, but they also have a personal testimony: "we know that this is truly the Savior of the world" (v. 42b). The gospel message of salvation readily embraced by the Samaritans contrasts with the Jews of Jerusalem who opposed him (cf. Jn 2:18, 20; 4:1-3, 44; 6:30, 41, 52).⁴⁵ Furthermore, Jesus' self-revelation has fulfilled the Samaritans' hopes and expectations, clearing the way for further gospel leadership to the Samaritans through Philip's subsequent preaching and miraculous signs (Acts 8:4-7), followed by Peter and John's baptizing them in the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 8:14-17). Jesus' hospitality to the Samaritans challenges sanctioned exclusivity as being normal.⁴⁶ Through his gospel leadership, presenting himself as Messiah and Lord, Jesus exemplifies that true worship in Spirit and in truth is not restricted to one people group, as he opens the gospel to the whole world, beyond the boundaries of Judaism, through the vehicle of hospitality.⁴⁷

Not surprisingly, Jesus draws upon a long tradition of hospitality, chronicled in the Old Testament. Four examples illustrate this tradition. First, Melchizedek, king of Salem, offered bread and wine to Abraham and blessed him after Abraham rescued Lot in a masterstroke of honor and hospitality (Gen 14:18). Second, Abraham extended hospitality in welcoming three unexpected visitors with a specific announcement to convey (Gen 18:1-15). Abraham quickly acts by first bowing in deference to them, then offering to wash their feet and provide respite, and finally by inviting them to dine with him and Sarah. These guests prophetically confirm that they will bear a son, even in

⁴² Charles K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2nd edit. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 243.

⁴³ See Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 215.

⁴⁴ For the *Didache* citation, see Arterbury, "Breaking the Betrothal Bonds," 80; Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles*, 2nd edit. (Reading the New Testament Series, vol. 4) (New York: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 123-24.

⁴⁵ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 455.

⁴⁶ Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 457; Burge, *John*, 150.

their old age, and that God intends to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. These revelations occur in the context of hospitality.

Third, God's hospitality extends to Moses and the Israelite nation through the provision of manna as they traveled to the Promised Land. God exhorts Israel not to oppress the alien (Ex 23:9), because God "defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt" (Dt 10:18-19).

Fourth, regarding fair wages, Israel was to treat aliens equitably (Dt 24:14) and not deprive them of justice (Dt 24:17). God reminds them: "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this" (:18). Along with Israelite widows and the fatherless, aliens could enjoy some of the harvest left by harvesters (:20-21).⁴⁸ God reminds them again that the Israelites had been enslaved people in Egypt (:22). Looking forward, Jesus also solidifies the place of hospitality in gospel leadership for those who would come after him. The next section addresses biblical hospitality in other New Testament contexts.

The Practice of Hospitality Elsewhere in the New Testament

Christian tradition evidences a long history and practice of offering hospitality to those in the family of God, those considered one's neighbor, and those considered strangers. In Scripture, God challenges the people of God to be a hospitable people who represent a hospitable God.⁴⁹ Specifically, God the Father sent his Son into the world as *the* penultimate gracious and hospitable act. Then, the Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, another hospitable act, to empower God's people for Kingdom advance. Consider the early church devoting themselves to fellowship in a family context of meals (Acts 2:42) and Paul's directive to "extend hospitality to strangers (Rom 12:13). Hospitality transforms relationships when inviting others to sit at a common table, receiving them with grace, and meeting felt needs as the embodiment of Christ's heart, hands, and feet.

Because Jesus was infilled and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:1, 14), his ministry of hospitality was pneumatologically constituted, meaning that the Spirit moved in and through him to draw others to the Father. In light of many gospel narratives and epistles that render hospitality vital in the life of the believer and the church, this section highlights selected passages from the gospels and the epistles where hospitality reflects

⁴⁸ Also see Lev. 19:34: "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God;" and Lev. 23:22: "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the Lord your God."

⁴⁹ Joshua W. Jipp, *Saved by Faith and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 2-3.

gospel leadership. In such cases, hospitality in the life of Jesus always reflects divine encounter.

Hospitality in the Gospels

In Luke's gospel, we find Jesus eating meals with various people. Meals become conduits of hospitality and, as Tim Chester suggests, "represent friendship, community, and welcome," in addition to contexts for embodying and enacting mission.⁵⁰ Jesus demonstrates gospel leadership by eating with tax collectors and sinners at the home of Levi, powerfully communicating that the gift of God's grace is available to all (Lk 5:27-31), while condemning hypocrisy on another occasion where Pharisees criticize him for not washing before eating (Lk 11:38). Jesus is anointed at the home of Simon the Pharisee during a meal, whereby Simon's lack of hospitality comes to the fore after a sinful woman anoints Jesus (Lk 7:36-50). After the overcome woman dries the tears that have fallen on Jesus's feet, she kisses them, and pours oil on them in "a shocking degree of intimacy."⁵¹ Joel Green observes, "Everything about this woman is wrong; she does not belong here and the actions she performs are inappropriate in any setting for someone like Jesus."⁵² Yet, Jesus receives her gesture as a gracious guest, recognizing her sincerity. With this woman, as with others, Jesus's reception of hospitality extends to the marginalized and rejected. His association with them reveals God's extravagant grace. Jesus personifies gospel leadership through forgiveness, gratitude, and the power of reciprocal love to redeem and restore, which the sinful woman received.

In Luke 9:10-17, Jesus serves as a gracious host in feeding the five thousand, chronicled in all four gospels, demonstrating that he is indeed the bread of life (cf., Jn 6:35, 41, 48, 58). In other words, Jesus is both the host of eternal life and the meal itself.⁵³ Elsewhere, Jesus highlights how hospitality should extend to the marginalized when conveying the Parable of the Good Samaritan to an expert in the Law (Mt 10:25-37). Jesus presents the Samaritan man as embodying an ethic of hospitality by actualizing the love of God through the love of neighbor. In contrast to Jewish religious leaders, the Samaritan, an unlikely source, provides a model of costly and inconvenient hospitality.

At another Pharisee's home, Jesus takes this opportunity to counter legalism on the Sabbath after healing a man with dropsy (Lk 14:1-14).⁵⁴ Jesus shares the Parable of

⁵⁰ Tim Chester, *A Meal with Jesus: Discovering Grace, Community, & Mission around the Table* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 14.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵² Joel E. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (New International Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 309. For more on the Pharisees viewing the woman as engaging in scandalous intimacy, see Craig L. Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 131-37.

⁵³ Pohl, *Making Room*, 30.

⁵⁴ Dropsy, or edema, refers to the swelling of soft tissues caused by excess water accumulation in the body.

a Great Banquet, where those invited offer excuses for not attending (i.e., busy with property, work, and family). The master instructs his servant to go out to call in the poor and disabled (:21). The message continues to reverberate—Jesus invites the disenfranchised into his hospitable community.⁵⁵ Chester aptly asserts, “The table fellowship of Jesus, with its ethic of grace rather than reciprocity, was creating a new countercultural society in the midst of the Empire.”⁵⁶

The role of guest continues, for example, when Jesus stays at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (Lk 10:38-42). Jesus even goes so far as to invite himself to Zacchaeus’s home (Lk 19:5-6). By welcoming Jesus into their homes, they become guests of God’s redemptive hospitality.

One of the most compelling N.T. passages related to instructive hospitality appears when Jesus speaks of Kingdom qualification, referencing the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31-46). Interestingly, Jesus identifies hospitable practices as qualifiers: “for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited” (:35-36). Jesus’ instruction is explicit. We are to offer hospitality to those who can least reciprocate. As Oden reminds us: “Eyes that can only see Christ in the triumphant and powerful will fail to recognize Christ present in the stranger or the poor.”⁵⁷ Gregory of Nyssa similarly comments, “The stranger, those who are naked, without food, infirm and imprisoned are the ones the Gospel intends for you [to reach].”⁵⁸ It requires eyes to see Jesus in the other.

However, hospitality through table fellowship crescendos at the Last Supper (Lk 22:7-23), where Jesus becomes the master host who humbly serves his followers. The bread and wine convey welcome to disciples who participate in the life of God’s Son and anticipate his return. Looking back to Passover and forward to the Messianic Kingdom, the Lord’s Supper confirms God’s eternal hospitality in the coming age, with the cross as the entry point.⁵⁹ Through the Eucharist, Christians are re-invited to participate in the life of Jesus—his resurrected life, and through the Spirit, the promise of eternal hospitality in the Kingdom to come.

Although the disciples “will not eat it again it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Lk 22:16), they could rest in knowing that Jesus would “go to prepare a place” for them, with his promise to return and take them with him (Jn 14:2-3), another indicator of eternal hospitality. The Eucharist itself sets the hospitality of God on full display, with

⁵⁵ Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 36.

⁵⁶ Chester, *A Meal with Jesus*, 81.

⁵⁷ Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 51.

⁵⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, “Homily: As You Did It to One of These, You Did It to Me,” in Amy G. Oden, ed., *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 59.

⁵⁹ Chester, *A Meal with Jesus*, 103.

divine love beckoning all to come to the table in humble solidarity as a manifestation of loving God and loving neighbor through a declaration of hope. Just as in the Eucharistic breaking of bread during his post-resurrection encounter with two disciples on the Emmaus Road (Lk 24:13-35), Jesus becomes known through breaking bread over a meal, which so often is where the Spirit moves in contemporary settings today. Like the first century, the Spirit builds the developing community through hospitable agape love.⁶⁰

Hospitality in Acts and the Epistles

The inbreaking of the Spirit at Pentecost signals God's ongoing ministry of hospitality, where redeeming grace and divine love extend beyond Jewish strictures to the whole world (Acts 2:1-21; 9:15). Meal fellowship would now include Samaritans and Gentiles, with the Spirit being divine host, resident within believers, and the divine dispenser of hospitality to others through genuine grace-filled *koinonia*.⁶¹ In the words of Paul, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom 15:7). Jews were to accept Gentile believers as honorable members of the body of Christ who also are sent into the world. However, this widening gospel access causes angst for Peter when directed by the Spirit in a vision to respond to Cornelius's invitation to visit, which results in Cornelius sending his emissaries to Peter. In hospitable Middle Eastern fashion, Peter invites Cornelius's emissaries to spend the night with him before leaving Joppa for Caesarea. Early church believers continue the tandem of being both host and guest through the Spirit's presence and direction as the gospel advances.

Numerous passages exhort believers to practice hospitality. For example, following the Spirit's outpouring, the postnatal church daily broke bread in homes, eating together, experiencing joy, and welcoming new converts (Acts 2:42-47). After exhorting believers to love and honor one another, Paul instructs them to "contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers" (Rom 12:13). Paul also presents Timothy with qualifications for overseers, including being hospitable (1 Tm 3:2), while also exhorting Titus to the same (Tim 1:8).

In addition to the apostle Paul's verbal directives, Koenig highlights three observations that represent Paul's gospel leadership and missional focus through tangible hospitable acts as both receiver and giver.⁶² First, Paul, as receiver, experienced extremes in provision but welcomed hospitality ("In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need," Phil 4:12). He received provision from the Philippian church (Phil 4:15-16), one of the few that supported him. Second, as giver, Paul offered provision by collecting the saints in Jerusalem (Rom 15:26-27), with Gentile believers providing for their Jewish counterparts. Recognizing the mistrust between Jewish and

⁶⁰ Lucien Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 50.

⁶¹ See Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 134-35.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 71-82.

Gentile believers, Koenig suggests, “What Paul foresees here is a new stage of partnership with strangers. . . . We must presume that he expected it somehow to hasten the ingathering of ‘the full number of the Gentiles,’ . . .”⁶³ Third, as teacher, Paul sent a tactful letter to Philemon, the Christian enslaver, urging him to welcome back previously enslaved Onesimus as a brother. Paul admonishes Philemon to receive Onesimus back again as a guest, as though Onesimus were Paul himself. Through all three texts, Paul demonstrates that “every act of hospitality by believers takes place on both the spiritual and physical levels,” reflecting gospel leadership.⁶⁴

Exercising hospitality is also an essential indicator for leadership fitness and the glue that held the early church together. Believers are challenged in Hebrews 13:2 to show hospitality to strangers, as they may be angels unawares (Heb 13:2), and Peter challenges believers to offer hospitality “without complaining” (1 Pt 4:9). The late Bolivian theologian Mortimer Arias observes that the gospel message advanced as a “centripetal mission or evangelization by hospitality.”⁶⁵ Historically, gospel advance came through the gift of hospitality by serving as the extended heart, hands, and feet of Jesus, suggesting gospel leadership at its finest. The next section draws practical applications from the John 4:3-42 narrative of Jesus with the Samaritan woman and the other New Testament examples previously described.

Practical Applications

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman and the highlighting of other New Testament texts around the theme of gospel leadership through hospitality provide timely lessons applicable to us today.

First, gospel leadership involves hospitality—the sharing of experiences and meals with those from different backgrounds forging trust and relational bonds, which make room for sharing the gospel—the love of God in word and deed. Hospitality in the Scriptures usually centered around personal welcome of another, as when Jesus offered rest to the weary (Mt 11:28-30), the offering and receiving of personal provision to meet felt needs as Jesus embodied with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:7), and the sharing of table fellowship in the early church (Acts 2:42). When Jesus shared meals with others, he often “challenged the prevailing religious and cultural boundaries by the company he kept and exposed the hidden patterns of social exclusion. He was a guest in the home of tax collectors, dined with sinners, and taught hosts to welcome those most likely to be excluded.”⁶⁶ However, the intimacy of a shared meal breaks the power of exclusivity, lowers defenses, and contributes to mutual acceptance. It should be noted that gospel leadership upholds the cross as the precursor to hospitality. The apostle Paul exemplifies gospel leadership when exhorting the Ephesians that the

⁶³ Ibid., 74.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁶⁵ Mortimer Arias, “Centripetal Mission or Evangelization by Hospitality,” *Missiology: An International Review* 10, no. 1 (Jan. 1982), 69-81.

⁶⁶ Pohl, *Making Room*, 73.

“dividing wall” of hostility” between Jews and Gentiles was destroyed at the cross through the blood of Jesus (Eph 2:11-22). Through the cross, both Jews and Gentiles became fellow citizens as members of God’s household, which dismantled ethnic exclusivity led to gospel advance.

Second, gospel leadership reflects concern for *the one*, not just the multitude, regardless of race, ethnicity, religious status, gender, age, and moral history.⁶⁷ For example, Jesus prioritized the Samaritan woman over others when traveling through Samaria (Jn 4:4) while personally engaging Nicodemus, an individual member of the Sanhedrin (Jn 3:1-21). Jesus received the sinful woman (Lk 7:36-50), and he invited himself to Zacchaeus’s house (Lk 19:1-10). Jesus’ gospel leadership to *the one* teaches us that God personally invites individuals into relationship with himself and that every effort to reach *the one* is needful.

Third, gospel leadership through hospitality counters *xenophobia* (Gk. fear of the stranger). In our contemporary culture, some quarters of Christendom resist transethnic community-building, even among ethnic groups in the same locale. Furthermore, with immigrants relocating in increasing numbers, the people of God have an opportunity to provide welcome and assist with felt needs. Joshua Jipp emphasizes, “The Scriptures emphatically reject xenophobia. The people of God are meant to show a different way,” and “must reject anything that dehumanizes, stigmatizes, and perpetuates violence against the marginalized and vulnerable.”⁶⁸ Without discriminating, Jesus’ mission to reach those outside the boundaries of Judaism highlights that he had “other sheep that did not belong to this fold” (Jn 10:16). When God’s people show hospitality to others, including foreigners, they welcome the Lord (Mt 25:35).⁶⁹

Fourth, gospel leadership through hospitality embraces a posture of listening. In a world with many conflicting voices, having a listening posture communicates a caring, unjudgmental demeanor toward the marginalized. “People are transformed when someone is willing to listen to their stories, to share a meal with them to find their insights and concerns important and interesting.”⁷⁰ Active listening contributes to healing for those who carry pain and rejection and leads to asking sincere questions, not to pry or expose, but rather to express genuine concern and build up the other so that the relationship may deepen.⁷¹

⁶⁷ See Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 125.

⁶⁸ Jipp, *Saved by Faith and Hospitality*, 9.

⁶⁹ Edward L. Smither, *Mission as Hospitality: Imitating the Hospitable God in Mission* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2021), 19.

⁷⁰ Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D. Pohl, *Friendship at the Margins: Discovering Mutuality in Service and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 80. Cf. Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God*, 12-13.

⁷¹ Smither, *Mission as Hospitality*, 125.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of John 4:4-42, this paper argued that extending hospitality to those of a different race or ethnicity reflects gospel leadership, which I define as the act of presenting the person, character, and work of Christ to others through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit led Jesus to meet the Samaritan woman, and Spirit enabled him to discern her background. The Spirit caused the woman to discern that Jesus was more than a prophet, and the Spirit prompted her to testify to her townspeople. The Spirit who opened the hearts of the Samaritans so that they could embrace Jesus as “the Savior of the world” (Jn 4:42b) oversaw gospel advance to an entire people group. Through acts of hospitality and welcome, the Holy Spirit can extend invitation, love, and grace that testifies to the person and character of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit blows (cf. Jn 3:8) in unusual places to those we might not normally encounter. Yet, if our hearts are open, God can use the gift of hospitality to draw others to himself. Of course, hospitality involves not only being hospitable hosts but also learning to be appreciative guests. As Koenig rightly observes, “The Spirit speaks within us, assuring us of our own welcome by God (Rom. 8:15-17); but [he] also calls us forward, leading us into new frontiers of hospitality. According to Luke especially, it is the Spirit who enables us to change our guest and host roles in ways that are appropriate to the Church’s mission.”⁷² May each of us encounter new frontiers of hospitality authored by the Holy Spirit to make Christ known in transethnic contexts through gospel leadership.

About the Author

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⁷² Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 134.



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Building Sustainable Business from Diverse Teams: An Intertexture and Social and Cultural Texture Analysis of Jesus' Recruitment Exercise as an Authentic Leader

Oluwatoyin O. Olanrewaju

This paper aimed to explore the authentic leadership (AL) of Jesus through the recruitment exercise of the twelve disciples as captured in Mark 1:16-20; 3: 13-19; Mathew 4:18-22, 10:1-4; and Luke 5:1-11, 6: 12-16. Then, link this attribute to the building of sustainable Christianity as a guide to building sustainable organizations. The methodology for the paper was Socio-Rhetorical Analysis (SRA), precisely its subsets of intertextual analysis and social and cultural texture analysis. The SRA revealed Jesus as an authentic leader, judging by the alignment of his recruitment actions with the four components of ALT: Self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008). ALT has some limitations. For instance, authentic leaders should not divulge certain personal information that would be counterproductive to achieving corporate goals. Despite the criticism of this construct, the sheer number of empirical evidence of its veracity has made it still a subject of interest to both practitioners and researchers. Further research is needed to strengthen further the impact of diversity in building sustainable organizations, as shown in Jesus' recruitment exercise and result.

Building Sustainable Business from Diverse Teams: An Intertexture and Social and Cultural Texture Analysis of Jesus' Recruitment Exercise as an Authentic Leader

At the beginning of the 21st century, the corporate scandals among global conglomerates, plus the surge in terrorism (9/11), led to an outcry against morally bankrupt leadership (George, 2003; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). George (2003) called for organizational leadership that could build global sustainable businesses. Authentic leadership theory (ALT) evolved with the call for an alternative leadership theory that addresses the morality of leaders and organizational sustainability when scholars led by Luthans and Avolio (2003) called for papers on the theory.

In addition, globalization has made finding and developing leaders who can effectively work across cultures and geographical boundaries critical (Lundby et al., 2014; Yukl & Gardner, III, 2020) as the workplace and the marketplace operate within a multicultural environment which calls for leaders with a global mindset and new skill sets (Moodian, 2009). A lack of intercultural competence and adaptability eventually affects corporate productivity and the bottom line (Moodian, 2009). A few research studies like Fu and Yukl (2000) and Schaubroeck et al. (2007) on this global challenge are insufficient for generalization because they studied a few countries (Yukl & Gardner, III, 2020). Though a meta-analysis has been conducted (House et al., 2004), there are calls for more research to understand cross-cultural leadership better (Yukl & Gardner, III, 2020). Furthermore, a multicultural setting means a flat organizational structure that reduces the minimum social stratification in the workplace. Fresh intake could now access the CEO within project groups with attendant organizational sustainability rather than the up-down structure that restricts access to management (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018; Cooper et al., 2005).

This study adds to the knowledge on ALT from the Biblical perspective, which has not been researched much (Adepoju, 2020). There will be an SRA (using the intertexture and social and cultural texture analysis) of Jesus' recruitment of the 12 apostles and applied to ALT components. This analysis is significant as a reference point for Christian leaders in secular and religious organizations who want to lead authentically and sustainably. Hence this paper shows how the authentic leadership (AL) nature of Jesus in his recruitment choices of the apostles made a difference in fulfilling sustainable global organizations' goals.

Did the recruitment of the apostles by Jesus depict the AL style of Jesus, leading to a classless team that culminated in a sustainable non-governmental body (NGO) posthumously to date? Did the horizontal relationship with the apostles lead to a sustainable, effective influence on organizations' sustainability? The significance of the answers to these questions is the guidance to organizational leaders building sustainably. So, this study aims to check the applicability of Jesus' recruitment choices as an authentic leader to building sustainable organizations.

Literature Review

Authenticity has always been traced to the ancient Greek aphorism, "To thyself be true," an admonition to self-awareness and self-moderation (Parke & Wormell, 1956). Gardner et al. (2011) listed 13 definitions of AL in a review of 91 AL publications. The definition of Walumbwa et al. (2008) has been the most encompassing of the definitions. Walumbwa et al. define AL as "a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (p. 94). This paper will attempt a comprehensive literature review. ALT is about the genuineness of leaders and their leadership (Northouse, 2010).

The publications of George (2003) and George et al. (2007) contributed immensely to both practitioner and academic development of ALT. The first book came when the globe saw the dire consequences of unethical leadership in the political and corporate environment – the rise in terrorism (9/11), the collapse of WorldCom, and Enron, among others. With a call for ALT research by Luthans and Avolio (2003), the publications sustained both scholarly and practitioners' interests in ALT. Luthans and Avolio believed the moral behavior of leaders would affect their followers, changing the whole organization, and leaders do not have to force their followers to act in any way.

Kernis (2003) and Kernis and Goldman (2006) found four AL components in an extensive review of the meaning of authenticity from Philosophy literature. Later, the Gallup Leadership Institute (GLI) associates (Bruce Avolio, William Gardner, Fred Luthans, Doug May, Fred Walumbwa, and their colleagues) corroborated and built on Kernis' components in their research (Gardner et al., 2011). The components are self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective, which has become the theoretical foundation for ALT (Gardner et al., 2011).

Self-Awareness

Shamir and Eilam (2005) believed that leaders could develop authenticity by sharing their life stories. They advocated that leaders look at their past experiences and turn them into stories to become more self-aware. In addition, they said that self-reflection is essential in developing authentic leaders. Walumbwa et al. (2008) said self-awareness is "demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning-making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time" (p. 95).

Relational Transparency

Yukl (2010) said authentic leaders do not hide the truth from their subordinates to build trust in their relationship. Walumbwa et al. (2008) said this is being real and not

being fake with subordinates, showing one's authentic self. Relational transparency is a crucial component that births trust in leader-follower relationships when the latter feel and see their leaders' genuinity.

Balanced Processing

Yukl (2010) said this is the leader making decisions in the best interest of the subordinates. Walumbwa et al. (2008) stated that this is where a leader examines all aspects of an issue before deciding. It is also a character trait of a leader who seeks the views of subordinates before taking the final decision.

Internalized Moral Perspective

Yukl (2010) said this is about a leader seeking to do the right thing and not the popular thing. Walumbwa et al. (2008) said this is a test of the moral fabric of the leader, where decisions are taken not from external pressure but internal conviction. "The authentic leader does not try to coerce or even rationally persuade associates, but rather the leader's authentic values, beliefs, and behaviors serve to model the development of associates" (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 243).

During the first decade of the 21st century, there were many academic publications with little scrutiny and criticism of the process; and an absence of multicultural and multidisciplinary inputs (Gardner et al., 2011). There has been an avalanche of publications in tens of thousands fulfilling these requirements in the last decade. These are qualitative as well as quantitative research to assess ALT. There are also empirical articles exploring ALT in diverse disciplines, from exegetical analysis to nuclear medicine. McCabe (2008) and Adepoju (2020) used the inner texture analysis of SRA to study John 21 and Philippians 2:5-11, respectively and applied the interpretation on ALT. McCabe (2008) posited Jesus as a change agent, while Adepoju (2020) concluded that Jesus is the ultimate authentic leader ever lived (p. 45). Both scholars agreed from their research that Jesus was an authentic leader. Henson (2017) reported a correlation between the moral development component of ALT and the ten principles in Paul's letter to Titus. The study equally discovered a close relationship between moral development in the secular and sacred contexts, and there could be a scriptural reconfiguration of the former.

In education, Eja et al. (2020) saw a positive correlation between authentic, cultural, balanced leadership and adequate school supervision in 94 schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Gill et al. (2018) tested and confirmed that when human resources (HR) leaders are authentic, employees' misrepresentation of HR goals, policies, and actions does not happen. Instead, HR policies align with the way employees perceive HR and the attainment of organizational goals. In nuclear medicine, Johnson (2019) said, "(a)authentic leadership has positive implications for health-care settings, including improved patient care, job satisfaction, motivation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing" (p. 181). Peus et al. (2012) stated that the empirical research on 306 businesses and 105 research organizations showed supervisor-employees satisfaction

and team effectiveness with employees making extra efforts and demonstrating organizational commitment when there is leader self-knowledge and self-consistency. The leader's trustworthiness seems to be the basis of the team's effectiveness. Tijani and Okunbanjo (2020) investigated the impact of AL on organizational commitment in the Information Technology (IT) industry using an IT company in Nigeria. The result was a direct positive impact on organizational commitment. Vem et al. (2017) researched to verify if AL could reduce mental exhaustion and increase job satisfaction in the hospitality industry and discovered it could. Bakari et al. (2017) tested AL on employees' readiness for change. The result suggests that employees must embrace change for AL to prepare employees for change. Braun et al. (2010) showed no marked difference between males and females in their relationship with psychological capital and authentic leadership though the study observed a significantly lower relationship between women than between men. In Braun et al.'s investigation of the relationship between the gender of leaders and authentic leadership perception, two of the five studies show increased authentic leadership perceptions for female leaders.

Much empirical research exists from other cultures in response to the initial criticism that most of the ALT literature was from Western cultural contexts (Gardner et al., 2011). They are from diverse cultures like Nigeria (Allen-Ile et al., 2020; Emuwa & Fields, 2017), Latin America (Hernandez, 2018), China (Zhang et al., 2012), India (Malik et al., 2016), Philippines (Roncesvalles & Sevilla, 2015), Turkey (Baker, 2015; Müceldili et al., 2013; Zehir & Narcikara, 2016), Jordan (Emeagwali et al., 2018), Iran (Zamahani et al., 2011), Taiwan (Wang & Hsieh, 2013), and Thailand (Uppathampracha & Guoxin, 2021).

After the criticism of the overreliance of ALT on the organizational leaders for its success, which is apt, much empirical research has come up to address the impact of ALT on leaders-followers/employees relationship. Perhaps, Hirst et al.'s (2016) query on this gap drives home the point better. They queried the focus on leaders when corporate failures are often a result of ethical failures at various levels of leadership (JP Morgans, Lehmann Brothers). Hence, they prod for research on AL at multiple levels across organizations. Avolio et al. (2004) and Ilies et al. (2005) are two of the earliest research on the impact of AL on leaders-employees/followers relationship. Avolio et al. (2004) accepted authentic followership as a core part of AL and requested clarity on the process linking AL to followers' behavior. Ilies et al. (2005) attempted to answer by using the four components of ALT (Walumbwa et al., 2008) to analyze leaders' impact on followers' well-being. They indicated the conditions where AL could positively impact followers/employees. Ilies et al. also called for more research on the impact of AL on leaders-follower/employees relationship. Levesque-Côté et al. (2020, 2021) studied why AL always leads to a positive leaders-followers experience. They used self-determination theory and discovered that authentic leadership practices (ALP) lead to most employees performing optimally on their jobs, having higher organizational commitment and performance, and unwillingness to leave the company.

Yammarino et al.'s (2008) study showed that AL promoted multi-level positive organizational behaviors (POB), which in turn increased performance (p. 705). It is not

all the research that is from surveys. Hannah et al. (2011) conducted a field study of 47 Army action teams over nine weeks to analyze the correlation between team leader authenticity, team authenticity, teamwork behaviors, and team outcomes. The result showed a relationship between team leader authenticity and teamwork behavior and outcomes. Also, when authenticity strength is higher, team authenticity-teamwork behavior relationships are stronger. While Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) criticized ALT (more on this later), they proposed a new ALT where all members, leaders, and followers/members seek to be authentic rather than only those in leadership. Rego et al. (2013) studied 51 teams to confirm the relationship between AL, team virtuoso, team affective commitment, and team potency. The result showed that AL leads to team potency through the mediating roles of team virtuous and team affective commitment. Müceldili et al. (2013) studied how AL predicts innovativeness through employees' creativity. The study's findings showed that AL positively impacts both employees' creativity and innovativeness. Erkutlu and Chafra (2013) studied the relationship between AL and organizational deviance. They said that trust and psychological contract are essential variables to followers imbibing AL's behaviors and values. They collected data from 849 lecturers and their Chairs from ten state universities in Turkey. The result showed a significant negative relationship between AL and organizational deviance.

Leroy et al. (2015) surveyed 30 leaders and 252 followers in 25 Belgian service companies to analyze the relationship between AL, authentic followership (AF), follower essential need satisfaction, and follower work role performance. The result showed a positive relationship between AL, AF, and follower essential need satisfaction. There was also a positive relationship between follower essential need satisfaction and follower work role performance. Arda et al. (2016) examined the impact of AL behaviors on employees' and organizational performance and the leaders-followers relationship. The result stated that AL impacts followers, organizational performance, and leader-follower relationships. Steffens et al. (2016) showed a direct correlation between leaders who put collective interest above theirs and a high organizational commitment from the followers/employees to achieve collective organizational goals.

Researchers equally studied ALT in high and low power distance cultures for applicability. Petan and Bocarnea (2016) studied high-power and low-power distance cultures of Romania and the USA, respectively, and tested for ALT components. They discovered that both cultures have the same positive correlation level. Gill and Caza (2018) looked at the impact of AL on organizations through the direct impact on followers and indirect impact on the colleagues of their followers. The result proved positive on both counts. Peter (2016) explored how AL behaviors impact Nigerian organizations' employee engagement and ethical culture from 457 employees in three Nigerian organizations. The result showed positive correlations between AL and the two.

There has been an increase in the criticism of ALT compared to its nascent stage. According to Reichers and Schneider (1990), this is proof that ALT has moved from the first stage of concept introduction and elaboration to the second stage of

concept assessment and augmentation. Initially, most of the criticism was around two areas. The first criticism that researchers resolved was the overreliance of ALT on self or the leader. Researchers conducted much empirical research on the impact of ALT on leaders-followers relationship and AF. The second criticism was insufficient foundational academic research on the construct before theorizing (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Cooper et al., 2005; Hirst et al., 2016; Nicholson & Carroll, 2013; Yamarinno et al., 2008). Alvesson and Einola (2019); and Einola and Alvesson (2021) posited the complete disintegration of ALT as a theory that AL is better off as two separate words. They argued that the theory could discredit academics and universities if practitioners have undesirable outcomes from embracing ALT. They also warned that ALT could lead to an identity crisis among managers and followers who want to live up to its unrealistic ideals. Though Gardner et al. (2021) answered most of Einola and Alvesson's (2021) objections, the latter still reiterate the call to abandon ALT as a theory that ALT is not a construct.

This study will approach ALT from a Biblical perspective; it is a perspective that still requires more studies compared to other methodologies (Adepoju, 2020, pp. 34-35). The study will analyze the recruitment exercise of the 12 disciples by Jesus using the SRA exegetical method. Then, the interpretation of the recruitment exercise will be applied to ALT, paying attention to how Jesus displayed AL, using the components of ALT. By so doing, showing how Jesus built Christianity, a sustainable movement from his socially diverse 12 apostles.

The study will answer the following questions: What lessons can be learned about ALT, using its components, from the exegetical analysis of Jesus' recruitment of the 12 apostles as captured in Mark 1:16-20; 3: 13-19; Mathew 4:18-22, 10:1-4; and Luke 5:1-11, 6: 12-16 (English Standard Version, 2001/2021)? Furthermore, what are the implications of the learned lessons for a contemporary understanding of how to use a socially diverse team to build sustainable organizations? This paper has two research questions to address. First, how does the recruitment exercise of Jesus show him as an authentic leader? Second, how does Jesus being an authentic leader influence his building of a sustainable, enduring enterprise (Christianity) to date posthumously?

Research Design

SRA is one of the methodologies that researchers use to exegete pericope. It is a scientific, systematic, holistic, and spiritual exegetical methodology that interprets and applies scriptures to contemporary times (Henson et al., 2020). It is the methodology this paper will use for its exegetical analysis. SRA uses five textures: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture (Robbins, 1996a, 1996b) to analyze its pericope. This study will use only intertexture and social and cultural texture to exegete the pericope on the recruitment of the 12 apostles (Mark 1:16-20; 3: 13-19; Mathew 4:18-22; 10:1-4; Luke 5:1-11; 6: 12-16), interpret and apply the information to the components of ALT.

Intertexture Analysis

Intertexture analysis is the second tool of exegesis under SRA. Intertexture explores the relationship of a text with the world outside the text (Robbins, 1996a). This analysis uses four filters to exegete a pericope. These are oral-scribal intertexture; cultural intertexture; social intertexture; and historical intertexture (Henson et al., 2020).

Oral-Scribal Intertexture

Oral-scribal intertexture involves analyzing other spoken or written texts inferred in a text (Henson et al., 2020). Henson et al. (2020) explained that oral-scribal intertexture comprises recitation, recontextualization, and reconfiguration. The pericope in this study does not have oral-scribal intertexture as there is no direct or indirect quotation of any spoken or written scriptures.

Cultural Intertexture

Cultural intertexture helps the interpreter understand insider knowledge (Robbins, 1996a). Robbins (1996a) says this understanding is through cultural references, allusions, and echoes, showing "cultural concepts and traditions" (pp. 58-59). Culture and religion are the same among the Jews (J. D. Henson, personal communication, June 21, 2021).

'Mountain' in Mark 3:13 and Luke 6:12 is a reference to a Jewish tradition of spiritual encounters with God. A few mountaintop encounters in the scriptures are: God gave the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai; the ark of Noah landed on Mount Ararat where he offered a sacrifice to God, and God made a covenant of rainbow with humankind; God asked Abraham to go to a mountain he would show him to sacrifice Isaac, and he manifested himself as the Jehovah Jireh (the miraculous provider) there (Exodus 20; Genesis 8; Genesis 22). In the New Testament, Jesus often withdrew to a mountain to pray, preach, and teach (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16).

Social Intertexture

Social intertexture is the social knowledge the people of a particular region have irrespective of their location and insider knowledge (Robbins, 1996a). According to Robbins (1996a), there are five categories of social intertexture: social roles, social identities, social institutions, social codes, and social relationships.

Social Roles. People understand social roles which have spelled-out responsibilities (Henson et al., 2020). In the pericope, the social roles are a leader and the disciples. Jesus called those he decided to make his disciples and gave them a clear job description (JD) - to be with Jesus, preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons (Mark 3:14-15; Mathew 10:1). Even if Jesus did not give the JD to the disciples, the expectation from the leaders and their disciples is evident in the Jewish culture; the culture expects the disciples to serve their leaders (Henson et al., 2020).

Social Identities. Social identities are pertinent to understanding the cultural, religious, and sociological development of the people of a region (Henson et al., 2020). Mark 3:18 identified Simon as a zealot. Zealots were revolutionaries against the Roman domination of the Jews. There was no need to explain who zealots were to the readers because everyone knew in the region.

Social Codes. Henson et al. (2020) defined social codes as written and unwritten rules of behavior, relationship, and appearance that everyone in a region knows. The people in Jesus' time were familiar with the phrase 'sent out' in Mark 3:14. They knew God sent out prophets for divine assignments in the Scriptures (Joshua 1; Jeremiah 1; Jonah 1). The people also knew what 'to preach' meant. Each of the prophets sent by God had a specific message to preach. Having 'authority,' as stated in Mark 3:15, to carry out an assignment is equally familiar to the Jews.

Social Relationships. Social relationships seek to understand the relationships at the time of the text, which is significantly different from contemporary times (Henson et al., 2020). The pericope is majorly on the relationship between a leader (Jesus) and the apostles, a mentor-mentee relationship. Mark 3:16 shows that though Jesus had a special relationship with 12 out of his huge adherents (Luke 6:13), a few were closer to him. In Mark 3:16-17, he renamed three disciples - Peter, James, and John, and these are the three that went with Jesus everywhere.

Furthermore, from this list is a favorite - John, who was popular among the 12 apostles. However, there were records of Jesus' one-on-one with other disciples like Nathaniel, Philip, Andrew, and even Judas Iscariot (John 1:43-51; 6: 5-6, 8-14; John 12:4-6). Could there be reasons for the affinity Jesus had for the three? After a massive breakthrough in their businesses, all three left their boat to become fishers of men (Luke 5:1-11).

In this pericope are also father-son relationships. James and John were the sons of Zebedee, and James and Thaddaeus were the sons of Alphaeus. There were three siblings among the disciples. Peter and Andrew, James and John, and James and Thaddaeus (Mark 3: 16-18). Likewise, there were relationships among the 12 disciples(team), for instance, Philip and Andrew. In addition, there was a professional relationship in the pericope. Peter and Andrew were business partners of James and John (Luke 5: 6-11).

Social and Cultural Texture

Social and cultural texture analysis is the third analysis of the SRA methodology. It "looks to discover a person's social and cultural location, view and habits inhabiting the original text's time and space" (Henson et al., 2020, p. 124). It is different from social and cultural intertexture, which are subtextures of the second analysis under SRA - intertexture. Robbins (1996a) explained that cultural and social intertexture deals with references, echoes, and allusions to cultural connotations and social roles, institutions, codes, and relationships. Robbins described the social and cultural texture as

answering the social and cultural person who lived in the pericope world. Perusing the narrative of the recruitment exercise of Jesus in the pericope, what did the writers see or hear as they wrote? Why is it essential for Mark, Mathew, and Luke to capture the recruitment of the 12 that way? What is their worldview?

Conversionist Worldview

The first is the conversionist worldview. This worldview believes the world is corrupt, and the way to change it is by repenting, converting, and transforming into better individuals, and the transformed individuals then change society (Henson et al., 2020). Mark 3:14 mentioned two of the reasons that Jesus chose the 12 - to be with him and preach. The first reason implied being with Jesus to influence them to become like him and convert. Hence, their conversion and transformation are the essence of the first objective to be with him, as stated in Mark 3: 13-19. Then, the disciples could preach, that is, demonstrate to others through their lives, conduct, deeds, and words how to be converted.

Thaumaturgical Worldview

Robbins (1996a) explained that this worldview seeks immediate relief for suffering individuals through mostly supernatural intervention and eventual access to heaven after this life. The third assignment of the 12 was to cast out demons (Mark 3:15, Mathew 10:1a); the fourth was to heal the sick (Mathew 10:1b). These are expectations of the supernatural intervention to relieve the tormented and the sick here on earth first.

Reformist Worldview

The writers are also reformists. The reformist worldview says the world is corrupt because its system is evil, and by reversing the evil, the world system can change for good (Henson et al., 2020). Jesus' promise to make Peter; and Peter and Andrew fishers of men in Mathew and Luke, respectively (Mathew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11) is a reformist statement. Thus, instead of using the fishing system, they will now use it for fishing for men. It will lead not only to individuals but also to changing the entire world system for good.

Common Social and Cultural Topics

Honor, Guilt, and Rights Cultures. Robbins (1996a) stated that honor culture is others' measurement of individuals by their power boundaries, sexual status, and societal positions. It was the case in Jesus' time; men dominated the culture and were preoccupied with moving up the ladder of honor in society. Peter falling at the feet of Jesus, asking him to leave because he is a sinful person (Luke 5:8), is more an honor and shame expression. Peter felt his limitation and inadequacy. He honored Jesus but felt shame for his inability as a fisherman to catch fish until Jesus came to his rescue. He felt worthless (Luke 5:4-8). In the same vein, honor for Judas was to measure up and move up the societal ladder hence his pilfering from the purse (Henson et al.,

2020). His betrayal of Jesus might not be as much for the reward as for social recognition by the religious leaders of the time and to be more honorable than the remaining 11 disciples.

Dyadic Agreements. Could Judas Iscariot be thinking of his relationship with Jesus in the context of their day as containing dyadic agreements? These are informal agreements of reciprocity. A party to a relationship expects reciprocity of any gift or act of kindness (Malina, 2001). Thus, Judas may have read this agreement into his relationship with Jesus when Jesus called him, and he accepted the call to be one of the apostles. It may have been his means to a meaningful spotlight to increase his honor in society. However, he could not stand alone in the spotlight like Aron when Moses went up the mountain (Exodus 32). He succumbed to his appetite for more honor - pilfering and, eventually, betraying Jesus (John 12: 4-6; Mark 13:19).

Final Cultural Categories

According to Robbins (1996a), these categories show an individual's cultural location, manifesting in how they propose, reason, and argue.

Subculture. At the time of Jesus and his apostles, the church's culture was a subculture within the dominant Jewish culture. In applying what Robbins (1996a) explained as a subculture, the early church subculture existed within the dominant Jewish culture but attacked a few elements of the Jewish culture but not the entire society. The application of the explanation of Robbins (1996b) further shows how the church has changed the Jewish culture both in degree and in kind. The church subculture does things better, like worshiping God (Mark 3:15). In kind, the church changed some things like segregation; for instance, the call of people from different classes to the apostle team (Mark 3: 16-19).

Countercultural. On the other hand, the early church could be countercultural. As Robbins (1996a) explained, counterculture embraced a different way of life from the dominant culture, hoping that the dominant culture would eventually change to the countercultural way. deSilva (2018) revealed that the Greco-Roman society where Jesus lived was highly segregated into class. Most of those chosen to be apostles were not people one would have expected as future early church leaders. They were from the lower societal class though a few like Peter and Andrew, James, and John, who owned their private fishing businesses, were in the middle class and were also business partners (Luke 5:1-11). The latter seems to be even higher on the societal pedestal because they have paid servants in their employment (Mark 1:20). So, recruiting across social classes in a highly sensitive male-dominated culture with a premium on social standings is countercultural (Henson et al., 2020).

Summary of Data

The analysis of the recruitment of the 12 apostles as captured in the pericope showed Jesus demonstrating relational transparency, one of the components of ALT

through the JD he gave the 12 apostles to be with him and then go out to preach (Mark 3: 14). Secondly, the social relationships under the social intertexture analysis revealed that Jesus already had lots of disciples (Luke 6: 13; Mark 3:13-14), whom he was understudying before graduating the 12 among them into apostles (Matthew Henry's Commentary). Though Jesus, being God, knew the minds of all the disciples, including the betrayer, he decided to gradually upgrade to teach that spiritual assignments need to follow a process of scrutiny before being given to people (Matthew Henry's Commentary). This decision showed Jesus demonstrating self-awareness, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective, three ALT components.

The social and cultural texture analysis revealed the four components of ALT. The conversionist worldview is seen in the JD to be with Jesus (Mark 3: 14), which shows the relational transparency of Jesus. The thaumaturgical worldview ((Mathew 10: 1) demonstrates internalized moral perspective and self-awareness. The reformist worldview displayed Jesus demonstrating internalized moral perspective and balanced processing components of ALT.

Discussion

Intertextual Analysis

Only social intertextual analysis is relevant to the pericope in the intertextual analysis. The researcher will apply the analysis to the components of ALT. Therefore, most of the applications will be on social relationships in the workplaces and marketplaces.

According to Matthew Henry's Commentary, the JD of the 12 apostles to be with Jesus is because acquaintance and communion with Jesus is the best preparation for the 12 for the ministry. It demonstrates relational transparency and internalized moral perspective, two components of ALT by Jesus. Avolio and Gardner (2005) posited that authentic leaders build authentic followers as they live their values and influence them to imbibe such moral values. The impact of the ministry of the apostles to date is a testimonial to the effectiveness of Jesus' authentic leadership style.

In contemporary times, there is much empirical research on AL's impact on professional relationships and business outcomes, with many reporting positive impacts due to the demonstration of self-awareness, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012; Arda, 2016; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Gardner et al., 2011; Gill & Caza, 2018; Hannah et al., 2011; Petan & Bocarnea, 2016; Rego et al., 2013; Steffens, 2016; Zehir & Narcikara, 2016).

While on earth, Jesus demonstrated self-awareness; he knew his purpose and had a unique vision and mission statement. His vision was to save the whole world, while his mission statement was to die by crucifixion to save the world. There were roles to fill and requirements for the right fit but no vacancy advertisement. Jesus went ahead with the heavenly recommendation to fill the disciples' roles. The social relationship

between Jesus and Judas Iscariot of leader-betrayer in the pericope reveals the depth of Jesus' self-awareness and internalized moral perspective as an authentic leader. Jesus could have screened him – Judas Iscariot- out. He consulted God, and God asked him to appoint him because a greater good was at stake, and he did (Mathew Henry's Commentary; Luke 6:12-16).

Most research on leader-follower showed a positive correlation between AL and leader-followers/employees relationship (Rego et al. 2013), resulting in relational transparency, an ALT component. Rego et al. (2013) said that AL feeds team virtues; team virtues affect team organizational commitment (OC), which leads to team performance. Looking at how the disciples of Jesus eventually turned out demonstrates the result of this research. The definition of performance is the achievement of the JD, which was: To be with Jesus, go and preach, heal the sick, and cast out demons (Mark 3: 14-15, Mathew 10:1). They all started knowing next to nothing about this JD (except to be with him) but became experts after Jesus exited the world (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Acts of the Apostles).

Gill and Caza (2018) looked at the impact of AL on organizations through the direct impact on followers and indirect impact on the colleagues of their followers. The result proved positive on both counts. It is an outcome of relational transparency and internalized moral perspective. First, the 12 impacted the entire followers of Jesus to date. deSilva (2018) said that only scripts by the Apostles, their associates, and Apostle Paul are part of today's New Testament. According to Pulpit Commentary, the disciples are the church leaders, the approved exponents of Jesus' doctrines around whom he built his organization. Today, Jesus' direct impact on the 12 has had an indirect global impact on the world. According to Pew Research Centre, Christianity is the most prominent religion globally (2.168 billion), 31.11% of the global population.

In addition to Jesus' impact on the moral perspectives of the disciples, he impacted their ability to perform their JD – preach and cast out demons. The apostles learned from Jesus' role modeling before them (Matthew Henry's Commentary). AL's impact on followers led to accomplishing corporate goals (team potency) due to increased individual and team affective commitment to the organization (Levesque-Côté et al., 2020, 2021; Rego et al., 2013). Some leaders crumble under pressure during a crisis, while others seek to maximize their potential and followers (Menkes, 2011).

On AL's behavior in leader-follower relationships, Jesus had an excellent leader-follower relationship with his disciples. Though closer to three, he still related cordially, one-on-one, with all of them. In response, the disciples related with him in openness. He had access to their families and vice versa. Peter did not have to hide the sickness of his mother-in-law from Jesus when he visited his home, and Jesus healed her (Mark 1:29-31). Likewise, the mother of John and James was that familiar with Jesus, and Jesus with her, to request from him special seats for her sons on the Last Day (Mathew 20: 20-21). These are proofs of the relational transparency of Jesus as an authentic leader.

Romania and USA's high-power and low-power distance cultures tested for ALT components, and both cultures have the same positive correlation level. (Petan & Bocarnea, 2016). Jesus' time was a high-power distance period, but Jesus demonstrated components of ALT expected in a low power distance culture. It is another demonstration of Jesus living from the inside out, working from an internalized moral perspective. He said that the Pharisees lord it over their followers, but his disciples must not do so, that the greatest will be their servant (Luke 22:24-27).

Social and Cultural Texture

Specific Social Topics (Worldviews)

Conversionist Worldview. The conversionist worldview of the writers portrays three of the four components of ALT. The first is self-awareness. Walumbwa et al. (2008) said self-awareness is "demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning-making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time" (p. 95). Jesus chose these 12 apostles when they did not look like leaders but saw the leaders in them. He gave them mandates they were not qualified to execute at the time, and then he qualified them (Matthew Henry's Commentary, Mark 3:13-19; Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 10:1-4). Jesus knew the demands of having the 12 around him always in the next three years. He knew how to deal with his humanity to have the 'me' time when he went alone, for instance, to pray and refuel (Luke 6:12). He knew he could accommodate the invasion of his privacy and achieve the transformation of the 12 Apostles. In the same vein, authentic leaders need to be self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses and work around the latter to be a catalyst for the positive change of the followers. It means authentic leaders are self-aware enough to know their capacity to help each follower to become a better version of himself/herself.

The second ALT component demonstrated by this worldview is relational transparency. Yukl (2010) said authentic leaders do not hide the truth from their subordinates to build trust in their relationship. Authentic leaders intentionally build a relationship with their followers to help them become whosoever they need to become.

It leads to the main ALT component that the conversionist worldview aligns with-internalized moral perspective. "The authentic leader does not try to coerce or even rationally persuade associates, but rather the leader's authentic values, beliefs, and behaviors serve to model the development of associates." (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 243). The internalized moral perspective of an authentic leader is what followers imbibe to become converted. This process becomes possible through the close, intentional relationship between authentic leaders and followers (Mathew Henry Commentary, 2021).

Thaumaturgical Worldview. The thaumaturgical worldview addresses immediate relief for the current suffering of individuals, mostly supernaturally. It is, at the minimum, a challenge to Christian leaders to seek solutions to corporate and business

issues on their knees, trusting for a mighty breakthrough. If there is a component of ALT that this aligns with, it is balanced processing. Walumbwa et al. (2008) stated that this is where a leader examines all aspects of an issue before deciding. One of the aspects to consider is God's aspect – God's solution, which could be supernatural, is an option.

Reformist Worldview. The reformist worldview aligns equally with two ALT components: relational transparency and internalized moral perspective. In Jesus' interactions and one-on-one conversations with the 12 Apostles, Jesus was casting a vision of a better system that the Apostles would oversee. Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to make them fishers of men (Luke 5:10). In close relationships with followers, authentic leaders know the followers enough to speak about their future even when they cannot see that far. Authentic leaders can cast a vision of a better future for subordinates because visioning is one of the core skills of leaders. One could say that was one of the reasons that Jesus prioritized the disciples being with him first; then, they could preach to others as agents of reformation to change their worldviews. Jesus needed them first to see the new system and way of life that he was handing over to them before they became agents of reformation to others.

By being with Jesus, the disciples saw how he lived, his values, and his sermons, and they replicated the same. The second ALT component (internalized moral perspective) aligned with the reformist worldview. Luthans and Avolio (2003) said authentic leaders need not force followers to imitate them; they simply role model their values to copy. Then these disciples role model what they have seen before those they have influence over, and the disciples' followers too get transformed and learn authenticity by copying what they see in their leaders. It aligns with authentic multi-level leadership in an organization that promotes authentic leadership practices (ALP) cascading down the organization from the top via relational transparency (Yammarino et al., 2008).

Common Social and Cultural Topics

Jesus demonstrated again the internalized moral perspective component of ALT in choosing to go against the norm of his day and not further shame Peter and his team after a futile fishing night. Peter already demonstrated shame by falling before Jesus, asking him to depart from him as a sinner. It was in line with the cultural belief that "suffering was a sign of the displeasure of God and prospering was a sign of God's approval" (Henson et al., 2020, p.137). Instead, Jesus chose the occasion to honor Peter and his business partners with another mission by casting a grand vision of global leadership for them (Luke 5:10).

Though the societal norm at his time was to engage in dyadic agreements, that is, do acts of kindness or give gifts with an informal expectation of reciprocity, Jesus deliberately chose Apostles who could not reciprocate his kind gestures. Most of them were in the lower echelon of society. Instead of having a patron-client relationship with the 12 Apostles, Jesus called them to be with him, not serve him as expected of his day (Henson et al., 2020). Thus, Jesus demonstrated internalized moral perspective once

again by giving without the intention to get. Yukl (2010) further explained the ALT component of internalized moral perspective: a leader seeking to do the right thing instead of the popular thing. Walumbwa et al. (2008) continued that the component is a test of the moral fabric of the leader, where decisions are taken not from external pressure but from internal conviction.

Final Cultural Categories

For Jesus to start building the early church and holding his ground within the Jewish culture as a subculture required inner resolve, as Walumbwa et al. (2008) stated. This inner resolve is evident in a countercultural movement. Jesus ran against societal norms of segregation and dyadic agreements, met with stiff opposition from his days' religious and political leaders, and eventually got killed for his stance. Jesus demonstrated the authentic leadership component of internalized moral perspective by sticking to his values and beliefs, even in the face of death.

In general, balanced processing is implied in Jesus' interactions one on one and collectively with the disciples because of them being with him. According to Yukl (2010), balanced processing ensures decisions made by leaders favor subordinates. Walumbwa et al. (2008) said it is the ability to recognize all views before deciding. Jesus intentionally asked for their views on issues to correct or affirm them. Influence is both ways. A leader could influence a follower and vice versa, especially when close. The disciples can influence Jesus in their way of life, thinking, and value if Jesus did not have a strong internalized moral perspective. For instance, Simon the zealot could have influenced Jesus to become revolutionary as Simon's group was. However, they all converted to Jesus' way of life, except Judas Iscariot, that betrayed him (Mark 3:19; Mathew 10:4; and Luke 6:16).

Conclusion

Why would a team of mostly young men with jobs abandon their trades to follow a controversial person in a volatile period as the Greco-Roman of Jesus' day? Imagine they followed him by mistake; should they not go their separate ways after his death? There is nothing as compelling as a life lived in alignment with values. Jesus modeled the life he wanted them to live, and they continued long after his death. The primary goal of discipleship manifested in the disciples. Unlearned men stood before the religious and political leaders of their time and boldly accused them of killing Jesus. The religious leaders were amazed and had only one answer for their audacity- they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). This statement is an endorsement of Jesus as an authentic leader. It also shows that Jesus got something right in his choice of apostles from different societal classes, against the norms of his days, who were foundational to the enduring Christianity today.

There are two perspectives to ALT, secular and Christian. The Bible teaches that morality is a product of culture and religion. It is why Jesus created a subculture and counterculture for the early church to thrive in the pericope (Henson et al., 2020).

Secular ALT, however, believes that morality is a product of evolutionary biology (Henson, personal communication, July 26, 2021). Secular authenticity also believes in being authentic to self and others alone, whereas Christian authenticity brings God in and advocates for authenticity with self, others, and God. It aligns with the first commandment not to have any other gods besides God and love God with everything (Exodus 20:3; Mark 12:30).

ALT has a few shortcomings worthy of mention. Though relational transparency has proven very impactful in authentic leadership practices (ALP), there are some things that an authentic leader cannot and should not share because of the potential negative impact on organizational goals. Thus, transparency has limits.

Niewold (2007) advocated for a display of servanthood in leadership that portrays the divinity and humanity of Jesus. It is vital because of the portrayal of Jesus' leadership as weak. This study aligns with Niewold's position of Jesus operating as fully man and fully God while on earth, displaying humanity and divinity, thus showing humans' possibilities to be authentic leaders as he was. Christian leaders could exhibit the character and power of Jesus in the workplace and marketplace as Jesus showed while on earth (John 14:12). The fact that morality is attainable by humans made in God's image and Jesus modeled this while on earth answers some of the criticism of ALT (Gardner et al., 2021).

Though AL does not have servanthood as a component, maybe there is authentic servanthood here, meaning leaders could be both authentic and servant. Moreover, that genuine authenticity may yield the desire to serve and help others. More research is still needed, especially on the Biblical perspective of ALT, particularly for Christian leaders who seek to make a difference in the marketplace and workplace by authentically living and leading while building sustainable organizations.

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Acts 15: The Jerusalem Council as a Model for Unity, Diversity, and Discipleship

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The declaration of the Gospel message provides the indicative premise for the imperatives of the Great Commission and the greatest commandments (Ferguson, 1989). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to conduct a theological analysis of Acts 15, demonstrating the pericope as a model for unity in diverse ecclesial contexts with five practical principles for discipleship in the 21st century. Utilizing Osborne's (2016) hermeneutical method, the text, its historical context, and the appropriate application for contemporary disciples is discussed. The framework for discipleship application will use Vanhoozer's (2016) categories that define the universal church: faith, Christ, scripture, and the glory of God. Those application principles for disciples, as well as the theological basis found in the pericope in Acts 15, illumine unity and diversity through the scripture and polity as primary goals in the early church and for ecclesial leaders today. Finally, the telos of the principles for discipleship is to fulfill the great commission and to live out the greatest commandments to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (*English Standard Version*, 2001/2016, Luke 10:27).

Acts 15: The Jerusalem Council as a Model for Unity, Diversity, and Discipleship

During the earliest beginnings of the church's formation, several key leadership challenges emerged related to differences in cultural values and attitudes, according to author of the book of Acts. The Jerusalem Council, in particular, addressed the significant theological and contextual implications of a rapidly expanding and ethnically diverse population being drawn as disciples of Jesus Christ (Serrano, 2020; Witherington III, 1998). The manner in which the ecclesial leaders as representatives of a multi-culturally diverse number of local church communities handled the conflict between the Jewish and Hellenistic Christians illustrated important and timely principles that have implications for our own time. Various approaches to textual interpretation and contextualization have the potential to either help or hinder the church's mission and witness (Dean, 2009). Yet, the church's crisis of missional effectiveness remains as essentially a crisis of contextualization in which communication and application of scriptural text can better answer real questions facing modern society (Pass, 2012, p. 22).

As Osborne (2017) asserted, the narrative world of the story, plot, characters, and their historical setting compels the reader toward theological lessons, action, and change (p. 219). Indeed, the drama of text and context are interdependent with relevant contextualization. As Osborne stated, "Theology without praxis is sterile, and praxis without theology is contentless" (p. 220). The declaration of the Gospel message provides the indicative premise for the imperatives of the Great Commission and the greatest commandments (Ferguson, 1989). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to conduct a theological analysis of Acts 15, demonstrating the pericope as a model for unity in diverse ecclesial contexts with five practical principles for discipleship in the 21st century.

Hermeneutic Methodology

The hermeneutical spiral, as developed by Osborne (2017), involves a holistic approach to the Scriptural text and includes both exegesis and contextualization as "the cross-cultural communication of the text's significance" (p 21). As such, the science of exegesis deals with an orderly and logical understanding of the text and context, while the art of hermeneutics unfolds as the exegete applies the meaning of the message to both the ancient and modern contexts. Most importantly, interpreters' efforts depend on God as they work in tandem with the leading of the Holy Spirit (p. 22). As the divergent horizons of the original author, the text, and the implied reader converge, the meaning of the text conveys a message that is as clearly intended for contemporary disciples as it was for the original audience in ancient times (Osborne, p. 410). Thus, the intent of this exegetical analysis is to convey textual meaning (what the scriptures meant in historical and literary context) within the contextual meaning for today's ecclesial challenges.

Historical Background as “Theodrama” in Apostolic Formation

In evaluating the text, consideration must be given to the immediate hearer’s context, the text’s context, the author’s overall writing context, the pertinent epoch/testament context, and the overall context within the Bible’s redemptive-historical narrative (Klien et al., 2017). For example, Acts 15 utilized exegetical patterns directly related to the Abrahamic covenant (*peshat*) when describing the promised blessing to all nations in God’s historical plan for the Gentiles (Bock, 1997). Similarly, use of the midrashic technique was evident in James’ speech, which effectively sermonized an Old Testament passage (Amos 9:11-15) as instructional of how the overarching Biblical narrative applied to their present circumstance (Bock, 1997). As the debate over the mission to the Gentiles and inclusion into the early church community evolved, the immediate context of Acts 15 illuminated the necessity and extent of acculturation for the foundation of the early church. Osborne (2017) described this acculturation as “the movement of the church from a Jewish sect to a universal religion for ‘all nations’” (p. 413). As such, cultural barriers were breached on both sides: (a) when the council at Jerusalem ruled that Jewish cultic requirements, especially circumcision, could not be required of Gentiles, and (b) while at the same time asking Gentiles to leave former practices out of for respect Jewish customs (Osborne, p. 413).

Another important factor relating to historical setting and authorial intent, according to Hays (2003), is Luke’s overt use of the role of the Samaritans throughout his Gospel account and in this portion of Acts. Within the Luke-Acts texts, Luke included six Samaritan episodes which weigh heavily for understanding the importance of the Jerusalem Council: (a) Jesus rebuked James and John for wanting fire from heaven to reign down a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56); The parable of the Good Samaritan that Jesus shared with an expert in the law (Luke 10:25-37); the Samaritan leper that returns to thank Jesus—the only one of ten to do so (Luke 17:11-19); Jesus’s great commission in which he tells the disciples to be his witnesses in all Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8); Philip, John, and Peter preaching in Samaria, as many believe (Acts 8:4-25); and when Paul travels through Samaria on his way to the Jerusalem Council and the Samaritans rejoice (Acts 15:3). As Hays stated, Jesus’s earliest declaration for Gospel expansion involved Jewish Christians taking the message to their traditionally hated Samaritan counterparts (p. 167). Importantly, then, Jesus’ phrase instructing the disciples to be his witnesses “in all Judea and Samaria” was not a mere geographical convention, but no doubt included strong ethnic connotations (Hays, p. 168).

Similarly, Stott (1990) noted that the disciples’ question that asked about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6) betrayed their former confusion about Jesus’ kingdom, as it led to Jesus’ expansive instruction (v. 8). For Stott, the implication was that the Great Commission and Acts 1:8 pointed to the consummation of Jesus’ kingdom in Revelation 7:9 where peoples from “every nation, tribe, people, and language” will worship together around King Jesus’ throne. Likewise, as we will see, the Jerusalem Council conveys the Lord’s intent for a co-existential unity and diversity in the

body of Christ. The trajectory of the good news points to a Gospel message that rings out like a “rich and compelling song” to be “sung in many variations and many keys”

(Flemming, 2009, p. 296). The “theodrama” of the already inaugurated kingdom in which we live and the not yet present eschatological kingdom that the church is called to typify through its unity and diversity represents the message we must bring to the world (Vanhoozer, 2015; Willard, 2014). As new creations in Christ, disciples possess a newer and truer identity as communicative agents in covenantal relationship with God and others, and are called to they live out the life of Christ in the world (Vanhoozer, 2015, p. 166). Thus, as we will see, the Greatest Commandments, to love God and neighbor, along with the Great Commission (Luke 10:27), e.g. to make disciples of all ethnē (Matt. 28:19) are intricately linked to how we read and apply the account of the Jerusalem Council to our current cultural context.

Proposed Universal Categories of Ecclesial Unity and Diversity

Decades ago, C. S. Lewis (2001) developed a concept of “Mere Christianity” which called for spiritual formation and discipleship in Christ as more than an intellectual or abstract pursuit, but in fact, demonstrating Christ operating in and through their lives (p. 36). For Lewis, the basic sacraments or ordinances of the church universal, including communion, baptism, Scripture reading, and the Word preached, are all necessarily physical, embodied acts of grace that represent the new life to be found among all of his people for the encouragement of love and good deeds. More recently, Vanhoozer (2016) developed the concept for reclaiming “elements for a normative Protestantism from the ruins of present day by revisiting historical Protestantism” via the reformational solas” (p xi). The five basic elements of the historical solas are grace, faith, scripture, Christ, and the glory of God. Accordingly, Vanhoozer summarized the chief importance of the solas as: (a) grace as putting merit and pride in their place; (b) faith as the instrument of spiritual power; (c) scripture as the primary authority, trumping mere tradition; (d) Christ as instituting the priesthood of believers as a safeguard against abuse and misuse; and (e) the glory of God as the telos of mission, rather than emphasizing psychologizing or therapeutic answers. Hence, as we will see, the five categories of grace, faith, Christ, scripture, and God’s glory map unto the account of Acts 15 in presenting the unifying effects of the council’s instruction, outcomes, and principles therein. Additionally, Vanhoozer, along with Collins and Ensign-George (2011), carefully noted that while denominations can often denote narrowness and dissent, in their best applications, strong denominations stand for diversity relative to the church as whole. In other words, the diversity of denominational points of view remind us that not any one expression of the church is infallible or perfectly representational of the diversity of God’s good creation (Collins & Ensign-George, 2011).

Theocentric Drama and Background of Luke’s Narrative in Acts 15

One of the central themes of Acts is how God’s gracious mission to the Gentiles unfolded in the midst of change and persecution (Johnson, 2003). Jewish Christians

had especially experienced persecution and isolation from Roman rulers, as well as the non-converted Jewish religious leaders (Segal, 1990). These Jewish converts still treasured Israel's covenantal distinctives and identity as God's "hesed" people – "I will be your God, and you will be my people" (Exod. 6:7). Even though they firmly believed Jesus to be the Messiah, now their ethnic privilege was being challenged as they felt the pressure inside an increasingly multi-cultural church. A particular trend had developed whereby the reception of the Gentiles apart from circumcision was no longer the exception, but had become the rule in Syrian Antioch and many of the outlying areas (Johnson, 2003, p. 187). Previously, Peter's explanation of his vision and the conversion of Cornelius and his Gentile friends led to the acceptance by leaders in Jerusalem of Peter fellowshipping with uncircumcised people (Acts 11:1-18). Even though when they originally heard this, "they stopped objecting and glorified God, saying, 'God has then granted life-giving repentance to the Gentiles too'" (Acts 11:18), now a new controversy emerged. With Paul's expanding mission to the Gentiles in Antioch and Jerusalem, certain men, called the Judaizers, began to question whether Gentiles could rightly be included as members of the covenant community apart from observing the Jewish ceremonial customs (Fernando, 1998).

Circumcision had always been the outward sign of Israel's identity as God's chosen and set apart covenant community in the OT. Whether Jewish by birth or by conversion, the circumcision practice had not been in question since the promise given to Abraham. God had set apart his people by circumcision, calling it an everlasting covenant (Gen 17:7). Since Jesus observed the custom and had not spoken of abolishing circumcision, it's not surprising that some of the Jewish Christians would also expect Gentiles to become proselytes in order to share in the same promise, in the same way they had experienced and understood their salvation as promised in the Messiah. However, the Judaizers were not only insisting on circumcision, but increasingly they were pushing for rigorous adherence to rabbinical tradition for all Gentiles."

Theology and Praxis at the Jerusalem Council

While Paul and Barnabas had strongly disputed the Judaizers' view in Antioch previously, the opposing views had become so irreconcilable that appeal had to be made to the apostles and elders in the mother church at Jerusalem (Johnson, 2003). Though separated by distance, diversity of ethnicity, language, and other cultural differences, each separate local congregation did not function autonomously, but as an interconnected whole. This dovetails with Vanhoozer's (2016) description of the span of diversity of local bodies of believers as part of the history of Christian mission as a contextualization of the Gospel message which serves specific situations based on cross-cultural significance (p. 189). As such, local bodies and strong denominations provide a structure by which faithful Christians can reasonably share unity while disagreeing with one another by holding to a diversity of views regarding open-handed issues (Vanhoozer, p. 189). The Judaizer's question, however, would be elevated to a historically foundational and essential matter of church doctrine. Thus, while the ecclesial leaders in Jerusalem initially welcomed Paul and Barnabas, a party of

Pharisees quickly confronted them over their differences, which necessitated the assembly of the first recorded ecumenical council. Bruce (1990) and Johnson (2003) noted the deliberative process used included (a) Peter retelling his experience as the Apostle whom God used initially to evangelize the Gentiles; (b) Paul and Barnabas reporting God's work among the Gentiles, especially in Antioch; and (c) James interpreting these events in light of Scripture.

Unity by Grace

Peter testified before the council stating:

And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will (Acts 15: 8-11, ESV).

An emphasis on the grace of God to convey meaning is evident by two bookend phrases in the verse. First, Peter stated "by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us" as a way of connecting the Gentile experience of God grace with the same grace that the Jewish converts had also experienced. However, the second declaration of grace is perhaps even more profound, as Peter stated, "we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will. (v.11)." Here Peter is highlighting the ongoing and ever-present grace of God by speaking in the future tense and by emphasizing the absolute necessity of God's grace for salvation. The thrust of this statement appeared to remove any presumption of status based on merit or entitlement on behalf of their Hebrew heritage or their ceremonial acts, including circumcision (Fernando, 1998). Additionally, this statement followed the rebuke in verse 10 for demanding the yoke of the law as a path to acceptance by God. Such a demand was like returning to slavery in Egypt and neither Jew nor Gentile could bear the weight of the law in their own strength (Johnson, 2003). The subtle twist in syntax along with the rebuke was meant to drive the message of grace home and bring about a posture of humility toward others.

Discipleship Principle One: By grace we are accepted into God's family and by grace we can accept, acknowledge, and welcome diverse others culturally different from ourselves.

Unity through Faith

In verse 9 of his speech, Peter stated that God "made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith," recalling the manner by which God converted both the Jewish and Gentile disciples. Though not mentioned in the Acts pericope, Christians today will notice numerous passages that state God's blessing to Abraham came through faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Heb. 11:17). Responding to the weight of Peter's speech emphasizing grace and faith, the entire council fell

silent. Paul and Barnabas followed Peter by relating the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.

According to Horton (2011) the Jerusalem Council set the course for the Christian Church. Rather than being defined by the ethnic distinctives of the Old Testament and the surrounding pagan culture, the Church as covenant community would henceforth be defined by faith in Jesus Christ. Also noting that Peter's persuasive argument was not drawn from social or psychological theory, marketing strategies, or any kind of political ideology, Horton stated that the logic of was drawn directly from the Gospel message itself. Accordingly, faith is the primary instrument that enables Christ's disciples to see and experience God's power at work in their own lives and in the world (Vanhoozer, 2016).

Discipleship Principle Two: Through faith our works and mission are unified in God and with one another. We can be confident that what we do by faith God accepts and uses to grow his church.

Unity in Christ

In his opening, James, probably the half-brother of Jesus, told of how Simeon (Peter) related the manner in which God visited the Gentiles "to take from them a people for my name" (Acts 15:14). Important to understand, Johnson (2003) stated this was God's plan from long ago to include the Gentiles (Is. 45:21-22, Gen. 12:3). In his commentary on Isaiah 45, Young (1965) mentioned that while strangers and foreigners were brought into outer sections of the temple and permitted to pray after being circumcised and becoming Jewish proselytes, in the New Testament, the Gentiles would no longer be kept back behind the dividing wall, but would be metaphorically permitted into the holy of holies (p. 393). Vanhoozer (2016) mentioned a similar sentiment when referring to the priesthood of all believers, in which every Christian now has direct access to the Father – and equally ministers grace to others. Furthermore, the fact that the Lord's name is called over them is even more significant, as will be demonstrated though James' words that follow. In the parallel text in Galatians, Paul wrote that spiritually speaking, there is no longer Jew or Greek, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Discipleship Principle Three: In Christ believers are known personally by name as friends and family, together in one holy priesthood and no longer as aliens or strangers.

Unity of Scripture

James, a pillar of the mother church in Jerusalem, weighed everything that had been said by Scripture (Johnson, 2003, p. 187). In his kerymatic proclamation, James begins by alluding to Old Testament prophecies, including: Zechariah 2:11, Amos 9:11-12, Jeremiah 12:15, and Isaiah 45:11. Bauckham (1996) opined that the key role of James' sermon at the council was to determine the forgoing stance on the church's

gentile mission, in particular the validity of Gentile inclusion (p. 154). Yet, the main issue was not specifically whether the Gentiles could join the Jewish Christians in the church community, but rather the focus was whether they would be required to become Jews through the prescribed rites and rituals of the Old Testament (Bauckham, 1996). To this end, James uses Amos 9:11-12 as way of invoking the covenant name of YHWH to denote the special relationship that Israel enjoyed in the old covenant. James' use of the passage, according to Bauckham (1996), demonstrated sophisticated Hebrew exegesis to apply the OT passage to Gentile believers in a way that would have been familiar enough to the Jewish Church that it was not merely plausible but convincing. James agreed with Peter through reliance on Scripture, and the council concurred with James' assessment (Johnson, 2003, p. 191). In alignment with Vanhoozer's (2016) unifying categories, the authority of scripture, rather the established tradition, became the council's official position.

After determining that no burden would be placed on the gentile Christians to adopt the Jewish practices, The Jerusalem Council ended up taking an additional matter, advising the Gentiles to abstain from four specific defiling practices: (a) things polluted by idols; (b) sexual immorality; (c) things that have been strangled; and (d) from blood (Acts 15:20). The reasoning for including these things in the letter of encouragement is not stated in the text, but a few possible categories fit. First, these pagan practices were common among the Gentiles, and therefore should no longer characterize those who were bought by Jesus's blood (Johnson, 2003). Secondly, since these regulations appear to be drawn from the holiness codes of Leviticus 17-18, Bruce (1990) stated that they would have applied to Israelites, as well as the Gentiles living among them. Thirdly, they may have been given for the purpose of cautious exercise of Christian liberty and a "winsome witness" by Gentile believers to those Jewish believers who worship with them (Johnson, 2003, p. 195). In other words, they appealed to love for neighbor and for the Gentiles to maintain the bonds of unity with others whose customary practices differed from their own. The issue is resolved by reliance upon the scripture and not on cultural identity. For example, to become Christians, the Gentiles need not become Jews, but they also cannot remain pagans. Also, the winsome witness of love for one another in the church gives extreme credibility for the faith and upheld the bonds of unity forged through the Jerusalem Council's efforts.

Discipleship Principle Four: Grounded in Scripture, the most essential and shared beliefs for Christian unity are established, over customs, traditions, and cultural practices.

Unity for God's Glory

The reading of the letter to the Gentiles evoked joy, comforted them with assurance of their faith, and encouraged them to forsake idolatry out of gratitude (Acts 15:31-32). However, shortly thereafter, a controversy arose between Paul and Barnabas. After such a promising outcome at the Jerusalem Council, the separation of Paul and Barnabas over a personal disagreement might seem disheartening. The text doesn't provide any details as to why Paul disagreed with Barnabas and or why he

didn't want to take Mark on their journey to revisit the cities where the Word of the Lord was previously proclaimed. However, Johnson (2003) posited that Barnabas, the son of encouragement, probably wanted to encourage Mark. Paul's response in the original Greek language conveyed an adamant negative reaction, potentially revealing something of Paul's interpersonal weakness (Johnson, 2003). Even though further speculation is limited, the text portrays the way in which even the most godly leaders can disagree, make different decisions, and take on separate missions, while maintaining the unity of faith.

One key take away from this section of the narrative theodrama is that the glory of God advances his kingdom using flawed servants, and even the gates of hell cannot prevail against Jesus growing his church (Matt. 16:18b). Even through this conflict, God doubled his work force. Barnabas took Mark and set sail for Cyprus; Silas joined Paul and visited Syria and Cilicia, further strengthening the body of Christ (Acts 15:39-40). God redeems sin and brokenness for his good purposes, in order to maintain the unity – and the diversity – of the Church. This further highlights Vanhoozer's (2016) theory about the right kind of denominational and church body expression. He wrote that even though denominations often originate from theological or missiological controversy, the contextualization of the Gospel for specific circumstances can often produce cross-cultural communities and create significance for peoples who ordinarily would not have had access to the Gospel message (Vanhoozer, p. 189). Wells (1991) called for the revitalization of the "missionary nature of theology" because our own culture and mindset seems far removed from the Biblical portrayal of the church community (p. 173). Indeed, since the very concept of a denomination involves the limitation that no one instance can embody the entire church universal, the goal is not denominationalism or sectarianism, but rather the structure and possibility for unity and diversity through the various expressions of Christ's body as a form of global polity. This is as Jesus declared through Luke earlier in Acts, "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (1: 8).

Discipleship Principle Five: To God's Glory leaders can be assured that the good news will will go forth and prevail despite their failures and weaknesses.

Conclusion and Culmination of Principles from the Jerusalem Council

The model of grace, faith, Christ, scripture, and the glory of God provides the structure for five key organizational principles of discipleship. Those principles, as well as the pericope in Acts 15, demonstrated the primacy of the goal of unity, while maintaining diversity through ecclesial polity. The telos of the principles for discipleship is to fulfill the great commission and to live out the greatest commandments. The Church's mission to disciple all nations, or *ethne*, enjoins believers together in the beautifully diverse worship picture of Rev. 7:9, comprised of every tribe, tongue, and nation. We need not to wait commencement in the eschaton, but rather, the promise is to be enjoyed in the here and now as we choose to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:27) and together fulfill the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

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Shared Leadership Theory in Acts 15:1-35

Steven Mickel

According to an innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35 shared leadership was essential to the New Testament church. An exhaustive literature review provides an overview of shared leadership theory in the ecclesial environment and includes a discussion of why one should examine this theory from a biblical perspective. The research showed an underlying biblical foundation for shared leadership. Nevertheless, much of the current literature regarding shared leadership in the ecclesial setting does not employ qualitative research from a biblical perspective. Utilizing Robbins' (1996) innertexture analysis revealed several antecedents, outcomes, and biblical perspectives of shared leadership theory from Acts 15:1-35. The antecedents included in this discussion are team heterogeneity and a charismatic leader. Outcomes included better decision-making and higher team satisfaction. The application of biblical perspectives from the innertexture analysis occurred throughout the discussion regarding shared leadership theory.

Shared Leadership Theory in Acts 15:1-35

Shared leadership was essential to the New Testament church. The majority of churches today have a tradition orientation of hierarchical leadership, and therefore, pastors are overwhelmed and unable to meet the expectations of their congregations (Barna, 2013; Brown, 2014; Carlson & Lueken, 2011; Crosby, 2012; Daniels, 2014; Dorsett, 2010; Osborne, 2014). Pearce and Conger (2003) found shared leadership to be "an effective solution to a fundamental dilemma: no single individual possesses the capacity to effectively play all possible leadership roles within a group or organizational setting" (p. 288). More recent research confirmed that shared leadership is a practical leadership approach to the complexity facing leaders and organizations today (Serban & Roberts, 2016; Wu et al., 2020).

While an increasing number of studies exist regarding shared leadership in secular organizations (Serban & Roberts, 2016; Wu et al., 2020), very little research exists regarding the relationship between shared leadership theory and leadership in the ecclesial context. Of the nineteen articles and books dealing with shared leadership in the ecclesial context, only eight mentioned the theory of shared leadership or the work of Pearce and Conger (2003) as a basis for their conclusions (Batchelor, 2015; Bell, 2014; Brown, 2014; Daniels, 2014; Davis, 2015; Rivera, 2012; Veliquette, 2013; Youn, 2013). Daniels (2014) noted the need for church leaders to reflect on a theological understanding of shared leadership, and Youn (2013) argued for a model of leadership education for ecclesial organizations that desire to move into a shared leadership model.

The purpose of this study was to provide ecclesial leaders with a greater theological understanding and ministry practice of shared leadership. Utilizing Robbins' (1996) innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35 revealed how the Jerusalem Council effectively employed attributes of shared leadership theory to achieve a positive outcome for the church. This analysis revealed the important practice of shared leadership theory in the local church today.

Shared Leadership Theory

Shared leadership, according to Pearce and Conger's (2003) seminal work is, "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (p. 1). Shared leadership is less about formal structure and authority, and more about the influence and knowledge leaders bring to the group (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) recognized shared leadership as being dependent on a network of relationships, rather than on individual leaders. This "post-heroic" model centers around relationships, networks, and social interactions (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 21). More recent research has confirmed shared leadership as a practical leadership approach to the complexity facing organizations (Serban & Roberts, 2016; Wu et al., 2020).

Building from the work of Pearce and Conger (2003) regarding the antecedents and outcomes of shared leadership, both Serban and Roberts (2016) and Wu et al. (2020) provided research models for analyzing shared leadership. Both models recognized an internal team environment as an essential antecedent to shared leadership, and both models revealed team performance as a critical outcome of shared leadership (Serban & Roberts, 2016; Wu et al., 2020). Wu et al.'s (2020) research provided a deeper understanding of the antecedents to shared leadership by reviewing essential team characteristics, such as team heterogeneity, intragroup trust, and team interdependence. As has been noted, very little research exists regarding the relationship of shared leadership to the local church context.

The literature reviewed revealed deficiencies in research on shared leadership theory in the ecclesial context, and a limited number of works exist on the theological foundation for shared leadership. Shared leadership theory or the work of Pearce and Conger (2003) was only referenced by a few authors discussing the role of shared leadership in the local church (Batchelor, 2015; Bell, 2014; Brown, 2014; Daniels, 2014; Davis, 2015; Rivera, 2012; Veliquette, 2013; Youn, 2013). Some of the articles discussed a theological basis for shared leadership, using the Trinity as a basis for participative leadership (Bell, 2014; Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Davis, 2015; Dorsett, 2010; Hellerman, 2013; Horsthuis, 2011; Ruffner & Huizing, 2016).

Davis' (2015) purpose was to "give a theological basis for the practice of shared leadership" (p. 105). This purpose was repeated with others (Bell, 2014; Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Davis, 2015; Dorsett, 2010; Hellerman, 2013; Horsthuis, 2011; Ruffner & Huizing, 2016), as they studied the biblical precedent for collaborative leadership. Daniels (2014) investigated the role of theological reflection of shared leadership on clergy couples who work together. Horsthuis (2011) gives an extensive review of a perichoretic theology of leadership that finds its roots in the doctrine of the Trinity and argues that this doctrine "invites us to view leadership in participative terms" (p. 81). Several other authors engaged in exegetical research to show how the doctrine of the Trinity is the fundamental theological basis for shared leadership (Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Davis, 2015; Horsthuis, 2011; Ruffner & Huizing, 2016). Ruffner and Huizing (2016) not only used the doctrine of the Trinity to show shared leadership but also studied the leadership and writings of Peter to argue for a shared leadership approach.

Three categories of findings regarding shared leadership exist in the literature reviewed. Two of the findings are related to the seminal work of Pearce and Conger (2003), which include the antecedents to shared leadership and the outcomes of shared leadership. The third finding relates to the importance of examining shared leadership theory from a biblical perspective.

Antecedents to Shared Leadership

Pearce and Conger (2003) found that knowledge sharing was vital in the successful implementation of shared leadership. Six of the studies in this literature review connected knowledge and learning as a facilitating condition for shared

leadership (Batchelor, 2015; Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Daniels, 2014; Rivera, 2012; Youn, 2013). Batchelor (2015) found that sharing knowledge was positively related to the commitment of followers in a shared leadership organization. Daniels (2014) noted the need for church leaders to reflect on theological understanding as they approach shared leadership, and Youn (2013) argued for a model of leadership education and training for organizations that desire to move into a shared leadership model.

Pearce and Conger (2003) also found that “Greater dispersion of power and influence enhances the likelihood of shared leadership” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 291). Keywords and phrases in the literature reviewed were “collaboration” (Barna, 2013; Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Davis, 2015; Hartwig et al., 2015), “inclusive” (Batchelor, 2015), “willingness to release power” (Carlson & Lueken, 2011), “empowering” (Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Grandy, 2013), “splitting responsibilities” (Carlson & Lueken, 2011), “shared responsibility” (Grandy, 2013), “delegated authority” (Rivera, 2012), “mutual submission” (Ruffner & Huizing, 2016), “participative cooperation” (Ruffner & Huizing, 2016), and “engagement” (Veliquette, 2013). These concepts supported the idea of shared power and influence in churches that desire to excel in shared leadership.

Other facilitating conditions presented by the literature revealed leaders who create a team culture designated to facilitate shared leadership (Barna, 2013; Brown, 2014; Cladis, 1999; Davis, 2015). Churches desiring to move toward shared leadership must remove barriers to shared leadership (Davis, 2015) and enable structures that facilitate shared leadership (Brown, 2014). The work of leaders in designing environments of support, encouragement, and accountability is instrumental in shared leadership creation (Barna, 2013). Visionary leadership and clear communication are also crucial in facilitating shared leadership (Brown, 2014; Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Davis, 2015; Hartwig et al., 2015; Hellerman, 2013).

The importance of a key leader is a critical aspect of facilitating shared leadership (Barna, 2013; Crosby, 2012; Grandy, 2013). Pearce and Conger (2003) reported that “the vertical leader’s actions are critical to the implementation process” of shared leadership (p. 294). Specifically, a key leader is involved in the essential tasks of leadership selection, creating culture, coaching, and developing others, empowering team members, and encouraging problem-solving and decision-making by a team (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Barna (2013) noted that their research revealed that every successful team had a leader who was a servant, provided guidance and was involved in the recruiting process. Crosby (2012) noted the importance of a leader who came alongside team members through facilitating and coaching and Grandy (2013) went so far as to say, “this leader is the driving force of this model of shared leadership” (p. 628).

Outcomes of Shared Leadership

Pearce and Conger (2003) found that shared leadership affected group behavior and performance. Team members were more apt to exert effort, make better decisions, and have a higher quality of problem-solving skills as a result of shared leadership

(Pearce & Conger, 2003). Also, they reported a stable connection between shared leadership and team member satisfaction, including a higher level of trust and creativity amongst the team (Pearce & Conger, 2003). These were also clear outcomes of the research reviewed in this article.

Shared leadership in churches resulted in greater trust amongst team members (Barna, 2013; Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012; Grandy, 2013; Hartwig et al., 2015; Horsthuis, 2011). It also resulted in a culture of honor lived out in teams (Crosby, 2012; Davis, 2015; Rivera, 2012). Mutual respect and deep friendship were also outcomes of shared leadership (Carlson & Lueken, 2011; Grandy, 2013).

Another key outcome of shared leadership revealed in the literature was better decision-making by teams (Batchelor, 2015; Carlson & Lueken, 2011; Grandy, 2013; Hartwig et al., 2015; Hellerman, 2013; Rivera, 2012; Veliquette, 2013). Not only were better decisions made, but the research highlighted and celebrated the collaborative and consensus-based model of decision-making (Carlson & Lueken, 2011; Grandy, 2013; Hartwig et al., 2015; Rivera, 2012). This outcome is consistent with the reporting of Pearce and Conger (2003) as well.

Biblical Perspectives of Shared Leadership

Several authors studied a Trinitarian model to build a case for shared leadership, including Cladis (1999), Crosby (2012), Davis (2015), Horsthuis (2011), and Ruffner and Huizing (2016). Horsthuis (2011) argued, "leadership as a participative movement of grace that originates within the triune God" (p. 83). Ruffner and Huizing's (2016) analysis of 1 Peter 5 revealed Peter's concept of leadership as trinitarian. Bell's (2014) research was the broadest study done in looking at the creation narrative in Genesis through the founding of the early church as a theological basis for shared leadership. Hellerman (2013) employs socio-rhetorical criticism to the text of Philippians 2 in order to "craft a biblical theology of leadership and community that will equip us to address issues of power and authority in our churches today" (p. 15). These studies revealed the inherent connection and importance between biblical principles and shared leadership theory.

The research reviewed in this article showed an underlying biblical foundation for shared leadership, which should encourage church leaders to pursue the study of this theory to the future leadership work of the church. Nevertheless, much of the current literature regarding shared leadership in the ecclesial setting does not employ qualitative research from a biblical perspective on shared leadership. Opportunities to study biblical passages and existing churches that employ shared leadership methodology await the researcher to determine the attributions and outcomes of this biblically-based leadership theory. This paper adds to the literature by utilizing an innertexture analysis of Acts 15 as it relates to shared leadership in the ecclesial context, revealing that the Jerusalem Council effectively employed shared leadership theory attributes to achieve a positive outcome for the church. In doing so, this article

answers the question: Does Acts 15:1-35 legitimize the practice of shared leadership theory in the church today?

Innertexture Analysis of Acts 15:1-35

deSilva (2018) recognized the book of Acts as a primarily historical piece of literature with a narrative emphasis. Therefore, one must approach the writings of Luke in the book of Acts as both history and narrative. Osborne (2006) noted the important similarities and distinctions of historical fiction and historical narrative. One must recognize Luke's historical writing to show Theophilus (Acts 1:1) all that happened and also his narrative writing, which places the history of Gentile Christians in the context of a larger story of Judaism and the life of Jesus Christ.

Utilizing Robbins' (1996) inner texture analysis will aid in understanding this historical narrative pericope. Robbins (1996) presents an overview of the types of inner textual analysis one can use, such as repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, argumentative, and sensory-aesthetic texture. These tools guide the following analysis.

Repetitive Texture and Pattern

Repetitive texture and pattern observe words and phrases which repeat more than once in the pericope and, according to Robbins, provides an overarching view of the text (Robbins, 1996). The following words were repeated in the pericope three times or more: God (9x), brothers (9x), Gentiles (9x), Paul (6x), Barnabas (6x), sent (6x), Lord (5x), Apostles (5x), men (5x), Elders (5x), Antioch (5x), church (4x), Moses (3x), Judas (3x), together (3x), gathered (3x), and Silas (3x). The repetitive texture of the pericope revealed six groupings: (a) opposing sides, (b) ongoing discussion, (c) strategic movement, (d) divine messaging, (e) essential characters, and (f) unified conclusion.

The opposing sides in the pericope represent Paul and Barnabas (15:2) on one side and "men from Judea" (15:1) on the other. The ongoing discussion represents the two sides of the issue regarding Gentile conversion to Christianity (15:1). Strategic movement is seen throughout the pericope between Jerusalem where the apostles and elders reside (15:2) and Antioch from where Paul and Barnabas were sent (15:3). These two locations also represent the two sides of the issue: Jerusalem, where the decision will be made and Antioch, where many Gentile converts reside.

Divine messaging is revealed in the reports of Paul and Barnabas regarding all that God had done among the Gentiles (15:4, 12), the custom of Moses (15:1, 4, 21), the work of Christ (15:11, 26), and the work of the Holy Spirit (15:8, 28). Other essential characters are revealed in the pericope as well, including the apostles and elders (15:2, 4, 22, 23), the brothers (15:1, 3, 7, 13, 22, 23, 32, 33), the church (15:3, 4, 22, 30), the Gentiles (15:3, 7, 12, 14, 17, 23), Peter (15:7), James (15:13), and Judas and Silas (15:22, 27, 32). These characters are instrumental in leading the discussion and communicating the decision. A unified decision for the Gentiles to abstain from things

polluted by idols, sexual immorality, that which has been strangled, and from blood (15:20, 29) brings rejoicing and encouragement to the Gentiles (15:31, 32). In other words, Gentiles do not have to follow the custom of Moses to be circumcised but do need to follow the purity codes established by Moses.

Progressive Texture and Pattern

Robbins (1996) described progressive texture and pattern as the “sequence of words and phrases,” which reveals a deeper meaning to the pericope. Analyzing the six groupings of the repetitive pattern reveal several progressions: 1) progression of conflict; 2) progression of movement; 3) progression of leadership; 4) progression of revelation.

Progression of Conflict

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch from their missionary journey with high reports of what God has done among the Gentiles. Men from Judea also come to Antioch and teach that these converts must be circumcised (15:1). There is a sharp disagreement, which moves the conflict to Jerusalem, where the apostles and elders take it up for consideration (15:2). After ongoing discussion, which includes much debate (15:7) and wisdom from the Holy Spirit (15:8), Peter and James both speak, and the conflict concludes with a unified decision (15:22).

Progression of Movement

Paul and Barnabas move around a great deal. Their missionary travels begin in Antioch and eventually delivers them to Jerusalem (15:2). On their way to Jerusalem, they take the opportunity to connect with other believers and share all that God has done through them (15:3). They stay in Jerusalem for the council (15:4-29) and then return to Antioch, with two leaders, Judas and Silas, to report on the council’s decision (15:30-35).

Progression of Leadership

Throughout the pericope, one sees layers of leadership that exist in the church of that region. Paul and Barnabas confront teachers from Judea (15:2). There are apostles and elders and brothers Jerusalem (15:1-4, 7, 13, 21-23, 32, 33). It appears Peter and James hold some type of authority, as they are the only ones quoted by Luke (15:7-11, 13-21), other than the brief one-sentence remarks of the men from Judea (15:1) and the believers from the party of Pharisees (15:5). Judas and Silas, leaders and prophets from the Jerusalem council, act as representatives to the church in Antioch (15:27).

Progression of Revelation

Peter tells the Jerusalem Council that "God made a choice" (15:7). Also, Peter reminds the council that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit just as the rest of them had, showing God was doing this work himself (15:8-9). Paul and Barnabas report on all

that God had done through them, revealing God's purposes (15:12). James refers to the agreement of the Old Testament prophets as another revelatory confirmation of God's will (15:15-18).

Narrational Texture and Pattern

Assistance in interpreting the meaning of the passage requires what Robbins (1996) described as the narrational texture and pattern. These "voices" used in a pericope, describe a pattern or flow, which assists in interpreting the meaning of the passage. In Acts 15:1-35, six different voices are employed with Luke's being the primary voice as narrator. Luke's voice often represents a larger group of leaders (the apostles and elders, the church, the assembly, or the brothers).

The men from Judea communicated disagreement (15:1). As the author, Luke recorded dissension and debate which was referred up to the leaders in Jerusalem (15:2-4). Believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees insisted that Gentiles be circumcised (15:5). Luke then recorded the gathering of leaders to consider the issue (15:6). Peter reviewed what God had already done among the Gentiles (15:7-11). Luke acknowledged that Barnabas and Paul then shared their stories of how God reached the Gentiles (15:12). James then summarized the discussion and made a recommendation (15:13-21), which Luke recorded as a decision made (15:22). A letter is then drafted that outlines the made decision (15:23-29). Luke recorded the implementation of the decision and resulting outcome in Antioch (15:30-35).

Opening-Middle-Closing Texture and Pattern

An overview of the pericope often is the result of a clear opening-middle-closing texture (Robbins, 1996). The opening of this pericope began with a conflict and the subsequent travel to Jerusalem (15:1-3). The Jerusalem Council convened and within this middle section it has its own opening-middle-closing texture and pattern as well. It begins with division (15:4-6), speeches made (15:7-21), and ends with a decision (15:22-29). The pericope ended with the journey back to Antioch (15:30-35).

Argumentative Texture and Pattern

Robbins (1996) described argumentative texture as the means to convince another person by utilizing persuasive techniques to move their thinking or acting. Acts 15:1-35 is resplendent with argumentative technique. The primary claim of this particular pericope is why the decision was made in the Jerusalem Council not to have Gentile Christians be circumcised. Nine different techniques were employed in this pericope to persuade the early church: results reported (15:3; 15:4; 15:7-10; 15:12), God's authority employed (15:8-11; 15:28), reminded of tradition (15:1; 15:5), dissension and debate (15:2; 15:7), rebuke (15:10-11), repetition (15:13-19; 15:29), proposal (15:19-21), statement (15:23-29), and ambassadorial authority granted (15:27; 15:32).

Sensory-Aesthetic Texture and Pattern

Robbins (1996) described the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern to show how language connects with our emotions, our feelings, and our senses. Utilizing three zones, Robbins (1996) encouraged an approach to the pericope that involves “emotion-fused thought, self-expressive speech, and purposeful action” (pp. 30-31).

Zone of emotion-fused thought

Acts 15:1-35 is infused with emotional thought. Dissension and debate (15:2, 7) eventually leads to great joy (15:3) and rejoicing (15:31). As a result, the Gentiles are encouraged and strengthened (15:32).

Zone of self-expressive speech

Several individuals and groups express their opinion in the pericope. Paul teaches (15:1), describes in detail all that God had done among the Gentiles (15:3-4). Peter shared his experience of telling the Gentiles about the gospel (15:7) at which point the Jerusalem Council fell silent (15:12) as Paul and Barnabas related what signs and wonders God had done among them (15:12). James replies (15:13) and echoes what the prophets also spoke regarding the salvation of the Gentiles (15:15).

Zone of purposeful action

Throughout the pericope the purposeful action of key characters is seen. Men came down from Judea to teach about the need of circumcision (15:1). Paul and Barnabas disputed the need for circumcision (15:2). This dispute led to the appointment of a group to go up to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders about the question of circumcision (15:3). The Christians sent them on their way (15:3) and after arriving in Jerusalem were welcomed by the church (15:4). The church gathered to consider the dispute (15:6) and recognized that God had made a choice regarding the Gentiles (15:7) by giving them his Holy Spirit (15:8). A judgement is made (15:19), a letter is written to the Gentile believers (15:20), and a chosen group of men and elders sent (15:22) to encourage the Gentiles to abstain from food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality (15:29).

Discussion

The innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35 reveals antecedents, outcomes, and a theological perspective to shared leadership theory. The antecedents included in this discussion are team heterogeneity and a charismatic leader. Outcomes include better decision-making and higher team satisfaction. Also given space is the application of the theological perspectives seen in the innertexture analysis to shared leadership. Lastly, discussion regarding these antecedents and outcomes reveal applications to church leadership today.

Antecedents to Shared Leadership

Team Heterogeneity

Team heterogeneity positively contributes to shared leadership even though the early stages of a diverse team experience challenges to connect and understand each other (Wu et al., 2020). Their research discovered these very challenges bring teams together (Wu et al., 2020). Team heterogeneity exists throughout Acts 15:1-35. Leaders from different groups came together to both disagree and discuss. The men from Judea interacted with the brothers in Antioch (15:1). Paul and Barnabas, who represented another viewpoint, “had no small dissension and debate” with the men from Judea (15:2). This debate led to the Jerusalem Council convening. The makeup of the Jerusalem Council included elders from the party of the Pharisees (15:5) as well as the other apostles (15:6). Peter and James give their viewpoints and experiences as well (15:7-18).

The diversity of thought revealed in the innertexture analysis confirms the importance of heterogenous teams as an antecedent to shared leadership. Pearce and Conger (2003) revealed that shared leadership is less about formal structure and authority and more about influence and knowledge leaders bring to the group. One study of shared leadership in churches found that the strategic act of sharing information and knowledge, a shared leadership approach, and a shared vision all contributed to a greater sense of belonging and effectiveness (Grandy, 2013).

Based on the innertexture analysis of the pericope, it is clear the focus of the Jerusalem Council was less about a formalized leadership structure and more about those who had knowledge and expertise regarding the challenge they faced as a community. In essence, the Jerusalem Council convened as a direct result of the diversity of opinion represented. Churches who wish to be effective in today's culture, like the church was in Acts 15, must implement shared leadership principles, such as sharing information and knowledge, sharing leadership influence, and creating a shared vision. Executive teams, ministry teams, and self-managed work teams can all benefit from greater use of leadership heterogeneity.

Davis (2015) writes, “Jesus was not interested in uniformity for his growing group of disciples, but rather, unity” (p. 116). It was in the integration of diverse groups of leaders, which enabled the Jerusalem Council to discover together the way forward. Churches today would benefit from a shared leadership birthed from heterogeneity teams. Drawing from the various cultural groups, which embody the present-day body of Christ, might very well lead to not only better decisions but also a more unified church moving into the future. An integrated community of diverse leaders can help shape, through shared leadership, a more effective church (Davis, 2015).

Research showed the majority of churches have a tradition orientation of hierarchical leadership and pastors feeling overwhelmed and unable to meet the expectations of their congregations (Barna, 2013; Brown, 2014; Carlson & Lueken,

2011; Crosby, 2012; Daniels, 2014; Dorsett, 2010; Osborne, 2014). Pearce and Conger (2003) found shared leadership to be "an effective solution to a fundamental dilemma: no single individual possesses the capacity to effectively play all possible leadership roles within a group or organizational setting" (p. 288). Researchers also discovered leadership teams as the most productive model for future leadership in the church (Cladis, 1999; Crosby, 2012). Therefore, church leaders must consider shared leadership as an invitation to involve a diverse group of leaders in the problem-solving and decision-making enterprise of the local church.

A Charismatic Leader

Charisma was described by Weber (1947) as a way of influencing followers based on how the follower perceives the leader as being exceptional. In particular, Weber (1947) found that charisma is especially needed during a crisis when a leader emerges with a compelling vision to solve the crisis. The voices recorded by Luke in Acts 15, displayed signs of charisma, inspiring followers to their way of thinking. Everywhere Paul and Barnabas traveled, they communicated "all that God had done with them" (14:27; 15:12), "describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles" (15:3), and how it brought "great joy" (15:3) to the believers. Peter displayed charisma in his visionary speech to the Jerusalem council (15:7-11), as did James when he spoke to the assembly, arguing for historical and biblical precedence for Gentile conversion (15:13-21). Charisma is sometimes associated with a more top-down, heroic-style of leadership rather than shared leadership, but as Yukl (2012) argues, heroic leadership is a myth, and "most major changes require a cooperative effort of many people in the organization" (p. 241). Yukl also notes that group-level theories, such as shared leadership, help inform how leaders influence followers. One way leaders influence followers is through casting a compelling vision. In this way, charisma might find itself, as it did in Acts 15, as part of shared leadership theory.

In the local church today, charisma is a necessary attribute to shared leadership. It is an essential mechanism for communicating vision and inspiring the group or team to action (Yukl, 2012). Floor (1976) contributed an intriguing insight into the role of charisma in the early church by showing how the church of the New Testament existed in two periods: the charismatic period and the institutional period. Floor (1976) argued that the church during the charismatic period borrowed heavily from Greek democracy by utilizing eldership to lead the ekklesia. It was only, in the later institutional period, that leaders began to lead in isolation.

Even though we still exist in the institutional period, leaders can choose to use their charisma to move the church back to the shared leadership of its founding. The innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35 revealed charismatic leaders were drawing people together, casting a compelling vision, and inspiring the church toward a more inclusive and shared leadership model. Also, charisma is necessary in times of crisis (Yukl, 2012). The church in Acts 15 was facing a crisis of membership. Would Gentiles be allowed into the fellowship, and what price would need to be paid (e.g., circumcision or not)? As Peter, James, Paul, and Barnabas all showed, charismatic leaders, in a group setting and a shared leadership model, can use their charisma to influence the group

toward needed action. Leaders in today's church, which faces many challenges and complexities, must rise to the occasion. Not in a top-down, heroic sense, but in an empowered and shared way. Shared leadership theory gives room for individual leaders to have a voice and mentor the group toward a shared purpose and shared decision-making.

Outcomes of Shared Leadership

Better Decision-Making

Serban and Roberts (2016), as well as Wu et al. (2020), confirmed the validity of shared leadership as a practical approach to complex leadership decisions. The outcome of the Jerusalem Council, amid dissenting voices, reveal a shared leadership approach as an effective way to navigate complex issues. The shared leadership employed by the Jerusalem Council directly led to a better decision and greater unity in the process.

One of the most important decisions ever made by the early church was the decision to embrace Gentile converts in their gatherings, without also requiring circumcision (Acts 15). Yukl (2012) discussed two vital and strategic responsibilities for shared leadership: 1) monitor the "external environment to identify threats and opportunities, and 2) determine a strategy for the "future survival and prosperity of the organization" (p. 277). This strategic decision-making process accurately describes what was taking place in Acts 15. The apostles and elders were monitoring the external environment and taking strategic steps for the church's survival. They understood both the threat and opportunity Gentile conversion was to the church. The lack of resolution regarding purity issues was a threat to the church's survival, but it was also an opportunity to expand the mission of God as Jesus instructed. So, they made a strategic decision to make it easier for Gentiles to come to Jesus without having to be circumcised and going through Jewish purity rituals (Acts 15:28-29). The leadership assembly did ask for a level of purity, which was another strategic decision to keep the unity between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians.

The early church sought a participative decision-making process, which culminated at the Jerusalem Council. Research has shown that participative decision-making often results in a higher-quality decision as well as broader acceptance of the decision among followers (Pearce & Conger, 2003). The involvement of those who disagreed with the conversion of Gentiles without circumcision (the men from Judea in verse 1 and the party of the Pharisees in verse 5) was an essential aspect of the decision-making process in Acts 15. These voices were not silenced but given voice. Druskat and Wheeler (2003) note the importance of leadership advocating the position of followers. The party of the Pharisees (Acts 15:5) participated, and, as a result, the decision made involved all sides. As a result, the Jerusalem Council made a better decision and gave a better opportunity for buy-in from all involved.

For the church of today to make significant decisions, leaders must incorporate team-oriented leadership. Barna (2011) recognized this trend in churches:

Rather than waiting for the superstar to make pronouncements and give permission to act, the new form of leadership invites all gifted leaders to coordinate their efforts with those of other leaders, focusing on a common vision and crafting ways of collaborating for heightened productivity and impact. (What's Happening with Models and Methods section, para. 3)

Scott and Caress (2005) found, in their study of Christie Hospital, that staff thrived when given an invitation into the decision-making process. Anderson's (2017) work revealed the reduction of pastoral dependency in a Seventh-day Adventist Church was a direct result of self-managed ministry teams, a form of shared leadership.

Another aspect of a shared decision-making process in the local church is leaders inviting the Holy Spirit to engage in the process. The innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35 revealed the Trinity working alongside and with a multitude of leaders to make the best decision possible. Facing a complex problem regarding the conversion of Gentiles, this team approach to leadership enabled a decision that seemed good to the leaders and God. Gentiles received the decision with open arms.

Deep theological reflection and the work of the Holy Spirit were both utilized in the Acts 15 decision (15:7-21). Matthews (2005) argues for theological reflection being an integral part of any decision-making process in pastoral ministry. Therefore, church leaders of today, in order to make the best decisions, must involve others in a shared practice of decision-making, including time given to theological reflection as it relates to the decision-making process.

One of the benefits of shared leadership is not only better decision-making but unified decision-making (Davis, 2015). Davis (2015) showed how a model of shared leadership flows from Jesus' vision for church unity and the unity of the Trinity. Also, Grandy (2013) showed how a plurality of leaders involved in decision-making would result in more ownership of the results of the decision (Grandy, 2013). Shared leadership increases the effectiveness and outcomes of change (Pearce & Conger, 2003), thus giving church leaders greater affirmation in moving forward in decision-making with what God has spoken. As scripture says, "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22, ESV). This multitude of counsel in Acts 15:1-35 strengthened the decision made by the Jerusalem Council. Effective, shared leadership will get the right people in the room together to make crucial decisions (Grandy, 2013), just as the key leaders did in the Jerusalem Council.

Lastly, this pericope challenges the notion of individualism. Shared leadership, as revealed in the innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35, show a better and more effective way to lead in difficult times. Involving a diverse group of voices in the decision-making process will lead to a more unified church (Grandy, 2013) and produce a better decision.

Higher Team Satisfaction

Team satisfaction is a significant outcome of shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Serban & Roberts, 2016). Hartwig et al. (2015) found “greater joy and satisfaction among team members” (p. 59) in local churches who employ shared leadership attributes. Other research also found an increase in team satisfaction in a shared leadership approach in the ecclesial context (Barna, 2013; Bell, 2014; Cladis, 1999). An innertexture analysis of Acts 15:1-35 revealed team satisfaction among the Jerusalem Council.

In the pericope, team satisfaction occurred as a result of shared leadership. Prior to the decision, the passage reveals dissension (15:2) and debate (15:7). After the recommendation from James is accepted, the passage reads, “Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church” (15:22). The decision resulted in group satisfaction and ultimately resulted in the rejoicing of the Gentiles (15:31). It “seemed good” to the group is reiterated two more times in the selected pericope to emphasize the satisfaction this decision had on the Jerusalem Council (15:25, 28).

Shared leadership in the literature reviewed and, in the passage studied, resulted in greater team satisfaction. Church leaders can employ shared leadership theory with confidence that one outcome will be a greater level of satisfaction among followers and teams. As Barna (2013) writes regarding churches which function out of shared leadership, “Leaders serving in these churches get great pleasure and satisfaction from leading within a team context” (p. 116).

Conclusion

Does Acts 15:1-35 legitimize the practice of shared leadership theory in the church today? An exhaustive literature review provided an overview of shared leadership theory in the ecclesial environment. Examining shared leadership from a biblical perspective provided a qualitative look at the potential impact of shared leadership in churches today. After an extensive search, only nineteen articles and books exist regarding shared leadership in the ecclesial context. Of these nineteen, only eight mentioned the theory of shared leadership as contributing to their results.

Categories of the findings in the literature include antecedents, outcomes, and biblical perspectives for shared leadership. The research showed an underlying biblical foundation for shared leadership. Nevertheless, much of the current literature regarding shared leadership in the ecclesial setting does not employ qualitative research from a biblical perspective of shared leadership.

Utilizing Robbins' (1996) innertexture analysis revealed several antecedents, outcomes, and biblical perspectives to shared leadership theory. The antecedents included in this discussion were team heterogeneity, and a charismatic leader. Outcomes included better decision-making and higher team satisfaction. Biblical perspectives from the innertexture analysis applied throughout the discussion regarding

shared leadership theory. Also, these antecedents and outcomes of shared leadership are necessary and applicable to church leadership today.

This paper added to the literature by utilizing an innertexture analysis of Acts 15 as it relates to shared leadership in the ecclesial context, revealing that the Jerusalem Council effectively employed shared leadership theory attributes to achieve a positive outcome for the church. In doing so, this article answers the question: Does Acts 15:1-35 legitimize the practice of shared leadership theory in the church today?

Future research utilizing the socio-rhetorical analysis of biblical passages and applied to shared leadership methodology is needed. Also, quantitative research of churches that employ shared leadership theory will produce interesting and helpful results. This quantitative research would help determine the essential attributes and outcomes of this biblically-based leadership theory to the local church. Hopefully, this article has encouraged ecclesial leaders to pursue the study of shared leadership theory to the future leadership of the church

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The Benefit of Role Reversal for Servant Leaders and Their Followers: A Genre Analysis of Philemon

Deborah L. Welch

Among the New Testament canonical epistles, Paul's letter to Philemon serves as an exemplary text for illustrating Servant Leadership in a beneficial way for both the early church and contemporary Christian leaders. Using Osborne's (2006) epistle genre analysis, this study analyzes Paul's letter to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, while reviewing Servant Leadership theory and emphasizing how the kingdom concept of role reversal advances the importance and possibility of leaders as servants first in the church. Kingdom dynamics that emphasize role reversal between leaders and followers also align Greenleaf's Servant Leadership theory together with Paul's teaching in his epistles and Jesus' commands in the Gospel narratives. Thus, Paul's letter to Philemon effectively portrays a paradigm-shifting, worldview renovation that persuades others by love and example to serve one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Benefit of Role Reversal for Servant Leaders and Their Followers: A Genre Analysis of Philemon

When societal ideas about leadership, power, and influence conflict with key biblical principles, the clear commandments of Jesus, and the teaching of the apostles, a misalignment of leadership theory and local church goals can occur. For example, servant leadership, as conceived in the Gospels and epistles of the New Testament, may not always have the same appearance and effect that is expected by modern leadership models. Jesus himself exhorted his disciples to this sacrificial way of service, telling them, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:43-45, *English Standard Version*, 2016). By considering the importance of genre analysis as outlined by Osborne (2006), analyzing Paul’s epistle to Philemon as regards Onesimus, and briefly considering the literature on servant leadership, this study emphasizes how role reversal positively impacts our understanding of servant leadership in the church. Paul’s letter to Philemon serves as the key mechanism for enabling readers to understand the paradigm-shifting, worldview renovation required at the heart of true Christian, servant leadership.

Exegetical Analysis

Among the New Testament canonical epistles, Paul’s letter to Philemon serves as an exemplary mechanism that illustrates the kind of servant leadership that benefited the early church while also providing application to our current ecclesial settings. Paul does not merely call Philemon and others to Christ-like leadership qualities and behaviors as examples to emulate, which might lead followers to retrofit servanthood traits and behaviors back into worldly paradigms. Rather, Paul’s letter to Philemon provides an exemplary model of the heart of servant leadership in action.

Importance of Genre Analysis for Epistle Hermeneutics

The hermeneutic evaluation of the New Testament epistles uses all of the general exegetical principles, including contextual, grammatical, semantic, historical, and cultural backgrounds analysis (Osborne, 2006, p. 181). For the purposes of this paper, additional hermeneutic principles used specific to the Philemon epistle include, analyzing: (a) the logical development of Paul’s argument; (b) the situation behind Paul’s statements; and (c) any different subgenres or intertextual considerations (Osborne, 2006, p. 318). Initially, the paper will consider the background of the epistle from historical, cultural, and contextual considerations. Then, the content of the epistle will be evaluated based on the above criteria, as pertains to Paul’s argument. Furthermore, a brief review of the past literature on the concept of Servant Leadership will be considered. Finally, a discussion of the implications of the text and servant leader theory further examines the beneficial contribution of the epistle to Philemon -- especially regarding the concept of kingdom reversal.

Background, Occasion, and Authorship

Of all Paul's letters and in the history of Christianity, no serious contentions appear that should threaten the authenticity of authorship or the contention that Paul wrote the letter to Philemon (Hughes, 2013, p. 374). In fact, Dunn (2014) affirmed that the scholarly consensus affirms Pauline authorship, stating that any claims of Pauline authenticity should not raise "alarm bells" (p. 300). Barentsen (2011) stated, Paul's earlier letters, including, Philemon tended to respond reactively to specific socio-historical situations. Since Tychicus already planned to travel to Asia in order to deliver two other letters to the Colossae and Laodicea churches, Paul seized on the opportunity by sending Onesimus along with an epistle Paul wrote on his behalf (Hughes, 2013, p. 380).

Considered the main recipient of the letter as stated in Philemon 1, Philemon held a high cultural status, as one who hosted the church in his home (Phm. 2) and apparently was capable of providing for long-term house guests (Phm. 22). However, the other recipients present included Apphia, Archippus, and the whole church that met in Philemon's home, according to Phm. 2. As one of Paul's fellow workers, Philemon likely held an active leadership role, rather than merely holding the background role of a typical wealthy patron (Dunn, 2014, p. 301). As author, Paul apparently wrote the letter from Rome, as a "prisoner in chains": a phrase that could refer either to physical confinement or a form of house arrest (Witherington, 2007). Either way, during his imprisonment, Paul had encountered the fugitive slave, Onesimus, and was now writing an appeal to Philemon for reconciliation – and would send Onesimus to deliver it himself. Since the epistle would be handed by the fugitive slave to his master from whom he had escaped, Paul's "relationship capital" with both Philemon and Onesimus would be put to the test. The difficulty and danger for all parties, as explained by Witherington (2007), included multiple layers of legal, social, and credibility factors.

Opening Epistle Analysis: Phm 1-7

In his discussion of Paul's greetings, Osborne (2006) stated that Paul typically mentions his legitimacy and official status as apostle in order to reinforce the authority of his words (Osborne, 317). However, in Philemon, Paul foregoes his apostolic status and leadership position, by rather emphasizing his imprisonment status of being "in chains" (Phm. 1, 10, 13). As previously mentioned, Paul addressed the letter not only to his fellow worker and brother, Philemon, but also to their sister in the Lord, Apphia, and their fellow "soldier" Archippus, who is widely considered a follower of Epaphras, mentioned in Col 4:17 (Witherington, 2006, p. 54). Furthermore, Witherington (2007), Moo (2008), and Dunn (2014) considered the fact that Paul uniquely addressed the letter to the house church assembly meeting in Philemon's home as a matter that overturns the private letter nature into a more public form of appeal. Indeed, Witherington (2007) considered the address to all members as a guarantee that the church would be fully aware of Paul's appeal and Philemon's response (p. 56).

Furthermore, both Witherington (2007) and Dunn (2014) call attention to Paul's use of "the Lord Jesus Christ" and his use of the term *kyrios*, which sets a unique tone in terms of the master (*kyrios*) and slave (*doulos*) motif that characterizes the much of the meaning of the text. Though Philemon and Paul both hold worldly authority positions, both are also subject to a greater Master, which Paul signifies by calling attention to Jesus Christ as *kyrios*.

Exordium: Thanksgiving and Prayer (Phm. 4-7)

Considered part of the greeting in this epistle, the section of thanksgiving and prayer, in most translations, tends to perform a special and important function, separate from the greeting and the body. Osborne (2006) described a syntactical investigation of Paul's greeting, by mapping the list of propositions. His exercise uncovered the kernel sortedness of Phil 4-7, stated as "I was moved because you loved all the saints" (Osborne, p. 117). Moo (2008), Dunn (2014), Hughes (2013), and Witherington (2007) agreed that Paul demonstrated exceptional rhetorical argumentation in developing his case in this *exordium* section. As such, Paul sought to gain Philemon's trust in these verses, as well as build his reputation among the congregants of the local house church community in Colossae before addressing the more serious matters in later verses. Witherington (2007) pointed out that Paul's Asiatic-style rhetoric used a form of prolix structure, in which ideas start in one section, but do not resolve until later in the passage (p. 57). Thus, the main point of Paul's emotional pleas in Phm. 4-7 is as an appeal to Philemon's and the hearers' affections by creating a type of *pathos*, described by Aristotle as preparing the hearers' receptivity and frame of mind (Witherington, 2007: *Rhet.* 1.2.3). In a sense, Paul motivated Philemon and the other recipients to embrace the difficult, dangerous, and unpopular message to come in the next section by securing their love, faith, and honor towards the saints and in the church community in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Body: Paul's Plea to Philemon on Behalf of Onesimus, Phm. 8-22

As Paul transitioned to address the specific situation and his plea to Philemon, the nature of the request continues to build through subtle insinuation, and eventually strong exhortation. Witherington (2007) stated that Paul used the rhetorical device of *insinuatio* to start with indirect statements, intended to avoid to offense, and building up to the *peroratio* where the writer would "pull out all the emotional stops" so as to make a bold and direct appeal (p. 64). The overall body section portrays Paul's various emotional appeals throughout, such as: Phm. 9: "yet for love's sake"; Phm. 10: "for my child"; Phm. 12: "sending my very heart"; Phm. 14 "in order that your goodness"; Phm. 16: "as a beloved brother"; Phm. 19: "I write this with my own hand" and "even your own self"; Phm. 20: "refresh my heart" (English Standard Version, 2016). With each emotional appeal, Paul attached a plea for Philemon's willing compliance by using *insinuatio* to build to his crescendo of full reconciliation and a soft appeal for more.

Insinuatio: Appeal to Love (Phm. 8-9)

In Phm. 8 and 9, Paul reminded Philemon and the other hearers that as an apostle, he could command Philemon to do as he wanted, and yet he would rather make an appeal based on love. Further drawing on the principle of saintly love, Paul referred to Onesimus as his spiritual son and stated that he had become his father by conversion of faith in Phm. 10.

Beneficial Reversal (Phm. 11-16)

In Phm. 11, Paul used a semantic device, the play on words, to describe Onesimus, whose name in Greek meant “useful” or “beneficial” (Moo, 2008, p. 434). Based on what Paul would write later, in Phm. 18, not only had Onesimus run away from his master, Philemon, but he may have stolen and caused other financial damages. Therefore, when Paul wrote that Onesimus was formerly useless, but now indeed useful to both to Paul and Philemon, Paul was setting up the reversal scenario. Yet, in his appeal, Paul carefully reiterated that he preferred Philemon’s consent and that any decision made by Philemon be of his own accord (Phm. 14). Thus far, Paul has not alluded to what his request would entail, though the passage continues to build. In Phm. 15 and 16, Paul’s appeal transitioned into *peroratio*, as he pulled out all the emotional stops for what was to come. He stated that perhaps Philemon would have Onesimus back forever (Phm. 15), “no longer as a bondservant (*doulos/slave*), but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother...both in the flesh and in the Lord” (Phm. 16).

Peroratio: Paul’s Promise and Request (Phm. 17-22)

Still applying the principle of *insinuatio*, Paul asked Philemon in verse 17 to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul himself and attached to it a promise that Paul would repay anything owed to Philemon. In so doing, Paul puts his relationship on the line with Philemon, as well as his own legal status. Dunn (2014) helpfully pointed out that while Paul made no declarations against the Roman system of slavery, his actions in harboring and aiding a fugitive slave would subject him to the same law along with Onesimus (p. 324). Since Paul’s letters likely would have to be read by authorities, either as they were taken out of prison, or while on Onesimus’ person as he returned to Philemon, this guarantee by Paul to repay any of Onesimus’ debts served more than one purpose (Dunn, 2014, p. 324). Paul made the deliberate statement in Phm. 19 that he wrote the section “in his own hand”; therefore, it held legal status. Paul said that Philemon could charge whatever owed to his account and followed with a reminder of the debt Philemon also owed in return, “even your own self.” In essence, Paul masterfully covered his legal bases while banking on his relational and spiritual account with Philemon.

Dunn (2014), Hughes (2013), Moo (2008), Barclay (2003), and Witherington (2007) agreed that Phm. 20 represents the climax of Paul’s rhetorical emotional appeal. First, Paul confidently called on Philemon’s obedience, addressing him once again as “brother.” Paul still avoided appealing to his apostolic authority, in deference to

Philemon's to voluntary obedience in response to the gospel, which Moo (2008) referred to as a gospel imperative (p 434). Additionally, Moo (2008) asserted that scholarly consensus affirms that when Paul stated, "I write to you" (21), he used the Greek verb in "epistolary aorist" form, which is considered both present tense and ongoing (p. 434). Similarly, his injunction to Philemon represented both an optimistic and ongoing approach, in that Philemon would do even more than Paul asks with regard to Onesimus (Phm. 21). Furthermore, by requesting "this benefit" from him, Paul equated the benefit with refreshing of his very "inner being." Witherington (2007) asserted when Paul again deliberately used the word *onaimēn*, which aligned with Onesimus's name, he brought the entire plea full circle to reinforce the overall theme and to connect it back to Paul's ministry (p. 84).

Hughes (2013) suggested that Onesimus is profitable for church leaders today in terms of learning from Paul's method of reconciliation in the body of Christ. Yet, the next passage suggests even more than that single occasion of reconciliation between Onesimus and Philemon. In Phm. 21, Paul further extended his request, stating that he was confident that Philemon would do even more than Paul had asked of him. Here, historians offer conjecture about the extent of the results of Paul's plea. Barclay (2003) stated that one may safely assume that Philemon complied with the request, doing precisely as Paul requested of him (p. 309). Additionally, others further insinuate that Paul's countercultural example and plea to Philemon may have influenced others in the churches to respond similarly.

The historical evidence is suggestive that Philemon in fact returned Onesimus to Paul in Rome, in deference to Paul's request, where Onesimus faithfully served as a free man (Hughes, 2013). Witherington (2006) considered the evidence of the letter's proliferation suggestive that Paul's request was efficacious. Furthermore, Barclay (2013) (along with Moo, Hughes, and others) referenced the letters of Ignatius to the church in Ephesus nearly 50 years later, in which Ignatius praised their Bishop, Onesimus, using the same pun that Paul previously made to Philemon about this "benefit" (p. 315). It may well be that Philemon's obedience led to one of the greatest gospel testimonies and stories of reversal both in Christ and the church (Barclay, 2003, p. 316). Nonetheless, the account of Philemon's "benefit" -- the metaphoric reversal of slave and master, leader and follower -- remains today for Christians to learn, apply, and obey, not under coercion, but because of Christ's love, his perfect example, and our kinship to one another in His name.

Closing Benediction and Farewell: Phm. 23-25

In the final section, Paul closes with a rather standard greeting. Osborne (2006) considered the closing greetings, benediction, or farewell as a common element of the typical formula for ancient epistle writing (p. 317). Paul mentioned other laborers who would have been known to Philemon and the other hearers. The benediction of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, again reminded Philemon of Jesus as their gracious, *kyrios*, or Lord and Master. DuGuid et al. (2020) cited Paul's desire that Onesimus might "serve" (*diakonē*) Paul on Philemon's behalf as a striking comment. By alluding to

Onesimus having acted on Philemon's behalf, even though Philemon was a master who had slaves to serve him, Paul is getting to the "heart of the distinctive ethic of servanthood lying at the heart of Christian community" (DuGuid et al., 2020).

Servant Leadership in Review

Greenleaf (1970) founded the servant leadership concept for modern leadership and in so doing conceptualized the servant first, not leader first. If one begins with the desire to serve first, rather than to lead first, the person makes a conscious decision to mitigate the desire for power and material acquisition (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 124)

Since Greenleaf's 1970 thought-provoking conceptual treatise on servant leadership, modern theorists have advanced the theory to include Patterson's (2003) development of foundational constructs that emphasized moral purpose and extensive theoretical research on servant leadership. Spears (1998), Farling, Stone and Winston (1999), Laub (1999), and Page and Wong (2000) made key efforts to operationalize the theory by emphasizing Greenleaf's theory. Additionally, Sanjaya (2003), Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), and van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2010) utilized constructs based on both Greenleaf's and Patterson's work to further operationalize and apply servant leadership dimensions in the workplace. Furthermore, Ayers (2008) described the Christological hymn found in Philippians 2: 5-11 as the Christ-like example of servant leadership that emphasized and leads to humility and authenticity.

Servant Leadership Theory and The Great Reversal

As Osborne (2006) contended, biblical interpretation moves from text to context as a spiral, from the original meaning and purpose to its significance and contextualization for today's church (p. 22). Likewise, systematic theologians hold to a trajectory of interpretation that moves from the particular statements found in the text to a formation of biblical theology, then to understanding within a systematic approach. Therefore, this section aims to connect the genre analysis above with aspects and implications of Servant Leadership theory.

Lee-Barnewall (2016) noted how Greenleaf and others emphasized that the desire to serve first precedes the leader-first mentality in Servant-Leadership and how that should shape our approach to church leadership, ultimately in terms she described as kingdom dynamics. Emphasizing the paradoxical nature of servant/slave and leader helps connect us with the New Testament's kingdom goals of "sacrifice, unity, and love" first before considering roles of functional authority (Lee-Barnewall, 2016, p. 106). Thus, the "leader as servant first" paradigm promotes a correct relationship between the members of Christ's body by considering the ultimate kingdom reversal, Christ's willingness to take on the nature of a servant for the sake of others (Philippians 2:5-11). Furthermore, in this version of reversal, God works through weakness, rather than strength, to confront worldly wisdom and strength with unity, love, and community for the purpose of building up his global body (Lee-Barnewall, 2016, p. 107). Thus, Jesus

pointed to this understanding of leaders as a certain form of slave when he told the disciples that whoever desired to be first, must become a slave, translated from the Greek, “*doulos*” (Matthew 20:27-28, Mark 10:22-45).

In addition, Lee-Barnewall (2016) highlighted the significance that Jesus and Paul frequently preferred to describe leaders as *doulos* rather than merely *diakonos* for relevant semantic reasons (p. 109). *Diakonos* is a broader term than *doulos*; therefore, a slave is always a type of servant, but not every servant is a slave (Lee-Barnewall, 2016, p. 109). Both Paul and Jesus provided examples of how they exercised the principles of kingdom reversal in their own interactions with followers, by referring to themselves as *doulos*. For instance, Carson (2016) discussed the importance of Jesus’ foot washing service to the disciples was not primarily reserved as an act of humility, so much as his imitation of the Gentile slaves who performed the role. Thus, Jesus here further enacted a reversal of expected social and economic roles, shocking the disciples, and shattering their expectations and sense of tradition (p. 462). Additionally, Paul referred to himself as (a) a slave of Christ in Romans 1:1 and Galatians 1:10; (b) a slave to all people for the sake of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 9:19; and (c) his apostolic role as being a “*doulos*” in 2 Corinthians 4:5. Just as Lee-Barnewall (2016) suggested, this notion of kingdom reversal serves to reflect Christ’s glory through the humility and weakness of those whom he calls as stewards and shepherds, because it is his power that is perfected through our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:8-10). Christ’s kingdom upends the existing order of the world, calling forth and promising eschatological blessings to the least likely individuals, while transforming man-made rules of power, prestige, and privilege.

Conclusion and Implications

While the eschatological promises remain under-realized in our day, Christian leadership still seeks to follow the sacrificial pattern set out by Christ and practiced by Paul. One day, when the ultimate reversal takes place, the first will be last, and the last will be first (Matt 20:16). Until then, leaders in the contemporary church, just as in ancient society, will often be tempted to associate their positions with their personal identity, worth, status, and honor. Thus, to take on the mindset of a servant or *doulos*, means giving up the very things that the world’s kingdom esteems, in exchange for that which matters eternally and for future promises of the kingdom to come. Hence, recognizing the paradox and reversal of Servant Leadership theory’s Christ-focused and other-centered approach can facilitate unity and enable Christian leaders to reflect God’s character in our various vocational settings. As Lee-Barnewall (2016) suggested, leaders may do well to ask whether current paradigms essentially serve to give the glory to God, or if our structures and processes give glory to the people who occupy those positions (p. 120). As Paul demonstrated in his letter to Philemon on behalf of the slave Onesimus, this kingdom-reversing dynamic that lovingly compels Christ followers to serve one another still continues to provide a persuasive challenge to prevailing worldly social assumptions and cultural norms.

About the Author

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in leadership

From the Pastor's Desk: A Quantitative Analysis of African American Pastors' leading with Congregants Experiencing Mental Health Issues

Mildred D. Williams

Several studies indicate there may be a significant increase in African Americans being diagnosed and suffering with severe mental illnesses (Avent, Cashwell, & Brown-Jeffy, 2015; Williams & Cabrera-Nguyen, 2016). Many African Americans, however, are shown to seek psychological support from their pastors rather than seek formal mental health services (Avent et al., 2015; Hays, 2015; Stansbury, Harley, King, Nelson & Speight, 2012). Researchers suggest that the Black pastor is perceived as a respected community leader who is firmly embedded within the African American community, where they acquire a significant degree of community admiration, influence, respect, and civic responsibility that justifiably classifies them in a unique honorable position (Mercer, 2013). The purpose of this research study was to explore through a correlation, quantitative methodological study utilizing the Demographic Data Questionnaire, The Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS) and The Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), how the African American pastor as a leader addresses mental illness with their congregants as well as determine the crucial role the pastor has in assisting their congregants who seek professional help for mental illness. Further, this research assessed the correlation between a Pastor's education and their understanding of mental health and their willingness to refer their congregants to a mental health provider.

From the Pastor's Desk: A Quantitative Analysis of African American Pastors' leading with Congregants Experiencing Mental Health Issues

Studies show that African Americans have utilized the Black Church to address many of their multifaceted needs: physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, social, and economic (Hankerson et al., 2013; Rowland & Isaac-Savage, 2014). Historically, African Americans have been known to seek support solely from the Black church and the Black pastor to address those various needs, especially when it comes to their mental and emotional needs. Research indicates the various reasons why African Americans choose to seek help from informal mental health services as opposed to formal mental health services. (Rowland & Isaac-Savage, 2014) There are significant disparities that exist along racial and ethnic lines indicating that minorities have less access to mental health services. The individual's, socioeconomic status, demographic location, and employment status contribute to these disparities hindering the individual's ability to seek formal support (Brown et al., 2014; Williams & Cabrera-Nguyen, 2016). Hankerson et al. (2013) also suggest that there are several barriers that keep African Americans from seeking formal mental health services.

Barriers for Seeking Services

One barrier that keeps African Americans from seeking formal mental health services is the lack of appropriate health insurance coverage to receive adequate psychiatric treatment. This barrier may be a result of urban poverty which is deemed to be a cultivator of mental health issues that keep the African American in a cyclical experience where poverty may create mental health issues, but the individual cannot seek help due to lack of benefits due to their poverty (Anakwenze & Zuberi, 2013). Further, there seems to be a negative stigma that is attached to seeking mental health services (Awosan et al., 2011; Hays, 2015). Consequently, Neighbors et al. (1998) assert African Americans do not seek treatment due to the negative stigma of being labeled as crazy. According to Hays (2015), there is a less than positive experience for African Americans seeking formal treatment where they verbalize a culture of mistrust with a therapist or clinician who is not African American.

There is also the notion that health care providers who serve the mentally ill are culturally insensitive, lack cultural competency and provide inadequate and improper treatment and diagnosis of African Americans seeking support- thus increasing the fear of institutionalization (Hays, 2015; Hovey et al., 2014). Given these aspects, many African- Americans are shown to seek psychological support primarily from their pastor. According to Neighbors et al. (1998), many African Americans continue to view the Black church as a haven for both solace and moral support. These researchers suggest furthermore that the Black pastor is perceived as one of the most respected leaders in the community and is deemed to be entrenched and embedded in the African American community. They further suggest that the Black pastor acquires a significant degree of community admiration, influence, respect, and civic responsibility that justifiably places them in a unique and honorable position. According to Lumpkins et al. (2013), the Black pastor's communication from the pulpit is influential to congregants due to the pastor's

significant leadership role and what it represents. The authors further indicate the pastor is deemed as a spiritual guide and a trusted servant recognized by members as a true change agent. Therefore, the pastor's guidance, direction and leadership become a vital component in the pastor parishioner relationship. Because the Black pastor is considered an influential leader in the community who is well respected, many African Americans would rather seek psychological assistance from their clergy rather than seek formal mental health services (Hays, 2015). Avent et al. (2015) conjectured, despite the educational background of the Black pastor, many members consider the pastor as a credible and valuable individual who may be instrumental in helping them both psychologically and socially. This study therefore assesses the nature of the African American pastor's feasibility to issue mental health counseling, utilize formal mental health services and collaborate and refer their congregants to formal mental health service agencies.

Research Method & Design

The researcher uses a quantitative methodological study approach utilizing the following surveys: (a) The Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009, p. 149-150), (b) The Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS), (Anthony, et al., 2015, pp. 120-121; Wylie, 1984), (c) The Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), (Fisher & Turner, 1970; Gaffney, 2016). The goal was for these surveys to be completed face to face at the Baptist Ministers fellowship meeting on Monday nights in Greenville, S.C. The meeting meets at Martin Webb Theological Seminary from 7:00pm-9:00pm. The researcher ascertained permission from the Baptist Minister's fellowship president to attend at least three consecutive meetings to secure participants. The first meeting was an informational meeting to share with the pastors about the research. The pastors were asked about completing the surveys in the following two meetings. A letter explaining the nature of the study and appropriate consent forms were brought to the meetings along with the surveys. During the second meeting, pastors were asked to complete the surveys. This process took approximately 45-60 minutes. During the third meeting, any pastors who did not complete the survey at the second meeting were asked to complete the survey in another room away from the regular meeting. After week three, if the researcher does not have the appropriate sample size of surveys, surveys will be administered to the remaining pastor via email. The sample for this study will be comprised from the Reedy River Baptist Association Pastors in Greenville, S. C. This group of pastors also makes up the Baptist Ministers fellowship pastors. The sample size estimated for this study will be approximately 30 pastors from the churches associated and listed within region four of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina. This sample size is based upon the number of churches in this region that meets the description of the type of pastor to be surveyed, Black Baptist pastors. A power analysis was completed to determine the sample size. This was done by using the survey system software. With a confidence level of 95%, a confidence interval of 10, which denotes a margin of error of +5 and -5. The margin of population is 30. Based on the calculation from this software, if this researcher receives at least 23-28 surveys back, this should be sufficient to proceed with and complete this research. Also, based on the researcher using three

different surveys, the number of questions for each survey and with the number of participants, even with a small sample, the researcher will receive an ample amount of data points to substantiate the research study. As indicated, this information is public information on both the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina website and the Reedy River Baptist Association website. The age range for these pastors is estimated to be from 40 years old to 75 years old. The surveys administered were the Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009, p. 149-150), the Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS), (Anthony et al., 2015; Wylie, 1984) and the Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), (Fisher & Turner, 1970; Gaffney, 2016).

The participants self-identified as African American senior level pastors or clergy. The parameter of age criterion for this study was 18 years of age or older, and the participant should be capable of reading the material and understanding the basic nature of the study. The survey asked engaging questions of the pastor surrounding the use of formal mental health resources in their community as noted in the Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), (Fisher & Turner, 1970; Gaffney, 2016).

Due to the unique and challenging responsibility of the Black pastor, this chosen research method and design was deemed most appropriate. Submitting surveys face-to-face created a personal touch and engagement where the researcher explained the nature of the study. The use of an online survey tool is only submitted to pastors via email who were unable to attend one of the survey meeting times. This research design is suitable to respond to this study's purpose, which is to explore how the African American pastor as a leader addresses mental illness with their congregants. The purpose will further examine the pastor's formal use of mental health services thus assessing whether the pastor educational level supports their making appropriate referrals to formal mental health agencies.

Results were computed by the researcher using the R Project software for statistical computing. SPSS for Windows was utilized to help with data analysis. According to Gaffney (2016), it is also vital for surveys that are ineligible or incomplete to be discarded and not included in the data analysis and outcomes of the study. The results from the final analysis will hopefully significantly contribute to both the theological and psychological fields of study. The merging of these two schools of thought may aid the pastor as well as the health care professional in understanding both the spiritual and psychological needs of the individual thus developing a healthier collaboration between the two (Rowland & Isaac-Savage, 2014; Stansbury, et al., 2012).

Operational Definitions of Variables

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative correlational research approach. The objective is to explore the possible relationships between the African American pastor's education level and their ability to understand the mental health issues of their

congregants as well as assess their willingness to refer their congregants for mental health services. It further determined the pastor's relationship with mental health referral agencies as it relates to the pastor's ability to refer congregants for services.

Table 1

Description of Research Variables with Corresponding Operational Definitions and Variable Measures

Research Variable	Operational Definition	Variable Measure
Pastor's Understanding of Mental Health	This variable is based on their self-report understanding of common mental health practices and issues from a scale	Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS)
Pastor's willingness to refer their congregants	This variable is based on their self-report indicating their willingness to refer their congregants for mental health treatment	Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS)
Pastor's ability to refer congregants	This variable is based on their self-report indicating their ability to refer their congregants for mental health treatment	Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS) Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS)

Table 2

Research questions and their corresponding measured variables

Question Number	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable
1. What is the association of a Pastor's education on their understanding of mental health?	Pastor's Understanding of Mental Health	Pastor's Education

2. What is the association of a Pastor's education on their willingness to refer their congregants to a mental health provider	Pastor's willingness to refer their congregants	Pastor's Education
3. What is the association of the Pastor/Mental Health agency relationship on a pastor's ability to refer their congregants to mental health services?	Pastor's ability to refer congregants	Pastor/Mental Health Relationship

The Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS) was initially developed in 1984 (Wylie, 1984). It was later revised in 2015 (Anthony et al., 2015, pp. 120-121). This survey is an eleven-question survey that asks the clergy various questions surrounding the following:

- Describing the characteristics of congregants who seek counseling
- Check list of issues that the congregant might be seeking help for
- The number of congregants counseled and for what mental health issue?
- Rank in order of importance as to why the congregant seek help from the clergy as opposed to the mental health professionals
- What are the cues that denote a congregant needs help?
- Checklist comparison of professional counseling and spiritual counseling
- Are congregants referred?
- Factors that influence decision to refer
- Experiences in counseling and doing a better job
- Opinion pertaining to formal training in counseling being appropriate for Clergy (Anthony et al., 2015, pp. 120-121).

This study hypothesized that the more formal education the pastor has, the more that pastor will utilize formal mental health services in the community. It further assessed the pastor's relationship with mental health agencies as it relates to the pastor's ability to refer congregants for services should they need it.

Validity and Reliability

According to Heale and Twycross (2015), validity is defined as "the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study" (p. 66). Reliability, the authors' state "relates to the consistency of a measure" as well as the "accuracy of an instrument" (p. 66). Leedy and Ormrod (2013) indicate the following as it pertains to validity and reliability. The "validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure" (p. 89). Reliability they state, "is the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain, consistent result

when the entity being measured hasn't changed" (p. 91). Therefore, the validity of a project indicates whether or not the information the researcher is receiving measures what the researcher wants as the outcome; thus, will it accurately reflect what the researcher wants it to reflect in the data sheet. Moreover, the reliability of the project should therefore indicate whether or not the project is reproducible where the researcher can receive the same results multiple times in a row.

The three survey instruments the researcher is using for this study, were all evaluated for their validity and reliability and were used in previous study's. The Mental Health Counseling Survey was "adapted from the Health Counseling Competencies Needed for Ministers Survey designed to determine the competencies ministers need to feel competent in counseling congregants" (Anthony et al., 2015, p. 122; Wylie, 1984). This instrument was also used in a study where the researcher wanted to determine the African American clergy's competence and their ability to recognize and address issues of depression with their congregants. The study further aimed to identify the clergy's skill set through training to determine if the clergy would recognize the congregant's issue of depression. The findings indicated the more educated and trained the clergy was, the better they were at recognizing and perhaps referring their congregants for professional help. Many did however state they needed more training in the area of learning about depression (Anthony et al., 2015).

The Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPH-SF), has also been used in past studies. "This scale originally looked at the effects of social class, educational level, religion, and college major regarding the attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help scale" (Gaffney, 2016, p. 53; Fischer & Turner, 1970, p. 86). In a study conducted by Gaffney (2016), the researcher assessed the African American Pastor's attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help. This study looked at the association between the African American pastor's theological belief, their education level, their personal experience with mental illness and the pastor's attitude toward congregants seeking professional psychological help. The findings indicated "theological belief has a direct impact on pastor's attitudes toward seeking professional psychological counseling" where the education and personal experiences had no impact (p. 72).

Elhai et al. (2008) further examined the reliability and validity of the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale short form. According to their findings, "The ATSPPH-SF evidenced adequate internal consistency. Higher scores (indicating more positive treatment attitudes) were associated with less treatment-related stigma, and greater intentions to seek treatment in the future. No associations were found for mental health impairment or depression" (p. 320). Because both instruments have been replicated in multiple studies where the concepts appeared to be accurately measured with a consistent measure, this indicates a high level of validity and reliability.

Findings

The reader will notice a smaller sample indicated in this research versus what the power analysis deemed as sufficient. As previously mentioned in chapter three, a power analysis was completed to determine the sample size. This was done by using the survey system software. With a confidence level of 95%, a confidence interval of 10, which denotes a margin of error of +5 and -5. The margin of population is 30. Based on the calculation from this software, if this researcher receives at least 23-28 surveys back, this should be sufficient to proceed with and complete this research. However, due to several unsuccessful attempts to collect data from participants who met criteria, the researcher was only successful at collecting the following:

- A. Eighteen surveys were collected for the Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009, pp. 149-150).
- B. Seventeen surveys were collected for the Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS), (Anthony et al., 2015, pp. 120-121; Wylie, 1984).
- C. Fifteen surveys were collected for the Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), (Fisher & Turner, 1970; Gaffney, 2016).

The data collection process began on August 12th, 2019, approximately one month and ten days after the researcher received IRB committee approval. An initial email with the 'Letter of Invitation to participate in the Study' was sent to 25 pastors. Attached to the email were the surveys. Participants were asked to complete the surveys and they were issued a deadline to distribute the surveys back to the researcher. Two weeks later on August 26th, and August 27th, 2019, another 30-60 emails were distributed to participants with 30 sent on August 26th, 2019. Another 30 pastors and clergy were sent emails. The emails sent on August 27th were 30 different pastors and clergy asking for their participation. The researcher also met two consecutive Monday evenings at the pastor's/minister's fellowship. This time was used to explain the importance of participation in the research process as well as answer any questions that needed to be answered. At each meeting there were approximately 25-30 clergy present. Over the course of several months, the researcher also sent follow-up emails, made follow-up phone calls to participants, and asked to meet with participants. It is estimated by this researcher from the various attempts, that approximately 100-125 clergy were reached and encouraged to complete the three surveys. However, after several attempts to garner more participation, the researcher was not successful in meeting the proposed sample size. The following is a breakdown of survey responses:

- Eighteen Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009, p. 149-150).
- Seventeen Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS), (Anthony et al., 2015, pp. 120-121; Wylie, 1984).
- Fifteen Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), (Fisher & Turner, 1970; Gaffney, 2016)

A consultation was held with the dissertation committee, and it was agreed that the researcher should proceed with analyzing the data using the surveys that were collected.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the participants is indicated as follows in the following pie graphs:

Figure 1

Race

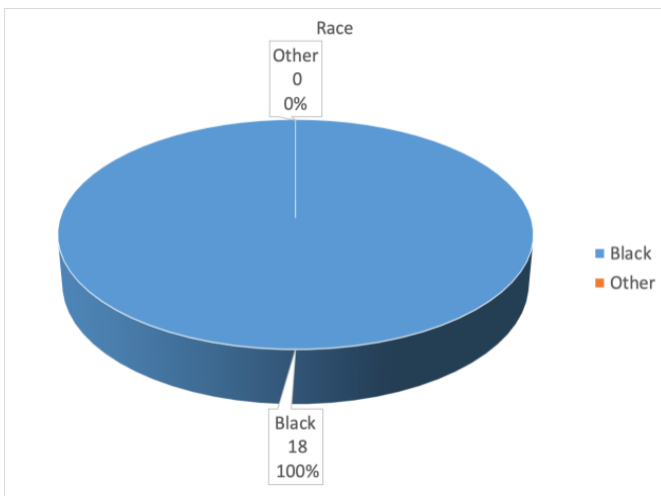


Figure 2

Marital Status

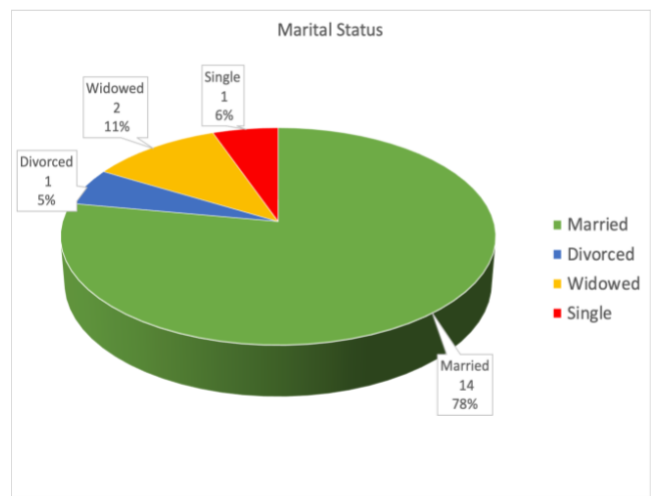


Figure 3

Gender

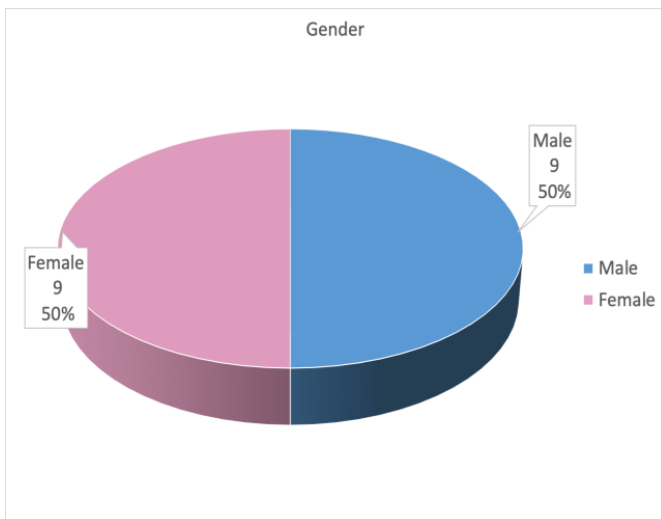


Figure 4

Annual Income

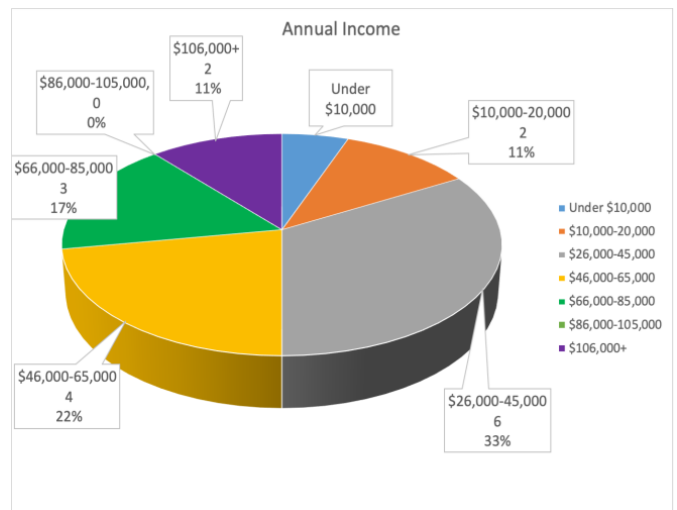


Figure 5

Denomination

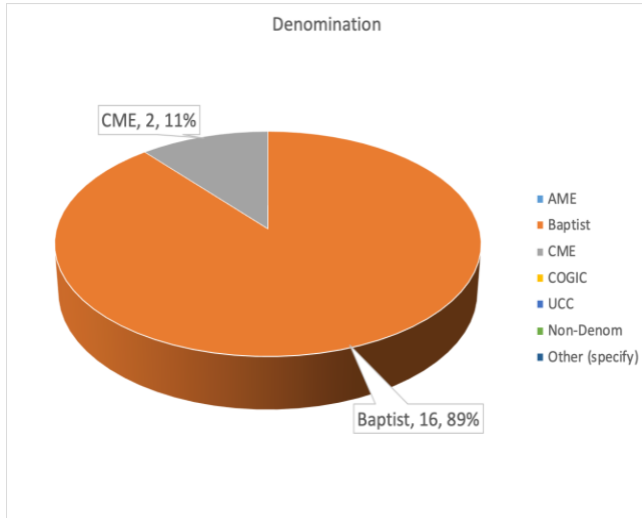


Figure 6

Engagement in Professional Relationship w/ Counselor

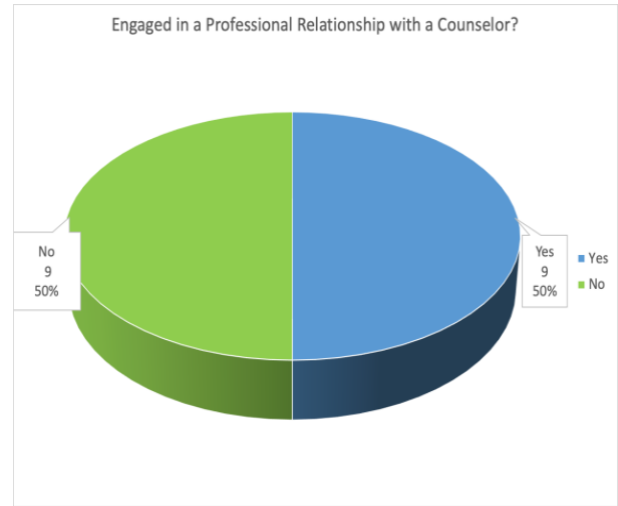


Figure 7

Received Counseling from a Pastor

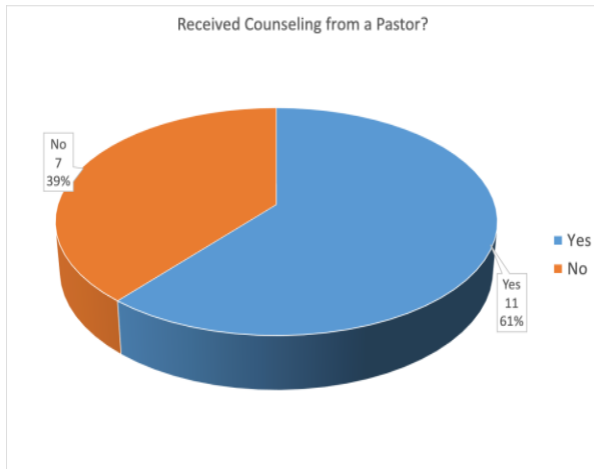
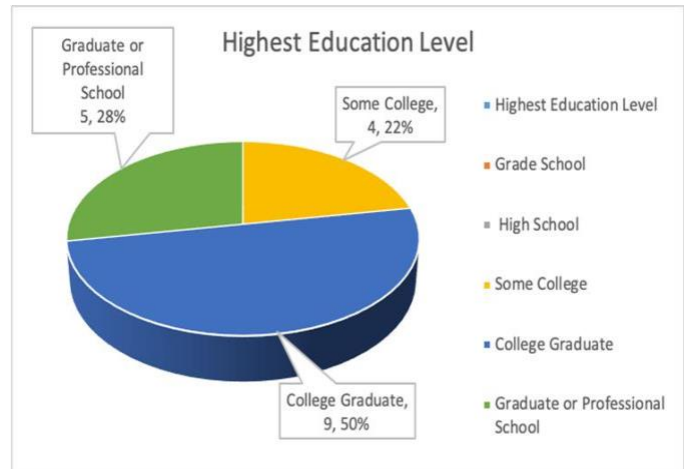


Figure 8

Highest Education Level



Therefore, the demographics noted from the Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009, pp. 149-150) indicates:

Race: Of the 18 participants that completed the survey, 100 % or all 18 participants identified their race as being Black (see Figure 1).

Marital Status: Of the 18 participants that completed the survey,

- 78% or 14 participants indicated they were Married.

- 5% or 1 participant indicated they were Divorced.
- 11% or 2 participants indicated they were Widowed.
- 6% or 1 participant indicated they were Single (see Figure 2).

Gender: Of the eighteen participants that completed the survey, 9 identified as male and 9 identified as female (see Figure 3).

Annual Income: Of the 18 participants that completed the survey,

- 5.6% or 1 participant indicated having an income less than \$10,000.
- 11% or 2 participants indicated having an income between \$10,000-\$20,000.
- 33% or 6 participants indicated having an income between \$26,000-\$45,000.
- 22% or 4 participants indicated having an income between \$46,000-\$65,000.
- 17% or 3 participants indicated having an income between \$66,000-\$85,000.
- There were 0% participants who had an income between \$ 86,000-\$105,000
- 11% or 2 participants indicated having an income of \$106,000 or more (see Figure 4).

Denomination: Of the 18 participants that completed the survey, 11% or 2 participants identified as Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME), while 89% or 16 identified as Baptist (see Figure 5).

For the following question: Have you ever been involved in a professional relationship with a licensed counselor/psychologist/psychiatrist/social worker for a personal problem?

- 50% or 9 participants indicated Yes- they have been involved in a professional relationship.
- 50% or 9 participants indicated No- they have not been involved in a professional relationship (see Figure 6).

For the following question: Have you ever received counseling from a pastor or other clergy person for personal a problem?

- 61% or 11 participants indicated Yes- they received counseling from a pastor or other clergy person.
- 39% or 7 participants indicated No- they have not received counseling from a pastor or other clergy person (see Figure 7).

Education: Of the 18 participants that completed the survey:

- 22 % or 4 participants identified as having some college
- 50% or 9 participants identified as being college graduates

- 28 % or 5 participants identified as having graduate or professional degrees (see Figure 8).

In summary, the figures noted from the Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009, pp. 149-150) shows overall for the surveys collected that all participants were African American with half of the population being male and half females. The majority, about 78% indicated they were college graduates. Most were of the Baptist denomination and most earned an annual salary between \$26,000 and \$45,000 dollars. About half of this population indicated they engaged in a professional relationship with a counselor, while the other half indicated they did not engage in a professional relationship with a counselor. Finally, most participants indicated they received counseling services from a pastor.

For the Mental Health Counseling Survey (MHCS), (Anthony, et al., 2015, pp. 120-121; Wylie, 1984) and the Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS), (Fisher & Turner, 1970; Gaffney, 2016) the data was computed by the researcher using both “R” and “R-Studio” Software.

Further Analysis of Data/Results

Mental Health Counseling Survey

Seventeen participants completed the Mental Health Survey. The questions on the survey generally are only analyzable qualitatively or by using frequencies (i.e., counts of how many people responded a particular way). Questions for which responses allowed for numerical/statistical analyses were analyzed in that way (e.g., Question 3).

Describe the characteristics of congregants who seek counseling from you.

Thirteen out of 17 participants indicated that congregants who sought counseling were adults (i.e., 18 years of older). Four participants indicated that they had been approached by younger individuals for counseling (one participant indicated 8 years and older, one participant indicated 12 years and older, and two participants indicated 16 years and older). Three participants indicated that they had been approached by males; 11 participants indicated that they had been approached by females. Eleven participants counseled individuals, 8 counseled couples, 5 counseled families, 6 counseled parents/children (3 participants counseled all groups)

Do any of your congregants seek your help when dealing with the following issues?

Congregants sought help about: grief, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and other miscellaneous concerns. Four participants said that congregants had sought help for all four of the issues (i.e., grief, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation). One participant was approached by congregants by the first 3 issues on the list (i.e., not on dealing with suicidal ideation).

In the past 4 weeks, estimate the number of people whom you have counseled for any reason:

Participants counseled an average of 2.85 congregants, with the number of counseled congregants ranging between 0 and 8. The standard deviation was 2.29; skewness was .631, indicating the values were moderately positively skewed. That is, most participants counseled 0-4 congregants, fewer participants counseled more than that (2 participants said that they had counseled 5 congregants, and one participant each said they had counseled 6 and 8 congregants, respectively). This suggests that a few participants (those with 5 or more congregants seeking counseling) seemed to have a somewhat more counseling oriented practice, whereas other participants saw fewer congregants or did not engage in frequent counseling practices.

In the past 4 weeks estimate the number of people whom you have counseled for each of the following mental health problems:

Depression. Six participants said that they had counseled one person for depression in the past 4 weeks; two participants both said that they had counseled two individuals for depression, and one participant said that they had counseled four individuals for depression.

Anxiety. Six participants said that they had counseled one person for anxiety in the past 4 weeks; two participants both said that they had counseled four individuals for anxiety.

Suicidal ideation. Three participants said that they had counseled one person for suicidal ideation in the past 4 weeks; one participant had counseled three individuals for suicidal ideation.

Why do you think most people come to you instead of going to mental health professionals for help with depression? Rank in order of importance below (1= lowest, 4 = highest).

Participants indicated that individuals came to them instead of MHPs for depression because:

- Clergy integrate their spiritual values and beliefs into the counseling ($M=2.6$).
- Their spiritual values and beliefs may not be respected by health care professionals ($M=1.75$).
- Health insurance does not cover visits to a mental health professional ($M=1.44$).
- Other reasons such as: trust and family members.

What cues make you suspect that a congregant might be depressed?

- Crying a lot, talking in despair, saying "They Quit"
- Separation, behavior change and sudden withdrawal from others

- Their body language and extreme interpersonal behavior change
- Distance/Self-Esteem
- Trauma/Withdrawn
- In their spirit, it is noticeable, also their behavior/conduct
- Especially on my worksite when I see an engineer looking and longing for a compass to get along or the individuals seem to start looking about before getting to their physical destination or most will stop by my desk in the interim afterwards
- Isolation. Not Eating
- Sitting alone, wanting to be seen in public because of shame
- Guilt

How does your depression counseling compare to your spiritual counseling experiences? (Check all the answers below that are true for you)

When the question was posed-how does your depression counseling compare to your spiritual counseling experiences? (Check all the answers below that are true for you)

Most individuals checked 1 or 2 items, two participants checked 3 items, and one participant checked 4 items. Two participants did not check any items at all.

Therefore, most of the checks were listed where the clergy indicated 7 checks. This deemed as an indication that their methods used in depression counseling was distinctly different from those the clergy used in spiritual counseling. 5 checks were also noted showing the clergy as using depression counseling that they state is somewhat similar to spiritual counseling. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Differentiating Counseling Experiences

Potential Responses	Frequency (in # of Checks)
The methods I use in depression counseling are distinctly different from those I use in spiritual counseling.	7
Depression counseling is somewhat similar to spiritual counseling.	5
Depression counseling is somewhat different from spiritual counseling.	4
Depression counseling is very similar to spiritual counseling.	3
Issues brought up in depression counseling almost never overlap with those addressed in spiritual counseling.	2

Depression counseling is very dissimilar to spiritual counseling.	2
Issues brought up in depression counseling are identical to those addressed in spiritual Counseling.	2
The methods I use in depression counseling are not different from those I use in spiritual counseling.	2

Do you refer depressed congregants to any of the following? Check all those that you refer to):

When the question was asked- do you refer depressed congregants to any of the following? Check all those that you refer to:

As indicated prior, the questions on the MHCS survey generally are only analyzable qualitatively or by using frequencies (i.e., counts of how many people responded a particular way). Most or 13 stated they would refer to a Mental health specialist. While 7 would refer to the individual's primary care provider, and 3 would refer the individual to the hospital emergency room. (See Table 4)

Table 4

Referral Frequencies

Referred to:	Frequency
Mental health specialist	13
Primary care provider	7
Hospital emergency room	3
Psychiatric hospital	1
Other referrals	Their pastor

What factors influence your decision to make a referral?

- When you know the problem is beyond what I can offer.
- If I feel I am not qualified to deal with the situation we contract a (sic) Counseling Service.
- When congregant refuses spiritual counseling that leads to depression counseling. Or choosing not to accept their faith connection.
- Understanding the actual root cause of the individuals and/or couple's issue.

- Knowledge.
- If the person shows known signs of harming themselves or others.
- Beyond my reach.
- When I have assessed what issues that I may be able to help with, but I can see the need for other format or beyond my area on counseling, my goal is to get the congregant to their next best suited area.
- When there has not been a breakthrough within a few times of counsel.
- Some people need physical help beyond the church.
- Their Ways

As you think about your experiences in counseling individuals suffering with depression, is there anything that would help you do a better job?

- Educating what cues to refer for further counseling.
- List of counselors in the area and senior population.
- More knowledge on mental health awareness and prevention.
- A professional counselor that is available on call.
- Yes.
- Professional to Assist Clergy.
- Much more training.
- Resources.
- Be able to connect with the congregant before the situation get into full depression, for example, if family members or acquaintances observe better, and recognize there is a problem, sometimes the heavier circumstances can be avoided.
- Becoming involved within a network that provides Updates in methods to bring about change for the better in the congregant.
- Yes.
- Be real and be honest in my life experience.
- Yes, need to get my master's degree

In your opinion, is formal training in depression counseling skills appropriate for clergy?

- Of the 17 participants, 15 said that, yes, formal training in depression skills is appropriate for clergy. No participants disagreed, and two participants did not answer the question.
- Very Appropriate, Very Important. This would help with making the proper assessment
- Yes, we all need to be the (sic) knowing the signs can help us all. I'll feel more comfortable with having more training
- I am not a counselor

(ATSPPHS)/Orientations to Seeking Professional Help Scale

Fifteen participants completed the Orientations to Seeking Professional Help scale (hereafter OSPH scale). The OSPH scale (Fischer & Turner, 1970) consists of 29 Likert style questions, where responses for each item were agreement (coded as a 3), probable agreement (coded as a 2), probable disagreement (coded as a 1), or disagreement (coded as a 0). Higher scores indicate more favorable attitudes toward seeking professional mental health help.

This inventory contains four sub-scales: Recognition of need for psychotherapeutic help (hereafter, Recognition of Need), Stigma tolerance, Interpersonal openness, Confidence in mental health practitioner (hereafter Confidence in MHP). Subscale scores were calculated by summing the appropriate inventory items for each subscale, according to Fischer and Turner (1970). Item scores were reversed for items with negative factor loadings (i.e., see Table 4, Fischer & Turner, 1970). The Total inventory score was calculated by summing the individual sub-scale scores.

Table 5

Summary of sub-scale and Total scale descriptive statistics

Sub-scale	Recognition of Stigma tolerance need	Interpersonal openness	Confidence in MHP	Total	
Mean	18.9	10.8	14.3	21.3	65.3
SD	2.8	2.4	1.7	2.5	6.0
Highest possible	24	15	21	27	87
Lowest possible	0	0	0	0	0
Max	22.0	13.0	17.0	25.0	70.0
3 rd Quartile	20.5	12.0	15.0	23.0	70.0
Median	20.0	12.0	15.0	22.0	67.0
1 st Quartile	18.0	10.5	13.5	19.5	63.0
Min	12.0	5.0	11.0	16.0	48.0

Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for subscales and total scale of the OSPH scale. The mean (average) and standard deviation (a measure of how consistent scores were – lower SDs equal more consistency) are given as the top two rows. The lowest and highest possible scores are given in the next two rows. These indicate the minimum and maximum scores that a respondent might have obtained. As example, for the first column, Recognition of Need for psychotherapeutic help contained 8 questions. The lowest possible score for this scale is 0 (8 items with a minimum score of 0: $8 * 0 = 0$). The highest possible score for this scale is 24 (8 items with a maximum score of 3: $8 * 3 = 24$). A box plot of the subscale and Total scale scores is given in Figure 1A. This box plot contains the same information as the last 5 rows of Table 3.

One male, number 5, accounts for most outliers (all low values). Aside from this, for the Confidence in MHP and Recognition of Need (for psychotherapeutic help) subscales, respondents scored in the upper half of each scale, suggesting that respondents had relatively high levels of confidence in mental health practitioners and did recognize the need/necessity for psychotherapeutic help. In terms of personal openness, the group scored in the center of the scale. In terms of stigma tolerance, the group mostly scored in the mid-high range of the scale, indicating general tolerance for stigma associated with mental illness.

Figure 9

Subscale and Total scale scores for OSPH scale.

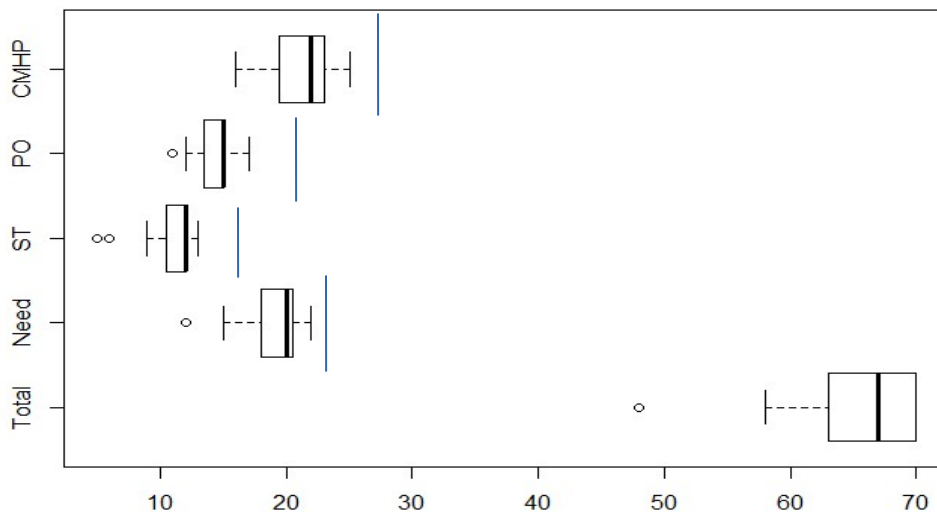


Table 6

Correlation matrix for sub-scales and Total scores for OSPH scale.

	Recognition of Need	Stigma Tolerance	Interpersonal Openness	Confidence in MHP
Total	r = .64 p = .01	r = .88 p = .001	r = .26 p = .36	r = .69 p = .004
Recognition of Need		.31 p = .26	.14 p = .62	.04 p = .88
Stigma Tolerance			.01 p = .96	.81 p = .002
Interpersonal Openness				-.24 p = .40

Table 6 contains a correlation matrix for the sub-scale and Total scale scores for the OSPH scale. With the exception of the Interpersonal Openness sub-scale, the subscales all showed statistically significant correlations with the Total score. This is not surprising as the Total score is constructed from the sub-scale scores. Individuals who score high in one sub-scale are likelier to score high in the other sub-scale and Total scale scores.

Aside from the correlation of the Total scale score with sub-scale scores, there were no other significant correlations between sub-scale scores except for one. There was a strong positive correlation ($p = .81$, $p < .05$) of Stigma Tolerance with Confidence in MHPs. Individuals who showed higher stigma tolerance also showed higher confidence in MHPs.

In conclusion, the data analysis found the following:

- For the Mental Health Counseling Survey, as mentioned earlier, the questions on the survey generally were analyzable qualitatively or by using frequencies—thus allowing the reader to determine how the participants answered each question.

This survey however may be assessed more closely in chapter 5 when summarized.

- For the Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS)/Orientations to Seeking Professional Help Scale, due to the quantitative nature of the scale, more conclusions can be evaluated. From the Figure 1. Subscale and Total scale scores for OSPH scale, the following conclusion can be determined from the four sub-scales: Recognition of need for psychotherapeutic help (hereafter, Recognition of Need), Stigma tolerance,

Interpersonal openness, Confidence in mental health practitioner (hereafter Confidence in MHP). As mentioned prior, the sub-scale scores were calculated by summing the appropriate inventory items for each sub-scale, according to Fischer and Turner (1970).

It is concluded from these subscales the following:

- Recognition of Need subscale found clergy scored the maximum score. Therefore, it can be concluded there is a strong recognition by the clergy that there is a need for individuals to receive help and counseling services.
- Stigma Tolerance subscale found clergy scored in the mid- range. So, although the stigma tolerance was positive, it can still be concluded there was an indication that clergy may have a stigma as it pertains to actually seeking mental health services.
- Interpersonal openness subscale found clergy scored in the mid- range. Which may be an indication that although the subscale is positive, there still may be resistance for personal openness.
- Confidence in MHP subscale found clergy scored the highest possible score on this subscale. This indicates clergy having confidence in the Mental Health Practitioner's ability and competence. Every participant scored at the top end of the scale, which again means the clergy is confident in the practitioner's ability to serve their congregants if needed.

Finally, although clergy recognize the need for counseling services and has confidence in the ability of a mental health practitioner, the subscales still conclude there is a stigma surrounding mental health counseling services, and the clergy does not score very high in having personal openness.

Recommendations for Further Research

The hope for this research is that it will contribute to the body of knowledge already in existence. Exploring how the black clergy and the black church address mental health issues, may become an ongoing process in ministry. According to Hayes (2015), it is estimated that over 85% of African Americans state they have a religious belief system where they practice that belief system to cope with stress and grief as well as other mental health issues. Therefore, rituals such as going to church, being active in bible study, prayer, meditation/devotion and talking to their pastor or spiritual leader are

all vital components for congregants as they are going through their personal challenges.

Based on this, the researcher would propose the following recommendations for further research and development:

1. Expound on this research by examining this phenomenon with a different demographic such as with Caucasian pastors of a different denominations.
2. Expound on this research by examining the tools clergy may need to support them in the area of mental health.
3. Explore opportunities to educate and train clergy members in mental illness and mental wellness to help them better serve their congregants.
4. Identify ways for the clergy members to also assess their own mental health challenges and determine where they too can receive help if needed.
5. Review and describe information in the area of pastoral counseling, biblical counseling, and Christian counseling to clergy members. This can perhaps equip the clergy to better work with their congregants.
6. Develop faith-based conferences, workshops, seminars, webinars, and panel discussions. Or examine those that may already be in existence where both the clergy member and the mental health practitioner can explore healthy ways to collaborate.
7. Develop a resource for healthy communications and dialog for both clergy members and mental health practitioners.
8. Construct a resource manual that would consist of direct referral information for both the clergy members and mental health practitioners.

Further research and development of the resources mentioned may be vital to contributing to the current body of knowledge.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research study aimed to determine there being a correlation between the clergy members educational level and their ability to understand mental health, make referrals, assess the clergy's mutual relationship with the mental health practitioner- thus encouraging the clergy to make referrals. Based on the results of this research, it appears to support the notion there may be a correlation between the clergy members educational level and their ability to understand mental health, make referrals and develop a collaboration with mental health practitioners- as evidenced by the results from the Demographic Data Questionnaire.

According to the Demographic Data Questionnaire (Plunkett, 2009) that was completed by the participants, 78% identified as being a college graduate or having a graduate or professional degree. It was also highly favored that most of the participants agreed there being a need for congregants to receive help. They also agreed that mental health practitioners had the ability and competence to serve congregants, yet

most clergy still noted having a stigma as it pertains to mental illness. Most clergy also noted their perspective as it pertains to interpersonal openness being minimal.

Based on these findings, it can be inferred there is an overall agreement that there should be collaboration between clergy and mental health professionals and there is a need for congregants to receive help if needed. Although the original purposes of this study to prove direct correlations as indicated in the research questions was not met, this study did disclose a clearer awareness of mental health issues as it pertains to clergy stigma, and resistance on the part of the clergy displaying personal openness- thus these finding impacting the church and congregants.

It may also be important for both the clergy and the mental health practitioner to assess their personal competency as it pertains to servicing the congregant. In other words, the clergy address the spiritual needs of the congregants and know their limit and the mental health practitioner to address the mental health component of the congregant and know their limits, as well. Developing a bi-directional collaboration between the clergy and the mental health practitioner may be a vital service to make sure the congregant is receiving appropriate care (Avent & Cashwell, 2015 and Plunkett, 2014).

About the Author

Mildred Williams is a full-time Associate Professor of Psychology at Southern Wesleyan University for 13 years. She is also the Director/Coordinator for the new Master's in Counseling Psychology Program at Southern Wesleyan University. She has an extensive background in clinical mental health counseling, totaling more than 34 years of experience in many areas, including individual, group, and family counseling, spiritual life coaching and mentorship, Christian education, sexual addiction, grief and loss, mental and emotional disorders, and substance dependency. She earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology from Rutgers University in New Jersey, two Master's degrees from Webster University~ one in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and one in Human Resources Development. She also completed her PhD in Leadership with a concentration in Ministry Administration at Carolina University in Winston- Salem North Carolina. Email: mwilliams@swu.edu

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A Resource for Christians to Discuss Racial Unity from the Foundation of Scripture: Review of the Small-group Curriculum *Reconciled: A Biblical Approach to Racial Unity*

Heidi R. Ventura and Nori Shoji-Schaffner

This review of the small-group curriculum *Reconciled: A Biblical Approach to Racial Unity* provides context for its importance and relevance in today's culture. The format of the six sessions is described along with two additional significant resources – the evaluation mechanism for models of racial reconciliation and the glossary. Christians must be willing to engage in relationships with one another; it is through our love for each other that God's love will be evidenced.

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Reconciled: A Biblical Approach to Racial Unity by Monique Duson with Krista Bontrager (2021) is a small-group curriculum for evangelical Christians to discuss racial unity. It covers the scripture-based main ideas for Christian communities to engage with current societal realities of racial tensions. Duson has presented the currently missing biblical fundamentals, alongside the relevant sociological theories and philosophies. This has been molded, with pragmatic group discussion tactics, into a psychologically and spiritually provoking small group experience.

In the introduction, Duson immerses participants directly into current context; these are conversation topics which trigger overwhelming emotions. Starting with Christian commonalities, participants are reminded of what unifies believers: 1) the Bible as authority, 2) Christians as family, and 3) all people as one race. The visioning for the future reminds us of the hope of what can emerge as brothers and sisters engage in difficult conversations, “The hope is that unity will be built into your group and that as understanding grows, so will friendship” (p. 11).

As Duson seeks to define what the *ministry of reconciliation* is, she begins with brief descriptions of current models being used in churches. Duson acknowledges that many Christian racial-reconciliation advocates have a worthy goal...but one that is predicated on a naturalistic worldview rather than a biblical worldview. Scripture teaches that the human heart is wicked and needs a Savior. The love and light of Christ will change the heart and the power of the Spirit will provide wisdom and strength to love others, regardless of differences. It is our identity in Christ that must rule, with all other identities in subjection. As family, believers are called to reflect on redeemed ideas about who we are and redeemed possibilities in perceiving each other. As Duson described, “If we are serious about racial unity, we must conform our thoughts, emotions, and actions to biblical truth” (p. 39). This means asking the Holy Spirit to reveal personal responsibility in seeking my own way apart from Him and consequently creating disunity.

The purpose of the curriculum is to introduce people to the reality that scripture itself addresses Christians in relationship. Throughout the six weeks, the book of Acts is studied as well as many of the epistles (e.g., Corinthians, Ephesians, Philemon). While the curriculum does not, nor should it, attempt to address all issues and answer all questions, it provides a foundation for believers to seek the Holy Spirit to guide them in deeper study. Duson provides a list of books, videos, podcasts, and blogposts for further learning each week.

At the end of the curriculum are two helpful resources. First, Duson proposes an evaluation mechanism that should be used for any model for racial unity. Currently, there are few theories or models in existence regarding racial reconciliation. A comparative analysis of these models and new ones that are developed would allow exploration of their alignment with historic Christian beliefs.

The other resource is the glossary provided by Dr. J. R. Miller. Unfortunately, the glossary does not introduce in what context the words are defined. While the curriculum is defined and discussed from a biblical context, the glossary appears to be defined in a modern cultural context. This lack of contextualization, however, does not diminish the wonderful support a relevant glossary can be for the desired small-group conversations in which people will have a variety of familiarity or experiences with current cultural terminology.

How are Christian leaders challenged to advance their capacities to engage in discussions of unity when confronted with the accelerating societal disunity? The foundation of scriptural principles along with critical assessment of innovative and heuristic approaches is essential, especially when addressing potentially charged group paradigms. This is a practitioners' curriculum that can be used multi-generationally. Duson has applied a Christ-focused approach to challenge the existing propositions associated with current divisions. As Christians seek to engage in constructive discourses vital to the present realities, the ideas of this curriculum will resonate in the solid foundation of scripture truth in revolutionary perspective.

About the Authors

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Reference

Duson, M. (Writer), & Bontrager, K. (Theologian). (2021). *Reconciled: A biblical approach to racial unity*. Center for Biblical Unity. <https://www.centerforbiblicalunity.c>