

**EMPOWERED FOLLOWERS:  
THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS  
FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

By

David Donaldson

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
McMaster Divinity College in partial fulfillment  
of the Master of Theological Studies degree.

McMaster Divinity College,  
Hamilton, Ontario  
2005

## Summary Page

Master of Theological Studies

McMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario

**TITLE:** Empowered Followers: The Measure of Success for  
Effective Leadership

**AUTHOR:** David Donaldson

**SUPERVISOR:** Dr. Joyce Bellous

**NUMBER OF PAGES:** 97



**McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE**

**Upon the recommendation of an oral examination committee, this thesis-project by**

**DAVID DONALDSON**

**is hereby accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Theological Studies**

  
**First Reader and Advisor**

  
**Second Reader**

  
**Dean**

Date: *March 28, 2005*

Abstract:

Empowered Followers:  
The Measure of Success for Effective Leadership

A thesis submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Master of Theological Studies Degree

McMaster Divinity College  
April, 2005

by:  
David Donaldson

Through the pages of this thesis, I articulate a biblical model for leadership and power, focusing on the relationship between leaders and followers. I contend that the goal – the measure of success – of effective leadership is the transformation and empowerment of the follower as opposed to quantitative or organizational success. The thesis opens with a definition of leadership as being influence. This leads to the discussion of power as the core of the leader/follower relationship. I examine scripture's description of power abuses that are at the root of the "patron/client" social order. Jesus reverses the social order both in his teaching and his behaviour and concludes, "You are not to be like that!" (Luke 22:26). Following Jesus' example, the Christian leaders' first responsibility is to empower their followers in a community of mutual inquiry and reciprocal submission.

I apply these discussions to the contemporary cultural situation, often labeled "postmodern," and the significant challenges it presents for Christian leaders. Postmodern culture demands, I suggest, a renewed emphasis on authentic relationship between Christian leaders and postmodern followers and a renewed sense of mission.

That is, postmodern culture provides new challenges that should be met with rigorous application of “Kingdom” principles of mutual respect and ethical living.

In sum, leadership, to be biblical, must transform followers to be empowered servants who carry Jesus’ message to a seeking world.

To:

My parents, for giving me a foundation faith,

and

Phil and Wendy for encouraging me to build on it.

## Table of Contents

Dedication

Introduction

Chapter 1: p. 1

**The Strange and Strained Relationship of Power and Love in Christian Leadership**

- Power and leadership
- Leadership: the Power to Serve
- Leadership: the Permission to Transform
- Vision: Environment for Empowerment
- Love: the Motivation for Transformation

Chapter 2: p. 19

**Human Power under the Sovereignty of God**

- The Gentile Paradigm: Patron/Client
- God, the Sovereign King, and David, the King who Takes
- The King as Shepherd
- Jesus: Not So With You!
- Tychicus: Paul's Empowered Follower
- Hebrews' Subtle Instruction

Chapter 3: p. 38

**Community:**

**The Environment for Empowerment**

- Community Starts with Individual Relationships
- Leaders: Agents for Change
- Education: a Paradigm for Transformation
- Community: the Environment for Transformation
- The Tension: Community or Individuality?

Chapter 4: p. 56

**Constructing a Postmodern Church with Ancient Building Blocks**

- The Postmodern Reconstruction of Leadership
- Modern vs. Postmodern
- The Wandering Stranger
- The Modern Theatre and the Postmodern Carnival
- Modern Solutions to Postmodern Problems

**Chapter 5:**

**p. 73**

**Empowered Followers:**

**The Criterion for Effective Leadership**

- **Creating a Community of Inquiry**
- **Empowerment is Participatory**
- **The Centrality of Community**
- **Empowerment**



## Introduction:

With recess only 15 minutes long, choosing the leader for “follow the leader” must happen quickly. Once chosen – either by dictatorship, “I’m the leader” or the more democratic (?) method, “eeny meeny miny moe...” – the parade starts. The leader hops to the swings, walks backward through the sandbox, and crawls up to the school doors. The rest follow the leader’s whim, with no recourse for appeal. Until relatively recently that represented my leader/follower paradigm. What he said went.

Real life challenged my paradigm, and I had to begin redefining leadership. That redefinition started with a book I read in the early 1990s entitled *Cages of Pain*. Buried in the pages of that book, Gordon Aeschliman’s attempt to describe healthy Christianity and healthy church life, was the paragraph,

Leaders who genuinely care about you will *enlarge* your world, increase your exposure to others’ views, invite your criticisms of their own ways, lessen their input into your worldview and discipleship process (while encouraging you to be influenced by others) – and will in fact *learn* from you. They will help your world become less black and white and more ambiguous, they will inspire you to risk where you’ve never been before, and when you return you will lead them down paths that are new to their Christian experience.<sup>1</sup>

It is not accurate to suggest that my leadership paradigm was shifted in an instant, but the passage simply gave me something to think about. That thinking led me to examine leadership in my own church and, more importantly, in my own life experience. My initial observation was that there was a relationship between leader and follower. A dialogical relationship is just under the surface in Aeschliman’s description. Compare this to Henri Nouwen’s words,

---

<sup>1</sup> Gordon Aeschliman, *Cages of Pain* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1991), 171.

The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his [or her] own.<sup>2</sup>

If one replaced “hospitality” with “leadership,” Nouwen and Aeschliman are saying the same thing, that leader and follower, or host and guest are actually talking to each other and learning from each other. In the playground, all we saw was the leader’s backside as he crawled under the swings.

After the thought that there might be something more to leadership, thinking and reading about leadership became a bit of a hobby for me. Sitting under church leaders, both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ intensified that hobby – giving the ideas a spiritual urgency. An effective spiritual leader can send empowered, mature, Christ-like servants boldly into the world and, contrarily, an ineffective spiritual leader can keep dependent, shallow, leader-copying sheep cowering in the church pew.

The pages to follow represent my reading and thinking about effective leadership and healthy followership. In chapter one, I explore the relationship between leaders and followers from the point of view of power and influence. Leadership is defined as influence. Influence includes ideas of power and change and opens the door to power excesses. It is service and love that safeguard against the danger of power corrupting the powerful. In chapter two I open scripture to determine its description of power. I examine the inequality inherent in the pattern of patron/client relationship. It is a human invention that is contrary to God’s law. The story of David and Bathsheba provides an illustration of power gone awry. Jesus reverses the patron/client relationship by

---

<sup>2</sup> Henri J. Nouwen, *Reaching Out* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 72.

redefining 'greatness' in the Kingdom of God. The chapter includes an examination of Paul's empowering relationship with a follower, Tychicus. I try, in chapter three, to establish community as a biblical foundation and the best environment for empowerment to occur. The world of educational theory provides some insightful descriptions for healthy communities that I incorporate into my discussion. In chapter four I introduce the ideas of postmodernism and suggest that, while it appears to be a whole new world 'out there' the needs of a postmodern person are best met by authentic leaders willing to share their stories and learn from their followers' experiences. Postmodern people redefine 'leader' and 'follower' to be co-participants in a mission, rather than the modern view of 'follow the leader.' And I conclude my investigation in chapter five by summarizing some of the topics in the earlier chapters in an attempt to focus attention on the definition of empowerment. It is, I contend, qualitatively different than delegation, and draws the follower into full participation of the mission. My conclusion is that criterion for successful or effective leadership is empowered followers. Since organizations succeed through the work of each contributor, leaders should focus their attention and measure their success on the individual people in their spheres of influence. That is, well-led people leads to organizational effectiveness (i.e. the church's mission is accomplished), but that success is the by-product of good leadership, not the standard by which good leadership is measured..

The urgency surrounding the following discussion is heightened for me since my children are entering adulthood and seeking communities of faith that speak to their needs. They live in a different world than I did *at their age*. The church must be able to reach members of this different world with the gospel of love. It will not reach them by

simply retooling modern methods to try harder to get them into the building. There must be a reconstruction of community and mission, and they are reconstructed in full participation of both leader and follower. The postmodern church, and, therefore, postmodern leaders have the challenging and exciting task of reconstructing the ancient gospel for a new generation; a task that is analogous to rewiring a house with the power still on. I pray there are leaders out there able to reach and welcome my children into community.

## Chapter 1

### The Strange and Strained Relationship of Power and Love In Christian Leadership

Contemporary culture and society are preoccupied with leadership. After a brief survey, a two-minute Internet search, I discovered just how prevalent the word 'leadership' is in literature. Amazon.com suggested 10,613 books and McMaster University library system offered 1,643 titles after a keyword search of 'leadership'. Granted, these titles cover the complete spectrum, applying leadership to every subject from anthropology to zoology. The church, too, has followed the cultural lead and offers its own books,<sup>1</sup> group of leadership gurus (e.g. John Maxwell and Bill Hybels) and mega-conferences.<sup>2</sup> It is a hot topic because, as all the resources I consulted affirm, leadership is essential for the success of any organization, be it business, civil or religious.

I will argue that effective leadership is primarily focused on the transforming relationship between the leader and the follower. In other words, leadership is relational, not primarily organizational or corporate. In its most basic definition, a leader is someone who has a follower; it is a relationship between at least two people. I will explore the relationship between leaders and followers and suggest that the measure of leaders' success is the quality of their followers, not their organizational success. One of

---

<sup>1</sup> The appendix to one of the texts I used suggested 250 titles for Christian leaders. Philip V. Lewis, *Transformational Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 250-255.

<sup>2</sup> Willow Creek Association's "Leadership Summit, 2005" is scheduled to involve 7,000 people at their Illinois auditorium, and be satellite-fed to 100 cities around the world. [www.willowcreek.com/events/leadership](http://www.willowcreek.com/events/leadership) accessed December 7, 2004.

my assumptions is that the two roles are inseparable; one cannot be a leader without a follower, and, therefore, a follower must have a leader. Though inseparable, they are not simply mirror images of each other. That is, one cannot simply define leadership and, by implication, assume that followership<sup>3</sup> is clearly defined. I suggest that there are unique characteristics of a good follower and it is the quality of these characteristics that qualify successful leadership.

A recent Doctor of Ministry thesis submitted to McMaster Divinity College contrasted two leadership models – transactional and transformational – and demonstrated that transformational leadership is the preferred model for Christian leaders.<sup>4</sup> I will focus my discussion on the transformational model of leadership and show that transformational “leaders use their power to empower [followers].”<sup>5</sup> In other words, the desired result of a successful leadership relationship is a follower whose character and behaviour have been transformed or changed by a transfer of power – as the word “empowerment” suggests.

In order to be effective, Christian leaders develop transformed and empowered followers. The following pages examine the various aspects and implications of transformation and empowerment. I show in this chapter that there is a power relationship inherent in leadership, and the power has to be tempered with service and love before a follower can be transformed. Chapter two continues the discussion about power relationships by examining what the Bible says about authority and submission.

---

<sup>3</sup> If “followership” is a neologism, it suggests that leadership has received all the cultural attention, leaving followers out of qualitative discussion.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Calcutt, “An Emerging Leadership Paradigm: Rediscovering Truth or Adapting to Change?” (DMin. Thesis, McMaster Divinity College, 2004), 190.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 21.

The second chapter focuses on the pattern of inequality, often characterized by “patron/client” relationship, which scripture rejects in favour of a leadership model of servanthood. Chapter three builds on the first two and establishes biblical community as the best environment in which transformation and empowerment happen. If the discussion was purely academic – a literature and biblical study only– it could end after chapter three. But leadership is pragmatic; it is about real people in the real world. The real world is often characterized as “postmodern,” which offers a unique set of challenges for Christian leaders. Chapter four examines our postmodern age, and its implications for leaders. In light of postmodernism, chapter five suggests that Christian leaders are, first and most importantly, Christian human beings who are trying to lead through their life stories. The context of postmodernism does not alter the definition of successful leadership, but it removes any possibility of leadership that is based on office or title. Through an examination of the literature, I will suggest that contemporary followers simply will not follow leaders they perceive to be inauthentic. At the end of the modern era it is more essential than ever for Christian leaders to understand that empowered followers are the measure of success for effective leadership.

### **Power and Leadership**

Leadership is, in a word, influence.<sup>6</sup> Since the leader/follower relationship is so intertwined, my discussion must start with a working definition of leadership. Some

---

<sup>6</sup> In my search for a definition I observed that “influence” was the common descriptor. See for example: Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 27; Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 18; Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership* (London: Paternoster Press, 2003), 2; Alan E. Nelson, *Spirituality and Leadership* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 24; John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Milton Keynes, UK: Word Books (UK), 1993), 15-33; Dale Galloway, *On Purpose Leadership* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press,

leadership writers challenge leaders to have a vision, then influence followers towards that preferred future. Some of the books focus on organizations, some on churches, and some on individuals, but all suggest that leaders influence followers to change their behaviour.<sup>7</sup> This changed behaviour is in the context of and focused on the visions and goals of the organization. Yet influence is not the core of leadership; it is the result. That is, a follower is influenced to change behaviour through the *power* the leader exerts to effect the change in the follower. In other words, as Lewis explains it, "*Power* is the capacity to influence others to do something they would not have done without having been influenced" (emphasis in the original).<sup>8</sup> If influence is the result of leadership, then power is the core.

The idea that leadership uses power as the means to the ends of influence begs the question, "what is power?" Lewis states the relationship clearly, "Power is central to the study of leadership. If a group exists, there is a power structure."<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the foundational concept of leadership is power and its use. It is almost automatic in our culture when one hears the word "power" to remember Lord Acton's aphorism, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."<sup>10</sup> Less well known, but more relevant to my study is the next line in Acton's letter, "There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it."<sup>11</sup> In other words, power is not a function of an office or title, but something else. That 'something else' is difficult to define. Lord Acton

---

2001), 37; Phillip Collins, "The Mystery of Christian Leadership," *McMaster Journal of Theology* (Spring 1990): 21.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 21.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> As quoted in Robert K. Greenleaf, *Seeker and Servant: Reflections on Servant Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 58.

<sup>11</sup> Greenleaf, *Seeker*, 58.



eloquently warns his readers that corruption and power go hand-in-hand. The 'powerful' people in history are often the tyrannical - Alexander the Great, The Caesars, Hitler, Amin to name a few. History seems to confirm the aphorism. Scripture, too, suggests that the sentiment accurately reflects reality; many of the Old Testament stories are about kings who, once in power, became arrogant and ignored God's counsel (e.g. 2 Chron 26:16).

Power itself is value-less. Educator David Nyberg defines it as the ability to control chaos through organization.<sup>12</sup> The operative word is 'control.' Power is that which exerts control over an otherwise chaotic situation. Power is the means to accomplish order or organization. Chaos might be the natural state, but it is a state that human beings cannot tolerate, so we exert power over chaos.<sup>13</sup> Powerful people, then, are the agents of control – those who have a vision of what 'order' means in the first place and then have the power to influence others to accomplish that goal.

Power as control over chaos does not account for the human relationship inherent in a power structure. Power in human terms is a relationship between the powerful and the powerless. In that relationship, power is not a tangible 'thing' that one possesses and the other does not,<sup>14</sup> it is an agreed part of the relational interaction. It is 'agreed' because, in social terms, power is conferred on the powerful by the powerless. That is, an individual or group allows others to influence – have power over – them. As Nelson points out, "Leadership is a social relationship in which people allow individuals to influence them toward intentional change... Power ultimately resides in the followers or

---

<sup>12</sup> David Nyberg, *Power Over Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 41-43.

<sup>13</sup> Nyberg, *Power*, 41-43.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 21.

collaborators.”<sup>15</sup> This has implications for the power-holders, as Nyberg observes, “All power is delegated and because of this it is accountable to those whose consent and delegation support the power-holders position.”<sup>16</sup> Power, for the purposes of this essay, is the permission to allow another to exert a measure of control and influence over oneself. In this sense power and leadership are directly and almost inseparably related.

Powerful people hold and keep their positions through various means. It is within these means that the dangers of power reside. Power is given to an individual, and allowed to remain in the individual through five power sources,<sup>17</sup>

*Referent power:* is given to leaders because their followers recognize their influence and admire their inherent ability. Followers follow – i.e. place power in – such leaders voluntarily.

*Legitimate power:* is authority granted to a person by either a higher power (e.g. a judge being appointed by the government) or the group itself (e.g. a board of directors electing a chair). Power resides in the office that a person holds (judge or chair in the above examples, but includes pastor) and described and defined through job descriptions.

*Expert power:* is power or influence because of a person’s special skills. “Is there a doctor in the house?” is a cry for expert power. The pastor on staff with the Doctorate degree is often given the Senior Pastor’s title because of (at least perceived) expert power.

*Reward power:* gives people the position because they can and do reward those who delegate power to them. Bosses may try to keep their power by granting large pay

---

<sup>15</sup> Nelson, *Spirituality*, 23.

<sup>16</sup> Nyberg, *Power*, 38.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 25-27.

raises, and pastors by giving public recognition. This is a tenuous way of holding onto power since it is only effective if the follower values the reward.

*Coercive power:* is the antithesis of reward power. It threatens punishment for not following. This is tyranny.

To a large degree, all the above five 'sources' of power create a hierarchy; power is granted to elevate some people to higher places on a social grid. This is clearly observed in the above example of Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is hired to lead the congregation. She/he is given the top box on the church's organizational chart, the chair of a number of committees and the pulpit through which to express her/his leadership. Through those offices and positions, the Senior Pastor has an unique opportunity to influence individuals and the church as a whole. Again the relationship between power and leadership is observed; leadership is an exercise of power that allows one person or a specific group of people to influence others.

### **Leadership: the Power to Serve**

Before examining the specific way leaders should use their power in a Christian context, it is important to make a distinction between *management* or *administration* and *leadership*. For example, the job description of a Senior Pastor contains a number of tasks: counseling, committee meetings, staff and human resource management, preaching, teaching, strategic planning, budget oversight, and the list goes on. Some of the items are exclusively management, some are leadership and some contain elements of both. Robert Greenleaf points out that management and administration "imply either *maintenance* (keeping things going as they are), *coercion* (sanctions or implied threat of

sanctions to enforce one's will), or *manipulation* (guiding others into thoughts or actions that they may not fully understand)."<sup>18</sup> In other words, getting people to do things that maintain the organization, or that accomplish a specific task within a plan is management, not leadership. The leadership parts of the job description are those activities that focus on the transformation of individuals and are future focused.

I contend that leadership, building on the above definition, is influence with the best interest of both the follower and the organization in mind. Again, Greenleaf explains it well, "When I use the word *lead* it involves creative venture and risk (as contrasted with maintenance) and it is as free as humanly possible from any implication of coercion or manipulation."<sup>19</sup> In other words, effective leadership is concerned with the people being led not with tasks being accomplished. The focus of leaders on their followers begins to resonate with Christian sensitivities and priorities. Throughout his essay, Phillip Collins develops a definition of leadership, starting in a general context and re-defining it for a Christian context. He concludes, "Christian leadership, characterized and motivated by biblical servanthood, is the ability and the activity to influence people, persuading them, and shaping their behaviour."<sup>20</sup>

Collins' definition adds a component that must be examined: servanthood, and the idea of servant leadership. The corporate world has reconsidered the idea of servant-leadership thanks to a great extent to Greenleaf's writing in the 1970s. He declared that the viable businesses in the future will be those that are servant-led. He describes a servant leader as one who "is a servant first... [Servant leadership] begins with the natural

---

<sup>18</sup> Greenleaf, *Seeker*, 54.

<sup>19</sup> Greenleaf, *Seeker*, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Collins, "The Mystery of Christian Leadership," 21.

feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”<sup>21</sup> This quotation is an epilogue to Gene Wilkes’ *Jesus on Leadership* in which the author examines Jesus’ life for clues on how Jesus led his disciples. Wilkes identified seven principles for servant leadership from Jesus’ life. Jesus:

- humbled himself and allowed God to exalt him.
- followed God the Father’s will rather than seeking a position.
- defined greatness as being a servant.
- risked serving others because he trusted that he was God’s son.
- left his place at the head of the table to serve.
- shared responsibility and authority.
- built a team to carry out his vision.<sup>22</sup>

After only about three years of serving and investing into the lives of twelve followers, he left eleven of them to carry on the vision he cast. They (especially after Pentecost) were empowered and did, in fact, influence the world.

Many of Wilkes’ observations surround Jesus’ acts of service. Jesus reverses the common idea of greatness from one who is served to one who serves. He does not remove the notion of greatness from his descriptions of his kingdom since he states that there will be positions of ‘greatness’ in the Kingdom of God (e.g. Mark 10:42 and Luke 9:48). What he does, however, is reverse standards – greatness is dependent upon service. So, as Peter Nelson concluded after an in-depth study of Luke 22:24-30, “though the Lukan Jesus may envision a profound reformation of the idea of greatness and leadership, he does not call for its elimination.”<sup>23</sup> Jesus both taught and exemplified this “profound reformation” called servant leadership. His teaching came to a climax during

---

<sup>21</sup> Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977), 10. Quoted in Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1998), 241.

<sup>22</sup> Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> Peter K. Nelson, *Leadership and Discipleship: A Study of Luke 22:24-30*, SBL Dissertation Series, 138 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 156.

the Last Supper.

The story, as recorded in Luke 22: 24-30 took place in the upper room, immediately after Jesus distributed bread and wine that symbolized the new covenant. An argument broke out amongst the disciples about who would be greatest in this new kingdom, based on the new covenant. It was not an unreasonable discussion, and Jesus answered, not with rebuke but with an explanation – they were not to be like the Gentiles around them (v.26). Nelson exegetes Jesus’ teaching and draws a number of contrasting pairs in Luke 22:26b-27:

Position [Gentile] A:	Position [Kingdom] B:
The greatest	the youngest (v.26b)
The leader	the servant (v.26c)
The diner	the table servant (v.27a)
The diner	Jesus the table servant (27b-c) <sup>24</sup>

Nelson describes a set of contrasts and points out that Jesus is increasingly specific about the description of the Kingdom Servant (Position B in Nelson’s comparative chart above). Jesus’ teaching builds to a climax – his own identification with the ‘one who serves’ (v.27). He instructs his disciples that the greatest will be like the youngest amongst them; will be like the servant; will be like the table servant; will be like himself, the ultimate ‘table servant.’ Nelson concludes his analysis of the pericope that, “The reference to his own conduct is the trump card of the argument.”<sup>25</sup>

The conduct that Jesus refers to might have been the foot-washing pericope as described in John 13:1-17. There is strong – even if only circumstantial – evidence to

<sup>24</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 133.

<sup>25</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 159.

connect Luke 22:24-30 to the foot-washing scene that is only found in John. The location for both is the Last Supper. In both accounts Jesus asserts his servant heart without removing his leadership position. The foot-washing act finds a logical context in the argument (cf. Luke 22:27c). In both Luke and John, Jesus refers to his own actions. And, finally, in both Jesus attempts to stimulate a behaviour change amongst the twelve.<sup>26</sup> Whether the stories are connected or not, it is clear that,

The Lukan Jesus orders a transformation of the idea of ‘greatness.’ He calls the apostles to turn away from the high power, high status ways of rule which prevail in the world, and to lead as lowly, humble servants committed to the care of others. By pointing to this humiliation in being a servant to them (i.e., his exemplary action and lowly death), Jesus clinches the argument and delivers the definitive model for servant-discipleship.<sup>27</sup>

Jesus, then, is not just an example of servant leadership, but the supreme and paradigmatic model that maturing Christian leaders should emulate.<sup>28</sup>

### **Leadership: the Permission to Transform**

Servant leadership, then, is the current fad in business leadership circles, but has strong biblical roots. It has to move from the academy – from discussion groups and essays – to impacting real people in real places. Servant leadership is practical. This suggests another question, “What is the goal of servant leadership?” I suggest above that “Christian leaders must develop transformed and empowered followers.” Empowerment suggests that power is transferred from the leader to the follower. It is power to do something in the real world. It simply is not worthwhile to discuss leadership in isolation

---

<sup>26</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 161-162.

<sup>27</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 171.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 242.

from the real world of human beings trying to live out their lives. Greenleaf, in his discussion of the spiritual aspect of leadership, said,

I would not accept the monk in his cell or the theologian in his study as *spiritual* unless the fruit of their efforts is such that it finds its way to nourish the servant motive in those who do the work of the world. This, it seems to me, is one of the major reasons why that mediating institution, the church, is so important: to help the fruits of contemplation and theological reflection become an animating force that sustains legions of persons as *servants* as they wield their influence.<sup>29</sup>

I suggest that a better word than “sustains” would be “empowers” – the goal of servant leadership is transformed and empowered followers who “wield their influence.”

So, transformed and empowered people wield their influence in the real world. We still need a clear understanding of ‘transformational leadership’ before we can bring it to the real world. I suggested above that the leadership relationship is transformative for the follower; the follower is transformed through empowerment. Viewing ‘transformational leadership’ in contrast to another leadership paradigm, ‘transactional leadership,’ brings the qualities of the former into sharp focus. Transactional leaders focus much of their attention on what is happening here and now; they are reactionary. These leaders are aware of the needs of their followers, but attempt to fill those needs only if the followers’ performance warrants it. Their leadership is reward-based and performance-based. They are focused on getting the work done, according to predetermined standards, and are intimately involved with power and politics to ensure their security within the organization.<sup>30</sup> Transactional leadership is more like management than leadership. Managers are intent and focused on making sure things work well, things are maintained, staff is happy and productivity is satisfactory.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Greenleaf, *Seeker*, 55.

<sup>30</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> For a more complete comparison between management and leadership, see Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 8.



On the other hand, transformational leaders are focused on the future, on making things better, on creating environments where followers work autonomously within visionary guidelines. Their focus is on the individual and on the environment in which the individual contributes. The focus is on the transformation of that individual. They build on the strengths of others, drawing out of them that which may have lain dormant. They raise levels of awareness about the consequences of actions in their constituency. They enable individuals to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of others.<sup>32</sup> They do not tie individuals' hands, but give them knowledge, skills, information, resources and encouragement to accomplish the vision both leader and follower are committed to. Lewis states it, "transformational leaders use their power to *empower* [followers]" (emphasis mine).<sup>33</sup> Servant leaders serve their followers with the intent of transforming and empowering them.

### **Vision: Environment for Empowerment.**

As I stated above, the power inherent in a leader/follower relationship is intangible – it is the permission granted by the follower to be influenced. It is not something that a leader inherently possesses; it is granted in trust. Empowerment, then, is the act of returning power to the followers. In one business text, empowerment is defined as creating a positive environment where individuals have the freedom to act in the best interest of customers and the organization within agreed upon levels of responsibility and authority, resulting in a feeling of self-worth in the workers.<sup>34</sup> There

---

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, *Transformational Leadership*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Marlene Caroselli, *Empowerment Works* (West Des Moines, IA: American Media Publishing, 1999), 9.

are many components to that definition of empowerment (some of which will receive more attention in Chapter 5), but the two that stand out are the role of the empowering (i.e. transformational) leader, and the result in the follower. That is, the leader “creates an environment” and the follower receives “self-worth.”

It is the leader’s responsibility to create an environment within which a follower can be transformed. Transformation is growth in the direction of a preferred future, or a vision. A leader’s first task, some argue, is to communicate a vision for the organization.<sup>35</sup> Vision is a clear image of a preferred future.<sup>36</sup> George Barna expands the definition of vision directly to the church, “Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to his chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances.”<sup>37</sup> The church, or any Christian ministry should have, according to Barna, a clear vision that motivates leaders who, in turn, communicate that vision and empower the followers to meaningfully contribute to its accomplishment. If leadership is relationship in the environment of empowerment, the vision must include a description of the environment in which people grow, develop, mature – that is, transform. Leadership that transforms followers invests in the followers, thereby increasing their “self-worth.” Leaders draw out the strengths inherent in the follower, employ and apply them to accomplishing the vision.

Unfortunately, Christian leaders have not always been able to accomplish the tasks of communicating a clear vision, and empowering a body of followers unified in their commitment to its accomplishment. Christian community is often characterized by

---

<sup>35</sup> Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 29ff.

<sup>36</sup> George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 28.

<sup>37</sup> Barna, *The Power of Vision*, 28.

power struggles, hidden agendas and division, rather than by unity and communal commitment to the vision. Christian unity is an important and God ordained goal (cf. Jn 17:20ff), but is often misinterpreted to mean uniformity or unanimity. The opposite of unity is divisiveness, and it is a threat to the unified church. Kathryn Tanner observes church leaders' reaction to the threat and describes two alternatives. "One possible response to ... a threat of divisiveness – a very common response in the history of Christianity – is to try to prevent disagreement and enforce a uniformity of conception by setting up a hierarchy of interpretive experts and consolidating their power to transmit a preferred sense."<sup>38</sup> If we apply the discussion of leadership and power to this option, the leader imposes – exerts and retains power – over the followers. The hierarchy declares orthodoxy and imposes sanctions for deviance.

Tanner's other suggestion, which came from her studies of Acts and the primitive church, does not involve exertion of power to limit individual interpretation and creative contribution. The alternative church "seeks to avoid divisiveness by encouraging Christian social practices to become a *genuine community of argument*, one marked by mutual hearing and criticism among those who disagree, by a common commitment to mutual correction."<sup>39</sup> This alternative suggests that each person possesses a voice and has an opportunity to discuss, even debate, his/her position. The 'vision' is the "common commitment to mutual correction." Everyone knows that there will be opportunity to correct and be corrected, and that the environment is one in which various voices are heard. Approaching the issues from an educational rather than a theological discipline,

---

<sup>38</sup> Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 123.

<sup>39</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 123.

Anita Farber-Robertson of the Alban Institute describes a similar community. She characterizes a community of inquiry as one that “*cherishes its critics*, those inside and those beyond [the community] because it understands that the prophetic voice and the word of God are often spoken by those we do not really want to hear.”<sup>40</sup> A community of argument or inquiry values each individual’s contribution. It, in other words, creates an environment that fosters followers’ (and leaders’) self-worth by encouraging them to contribute. The community is built on the strengths of each individual, strengths that may have lain dormant until drawn out in community.<sup>41</sup>

### **Love: the Motivation for Transformation**

The ‘glue’ that holds this community together is love. Love and power are rarely spoken (at least positively) in the same breath. Power, often equated with authoritarianism, is usually considered “the ethical antithesis of love, ... hubris, a wanton disregard for others, violence, and selfish exploitation – immoral means to immoral ends.”<sup>42</sup> Nyberg, in his discussion of power, explores the error inherent in the common notion that power is antithetical to love. For example, tyrants do not love their subjects. The root of the error, he suggests, is because “our culture has developed, following a biblical tradition, in separating the two as opposites.”<sup>43</sup> He may be accurate in observing that our culture has posited these two as opposites, and perhaps based upon a biblical tradition. He states, however, that power and love need not be antithetical, but when

---

<sup>40</sup> Anita Farber-Robertson, *Learning While Leading* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2000), 106.

<sup>41</sup> Community will be considered in depth in chapter 3.

<sup>42</sup> Nyberg, *Power*, 43.

<sup>43</sup> Nyberg, *Power*, 42.

balanced with each other produce transformational relationships.<sup>44</sup> I disagree with placing the blame in biblical texts, however. I show below that *if* the tradition is based on biblical principles, the tradition has diverged from the Bible and misunderstood its principles. In the Bible, love and power are not considered antithetical, but are often discussed together.

Power (defined as bringing order out of chaos) and love are characteristics of God and reside in him simultaneously. The power to create, to bring order out of the chaos of pre-creation (see Gen 1:1ff) and the power to love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:16) are God's. Jesus, our example of servant-leadership, lived his life characterized by love and service, yet held the power to change the world. He, as Wilkes points out, invested in, empowered and released his disciples to accomplish the world-changing vision.<sup>45</sup> Yet, he insisted the greatest commandment was to love both God and one's neighbour (Matt 22:37-40; cf John 13:34-35). Power need not corrupt when it is tempered with love. For leaders, then, to follow Jesus' example, they must love their followers. Through love, they will care for them, direct them,<sup>46</sup> correct them and transform them to be empowered. Through power, too, leaders will call followers to a vision that has come from God and ask, even sometimes demand, discipline to accomplish that vision.

The following chapters are built on a clear definition of leader and power. Leaders have influence over followers. Through influence they have power to shape their followers towards a preferred future – that is, towards a vision. That power must be

---

<sup>44</sup> Nyberg, *Power*, 42ff.

<sup>45</sup> Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 209-236.

<sup>46</sup> For an elegant discussion of "direction" as contrasted with "directions," see F.D. Coggan, "Religion and the Church" in *Authority in a Changing Society*, ed. Clifford O. Rhodes (London: Constable & Co., 1969), 28-40.

tempered with love, and demonstrated through service. As I stated at the opening of this chapter, the core of the leader/follower relationship is power. I referred to Lord Acton's aphorism about the corrupting potential of power, but left it unconsidered. I move now to a deeper examination of power as it shows up in direct leader/follower relationships within Scripture.

## Chapter 2

### Human Power under the Sovereignty of God

I presented a definition of leadership as the permission to exert power to transform a follower in a relationship of love and service. If taken purely at face value, Hebrews 13:17, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority,” suggests characteristics of leadership that differ from those established in chapter one. The verse implies a relationship between a leader and follower of authority and submission, not interdependence and service. Scripture contains both narratives and precepts that suggest that there is more subtlety surrounding the leader/follower relationship than a authority/submission reading of Hebrews 13:17 might suggest. Leadership is defined in scripture, I contend, as a relationship of interdependency and mutuality, not authority and submission.

In this chapter, I will examine of some events, teachings and examples from both the Old Testament and the New. I will consider King David’s encounter and sin with Bathsheba in the context of Israel’s theocracy. This examination will establish God as sovereign, and all human beings, kings and commoners subject to him. On that foundation, I will examine Jesus’ critique of the “Gentile” paradigm of leadership that was based upon inequality, and operated within a patron/client relationship. Jesus, we will see, equalizes the relationship by lifting the lowly and lowering the lofty. Then I will examine the real-life example of Tychicus, one of Paul’s followers, which illustrates interdependency and mutuality in a leader/follower relationship. I will conclude that a leadership structure that resembles a patron/client relationship is contrary to scripture for

two reasons: it is founded on inequality and it usurps God's sovereignty. In this light, I will reconsider Hebrews 13:7 and suggest a more subtle interpretation that does not stand in contrast with the rest of scripture.

### **The "Gentile" paradigm: Patron/Client**

To understand the arguments below, we must have some understanding of the patron/client relationship. One of the founding principles of ancient Near East politics and economics, of local social structures and even familial relationships is a pattern of relationship that classified every person as either a superior (i.e. patron) or a subject (i.e. client). The superior person had power over the subjugated; power to demand fidelity and servitude, power to demand tribute and material support. In fact, patrons had power over their clients' very lives. The subjugated had position only *vis à vis* the superior and had identity only in light of the superior. Language of master/slave, king/subject, lord/servant, and, I will suggest, leader/follower all reflects the relationship of superior and subject. Even though the primary metaphor within patron/client is economic, the pattern was socially pervasive.

The first characteristic of the patron/client relationship is that it fundamentally presupposes that all humanity is created unequal.<sup>47</sup> Those in power are qualitatively different and are supposed to be in power. Therefore those not in power are, in fact, inferior and subject to subjugation. The other characteristic is that it is reciprocal in nature;<sup>48</sup> the patron is obligated to provide for and protect the client, and the client is

---

<sup>47</sup> It has been suggested that the modern preoccupation and assumption of equality has kept social scientists from fully appreciating the prevalence of patron/client and honour/shame in both public and private relational arenas. See Nelson, *Leadership*, 30.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce J. Malina, *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels* (London: Routledge, 1996), 153.



obligated to provide service and protect the status of the patron. One's social standing is always in relationship – dependent – to the significant people in one's life. That is, as Nelson summarizes, in such a relationship "one [is] not 'free' to act autonomously"<sup>49</sup> but must be dependent upon those around one.

In the New Testament context, then, when Jesus used the phrase "kings of the Gentiles" (Lk 22:26) his hearers knew his referent was the patron/client structure. They were intimately familiar with, for example, the relationship between the Herods and Caesars. The patron, Caesar, demanded and received support, loyalty and homage from the client who, in this case was Herod. In return, Herod retained his title of King and was able to expand his domain. Not only did this pattern permeate the political scene, but the social and domestic as well. The elders were the patrons who ran the village, and the father ruled the family.<sup>50</sup>

The social currency of honour and its opposite, shame, grew out of the patron/client model. Honour was bestowed based on one's social standing in the community as it compared with others. The positions were clearly understood and enforced. Those who acted above their rank were shamed. On the other hand, if people behaved modestly, assuming less rank, others noticed and elevated them to their rightful rank – that is, they were honoured.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Halvor Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 135.

<sup>51</sup> Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 135.

### **God, the Sovereign King, and David, the king who takes**

Although these patterns of political and social behaviour were characteristic of ancient society, scripture tells a different story of God's economy. That economy is founded on God's sovereignty and is exemplified in God's creation. He created humankind to be equal partners and co-inhabitants in, and co-stewards of creation. This partnership was shattered when sin entered the world and humanity fell. After humanity fell, God covenanted with Abraham and his descendants to try to recreate a community based on God's economy. That covenant became the nation of Israel, whose earthly leaders, from the greatest to the least, were to be considered mediators of God's sovereign and supreme authority.<sup>52</sup> God's sovereignty was the founding principle of Israel's original civic structure. As the nation of Israel was establishing itself, its first rulers were the "Judges". These men and women refused the title and authority of king. For example, Gideon clearly resisted the call for him to rule in Judges 8:23, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you." The Judges attempted to 'turn the attention' of the nation from themselves to their sovereign, YHWH. In God's economy, then, there is one sovereign and one creation, humankind.

It is not that kingship was foreign to Israel; it was anticipated by early law-givers. In the Torah there is at least one passage that instructs the nation about how to choose a king. It anticipates that the nation will want to emulate their national neighbours, but stipulates, "be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses" (Dt 17:15). The Deuteronomy passage continues to prescribe limits to the king's possessions (vv. 16-17) and to make sure that the writings of the laws remain close at hand (vv. 18-

---

<sup>52</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 32.

19). Most striking, at least in comparison to neighbouring kings, is the stipulation “[the king must] not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law” (v. 20). In other words, the king is not to be in a class by himself. He possesses neither privilege nor immunity from the law.

Israel, as anticipated in the Torah, calls for an earthly sovereign; they want a king. Samuel warned them that earthly kings will be ‘takers’. He told them, “the king who will reign over you will ... take your sons ... your daughters ... the best of your fields” (1 Sam 8:11-18). Nonetheless, the nation responded, “No! Give us a king.” They wanted to be like every other nation around them. Finally, Samuel pleaded their case before God. God responded, “they have rejected me as their king... [but] listen to them and give them a king” (1 Sam 8:7, 20). Samuel delivered God’s decision, but reminded them that even when a king was selected the ultimate sovereign was God (1 Sam 12:12-15). In fact, he said that their insistence on having an earthly king was “an evil thing ... in the eyes of the LORD” (1 Sam 12:17). Israel received their monarchy, but it was conditional; it was a compromise between God’s sovereignty and earthly monarchs that they wanted to emulate (1 Sam 8:20).

The compromise produced a limited kingship for the Israelites. The first observable limitation, in comparison to the kingdoms surrounding the nation of Israel, was that since God appointed the king he was always subject to God (cf. Dt 17:15). The king was reminded of his place under God through the act of anointing. God, through his prophet, selected and anointed the king (and could de-select, as Saul found out). Scripture tells the stories, then, of Samuel anointing Saul (1 Sam 10:1ff) and David (1 Sam 16:1-13, specifically v. 13) and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet together

anointing Solomon (1 Kgs 1:38-39). The second noticeable difference between Hebrew and other kingships was the relative ease of access to the monarch. Gentile monarchs were usually unapproachable, and were often considered gods in their own right. Hebrew monarchs enjoyed no such deification or isolation<sup>53</sup> (cf. Dt 17:20). Israel's theocracy was an attempt to limit the power resident in a king and continually remind the nation of God's sovereignty.

The danger of power is that one tends to forget that power ultimately comes from God. The amnesic nature of power is illustrated in the story of David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah (2 Sam 11). David exerted power over the life of both Bathsheba and Uriah that rightly was God's to exert. David's sins – other than the obvious commands against adultery and murder – shed light on the 'power struggle' between the earthly king and the sovereign God.

David saw Bathsheba bathing and "sent messengers, [who] took her" (2 Sam 11:4, RSV).<sup>54</sup> David did precisely what Samuel warned them a king would do; he exerted power by taking. When Bathsheba sent a message telling David of her pregnancy, she revealed the direct consequence of David's taking. David attempted to cover up his sin by continuing to send and take. He sent messages to Joab and took Uriah's life. He acted out of desperation "in order to control and dominate."<sup>55</sup> David's feigned concern for the battle is clearly hypocritical (to the reader who knows the facts

---

<sup>53</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 35. Examples of the boldness with which subjects approached David are found in 2 Sam 12 (which will be discussed) and Joab's boldness in 2 Sam 19.

<sup>54</sup> Bill T. Arnold, *1&2 Samuel: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 527. The NIV, "then David sent messengers to get her" unfortunately softens the verb "to take" by rendering it "to get."

<sup>55</sup> Arnold, *1&2 Samuel*, 528.

and even to Joab as suggested in v. 25) and was used as a deceitful mechanism to cover sin.

David thought he got away with the cover-up, as the passage suggests “After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son” (v. 27a). It seems that he forgot that God was still sovereign, as the rest of the verse suggests, “But the thing David had done displeased the LORD” (v. 27b). At this point God stepped in and dealt with sin. The phrase (v. 27b) acts like a fulcrum to the story. Up to this point in the story, David sent and took and deceived and acted in his own power. God, not pleased with David’s sin, stepped in and started ‘sending’ messages of his own.<sup>56</sup> God sent Nathan to deliver *his* message. Nathan, only introduced as “the prophet” (2 Sam 7:2), had the unenviable task of exposing David’s sin to him. The king, as his dealings with Uriah illustrated, could be self serving to the point of murder. So Nathan used a carefully designed “judicial parable” for the king, which rehearsed a story of a character violating one of God’s laws. This type of parable was designed for the hearer to pass judgement.<sup>57</sup> Nathan’s parable spoke directly to the former shepherd’s heart (see 2 Sam 12:1-4). David listened to the story and then reacted passionately and decisively to the obvious injustice. He pronounced the judgement, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!” (2 Sam 12:5). Nathan, on the strength of David’s declaration, uttered the famous and indicting words “You are the man!” (2 Sam 12:7).

---

<sup>56</sup> Arnold, *1&2 Samuel*, 530-531.

<sup>57</sup> A. A. Anderson, *Second Samuel* Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 160.

The appeal of this story, as Brueggemann states, is that it reveals “more than we want to know about David and more than we can bear to understand about ourselves.”<sup>58</sup> The passage’s use of “send” and “take” illustrated David’s abuse of power that lay at the root of his sin. Instead of serving his country, his God and his men by leading them into battle, he took one of their wives, which, in Brueggeman’s words showed that “he abuse[d] instead of serving.”<sup>59</sup> We do not want to know that David, who is so fondly remembered as a “man after God’s own heart,” (1 Sam 13:14) could abuse his power so destructively and behave so selfishly. The abusive – the ‘taking’ – use of power, as David found out, destroys. What this says about ourselves is that we too may be susceptible to similar abuses. We may rigorously obey the Ten Commandments, but if we abuse people – if we “send” in order to “take” – we displease the Lord.<sup>60</sup> The pericope clearly illustrated the traps of power. No king, not even David, should forget that his power is not his own, but his power is as a co-regent with God.<sup>61</sup> David assumed the role of the patron; the one to whom honour and fidelity is owed. He forgot that God was still the sovereign. Lord Acton’s aphorism, “power corrupts” should not leave the minds of leaders. Or, more eloquent is Kant’s statement, “Out of timber so crooked as that from which [humanity] is made nothing entirely straight can be carved.”<sup>62</sup> A patron/client model of kinship based on human inequality and in place solely for the benefit of the king is not part of God’s economy. David heard the message and repented (cf. Ps 51).

---

<sup>58</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *First and Second Samuel* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 272.

<sup>59</sup> Brueggeman, *Samuel*, 272.

<sup>60</sup> Brueggeman, *Samuel*, 272.

<sup>61</sup> Arnold, *1&2 Samuel*, 540.

<sup>62</sup> As quoted in Arnold, *1&2 Samuel*, 550.

## The King as Shepherd

Subsequent kings, however, did not repent. Just as David was, these kings were responsible to YHWH for their charges – the nation of Israel – but they failed in their task. God sent prophets to challenge these kings, who often used the thinly veiled metaphor ‘shepherd’ to create a familiar and analogous image of a care giving relationship. The term ‘shepherd’ was a common metaphor for king throughout the ancient Near East.<sup>63</sup> When prophets cast rebuke on ‘shepherds’, everyone knew to whom they were referring. Kings were shepherds, and for the nation of Israel, as Alan writes, “employees of the divine shepherd and responsible to him.”<sup>64</sup> Jeremiah used the metaphor of shepherd king in 23:1, “ ‘Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!’ declares the LORD.” Ezekiel, a slightly later contemporary expanded Jeremiah’s use of the metaphor.<sup>65</sup> His is a detailed oracle, enumerating the kings’ shortcomings. Instead of feeding the flock, they fed on the flock (Ezek 34:3). They did not seek the lost or heal the sick. That is, they did not care about the people as long as their own needs were met. They were harsh and brutal (v. 4). This was contrary to God’s plan as Alexander pointed out, “God makes it clear that a leader has a primary responsibility to care for those he leads, even at the sacrifice of his own desires.”<sup>66</sup> Because of the lack of responsible, caring and nurturing leadership, the flock scattered. These leaders were “sleek and strong” (because they fed from the best of the

---

<sup>63</sup> Leslie C. Alan, *Ezekiel 20-48*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 160.

<sup>64</sup> Alan, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 161.

<sup>65</sup> Alan, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 160-162.

<sup>66</sup> Ralph H. Alexander, “Ezekiel” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 6*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 911-912.

flock), (v. 3), and God will remove them from their positions (v. 16c) and put a leader in place (v.23) who will lead with justice (v. 16) and peace (v.25).

As illustrated by the David and Bathsheba pericope and the prophets' description of shepherds as leaders, the Old Testament established a paradigm for leadership. The king was to be subject to God, the sovereign – the only “patron.”<sup>67</sup> These Old Testament concepts provide the keys to interpretation of New Testament teaching, when Jesus used, for example, shepherd images. He reminded his hearers of Ezekiel 34 when he told the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:5-7). Further, he called himself the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:14), recalling Ezekiel 34:10ff in which God declared he will search for and find his sheep and then put a leader (vv. 23ff) in place who will lead with justice and peace.

### **Jesus: Not so with you!**

The New Testament removed the categories of kingship and subject, of patron and client and even those categories that separated the people of God (Israel) from the rest of the world. Peter discovered that there were no longer clean or unclean animals (see Acts 10:9-23), and, by implication, no longer distinctions between Jew (clean) and Gentile (unclean). And Paul declared there is no longer “Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). In fact Paul instructed his readers to realign their attitudes to that of Jesus (Phil 2:5), to become like Jesus (Rom 8:29) and base their acceptance of each other on Jesus' example – a high standard to accomplish.

Accept (receive ye, KJV; welcome, RSV) one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the

---

<sup>67</sup> Malina, *Social World of Jesus*, 143-149.



Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy... (Rom 15:7-9a, NIV).

Jesus is the standard by which we judge our attitudes and levels of acceptance of others – especially those around us with whom we have little affinity.

In very practical terms, Jesus exemplified Paul's admonition to accept most clearly at mealtimes – that is, through hospitality. Before examining it as a paradigm that realigns the patron/client relationship, hospitality needs to be defined. Parker Palmer defines and attempts to re-establish hospitality as a primary (and neglected) Christian ministry. It is the attitude that best declares one's acceptance of another. By inviting strangers to sit at our table, we are accepting and declaring them equal. He writes:

Hospitality means letting the stranger remain a stranger while offering acceptance nonetheless. ... It means meeting the stranger's needs while allowing him or her simply to be, without attempting to make the stranger over into a modified version of ourselves.<sup>68</sup>

A clear example of this “letting the stranger remain a stranger while offering acceptance” can be found in the story of Jesus at a dinner in the house of a Pharisee (Lk 7:36ff). While reclining at the table, a woman of ‘questionable moral reputation’ anointed Jesus' feet with her tears and oil, then wiped them with her hair. The Pharisee was shocked (as many of us would be if a prostitute, in her ‘working clothes’ joined First Baptist's pot-luck supper). Jesus asked Simon, the Pharisee, “Do you see this woman?” (Lk 7:44). The implication was that Simon saw a sinful woman (v. 39). Perhaps he saw her costume, or the fact that her hair was loose, or the fact that she was not veiled. Jesus

---

<sup>68</sup> Parker J. Palmer, *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 68.

saw a human being – a broken, tearful and repentant human being. Jesus accepted her humanity and spoke life and forgiveness into her broken spirit.

Jesus challenged inequality at another mealtime setting in Luke. He stepped into a patron/client relationship when he accepted an invitation to dine with a Pharisee (14:1ff). The Pharisee was both host and patron and the invited people (including Jesus) were the clients. The dinner guests reclined on couches, each leaning on his left elbow. They sat according to status, the most important nearest the head of the table. It was apparently common for a person to be displaced – that is, shamed – if a latecomer arrived who had more social status<sup>69</sup>.

Luke's comment, "he [Jesus] was being carefully watched" (v.1) suggests the social custom of seeking honour or opportunity to shame. Jesus observed the people choosing their places at the table. Jesus watched an amount of jostling and competing amongst the guests for the honoured couches. After his observations, he told the parable of the Wedding Banquet (Lk 14:7-11). The parable challenged the guests' recent behaviour. This competition for the best seats was a breach of their own customs.<sup>70</sup> At a wedding, the seats of honour were not to be *taken* but were *given* by the host of the wedding.<sup>71</sup> Not only a breach of custom, the competition for the most honoured position was also contrary to scripture. The Pharisee and his guests would have known Proverbs 25:6-7, which offered the instruction:

Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, 'Come up here,' than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman.

---

<sup>69</sup>Walter L. Liefeld, "Gospel of Luke" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 8*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 976.

<sup>70</sup>Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 135.

<sup>71</sup>Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 390.

Jesus did not suggest something new – to wait for an invitation for the best seats – but reminded them what scripture taught: guests should have waited to be seated.

The jostling for the most honoured position at the table creates a situation of competition that amplifies status-seeking behaviour. Jesus taught, however, that it is up to the host to welcome people to places of honour, as Proverbs instructs. He pushes the custom further when he accepts the woman – the stranger – and receives her into his presence without demanding her to change, or demeaning her by sending her to an inferior place.

Luke suggested radical social re-alignment. In the above story, for example, Jesus twice silenced the Pharisees (14:3,6), he shamed honour-seeking dinner guests (v.9), and warned that those who attempt to exalt themselves will be humbled (v.11). Luke suggested that social interaction based on reciprocity (v. 12) and intended to meet the needs of the social elite was to be replaced with a redistribution of honour that met the needs of the disenfranchised. In Moxnes' words, "In this new system of social relations, the one who humbles himself is awarded honor (v. 11), the impure are healed and the poor are invited to the feast and thereby included in the community."<sup>72</sup>

To Jesus, the Kingdom of God is a feast that welcomes the lowly; it is a community of inclusion and a community of service. His disciples heard this teaching on a number of occasions: become like a little child (Lk 18:15ff), the "first shall be last" (e.g. Mk 10:35) and in the two mealtimes discussed above. Yet still they did not get the point. During Jesus' last night with them, they argued about who would be greatest in the

---

<sup>72</sup> Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 136-137.

kingdom. The argument erupted immediately after Jesus contrasted “gentile” authority structure with “Kingdom” structures and told the disciples plainly, “you are not to be like that” (Lk 22:39). One older commentator suggests that this argument (Lk 22:24ff) was the immediate cause for Jesus washing the disciples’ feet (Jn 13).<sup>73</sup> Whether or not the Lukan passage is related to the foot-washing pericope, Jesus exemplified, in an unforgettable moment, the “you are not to be like that” attitude. He, the master and teacher, stooped to wash the feet of the servant and student. The kingdom of God is characterized by a voluntary ‘reversal’ of roles which, as Nelson points out, “is not only a way of self-sacrifice, but also away *through* self-sacrifice to present and future reward.”<sup>74</sup> The way into the kingdom of God is through and by acceptance, hospitality and service.

### **Tychicus: Paul’s empowered follower**

It is clear, then, that scripture teaches, through both illustrative and didactic means, that God’s economy is to be fundamentally different than humankind’s, as Jesus’ words declared, “you are not to be like that.” The Hebrew theocracy, and David’s problematic misuse of power, the teaching and example of Jesus all reveal something other than human, unequal patron/client relationship. God is sovereign, the social roles associated with honour and shame are to be reversed, and inequality is to be eradicated. What, one might ask, does this really look like in the realm of a ministry follower and a ministry leader? An answer can be observed in the ministry of Paul as he interacted with some of his entourage. From Paul’s short description of Tychicus, a letter carrier, we can learn a great deal about the ministry relationship.

---

<sup>73</sup> A.B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1877), 333.

Tychicus, a little-known person in Paul's circle of followers, exemplifies a follower, first of Christ, then of the strong leader, Paul. His followership is not, however, characterized by 'client' status, but by partnership: he is Paul's "fellow servant" (Col 4:7). Paul's phrase clearly elevates Tychicus' position to the equality of a partner. In the Greek "fellow servant" is one word – slave – with a prefix – fellow. The word unifies and binds the two concepts and, in fact, the two people together. There is no mistaking the fondness and comradeship Paul expressed for his friend and partner.<sup>75</sup> Further to this companionship, Paul describes Tychicus using four adjectives (Col 4:7-8) that describe a relationship that is qualitatively different from a patron/client relationship: beloved brother, faithful minister, trusted communicator and an encourager.

First, Paul calls him "beloved brother"<sup>76</sup> that suggests they shared *koininia*<sup>77</sup> (loving Christian fellowship) as members of the body of Christ (even though Paul does not use the word, "*koininia*" in the text). Their fellowship encouraged each other, and they partnered together in the greater cause of the community of Christ. Second, he is a "faithful minister." Paul, as suggested in these verses, entrusted Tychicus with the delivery of the letters to the Colossians and to Philemon. These were important letters and their delivery was essential (mostly to Onesimus, the run-away slave from Philemon's household.) Paul trusted Tychicus, and Tychicus served faithfully. Third, Tychicus is a trusted communicator. It is important for Paul to relate his circumstances to his friends in Colossae, so he sends Tychicus to accurately "tell you everything that is

---

<sup>74</sup> Nelson, *Leadership*, 91. The above quotation appears after an enlightening chapter of "reversal motifs" in the New Testament, pp. 75-91.

<sup>75</sup> Curtis Vaughan, "Colossians" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol 1*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 223.

<sup>76</sup> The NIV renders the Greek original, "dear brother" but "beloved" is the accurate rendering.

<sup>77</sup> For a full definition of *koinonia*, see Colin Brown, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 642ff.

happening here” (v. 9). Fourth, Tychicus is an encourager. He delivers news and a letter, but, more than that, he delivers encouragement (v. 8).<sup>78</sup>

These few words of scripture convey a relationship, not of patron/client or even of leader/follower but of fellow partners. Paul, it is clear, did not simply send a person with a letter, but shared his ministry of encouragement with Tychicus. They worked together and shared a relationship that fits Wright’s description of the leader/follower relationship, “leaders who are followers, followers who are leaders, servants who lead, and leaders who serve. Leadership is a relationship of mutual interdependency.”<sup>79</sup>

### **Hebrews’ subtle instruction**

With the above considerations in mind, we return to Hebrews 13:17 and ask how does it fit into the description of leader/follower based on equality and interdependence? The text after all, seems clear, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as [those] who must give an account.” Before answering the interpretive question, we must note that the NIV does not render the original Greek very accurately for two reasons. First, there is no Greek word to correspond to the NIV’s words “their authority.” The RSV’s translation is more accurate to the original language, “Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls...” The submission is to a care-full leader, not to a position of authority. Second, the NIV inserts a period after “their authority” which removes the preposition “for” from the translation. The reason – that is, the “for” – of obedience is the next phrase, “they are

---

<sup>78</sup> Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership* (Carlisle UK: Paternoster Press, 2000), 149-151.

<sup>79</sup> Wright, *Relational Leadership*, 150.

keeping watch...”<sup>80</sup> This makes a subtle difference in the text. In the NIV the motivation for followers is positional: the leader’s authority. This sounds a lot like a patron/client relationship. In the Greek, as rendered by the RSV, the motivation for followers is the leaders’ tireless care for their charges.<sup>81</sup>

With a more accurate translation in mind, there are two contextual considerations that challenge the face value “authority and submission” interpretation. Neither removes the foundational truth of the verse that followers of Christ should have an obedient and submissive attitude. The first consideration is that the verse’s context addresses all believers equally and does not generally differentiate ‘leader’ from ‘follower.’ The chapter opens with “Keep on loving each other” (v.1) and “Do not forget to entertain strangers”(v.2). Love and hospitality are the mature believer’s foundational attitudes. The writer’s exhortation is to each believer on an equal basis. There are times when each believer is in a leader role and a follower role, yet the criteria of love and hospitality always apply. Through love and hospitality we are to practice submission one to another (cf. Eph 5:21).

The writer to Hebrews is mindful that the burden of leadership is significant. So he reminds leaders of their own mentors, “Remember your leaders ... Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (v. 7). These remembered leaders are likely already dead, probably martyred, as suggested by “outcome of their way of life.”<sup>82</sup> These leaders gave all for their followers (i.e. those that the writer is addressing). So, the

---

<sup>80</sup> Leon Morris, “Hebrews” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol 12* ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 152.

<sup>81</sup> “Keep watch over you” has the connotation of a shepherd staying up at night watching over his sheep. Morris, “Hebrews,” 152.

<sup>82</sup> Morris, “Hebrews,” 152-153.

second contextual consideration focuses upon the task and attitude of leaders. Leaders are to be dedicated to their followers, with their followers' best (i.e. spiritual)<sup>83</sup> interests in mind. If this is the case, a follower will be empowered and thrive following the leader's leading. The exhortation in verse 7 is to become like them in their faith, to become leaders who, in turn, influence others to be leaders and so on.

F.F. Bruce suggests a *Sitz im Leben* (a setting in life) for verse 17. During the early years of the church, charismatic itinerant preachers visited churches and attracted followers. After they moved on to their next speaking engagement, the real and daily task of 'shepherding' was up to those left behind – to the leaders who dedicated their lives to that community. These leaders were to work tirelessly for their followers' wellbeing, and would be called into account for the quality of their followers.<sup>84</sup> Effective leaders, or leaders who actually have the transformation of their followers in mind, are those who commit themselves to the community that they share with those they are called to lead. This dedication, as the context of Hebrews 13 suggests, is the challenge God presents to leaders, and, perhaps, is the basis for the accountability Gods holds them to. God has a clear idea, then, of the leader and follower relationship.

We can conclude that from the beginning God established an economy in which He was sovereign and human beings were to align themselves only with him. Setting up an earthly king was an evil in his eyes. The position of kingship gave David the opportunity to "take" Bathsheba and Uriah. God judged his actions, and the consequences were felt for generations. Patron/client relationships did not end, however, and so both Jesus and his apostles battled the attitude that elevated some people and at the

---

<sup>83</sup> Morris, "Hebrews," 153.

<sup>84</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 408.



expense of others. They taught and practiced social-status reversal and exhorted Christians to “accept each other just as Christ accepted you.” Paul, as seen in his description of Tychicus, invested in, trusted and considered Tychicus a faithful partner in ministry. He was a follower of Paul, yet not described or considered a ‘client’ to Paul’s ‘patronage’. Leaders do not subjugate their followers, as patrons did their clients, but empower them through an interdependent relationship. The sum total of interdependent relationships is community, the ideal environment for empowerment.

## Chapter 3

### Community: The Environment for Empowerment

Christian community is the bridge that spans ancient descriptions of Christianity on one side and twenty-first century postmodernism on the other. I have written this thesis for Christian leaders living in and desiring to engage contemporary culture. Our culture is often labeled ‘postmodern.’ That label is like the title of a book; it identifies the volume and perhaps provides hints as to the content, but does not do justice to the story. *Lord of the Rings* identifies a trilogy of books and, yes, they are about lords and rings, but the title reveals virtually nothing about the complexity of the content, just as the label ‘postmodern’ reveals very little about the complexity of our contemporary culture. I will attempt to unpack the concept ‘postmodern’ in chapter four. This chapter acts like a bridge joining literary, definitional (chapter 1) and biblical (chapter 2) descriptions of leadership and followership (discussed around the consideration of power structures) with the broader cultural context within which leaders and followers live and work. Leaders’ first responsibility is to foster interdependent relationships with their followers. These leaders influence a number of people who, in turn, lead and impact their own followers. This creates a network of interdependent relationships that builds authentic community. I will show that the development of community is both the leaders’ visionary goal and the church’s unique offering to the larger, postmodern culture.

### **Community starts with individual relationships**

I stated in chapter one that a servant-leader's focus is the transformation and empowerment of the follower. This language is particular and individual: at the core transformational leadership is a relationship between a leader and a follower. Community starts with two individuals working in interdependence. Gilbert Bilezikian begins his discussion of Christian community right back at the beginning – in the Garden of Eden as described in Genesis. He retells the story of Adam and Eve as God created them before the fall. God created male and female as the prototype of unity; in biblical language, one flesh (Gen 2:22-24). The implication is that God designed humanity to live in oneness. The fall separated the oneness and introduced competition, shame and disunity. In an attempt to thwart God's plan for unity, Satan put domination or "ruler/subject hierarchy" in its place.<sup>85</sup> The return to "oneness" is the goal of Christian leaders as they relate to their followers. Or, as Jesus prayed just before his death, "that they may be one as we are one" (Jn 17:11, 22).

In chapter one I suggested that empowerment is the result of an environment that values individuals and their contributions. This chapter is concerned with the way that environment is created. It does not just happen, nor does it happen on a whole church level, but is built, I will show below, on individual relationships. Like the ever-widening ripples caused by a small pebble dropped into a calm lake, leaders who invest into the lives of individual followers and teach them to invest into others multiply healthy, interdependent relationships. My discussion in this chapter, then, starts with examining a healthy interdependent relationship, then examining the resultant community.

---

<sup>85</sup> Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as a Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 45.

### Leaders: Agents for change

We can observe parallel thoughts between Paul and twenty-first century leadership writers. Both suggest transformation as a goal of leadership. Paul instructs Christians to transform our minds (Rom 12:2) which is parallel to contemporary leadership paradigm of “transformational leadership.” Leaders are the change agents for followers – they help followers be transformed. When I read Paul’s exhortation in Romans I think of education. Paul focuses the transformation to the mind, and states that higher thinking<sup>86</sup> produces transformation. The word, in the original language, is the same word that the Matthew used to describe Jesus’ change on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17:2). The word means “to change into another form or image”<sup>87</sup> and suggests a metamorphosis. This change of image starts with the renewal of the mind and is to be “a continuing process of transformation.”<sup>88</sup> The metaphor of metamorphosis or, in Matthean language “transfiguration” is a total change, not just a cognitive change. Paul agrees and begins the passage with “offer your bodies as living sacrifices” (Rom 12:1). So my first reaction that Paul is talking about education is accurate, but education must be defined as more than curriculum and information.

Education is often considered a purely cognitive process. In an attempt to ‘educate’ Christians, church communities usually establish “Sunday School.” These programs help Christians learn the facts of the faith, which is an admirable and defensible goal. The programs expand and become institutes or discipleship programs that delineate

---

<sup>86</sup> Colin Brown, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 617.

<sup>87</sup> Brown, *New International Dictionary*, Vol 3, 861.

<sup>88</sup> Brown, *New International Dictionary*, Vol.3, 864.

and inculcate discipleship facts.<sup>89</sup> The word transformation suggests, however, something far deeper than factual inculcation or program-based instruction. John Westerhoff, a religious education theorist, suggested a move away from program-based and institutional focused education – what he called “schooling-instructional paradigm” – to more communal and cultural environment for learning – what he called “community of faith-enculturation paradigm.”<sup>90</sup> “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” does mean education, but does not necessarily mean a curriculum complete with syllabi and examinations.

Paul’s description is holistic; a person does not just change his/her mind, but is a whole new creation (2 Cor 5:17). The emergence of this new creation provides the foundation for a transformational relationship between a leader and a follower. Paul’s goal of transformation or his description of what a transformed person might look like follows the exhortation in Romans 12:1-2. He characterizes a transformed person as one who has a “sober” (Rom 12:3) opinion of him/herself and has a significant place within the community of faith (vv. 4-8). With Paul’s image in our minds, we can focus on what an interdependent relationship might look like in a contemporary setting.

### **Education: a Paradigm for Transformation**

Religious educator Timothy Lines views the process of what he calls religious education – or transformational relationships – as a unique phenomenon. Religion is bigger than the process of educating a person, just as education is bigger than religious

---

<sup>89</sup> For a cynical exploration of common ‘discipleship programs’ see John Eldredge, *Waking the Dead* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 96.

<sup>90</sup> Taken from Timothy A. Lines, *Functional Images of the Religious Educator* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1992), 59.

indoctrination. But, when the two come together as “religious education,” Lines suggests that a new and unique set of characteristics emerge.<sup>91</sup> One of the unique characteristics is the other-focused nature of religious education.<sup>92</sup> This aligns with our discussion of leadership as having the purposeful goal of serving, transforming and empowering the follower. It is this parallel that allows us to apply Lines’ educational theories to our discussion about leadership.

To make his point clear, Lines uses a number of metaphors to describe the process of “enculturation” education. After he describes the metaphor, explaining the points of comparison, he heightens the relational impact by describing the danger inherent in the metaphor or, what he calls the “shadow role.”<sup>93</sup> Lines likens education to the maturation of a human being, and so begins with the metaphor of educator (or leader) as parent. A parent’s primary role is to provide the conditions and resources for healthy development.<sup>94</sup> While much of what a parent does is direct instruction (e.g., “Wash your hands before eating”), much more is environmental (e.g. providing a clean home within which “wash your hands” makes sense). Not only are parents providers, they act as protectors; parents protect their children from harm. There is a similar charge to church leaders. Peter’s letters direct a church leader to protect as a shepherd who cares for the sheep (1 Pet 5:1-4) against false teachers (2 Pet 2). Through provision and protection, an educator creates an environment safe for the learner to explore and develop.

---

<sup>91</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 14-21. He continually sharpens the focus of religious education from the general religious, to a specific “faith tradition” to a more specific “theological education” within that faith tradition. His is a focus well worth consideration, but somewhat peripheral to this essay.

<sup>92</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 43.

<sup>93</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 43. I am not stretching Lines’ definition of ‘shadow role’ to fit my attempt to define a healthy leadership as service of a follower. Lines explicitly states that shadow roles “result [in] taking potential in the directions of self-service and selfishness of the religious educator, rather than using the potential for *the good of the learner*” (Emphasis added). Lines, *Functional Images*, 43.

<sup>94</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 55.

A parent also acts as a model for behaviour. In other words, a learner copies the behaviour of a model in implicit ways, just as the learner learns material explicitly through curriculum.<sup>95</sup> I had initially considered Paul's instruction to the Corinthian Christians somewhat arrogant. He tells them "imitate me" (1 Cor 14:16). It is in precisely the context of a parent metaphor that he states this. In verses 14-16 he calls them his "dear children" and himself their "father." He considers himself their father and, just as a child imitates his/her parents, a Christian follower is to imitate his/her leader. I have not yet satisfied my charge of arrogance against this idea. Paul, however, puts the imitation into a proper context later in his writings, "Be imitators of God" (Eph 5:6) and "You became imitators of us and of the Lord" (1 Thes 1:6). The progression is clear: leaders imitate God, and followers imitate the leaders (and, ultimately God).

The metaphor of Christian leader as parent becomes more relevant when Lines points out that a child forms his or her first impressions about who God is through parental teaching and example. The parent is, then, the child's first theological teacher.<sup>96</sup> The parallel is direct and striking: the Christian leader has a significant role as theological teacher for the follower.

A parent's job is to raise children to maturity. Lines discusses maturity as the goal of education.<sup>97</sup> So, too, does Paul view maturity as the goal (Eph 4:13). A leader cannot instill, or give maturity to the follower. It is something that the follower must attain within the context of the learning relationship. The learner, or follower, must pursue maturity, but this does not remove any responsibility from the leader. Both the

---

<sup>95</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 60.

<sup>96</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 61.

<sup>97</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 64ff.

leader and follower share a mutual responsibility for follower's maturity. The follower must, in Paul's words, "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). And the leader's role is to do "everything conceivable to facilitate and to contribute to the continual development of maturity in his or her charges."<sup>98</sup> Maturity is not something that a leader gives a follower, but, as seen above, a leader provides a nurturing environment which fosters increased interdependence and individuality. Within that environment the mature follower gains the "ability to accept and incorporate change while retaining some basic and fundamental identity and personality. Each individual demonstrates how and to what degree this is done uniquely in his or her own life."<sup>99</sup> Part of the change process, as Plato suggested, is the perplexity that one experiences between the old way of viewing and doing things and the new way.<sup>100</sup> And, therefore, part of maturity is accepting "the confusing nowhere in-betweenness"<sup>101</sup> between the old situation and the new one. The definition of a transformed follower is an individual interdependent with the leader, confident with his or her personal individuality (cf. Rom 12:3) and comfortable with change. This sounds very much like Gordon Aeschlieman's description of a good church leader:

Leaders who genuinely care about you will *enlarge* your world, increase your exposure to others' views, invite your criticisms of their own ways, lessen their input to your worldview and discipleship process (while encouraging you to be influenced by others) – and will in fact *learn* from you. They will help your world become less black and white and more ambiguous, they will inspire you to risk where you've never been before, and when you return you will lead them down paths that are new to their Christian experience.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 65.

<sup>99</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 66.

<sup>100</sup> See Plato, *The Republic of Plato* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 227ff.

<sup>101</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 66.

<sup>102</sup> Gordon Aeschlieman, *Cages of Pain* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1991), 171.



The above quotation recalls business researcher and writer, Jim Collins' description of a good student, "The best students are those who never quite believe their professors."<sup>103</sup> In other words, the goal of transformational leadership is a follower who can think for and by him/her self, and this independence does not threaten the leader's position. Or, in Paul's words, each individual is to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13).

To show the parallel between parenting and education (or leadership) more clearly, Lines describes the shadow side of a healthy parent role, an abusive parent. This is an extreme and dramatic metaphor perhaps, but child abuse is rampant in contemporary society. There are many forms of actual child abuse, physical, sexual, and emotional, to name a few. Social scientists suggest that the non-physical forms may be the most devastating to a child and may have the deepest and most severe long-term effects. As Lines states, quoting Alice Miller, "The greatest cruelty that can be inflicted on children is to refuse to let them express their anger and suffering except at the risk of losing their parents' love and affection."<sup>104</sup> Inflicting pain on a child is repulsive, but the removal of the safety and security of a child's individuality compounds the pain, and creates lifelong emotional, relational and psychological difficulties.

The behavioral patterns that are observed in child abuse situations show up in other relational circumstances. Contemporary analysts are beginning to observe and describe abuse even within the community of faith. They notice behavioral patterns that are similar to child abuse with consequences that are also parallel. Just as a parent inflicts emotional damage on a child by forcing repression of honest expression of

---

<sup>103</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 16.

<sup>104</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 77.

opinion and feelings, so, too, the community of faith can inhibit growth and maturity by stifling expression. David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen have studied and identified characteristics of what they call abusive churches. One of the descriptions of an abusive church is analogous to a child being forced to repress his/her true feelings out of fear of the parent's reaction. Just as a child may be described as a problem, often within a church setting, when a parishioner identifies a problem, the leadership, instead of dealing with the issue raised, labels the parishioner as *the problem*.<sup>105</sup>

A church abuses when it enforces the restriction of expression. In their words: "The most powerful of all unspoken rules in the abusive system is ...the 'can't-talk' rule. ... If you speak about the problem out loud, *you are the problem*. In some way you must be silenced or eliminated."<sup>106</sup> The result is directly opposed to the goal of maturity; not only is one not invited to change, any discussion of change is conceived as a challenge to authority. The person who acts and thinks independently becomes a problem, not a growing individual exercising maturity. In their words, referring to a specific case of a woman who was shamed into not speaking her opinion in her church setting, "The good news had become the bad news; the message of life had been distorted until it nearly crushed out her inner life."<sup>107</sup>

Instead of fostering an "inner life," abusive leaders crush individuality and, as we saw in Tanner's suggestion in chapter one, a call for conformity. As a metaphor, then, a 'good' parent creates an environment within which a child can grow and mature as an interdependent human being. The church leader, too, must create an environment that

---

<sup>105</sup> David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen, *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1991), 171-172.

<sup>106</sup> Johnson and VanVonderen, *Subtle Power*, 68.

<sup>107</sup> Johnson and VanVonderen, *Subtle Power*, 12.

fosters growth in the individual; an environment that sometimes means the follower is allowed to challenge the leader.

As a child matures he/she encounters a number of educators, mentors and role models other than his/her parents who enable the child to grow. The child might have coaches in school sports who impact his/her life. Further, the child will be influenced by the stories told in books and movies and other forms of media. Lines uses these other life situations to help his readers understand the role and effectiveness of religious educators. For example the religious educator serves as a coach.<sup>108</sup> The athletic coach designs training exercises and regimens for peak performance of an athlete. It is the coach's job to bring the best out of the athlete. The athlete is guided through exercises that strengthen his or her muscles and stamina. The coach designs training routines, skill development, lifestyle disciplines and mental exercises all to enable the athlete to perform in competition. The athlete progressively tests his/her skills in actual competitions, not just endless training exercises. Unless, of course, the coach is a procrastinator, the shadow side of effective coaching. There may be many reasons, but usually the coach considers the athlete not ready for competition. This, too, has at least one parallel in church life. In my own experience, I remember when I was an elder in our church how often I described a person as "not ready" for a particular ministry, thereby limiting the growth of the person.

Further to an educator analogous to a parent, with the shadow side being an abuser, and a coach with its shadow being a procrastinator, Lines suggests the educator can also be considered a storyteller. The shadow side of a storyteller, I consider below, is

---

<sup>108</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 98.

a dogmatist. (As we will see in chapter four, ‘postmodern’ people are very interested in ‘story’, and much less interested in dogmas or facts.) A story is “a narrative of true or imaginary events which form a vitally related whole, so presented as to make its appeal chiefly to the emotions rather than to the intellect.”<sup>109</sup> We shape our views of the world with stories from history, from individuals, from our parents and even from ourselves. The myths of the past, whether based on verifiable facts or not create our inner meanings. The nation of Israel was told not to forget the story of their slavery and the Exodus (e.g. Ex 12:25-27) and Christians are told to remember the story of Christ’s death and resurrection (1Cor 11:23-32). Through stories, through the retelling of a familiar plot, individuals see themselves and are able to create meaning.

The meaning – the power – of the story is the story itself, not its facts. For example the rags to riches saga is retold with various characters and various settings without losing its inspirational power. The innocent ‘true love’ saga is retold over and over. The original true love saga is the story of Eden. Within that narrative there is unity and community, love and innocence, shamelessness and freedom. Bilezikian, as I referenced above, points to the Eden story as the prototype community – intimate communion between God and humankind, and between male and female. The problem with the Eden story is that so often preachers and teachers spend too much time on the ‘facts’ of the case; too much time on locating the garden amongst Middle-Eastern rivers; too much time ‘proving’ they were actual people. The message of the story – the point and the power – is lost to these dogmatists. Lines describes the shadow role of a storyteller as that of a dogmatist. A story that is to point people to truth, or to elicit an emotion from the hearer, is mined for dogmatic facts. Dogmatists, in effect,

---

<sup>109</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 227.

have grasped the sacred stories by the neck, mistakenly thinking they can extract the truth from them. In reality they are squeezing not only the truth but the very breath of life from the stories, consequently depriving their hearers of the desperately needed stories that could help them all to know how and why to live.<sup>110</sup>

As we will consider in more depth in chapter four, people today need to be inspired and moved, not indoctrinated. The Eden story should inspire hope for community and a longing for intimacy, not inspire an argument over its location in time and space. Leaders need to be storytellers, not dogmatists. They need to know and share their stories. Further, they need to be able to hear the stories of their followers, thereby truly getting to know them.

Leaders, then, invest in their followers' lives as a parent would invest in a child or as a coach would invest in an athlete. The leader's attention is on the best interest and growth (i.e. transformation) of the follower. Through the sharing of stories, shared openly and emotionally, not for dogmatic analysis, but for personal enlightenment, leaders truly know their followers. Within the culture of investment and community, followers move towards maturity. Mature followers are confident individuals who understand the story of their lives, in the context of the story of their cultural milieu. They are transformed from children to adults, ready to face the inevitable changes that maturity brings and ready to influence people around them. Finally, good leaders applaud mature followers and say, not, "Look at what I did!" but "Look at her go!"<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Lines, *Functional Images*, 251.

<sup>111</sup> Taken from the video John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You* (Nashville: NelsonWord Multimedia Group, 1998).

### **Community: the Environment for Transformation**

Community is the collection of individuals, living together and learning together. Bilezikian, as mentioned above, begins his discussion of community with Adam and Eve, the original human community. When Satan tempted humanity away from intimacy with God, not only was that relationship severed, but also the relationship between human individuals was forever changed. Instead of living together without shame, human beings discovered power and developed ruler/subject relationships. Much of the rest of scripture is about the reconciliation of fallen unity – between God and humanity and between human individuals. The abuse of power that David showed by taking Bathsheba and murdering her husband illustrated both relational separations: Nathan illuminated David’s sin against Uriah (2 Sam 12), and David repented to God for sinning “against you, you only” (Ps 51:4). If a leader/follower relationship develops that mimics a ruler/subject or patron/client, then the relationship is, using Bilezikian’s word, worldly<sup>112</sup> and not characteristic of Christian relationships or community. Christian community, on the other hand, reunites diverse people through the gospel. Paul expressed reunification clearly in his letter to the Roman church, “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you” (Rom 15:7). The antidote for sinful power hierarchies is the community of acceptance.

Perhaps the fundamental characteristic of community, then, is acceptance. Dietrich Bonhoeffer picks up this theme as he struggled to put his theology into real world practice. He suggests there is no room for power and hierarchy in Christian community. He writes,

---

<sup>112</sup> Bilezikian, *Community* 101, 129.

Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. ... What does this mean? It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity.<sup>113</sup>

Community is unity because all Christians are equally unworthy of acceptance but are equally accepted by Christ. He wrote in the middle years of the twentieth century, decades before any notion of postmodernism captured the attention of the general culture. It is precisely acceptance, however, that characterizes postmodern pastor, Brian McLaren's "new kind of Christian." He describes his ideal postmodern community by appealing to the ancient Nicene Creed.

I think of the beautiful phrase in our Nicene Creed: "I believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church." This is the "one ... catholic" part. We are unified, connected to one another, maintaining the humility and gentleness necessary for unity to flourish. And we are catholic, meaning that we accept anyone whom Christ accepts. We don't show favoritism, screen out, or judge.<sup>114</sup>

### **The Tension: Community or Individuality?**

I am aware of a profound tension with my arguments above: leaders are to seek to transform their followers *yet* live in an accepting community with them. In other words, leaders live with the tension of expecting followers to change, *but*, and at the same time accepting followers as they are. Paul wrote "accept one another" to the Roman Christians, but he also wrote "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). The solution to the tension, I believe, is found in a focused consideration of the role of the community of Christ-followers, that is, the Church. I have focused my argument on the relationship of a leader with a follower. While this is a worthwhile

---

<sup>113</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1954), 21.

<sup>114</sup> Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 155.

exercise, it must always be considered in the context of the church. The church has a mission, and accomplishing the mission is the task of the church's leaders. In other words, the church exists neither for the leader, nor the follower, but for the mission that Jesus gave it. McLaren explains, "In my thinking, church doesn't exist for the benefit of its members. It exists to equip its members for the benefit of the world."<sup>115</sup> He is trying to describe a church that is able to reach a postmodern age. But his words sound very much like the thinker of a few generations ago, Karl Barth,

Where there is Christian faith there arises and grows an historical form, there arises among [humanity], among contemporaries and non-contemporaries, a *community*, a togetherness, a brotherhood [and sisterhood]. But by means of this community, we inevitably reach, at the point where faith is Christian, a human proclamation and message as well, to the *world* outside this communion and brotherhood [and sisterhood]. ... For faith that believes in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit cannot refuse to become public.<sup>116</sup>

This is reminiscent of this chapter's starting point: authentic community is the church's unique offering to the larger culture. Does this mean a church leader must divide his/her attention between individual followers and the church as a whole? In other words, if the church is for the world and leaders' attention is to be on the transformation of their followers, are these tasks mutually exclusive?

I suggest that Jesus taught that the best way for the church to impact the world is for its leaders to develop good people. Recent literature supports this contention. John Maxwell, a Christian leader and consultant, and Jim Collins, a business researcher and consultant both suggest the same thing; investing in people is the best way to accomplish an organizational aim. In Maxwell's video *Developing the Leaders Around You* he

---

<sup>115</sup> McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian*, 155.

<sup>116</sup> Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (London: SCM Press, 2001), 20.



suggested that the most effective leaders are those who develop relationships with other people in order to instill and foster leadership qualities in them.<sup>117</sup> He describes a leader who at the “highest level” is intent on leading leaders, not leading followers. That is, leaders invest in the lives of those around them in order for those others to be the best leaders that they can be within their spheres of influence. The goal is not to create a group of people who are following leaders, but a group of people to launch out into individual ministries on their own. Leaders share the responsibility and give authority to followers to accomplish the mission. This is reminiscent of Jesus’ last words to his disciples (as recorded in Matthew): “Go and make disciples of all nations...” (Mt 27:19). Jesus, the leader, did not abdicate his responsibility for creating the church (Mt 16:18) but commissioned the disciples by sharing responsibility and authority to accomplish the task.<sup>118</sup>

This commissioning is, in effect, training one’s replacement. Leaders mentor the next generation of leaders. Maxwell described a number of characteristics of leading from the highest level. First, these leaders want to be succeeded. Maxwell stated in another book, “There is no success without a successor.”<sup>119</sup> Collins completed an exhaustive study of businesses that transitioned from ‘good’ companies to ‘great’ companies. He discovered that ‘great’ companies had a succession of leaders, and remained great. In fact, stating the concept negatively, three quarters of the companies that did not accomplish greatness set their “executives up for failure or chose a weak

---

<sup>117</sup> All references in this section to Maxwell come from Maxwell, *Developing the Leaders Around You*.

<sup>118</sup> Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 181ff.

<sup>119</sup> As quoted in Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership*, 208.

successor or both.”<sup>120</sup> Under leaders who do not plan for succession, an organization can go “from good to great for a brief shining moment and then, just as quickly, [go] from great to irrelevant.”<sup>121</sup> Again, in the church leadership realm, one considers Jesus who, after investing three years into his disciples, handed the mantle of leadership over to them, and the church flourished. This principle is seen, too, in Paul’s writings, especially his letters to Timothy. Paul handed the mantle of leadership to Timothy (1 Tim 1:3ff) and further encouraged him to lead (2 Tim 1:3-7).

Leaders who develop leaders not only invest in people to succeed them, they, second, focus and build on the strengths of those they lead. Contrary to popular practice and belief, a good leader finds good people first, then determines what is best for them to do, based on their personal strengths. That is, it might prove impossible to find the “right” person to fit the “perfect” job description. On the other hand, it is far easier to identify competent and energetic people and *then* build a job description around their competencies.<sup>122</sup> A corollary to this is that the people one needs for the success of the organization are already within the community. Collins found that the vast majority of leaders that led companies from ‘good’ to ‘great’ were hired from within, not “larger-than-life celebrity leaders.”<sup>123</sup> These leaders, instead of starting with grand visions or great strategies, “*first* got the right people on the bus ... [and] in the right seats – and *then* figured out where to drive it.”<sup>124</sup> This is not just a business model but embedded in the New Testament description of the local church. Each person in the church has abilities

---

<sup>120</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 26. And Steven B. Sample, *The Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 72-74.

<sup>121</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 27.

<sup>122</sup> Sample, *Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership*, 125.

<sup>123</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 10.

<sup>124</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 13.

and gifts to contribute to the body (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12).<sup>125</sup> The church, in other words, has the people it needs to fulfill the job it has been given. This idea is built into the title of the Spiritual Gifts workbook, *Network: The Right People...In the Right Places...For the Right Reasons*. Bill Hybels, in the Foreword of the workbook said, “Believers flourish in their service to Christ when they are serving in their area of giftedness and in conjunction with their God-given uniqueness.”<sup>126</sup> Leaders identify the abilities and gifts of the people around them, and focus on those strengths so everybody is serving in the ‘right place.’

The best leaders are those who can provide an environment in which individuals are safe to mature in their own unique way. The leader identifies the strength of the individual and provides opportunities for that individual to contribute accordingly. Therein, the leader builds up individuals, builds community and strengthens the organization. The best *church* leaders are those who can take this community – this group of gifted individuals – and influence their culture. It is the discussion about culture that might provide the greatest challenge for contemporary leaders, since our culture is in a state of disarray – modern culture refusing to die, and something after the modern period is struggling to be born.

---

<sup>125</sup> Bilezikian, *Community 101*, 130.

<sup>126</sup> Bruce Bugbee, et.al., *Network: The Right People...In the Right Places...For the Right Reasons, Participant's Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), from the Foreword.

## Chapter 4

### Constructing a postmodern church with ancient building blocks

*"What 'ya readin', Dad?" Laurel, my 18-year-old daughter asked.*

*"Postmodern Pilgrims," I said.*

*"As long as it has 'postmodern' in the title, you'll read it!" She laughed and shook her head at me.*

*"He actually thinks the word means something," Matt, my 21-year-old son, eavesdropping from the couch, interjected.*

#### **The Postmodern reconstruction of leadership**

Leonard Sweet, in the introduction to *SoulTsunami*, wrote:

This book is an early warning signal intended to wake us up and keep us awake.

Wake up and smell the future.

Wake up on the right side of history.

Wake up and breathe in the cold, arctic air of a moribund modernity.

Wake up and breathe out the fire of a postmodern future – with all its omens, amens, and amends.

Can the church tell a sleeping world what the best part of waking up is?<sup>127</sup>

Sweet did not even try to define postmodernism in this work, but he launched right in and warned the church that it had better take seriously the changes taking place at breath-taking speed within contemporary culture. He did, however, suggest that modernity is moribund. What is dying? What is taking its place? And what is the church to do about – or within – it? If a good leader is, as I have been suggesting, one who provides a community for empowered followers, I suggest that contemporary culture – called postmodern – provides a unique set of circumstances a Christian leader must first understand then respond to. Contemporary society is qualitatively different from the society that existed a few decades ago, and a church has to respond creatively to the differences. Postmodern culture is often characterized by personal alienation, and the

---

<sup>127</sup> Leonard Sweet, *SoulTsunami* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 16.

church addresses the predominant need by offering personal authenticity and a community of values.

Values are ultimately more important than institutions to postmodern people. Naomi Klein, a postmodern leader of the economic globalization debate, suggests that values drive this generation. She writes in her second book, “I found myself tossed into the middle of an international debate over *the most pressing question* of our time: *what values* will govern the global age?” (Emphasis added).<sup>128</sup> Postmodern people have to trust the values of an organization before they will commit to serving it.<sup>129</sup> They are motivated by and will gather around values, not leaders and not institutions. They will follow people only in so far as the people are true to their values and, in other words, are trustworthy and authentic.

Values, not people, are motivating contemporary individuals as they weigh their options for involvement. This is not only true of Klein’s global economic efforts, but within the church, too. Mike Regele, a church analyst, suggests, “Authority in the future will be granted to people, not to positions. It will not be enough, and indeed will most likely be counterproductive, to claim authority based upon position.”<sup>130</sup> It is the opportunity and possibility for real change that motivate postmodern people – that is, they are pragmatic. Again, Klein observes, “Tens and then hundreds of thousands of people were joining new demonstrations . . . many of them people like me who had never really believed in the possibility of political change until now.”<sup>131</sup> These values-based

---

<sup>128</sup> Naomi Klein, *Fences and Windows* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002), xiii.

<sup>129</sup> David Donaldson, “Homiletics and Heli-skiing: Radical Gospel for an Extreme Generation,” *Evangelical Baptist*, September/October 2002, 8.

<sup>130</sup> Mike Regele, *The Death of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 206. As quoted in Don Posterski and Gary Anderson, *Future Faith Churches: Reconnecting with the Power of the Gospel for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1997), 84.

<sup>131</sup> Klein, *Fences and Windows*, xiv.

and pragmatic-driven decisions make a difference for contemporary leadership. Klein, on leadership, states, “The movement doesn’t have leaders in the traditional sense – just people determined to learn and to pass it on.”<sup>132</sup> This just might be the new definition of leadership!

The gospel offers the values of acceptance and community (chapter 3) that have the pragmatic power to change the world. The gospel comes from a God who cares for and acts in the story of humanity. That is the beauty of the church; it represents God’s unfolding drama among real people. The church needs to re-present God, not as an authoritarian tyrant sitting up in heaven sending unbreakable commands, but a dramatist inviting actors not just to act out a script, but to write the script as they go. His sovereignty does not reduce us, the actors on the stage, to marionettes. He is the author of the drama, as yet incomplete. He invites us creatures into the drama to write, act out and have a direct impact on the ending.<sup>133</sup> In fact, even with God, the Bible presents not an authoritative paradigm but a dialogical or interactive “paradigm which allows us to wrestle trustingly with God.”<sup>134</sup> The church offers each follower a role – a starring role – in the unfolding drama that is God’s redemptive plan.

Leadership, too, within a postmodern setting needs to be revisited and reconstructed. Leaders are to be co-learners with followers. They are just those people who have learned something and are willing to pass it on to other fellow learners. I remember Dr. Erb, an English professor at Wilfrid Laurier University saying, “I am no smarter than anyone here. I just have 20 years of reading on you.” In other words, he

---

<sup>132</sup> Klein, *Fences and Windows*, xv.

<sup>133</sup> Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1995), 185.

<sup>134</sup> Walsh and Middleton, *Truth*, 185.

took no privilege from his professorial position, just offered to us his years of reading. He took a postmodern view of his leadership; he offered his learning and reading to the group of students, but asserted only a few of the privileges commensurate with his office.<sup>135</sup>

### **Modern vs. Postmodern**

Before, however, examining postmodern implications for the church and on the leader/follower relationship there is a primary question, “What is ‘postmodern’?” If ‘postmodern’ means anything, it signifies something in relation to ‘modern.’<sup>136</sup> Scholars have a penchant for naming eras and so ‘modern’ has become a name of the seventeenth to the mid-twentieth century.<sup>137</sup> The early seventeenth century philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650), sometimes called the father of modern philosophy,<sup>138</sup> started the modern experiment with his quest for certainty. Most famous for his epistemological foundation, *Cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am, or therefore I exist), he wrote in the midst of historical circumstances that made his quest for absolute certainty plausible. He lived when social, ecclesiastical and civil authorities could no longer be trusted. Over the course of the preceding centuries, the plague killed thousands of people, the church had divided as a result of the Reformers’ efforts and central Europe was embroiled in the Thirty Years War. He had to search for rational foundations that were “general and timeless rather than local and timely – in other words, [he began] the quest for universal

---

<sup>135</sup> He did assert at least one privilege, it must be noted: he did grade my assignments

<sup>136</sup> Even this is debated, but I will use ‘modern’ as the ‘enlightenment’ cultural era, and ‘postmodern’ as the current one.

<sup>137</sup> J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *The Transforming Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 117ff.

theory.”<sup>139</sup> With the decay of both religious and political authority his search took him outside these traditional sources for certainty. Descartes laid the foundation, set the direction and even determined much of the agenda for the 300 years following his death.

His legacy was modernity. Middleton and Walsh describe four characteristics that defined modernity. First, it was focused, not on the supernatural but on the natural, the imminent and the secular. Second, it moved away from reliance on authority structures, either ecclesiastical or civil, to an increased belief in the power of an individual’s mind, through observation and experience, to arrive at ‘truth.’ Third, modern man (the language is purposely and descriptively exclusive) believed in progress; that the best was yet to come and achievable through his efforts alone. Fourth, progress was achieved through the study of nature for the purpose of subduing it.<sup>140</sup> Modernists sought mastery over skepticism through rationality. Modernists sought to be, as Descartes stated, “the masters and possessors of nature”<sup>141</sup> through science and technology. These masteries resulted in a monolithic world of economic progress and self-confidence. There were echoes of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-5) in the modernist experiment. As Middleton and Walsh summarize, “we could characterize the modern Western dream of progress as the building of a vast, towering civilization, a social and cultural accomplishment of immense, even mythic proportions.”<sup>142</sup> Modernity was the quest for the universal, humanistic, forward-moving culture that would describe the whole human race.

---

<sup>138</sup> Nancy Murphy and Brad J. Kallenberg, “Anglo-American Postmodernity: A Theology of Communal Practice” in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 27.

<sup>139</sup> Murphy and Kallenberg, “Anglo-American Postmodernity,” 27.

<sup>140</sup> Walsh and Middleton, *Truth*, 14.

<sup>141</sup> As quoted in Walsh and Middleton, *Truth*, 34.

<sup>142</sup> Walsh and Middleton, *Truth*, 15.



This unification was not to be, however. During the last decades of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, various thinkers started to describe fragmentation, not unity as the result of modernity. Although primarily focusing on economic life, Karl Marx (1818-1883) observed that industry that was dependent upon technology – that is, capitalist economy of production and consumption – alienated the labourer from his product. This led to, or at least was related to individual and social alienation. In response to alienation, Marx called for ‘reintegration’ or ‘reunification’ of an individual’s labour/social/personal life. Marx insisted that people should be “both the authors and the actors of their own drama.”<sup>143</sup> Less an economic and more a social analyst, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) suggested that ‘anomie’ characterized modern society. Anomie is the state of normlessness. It is inherently related to a state of disintegration in which individuals have a difficult time binding together or congregating in community. Durkheim distinguished between ‘mechanical’ and ‘organic’ community. Pre-modern societies were held together ‘mechanically’ because of social commonality – living in a common village with common trades and circumstances. In modern society, with its advanced division of labour, any social community must be ‘organic’ in nature, “based on complementarity rather than similarity [circumstances]. Hence modern society face[d] unique challenges in providing overarching meanings and norms for individuals in diverse walks of life.”<sup>144</sup> So, analysts towards the end of the modern experiment described an increasing differentiation, or pluralism, not unity.

Pluralism was not just a social description without epistemological implication. It challenged the very foundation of modern civilization. As Kim observed, “The

---

<sup>143</sup> Kwang-ki Kim, *Order and Agency in Modernity* (Albany: State of New York Press, 2003), 2.

<sup>144</sup> Kim, *Order and Agency*, 3.

pluralized world is filled with discrepancies and lacks all consistency, which is a necessary precondition for certainty. Modernity leads the modern [person] into a pluralized world characterized by ‘a multiplicity of incongruencies’.”<sup>145</sup> Modern civilization sought certainty through reason, science, technology and industry, but the direct result was the impossibility of certainty.

So, as Sweet assumed, modernity is dying, if not dead, and something new is emerging. Following Marx’s and Durkhiem’s lead, others during the middle years of the twentieth century started to conclude that the modern experiment simply did not work. For example, Christian philosopher Romano Guardini declared in 1948 that “the modern age is essentially over.”<sup>146</sup> The century witnessed a ‘war to end all wars,’ the Bolshevik revolution, an economic depression that spanned the western world, the rise of fascism and Nazism and, ending only three years before Guardini’s words, the Second World War with its Holocaust. It is quite understandable why the optimism and ideals of human progress that characterized the modern age were discarded in the twentieth century. Almost fifty years after Guardini’s pronouncement Middleton and Walsh’s describe Modernity’s waning influence:

But modernity, like Babel, has faltered and is about to topple. The homogeneity of the modern worldview has fragmented into tribalism, gender wars, racial tension, ethnic cleansing, and widespread cultural confusion. The sacred canopy of the progress myth that gave us normative historical orientation is ripped to shreds and we are left with the tatters of disorientation and anomie. The shared language of Enlightenment rationality, technical efficiency and economic growth has been drowned out by the deafening cacophony of the postmodern carnival. And like the builders of Babel, we experience the human family as profoundly scattered in its diversity and are fundamentally unable to hear with compassion the voice of the other.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> Kim, *Order and Agency*, 6.

<sup>146</sup> As quoted in Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman Holman Press, 2000), xiii.

<sup>147</sup> Walsh and Middleton, *Truth*, 188.

The challenge for leaders is twofold. First leaders need to begin to understand the fundamental cultural changes that have (and still are) taking place. Babel is falling all around us, to apply Middleton and Walsh's metaphor. Notions of progress and the supremacy of the empirical method no longer hold their positions atop the cultural monolith called modernity. Some implications of modernity include the belief that nature is humanity's to dominate and bigger is better. This has implications for the church, since some of these modern notions have crept into church structures and theology. Leaders need to discern what characteristics are from God – as God intended his church to be – and what are human inventions. In other words, leaders must be able to discern which walls need to be shored up and which need to be allowed to crumble. The Enlightenment era still wields a tremendous influence over the minds of contemporary leaders. Leaders need to join the postmodern age and carefully discern if a paradigm is truly from God or just a modern invention.

The second challenge leaders' face is how to inspire and motivate people living in the rubble of Babel. Many of these people are lost and seeking something that the church can offer. These people are wandering, alone and strangers in an increasingly strange land.

### **The Wandering Stranger**

Plurality and insecurity have replaced unity and certainty. This has led, not only to epistemological skepticism, but social and, oftentimes physical, restlessness. Kim described humanities' penchant for wandering, and its result, "Due to [humankind's] suspicion and continuous migration, modern [people find] no place to anchor [themselves] any more and... [wander] here and there prone to distance [themselves] from

societies, social sectors, and individuals.”<sup>148</sup> Plurality led to suspicion and cynicism that led to ‘anchorless’ existence, or anomie. Anomie led to disintegration of relationships between individuals. But, as George Simmel observed, this disintegration, or enforced distancing is necessary to survive in the postmodern world. He explained,

...the jostling crowdedness and motley disorder of metropolitan communication would simply be unbearable without such psychological distance. Since contemporary urban culture, ...forces us to be physically close to an enormous number of people, sensitive and nervous modern people would sink completely into despair...<sup>149</sup>

Peter Berger agreed; postmodern people suffer from “a deepening condition of homelessness.”<sup>150</sup> They can be considered permanent wanderers or strangers since a wanderer occupies territory on the fringes, retaining a sense of freedom, but retaining a sense of alienation from the centre – the mainstream. Relational alienation, anomie, and dwelling in the fringes describe, as Kim notes, “The picture of the stranger.”<sup>151</sup> In an ironic way it might be this fact of ‘strangeness’ that provides the greatest opportunity for Christians.<sup>152</sup> (After all, Jesus associated most closely with the disenfranchised – the strangers – of his culture and did not get along too well with the establishment.)<sup>153</sup>

The church is called to meet with these strangers. But they do not often wander into a church building; Christians will have to go and find them. They are found, in another Middleton and Walsh picturesque metaphor, at the carnival.

---

<sup>148</sup> Kim, *Order and Agency*, 6.

<sup>149</sup> As quoted in Kim, *Order and Agency*, 7.

<sup>150</sup> As quoted in Kim, *Order and Agency*, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Kim, *Order and Agency*.

<sup>152</sup> See Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 16-34.

<sup>153</sup> Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 364.

## The Modern Theatre and the Postmodern Carnival

Metaphorically speaking, modern people attended classical theatre: one stage, one play, many tuxedos and brandy at Sir Higginbothom's afterward. The postmodern person attends a "carnival with a never-ending variety of sideshows."<sup>154</sup> The sideshow hawkers do not want our full attention, as the classical theatre demanded, but offer momentary titillation, superfluous entertainment and distractions. But the carnival is all there is; there is no centre stage. The modern classical theatre allowed sideshows as long as they did not infringe of the centrality of the play. Middleton and Walsh's observation points out that "in a postmodern culture ... there are nothing but sideshows."<sup>155</sup> Each freak show and fantastic display has equal status and equal right at claiming a postmodern person's attention. There is no centre stage demanding priority. So, in the early years of the twenty-first century we have strangers wandering around a carnival looking for something to hang onto. Leaders need to be able to identify anomie's symptoms, and be able to address them as they move followers towards community.

If "strangeness" or alienation is the malaise of postmodern people, how does this manifest itself in day to day living? In other words, what are the symptoms of alienation?

Melvin Seeman identified five symptoms:

1. *Powerlessness*: the belief that the individual is incapable of influencing the world ...
2. *Meaninglessness*: the lack of any clear system of meaning by which individuals can interpret events.
3. *Normlessness*: the inability of the system to direct individual behavior
4. *Isolation*: a sense of estrangement from society and a questioning of its beliefs.
5. *Self-estrangement*: the feeling that there is no meaning in one's inner life.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> Middleton and Walsh, *Reality*, 42.

<sup>155</sup> Middleton and Walsh, *Reality*, 43.

<sup>156</sup> As quoted in Jack O. Balswick and Kenneth J. Morland, *Social Problems: A Christian Understanding and Response* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 131.

If these are the symptoms of postmodern anomie, the solution the world offers is to multiply one's choice for the source of meaning. Postmodern people live with ultimate meaninglessness or, what Victor Frankl calls "the existential vacuum."<sup>157</sup> The only thing a person can do is chose meaning for him/her self.<sup>158</sup> The myriad of choices, none demanding precedence, "produce[d] multitudes of men and women who are impelled, if they have religious yearnings, to embark on *their own individual* quests for symbols of transcendence."<sup>159</sup> The strangers, wandering from sideshow to sideshow, scour the landscape for something to which to anchor their meaning. Frankl considers this search as a primary force in a person's life.<sup>160</sup> After most of his family died in German concentration camps, and he endured and survived, Frankl reflected on the difference between those who did not capitulate and survived with those who gave up and gave in. The difference between the two was the meaning that the individual had for life. This meaning is something that "confronts existence."<sup>161</sup> In other words, meaning is something that challenges a person to the core of his character, it is not "a mere expression of self, or [not] ... a projection of wishful thinking [because those] could no longer call man forth or summon him."<sup>162</sup> Frankl suggests, therefore, that a person's ultimate meaning is something that challenges the core of who the person is, and provides an anchor for all of life.

So, back at the carnival full of people looking for meaning, Christian leaders set up their booth; another sideshow nestled between the "Three Easy Steps to Unimaginable

---

<sup>157</sup> Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 169.

<sup>158</sup> Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 154.

<sup>159</sup> George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 126.

<sup>160</sup> Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 154.

<sup>161</sup> Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 156.

<sup>162</sup> Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 156.

Wealth” and “Massages by Trixie.” They offer not Epicurean delights, but ultimate meaning. A postmodern hears, “eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die,” from the other booths. Christian leaders sit in front of their booth asking the challenging question – the “meaning” question, in Frankl’s terms, “Is that all there is to life? And then what?” They then invite the carnival attendee to pull up a chair and have a conversation. Postmodern people are looking for that meaning. But leaders cannot invite postmodern people into merely conversation; the words must be accompanied by action. The ‘meaning’ must work; must make a pragmatic difference in everyday life and contribute to socially responsible living. As ethicists Glen Stassen and David Gushee point out, “Postmodern ... people want to know what difference the gospel makes for people’s actual living. They doubt claims to ‘timeless truths.’ ... They want to validate truth not by an authoritarian claim but by seeing how it works out in life.”<sup>163</sup> The church offers community and “and the Spirit ... who helps us to discern what would be faithful [meaningful living] in our own time.”<sup>164</sup> The church offers a table to which a stranger can come and be accepted as a stranger. The host offers the guest a welcome to the table and to enjoy mealtime hospitality.<sup>165</sup> The opportunity for Christian witness in a postmodern world is to offer real power, meaning, standards, community and wholeness.

Further to community and a welcoming table, the church can offer pragmatic, social impact. The Old Testament prophet called Israel to social action, “And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy...” (Mic 6:8). Justice and mercy are part of the postmodern agenda, at least as it pertains to world economics.

---

<sup>163</sup> Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 76.

<sup>164</sup> Middleton and Walsh, *Reality*, 184.

<sup>165</sup> Palmer, *Company of Strangers*, 68.

Klein describes the themes of her book as fences and windows. Fences are “separating people from ... much needed land and water.”<sup>166</sup> Micah gave the Israelite people, and Jesus gave the church the simple mandate to live justly. One practical way is to give water (Mt 10:42). In the wake of the tsunami tragedy the media has impressed on all of us the importance of simple clean water. Klein’s second image is that of windows. She writes, “people [are] pushing up against the barriers that try to contain them, opening up windows, breathing deeply, tasting freedom.”<sup>167</sup> The mercy of God opens up the fences of oppression (cf Is 58: 6-10) and gives freedom (Jn 8:32).

### **Modern solutions to Postmodern problems**

It is simple to state that the church possesses and offers meaning. It is difficult, on the other hand, to accomplish, especially difficult for a church structure so often attempting modern solutions to postmodern problems. As John Eldredge observed, regarding a church’s definition of discipleship, the church’s plan is,

First becoming a member ... Then they encourage you to take a course on doctrine. Be ‘faithful’ in attending the Sunday morning service and a small group fellowship. Complete a special course on Christian growth. Live a life that demonstrates clear evidence of spiritual growth. Complete a class on evangelism. Consistently look for opportunities to evangelize. Complete a course on finances, one on marriage, and another on parenting (provided you are married or are a parent). Complete a leadership training course, a hermeneutics course, a course on spiritual gifts and another on biblical counseling. Participate in missions. Carry a significant local church ministry ‘load’. ... My goodness, you could earn an MBA with less effort.<sup>168</sup>

Postmodern people are looking for involvement, participation and community, not programs to “fit in[to].”<sup>169</sup> They are looking for values that they can anchor their souls

<sup>166</sup> Klein, *Fences and Windows*, xviii.

<sup>167</sup> Klein, *Fences and Windows*, xxvii.

<sup>168</sup> Eldredge, *Waking the Dead*, 96.

<sup>169</sup> Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 300.



to. They are looking for, as McLaren suggests, “one holy, catholic and apostolic church.”<sup>170</sup> To paraphrase McLaren’s thoughts, the ‘commodities’ of a holy, catholic and apostolic church are transcendence and the anchoring in the Holy God; universality and the acceptance and equal consideration of all people; and the ancient wisdom, proven to be sufficient to provide meaning and impact the world.

The church holds these commodities, whether they know it or not within the very DNA of the Body. The Body, (i.e. the Church) is designed to be a community.<sup>171</sup> Community, as we saw in chapter three, is the network of interdependent relationships through which transformation and empowerment take place. Community is something that a person can experience.<sup>172</sup> The church’s unique offering is the value of interdependence and community. It is, after all, “the only community on earth that can confront the evil one. For it is the only community on earth to whom the keys of the kingdom were given.”<sup>173</sup> The ancient church has the postmodern answer: its values set it apart from other sideshow booths.

The church, like any organization, operates based on its values. An individual church’s vision and values are not a direct revelation from God to that church, but are chosen by the collective understanding of how God works through the specific community. Each church, then, may have a slightly different set of values, and so a postmodern person has a number of value-systems to choose from. Values are inextricably related to choice. Even when they are institutionalized, shared values are not

---

<sup>170</sup> McLaren, *New Kind of Christian*, 155.

<sup>171</sup> See Bilezikian, *Community*, 44.

<sup>172</sup> Experience is central to postmodern cultural expectations. The question is no longer, “Does it make sense?” but is now, “Was it a good experience?” See Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 92.

<sup>173</sup> Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 65.

forced on individuals within that organization, but must be chosen by the person. An individual makes the choice if the values of the community are appropriate for him/herself.<sup>174</sup> Values may be assumed and even imposed by an organization or society, but the postmodern 'agent' always and continually faces them as a matter of choice.

Values can no longer be imposed from above with adherence to a simple and stated expectation. The modern church set up a hierarchical structure with expectations for conformity, and disregarded individuality and an individual's unique contribution in favour of conformity and uniformity. Postmodern people reject conformity<sup>175</sup>, and, they insist, uniformity is not necessary for cooperation. Postmodern people are comfortable with pluralism, with different opinions and with different points of view. Tanner states it this way, "Uniformity of belief in general is overrated as a requirement for social stability, according to postmodern understandings of culture ... Mutual understanding, without substantive agreement, is sufficient to produce a predictable sequence of actions and reactions toward an end that all parties desire."<sup>176</sup> A shared vision is often sufficient for many people of various specific opinions to work together. The labels of denominations, positions or even biblical points of view (i.e. conservative and liberal) are becoming less and less meaningful, while visionary and values-driven causes unite strangers into community.

These strangers, sitting around a common table (using an image from Palmer)<sup>177</sup> can share in meaningful service, because each has a unique set gifts and abilities to offer. Each individual fits together in a community that shares a vision and works to accomplish

---

<sup>174</sup> Kim, *Order and Agency*, 35.

<sup>175</sup> Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*, 389.

<sup>176</sup> Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 121.

<sup>177</sup> Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, 68.

a mission. In postmodern communities the person comes first, and then the role the person might fit. In other words, modern church structures made people fit into pigeon-hole compartments then “post[ed] ‘No Trespassing’ signs all around the hole warning you to stay in and the others to stay out.”<sup>178</sup> They structure themselves around job descriptions, hierarchy and committees. Postmodern churches will invite people to be part of the drama. They replace job descriptions with ‘Spirit Descriptions’ which,

will be so basic to the body of Christ that people will be hired for ministry solely on the basis of their spiritual energies. ‘I have no idea how we are going to use you, but I know this church can’t be without you. Why don’t you join us as the ‘Minister of I-Don’t-Know-What’?’<sup>179</sup>

What is important is the involvement and the contribution to the team, not the position.

Sweet’s “Spirit Description” is not just some utopian ideal, but a proven strategy for success, at least in the business world. Jim Collins discovered that great companies “hired outstanding people whenever and wherever they found them, often without any specific job in mind.”<sup>180</sup> Or, as Steven Sample stated, “It’s great people, not great job descriptions, that make an organization successful.”<sup>181</sup>

Authentic people who live lives consistent with their convictions are what matter to postmodern people. Labels no longer matter.<sup>182</sup> Donald Miller tells of his liberal, political activist friend Andrew,

On Saturday mornings Andrew feeds the homeless. He sets up a makeshift kitchen on a sidewalk and makes breakfast for people who live on the street. He serves coffee and sits with his homeless friends and talks and laughs, and if they want to pray he will pray with them. He’s a flaming liberal, really. The thing about it is, though, Andrew believes this is what Jesus wants him to do. Andrew does not believe in empty passion.<sup>183</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 300.

<sup>179</sup> Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 301.

<sup>180</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 42.

<sup>181</sup> Sample, *Contrarian’s Guide*, 125.

<sup>182</sup> Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 389.

<sup>183</sup> Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 110.

Later in his book, Miller describes his church. He loves his church simply because, first, it is spiritual. “The people ... pray and fast about things. It took me a while to understand that the answer to problems was not marketing or program but rather spirituality.” Second, his church embraces the arts, as God-given and as integral to proclaiming the gospel to this image-crazed postmodern age. Third, the church is community – people getting together. They eat, pray and play together. Nobody is lonely. Fourth, the church is authentic. “I don’t have to pretend to be godly in order for people to listen... it feels better to have people love the real me than the me I invented.”<sup>184</sup> The church has all the things a postmodern person needs, and those things are not complicated: love them and invite them to make a meaningful and personal contribution.

---

<sup>184</sup> Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*, 136-137.

## Chapter 5

### Empowered followers: The criterion for effective leadership

As I described in chapter one of this thesis, a leader has the power to influence a follower. This power relationship is (ideally) dependent upon the follower giving permission to be led. The operative word is 'relationship'. The relationship is based on love and is expressed through empowerment. In chapter two I suggested that power, when misused, abuses the 'follower' by taking from him/her. Jesus reversed the power relationship by redefining greatness: a great leader in the Kingdom of God is one who serves. Jesus calls his followers to obedience to this new ethic of service. He, as we saw above, told the lawyer to "Go and do likewise" after the parable of the Good Samaritan. He also insists on obedience to his ethic of service in Matthew 25: 31-46. Entrance into the kingdom, according to this passage, is dependent upon obedience to Jesus' ethical commands. This reversal of power relationship – or ethic of service – is best fostered in a community and results in healthy Christians who are interdependent with each other, as pointed out in chapter three. In the previous chapter I described our postmodern age as one in which individuals expect authenticity in their leadership. Personal authenticity has taken precedence over position or office as the standard of leadership. The authenticity has to be relational as well; that makes interdependence, not subjugation, the goal. So in this final chapter I will tie all these strands together and describe how the empowered follower is the measure of success of leadership.

At the end of the day, servant leadership – leadership transforming the follower – empowers the follower to accomplish the mission Christ left his followers. With the

previous chapters defining some terms and laying biblical foundation of the relationship between leaders and followers, I now examine the environment a leader must create, the characteristics of the follower and, I will finally suggest that an empty church is a successful church. Perhaps that is an overstatement, but I will show that a postmodern church is one in which followers are empowered to impact the community outside the church walls. So, by implication, a church leader creates a community within the church walls that empowers and releases the follower to impact the world. The community or environment within which a follower learns is the first concern for a Christian leader.

### **Creating a Community of Inquiry**

Creative, critical and constructive thinking and interaction characterize an empowering environment. It is within that environment that a good follower develops and thrives. As I suggested in chapter three, a transformed follower (or a good follower) is one who is interdependent with leadership, and confident in his or her personal giftedness and abilities and flexible enough to manage change. These characteristics lead to, as Anita Farber-Robertson describes, fourth-order thinking. Her discussion compares fourth-order thinking, which transforms, with third-order thinking, which restricts transformation. The former is creative, critical and challenging, while the latter is structured after a patron/client supposition. After both study and personal experience in church leadership, Anita Farber-Robertson challenges leaders to engage in, and encourage their followers to engage in, fourth-order thinking. She applies the dramatic illustration of third-order thinking to the leadership structure in Nazi Germany. Hitler issued orders and expected his followers to follow them. As the post-war trials

progressed, the international court found the perpetrators of the holocaust horrors personally responsible for the crimes they committed during the war. Followers are responsible for the “goals (and the gods) [they] have chosen to serve.”<sup>185</sup> In other words, just as the Nazis were not exonerated for simply following rules, followers cannot escape responsibility for their behaviour simply because they are following rules, or simply because they are doing things the way they have always been done. Third-order thinking honours orders and reveres tradition. A less dramatic example of third-order thinking than Nazi Germany is a story my mother told. In the early years of her marriage, whenever she baked a ham she would cut the first inch or so off meat and discard it. When asked about that, she responded that it was the way her mother taught her. One day my mother asked hers why she cut the meat off. “Because my roasting pan was too small,” she said. My mother was behaving in a third-order way. The way things always have been done is the way they are to be done. She engaged in fourth-order thinking when she asked her mother, “Why?” For personal and organizational progress to occur, leaders, according to Farber-Robertson, must engage in fourth-order thinking.<sup>186</sup>

This engagement, however, takes skill and practice. Often, as seen in the educational discussion above, a person’s curiosity – the courage to ask “why?” – is driven out of people. Part of a leader’s responsibility is to build an environment in which “why?” is an acceptable question. To do this, Farber-Robertson calls leaders to practice the balance between “advocacy” and “inquiry.” Leaders have a point of view and position that needs to be advocated for, but that advocacy needs to be balanced with inquiry. Hers is a practical rationale, “because the give-and-take of putting ideas forward

---

<sup>185</sup> Farber-Robertson, *Learning While Leading*, 65.

<sup>186</sup> Farber-Robertson, *Learning While Leading*, 64-65.

and critically examining them produces the best result, the most productive behavior is advocacy coupled with inquiry.”<sup>187</sup> Leaders must be inclusive in this behaviour. Not only would leaders seek input from their followers through the advocacy/inquiry balance, they would encourage their followers “to inquire about [their] own position, [their] reasoning, meanings, intentions and to ask any other questions that would help them ... understand.”<sup>188</sup> In other words, the inquiry goes both ways: leaders asking and challenging followers, *and* followers asking and challenging leaders. So, within the environment of mutual inquiry, a leader creates the environment for fourth-order thinking.

The purpose of the community is the accomplishment of the community’s mission. Fourth-order thinking will direct both followers and leaders to be those who accomplish a mission. The leader is responsible for setting the mission, and then envisioning the followers to accomplish it. The envisioning still occurs in an environment, but an environment in which God’s story is understood within both the leader’s and follower’s stories. Don Posterski and Gary Nelson call leaders who provide this environment “Future Faith Leaders.”<sup>189</sup> These leaders are dramatically different from the leaders of a previous generation in a number of ways. The first is the difference between “professional” pastors and “missionary” pastors. Missionary pastors first of all understand themselves and their story. Posterski and Nelson write, “Leaders find their effectiveness when they *understand* God’s story in their story. Personal biography shapes the way leaders lead. And people in the pews respond to leaders they perceive to

---

<sup>187</sup> Farber-Robertson, *Learning While Leading*, 58.

<sup>188</sup> Farber-Robertson, *Learning While Leading*, 59.

<sup>189</sup> Posterski and Anderson, *Future Faith Churches*, 83ff.



be genuine and transparent.”<sup>190</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, postmodern people no longer follow just because of an office or title, but follow people who are honest about their own stories and, as we saw in Klein’s writing, are co-learners. Second, missionary pastors are not concerned with the quantitative aspects of church life, as professional pastors once were. At one time, not too long ago, the measurement for success was numerical growth and “attracting people into the church.”<sup>191</sup> In the former paradigm leaders are, “still attempting to retool the church in the old framework, [orienting the church to] attracting people into the church rather than scattering the people intentionally into the world.”<sup>192</sup> Or, in the words of Harold Percy, an Anglican leader,

The pastoral parish [or leader] asks, “How many visits are being made?”  
*The mission parish asks, “How many disciples are being made?”*  
 The pastoral parish says, “We have to be faithful to our past.”  
*The mission parish says, “We have to be faithful to our future.”*  
 The pastoral parish thinks about how to save the church.  
*The mission parish thinks about how to reach the world.*<sup>193</sup>

I have suggested that a modern method of attempting to meet the needs of postmodern people is to establish a program. An example of this, as seen in the Eldredge quotation above, is to establish a whole curriculum of prescribed material to be studied and applied. When these become ineffective – that is, when people stop attending them – the program is discontinued and replaced by another set of seminars. The constant reprogramming or “retooling” using the old framework has led to anger in many people who are now leaving the church. It is over this precise difference between professional

---

<sup>190</sup> Posterski and Anderson, *Future Faith Churches*, 84.

<sup>191</sup> Posterski and Anderson, *Future Faith Churches*, 103.

<sup>192</sup> Posterski and Anderson, *Future Faith Churches*, 103.

<sup>193</sup> Posterski and Anderson, *Future Faith Churches*, 103.

and missional clergy that causes the anger. In Sweet's words, "There is anger over the hogging of ministry by professionals; anger of not empowering all Christians for ministry; anger over not releasing the spiritual potential in every believer."<sup>194</sup>

### **Empowerment is Participatory**

Missional leaders invite people to participate in the mission. In fact, postmodern followers will demand participation, as seen in the example of Mark Parent's address to his denominational leadership. He expressed gratitude for being given permission to be "both provocative and critical"<sup>195</sup> when addressing a national conference. Parent is under denominational leadership and clearly wants and welcomes the opportunity to contribute. When given the chance, followers have plenty to say, which alone suggests that they need to participate in, to contribute to and comment on leadership's direction.

Inviting followers to participate is not just a nice thing for leaders to do; it is essential for effective personal and organizational growth. In his book about educational models, Ira Shor describes participation as a means to empowerment. He quoted Piaget: "Knowledge is derived from action. ... To know is therefore to assimilate reality into structures of transformation and these are the structures that intelligence constructs as a direct extension of our actions."<sup>196</sup>

Shor inserts this quotation into the context of participatory education. That is, one learns best when there is interaction between the learner and the teacher. Children,

---

<sup>194</sup> Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 58. Sweet warns of a coming anti-clericalism, and tells a joke in the paragraph preceding: "Do you why clergy are just like diapers? ... They need to be changed often and for the same reason."

<sup>195</sup> Mark Parent, "What I Expect from Denominational Leadership" (paper presented at the National Staff Conference, Atlantic Baptist College July 1, 1991), 1.

<sup>196</sup> Ira Shor, *Empowering Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 17.

especially pre-school children, are a prime example of participatory learners since they ask questions and experiment with everything around them in order to learn. In a word, children are curious, which motivates children to continually seek knowledge about the world around them. And, as most parents know, nothing is out of bounds for their inquiring minds and fingers. Shor continues by describing how most school systems impose authoritarian structures, syllabi and curricula onto the learning process until a child's "learning habits wither inside the passive syllabus dominant in education."<sup>197</sup>

If imposed structures of authority (i.e. teacher/student and prescribed curriculum) stifle curiosity and, therefore genuine learning, participation resurrects curiosity and motivates the learner to learn authentically once again. Participation is, then, the "educational and political means for students to gain knowledge and to develop as citizens."<sup>198</sup> Full human development, Shor suggests, includes participation in the learning process.

There is direct, not just analogous, correlation between Shor's educational world and the church world. Authority structures that impose a curriculum are less effective in education and, for many of the same reasons, less effective in church leadership structures. Parent, in his address to his denominational leadership, asked his leadership to include pastors in their decision making process. That is, he asked for participation. In his words, "major programs and ministry initiatives [are to] be entered upon only after extensive discussion with and participation by local pastors."<sup>199</sup> Parent, a follower in this relationship, asks for participation. He provides evidence of denominational leadership

---

<sup>197</sup> Shor, *Empowering Education*, 17.

<sup>198</sup> Shor, *Empowering Education*, 18.

<sup>199</sup> Parent, "What I Expect," 4.

imposing goals on local pastors with expectation of accomplishment. They communicated this expectation without dialogue about the goals in the first place. Parent asked for participation to remedy this authoritarian imbalance.

An educational theory that has a single parallel in church leadership experience may not be sufficient evidence to draw a conclusion. Other writers and thinkers, however, have arrived at the same conclusion. In his work comparing modern and postmodern characteristics Sweet contrasted representative (i.e. modern) with participatory (i.e. postmodern) culture:

A representative culture is based on certain beliefs:

- People want and need to be controlled and have decisions made for them.
- The task of leadership is to administer guidance and regulations.
- People do only the things they are rewarded for doing.
- People cannot be trusted to use their personal freedom in service of the society or the organization.

A participatory culture is based on just the opposite beliefs:

- People want to make their own decisions and have multiple choices.
- Leadership is emboldening and empowering others to lead.
- People will make sacrifices for the good of the whole.
- Human systems are self-organizing, and the people can be trusted to invest wisely of their resources and time.<sup>200</sup>

Based on these observations Sweet challenges the church to become participatory. He describes the Pauline metaphor of church as the body of Christ as being participatory. There were “no ... ‘professional clergy’ and pew sitting laity. There [were] only ministers who look to leaders to mobilize and release ministry through them.”<sup>201</sup> He cites the fact that Pentecostalism is the fastest growing religious movement in the world because Pentecostals invite members into “participation in the mysteries of God. [They] talk about ‘moving the service’ ... [which] is to facilitate intimacy with God through

---

<sup>200</sup> Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 60.

<sup>201</sup> Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 72.

dance, speech, sound, touch, etc. To ‘move the service’ is to transform anticipations into participations through interaction rituals.”<sup>202</sup> A postmodern follower, then, needs to be involved, or needs to be a participant in the total life of the community of faith.

### **The Centrality of Community**

Participation presupposes a community; there needs to be a number of people involved for participation to be possible. Interdependency and mutual teaching/learning happen within a communal environment. That is, leader and follower share each other’s insights and disappointments, and hopes and dreams. One has to experience the support and respect of a group of learners (remember Klein’s description of leaders as those intent on learning and passing the learning on) who share the awkward experiences of learning – the growth period that transforms.<sup>203</sup> The transformative process is difficult, and needs community in order to be accomplished. In fact, the growth period, often characterized by disorientation, demands so much self-evaluation and so much emotional energy that “learners may be tempted to retreat and thus endanger further learning.”<sup>204</sup> Transformation needs community. Community does not avoid, but often consists of conflict and, in Dan Sheffield’s description, an atmosphere of “critical reflection ... [that] requires that conditions be created under which each person is respected, valued and heard. For adult professional development this means an engagement in critical conversation.”<sup>205</sup> The result is empowerment since, again in Sheffield’s presentation,

---

<sup>202</sup> Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 72.

<sup>203</sup> Dan Sheffield, *The Multicultural Leader: Developing a Catholic Personality* (Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2005), 106.

<sup>204</sup> Sheffield, *The Multicultural Leader*, 106.

<sup>205</sup> Sheffield, *The Multicultural Leader*, 106.

empowerment is about the “process by which people learn from new information, new ways of thinking, and begin to act confidently upon those insights.”<sup>206</sup>

The learning process involves periods of stability, then periods of crises that demand change. The crises and change process results in perplexity (as I considered in chapter 3). Transformation happens at the end, when one has worked through the perplexity, grieved the loss of stability but, as Lines defined maturity, accepted the change. The growth happens best in a community or in transformative learning practitioner Kathleen Loughlin’s words, “[individuals] united in a shared experience of trying to make meaning of their life experience.”<sup>207</sup>

If community is the best environment within which each individual’s personal, God-given gifts are exercised, what is the attitude of the leader of that community? Three writers I have referenced throughout this paper provide insight that helps form an answer that question. First, Paul hints at the answer in his letter to the Christians at Philippi: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. . . . Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:3, 5). Jesus gave up his position in order to serve and, ultimately, to redeem humankind. So leaders, too, should not hold onto position but serve their followers, and even think of them as better than the leaders themselves. Further, Wright suggested a model that turns the working relationship of leaders to followers on its head. Instead of followers reporting to leaders, they are “the people for whose success [they] are

---

<sup>206</sup> Sheffield, *The Multicultural Leader*, 73.

<sup>207</sup> Kathleen Loughlin, *Women’s Perceptions of Transformative Learning Experiences within Consciousness Raising* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), 320-321. As quoted in Sheffield, *The Multicultural Leader*, 105.

responsible.”<sup>208</sup> Sample suggested much the same thing. He devoted a whole chapter, “Work for Those who Work for You” to expound the idea that leaders “should be doing *everything [they] can* to help [their] direct reports succeed. [They] should be the first assistant to the people who work for [them].”<sup>209</sup> In other words, the leader’s responsibility is the empowerment – ensuring the success – of the follower.

### **Empowerment**

As I suggested earlier, a transformed follower is one who is empowered to be what God made her/him to be. Or, to rephrase my thesis, a leader’s success is dependent upon developing empowered followers. What is empowerment? and How does empowerment happen? are the two remaining questions.

It is important to understand the difference between empowerment and delegation. I disagree with Wright’s application of the term “delegation” to describing a successful leader. I agree with his definition, “The goal of leadership is to move people up the maturity continuum ... [and] to increase the competence and confidence of all our people.”<sup>210</sup> He continues, however, with “... so we can *delegate leadership* to them” (emphasis added).<sup>211</sup> What he labels “delegation,” I define as empowerment. The difference, I contend, is significant and essential to understand effective postmodern leadership. The difference is clear from business leader and teacher Marlene Caroselli’s work. Her comparison:

---

<sup>208</sup> Wright, *Relational Leadership*, xiv.

<sup>209</sup> Sample, *Contrarian’s Guide*, 121.

<sup>210</sup> Wright, *Relational Leadership*, 39.

<sup>211</sup> Wright, *Relational Leadership*, 39.

- Delegation is one way – boss to employee. Empowerment is two way, interdependence and dialogue about what is best in view of the vision and values of organization.
- Delegation is task oriented. Limited, finite and non-creative. Empowerment is goal and vision oriented, creative within agreed upon limits of responsibility and authority and results in “a permanent state of heightened authority.”
- Delegation limits horizon to task at hand. Empowerment expands horizons – anything is possible based on creativity.
- Delegation is supervisor-held accountability. “I work for him.” Empowerment is self-accountability. “I work for the organization.”<sup>212</sup>

The focus of empowerment is on the vision and direction of the organization, to be sure, but the accomplishment of the vision is through shared authority and responsibility. That is, the follower is given the authority to accomplish all he/she can. It is the leader’s job to provide the environment.

Empowerment happens in an environment intentionally created by the leader for the benefit of the follower, which is the best way to accomplish an organization’s mission. Leith Anderson, an experienced pastor and writer, describes the best way to breathe health and growth into an unhealthy and stagnant congregation through an earthy metaphor. He had a very sick and brown lawn and asked for advice on how to make it green and healthy. He received the simple and useful advice, “Focus on growing grass, not killing weeds.”<sup>213</sup> Applied to the church, a leader focuses on the strengths of each member, and empowers that member to exercise the gifts God gave him. This agrees with Paul’s admonition to the church at Rome. He tells them to exercise their gifts with passion and diligence (Rom 12:3-9). The church will accomplish its mission through individuals exercising their unique set of gifts. Sample balances the interest of the individual leader/follower relationship with the vision of the organization this way,

---

<sup>212</sup> Caroselli, *Empowerment Works*, 12.

<sup>213</sup> Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Minneapolis: Bethany Publishing House, 1992), 126.



Leaders don't really *run* organizations (although we often use that term in describing leadership). Rather, leaders lead individual followers, who collectively give motion and substance to the organization of which the leader is the head.<sup>214</sup>

In other words, leaders who want an effective organization, that is, one which accomplishes its vision, focus their attention on the individual follower *not on the organization as a whole*.

Postmodern leaders' agendas must be to serve their followers by creating an empowering community in which followers learn and participate in the mission. An empowering community is an ethical one. McLaren, states, "[The church] is about three things: community, spirituality, and mission."<sup>215</sup> The description of an empowering community really is the biblical definition of the Kingdom of God. From the beginning, community and participation were not separate, but integral to God's Kingdom. Eden was about men and women in beautiful and mystical unity with each other, and with their God. It was about care for God's creation, for responsibility and stewardship (Gen 2:15-23). When that did not work, due to sin and "the fall," God covenanted with a nation to bless them as long as they built an ethical society of justice and acceptance (Dt 11:1; cf. 5:10; 7:9; 10:12; 11:13, 22; 19:9; 30:16). The nation did not follow the Deuteronomic social order, however, but developed a nation characterized by greed and oppression. Isaiah hoped for a day when God would establish his city within which was peace, abundance and inclusion (e.g. Is 26:1ff). The prophet Micah saw injustice and oppression all around him, and called for repentance – a return to the simple faith of justice and humble worship (Micah 6:8). And Jesus simply said, "follow me and obey my

<sup>214</sup> Sample, *The Contrarian Leader*, 157.

<sup>215</sup> McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian*, 155.

teachings” (a loose paraphrase of Jn 14:23; Mt 28:18-20). We are called to be a community that is fully participatory in God’s unfolding drama. To do so, we, “in view of God’s mercy, offer [our] bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is [our] spiritual act of worship. ...[we are] transformed by the renewing of [our] mind” (Rom 12:1-2). In other words, we are transformed as we, in community, worship God and participate in the mission to the world. Postmodern leaders are, then, to be mission minded. The mission is out in the world, and so their intent is sending people out of the church, into the world with the ancient gospel message. After all, “the church is most effective when everyone’s out of [the] building.”<sup>216</sup>

So, what have I said about leaders and their followers? Leadership and power are intimately connected, and leaders have an opportunity to exercise this power to transform their followers. Leadership is about empowering others and releasing them to mission. So, to accomplish the vision, effective leaders serve their followers. This is the model currently being touted in contemporary business circles, but really found its origin in the words of Jesus Christ. In chapter two I delved into the biblical examples of power abuse, power use and authority. Power is to be used, not to take, as in David’s example, but to serve and empower, as in Paul’s example. Jesus teaches and exemplifies a near reversal of authority and submission by defining greatness as service. Submission is not patterned after a patron/client model, but interdependence between leader and follower, for both are to follow Christ and the leaders who have come and gone before, as Hebrews 13 states. I have gathered these thoughts and put them into a postmodern context where authority is not a position, but an earned right dependent upon values and authenticity.

---

<sup>216</sup> Posterski and Anderson, *Future Faith Churches*, 94.

The postmodern follower, however, also seeks the authenticity of the ancient creeds and ancient church – community, social mission and mutual acceptance.

How does one measure the success of a leader in the dawn of the third millennium? I'll leave the last word to Walter Wright, "Success in leadership is measured by the growth of your followers – not by how *many* followers you have."<sup>217</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> Wright, *Relational Leadership*, 40.

## Bibliography

- Aeschliman, Gordon. *Cages of Pain*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1991.
- Alan, Leslie C. *Ezekiel 20-48*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990.
- Alexander, Ralph H. "Ezekiel" in ed. Frank E. Gaebelin. *Expositor's Bible Commentary, The, Vol 6*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.
- Anderson, A. A. *2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel*. Word Biblical Commentary, Dallas: Word Books, 1989.
- Arnold, Bill T. *1&2 Samuel*. The NIV Application Commentary, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Balswick, Jack O. and Kenneth J. Morland. *Social Problems: A Christian Understanding and Response*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990.
- Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. London: SCM Press, 2001.
- Bilezikian, Gilbert. *Community 101*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1954.
- Braun, Willi. *Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Bridges Johns, Cheryl, "Meeting God in the Margins: Ministry among Modernity's Refugees." *The Papers of the Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey W., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985.
- Brown, Colin, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 1*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979.
- Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1877.
- Bruce, F.F. *Hebrews*, NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Bugbee, Bruce, et.al., *Network: The Right People...In the Right Places...For the Right Reasons, Participant's Guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Calcutt, Alan. "An Emerging Leadership Paradigm: Rediscovering Truth or Adapting to Change?" D.Min. Thesis McMaster Divinity College, 2004.

- Caroselli, Marlene. *Empowerment Works*. West Des Moines IA: American Media Publishing, 1999.
- Cladis, George. *Leading the Team-based Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.
- Collins, Jim. *Good to Great*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Collins, Phillip. "The Mystery of Christian Leadership." *McMaster Journal of Theology*. (Spring 1990): 19-31.
- Donaldson, David. "Homiletics and Heli-skiing: Radical Gospel for an Extreme Generation." *Evangelical Baptist*, September/October 2002, 8-9.
- Eldredge, John. *Waking the Dead*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Farber-Robertson, Anita. *Learning While Leading: Increasing Your Effectiveness in Ministry*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2000.
- Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988.
- Frankl, Victor. *Mans' Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963.
- Galloway, Dale. *On Purpose Leadership*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2001.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. *Seeker and Servant: Reflections on Servant Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.
- Hybels, Bill. *Courageous Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Johnson, David and Jeff VanVonderen. *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1991.
- Kim, Kwang-ki. *Order and Agency in Modernity*. Albany: State of New York Press, 2003.
- Klein, Naomi. *Fences and Windows*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002.
- Lewis, Philip V. *Transformational Leadership*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996.
- Lindbeck, George A. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984.
- Lines, Timothy A. *Functional Images of Religious Educator*. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 2001.
- McLaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

- Malina, Bruce J. *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Maxwell, John C. *Developing the Leaders Around You*. Nashville: NelsonWord Multimedia Group, 1998.
- Middleton, J. Richard and Brian J. Walsh. *Transforming Vision*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Miller, Donald. *Blue Like Jazz*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Moxnes, Halvor. *The Economy of the Kingdom*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Morris, Leon. "Hebrews" in ed. Frank E. Gaebelin. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol 12*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.
- Murphy Nancey and Brad J. Kallenberg. "Anglo-American Postmodernity: a Theology of Communal Practice." in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 26-41. London: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Nelson, Alan E. *Spirituality and Leadership*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002.
- Nelson, Peter K. *Leadership and Discipleship: A Study of Luke 22:24-30*. SBL Dissertation Series, 138. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994.
- Nouwen, Henri J. *Reaching Out*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.
- Palmer, Parker. *The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.
- Parent, Mark, "What I Expect from Denominational Leadership." Unpublished essay delivered at the National Staff Conference, Atlantic Baptist College July 1, 1991.
- Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Posterski, Don and Gary Anderson. *Future Faith Churches: Reconnecting with the Power of the Gospel for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1997.
- Sample, Steven B. *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Sheffield, Dan. *The Multicultural Leader: Developing a Catholic Personality*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2005.
- Smith, R. Payne and C. Chapman, "II Samuel" in ed. H.D.M. Spense and Joseph H. Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 4*. Peabody, MI: Hendrickson Publishers.



- Solle, Dorothee. *Creative Disobedience*. Cleveland, IN: The Pilgrim Press, 1995.
- Stassen, Glen H. and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Postmodern Pilgrims*. Nashville: Broadman Holman Press, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *SoulTsunami*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Taylor, John B. *Ezekiel*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary, Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 1969.
- Trites, Allison A. "Church Growth in the Acts of the Apostles." *McMaster Journal of Theology* (Spring 1990): 1-18.
- Vaughan, Curtis, "Colossians" in ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol 11*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978.
- Walsh, Brian J. and J. Richard Middleton. *Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Wilkes, Gene. *Jesus on Leadership*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale Publishers, 1999.
- Wright, Walter C. *Relational Leadership*. Carlisle UK: Paternoster Press, 2000.