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Humility and Leadership: Relevant Concepts from Benedict of Nursia

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Benedict of Nursia was a monk in the 6th century who founded a movement of monasteries who wrote a book concerning the governing of these monasteries. This book called "The Rule" was used not only for these monasteries but for many others as well. His instructions concerning the leadership of the monasteries were very broad and based upon Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. One area of emphasis was that of humility. This study examines the 12 steps of humility as described in "The Rule" and applies them to the contemporary context of the organization and the church. As a result a model for humility in leadership is developed as well as an understanding for the need of humility in leadership in contemporary contexts.

Leadership has become an area of intense concerted study over the last fifty years in the social sciences. In spite of this concerted study during the 20th century there is no universal consensus on the definition of leadership except that it involves influence and how leaders influence others to accomplish objectives (2004). However, it has been an issue of discussion throughout the history of humanity. Some prominent figures of history have addressed the issue of leadership directly in their writings such as Plato, Machiavelli, and James Madison (Guinness, 2000). While others have held up a certain person as the ideal of leadership like, St. Athanasius in writing about Antony as the founder of monasticism. Another larger group, has addressed certain issues as important to leadership, these authors would include Augustine, Martin Luther and the Hebrew as well as the Christian Scriptures (Guinness, 2000). Therefore, history holds a rich resource of knowledge for the study and understanding of leadership especially when you add the study of the lives of great leaders, such as Alexander the Great and Winston Churchill. It is not only here that history yields up secrets of leadership it is also found in the documents written by these leaders of movements specifically about leadership itself.

History is not just a record of past events there is a connection between past and present. The conclusion is inescapable that human life is never simply lived in the present alone but in three worlds: one that is, one that was, and one that will be, we experience them as inextricably linked and as influencing each other in many ways (Breisach, 2007). This influence includes the

perceptions, models, and activities of leadership. The past affects present leadership which in turn affects the future of how leadership is to be done.

History involves both changes from one era to another as well as continuity through time and this tension in human life, as studied in history, can both inform us and render service to human life (Breisach, 2007). In light of these realities it becomes important to search the pages of history before the 20th century to find both continuities and differences concerning leadership in the lives and writings of those who have gone before. This inextricable connection then can inform, critique, and develop new understandings or models for leadership in the present. Leadership theory is firmly grounded in the archives of history and it is presumptuous to think that leadership philosophy was born in the twentieth century (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). There are many lives and documents that could be mined for insights for leadership however; this study will examine only one, *The Rule,* by Benedict of Nursia.

The Rule

The Rule is a rule of life written for monks and is still followed by modern-day monks (Cheline, 2003). Benedict of Nursia, who lived from A.D. 480-547, led an expanding network of monastic orders, and wrote this document crystallizing practical insights from his years of managing these organizations (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). Benedict wrote this rule for monks which was both excellent for discretion and eloquent in style which he portrayed in his life, because he lived out the teaching of *The Rule* (Gregory, 1875). The Rule was written at about A.D. 527 and was intended to be the governing document for the monasteries Benedict founded (Crozier, 2003). The Rule of Benedict was a masterpiece of leadership principles in combining the best of the Greco-Roman organizational theory with early Christian leadership principles (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004).

Benedict wrote this document for those in the monastic order which he led but it was a rule of life which he led and many others through the centuries would follow as well. He had a deep aversion to the Roman timocratic from of leadership, leadership that is mainly interested in honor, privilege, prestige and power (Bekker, 2008a). This aversion led him to write the Rule for his organization that used different principles than those of privilege, prestige, honor and power. While it was written for Benedict's monasteries within 500 years it became the governing document for all western monasteries (Crozier, 2003).

The Rule consists of seventy-three short chapters dealing with issues as diverse as how to chant the psalms, to choosing an abbot, to how to apportion food and drink. However, in this context there are several areas that become pertinent for organizational leadership. Galbraith and Galbraith (2004) find fifteen concrete principles for application from the Rule for modern organizations ranging from the rule of common interest to the rule of iron resolve. These fifteen rules have profound implications for modern leadership theory. This study was made without addressing the area of spirituality that was of deep importance to Benedict and his Rule. The basic premise of their book is that history is an incredible repository of leadership thought, yet it is rarely tapped by modern practitioners (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004).

Cheline (2003) in his writing on Christian Leadership develops eight concepts in his presentation on the Benedictine Rule. These eight focus mainly but not exclusively on spiritual formation ranging from faith to work. Crozier (2003) wrote concerning principles from the writing of Benedict as applied to secular organizations with the core being about relationships and one's

ability to contribute to the needy in the world(2003). She examined the Benedictine values of poverty, chastity, obedience, stability and conversion of life proposing modern applications for leadership and organizations.

Benedictine leadership finds its definition and mode of expression in three criteria: eagerness for the work of God, radical missional obedience, and active humility, and it is this last attribute that holds promise for a contemporary understanding and application to leadership (Bekker, 2008a). Then Bekker goes on to discuss the twelve steps of humility as found in the rule and applies them to leadership.

There is one section however, common in each of these studies (Bekker, 2008a; Cheline, 2003; Crozier, 2003; Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004) that need deeper investigation from the Rule of Benedict. This is the area of humility in leadership. Each study found humility as an important attribute of leadership as discussed by Benedict, while Bekker focused exclusively on humility. Can a value such as humility become an important component of contemporary leadership or is this a historical construct that is no longer useful in the modern context? In one sense the present and the future are inextricably tied with the past even in the area of leadership. However, the question arises as to whether this is the piece that has changed from the past in making progress or is the piece that forms continuity with the past informing the present.

Humility in Leadership

Humility has recently become an issue of discussion in connection to leadership. Collins brings humility into the discussion of leadership in 2001 with his declaration that the highest level of leadership based upon his research has two attributes one of which is humility (2001). This level 5 leadership is the leadership of those leading companies which became great companies. In addition, this level of leadership can be developed in a leader as long as the leader does not have a monumental ego (Collins, 2001). Humility becomes extremely important based on this research though it had not been an area of intense study in the organizational leadership world before this time. Level 5 leaders blend the paradoxical combination of deep personal humility and intense professional will and in so doing boost their companies to greatness and keep them there (Collins, 2001). Collins confesses that this discovery is counterintuitive and even counter cultural (2001). Nevertheless, it became one of the two key components in this research.

This research spawned other studies such as the one by Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbanski (2005), to explore the potential nexus between humility and leadership. This connection between humility and leadership develops the concept of virtues in leadership as the main issue rather than an aside to leadership under the discussion of ethics. In these discussions humility, as a virtue, moves to center stage, as motivation for activities that bring good leadership. This is contrary to the model that looks at behaviors for leaders or even charisma and only secondarily, if at all, considering the internal virtues. The apparent obsession of the charismatic appeal of leaders stands in contrast to a growing call for humility in leadership (Morris et al., 2005). This growing call could come from the weaknesses found in other models and from the potential strengths of this type of virtue driven leadership. Humility may cause leaders to operate in an other-enhancing manner rather than self-enhancing, and it may shield the leader from needing public adulation, as well as it may contribute to organizational performance through its impact on organizational learning and resilience (2005). This research showed that openness, self-awareness, and transcendence are attributes of humility that could be predicted by certain

indicators affecting leadership (2005). Humility is not a nebulous concept that defies definition but a concrete construct that can be related to certain attributes and leadership behavior.

In addition, there have been other discussions concerning humility and leadership recently. Some of these discussions have centered on the construct of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1997). The concept of humility in leadership was also developed by other writers (Anderson, 2008; Patterson, 2003; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003) in connection to servant leadership. Winston discusses humility as one of seven principles for value based leadership (Winston, 2002). Though some of these are popular level and some are research based they each discuss the importance of humility as one aspect of effective leadership in the contemporary era.

Definition of Humility

For humility in leadership to be examined it must not be a nondescript ideal but a concrete definable construct. Both Patterson (2003) and Morris (2005) point out that humility is not to be equated with low self-esteem. While Collins (2001) describes the person who is humble as one who demonstrates a compelling modesty and channels ambition into the company. Drawing upon the rich history of humility thought humility is defined as a personal orientation founded on the willingness to see the self accurately and a propensity to put oneself in perspective, it involves neither self-abasement nor overly positive self-regard (Morris et al., 2005).

Though there is some agreement as to the basics of humility the way it is manifest in leadership finds some divergence. However, the question remains as to how Benedict related humility to leadership. Benedictine humility does not condemn one to servility or oppression but is the awareness of one's relationship to the world accepting others for who they are and oneself for who one is as well (Crozier, 2003). Benedictine humility is similar at its core with contemporary thinking about humility. This humility becomes important to contemporary leadership on at least two levels. First, it forms continuity through history from the 6th century to the 21st century as a concern for leaders and leadership. Second, the Rule has been remarkably successful and enduring as a management system providing the basic leadership text for thousands of organizations for close to fifteen centuries (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004).

Benedictine Humility for Leadership

Benedict developed twelve steps for humility in his Rule as a guide for life and for the leaders in his movement. Jim Collins was not the first to describe the possibility and power of leadership humility, Benedict of Nursia (A.D. 480-540) provided his followers with a twelve step process description of how humility is formed in followers and leaders (Bekker, 2008a). This process is based in the Biblical call to humility in humbling self (Benedict, 1975). According to Benedict this process is like a ladder with the goal of reaching the highest peak of humility (1975).

The First Step

The first step of humility is taken when one obeys all of God's commands and fearing God in one's heart (Benedict, 1975). This speaks of respecting God and turning away from self-will (Bekker, 2008a). It means to revere the simple rules (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). In this section Benedict quotes several verses from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures wherein God always sees individuals even knowing the thoughts as well as actions of the person. Therefore becomes important that each one does the will of God.

Do the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures encourage humility particularly in the arena of leadership? In using these Scriptures is Benedict building upon a proper foundation for his concepts of humility or is he simply appropriating these writings for his own purposes? In his exegesis of Philippians 2, Bekker (2007) found that humility was an important component of Jesus' example for Christian leadership. In leading Biblically, Winston (2002) discusses humility as one of the attributes found in the gospels for effective leadership. In addition, humility is discussed in I Peter 5, in the Christian Scriptures. In addition, there is a connection with leaders and humility as seen in the life of Moses as a great leader in the Hebrew Scriptures. Benedict builds upon a solid foundation here in his discussion of humility as founded upon the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

Step one is to respect God and in this sense it refers to the concept of the fear of the Lord as found in the Hebrew Scriptures. In this short section Benedict quotes portions of twelve Scriptures to develop this theme of the fear of the Lord. A hermeneutical analysis reveals that the fear of the Lord, according to Benedict, is to understand that God sees the individual continually, and He even knows the thoughts of the person. Knowing this one should deny self, even guarding against evil desires and obey God since God is searching for those who seek Him.

In the Hebrew Scriptures Proverbs 10:1 teaches that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The first step in humility in Benedict's twelve step program is to develop a deep abiding sense of the presence of God who knows even internal thoughts, causing the individual to be aware of this presence when making decisions about thoughts and actions. Humility does not begin with a general sense of lowliness of mind but with an understanding that in comparison to God one is lower than Him, that He is the one who makes ultimate decisions and that one should think and live in light of this reality. This is the beginning of wisdom, knowing that God is present, teaching us to deny self and evil. This first step toward humility is the acknowledgement and understanding that God is present, He is the ultimate director and one should live in the awe of this constant reality. This step toward humility also involves developing wisdom, an ability to apply knowledge well in specific situations.

The foundation for humility is a respect for God and a realization of His presence in that it affects one's decisions. This can also be known as transcendence, as the acceptance as something greater than self exists from which comes the understanding of the small role that one plays in the universe, bringing a proper perspective on life (Morris et al., 2005). In this step for Benedict this transcendence is rooted in the fear of the Lord.

The Second Step

Step two according to Galbraith and Galbraith is to reject personal desires or to consciously temper the basic desires (2004). While Bekker (2008a) describes this second step by using Benedict's words of not loving your own will. In this short section Benedict builds upon the previous section concerning the fear of the Lord and self-denial with desiring to do the will of the Lord. Self-denial is only the first step upon which is built a new design, that of finding and doing the will of God. However, what is the significance of these short succinct concepts in step two as found in these two sentences of this section? It could well be found in the one verse from the Christian Scriptures that Benedict cites in this section.

In John 6:38 in quoting Jesus the Scripture says "I came not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me (Benedict, 1975). According to Benedict (1975) this is an injunction to do the same thing or to have this same attitude to do the will of God. The context of this verse in the

book of John finds Jesus declaring that he is the manna that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. But then he continues by declaring that the will of Him who sent him was that everyone who believes on the Son will have eternal life and be raised up on the last day. The will of God for Jesus had to do with his destiny on earth, with his calling to fulfill his purpose to be the Messiah. This statement by Jesus comes in the midst of an explanation of who he is and his mission on earth. Three times in this section Jesus speaks of the will of the Father and that will is always focused toward some aspect of salvation and raising people at the last day and what emerges is a picture of God who actively wills to endow people with life and He carries that out through Jesus who is the one come down from heaven (Brodie, 1997). In following the will of God Jesus had a mission to accomplish concerning bringing salvation to people and He was obedient to that call for his life.

Doing the will of God is more that avoiding evil; it is fulfilling the mission or call in one's life. Leadership begins in the mind of God, as a gracious inclusion of humanity into the plans and purpose of God (Willimon, 2002). The second step of humility is finding and submitting to the will of God for one's life, to find one's call or destiny and living toward that end, like Jesus who came from heaven to bring salvation. Step two is finding one's destiny in life and submitting all other issues to that purpose. Calling extends to everyone everywhere in everything it does not belong to an exclusive few (Guinness, 1998).

The process of humility involves finding one's purpose, who you were created to be then fulfilling that purpose. In the business world Hughes and Beatty (2005) describe it as assessing where we are, understanding who we are, and where we want to go, learning how to get there, making the journey and checking the progress, as the process of strategic leadership. Who you are matters since it is here that the call of God is discovered and energized. Benedict lists this as a foundational issue for the development of humility, fulfilling the will of God, the call of God that comes from outside of the person but defines the person and facilitates growth in humility and leadership.

The Third Step

The third step of humility is, out of love of God, submitting to a superior in imitation of the Lord (Benedict, 1975). Galbraith and Galbraith explain this as willingly obeying others in position of authority (2004). This is a short section with only two sentences and one verse from the Christian Scriptures. The Scripture is found in Philippians 2:8 speaking of Jesus who was made obedient unto death. The exhortation is to imitate Jesus who submitted even to death in obedience to another, the Father. Benedict connects the internal motivation of love of God to an external action submission to a superior. This is an ontological issue, one of being or who one is as a person. This internal love of God affects ones actions and attitude. Notice it is not only submission it is obedient submission. Humility grows in the seedbed of one's being; internally one loves God and submits to a superior expanding humility in the individual.

In Philippians 2:8 the author is describing the humility of Christ and how he humbled himself to the purpose of His Father to die on the cross. The humility of Christ here is linked with his appearance as a man and his obedience to death (Bekker, 2007). Thus Christ set the example for others; it was an intentional example, of the path to leadership paved with humility and part of the process of humility is obedience. This section shows the voluntary abasement, humility and obedience of Christ as an example critiquing the leadership models of the time and offering an alternative model rooted in humility and common mutuality, offering the hope of returning to a

humane and empowering approach to leadership communicated in humility and love (2007). The process of humility includes a submissive obedience to superiors that is both ontological and developmental. It is ontological in that in proceeds from an internal issue of love for God, not a legalistic directive. It is developmental in that this obedience facilitates the growth of humility as one humbles themselves as Christ humbled Himself.

The Fourth Step

Step four is described as enduring affliction, by consciously turning the other cheek, even when right (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). It is also described as being obedient especially in difficult situations (Bekker, 2008a). Benedict (1975) declares that the fourth step is reached when one patiently and quietly puts up with everything which is inflicted without giving up. This longer section contains seven citations from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

A hermeneutical analysis of this section reveals two opposing concepts described with several similar words. The first set of words are the negative ones such as inflicted, painful, endure, suffer, tested, adversity, injustice, and persecution. These concepts are set in stark contrast to the second set of words like persevere, overcome, rejoice, and reward. The process of humility involves adversities and suffering sometimes even unjust suffering, but the individual growing in humility patiently perseveres and in so doing overcomes these adversities, in this there is reward and the ability to rejoice in the midst of these situations. Instead of disaster adversity brings growth in humility when one learns to overcome through perseverance.

There are also two pictures given of suffering and testing. The first is that of sheep being led to suffer death, but the answer is to be secure in the hope of reward and thereby rejoice. The second is the testing of silver with fire with which the silver is purified. However, it is significant that this testing comes from the Lord not just circumstance. Testing and reward both come from the Lord and one overcomes by the patience with which one obeys.

A contrast is set up throughout this section between suffering and overcoming then it is concluded by a contrast of the suffering and practical responses of one who overcomes. When struck on one cheek, they turn the other, when their coats are taken away they also give their cloak, when forced to carry a burden one mile they go two, and when they suffer persecution they bless their persecutors (Benedict, 1975). The paradox of humility is seen here. Humility, which is the way to heavenly heights according to Benedict, is increased by enduring patiently trouble, suffering, and persecution. This is paradoxical because intuitively to increase one must promote self or promote one's cause. But here it is seen that humility increases through testing and suffering with perseverance and even rejoicing. Again it is paradoxical because suffering and rejoicing do not usually meet together in the same circumstance or event. Could it be that human intuition is wrong? It appears so with humility at least in Benedict's way of thinking in that the way to increase is not self-promotion but self-denial and embracing the troubles of life as a path to joy. Is joy found by seeking joy? Intuitively many would say yes. However, empirically it does not work that way. Possibly Benedict found a way to joy in pursuing humility. This, if found to be true, would be quite paradoxical.

The Fifth Step

The fifth step to humility is when a monk confesses to his superior the evil thoughts in his heart and his evil deeds as well (Benedict, 1975). Galbraith and Galbraith (2004) explain this step as confessing weaknesses, to regularly acknowledge, even to yourself, your failings with details.

This step is also described as being transparent (Bekker, 2008a). An aspect of humility is openness or knowing one's weaknesses and an awareness of one's limitations (Morris et al., 2005). In this step humility is developed by learning to recognize one's weaknesses, to be transparent with others about these weaknesses particularly with one's self. However, what about confession? Does humility require systematic confession?

To develop this point Benedict uses 3 verses from the Hebrew Scriptures. In a hermeneutical analysis of this fifth step of the verses as quoted by Benedict shows that 4 times the speaker in the verses is confessing to the Lord, not other people. These verses use phrases like "Reveal to the Lord," "Confess to the Lord," "Make known to You (the Lord) my offenses," and "I will declare against myself…to the Lord." It is clear that the confession that Benedict uses as a foundation for this step is to declare to the Lord and to declare against one's self. There is no confession to a human involved here. Then why does Benedict insert it into this step and what are the ramifications for contemporary leadership?

One of the steps in the hermeneutical process is understanding the historical context. The historical context has to do with the time and culture of the author and his readers as well as the occasion and the purpose of the particular writing (Fee & Stuart, 1993). The context of the Rule is set in sixth century Christian monasticism (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). Monasticism is the quest for union with God through prayer, penance, and separation from the world, pursued by those sharing a communal life (Benedict, 1975). Sixth century monasticism put a premium on penance which involved confession to a superior. Benedict was part of this culture of monasticism in the sixth century and viewed confession to God as being accomplished through confession to a superior in a systematic manner. Confession is a principle of developing humility and in the context of sixth century monasticism that meant confession to an Abbott.

However, the next step of hermeneutics is to seek the contemporary relevance of ancient texts (Fee & Stuart, 1993). In the 21st century western culture the norm is not confession to a superior, but there is a place for confession. Confession, properly practiced, is essential to growth in character and to sustaining and renewing growth in character (Guinness, 2000). But to whom should one confess weaknesses and failings? In the context of Benedict's writing it involves at least confession to the Lord and to one's self. Leaders with personal humility look in the mirror, not out the window to apportion responsibility for poor results, never blaming other people or external factors (Collins, 2001). These leaders will take responsibility for poor results and explain this to others as found in the Collins (2001) study.

Authentic leadership theory includes relational transparency as one of its components, which involves valuing openness in one's close relationships, and creating an open dialogue with followers (Vogelgesang, Clapp-Smith, & Palmer, 2009). The 21st century version of confession is to develop transparency with others with who the person is in relationship and then to have an open, transparent dialogue with followers which would include even acknowledging shortcomings.

The Sixth Step

The sixth step of humility is reached when one accepts all that is crude and harsh and thinks himself a poor and worthless workman in his appointed tasks (Benedict, 1975). This is to practice contentment, with job and status (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). Bekker (2008a), says it is to be content with low and menial jobs. In this short section Benedict focuses on the person's evaluation of himself. The person accepts and thinks of himself as poor and worthless and then

he agrees with the prophet about himself, that he is brought to nothing and is become like a beast. Contentment can be found here but the focus is upon the person and thoughts about himself.

Benedict uses only two verses from the Hebrew Scriptures to describe this step, Psalm 73:22-23. In these verses the idea of being a beast is conveyed as being senseless and ignorant and then needing to be led by the hand of the Lord. This step is the acceptance of this reality with contentment. In other words there is no striving or pushing to change the reality of weaknesses but it becomes part of the person's thinking. This is not poor self-esteem it is an honest evaluation without pressing for more prestige or recognition. In Collins (2001) study one of the keys for top leaders was a compelling modesty, even shunning public adulation. A consistent theme on the topic of humility in the literature has been the understanding that a key element of humility is the ability to understand one's strengths and weaknesses (Morris et al., 2005). In defining virtues, humility is related to correctly ascertaining one's place in life and one's value in relation to others, one of the attributes included in this is modesty (Lanctot & Irving, 2007). The sixth step is an understanding of self and a proper estimation of weaknesses with modesty in thought about one's self.

The Seventh Step

The seventh step is connected closely with the sixth step. It is one thing to think of self in modest terms it is another to fully believe and confess that thought to others. This step is reached when one not only confesses that he is inferior and a common wretch, but believes it in the depths of his heart (Benedict, 1975). This is learning self-reproach in developing a conscious effort to see self as humble and lucky to have whatever one has in life, and this takes serious internal reflection (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). It is having a correct but lowly estimation of self (Bekker, 2008a). Collins (2001) noted that the researchers were struck with the way that the modest leaders spoke about themselves, in that they would not take much credit for successes and these leaders would speak of it being the result of other marvelous people and in fact they would speak often of success being the result of good luck.

Benedict uses 3 verses from the Hebrew Scriptures for the foundation of this step in humility. In this quick succession of verses there is a progression of thought about humility. Progressive texture resides in sequences of words and phrases throughout the unit, the purpose of this inner texture analysis is to gain an intimate knowledge of words and structures in the text which are the context for meanings (Robbins, 1996). This progressive sense of the text facilitates the meaning of the section of writing. First the person humbles himself, secondly even when exalted the person is humbled but it does not say by whom the person is humbled. Then finally the person declares that it is good to be humbled by the Lord to be able to learn His commandments. Humility that is believed in the heart begins with the person humbling self, this is intentional, then when a time of exaltation comes the person can receive it with humility and finally the person embraces the humbling of the Lord.

Coming to the place of believing this in the heart is a process that takes an active embrace of humbling self with internal reflection. This internal aspect of humility brings the person to the place of embracing external circumstances that can bring humility from without so that the person can learn and grow. This is the place of humility, not as an addendum or a function to be performed but it becomes part of the person, part of the character of the person or internalized humility.

The Eighth Step

The eighth step of humility is reached when the person only does that which the common rule demands or the example of his elders demands (Benedict, 1975). Obey all of the organizational rules, not just in letter, but also in spirit (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). It is to stay within the bounds of the organization and role (Bekker, 2008a). Benedict explains this step with only one sentence and no quotations from the Hebrew or Christian Scriptures. According to Collins (2001), the leader with personal humility channels ambition into the company, not the self. Leaders with high levels of humility act with restraint, mutuality, and respect for others, like Collins level 5 leaders who focused on the betterment of the organization rather than betterment of self (Morris et al., 2005). These leaders depend upon inspired standards not inspiring charisma to motivate (Collins, 2001). In other words the focus is upon the organization, not the leader. These leaders set up successors for even more greatness in the next generation of the organization (Collins, 2001). It is not about setting up a dynasty or a platform for the leader it is about bringing the organization to greatness. This step of humility follows the common rule of the organization to bring success and momentum to the organization not to the individual. This step involves building on the shoulders of the "elders" those who have come before in the organization, with a focus on the organization for generational greatness.

Servant leadership as developed by Greenleaf (1997) focuses on the needs of the follower and develops the leader as a servant which includes humility. Servant leadership was introduced partly in response to the cult of leadership, servant leaders approach leadership from a non-focal position seeking to fulfill the interests of the organization and its members rather than self-interests, working in a facilitative manner for the betterment of the organization (Morris et al., 2005). The focal point then is the growth and betterment of the organization and the people involved not of the prestige or reputation of the leader.

The Ninth Step

The ninth step is achieved when a person, practicing silence only speaks when asked a question (Benedict, 1975). It is to control one's tongue (Bekker, 2008a). Consciously try to listen more than speaking and do not give as many executive orders (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). An essential ingredient for cultivating good character is the discipline of secrecy, the freedom from needing to parade our virtue or to seek public recognition for our good qualities and achievements (Guinness, 2000). This step is explained by Benedict in two short sentences with two verses from the Hebrew Scriptures. The focus in these verses is upon avoiding sin and being able to prosper through one's speech being disciplined.

The development of humility is found in self-control of one's speech. The speech of the person does not become boastful or self-centered. In quoting Dallas Willard Guinness (2000) writes, that the discipline of secrecy helps us tame the hunger for fame, justification, or the attention of others, we learn to love to be unknown, and even to accept misunderstanding. In this stage humility produces not only true confession but also the taming of the tongue under the mastery of true humility. Collins (2001) revealed that in the interviews with humble level 5 leaders these leaders would instinctively deflect any discussion about their own role and would not talk about themselves. This stage of humility enters the realm of speech not just in confession but that which proceeds from humility that of true words of humility, words of affirmation to others but silence about self in relation to boasting or success.

The Tenth Step

The tenth step of humility is reached when a person restrains himself from laughter and frivolity (Benedict, 1975). According to Bekker (2008a) it is to avoid frivolity. This step is to meditate on the seriousness of humility and let that seriousness become part of your actions and speech (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). This step is expressed by Benedict in one sentence with reference to one verse in the Hebrew Scriptures, which speaks of a fool lifting his voice in laughter. There is a similar verse in the Christian Scriptures in Ephesians 5:4. In the context of being imitators of God the exhortation is to avoid silly talk or coarse jesting. The word here "frivolous" comes from the Latin and means of little weight or importance or marked by unbecoming levity ("Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary," 2010).

This is not a condemnation of all humor as much as that which is negative or unbecoming. Negative humor is usually done at the expense of others in putting others in a negative light to put one's self in a more positive light. This activity is condemned by Benedict. In this stage of the development of humility the person has ceased from this frivolity and jesting.

The Eleventh Step

The eleventh step of humility is arrived at when a person speaks gently, seriously, rationally and softly (Benedict, 1975). It is to talk in a low voice, speak gently and with kindness to everyone (Bekker, 2008a; Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). Benedict offers only one verse from the Hebrew Scriptures in this step from Proverbs 10:14 saying that a wise man is known by few words. Humble leaders are more likely to adopt a stance of egalitarianism rather than superiority or servility in their communication with others (Morris et al., 2005). When one reaches humility at this level it affects not only their confession as found in step 7 and 8 nor only their avoidance of negative humor as found in step 10 but it also effects how they communicate on a regular basis with others particularly with followers whom they lead. It is likely that leaders with high levels of humility are supportive of those around them (Morris et al., 2005). According to Collins (2001), level 5 leaders who have personal humility act with quiet, calm determination. The picture here of the person with a high level of humility is one who leads with peaceful determination, without bullying or loud ultimatums and demands.

The Twelfth Step

The twelfth and final step in developing humility is reached when a person shows humility in his heart, his appearance, and his actions (Benedict, 1975). Act humbly in appearance (Bekker, 2008a). Tone down the expensive dress and elegant tastes (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). In this short section Benedict uses several progressions in sets of three. He also ends much like he begins in step one by focusing the person on relationship with God and that this humility is seen most clearly when the person sees who they are in relation to God. In explaining the concept of top leaders, level 5 leaders, Collins (2001) cautiously compares them to Abraham Lincoln making note of his quiet and peaceful manner who never let his ego get in the way of creating an enduring great nation. Lincoln and these level 5 leaders had humility not just in the heart but also in their actions. Consider Mockler, CEO of Gillette who shy in demeanor and publicity shy, yet he led his company to triumph as told by Forbes magazine after his death (Collins, 2001).

Benedict begins his progressions of threes by talking about humility in the heart, then in appearance, and finally humility in actions. True humility begins in the heart, the soul of the person. Benedict sees leaders as teachers and examples The Rule requires leadership by example

and Pope Gregory used the Rule to apply to the role of church leaders as role models (Skrabec, 2003). Humility begins in the heart but then affects one's appearance and actions so that the leader becomes a role model leading by who one is rather than what one says. Most leadership models are based on a contingency theory that says that leader traits, situations, and behavior interacts, but Benedict reduces these interactions to humility and obedience (Skrabec, 2003). Humility and its corresponding actions becomes the pace of leaders as role models. Gregory the Great called these leaders, servant of servants (Skrabec, 2003).

The second set of threes has to do with location. Whether he is in the oratory, at the work of God, in the monastery or Garden, or lastly on a trip in the fields (Benedict, 1975). Whether one is involved in the work of God, or going about daily business, or even on a trip away from the monastery one must continue with humility in heart, appearance, and actions. This humility is not just a leadership behavior; it is a part of the person and therefore continues wherever the person may go.

The third set of threes concerns posture and attitude. Whether sitting, standing, or walking, there is no time when the person's heart or actions are exempt from humility whether active or inactive. Yet even his attitude takes on three aspects, thinking of his sins, with his head down and eyes on the ground, finally imagining he is on trial before God. This is the place of being totally humble. This is the posture of humility involving the person's thoughts, his body, and even his imagination. Humility engages and changes a person's thinking about himself, his actions toward others, as well as his imagination and plans for the future. The humble person realizes that it is before God that he rises or falls and this becomes paramount in actions, thoughts, and plans. The leadership wisdom of Benedict lies in his insistence that all development in virtues begins with the source of all virtue, God and that leaders who have integrated the value of humility with their public action lead with their heads bowed down (Bekker, 2008a). This final step in the development of humility is the culmination of the other steps in a truly humble person who no longer must learn the rules of humility but who lives and leads from the ontological reality of humility in the heart which manifests in appearance and action.

Summary

Benedict concludes this chapter on humility with his own summary and conclusions. True humility is learned by attempting the first step then moving progressively higher with practice, do not take a step higher until you have mastered the earlier one and like in practicing the piano tedious exercise soon becomes a musical masterpiece (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). Benedict outlines in this section what might be called the world's first twelve step program describing the twelve rungs on the ladder of humility (Cheline, 2003). Benedict declares that when one climbs all twelve steps three things will happen in the person.

The first is that he will find the perfect love of God. In this perfect love he will overcome fear and anxiety while finding that now the things that make humility will come naturally. The perfect love of God has been the topic of discussion and pursuit for many throughout history from Augustine's *Confessions* in the 4th century, to Bernard of Clairveaux's *On Loving God* in the 12th century and the writings of the mystics from the 14th to the 16th century from the pen of Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, and Teresa of Avila. This love is more than the expression of emotions; it is the experience between the people and God that by personally experiencing God's love, which was supremely expressed through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, Christians are to respond in deep gratitude with passionate love for God, and selfless,

sacrificial love for others (Ayers, 2008). God's love means that God eternally gives of himself for others and we imitate this communicable attribute of God first by loving God in return, and second by loving others in imitation of the way God loves them (Grudem, 1994). This ladder of humility leads to humility as a natural part of the person, and to the perfect love of God. This love of God is a passionate love for God and a love for others in a way that is full of sacrifice in service to them. Humility is the path to the perfect love of God, serving others.

The second thing that will happen is he will no longer act out of the fear of hell but out of the love of Christ. The internal motivation changes from fear or checking a list of rules to one of love. In the Philippians hymn (Philippians 2:6-11), the call is to imitate Christ in leadership not just in serving but in the radical call to become a servant, this offers the hope of returning to a humane approach to leadership communicated in humility and love (Bekker, 2007). This love for God helps to develop a love for others, then leaders are exhorted to imitate Christ in his sacrifice of becoming human and obedient to death for others. Love for God becomes a motive for the good habits endorsed in the Rule.

Thirdly the person who completes the twelve steps of humility finds pleasure now from the practice of virtue. These issues of humility are no longer a list of arduous tasks but are now virtues that when practiced give pleasure to the person. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing this reality or working this reality into the person. There is a passive role in sanctification (the work of the Holy Spirit) and an active one in which the person plays a part in obedience (Grudem, 1994). This active part of developing humility is seen in Benedict's twelve steps. The motives for obedience include the desire for a deeper walk with God and desire to do what God commands because the commands are right and we delight in doing what is right (Grudem, 1994). The path toward humility begins with obedience and becomes pleasure out of the love of God in living virtuously. This virtuous living affects the leader as leading out of new motives, as a servant. Up to this point the person is called the man or the monk but here in the final picture he is called His servant. The person is now transformed to be the loving, humble servant leader. Benedict's twelve steps lead to true humility and becoming a servant leader. Benedict's steps with contemporary application can be seen graphically as follows:
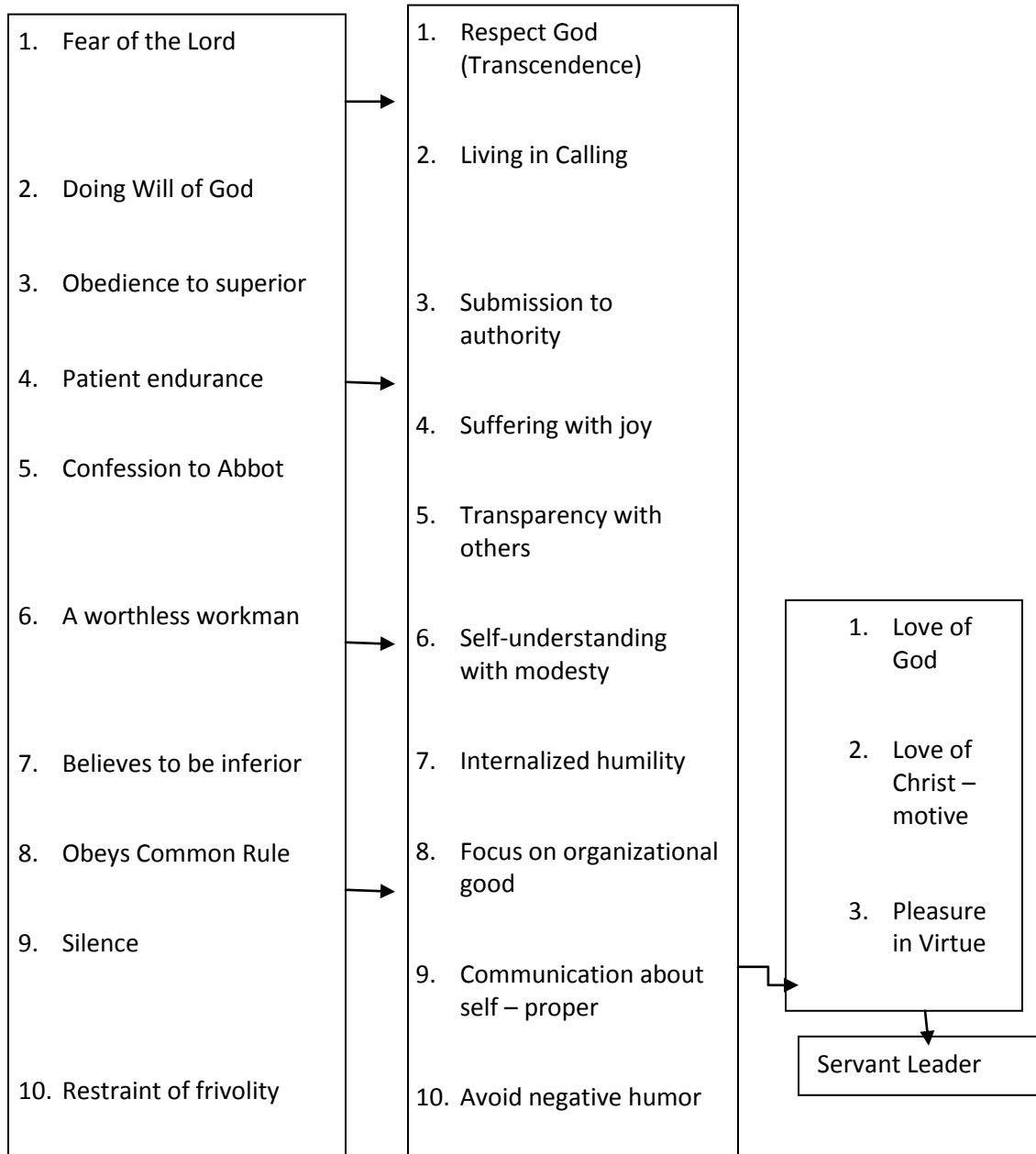
1. Fear of the Lord	1. Respect God (Transcendence)
	2. Living in Calling
2. Doing Will of God	
3. Obedience to superior	3. Submission to authority
4. Patient endurance	4. Suffering with joy
5. Confession to Abbot	5. Transparency with others
6. A worthless workman	6. Self-understanding with modesty
7. Believes to be inferior	7. Internalized humility
8. Obeys Common Rule	8. Focus on organizational good
9. Silence	9. Communication about self – proper
10. Restraint of frivolity	10. Avoid negative humor

1. Love of God
2. Love of Christ – motive
3. Pleasure in Virtue

Servant Leader

Figure 1. Benedict's 12 Steps of Humility

His steps to humility lead to leadership that is virtue based founded in humility and love. But how does this model apply to contemporary organizational leadership?

Organizational Leadership and Benedict's Twelve Steps

The lessons of humility must be learned early in a management career and in its purest form humility is the greatest source of personal power (Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004). Humility in leadership could serve several important functions, influencing leaders to perform in ways that are other enhancing instead of self enhancing and may contribute to organizational performance through its impact on organizational learning and resilience (Morris et al., 2005). In her study of

the Benedictine model of leadership Crozier (2003) concluded that the Rule of Benedict could be used in several human resource functions in business organizations; some of these functions included development of a code of conduct, development of recruiting and selection policies, and the development of executive level job descriptions. Given its potential importance in generating organizational and leader effectiveness, humility may offer a new lens through which to view the leadership process (Morris et al., 2005).

To transform an organization from good to great one of the necessary ingredients is a level 5 leader who combines personal humility with professional will (Collins, 2001). In addition, the cult of the great leader and celebrity CEO was encouraged by the results of powerful motivations to get people to do what they otherwise would not do but this fascination has given way to anger and feelings of betrayal (Morris et al., 2005).

The contemporary stage is set to hear the wisdom of history concerning effective leadership. This Benedictine model is from this historical context and includes aspects from these different studies in humility. It is becoming clearer through contemporary research in these models and models of servant leadership that humility is an important ingredient for current leadership theory. Can these twelve steps be used as a model for organizational leadership?

The first step in the 12 steps for organizational leadership is respect for God or transcendence. Can this be transferred to organizational leadership? There are at least two reasons that organizational leadership development models can start with this first step. The first is that at the turn of the 21st century there was a corresponding turn to spirituality in leadership studies (Bekker, 2008b). This turn to spirituality broadens the field for leadership models to include aspects of spirituality in the research and models of contemporary leadership. Second, it can be argued that transcendence can be best thought of as something greater than self, and the acceptance of the small role that one plays in the universe (Morris et al., 2005). This concept of transcendence can be the beginning of humility and leadership development in the context of organizational leadership. This is a process that only begins here.

This beginning would have to include a cultural shift as well. As Crozier (2003) discusses there would need to be a pattern from the Rule not only of leadership but also of employee conduct as well as the recruiting and selection policies. Important practices that could promote organizational humility are models of humility among leaders, promotion practices that reward humility, and public rejection of arrogant behaviors (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). This would be a shift in organizational thinking and culture that would become the foundation upon which this developmental concept of leadership could be built. Successful companies have developed something that supersedes corporate strategy, they have capitalized on the power that resides in developing and managing a unique corporate culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). This unique corporate culture would include these human resource issues of humility.

This unique culture would need to include some elements of transcendence as well. This would be counterintuitive to some organizations and people but the organization could develop workshops and even symbols that recognize the unique but small place that each person serves in the vast universe. In reinforcing culture change consider structure, symbols, systems, staff, strategy, style of leaders, and skills of managers (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Since this leadership process will be counterintuitive and contrary to many models of leadership focusing on charismatic leadership each of these areas will need to be considered in this organizational cultural shift to embrace the Benedictine 12 step model.

The second step in the process is for the individual to find and live in their calling. This would involve a discovery process for the individual to explore their gifting and talents and personality testing to learn their strengths and weaknesses as well as to assist in team building in putting them in the proper network of people in the organization. The third step is submission to authority. This would be facilitated by the culture if the executive leadership is walking in this type of humility it would engender an atmosphere of submission to authority. This is discussed in the Christian Scriptures in Luke 8 wherein a centurion asks Jesus to heal his servant. He tells Jesus just to say the word and his servant would be healed and Jesus marveled because this centurion understood authority. The centurion said that he had authority over certain men and they would do what he said. The centurion was under authority and knew that Jesus was under authority therefore Jesus could command the sickness and it would obey him. Submission to authority produces submission to authority and brings with it a certain authority in accomplishing assigned tasks.

Suffering with rejoicing is the fourth step and this may take a combination of workshops and individual coaching or mentoring. This mentoring is to reorient the thinking of the person in the understanding of suffering and growth. There could even be celebrations not just with the successes but also with the setbacks organizationally to model rejoicing in suffering.

Developing transparency with others is the fifth step and this could be coupled with the sixth step which is a self-understanding with modesty. This needs to be in the context of the organizational culture and could most effectively be developed with individual and group mentoring and coaching. Executive coaching involves one on one learning and it is a process to work through such issues as behavior and culture change (Day, 2000). Mentoring is seen as effective component of development and one of the possible reasons is that it enhances shared mental representations and interpretations of organizational concerns (Day, 2000). It enhances the thinking about leadership that is embedded in the organization and the executive leadership. Both coaching and mentoring could be used to help the individual develop these two steps in this process of leadership development. There are differences between coaching and mentoring but both could be used in this context.

Step seven is internalized humility which should become a result of the previous processes but can be monitored through the mentoring process. The eighth step in the process is to focus on the organizational good rather than on self-protection or even self-exaltation. This may be difficult in that it can appear to be self serving in the process of endeavoring to develop the attitude of serving others. In this stage an innovative network of people may need to be formed made up of those in this stage of development to create new ideas for the organization led by one who is farther along in the process. Special job assignments pertain to how individuals learn, undergo change, and acquire leadership capacity (Day, 2000). The underlying assumption in the 12 steps of Benedict is that there will be a personal presence of an Abbot a leader to whom the individual can relate and learn from who has already gone through this process. Therefore it is important that this process of coaching, mentoring, and job assignments not be just a generic program but have leaders through whom the individuals can receive direction and assessment.

Step nine and ten concern communication about self and others. Proper communication about self and avoiding negative humor must be modeled by executive leaders. Step eleven moves past communication, developing peaceful determination and the final step is developing humility in character. These last two must become the culmination of the other steps while being encouraged and modeled in the mentoring process.

This Benedictine model could be used in organizational leadership in applying it to human resource issues such as hiring and promotion and modeling by executive leaders. This could be coupled with leadership development through the process of mentoring, coaching, job assignments, and workshops created specifically for developing individuals in the process of humility in leadership. Development of humility in leadership reaches beyond specific styles or behaviors in which one should engage (Morris et al., 2005). Therefore this process must become part of the culture. It must be an intentional process that includes aspects of training and development that are able to bring cultural and behavioral change like coaching, as well as aspects that enhance mental images for leading, like mentoring.

Ecclesial Leadership and Benedict's Twelve Steps

These twelve steps were created in the context of the church, not the hierarchy but within the church itself and had been used within certain contexts of the church for 14 centuries. This process begins with the Fear of the Lord and continues to completion to the love of God based on one's relationship with God. The process of developing greater humility is inextricably linked with developing one's spirituality (Morris et al., 2005). In addition, Benedict's twelve steps are founded upon declarations and teachings from the Christian and Hebrew Scriptures. There are other verses in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures that expand this teaching on humility and leadership. There is the example of Moses in the Book of Exodus as a humble leader and there is a directive to leaders in I Peter 5 concerning humility.

Benedictine 12 step leadership development is uniquely suited for leadership in the church. In many ways throughout the centuries the church has followed business and government leadership that was embedded in the current culture. For instance, the medieval church developed a hierarchical system of leadership much like the Roman government's system of government with a Pope at the top of the system, similar to the Roman Caesar. Then when the church moved to early America it developed a democratic form of government and leadership much like the surrounding culture. However, this is an opportunity for the church to develop unique effective leadership for the church in Benedict's 12 steps. The church has the ability to develop unique leadership models due to its foundation upon the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures such as established in Benedict's model. Instead of the church mimicking the surrounding culture the church could impact the surrounding culture with a pacesetting leadership model based upon humility.

Leadership development in the church context could be based upon this twelve step program toward humility beginning with the fear of the Lord as a foundation with no concern for having to work through someone's theological concerns in the workplace. The end or the goal then becomes more than humility in character. It becomes finding the perfect love of God and its ramifications in one's life of motivation from the love of Christ and the ability to receive pleasure of virtue in the outworking of humility.

There are other discussions in the business world of theories and models of leadership that include humility and this is a positive step for organizational leadership based upon the long history of humility's effectiveness in leadership. Collins (2001), Morris (2005), and others have brought to the thinking of leadership a key component in humility. However, the church can expand upon this beginning by developing effective models based upon the full intent of the Benedictine model and set the pattern for other types of organizations.

The model for development in the church would include workshops, mentoring, coaching, and job assignments like the organizational model however; spiritual formation could be added to facilitate the process. In addition, both individual and group study would be added from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures concerning humility and leadership. Not only study but other issues of spiritual formation could be added such as prayer, journaling, and spiritual community development for the discussion of the issues of humility. Spiritual formation and leadership development would grow together as part of the process of developing humility in character and finding the perfect love of God.

Conclusion

Benedict's twelve steps to humility can be set into the context of the contemporary world for a foundation for a model of leadership. The model of humility in leadership has been developed by several different contemporary researchers (Cheline, 2003; Collins, 2001; Greenleaf, 1997; Guinness, 2000; Lanctot & Irving, 2007; Morris et al., 2005; Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2002). In addition, there have been several studies to apply Benedict's model of leadership, including humility, to organizational leadership (Bekker, 2008a; Cheline, 2003; Crozier, 2003; Galbraith & Galbraith, 2004; Skrabec, 2003). The twelve step model of Benedictine leadership can be applied to organizational leadership and set in the context of the 21st century business world. The steps are updated by beginning with developing the fear of the Lord in the 6th century Benedict model to respect for God and transcendence in the contemporary organizational model. The conclusion of the model is humility in appearance and finding the perfect love of God in the 6th century model with developing humility in character in the contemporary organizational model. Nevertheless, this model can be more directly applied in contemporary ecclesial leadership beginning with the fear of the Lord in step one and being completed after step twelve with finding the perfect love of God.

Humility is receiving new recognition in leadership thinking and this thinking can be facilitated with Benedict's twelve steps to humility. This robust theory has stood the test of time and simply needs contemporary application to the organizational and leadership needs of the contemporary context. This model includes not only a model for leadership but also a model for leadership development. Since this model for leadership is so counterintuitive, countercultural, and relatively new it needs models for development to assist in bringing this theory to birth and maturity.

The need is for the church to see this opportunity to develop a leadership model that is uniquely suited for the church and to apply it in the church in such a way as to set the standard for organizational leadership. Leadership is somewhat ontological, it proceeds from being not just behavior and the church is uniquely qualified to show this truth in their models of leadership like the Benedictine 12 step model.

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