LEADERSHIP THAT SERVES: A CROSS-CULTURAL INVESTIGATION INTO CLERGY ENACTMENT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

"Leadership That Serves: A Cross-Cultural Investigation into Clergy Enactment of Servant Leadership"

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Leadership theories have proliferated in the last several decades, as has the desire for ethical leadership. Servant Leadership was initially proposed as an ethical use of power in leadership, arguing that serving should be the motivation and leadership the enactment. After being largely ignored by the academic world for several decades, only recently has research interest in Servant Leadership increased. In contrast, the vocabulary of Servant Leadership was incorporated into Christian writings on leadership, to the point where the term is so ubiquitous that it is nearly synonymous with Christian leadership. Both the academic and theological discourses neglect the reality that cultures vary in their view of the ethical use of power. This variation was initially mapped by social psychologist Geert Hofstede, whose Power Distance (PD) rankings of national cultures was seminal and has generated research to this day. This project is a preliminary investigation into the possibility that Christian leaders' use of power may vary by culture.

The project employs a qualitative phenomenological methodology, involving semi-structured interviews with fifteen clergy from three different PD backgrounds: Philippines (PD ranking 94), Hong Kong (68), and Euro-Canadian (39). Significant differences in how leadership was conceptualized were found between the different PD

groups. Higher PD clergy more easily held a self-understanding of themselves as leaders and as having power than did lower PD clergy. While all the groups were motivated by a desire to serve, the higher PD clergy were more easily able to identify the leadership dimension within Servant Leadership.

The results suggest that the understanding and enactment of Christian leadership varies by culture, meaning that both the theological and academic discourses on Servant Leadership should be more attentive to variation by culture. Further, it would be wise for churches and ministries to engage in a culturally-aware discernment process to articulate and map Christian leadership in their settings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP THE ONLY CHRISTIAN WAY TO LEAD?

What is Christian leadership, exactly, and what makes it *Christian*? Does it look the same in each and every place, regardless of culture or context? These seemingly straightforward questions require us to explore concepts such as leadership, influence, power, and culture. These questions lead towards engagement with different cultures, to see if expectations and norms regarding leadership vary—and if so, how. These questions lie beneath countless conversations in churches about the "right" kind of leadership needed today.

In recent decades, a type of leadership termed "Servant Leadership" has grown in popularity. Initially proposed as an ethical motivation for leadership, this model has been taken up by churches to the point that it is often assumed as *the* Christian way to lead, so much so that it is hard to imagine a clergy leader stating that he or she is *not* a Servant Leader. This type of leadership is often framed as an ethical way to use power. However, the reality is that different cultures have differing understandings about the ethical use of power. Are they all correct? Is it possible that Servant Leadership as it is currently conceptualized is a Western construct, emerging out of cultures with lower acceptance of power differentials? If so, and if it is seen as a near-synonym for Christian leadership, might there be a Western bias in current Christian understandings of leadership? Might Servant Leadership look different in different contexts?

The Complexities of Defining Leadership

Leadership is less concrete and identifiable than some other practices (compared to preaching or counselling, for instance). It often exists below the surface of observable activities. John Dugan argues that leadership "is less concerned with the status quo and more attentive to issues of growth, change, and adaptation."[1] This means leadership is, at least in part, about exercising *influence*—a term that has "frequent usage in many formal leadership theories."[2] Influence can be seen as a form of power, and as such is embedded within many concrete activities in a typical church such as preaching, conversing, listening, asking questions, organizing processes, chairing or participating in meetings, telling stories, and so on. And yet, all these activities can also take place without a leadership dimension being consciously present or being present at all.

Because leadership may be embedded below the surface in diverse activities, it will be perceived differently by different people, or perhaps not perceived to be present at all. This also means that it may or may not have the effect intended. Dugan surveys the trajectory of leadership theory, discussing how it has evolved away from a simple focus on essences within a person and towards looking at the enacting of leadership within dynamic systems.[3] He argues that the enactment of leadership depends partly on the kind of leadership that is expected by the system: leaders "show up" with the kind of leadership the system is calling for. Dugan states, "people's perceptions, beliefs, and expectations regarding leaders and leadership often contribute to the creation of ideal prototypes. Ultimately, an individual or group could enact leadership based on just about

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[1] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 20.
[2] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 21.
[3] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 71.

any theory, but if it does not align with implicit assumptions, deep consequences may arise."[4] In other words, groups (for example, organizations, cultures, professions) have ideals as to what leadership looks like for them, and as a result people who fit the ideal begin to be noticed by others or begin to see themselves as leaders. This means that leadership is at least partly contextual; it could even be said that context, at least in part, creates its leaders. A leader who is effective in one context may not be effective in another: "perceptions of leadership are built on social constructions derived from one's cultural context and influenced by ideology and hegemony."[5] If leaders do not adapt when they shift into a new context, they may not be effective. Leadership may be visible or invisible depending on what individuals expect to see; their expectations of what leadership looks like may cause them to miss seeing enactments that lie outside their expectations. In an ecclesial setting where the extent to which clergy are given permission to lead might be contested, leadership may be happening but not seen because its enactment is intentionally subtle, below-the-surface, and woven into activities not perceived to be leadership.

This contextual understanding of leadership can be seen as a symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers, embedded within a commonly held set of norms and expectations. The idea of symbiotic relationship is a core part of Implicit Leadership Theory, which is an overarching systems approach to leadership that can be used with all other leadership theories. Implicit Leadership Theory "centers the importance of congruence between how people perceive leaders should be and how they actually show up" and "operates on the premise that individuals develop cognitive

[4] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 72.
[5] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 63.

schemas that serve as tools for meaning-making by assisting in the organization and processing of the massive amounts of information one encounters in life."[6] Based on these schemas, people develop prototypes of leaders that fit their cognitive schema. People see leadership in the way they are *expecting* to see it and leaders show up in ways that are congruent with their and their followers' expectations. Leaders are embedded in systems of meaning and expectation, and in a sense are generated by those systems. One such system is culture, which is the focus of this research project.[7]

Despite all these complexities of identification and categorization, leadership is clearly a practice of some sort. There is *something* there. If we consider the preponderance of books and seminars and degrees that have proliferated in the last thirty years in the Church that deal with this topic, clearly these are responding to some felt need. Despite the wide variety of theoretical frameworks and approaches that are in Dugan's survey, each would argue that leadership is a particular practice, namely, that something distinctive is happening.[8]

Leadership, then, can be understood as a *meta-practice*, within which are a variety of theoretical frameworks, each a specific way of approaching and enacting leadership. Within each theoretical framework are specific practices that concretize the framework's overall practice. While there are genuine differences in the theoretical approaches, they would all see leadership as something that *occurs*, or is *done*, and that it is an external, observable, interpreted reality.

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[6] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 72–73.

[7] There are other systems of meaning within each culture: family systems, organizations, denominations, social classes, generations, professions, and so forth. Each of these will exist within a culture and will interface with that culture's system of meaning.

[8] They may not use the term "practice," but they are all constructed in order to strengthen and improve leadership, which means that they see it as something that is enacted or practiced.

Core Practice

This dissertation project examines the practice of Servant Leadership as it is conceptualized and enacted by clergy from diverse cultures. I have spent my vocational life as a leader in churches and Christian organizations in Canada, and have been exposed to a plethora of books, materials, seminars, and conversations related to the nature and practice of Christian leadership, many of which use the phrase "Servant Leadership." I have worked alongside Christian leaders from a variety of cultures and seen a variety of leadership enactments being expressed, especially with regard to how power is used, all ostensibly in order to serve what is being led. These experiences have resulted in this core question: how is Servant Leadership articulated and practiced in cultures that vary in their ethical understanding of the use of power?

Importance of the Research

Within church congregations it is not uncommon to see differing expectations about leadership, often stemming from varying personal, cultural, and denominational backgrounds. Much of the popular literature that discusses Christian leadership is composed of single author works that promote the author's viewpoint; they are largely from Western cultural contexts and as such do not discuss how leadership might be enacted differently in various contexts or cultures. Terminology relating to Servant Leadership is commonly found in the popular literature, but much of it focuses on values and attitudes with little attention given to specific practices. This is of concern because it is the enactment of leadership into concrete practices that is seen and received

by those being led, either meeting or not meeting expectations, while values and attitudes remain invisible.

The concept of Servant Leadership looks at how to use power ethically. Robert Greenleaf pioneered the term in an essay in 1970, followed by a book in 1976, proposing it as an aspirational motivation rather than a leadership theory.[9] Greenleaf was a Quaker but did not frame Servant Leadership within Christian belief or as a Christian framework. He said that "the idea of the servant as leader came out of reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*," which portrays the central role of a servant that accompanies a group of men on a mythical journey.[10] Greenleaf's proposal resulted in two separate and rarely interfacing discourses: One is rooted in Christian thought and is largely attitudinal and aspirational; the second is academic and secular and seeks to conceptualize and then test practices in order to determine their effectiveness in organizational settings.

While at first glance Servant Leadership is a compelling and supposedly easily understood idea, it has significant complications. There are no agreed-upon set of practices, and it has been critiqued for being a Western approach to leadership given that emerged from a Western professional setting. It is therefore important to consider leadership enactment that may vary by cultural context. This process can begin by exploring how Christian leaders from a variety of cultural backgrounds experience leadership as they conceptualize and enact leadership practices, and to see to what extent Servant Leadership is a formative concept in their experience and enactment. This may help deconstruct the idea that one leadership approach is *the* Christian approach to apply

[9] Greenleaf, *Servant as Leader*; Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.
[10] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 21.

across all cultures and create space that allows for theological reflection on leadership that is attentive to cultural context.

Power Distance

Given that leadership is about exercising influence (or power) in order to effect change, and given that Servant Leadership was initially proposed as an ethical approach to using power but is potentially a Western-centric proposal, this project will focus on investigating differences in leadership conceptualization and enactment among clergy who come from cultures that differ in their view of the ethical use of power. I will use a framework, Power Distance, developed by social psychologist Geert Hofstede. Hofstede's seminal research in the early 1980s looked at various national cultures in order to identify differences and similarities between them. His work resulted in a quantitative dataset of numerical comparisons between values of national cultures. These numerical comparisons revealed four scales on which cultures could be located: Power Distance, Collectivism versus Individualism, Femininity versus Masculinity, and Uncertainty Avoidance.[11] Hofstede's research was pioneering in terms of the breadth of cultures being considered and the use of a large dataset which allowed for the mapping of cultures using numerical scores. Power Distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally."[12] The well-attested Power Distance scores, developed by Hofstede and added to by others, are a way of locating cultures based on their view of the ethical use of power. This project will explore how clergy leaders from cultures with

[11] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 28–33.
[12] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 61.

differing Power Distance scores conceptualize and enact leadership, and to what extent they identify with Servant Leadership as a guiding motif. Doing so will shed light on the applicability of the concept and theory of Servant Leadership in diverse cultures, especially with regard to their differing views on power, and will also help reveal the extent to which culture affects how clergy conceive of and enact leadership.

Overview of Research

This research project explores the experience, meaning, and enactment of leadership by clergy leaders, and is especially attentive to the extent that Servant Leadership terminology and practice is a part of their experience. Clergy were selected who come from cultural backgrounds on both the low end and high end of the Power Distance spectrum in order to identify commonalities and differences between the different groups.

Importantly, this research project is properly considered Practice-Led because it arises from and is rooted in my practice, as I have already outlined in brief above. Linda Candy states that "Practice-led Research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice. The main focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice."[13] The practice-led lens of this research takes into account the reality that the religious faith of Christian leaders will likely be significantly interwoven with their sense of identity as a leader and with the particularities of what they are seeking to accomplish.

[13] Candy, "Practice Based Research," 3.

The project employs a qualitative methodology. Since there is no one act that is equated with leadership, leaders need to find or make meaning within a variety of acts in such a way that they construe these acts to be leadership. Qualitative research involves identifying and understanding meaning(s) in the midst of the complexity of human life and is thus suited for the study of a practice as ambiguous as leadership.[14]

The specific qualitative methodology I employ is phenomenology. Creswell and Poth state that "a phenomenology study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon."[15] This project focuses on how clergy leaders experience their enactment of leadership, in order to understand what they are trying to do, discover how those self-expectations were formed in them, and note what the response is of the context they are leading.

My process includes ongoing reflexivity, whereby I actively reflect on my experiences of making meaning in leadership as I reflect on the responses of the study's participants. Swinton and Mowat argue that all qualitative research is in some measure autobiography.[16] Given that a key lens of the research is cultural situatedness, it is appropriate for me to reflexively acknowledge my social location as a middle-class professional practitioner in the Western world—I do not privilege this context but rather include as a necessary element in my practical theological reflection.

[14] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 29.
[15] Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 121.
[16] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 57.

Design and Methodology

To engage in this research, I conducted semi-structured interviews that included questions that explored internal understandings and postures as well as external enactments of leadership. I utilized an open-ended approach that created space for leaders to use whatever terminology they preferred to self-describe, which I anticipated would allow for culturally diverse frameworks, language, and metaphors to come to the fore. The questions also tested vocabulary related to Servant Leadership, to discover the extent to which that vocabulary resonates or does not resonate with the leaders.

Using a combination of Hofstede's original power distance scores and the ongoing research that emerged from his work, clergy leaders were selected from three contexts that vary in their Power Distance scores, for a total of fifteen interviews.[17] Canada was one context, with its lower score, and an additional two contexts were chosen, both of which have higher scores at varying levels. The purpose of adopting this structure was to see if there are similarities in themes, understandings, or enactments within each context, which may also be different from the other contexts.

Interview results were analyzed for the purpose of identifying thematic similarities and differences in internal understandings and external enactments. I looked for how frequently "servant" and similar terminology were present, as well as initial reactions from interviewees based on my use of this terminology. Based on these results, I was able to make some initial conclusions as to whether Servant Leadership is a Western-situated framing of leadership or is translatable cross-culturally. I also made

[17] For a full listing of scores by country, see Hofstede et al., *Cultures & Organizations*, 57–59.

some initial conclusions as to how variable is the conceptualization of Christian leadership across various cultures.

I found that there is diversity in how leadership is conceptualized and enacted cross-culturally, and so concluded that church congregations need to consciously engage in a process of contextualization with regard to their understanding of Christian leadership. This process should be especially attentive to the concept of Power Distance, given that the use of right use of power is at the core of ethical leadership. In addition, the findings of this preliminary study unearth several important ideas that bear further scrutiny and research.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 reviews literature that pertains to this project. It looks at the complexities that are present in discussing leadership, explores the academic and theological conversations that have taken place regarding Servant Leadership, and looks at how cultures differ in their view of power.

Chapter 2 describes the Research Methodology and Findings. This chapter makes a case for the research methodology chosen, including the questions that were asked in the interviews. In this chapter the initial findings are summarized, and areas of similarity and difference are identified.

Chapter 3 analyzes the data resulting from the interviews. This chapter explores consonances and dissonances in the data as it is assessed against conceptual understandings found in the literature review. I discuss whether there is difference between the lower and higher power distance settings, in areas such as

leadership metaphors, internal self-understanding, understanding and use of power, and enactment of leadership practices.

Chapter 4 reflects theologically on the core question of how much variation can take place in leadership if the leadership is still meant to be Servant Leadership. It looks at New Testament examples of leadership enactment, explores themes present in the examples and in the research findings, and proposes themes that should inform Servant Leadership across cultures.

Finally, the concluding chapter makes recommendations for next steps in both the academic and theological conversations, and recommends that churches and other ministries be more intentional at discerning the shape of leadership they desire to enact.

Conclusion

As churches in Canada grow more multi-cultural, and as the global Church becomes more interconnected, it is critical that Christians evaluate leadership approaches and theories and help clergy and congregations contextualize these theories in their settings. This is particularly true for Servant Leadership, which has grown in popularity to the point where it is seen as the only Christian way to lead. By discovering the extent to which leadership experiences and enactments vary by culture, space can be opened for a conversation within congregations that is less about arguing over the "right" and "wrong" ways to lead, and more about discerning the shape of leadership that believers desire and expect their leaders to enact.

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP?

Servant Leadership seems at first glance to be such a good idea that it is hard to imagine anyone being opposed to it. After all, did not the Son of Man come to serve, not to be served (Matt 20:28)? Are not Christians supposed to serve God and serve one another? Who would be in favour of the seeming opposite, where leaders are self-serving, accumulating power and prestige? It is to such questions that the imagination turns, resulting in the seemingly self-evident conclusion that Servant Leadership is good, moral, and perhaps even the only Christian way to lead.

However, deeper reflection leads to additional questions. Are Servant Leaders meant to take orders from those they lead, since, after all, historically and in cultures today with actual servants, that is what servants do—obey their masters? Do Servant Leaders serve God, or people, or both, and if both, what happens if God or the leader or the people desire different things? Given that the term Servant Leadership does not appear in the biblical text, what justification is there that the theory is theologically valid (that is, faithful) and not simply an imposition of secular leadership theory? Finally, how might the fact that the term was coined by a middle-class Western white male in a professional business context shape questions about the leadership theory's applicability to other contexts?

This chapter will engage in a literature review of important sources in order to explore the complexities relating to Servant Leadership. I will begin by looking at

leadership itself, after which I will look at the two separate and rarely interfacing conversations about Servant Leadership—the academic and the theological—and identify the strengths and deficiencies of each. I will then look at a core component of leadership that varies by culture, which is how power is used. Finally, I will consider the existing research on Servant Leadership and cultural differences in the use of power. Through reviewing each of these elements, I will reveal that there is indeed something good and Christian in the discussion around Servant Leadership, but that the term itself is ambiguous in significant ways. It has had a Western and professional bias, and there is a serious lack of understanding as to how it might look in different cultures or whether it is even an appropriate term for all cultures.

Leadership's Complexities

What is leadership, exactly? Surely leadership is about more than just being given a title or being in a leadership role. As discussed in the Introduction, as a meta-practice leadership is not concrete and obvious, saturating other practices in complex ways. Indeed, because leadership may be embedded below the surface in diverse activities, it will be perceived differently by different people, or perhaps not perceived to be present at all.

Leadership theory has shifted over time, away from focusing on essences within person and towards considering how it is enacted within systems.[1] The three key pieces at play in any leadership theory are: Person (the identified leader and others), Process (what happens), and Purpose (the end goal).[2] Leadership theories cluster together

[1] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 71.
[2] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 70.

depending on the extent to which they are attentive to these three pieces.[3] As mentioned earlier, the enactment of leadership depends partly on the kind of leadership that is expected by the system.[4] Dugan notes that early leadership theories assumed the right of leaders to lead and did not even bother to discuss the ethical ramifications of this, instead focusing on techniques and approaches that accomplished the leadership task successfully. This has changed in contemporary leadership theories, which have, in general, given greater attention to leadership's functioning in the context of relationality.[5] Contemporary theories commonly take into consideration the power dynamics that are present in leadership. Dugan locates Servant Leadership within a cluster of theories that shifted the theoretical discussion away from productivity, to focus on transformation of the persons involved.[6] He states that this set of theories marked "a distinct shift in the dominant leadership literature attempting to alter its intentions" away from a focus on productivity and output and towards "the concurrent importance of people, process, and purpose."[7]

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf coined the term "Servant Leadership" in order to describe a particular motivation for leading: "The servant-leader is servant first . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of

[3] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 71.
[4] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 72.
[5] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 60.
[6] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 189.
[7] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 189.

the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions."[8] Greenleaf proposed this motivation as a necessary requirement for using power ethically in leadership. He criticized coercive power: "The trouble with coercive power is that it only strengthens resistance. And, if successful, its controlling effect lasts only as long as the force is strong. It is not organic. Only persuasion and the consequent voluntary acceptance are organic."[9] He stated that "we live at a time when holders of power are suspect, and actions that stem from authority are questioned. Legitimize power has become an ethical imperative. Can discriminating people be helped to find the means for legitimizing power?"[10] Greenleaf's work has been used primarily to discuss how persons lead, even though his writing is primarily about how institutions lead.[11] His goal was less about describing a particular leadership style, and more about re-shaping society:

> The only way to change a society (or just make it go) is to produce people, enough people, who will change it (or make it go). The urgent problems of our day—the disposition to venture into immoral and senseless wars, destruction of the environment, poverty, alienation, discrimination, overpopulation—are here because of human failures, individual failures, one person at a time, one action at a time failures.[12]

A key thing to note is that in Greenleaf's thinking, "leader" is a role and "servant" is the motivation. They are not a blending of two opposite roles or styles. In fact, one of Greenleaf's extended portraits of a real-life Servant Leader was someone who in Greenleaf's own words "was an autocrat," clearly showing that Greenleaf had a

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[8] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 27.
[9] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 55–56.
[10] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 19.
[11] Greenleaf's book focuses primarily on institutional leadership in various sectors of society: business, non-profits, education, foundations, and churches. Only three of the eleven chapters are focused on the leader as an individual.
[12] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 60.

significant focus on the outcomes the leader generated in the institution he or she served and on the effect of that institution on society, and less of a focus on a particular style of leadership.[13]

Greenleaf's writing spawned both theological and academic conversations. The alignment of servant terminology with servant imagery in the Scriptures makes it no surprise that the theological conversation began earlier than the academic conversation. Servant Leadership was not engaged at an academic level for thirty years; only in the last two decades is it being re-configured into a leadership theory as practices are hypothesized and tested in real-life settings.

Servant Leadership: The Academic Discussion

It may be a mistake to call Servant Leadership a "theory." It is certainly not yet a fully formed theory. Greenleaf's writing was aspirational, articulating a desired type of leader, and his thinking "attracted little interest in the academic community until the 2000s."[14] As recently as 2008, Robert Liden stated that, "Although Greenleaf eloquently articulated the potential of servant leadership . . . conspicuously lacking is formal theory and research designed to test the claimed strengths."[15]

Dugan groups Servant Leadership within a set of theories that shifted the theoretical discussion away from productivity and towards transformation.[16] About the same time as Greenleaf was doing his initial writing, James Burns published his influential book *Leadership,* where he said that transforming leadership occurs when

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[13] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership,* 262.
[14] Liden et al., "Servant Leadership: Antecedents," 358.
[15] Liden et al., "Servant Leadership," 162.
[16] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 189.

> one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality . . . Various names are used for such leadership . . . elevating, mobilizing, inspiring, exalting, uplifting, preaching, exhorting, evangelizing . . . [T]ransforming leadership ultimately becomes *moral* in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leaders and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both."[17]

Bernard Bass expanded on Burns's theory (re-naming it *Transformational Leadership)* by looking at the psychological mechanisms that underlie it and also considering how it could be measured.[18] These two books were seminal in shifting leadership theory away from a transactional approach to one that looked at the persons, systems, and processes involved: "for almost 40 years, transforming and transformational leadership has represented the dominant approach in the leadership literature."[19] The work of Burns and Bass spawned significant academic investigation, while Greenleaf's work languished in the realm of a philosophical framework until the last two decades. Both Bass's and Burns's theories are similar to Greenleaf's work, though with somewhat less attentiveness to social responsibility and individual relationships, and with more focus on organizational outcomes. Rakesh Mittal and Peter Dorfman note that "the primary allegiance of transformational leaders is to the organization; the personal growth of followers is seen within the context of what is good for the organization."[20] Jill Graham argues,

> The concept of servant-leadership goes beyond Bass' (1985, 1988) transformational leadership in at least two significant ways. First, it recognizes social responsibilities in the call to serve . . . the have-nots in our world, who are recognized as organizational stakeholders to be served, together with all the

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[17] Burns, *Leadership*, 20.

[18] See Bass, *Performance beyond Expectations*, Chapters 3–6, 11, 12. Bass also took away the moral dimension of Burns in that he argued that leaders such as Hitler were transformational, though in a negative direction.

[19] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 189.

[20] Mittal and Dorfman, "Servant Leadership across Cultures," 47.

> others. Second, servant-leadership provides a way to answer the question, "why should people grow even if they don't want to?" To affirm that people are *served* by someone who influences them to become wiser, freer, more autonomous, etc., is to say that it is in people's interest to change in those ways.[21]

The relatively short amount of time that academic research has been conducted on Servant Leadership leads to some challenges. There is no common consensus as to an operational definition that puts into practice Greenleaf's philosophical and values-based description: "the lack of an operational definition of SL made it difficult for scholars to develop research studies, and the literature of servant leadership lagged behind that of other leadership theories."[22] Because of this, there is also no consensus as to the practices that comprise Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership is not "owned" by any one organization or theoretician and so there are a variety of perspectives and voices.[23] Even the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership is just one among many organizations that promote and teach Servant Leadership.

However, while there is no consensus yet on the practices that express Servant Leadership, progress is being made. In 2019, five of the leading researchers in Servant Leadership theory co-authored an article that summarized the trajectory of Servant Leadership research to 2018, identifying three distinct phases.[24] Phase 1 was the conceptual development of Greenleaf's ideas. Phase 2 has been about developing measurable practices and is the most recent phase. Before Phase 3—the development of a model—can begin, a consensus will need to be developed regarding the best way to measure concrete practices. To facilitate this, the study's authors evaluated sixteen

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[21] Graham, "Servant-Leadership in Organizations," 113. Emphasis in original.
[22] Pousa, "Measuring Servant Leadership," 212.
[23] van Dierendonck and Nuijten, "Servant Leadership Survey," 250.
[24] Eva et al., "Servant Leadership."

studies that attempted to measure concrete practices, and recommended measurement scales that had the strongest validity and most robust methodological base and were thus suitable for future use in the development of a model.[25] Specifically, they argued that the three scales they recommended were "the only measures that had gone through rigorous process of construction and validation." [26] I will briefly review these recommended scales to discover what is currently considered most valid, in the academic conversation, as pertains to the enactment of Servant Leadership.

The first scale they said had strong validity is from a 2008 foundational study by Liden et al. which reviewed existing research and identified nine dimensions that are measured by twenty-eight practices. These dimensions were: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, behaving ethically, relationships, and servanthood.[27] Based on this review the researchers developed a number of hypotheses designed to identify Servant Leadership behaviours while controlling for factors overlapping with similar leadership theories; they validated the hypotheses through further research and confirmed that Servant Leadership is distinctive compared to theories that are close to it:

> The ability of servant leadership at the individual level to uniquely explain community citizenship, in-role performance, and organizational commitment distinguishes it from both transformational leadership and LMX [Leader-Member Exchange]. Perhaps servant leaders are unique in the way they exhibit an active concern for the well-being of broader organizational constituencies and the community at large. This trait is of particular interest in a period during which the behavior of a small number of executives has caused the public to question the credibility and integrity of corporate leaders as a group. The results pertaining to organizational commitment highlight a noteworthy aspect of the servant leadership construct. We have suggested that it is the process of

[25] Eva et al., "Servant Leadership," 116.
[26] Eva et al., "Servant Leadership," 129.
[27] Liden et al., "Servant Leadership." The article further describes each dimension and the practices that express them.

> interaction/exchange between the leader and the subordinate that is central to servant leadership theory.[28]

One of the distinctive elements of this 2008 construct is that it includes conceptual skills, not just character and behaviours.[29] This is an important inclusion because it is possible to be a moral, loving person, but to not have the skills to be an effective leader. Also worth noting is that the dimension "behaving ethically" should not be read through a theological or moral lens; rather, it means that leaders are "interacting openly, fairly, and honestly with others."[30] In this and other academic studies, there is no attempt to describe or measure the moral worth of the whole effort (such as the outcomes of the organization), or, to put it in theological terms, there is no evaluation of the *telos*. Whatever values or morality are present have to do with the type of relationality between the leader and followers.

The second measurement scale with strong validity identified in the 2019 article was developed by Sendjava et al. in 2018. This team took the well-attested thirty-five item Servant Leadership Behaviour Scale and simplified it while retaining its validity. The simplified construct measures six dimensions: voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence.[31] These dimensions are distinctive compared to that of Liden et al. in that they are more holistic in terms how they view the development of followers, including reference to morality and spirituality (though not in specifically Christian terms). The authors argue that "without the spirituality dimension, there is nothing

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[28] Liden et al., "Servant Leadership," 174.
[29] Eva et al., "Servant Leadership," 116.
[30] Liden et al., "Servant Leadership," 162.
[31] Sendjaya et al., "SLBS-6," 942.

unique or new about servant leadership nor would servant leadership become a truly holistic leadership approach."[32]

The final scale considered in the 2019 article was established by van Dierendonck and Nuijten in 2011.[33] These researchers surveyed the literature to that point and found ninety-nine items that could signify Servant Leadership. After extensive analysis they simplified this into eight dimensions which they went on to validate: empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship. They were critical of prior studies that focused too much on "servant" and not enough on "leader" and proposed their instrument as a solution that looks at both. This dovetails nicely with Greenleaf's thinking, who saw servant as the motivation and leader as the enactment.[34]

> Most—if not all—scales of servant leadership mainly deal with what we would call the "people" side of servant leadership. This includes aspects like: helping, serving, being honorable, authentic, and empathic, behaving ethically, healing, and accepting. Although certainly valuable and important, they do not cover the whole concept. The use of the term "servant" in servant leadership often results in too much attention for the people aspects of servant leadership. This can hinder its implementation in organizations. It is indeed important to pay equal attention to the "leader" part of servant leadership. Servant leadership is also about giving direction. A servant leader knows very well where to take the organization and the people in it. A servant leader needs to be a courageous steward who is able to hold people accountable for their own good . . . The instrument we propose focuses on both the "people" and the "leader" aspects of servant leadership.[35]

In summary, there are three key points to note from the academic conversation on Servant Leadership. First, academic exploration based on Greenleaf's work did not take place for several decades after Greenleaf's initial writing, and so the development

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[32] Sendjaya et al., "SLBS-6," 942.
[33] van Dierendonck and Nuijten, "Servant Leadership Survey."
[34] Eva, "Servant Leadership," 117.
[35] van Dierendonck and Nuijten, "Servant Leadership Survey," 251.

of a model for Servant Leadership is still in its infancy. This should cause one to be wary of anyone who says that they "know" what Servant Leadership is. Even though the term Servant Leadership is used widely in Christian ministry settings, it is doubtful that those who use the term actually mean something like "the enacted practice of leadership that is rooted in Robert Greenleaf's ideas." Second, the academic trajectory of conversation shows how difficult it is to translate a set of values into enacted practices and operations. Practices are read (that is, understood) differently by different people, and what is intended is not always what is received. The three scales from the 2019 study have similarities and overlap, but they are not the same and are not measuring exactly the same things. This leads to a third point: that the academic conversation should be commended for its focus on enactment. Indeed, much of the research interrogates the experience of subordinates rather than the intentions of leaders. The conversation is centred on the how and what of leadership enactment—that is, on the practice of leadership—and has developed a certain amount of discipline in how to evaluate these practices. Greenleaf's work was a set of prophetic calls and aspirational ideas but did not include practices; the academic conversation has worked towards operationalizing Greenleaf's ideas by conceptualizing practices and measuring their effects.

In this regard, the academic conversation could be said to be engaging in an effort akin to Practical Theology, in that they are paying real attention to practices and effects. As we shall soon see, enactment is rarely if at all dealt with in the theological Servant Leadership conversation, which tends to assume that good intentions and right thinking on the part of the leader will result in good effects. The focus on articulating

and measuring the enactment of leadership by identifying concrete practise and the effects of those practices on subordinates is a critical need in churches and other Christian contexts.

There are two pieces missing from the academic conversation that this project will contribute towards. First is attention to a possible transcendent morality and the impact of an organization on society. Greenleaf's initial writing spoke of this, but the trajectory of the conversation since then has focused on the relational interface of leaders and followers. While there is some generalized attentiveness to the effect of an organization on society, this is not yet defined in any concrete way. For this reason, the academic conversation on its own is insufficient as a guide to theologically reflect on the meta-practice of servant leadership, though it is a helpful resource. Second is attention to the possibility that the efficacy and enactment of Servant Leadership may vary by context or culture. Given that the idea of Servant Leadership was posited by a white male from a professional business context, and that his focus was on Western professional institutions, caution should be taken in extending Servant Leadership into other contexts uncritically or without adaptation. One may even consider the possibility that it is a Western construct and not one that should be applied to all cultures. In 2012 Mittal and Dorfman stated that "To date, there is an almost complete absence of country comparisons on servant leadership."[36] There are some exceptions, which will be reviewed later in this chapter, but almost all the studies in the literature were performed in Western settings. Given that we live in an increasingly globalized and multi-cultural

[36] Mittal and Dorfman, "Servant Leadership across Cultures," 555.

era, there is an urgent need to consider how the enactment of leadership in general and Servant Leadership in particular may vary depending on culture.

Servant Leadership: The Theological Conversation

It is a challenge to know whether to entitle this section "Christian Leadership" or "Servant Leadership," because while servant and servant leadership terminology is common in the Christian literature, other terms and metaphors are used as well. The academic conversation is structured according to the norms of the academy, meaning that conversational trajectories are rooted in particular areas of research. It is therefore more bounded than the Christian literature, which is for the most part written by, to, and for practitioners, and which makes no attempt to restrict the discussion to the particular term "Servant Leadership" or to interface with other authors (especially academic researchers) who are having the same discussion. Having said this, Servant Leadership still *does* appear to be a primary term. As an example, a quick search for "Servant Leadership" on the InterVarsity Press webpage returned 585 results; of the first ten books listed, six explicitly mention "servant" or "servant leadership" in the title, or as a chapter title, or in the book description (see Appendix I).[37] My thirty years of experience in Christian leadership would bear this out: other terms are sometimes used—visionary leader, prophetic leader, pastoral leader, to name but a handful—but Servant Leadership is a frequently used descriptor. This is so much the case that it serves for many as a near-synonym for Christian Leadership, to the point where it would be unthinkable for a clergy leader to declare that he or she is *not* a Servant Leader. It *is* plausible for a clergy

[37] One book is entitled "Steward Leadership," a term which Greenleaf essentially uses as a synonym for Servant Leadership.

leader to say that they are not a prophetic or visionary leader, because these are seen as types of leadership, and to not be one is not seen as a moral issue. But it *would* be seen as a moral issue if one said that they were not a Servant Leader. It does appear that Servant Leadership, while not the exclusive descriptor of Christian leadership, does have a primacy of place.

It is also a challenge to know whether to entitle this section "The Theological Conversation" or "The Christian Conversation." Much of the literature is written for practitioners, not scholars, and so does not attempt to situate itself explicitly within an existing academically-oriented *theological* conversation. At the same time, if we believe that every statement that is rooted in Christian faith is in some measure a theological statement, and if we believe that the enactment of the life of faith is the domain of Practical Theology, then we can indeed frame this literature as being theological in nature, even if it is not academically theological.

Not surprisingly, the theological conversation has a strong moral tone and both explicitly and implicitly argues Servant Leadership is the "right" way for Christians to lead. While some writings do attempt to be practical and application-oriented, the tendency is to be less focused on concrete enactment and more conversant with principles and ideas; there is also no discussion of context and no attempt to test Servant Leadership practices in the real world of human experience.[38] In the following paragraphs I will review three books that represent the breadth of typical types of literature and one book that is atypical, which will give an idea of the scope of current Christian literature on Servant Leadership.

[38] The only types of "testing" or proof offered are anecdotal examples known to the author.

Skip Bell's edited volume *Servants and Friends* claims to be "the most complete biblical theology of leadership available."[39] Twenty scholars and practitioners write out of their particular expertise and offer a breadth of entry points into a biblical theology of leadership. Multiple terms and images are used to illustrate biblical leadership, but for our purposes I will focus on the interface with Servant Leadership as a concept, a theme which appears over and over. Introducing the Old Testament section, Davidson says,

> The language of servanthood is pervasive throughout the Hebrew Bible. Some sixteen different Hebrew/Aramaic terms for "servanthood" are found . . . [involving] more than 1,500 occurrences . . . This astonishing number of occurrences reveals the pervasiveness of the concept of servanthood in the Old Testament . . . The concept of servanthood embraces the whole range of Old Testament leaders, *thus comprising what may be regarded as a universal term depicting leadership in the Hebrew Bible*.[40]

Davidson's listing of basic theological insights into leadership has the image of "servant" or "service" in every statement:

- Scripture contrasts two different forms of leadership: power leadership and servant-oriented leadership.
- A servant leader is someone whose nature is characterized by service to God and to others, possessing a servant's heart, and such an individual need not be in a position or office of responsibility to exercise leadership.
- There is a stark contrast between the (forced) service of the world and the (voluntary) service of God.
- Service is ultimately done to the Lord, but it necessarily also involves serving the covenant community.
- Service is a gift from God.
- Servant leadership calls for a wholehearted, willing-spirited personal relationship with God.
- The call and career of the servant leader is marked by humility and total dependence upon God, not self.
- Servant leaders exhibit other character qualities and life habits that lead to successful leadership.[41]

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[39] Bell, "Introduction," 28.
[40] Davidson, "Leadership Language," 34. Emphasis added.
[41] Davidson, "Leadership Language," 39–42.

As the editor summarizes leadership principles in the Old Testament, "leadership is service"[42] is listed as one of seven, but it is not framed as a foundational principle, just as one among many. Similarly, Patterson's summary of eleven leadership principles in the New Testament uses the terms "service"[43] or "servant"[44] twice, but also utilizes other images, like "incarnational,"[45] such that it is not clear how these intersect with each other in a coherent way.

> The complexity of using servant as an image is acknowledged:
> Jesus binds together two seemingly opposite roles. He can legitimately say that He is their leader, their lord, their teacher, even their king. His authority and His status are over them, and He is not renouncing that lordship. But at the same time His Highness makes Himself His Lowness. He has dramatically abased Himself and humbled Himself before them, and He will do so even more when He dies the most humiliating death—death by crucifixion. He suffers to serve them.[46]

Servants and Friends does a remarkably thorough job engaging the breadth of Scripture but fails to address several important things. There is no explicit hermeneutic: the New Testament is treated similarly to the Old Testament, and Jesus appears as merely one of several leadership examples. Perhaps this is a result of having a diversity of writers: in essence, the book is a series of articles, with an attempt at summary by the editor at the end. Also, while there is sometimes an attempt to speak of the enactment of leadership (and not just the internal attitude), the enactments described are rather vague rather than being concrete practice s. When practices are selected from the biblical text, they are used to support the underlying argument, with other practices being ignored. For example, Nehemiah is called a Servant Leader in Barry Gane's article but

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[42] Bell, "Reflection," 381.
[43] Patterson, "A Reflection," 388.
[44] Patterson, "A Reflection," 387.
[45] Patterson, "A Reflection," 386.
[46] Johnston, "The Gospels," 178–79.

Nehemiah's beating of opponents and pulling out of their hair (Neh 13:25) is conveniently ignored.[47] Finally, it is context-less, so it assumes that Christian leadership looks the same everywhere in all situations. This may indeed be a theological assumption of the writers, but it is never acknowledged nor addressed.

In contrast to the broad but unfocused work of Bell's volume, Gene Wilkes's *Jesus on Leadership* is entirely focused on Jesus. Wilkes identifies seven key principles seen in Jesus' leadership: he humbled himself and allowed God to exalt him, followed his father's will rather than sought a position, defined greatness as being a servant and being first as becoming a slave, risked serving others because he trusted that he was God's Son, left his place at the head table to serve the needs of others, shared responsibility and authority with those he called to lead, and built a team to carry out a worldwide vision.[48] The first four of these are primarily internal and attitudinal, while the last three are primarily enactments that flow out of the first four. The strength of Wilkes's approach is that he has a clear hermeneutic—to look at Jesus and do what he did—that is convincing for those who see themselves as followers of Jesus. However, Wilkes carefully selects only certain data from Jesus' life in order to make his argument. For example, Jesus did not give the disciples any input into the shape of their mission—should that therefore characterize Servant Leadership today? Jesus served his father, and he served His disciples, but in very different ways: are both Servant Leadership? Further, Wilkes's first five principles are not about servant *leadership,* but about straightforward serving. Wilkes's argument is that leaders are to approach leadership

[47] Gane, "Nehemiah," 273–86.
[48] The entire book is structured on these postures and enactments.

with that internal posture of service, which is a fair argument, but these principles do not help us know what that sort of leadership looks like.

Don Page's *Servant Empowered Leadership* is a practical manual for organizational leaders. Page begins by noting that leadership is about the right use of power, which is to serve: "Leadership is all about the exercise of power in order to make things happen through others. How that power is used will determine whether the led believe that good or bad leadership is being exercised."[49] Page is not writing as a scholar and so uses terms loosely, an example being that while his primary term is "servant" leadership, he also calls it "servant-empowered" leadership, as in the book's title. He states that both Servant and Transformational leadership were reactions to autocratic leadership and distinguishes between the two (as does the academic conversation), noting that Transformational Leadership prioritizes the goals of the whole group, while Servant Leadership prioritizes the goals of each individual.[50] Having made this distinction, he claims to be writing about Servant Leadership but there are several times his description is closer to Transformational Leadership. For example, Page states that vision is normally birthed in the heart of the leader and then shared with others,[51] and that one of the key jobs of the leader is to sell the vision.[52] The strength of Page's book is that it does sketch out key things for a Servant Leader to do, so gets closer to describing concrete practices. However, as with other writings, context is not addressed.

As I have stated, these first three books are typical of the types of resources found in the theological literature. While the treatments Bell, Wilkes, and Page offer

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[49] Page, *Servant Empowered Leadership*, 45.
[50] Page, *Servant Empowered Leadership*, 73.
[51] Page, *Servant Empowered Leadership*, 124.
[52] Page, *Servant Empowered Leadership*, 162.

may be found helpful for certain uses, Steven Crowther's *Biblical Servant Leadership* is atypical in that it is much more thoughtful, theologically nuanced, and academically aware. Crowther's work is theologically centred but interfaces carefully with the academic conversation. He engages the Old Testament with a careful, explicit hermeneutic: "the Old Testament is appropriated by means of Jesus as its ultimate fulfillment and normative interpretation. In interpretation of the Old Testament, the text needs to be carefully reviewed finding the message of timeless truths and then looking for ways that these texts are fulfilled in Christ and the New Covenant as their interpretive metric."[53] Crowther considers theories close to Servant Leadership, primarily Shepherd and Transformational, and recognizes the strengths in these. Compared with other theological treatments, Crowther does not appear to be arguing for a constructed concept called Servant Leadership; rather he carefully considers the worlds of leadership theory and Scripture and seeks to bring them together, noting strengths, weaknesses, and complexities. While his primary terminology is "Servant" he is not trapped by it. For example, one of his critiques of Servant Leadership theory is that it fails to deal substantively with the issue of authority:

> Proper use of authority is an issue for biblical leadership; however it does not appear in servant leadership. The proper use of authority for guidance and encouragement instead of for dominance and fear needs to be addressed in the model of leadership. Power is always an issue in leadership and teaching even servants how to use it well can be important. Stewards as found in 1 Peter 4 were lead servants. They had to learn to use authority properly since it was delegated authority.[54]

[53] Crowther, *Biblical Servant Leadership*, chapter 4, para. 5, Locations 984–86.
[54] Crowther, *Biblical Servant Leadership*, chapter 7, para. 10, Locations 2907–11.

In the theological conversation, Servant Leadership is informed by a Christian understanding of mission, as described in the Scriptures and as exemplified in Jesus. For this reason, the theological conversation is particularly helpful for churches and church leaders, though it seems to have less to say to Christians leading in secular contexts. However, there are a number of deficiencies as well. First, too often the theological conversation fails to identify how good intentions are enacted concretely into practices. Second, attention is rarely given to context. As a result, too often the author's preferred way of leading is what influences the discussion. A better approach might be to first have a hermeneutically careful theological discussion on principles or values, and then to have a discussion on enactment that includes context as an important dimension. Third, the conversation's theology of power is weak. Not all authors address power, and even those who do fail to address the fundamental question of why and how it is okay to use power to affect another human being, and to what end.

These deficiencies in the theological conversations result in a situation where each book or article explicitly or implicitly argues that its way of approaching Servant Leadership (or leadership in general) is *the* way. This is surprisingly one-dimensional and superficial, given the multi-cultural nature of urban centres in the Western world and the long history of the Western church's global mission movement, where it has learned about the need for contextualization. There is a lack of awareness that good intentions (including good internal ideas about leadership) that are not contextualized for appropriate enactment may result in leadership that is ineffective and may even cause harm. Might we imagine how this conversation could be different, if, instead of each author trying to describe *the* way to be a Servant Leader, they grappled seriously

with the biblical text in all its complexity with a careful and nuanced hermeneutic that could be applied situationally, instead of trying to leverage the Scriptures to argue for a particular set of ideas?

Enacting Leadership: Cultural Differences in Power Distance

I have argued that one of the key gaps in both the academic and theological conversations is a lack of attention to the role of cultural context in leadership. There are a small number of studies that have looked specifically at this, which will be reviewed shortly, but first I will give attention to a specific aspect of leadership that varies by culture: how power is used. Greenleaf argued that Servant Leadership is, at its core, about the ethical use of power. Therefore, while there may be several dimensions of Servant Leadership that might vary by culture, at a foundational level we need to look at power and how its usage varies by culture.

As mentioned earlier, Geert Hofstede's research in the 1980s looked at national cultures in order to compare how they saw and engaged the world around them. Hofstede stated that "in the first half of the twentieth century, social anthropology developed the conviction that all societies, modern or traditional, face the same basic problems; only the answers differ."[55] In other words, there is a commonness to all humanity but also a differentness that is expressed in cultural diversity.

Hofstede had access to data from what was essentially the world's first multi-national company, International Business Machines (IBM). IBM had collected large amounts of information from its employees in a variety of countries to discover their

[55] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 44.

attitudes and expectations towards management and their workplaces. This information was primarily numerical, in that respondents chose answers that were assigned a numerical value. Numerical averages were calculated for each question for each country; he then engaged in the statistical procedure of factor analysis to cluster questions into groups where the average scores varied together in a similar fashion.[56] By analyzing this data and then conducting further research, Hofstede was able to create a quantitative dataset of culture comparisons unlike anything else that had existed up to that point. Hofstede's research has been widely accepted and continues to serve as the baseline research into cultural differences, spawning similar studies that have built upon the initial research and added to it. The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project is the most noteworthy as an ongoing project that has, to date, involved over five hundred researchers conducting research in 150 countries.[57] Hofstede stated that his "statistical analysis of the country averages of the answers to questions about the values of similar IBM employees in different countries revealed common problems, but with solutions differing from country to country."[58] One of the early critiques of Hofstede's research is that he used data only from IBM employees, but his response to this critique was that this actually strengthens the data by removing other variables that may exist within a culture, such as the differences between people attracted to non-profit versus for-profit roles.

Hofstede identified four dimensions on which cultures were located: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Collectivism vs. Individualism, and Femininity vs.

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[56] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 55.
[57] "Globe 2020 About"
[58] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 45.

Masculinity.[59] These four dimensions were not part of an *a priori* hypothesis that was then tested; rather, through a series of multiple regression and correlation analyzes, certain questions and responses were found to be correlated. He identified themes that were common to the questions that had correlation with one another, resulting in the four dimensions mentioned above.[60] This was the first time that research had been done that focused not on a deep understanding of a particular culture or a few cultures, but on how cultures compared to other cultures. It was also pioneering in that it mapped cultures on the four spectrums using numerical scores, which show each culture's relative positioning compared to the other cultures. Hofstede made no value judgments or moral evaluations of a culture's location on any of the spectrums: the goal of his research was simply to help people understand one another without judging each other, and to acknowledge their differences so that they could find ways to work together.[61]

Power Distance is defined by Hofstede as "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally."[62] The diversity of cultures in our world means that cultures exist on all places on the power distance spectrum, from high to lower power distance. A key thing to remember is that the score represents how the *entire* culture views the appropriate distribution of power—a high power distance culture means that *both* managers and subordinates in a culture have a similar understanding and expectation about how power and authority should be distributed, used, and expressed. Another way of putting this is

[59] Hofstede, "The Interaction," 347–48.
[60] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 28–33.
[61] Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 25.
[62] Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 61.

that different kinds of leadership—and their inherent differences in use of power may be recognized as leadership in some contexts but not in others.

The fact that both the theological and academic conversations regarding Servant Leadership are taking place almost exclusively in Western, lower power distance contexts, raises significant questions. Might it be the case that Servant Leadership is best expressed in low power distance contexts or is only suitable in those contexts? Or is Servant Leadership an attempt to re-shape contexts that are higher power distance? Or, possibly, is the expression of Servant Leadership different in a high-power distance setting than in a low power distance setting? Or is Servant Leadership just an expression of a Western way of leading?

It is important to figure out which of these possibilities informs the work being done in Servant Leadership, and to clearly state the intent of Servant Leadership in a world that has cultures with so much power distance variation. To do this, the discussion needs to move beyond internal values and towards concrete enactment, because it is in enactment that leadership values get expressed and experienced in practice.

Servant Leadership and Cultural Differences

While most of the Servant Leadership literature ignores context, there are a handful of research studies that look at its potential expression in varying cultural contexts. As I reviewed earlier, Mittal and Dorfman have stated that there is a significant lack of country comparisons for Servant Leadership. Based on a literature review they identified five core characteristics of Servant Leadership: Egalitarianism, Moral Integrity, Empowering and developing others, Empathy, and Humility. They analyzed the degree

to which these characteristics were endorsed as important for effective leadership across cultures by examining the correlations between societal cultural values and servant leadership dimensions, in order to explore how different societies might endorse the concept of servant leadership in different ways.[63] After testing these hypotheses in various cultures, they concluded that while "overall servant leadership is viewed as being very important for effective leadership across cultures," how this is conceptualized, articulated, and accepted varies by culture; they also found that power distance is negatively correlated with Egalitarianism and Empowering.[64] They state,

> An analysis of cultural values in a society provides us with additional understanding of how and why specific societies differ in their endorsement of servant leadership. Since the cultural values depict the deepest beliefs and aspirations of people in a society, these are likely to influence that society's endorsement of attributes perceived to be important for effective leadership. For example, we found that the cultural value of power distance correlated significantly and negatively with the servant leadership dimensions of Egalitarianism, and Empowering. This is not surprising since unequal sharing of power with its rigidity of cultural stratification of leadership–followership relationships is certainly not in concert with the concept of Egalitarianism or empowering. The negative correlation of power distance with the dimension of moral integrity is more complex to decipher. It is conceivable that a desire for more power operates through a personal mode (Carl et al., 2004), which does not resonate with the elements of trust and collaboration which are part of our moral integrity sub scale. It is relevant to note that in our analysis, there was no significant difference among culture clusters in their endorsement of moral integrity. It is therefore possible that the negative correlation of power distance with moral integrity is being counterbalanced by the positive correlation of moral integrity with cultural values, such as performance orientation and collectivism. For example, Bolivia and New Zealand, which are amongst the highest scorers for power distance are also very high in performance orientation. Evidently, more research is needed to fully fathom the depth of power distance–morality relationship.[65]

[63] Mittal and Dorfman, "Servant Leadership across Cultures," 555.
[64] Mittal and Dorfman, "Servant Leadership across Cultures," 562.
[65] Mittal and Dorfman, "Servant Leadership across Cultures," 566.

In a 2007 PhD dissertation, Darin R. Molnar triangulated Hofstede's cultural dimensions with Servant Leadership categories introduced by Jim Laub[66] and with data from the World Values Survey (WVS) respondent database. Laub's categories are a part of his Organizational Leadership Assessment servant leadership model, which he has continued to develop and work with.[67] The categories were compressed into a single score by Sherri Hebert, allowing for triangulation.[68] The categories are: (a) values people; (b) develops people; (c) builds community; (d) displays authenticity; (e) provides leadership; and (f) shares leadership. The WVS dataset had the following categories: (a) framework; (b) perceptions of life; (c) environment; (d) work; (e) family; (f) politics and society; (g) religion and morality; (h) national identity; and (i) sociodemographics. Molnar chose countries that were in both the Hofstede and WVS datasets and then recoded the WVS data into a binary—present or not present—framework. He looked for crossover points between Hofstede's dimensions and the WVS categories, which enabled him to produce a Servant Leadership score for each country. This allowed for comparisons between Hofstede's scores and Servant Leadership scores for each country. Molnar found that there was "a strong positive correlation between Hofstede's definition of masculinity and femininity and servant leadership at the general study level" but that the other Hofstede dimensions had no correlation with Servant Leadership scores.[69] It is certainly surprising that he discovered no correlation between Servant Leadership and Power Distance. Molnar notes that one of the significant limitations of his study is that all the countries studied were in the

[66] Laub, "Assessing the Servant Organization."
[67] Laub, *Leveraging the Power of Servant Leadership.*
[68] Hebert, "The Relationship."
[69] Molnar, "Serving the World," 106.

Northern Hemisphere and were either European or had a history of significant European influence, and that there is a significant need for similar research in other parts of the world.[70] This is a very significant limitation of the study.

In 2007, Maureen Hannay produced a theoretical paper that identifies characteristics of servant leaders in the workplace and then discussed how they might be applied in cross-cultural settings using Hofstede's five cultural dimensions (Hofstede added a fifth dimension in 1991).[71] She concluded that Servant Leadership is unlikely to work very well in a high power distance context, primarily because employees would not feel free to give feedback and so they would not be empowered.[72]

In 2014, Raj Selladurai and Shawn Carraher worked with the GLOBE project's nine cultural dimensions (which includes Hofstede's dimensions to which four new dimensions have been added through ongoing research) and paired them with Servant Leadership characteristics that had a similar theme as the dimension. The purpose of this study was to increase intercultural capacity in leaders. Selladurai and Carraher acknowledge that some research has found that "where power distance is high, or where power is shared at the top only, servant leadership may not be embraced."[73] However, they still clearly believe that Servant Leadership should be an aspirational goal, saying that "being fully self-aware, intercultural leaders are poised to decrease the power distance, lead from within or from the heart, engage cultural differences in ways perhaps unknown to other type leaders."[74]

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[70] Molnar, "Serving the World," 110.
[71] Long verses Short-Term Orientation. See Minkov and Hofstede, "Fifth Dimension."
[72] Hannay, "The Cross-cultural Leader," 6.
[73] Whitfield, "Servant-Leadership with Cultural Dimensions," 52.
[74] Whitfield, "Servant-Leadership with Cultural Dimensions," 63.

Conclusion

In summary, this review of the salient literature has revealed several ideas that will inform this project. First, leadership is not just about intent or internal values but includes the enactment of intent into practices. Second, Servant Leadership is one of a handful of theories that shifted the leadership conversation away from a leader-centric model and towards one that looked at systemic impacts. Third, Greenleaf's proposal was about one's motivation and was thus an aspirational call to leaders to serve; it was not about a specific type of leadership. Fourth, Greenleaf's proposal spawned two conversational trajectories, academic and theological, which rarely interface. Fifth, with rare exception, what is missing in both conversations is attentiveness to cultural context. Sixth, cultures vary in their understanding and expectation of how power should be used.

This review has shown that there is a significant amount of complexity underlying the seemingly simple term, Servant Leadership. It means different things to different people, as has been seen in the difference between the academic and theological conversations. Even within each conversation there is variation. Also, the current Western-centric focus of the discussion is troublesome. To further develop the understanding of Servant Leadership, it would be wise to enter into conversation with leaders from a variety of cultures in order to interrogate their understanding of leadership, including their motivations and practices. This is what I have done in this research. The next chapter describes how I proceeded with this investigation.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

At a foundational level, this research project deals with the idea and enactment of "Christian leadership" by clergy leaders. To this point in exploring this topic a number of conclusions have been reached. First, that the simple word "leadership" is filled with complexity, interfacing with a number of concepts such as influence, power, enactments, and cultures. Second, a type of leadership called "Servant Leadership" was proposed as an ethical use of power and has been popularized in the Church to the point where it is difficult imagining a clergyperson claiming to *not* be a servant leader. Finally, cultures vary in their understanding of the ethical use of power and this differing understanding can be mapped using Hofstede's Power Distance scale. This scale implies that leadership conceptualization and enactment may look different in various contexts, especially with regard to the use of power, and that even the conceptualization and enactment of *ethical* leadership might vary by culture, which calls the idea that Servant Leadership is applicable to every context into question. It may in fact be inappropriate to conceive of or speak of Servant Leadership as the right or moral way to lead in all contexts and situations. Or perhaps what Servant Leadership looks like varies by context. These are important issues because implicit assumptions about leadership lie at the foundation of conversations in churches about the "right" kind of leadership they need. Further, given the Western-centric nature of the Servant

Leadership discussion, it may be a form of cultural hegemony to propose it as an ethical way of leading for all cultures.

To fully explore this issue would require multiple projects which engage in research with leaders and with those they lead from a variety of cultures and from a variety of contexts within each culture, in order to interrogate understandings, motivations, and practices of leadership. The results of the above avenues of research would help situate Servant Leadership appropriately within the realm of leadership theories and within the Church. Thus, the present project is but an initial investigation into these issues.

This preliminary research project investigates the attitudes of clergy leaders towards the practice of leadership to discover their understanding of and enactment of leadership in their church, with attentiveness to the extent that Servant Leadership terminology and practice is a part of their experience. The purpose of this is to discover whether they all understand and enact leadership in similar ways or whether diversity is present—and, if there is diversity in conceptions of leadership, to consider whether that diversity might be related, at least in part, to the clergy leader's cultural background.

Methodological Framework

This research project is located within the field of Practical Theology because leadership is about lived human experience, both for the leader and those who are led. Leadership is enacted. If there is no enactment there is no leadership, there are just ideas and concepts residing inside someone's head. Practical Theology affirms that human

experience is an important source for theological reflection. Swinton and Mowat state that:

> . . . Interpreting situations is an important "missing dimension" of the theological enterprise. As such, "remembering" this forgotten dimension is one important contribution that Practical Theology can offer to the field of theology. This is not of course to suggest that historical texts are unimportant. As has been suggested, dialoguing with historical texts and Christian tradition is an important dimension of Practical Theology. It is, however, to suggest that the text of human experience in general and the experience of the Church in particular holds interpretative significance for theological development.[1]

I will use Swinton and Mowat's definition of Practical Theology to guide my research and reflection: "Practical Theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world."[2]

The research is also Practice-Led in that it is rooted in my practice and intended to add new knowledge to the practice with respect to the contextualizing of leadership enactment. This means that I engaged in personal reflexivity as the findings were interpreted and as theological reflection took place. I have spent my vocational life as a leader in churches and Christian organizations in Canada and has been exposed to a plethora of books, materials, seminars, and conversations related to the nature and practice of Christian leadership, many of which use the phrase "Servant Leadership." I have also worked alongside Christian leaders from a variety of cultures and has seen a variety of leadership enactments being expressed, especially with regard to how power is used.

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[1] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology,* 27.
[2] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology,* 19.

The project employs a qualitative phenomenological methodology because it investigates how clergy experience leadership in a meaningful way.[3] Since there is no one concrete act that is equated with leadership, leaders need to find or make meaning within a variety of acts in such a way that they construe these acts to be leadership. Qualitative research involves identifying and understanding these meanings in the midst of the complexity of human life, and as such is suited for the study of a practice that is as ambiguous as leadership.[4] In contrast, any quantitative approach to measuring leadership would have to make *a priori* assumptions about what to measure, but given my argument that leadership enactment might be culturally-conditioned it would be inappropriate to make such assumptions. Because assumptions about leadership are culturally conditioned, they need to be bracketed so that instead of asking questions that are embedded within those assumptions, open-ended questions should be used, in order to see how leaders think, feel, experience, and enact leadership.

Creswell and Poth discuss phenomenology, arguing that it "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon."[5] The experience of leadership for the leader begins internally within him- or herself, with a sense of who he or she is as a leader and what they should do as a result. This leads to them enacting acts that they construe to be leadership. This enactment is experienced and responded to by those they lead. The leader experiences the responses and themselves respond. Leadership is a dance of experience, an ongoing interactive dance of relationality between leaders and the contexts they lead.

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[3] Peoples, *Phenomenological Dissertation*, 3.
[4] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 29.
[5] Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 121.

I anticipate that some aspects of meaning will be common to all participants, that other aspects would vary by cultural background, and also perhaps that each cultural background might have a shared common understanding that is different from the other cultures. For this study a hermeneutical phenomenology approach was used that allows for involving the perspective of a researcher, in contrast to a transcendental phenomenology approach which is more exclusively centred on the experience of participants.[6] A hermeneutical approach allows for personal reflexivity on the part of the researcher, and for my experience to enter into dialogue with the data—though not in a defining or privileged way.

Four steps commonly found in phenomenological methodology are followed, as outlined by Neville Greening.[7] First is the process of bracketing, "where preconceived beliefs and opinions concerning the phenomenon research are identified and held in abeyance."[8] Edmund Husserl's philosophy describes this using the Greek word *epoche*̧ which means "abstention, stay away from."[9] Max van Manen states that, "Bracketing means parenthesizing, putting into brackets the various assumptions that might stand in the way from opening up access to the originary or the living meaning of a phenomenon."[10] The second step is intuiting, "where the researcher now remains focused on the attributed meaning of the phenomenon by the preceded research"[11] in order to develop a shared understanding of the phenomenon. The third step is analysis, where "categorizing and making sense of the significant meanings of the phenomenon is

[6] Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 126.
[7] Greening, "Phenomenological Research," 89–90.
[8] Greening, "Phenomenological Research," 89.
[9] Van Manen, *Phenomenology*, 215.
[10] Van Manen, *Phenomenology*, 215.
[11] Greening, "Phenomenological Research," 90.

created."[12] Units of meaning that emerge from what the participants said are synthesized into broader themes that are common to the experience of all the participants.[13] As stated above, there may be some themes common within each cultural group that are different from the other cultural groups. The final step is to use the practice of writing to fully describe the phenomenon. The goal is to provide a rich, thick description of the phenomenon by employing different styles of writing that van Manen calls "experiential, thematic, vocative, and interpretive."[14]

The goal of this methodology is to understand the leader's sense of who they are in their role, what that means, and what they do as a result. Having revealed this, focus can be given to the shared understandings within each cultural group and the differences between cultural groups. While this project does not directly engage with the church that the clergypersons are leading, it is anticipated that he or she will make comments that articulate the consonance or dissonance they experience as they interact with their church as a leader; this consonance or dissonance will implicitly surface some of what their congregation may be expecting of their leader(s).

Data Collection

Clergy leaders were purposively sampled from cultural backgrounds that are in different places on the power distance spectrum, in order to identify commonalities and differences between the various groups. The three cultural groups chosen were: Cantonese-background (from Hong Kong), Filipino-background, and "Canadian"

[12] Greening, "Phenomenological Research," 90.
[13] Peoples, *Phenomenological Dissertation*, 59.
[14] Van Manen, *Phenomenology*, 376–88.

background (which henceforth will be referred to as "Euro-Canadian").[15] Hong Kong has a Power Distance score of 68, the Philippines score is 94, and Canada's is 39.[16] The basis of choosing the specific cultural groups was that, besides being located in different places on the Power Distance spectrum, all of the groups are known to be represented plentifully in the research context (Canada) and are known to have significant fluency in English. They were also accessible through professional networks which were known to me.

Time and financial constraints did not allow for interviews to take place in the countries-of-origin and so clergy who live in Canada were selected. In addition, I am unilingual (English) which limits interviews to English-speaking clergy.[17] The requirement for Euro-Canadian clergy was that they have lived in Canada for all their adult life and have pastored in Euro-Canadian churches, where the majority of the congregation is of European descent. The requirement for the Cantonese and Filipino clergy was that they arrived in Canada as an adult within the last five years, or, if they arrived more than five years ago, have pastored in congregations that are the same culture as the culture into which they were born. The rationale behind these requirements is that if their pastoral ministry has been with people from the same culture as their childhood culture, they will be functioning largely according to the norms of that culture, as opposed to Euro-Canadian culture, even though they are now living in

[15] The terms used relate to the primary shaping culture, not to the person's citizenship. "Canadian" refers to people who were born in Canada or who arrived in Canada pre-adulthood; the actual Canadian clergy interviewed were all of European descent and so henceforth the term Euro-Canadian will be used.

[16] Hofstede et al., *Cultures & Organizations*, 57–59.

[17] It is conceivable that interviews could have taken place by use of an interpreter. However, I felt that the interpretation process itself could insert or shift meaning in ways not intended by the clergyperson being interviewed, unbeknownst to me.

Canada. In my past professional roles I became familiar with congregations that are largely Cantonese or Filipino, and observed that they do indeed function with different cultural norms than Euro-Canadian congregations. In the case of the Cantonese clergy, the Cantonese congregations they pastored functioned in Cantonese. The Filipino clergy served in Filipino congregations that functioned in English; English is an official language in the Philippines and is spoken by a significant majority of Filipinos.

Filipino and Cantonese-background clergy were recruited through faculty at Tyndale Seminary and the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries Centre. Euro-Canadian clergy were recruited through my professional networks. Potential participants were emailed either by myself or Tyndale faculty (depending on the cultural group they were in). The email described the topic of the research, the criteria for participants to be eligible to participate, and how the interview would be conducted. A document was attached which offered a fuller description of the research along with a consent form. The email script is included in Appendix II and the Letter of Information / Consent is in Appendix III.

The goal was to interview five clergy from each cultural group. However, it was a challenge to access a fifth Filipino participant and so the project ended up recruiting five Euro-Canadian, six Cantonese, and four Filipino participants. All the participants lived in Canada at the time of interview; six lived in Western Canada, one in Atlantic Canada, and the rest lived in southern Ontario. Two of the Euro-Canadian clergy and one of the Cantonese clergy were female; the rest were male.

As a qualitative hermeneutical phenomenological study, the project does not require the size of sample that a quantitative study (which aims to make statistically

verifiable conclusions) would require. Literature on phenomenological research consistently states that data should be gathered until operational saturation is reached, which means that additional interviews would discover no new information.[18] While this makes sense conceptually, the challenge is that it is not possible to know ahead of time what number of participants would be required in any specific study to reach this level. Greg Guest et al. surveyed the methodological literature and found that a wide variety of recommendations were given for number of participants, with no evidence being presented to back up the recommendation.[19] They then reviewed data from a study involving sixty interviews and documented the degree of data saturation and variability being achieved as additional interviews were conducted, and found that saturation occurred at twelve interviews, with basic meta-themes being present as early as six interviews.[20]

The goal in this study was not actually to achieve full saturation within each cultural group, but rather to discover differences between and similarities within the cultural groups in terms of clergy self-understanding and enactment of leadership. To achieve this the research engaged in purposive sampling. Given that each of the cultural groups was homogeneous in terms of being clergy and in terms of being from the same culture, I expected that sufficient saturation would occur earlier than with a heterogeneous grouping. Guest states that saturation will be reached sooner with purposive sampling than with random sampling: "We assume a certain degree of participant homogeneity because in purposive samples, participants are, by definition,

[18] Guest et al., "How Many Interviews Are Enough," 59.
[19] Guest et al., "How Many Interviews Are Enough."
[20] Guest et al., "How Many Interviews Are Enough," 59.

chosen according to some common criteria. The more similar participants in a sample are in their experiences with respect to the research domain, the sooner we would expect to reach saturation."[21] Given the plan to purposively sample and that full saturation within each group was of less interest than the ability to do comparisons between the groups, it was my judgment that approximately five participants from each cultural grouping would be sufficient to see similarities within each group and differences between the groups.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online via Zoom from mid-June to early September 2022. Each interview lasted forty to sixty minutes and was recorded using Zoom's recording feature. The audio recordings were transcribed automatically using software. I then reviewed them for accuracy. The participants were told that while there was a planned set of questions, they could speak about anything that related to their experience of leadership. The interviews started with broad open-ended types of questions designed to explore the interviewee's self-understanding of themselves in relation to the term 'leader' (for example, "what words would you us to describe your experience of leadership?"). I chose this approach because 'leader' is only one of several terms that may be applied to a clergy role, and so no assumptions were made that all clergy gravitate to that term or hold it with ease. It was expected that some find their experience of leadership to be easier than others and that they embrace that term with greater ease and confidence than others, and that perhaps among other things this is related to where they (that is, their culture) lie on the power distance scale. Later questions became more specific in order to explore specific aspects of leadership,

[21] Guest et al., "How Many Interviews Are Enough," 76.

especially related to Servant Leadership (for example, “Have you heard of the term ‘Servant Leadership?’” and “In your experience of leadership do you sense that you have power?”). The purpose of this design from broad to specific was to ensure that the interviewer did not signal to the participant at the start any specific language or metaphors with regard to leadership, instead allowing them to articulate their own experience using words that were meaningful to them.

The questions were designed to have participants articulate their experience of leadership, to describe their identity as a leader, and to describe some of what their enactment of leadership looked like. Also explored were the internal responses leaders have to their contexts’ reactions to their leadership. The open-ended approach and conversational tone of the interviews created space for leaders to use whatever terminology they preferred to self-describe, which would allow for culturally diverse frameworks, language, and metaphors to come to the fore. A full list of questions, including possible follow-ups, is found in Appendix IV.

The purpose of adopting this approach was to see if there were similarities in themes, understandings, or enactments within each cultural grouping, as well as to see if these are distinct from the understandings and enactments of the other cultural groupings. As stated earlier, the experience of leadership is a dance, in which internal understandings and expectations and hopes interact with external practices and events and more broadly with how the system in which the leader is functioning responds to their leadership. Given this, I expected that understandings and enactments of leadership would not be random or trans-cultural but in fact emerge and be generated by the cultural system in which the leadership is happening. The questions also specifically

looked for how frequently “servant” and similar terminology is present and how meaningful this was to the participant, as well as initial reactions from participants based on my use of this terminology in the interview.

The names of the interview participants were anonymized by re-naming them with a code referring to their Power Distance background: HPD for the Filipino clergy whose power distance score is 94 (HPD1, HPD2, HPD3, and so on), MPD for the Cantonese clergy whose score was 68, and LPD for the Euro-Canadian clergy whose score was 39. This terminology will be used for the rest of this dissertation, along with PD to mean Power Distance. Interview results were coded and analyzed in order to identify thematic similarities and differences in internal understandings and external enactments.

Summary of Results

Participants’ Experience of Leadership

The first interview question participants were asked was to describe their experience of leadership. The open-ended nature of the question was intended to elicit their most immediate and top-of-mind experience of leadership, hopefully bringing to the surface what their most normative experience is and how they normally conceptualize that experience. Most of the respondents primarily used feeling words, describing their internal emotional state as they led, while some shared what they believed leadership to be.

Feeling-words

HPD (Filipino) participants responded with words that were largely positive, such as: great, inspiring, motivational, challenging, and full of learning. In comparison, the LPD (Euro-Canadian) participants had a broader range to their descriptions, with words such as: roller-coaster, encouraging, wounding, uncertain, challenging, and inviting. One LPD participant repeatedly used the term "misfit" throughout the interview to describe their sense of incongruence with the role of leader (LPD3 01:06). Another LPD participant said that they "never went into the ministry with a sense of the word leadership" (LPD5 01:37). There was a breadth of feeling-words in the MPD (Cantonese) group, though less negative overall than the LPD group, with words such as: growing, triumphs and defeats, regrets and learnings, exciting, fulfilling, challenging, frustrating, and learning.

These responses contain a wide diversity of vocabulary within each PD group, which is not surprising given the open-ended nature of the question that gave individuals freedom to answer any way they wanted. At the same time, it is notable that the HPD participants used words that were largely positive while LPD participants spoke more often and more frankly of negative (hard) experiences. MPD responses were both positive and negative.

What Leadership Is

While most of the respondents used feeling-words to describe their experience of leadership, some responded with what they think leadership is. Two HPD participants used words such as influence and leading as a servant. Three MPD participants used

words such as influence, mission with relationship, and leading by example. One LPD respondent spoke of influence, shepherding, and being visionary.

Leadership: Hard vs. Joyful, Good Job vs. Bad Job

The initial open-ended question was followed by probing more deeply into their experience of leadership, asking about when leadership was hard and when it was joyful, and when they felt they had done a good job and when a bad job in leading. In all the PD groups many of the respondents spoke of joy coming from seeing people grow in their faith, using words and phrases such as: see steps of faith, growth, spiritual breakthrough, seeing lives transformed, maturing people, yield to the Lordship of Christ, light bulb moments when someone really gets it, and stepping out of their comfort zone. There were no noticeable significant differences in responses between the PD groups. However, LPD respondents mentioned a few things not mentioned by the other groups: participating in leadership in God's Kingdom, having a purpose that enables them to step in and solve problems, meeting needs, having a teaching ministry, knowing that their sense of calling matched what the world needed, and knowing God's delight. Two HPD and one LPD respondent spoke about joy coming from people developing in leadership and ministry, seeing people "turn into leaders" (HPD4 11:13) and saying that "[it is] most joyful to me if I'm seeing all of our leaders [leading] the church and less supervision of me" (HPD3 08:43).

When describing hard experiences or times when they thought they did a poor job, HPD respondents mentioned relational conflicts in the congregation, times when there is no support from their team, collateral damage from decisions they make, the

challenge of prioritizing family and personal relational health, and discouragement from the devil. LPD respondents also spoke of relational challenges: dealing with dysfunctional people, conflict in leadership teams, moral failure, unrealistic expectations of themselves and from others, and disappointing people. One LPD respondent mentioned the challenge of people refusing to acknowledge what the problem is. Another said that they felt ill-equipped for their role and had a low sense of self-worth, and one said that they never went into ministry with the idea of being a leader. MPD respondents also spoke of relational challenges: needing to make tough decisions, feeling alone in leadership, personality clashes and power struggles, and not having enough relational capital.

Identity: Do They Think of Themselves as a Leader?

After these initial questions about their experience of leadership, participants were asked a direct question that invited a 'yes or no' response, relating to the participants' internal sense of themselves as leaders: "do you think of yourself as a leader?" Notable differences could be discerned between the PD groupings. Of the four HPD participants, three answered "yes" immediately while one responded "probably, I would say, because of my experience" (HPD2 16:20). MPD participants were almost as clear and unequivocal as the HPD participants, with four responding with some variant of "yes" and one saying, "people told me yes" (MPD4 10:18) while another said "sometimes, sometimes" (MPD2 09:18). In contrast, only one of the LPD respondents answered "yes" and they immediately qualified it by saying that they are a "reluctant" leader, noting that some of that is because of their gender (LPD2 11:02). Another LPD

respondent also called themselves "reluctant," saying that "the identity of leader is not one that's meaningful to me" (LPD4 19:31). One LPD respondent called themselves a "misfit" in response to this question, a term they used several times in the interview (LPD3 01:06), and another responded "not really" (LPD5 12:03). Another LPD said that they never went into the ministry with the idea of being a leader (LPD5 01:37). Given the fact that "leader" is a contested term when applied to clergy and knowing that higher PD contexts are more comfortable with unequal power distribution and are therefore more comfortable with the exercise of leadership by individuals, it is not surprising that clergy from higher PD backgrounds were more comfortable with answering this question with a straightforward positive response.

Power and Influence

Understanding of and Relationship to Power and Influence

The interviews then moved to another direct question, which explored the participants' understanding of, and relationship with, the idea of having power and influence: "In your experience of leadership do you sense that you have power? You might also call it influence." HPD respondents easily answered with 'yes' or variants of that with almost no equivocation, though they did acknowledge the potential downsides in the use of power. HPD1 said "I do. I think it is not because of the position, but it is actually born out of the influence, right? . . . you get that through building relationships" (HPD1 41:30). HPD2 said "So being a pastor, you have the power, because when you communicate, you command, you have to lead, the congregation will listen to you, because they trust you" (HPD2 41:50). HPD3 answered "Yes. In the sense that people

respect me, people will follow my instruction . . . they're following me and . . . I have influence with them because whenever you ask them something to do . . . they will be available and be happy in doing that. That way I could say that I have power. Right? I could say . . . influence" (HPD3 34:15). HPD4 shared "Yes, of course, I have power. I have authority because that's God's promise in giving you authority. If God called you to be a leader, then God is [going to] empower you. God empowers you through the Holy Spirit to lead people. Because if you have no power, then how can you lead people?" (HPD4 38:24).

LPD respondents for the most part also affirmed that they had power but were more cautious, equivocal, and nuanced in their initial response to the question. LPD1 observed "there is a power . . . an influence that comes to anyone in the kind of roles that I'm in or you are in . . . Part of it is the character that gets developed over time. Part of it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that has brought us to that place and gifted us to be able to be effective. There's definitely power, there's definitely influence, and we have to be aware of it" (LPD1 39:50). LPD2 commented "Yes. But again, I would say as reluctant leader, it's taking the time to realize that. So yes, I have power that comes from God, as he gives it authority to lead authority in his church. . . I think there's a great power. And of course, with great power comes responsibility in that in being able to influence people and them inviting you into their lives" (LPD2 29:56). LPD3 said "Yeah. Do I want power? Not Really. If I have to rely on power to lead people. I think I'm missing the boat" (LPD3 40:31). LPD 4 responded "Power is one of my favourite topics. There's so many different kinds of power . . . So, I think that in terms of my own position in the system that I occupy I think I have a fair bit of power . . . I have

influence. I have trust. The people that I lead trust me. The people that I lead listen to me and I have influence over them" (LPD4 42:34). LPD5 noted "I am very cautious with power and authority" (LPD5 40:57).

MPD responses were somewhere in-between LPD and HPD responses, largely positive but with some cautions. MPD2 responded with a question: "what do you mean by that?" To which I responded "Is that a word that sits comfortably with you? Or is it not?" MPD2 went on to say "Oh, probably not a comfortable term that I would like to describe myself with power . . . the power of influence is way better than the authority. Okay. You're my pastor. So, you have this authority. Now, you have the influence. That's what I will follow. I will rather people will say that you have you have the influence into my life. And you have that relationship established, a trust amongst us" (MPD2 45:27). MPD3 responded "Yeah, yeah. But different kinds of power . . . when you're standing on God's side you have power, because the power comes from that, right? So, I have to be very careful that whatever I say, whatever I do my intention or whatever, you know, [that I am] on God's side. Then I have the power, I can speak the truth with power. I can do things and talk to people with power" (MPD3 40:36). Two MPD leaders answered with one word: "yes."

While all three PD groups affirmed that they had power and influence, the higher PD groups were more comfortable and less equivocal in using the terms.

Cautions

All the PD groups identified cautions in using power; notably, however, the LPD respondents emphasized cautions more than the other groups. LPD1 spoke of the story

of David and Saul, and how Saul was constantly trying to make things happen, which is dangerous: “I can go one of two ways. I can force this to happen, I can seize control, I can give way to the voices and the fears, or I can sit back like David and trust in the timing of God, even when it doesn’t make sense and feels like it’s taking forever” (LPD1 28:54). They also shared, “You can easily manipulate it, you can easily misuse it for your own purpose and power. You can get to the place where you create a culture where people defer to you, out of honouring those in spiritual leadership over you, which is not healthy for the church or for you. And it certainly doesn’t raise up or build up leaders. But I see so many people fall into that trap on a continual basis” (LPD1 39:50). LPD4 differentiated between coercive and indirect power, and said “you can use either kind of power and the situation dictates what kind of power . . . you use” (LPD4 43:23). LPD5 answered,

> I [am] very cautious with power and authority. I’m very aware of the incredible danger of the longing and lust for power. I attach the danger to pride. And I consider pride the deepest sin. . . I just see too many people wanting authority and power. And all for the wrong reasons. I don’t do things for because I have the authority or the power or whatever. I want to do them because they’re right. I want to do them because it’s biblical. And so I’m very cautious, because I know my heart is deceitful as anybody. And I can do things for the wrong motives. I can do things. When push comes to shove, and suddenly we’re in a conflict at the church, I could use my power. I very intentionally will not. For instance, at the business meetings we have, rarely do you hear me talk. Because my words have weight. And, and I can swing a congregation I know I can. And therefore I don’t want to try. I want them to come together and decide together. Now, I will answer questions or those kinds of things. But power scares me. And so I’m very cautious for how I influence. (LPD5 40:57)

The other PD groups also expressed cautions, though with less emphasis than the LPD group. For example, HPD2 said, “if you abuse the power of the influence for your personal benefit, that’s not the way it shouldn’t be. . . power should not be abused” (HPD2 41:50). HPD3 said:

> I do believe in in the principle that if you use that power, that power without God's leading, I think it will not become fruitful. But if you're using it with dependency on the Lord, praying for it, before communicating it to any person, I think that will be blessed by the Lord, a power or influence that is God given. I think it will be people will accept it. But if you're doing it with your own desire to, to influence or to do something that you actually would like to see, or it's a different desire, it's a selfish desire for your power. I think that will not be blessed, especially in a church context. (HPD 35:16)

Right Use of Power, and to What End

In addition to warning about the potential misuse of power, participants also spoke of the right use of power, that is, to what end power should be used and how to use it in a way that is not abusive or wrong. Many of the participants in all the PD groups spoke of the importance of relationship, saying that influence comes out of trusting relationship with congregants.

HPD2 spoke of "alignment, that we are moving in one direction. . . And, of course, to those who are engaged, they will agree and they're going to support you . . . I would say that is the influence or the power" (HPD2 44:10). LPD2 shared that "the call of Christian leadership is to use it for the good purpose of God, to influence others towards God themselves, to follow God, listen to God, [and] lead in his kingdom. Because you can use it for good or use it for evil. So use it to shepherd people" (LPD2 30:59). LPD4 stated "I want to use my power in service of the kingdom—in service of God —bringing God's flourishing to the world through my community. Or even I want to use my power in service of bringing God's Shalom to the person that's in front of me" (LPD4 46:06).

MPD6 spoke of a relational type of power "when the people come to ask you for advice . . . Or share their story with you" (MPD6 23:56). They also said that power is

about “ultimately, the nurturing of disciples” (MPD6 26:03). MPD4 said their use of power was to bring people closer to God but that it also involves making decisions:

> people will be coming to me for asking advice and decision. Sometimes when they don’t have a definite direction, then they will ask me to make a decision. I feel that that’s particularly common situations that my power stands out . . . people say that, hey, we can make a decision. You are the pastor you already in charge in here, why don’t you make a decision? . . . Consciously, unconsciously, I’m using power . . . Or if my colleagues that who I supervise that I feel that that is not a wise decision? I’ll use my authority and say that, hey, this is not the way to go. Because there are consequences that might happen in this way . . . I think if the power that I use doesn’t bring people closer to God or understand God more, then my power may be reinforcing and empowering my power. And how they discover about themselves to love themselves more, to appreciate life that God given to them that’s important. And definitely loving others is very obvious. And I think I stress more in the loving life part . . . what I like to see people to love their lives and passionate about the calling, passionate about gifts that God given to them. And that is something that I like to see my impact and influence. (MPD4 40:38–42:42)

MPD3 spoke of needing to make decisions and to guide the church, saying that they were “in a position as a senior pastor of a church . . . the key person to lead the church in a way, and also the key person to pastor the church” (MPD3 42:52).

Some participants acknowledged that decision-making and guidance was sometimes hard and that it had to be done carefully. MPD1 said “Sometimes we need to make a tough call” (MPD1 11:06). HPD3 reflected that “if you use that power . . . without God’s leading, I think it will not become fruitful. But if you’re using it with dependency on the Lord, praying for it, before communicating it to any person, I think that will be blessed by the Lord, a power or influence that is God given” (HPD3 35:16). MPD5 said,

> The power is like, when you are a pastor in the church, and you have respect from the people and that respect sometimes equal to power . . . then you suggest idea or any plan and that make a great impact to the church or to the to the congregation as a whole. But then sometimes have to be careful with that decision is not in sync with God’s idea. And then you kind of leading the

> congregation kind of circle or detour in the life and then you find out oh, no, like this is it was not a good idea. Yeah, but then everyone's already moving forward to your idea. And that's painful sometimes. So, sometimes need to hit a stop. Or try to let me be like change plan or, like kind of modify . . . (MPD5 24:22)

Servant Leadership

In the last part of the interview participants were asked questions relating to their self-perception with regard to their style of leadership. They were specifically asked whether they had heard of Servant Leadership and, if so, if it was an approach that was meaningful to them and which they tried to enact. I deliberately chose not to use the term Servant Leadership until later in the interview in order to see the extent to which the term was a significant self-identifier for the participant and thus spoken of without it being prompted.

The responses of the participants reveal that Servant Leadership was a recognizable, familiar term to all the participants, which confirmed my professional experience and expectation that the term is commonly used in the Church and in the pastoral profession. In addition, all the participants except one accepted it and affirmed it as a valid and helpful term to describe Christian leadership in general and their leadership in particular. Jesus was often mentioned as the ultimate example of Servant Leadership. The one participant who had trouble with the term was worried about making "servant" a central motif in leadership, concerned that it would lead to co-dependency and an unhealthy desire to please people and be driven by their needs.

Nearly half of the participants (seven out of fifteen) mentioned "servant" or "servant leadership" on their own before I mentioned it in the interview. It is interesting to note that this was true within each PD grouping: two of four HPD, two of five LPD, and three of six MPD, all mentioned the term before I brought it up.

Respondents were asked to distinguish between being a servant and being a servant leader. MPD and HPD respondents replied with a fair amount of clarity about the difference, while the LPD responses were more ambiguous in distinguishing between the two. HPD1 said that a servant leader goes beyond just following orders:

> A servant might just simply be following orders, right? A servant might just be complying with the rules or the parameters where he or she is given to work with whereas a servant leader, there's a, a part of it is the element of risk, right? Understanding that you may have to go beyond the boundaries that you're placed. . . So as a servant, you know, maybe it's more about simply following the flow. Right. But as a servant leader, being able to go against the flow, right? (HPD1 31:37)

HPD2 also said that servant leadership went beyond serving:

> . . . at the same time you are serving but you are also a leader. Because being a leader, you must be in the front line. You must not be in the back . . . You are servant but you are leader -- you are in the front line, not in the back of the crowd. You are the one who is bringing the flock or the congregation where you are leading to because being a leader, you must have that vision. Whatever the Lord gave you for your specific congregation. (HPD2 06:54)

HPD3 said that influencing and teaching people and modeling behaviour is what distinguishes servant leadership from servanthood:

> Okay, so I would differentiate a servant and a servant leader in this way. So a servant leader for me is, while you are serving people and committed to them, you are also leading them or influencing them or teaching them how to lead at the same time when you're serving. Okay? If you are a servant, you're following and you are a team player. You're just following without giving any instructions or probably modeling it to others on how to do it or teaching it. Leadership is serving in leading and modeling at the same time. (HPD3 32:09)

HPD4 spoke similarly:

> Servanthood has no idea of leading people -- just serving -- servant leadership is an idea that while you're serving people, you lead them to where they need to be. Because when you serve people, just serving them, you just pleasing them to just meeting their needs. But servant leadership is that you serve them, but while serving them, you lead them when they need to be there. (HPD4 37:30)

The MPD respondents were similar to the HPD respondents but emphasized the service dimension more than the HPD respondents did. They were still able to easily distinguish between servanthood and servant leadership but had a somewhat broader range in how they did that, such as: the leader having vision, leading the congregation in a particular direction, empowering people, and leading by serving. MPD1 said, "Definitely, I see myself as a leader, but also a servant" (MPD1 17:07) and that "being a servant is the most important thing" (MPD1 38:26). They added, "To serve is amongst the most important thing. But I think to serve as a leader doesn't mean we just doing things, I think to serve in some sense is to empower people to exercise the gift that God entrusted to them. I think . . . to serve as a leader is to make sure the people want . . . to serve faithfully" (MPD1 38:26). They went on to emphasize the primacy of service, but not at the exclusion of leadership:

> The first thing to start off is washing the feet . . . Of course we serve. But at the same time, it doesn't mean Jesus doesn't give the disciples things to do . . . I think as a leader like Jesus, we start off with the servanthood. But the same time doesn't mean we don't teach. And we don't give them a vision. And we don't affirm. We don't give them a confidence to serve. I think as a leader, we need to do that . . . if servant leaders just wash feet, you can wash a lot of feet . . . but is this the way Jesus to lead? [Jesus is] telling the disciples what they need to do and waiting for the Holy Spirit . . . I think there's a lot of encouragement, and lots of teaching. A lot of vision sharing, but starting as a servant washing the feet. (MPD1 40:12)

MPD2 spoke about not serving oneself but serving others by influencing them: "if a servant can really bring influence or transformation into his people's life, that does more than just serve himself or herself, right. It's about some sort of impact to others" (MPD2 44:37). MPD3 said that a "servant leader is to lead by serving other people" and that they are to be a "servant of God", which means that "God put me in the ministry to lead the church, right, so I have to lead the ship. So the way I should lead is to point

them to be a servant to serve God, not to serve me, but to serve God" (MPD3 36:15). MPD4 said that servant leadership is about being a role model and about humility: "You have to do it first. And you demonstrate, for example, if you want people to open up the house, to serve others, you open up your house to serve others first. You don't fight for the glory or you don't fight for the credits . . . it's very tied in to how Jesus served, like how he served with humility" (MPD4 35:52). MPD5 said that a servant leader has an agenda, or purpose, beyond just serving:

> [you] start with humble heart, and with the people and know the concerns and what happened to them, and then, and then kind of help them . . . I love that kind of style. I know that as a pastor, I serve people. Right? So I serve people, I help them, and sometimes even the physical need, I will help them, right? So they want to fix the house. And okay, if I have time, I can help you paint some of the wall and work together. But then of course, we can talk right, and I can understand them more . . . Yeah. But then after that they can see that I'm always the leader, right? . . . The servant is just to fix problems, resolve problems. The servant leader is like how people moving forward, and you always have a next step in my so just serve. Right. But then you serve with the purpose . . . If I go to people's home to help them. And of course, in my mind, I kind of have an agenda . . . in serving I want to find out something. Oh, I want to encourage them to move over to the ministry or some kind of agenda that I have right now. (MPD5 22:58)

MPD6 distinguished servant leadership in this way:

> Servant leadership is much, much more than just [being] a servant. Because at the same time of serving, we still know that we are a leader. We need to influence people, take the lead, guide the people, direct the people as we go along. Servant Leadership is a more demanding, more requirement there. Right, more reflection, and then the same time, we need to continuously reflect upon how I'm a servant leader. How I serve at the same time I might really leading or just be a servant there without leading. (MPD6 22:33)

The LPD participants responded quite differently from the HPD and MPD groups. There was more ambiguity in distinguishing between servanthood and servant leadership, and one respondent (LPD3) was very reluctant to even try to distinguish them, even wondering why the term "leadership" needed to be used at all. There was

more emphasis on serving God, on how Jesus served people, and on service being itself a type of leadership. LPD2 said, ". . . servant leadership [is] giving your life as Jesus gives life as a ransom for many. And . . . not to be served but to serve. So that's when I think of often. But even I think, just more of how Jesus interacted with people" (LPD2 19:39). While LPD2 emphasized the need to serve, they also said:

> . . . when you're called to a church or a leadership position in Christian world, you are serving God, but you're also serving the the people.Now that doesn't mean you get to be their doormat, or they get to boss you around. But it does mean you are to serve them under God so that they can become more fully devoted followers of Jesus themselves. And so yeah, I think the two go well hand in hand as a term because it's the reminder, we're servant but we are also a leader that our our gift of leadership is a service to the church and so we have to have to use it. So yeah, it is a term I'm comfortable with. (LPD2 28:31)

LPD1 warned against using servanthood as a means to an end, arguing that the calling to servanthood is much more:

> So you can be a servant leader as a means to an end. You can see it as a skill or a habit or a practice that you have to engage in, in order to help your people get to where God wants them to be. Or you can embrace servant leadership, as a lifestyle as a model, as the best pathway forward for you in all circumstances. And it's the latter that I think is the message that we most need right now. Because right now, what we're tending to do is we're tending to focus servant leadership on one aspect, which you've already identified serving the community, you know, serving the church, serving the denomination, serving those you work with, I think that what we need to do is to step back and to begin to embrace this understanding of Jesus as the ultimate servant, or the ultimate model, you know, in a way that really allows us to embrace servant leadership in every field of our lives. And it means continually not making it about us. What is God wanting to do here? So when I walk into the church into a board meeting, of one of our local churches, Lord, where are you at work here? What are you doing here? What do you want me to do here? How can I serve you here in this place? As opposed to me coming in with a preconceived idea? (LPD1 37:34)

LPD3 said that servant leadership is about "serving others, just like Jesus modeled in his leadership, where he served the least of these and he served, he sacrificed himself and served of himself" (LPD3 35:04). When asked about distinguishing between

serving and servant leadership, they responded “Do you have to distinguish?” (LPD3 36:10) and continued to emphasize that leadership was service. When asked whether they saw leadership and service as the same thing, they responded,

> I guess I’m hesitant to say it’s black and white. I want to be one among the people. I want to be one among the people serving and yes, I mean, as a pastor, I’m a leader, people look towards me for leadership and guidance, right. But, man, I sure would love to point that just the people who are in the midst doing it and say that’s the leadership. Right . . . I really, I really get hung up. I get the need for talking with leadership in church and our culture, I get that. Servant, Shepherd. Those are terms that really resonate with me as a pastor. (LPD3 37:55)

LPD5 emphasized humility and service over leadership, saying that the term “servant leadership” resonated with them in this way: “I have come to a deep understanding of the power of humility in a person’s life, that the person that does not need praise, that does not need accolades. That doesn’t mean you know, all of those kinds of things [referring to leadership]. But would rather go and do as a servant is more powerful” (LPD5 37:13). They found it hard to distinguish between servanthood and servant leadership, and emphasized the motivation of the one serving:

> That’s hard. A servant does something out of duty, out of position. A servant leader does it to bless others. I want to be the servant leader who doesn’t do something for attention. It doesn’t do something for benefits or those I want to be a servant leader. Who, whose example points to Jesus. And so, like Jesus washed feet, I wash dishes. And so I see the servant as an opportunity as a leader to communicate something that a sermon or quote or something else will never impact. The action will touch a heart or, or challenge of thinking far deeper than the best of servants. (LPD5 39:17)

LPD4 was the only respondent who responded negatively to the term Servant Leadership: when asked if it was a term that connected with them, they said “not really” (LPD43 7:29). They went on to say that “if you gave me a questionnaire that listed all the characteristics of servant leadership, I’m pretty sure I’d score pretty high” (LPD4

37:54) but that the term invites an important question: “Who are you serving? . . . And I know because I’ve been there. I know how dangerous it is to see your role as serving the people. Full stop. That’s a recipe for burnout. So I serve Jesus, right . . . and because I serve Jesus, well, I mean, I love the people. Obviously, I serve Jesus and I love the people and so I also serve the people in my community, for sure” (LPD4 38:09).

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore whether clergy leaders from different Power Distance contexts conceptualized and enacted leadership differently, and to investigate their engagement with Servant Leadership as a leadership approach. Behind this question are deeper issues, related to theologies of power, culture, and cultural diversity. In the end, what is being questioned is whether it is appropriate for one leadership theory to be seen as morally appropriate for all cultures, or whether moral leadership approaches need to be contextualized and constructed within each cultural setting. The interview findings, summarized above, point to differences between the cultural groupings as well as similarities. These will be further explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: THE UNDERSTANDING AND ENACTMENT OF LEADERSHIP BY CLERGY LEADERS

Might it be possible that ethical leadership varies by culture, and that Christian leadership and Servant Leadership also vary by culture? These questions challenge the notion that ethics and morality are transcendent and trans-cultural and thus can be applied to human behaviours without regard for context or culture. They interface with sociological understandings of cultural diversity, and specifically with Hofstede's framework of Power Distance.

Hofstede's work was within the field of social anthropology, which had "developed the conviction that all societies, modern or traditional, face the same basic problems; only the answers differ."[1] These problems were "Relation to authority; Conception of self—in particular the relationship between individual and society, and the individual's concept of masculinity and femininity; [and] Ways of dealing with conflicts, including the control of aggression and the expression of feelings."[2] Hofstede was given the opportunity to study a large amount of survey data from employees of International Business Machines (IBM) that looked at their values and expectations, and saw this as an opportunity to discover whether national cultures answered the basic questions differently. He approached his research with no *a priori* assumptions or

[1] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 29.
[2] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 30.

hypotheses about what he would find and took no moral stance about what was right or wrong in any culture. Power Distance (PD) is the term he gave to the results from a set of questions that correlated strongly internally within every culture, but which varied in relation to other cultures. For example, in some cultures some questions correlated at a higher PD level and in others at a lower PD level. The questions were about current and desired realities: "The three survey items used for composing the power distance index were as follows: 1. Answers by non-managerial employees to the question 'How frequently, in your experience, does the following problem occur: employees being afraid to express disagreement with their managers?' . . . 2. Subordinates' perception of the boss's actual decision-making style . . . 3. Subordinates' preference for their boss's decision-making style."[3]

Two things about Hofstede's approach should be emphasized. First, the research focused not just on practices (how it works now) but also on values (what is desired). Second, the questions were asked of employees about their managers, not of managers about their subordinates, and so there is no chance of image-enhancing responses that might have resulted if managers were asked about their own managerial approach. Hofstede's approach gives credence to his assertion that the Power Distance scores he calculated represent what the culture desires.[4] These are not the desires of managers, nor are they simply an articulation of how things work now. Another way of putting this is that the culture sees this as the *right* way to function, which can be seen as an ethical or

[3] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 56.

[4] In addition, Hofstede's research has generated substantial and still ongoing research into National Cultural Values, including Power Distance. The aforementioned Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness project is an example of such research.

moral aspiration. In other words, whether high or low Power Distance, the culture sees this as right, good, and ethical.

Hofstede does not argue that every single individual in a culture thinks the same way, nor is he arguing that every profession or organization or context within a culture works with exactly the same level of Power Distance.[5] The Power Distance numerical value does not attempt to provide some sort of measurement of absolute Power Distance, it merely positions this culture as higher or lower in comparison to other cultures. Hofstede argued that by studying only IBM employees he was removing other variables that might affect the responses and thus was isolating culture as the only significant variable; he argued that within each culture a similar sort of person would be working at IBM (for example, they would have some education), so that to compare similar types of people from various cultures would be a valid way to isolate culture as the varying factor. Hofstede stated, "Comparisons of countries or regions should always be based on people in the same set of occupations. One should not compare Spanish engineers with Swedish secretaries."[6] A similar argument can be made in terms of organizations, namely, that within a culture the level of Power Distance might vary across various organizations, but that compared to another culture the relative difference would remain the same compared to the same organizations in that culture. For example, a Baptist church might have a different level of Power Distance compared to the IBM office down the street, and similarly in another country a Baptist church there would have a different Power Distance value compared to their local IBM office, but the relative difference would remain the same between similar organizations in the different

[5] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 40.
[6] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 79.

cultures—IBM office in Culture "A" compared to IBM office in Culture "B," Baptist church in Culture "A" compared to Baptist church in Culture "B."

All the interviewees in this research project were of the same profession, clergy; similar to Hofstede, this project investigates the same profession across cultures. Another similarity is that all the churches served by the clergy were Baptist except for one, and that church was baptistic. This removes possible variation resulting from Power Distance scores that vary between professions or denominations from the dataset. However, one source of non-cultural variability may still be in the data: since individuals can vary from their culture's overall Power Distance value, the data may include the possibility of individual outliers—that is, not every individual interviewed may be representative of their culture or profession. The intent of this project is to identify possible differences in leadership conceptualization and enactment between various Power Distance groups, but by having that as the focus it is not assumed that every individual will think and act the same way within each cultural group. The focus will be on differences between the groups, while acknowledging differences within groups if they appear.

Identifying as a Leader

When applying Hofstede's framework of Power Distance to the role of leader, the expectation is that higher Power Distance cultures would more easily accept and support the idea and enactment of leadership. This is because leadership is about enacting change, which requires some measure of power or influence. Since higher Power Distance cultures expect that power is distributed unequally and see this as good for

their culture's functioning, it is reasonable to expect that they would accept leadership more readily. This would be true of both leaders and followers—leaders would more easily identify as leaders, and followers would more readily accept their leader's leadership, which could result in a more positive experience for the leader compared to lower Power Distance cultures. Power Distance is an example of the symbiotic relationship referred to in Implicit Leadership Theory, discussed in the Introduction, where leaders and followers are embedded within a commonly held set of norms and expectations. Culture is one such type of context, and within culture, Power Distance is a specific aspect.

The responses obtained from interview participants matched what I expected to see based on Hofstede's Power Distance framework. In general, HPD and MPD respondents more easily identified with the title and role of leader, while LPD respondents had a more complex and even negative relationship with this term. Of the ten HPD and MPD participants, seven immediately answered "yes" when asked if they were a leader, and two others responded positively while adding a small explanation about why they were saying "yes." Only one respondent was slightly less definitive in their response, saying "sometimes." This is in stark contrast to the LPD respondents, only one of whom responded immediately with "yes" but who immediately qualified it with the phrase "reluctant leader." LPD3 responded negatively at seeing themselves as a leader, saying that they were a misfit but that they have learned to trust God in it:

> There are times where I felt like I just don't fit. I have a speech impediment, and I'm in a job that has public speaking as a part of it. Right? And so I was like, okay, God, did you not draw the connection here that this isn't the right fit? And yet, it's what I'm called to do. Called would be another word, of course, for, you know, leadership. So I just often feel like I'm ill equipped and like, just, I look at other leaders, like they'd be so much better at this than me. And yet, I'm the one

> that God's put here. So I have to feel like a misfit in my role . . . I've come to a spot like, Okay, I, I'm here for a reason. I'm here for a purpose. And it's not about all about me doing and it's about trusting and leaning into what God wants me and who God wants me to be. (LPD3: 2:31, 3:40)

LPD4 was less negative but still said that the term "leader" was not a meaningful one for them: "the identity of leader is not one that's meaningful to me. . . It's not a part of my identity. Like, I lead. I guess I don't see myself as a leader, not because I can't do it. But that's just not how I understand myself" (LPD4 19:31). LPD5 said that the idea of "leader" was not something that shaped their call into pastoral ministry: "Okay. I need to start by saying, I never went into the ministry with a sense of the word leadership. That really was not something I thought of, focused on. I started to see the reality of that later. But I went [in as a] shepherd pastor, that that's what I went into. Leadership became part of the ministerial culture that I was in" (LPD5 01:37).

Relationship to Power and Influence

Related to how easily participants held the identity of leader was how easily they thought of themselves as having and using power and influence. As described in the previous chapter, all the Power Distance groups affirmed that they had power and influence, and all the groups identified cautions regarding the use of power. However, the groups varied in terms of their level of equivocation in describing whether they had power, and also varied in how comfortable they were in using the term.

HPD respondents answered positively and with ease to the idea of having power, even while they emphasized that it worked through relationship and should be used with caution. HPD4 said "Because if you have no power, then how can you lead people? Right? Not because you have power in person, but your power comes from God. Right?

He gave you the wisdom, He gave you the strength, He gives you the directions so that you know where to go. So you have the power. Power not to abuse it but use it to develop more people" (HPD4 38:24). HPD3 emphasized the relationality of power and said that out of that relationship, people will follow their instructions:

> Yes. Okay. In the sense that people respect me, people will follow my instruction. So whenever we do something, and even sometimes if people especially leaders—elders and deacons at church, which is much more elderly than I am—they're following me and also, yeah, I have influence with them because whenever you ask them something to do or to do a work of a ministry or to do something to reach out for people who are in need, so they will be available, and be happy in doing that. So that's it. That way I could say that I have power. Right? I could say yeah. Influence. (HPD3 34:15)

While there was an understanding that influence comes out of relationship, there was also an expectation that people would follow their direction: "So being a pastor, you have the power, because you have the power, when you communicate, you command, you have to lead, the congregation will listen to you, because they trust on you. You have that integrity of experience, they believe that you could lead them" (HPD2 41:50).

LPD responses acknowledged that they had power but were much more cautious about the use of power and occasionally even negative: "Do I want power? Not really. If I have to rely on power to lead people, I think I'm missing the boat" (LPD3 40:31). LPD2 said "with great power comes responsibility" (LPD2 29:56) and LPD5 said "I am very cautious with power and authority" (LPD5 40:57). MPD responses were somewhere in-between LPD and HPD responses, largely positive but with some cautions.

Identifying as a Leader and Relationship to Power and Influence

It is not surprising that the data showed a correlation between the ease at which clergy hold the identity of leader and the ease at which they hold their relationship to power and influence. In both cases, higher Power Distance groups have a greater level of ease and confidence. Leadership is fundamentally about the use of power and influence to guide, direct, and enact change. Thus, a stronger identification with the role of leader would naturally correlate with a greater ease at relating to power and influence. Don Page states that "Leadership is all about the exercise of power in order to make things happen through others. How that power is used will determine whether the led believe that good or bad leadership is being exercised."[7] The exercise of power is happening in all Power Distance contexts, but in higher PD contexts there appears to be a greater ease at acknowledging and describing the reality.

The Experience of Leadership

In the previous chapter, I discussed how all the Power Distance groups acknowledged that their experience of leadership encompasses both joys and hardships, and that there was no noticeable difference in the pattern of responses among the groups. This lack of difference is surprising and merits further research to determine whether leadership is a more joyful or easier experience for higher Power Distance groups because their context is more accepting of leadership. It is possible that when asked a direct question about what makes leadership joyful and what makes it hard, leaders—regardless of context — will identify both joys and hardships. If this is the case, it is not surprising that there

[7] Page, *Servant Empowered Leadership*, 45.

were not significant differences in the responses from the different groups. Given what has been seen of the higher level of confidence and ease in higher Power Distance responses at identifying with the role of leader and at describing the use of power, it would seem to follow that the overall experience of leadership would be easier and perhaps more joyful, even when dealing with hardship. However, this conclusion is not warranted solely based on the data collected in this study; further research is required.

Conceptualizing Servant Leadership

As I have discussed, Greenleaf's proposal for Servant Leadership was his attempt to articulate an approach to leadership that uses power ethically. He was focused on the motivation of the leader, and so his articulation of Servant Leadership was more akin to an aspirational philosophy than a well-articulated leadership theory. Dugan locates Servant Leadership (as it was proposed and has developed) within a group of theories that focus on transformation of the persons involved.[8] Two discourses have been generated by Greenleaf's idea: an academic secular discourse and a theological discourse, but they rarely interface and there is no common definition or understanding of Servant Leadership. It is therefore not unexpected to find some complexity embedded within how clergy use this image and terminology.

The interview questions were designed and ordered to avoid signalling any leadership terminology, theory, or style to the participants before they had been given ample opportunity to self-describe their understanding and experience of leadership. Nearly half of the participants (seven out of fifteen) mentioned "servant" or "servant

[8] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 189.

leadership" on their own before I mentioned it; this was true across all the PD groupings. Once the others were asked whether they had heard of the term, all of them responded that it was a recognized, familiar term. Every single respondent except one from all the Power Distance groups not only recognized the term but identified it as something that was a helpful way to describe their leadership. As noted earlier, one participant (LPD4) who had trouble with the term was concerned about making "servant" a central motif in leadership, in case it would lead to co-dependency and an unhealthy desire to please people and be driven by their needs. This same interviewee also did not identify with the term "leader."

On a motivational and inspirational level, the idea of Servant Leadership is widely held and affirmed. Differences started to appear when participants were asked to distinguish between servanthood and Servant Leadership. LPD respondents were sometimes ambiguous or else emphasized the servanthood side without clearly articulating a leadership dimension. For example, LPD1 responded to this question by emphasizing that Servant Leadership is an attitudinal lifestyle, not a way of leading:

> So you can be a servant leader as a means to an end. You can see it as a skill or a habit or a practice that you have to engage in, in order to help your people get to where God wants them to be. Or you can embrace servant leadership, as a lifestyle as a model, as the best pathway forward for you in all circumstances. And it's the latter that I think is the message that we most need right now. Because right now, what we're tending to do is focus servant leadership on one aspect, which you've already identified serving the community, you know, serving the church, serving the denomination, serving those you work with, I think that what we need to do is to step back and to begin to embrace this understanding of Jesus as the ultimate servant, or the ultimate model, you know, in a way that really allows us to embrace servant leadership in every field of our lives. And it means continually not making it about us. What is God wanting to do here? (LPD1 37:34)

LPD3 was initially negative about needing to distinguish between servanthood and Servant Leadership, asking why we needed to distinguish them at all. They then went on to describe servanthood as being a form of leadership:

> Well, I guess I'd say, you know, we always want to have somebody who you look to who guides us how to do it. And that's a role that we have. But scripturally we're called, we're told that the least of these are among the greatest. And the least important parts of the body are the most important parts of the body. So I look at people like we have a lady in our church who doesn't have much to offer yet she shows up in a dying lady's house and cleans her house for her. She's being a servant, no doubt about it. I would say that's showing more leadership than somebody who's up front leading the troops. She's modeling what it means to be a servant. And so there's leadership just in the nature of doing and living out. So on one level servant leadership to me means you're modeling it by living it out, not just talking about it. (LPD3 36:16)
>
> Interviewer: So you basically see them as the same thing, they aren't really different things?
>
> LPD3: I see a difference but I, I guess I'm hesitant to say it's black and white. Okay, like, I want to be one among the people. I want to be one among the people serving and yes, I mean, as a pastor, I'm a leader, people look towards me for leadership and guidance, right. But, man, I sure would love to point that just the people who are in the midst doing it and say that's the leadership. Right. Okay. (LPD3 37:17)

LPD5 said that it was hard to answer the question, but then said, "A servant does something out of duty, out of position. A servant leader does it to bless others. I want to be the servant leader who doesn't do something for attention" (LPD5 39:17). LPD2 was an outlier in the LPD group in that they were better able to articulate a leadership dimension, saying that they are a servant to Jesus and that clergy are also serving the people, but "that doesn't mean you get to be their doormat, or they get to boss you around. But it does mean you are to serve them under God so that they can become more fully devoted followers of Jesus themselves . . . We're a servant but we are also a leader

that our gift of leadership is a service to the church and so we have to have to use it" (LPD2 28:31).

HPD respondents had clearer distinctions between servanthood and Servant Leadership. HPD1 shared that, attitudinally, "a leader must first be a servant" (HPD1 30:25) but that a Servant Leader takes risks and pushes against boundaries and thus is more than a servant:

> I think a servant may not fully understand the kind of the privilege that they have, right? A servant might just simply be following orders, right? A servant might just be complying with the rules or the parameters where he or she is given to work with whereas a servant leader, there's a, there's a part of it is the element of risk, right? Understanding that you may have to go beyond the boundaries that you're placed. Right. So with the apostle Paul, for example, right, he constantly pushed boundaries, you know, going into places and, and, you know, situations where there might be threats to his life. So as a servant, you know, maybe it's more about simply following the flow. Right. But as a servant leader, being able to go against the flow, right. (HPD1 31:37)

HPD2 shared that "we have to have that servant mindset. Like Christ Himself. He did not come only to lead but to serve" (HPD2 36:37), which is the opposite of a business setting where, "being the leader, you are on the top. But in the church context, being a leader, you are a servant" (HPD2 1:05). At the same time, "being a leader, you are in charge. To be on the front line" (HPD2 9:24) and that "being a pastor, you have the power, because you have the power, when you communicate, you command, you have to lead, the congregation will listen to you, because they trust on you. You have that integrity of experience, they believe that you could lead them" (HPD2 41:50). HPD3 remarked that, "If you are [just] a servant, you're following and you are a team player. You're just following without giving any instructions or modeling" (HPD3 32:09), while with servant leadership "you have the power, you have the influence, but you choose to do the job of listening to people, serving the people, and putting yourself less

before them" (HPD3 31:12). But while you serve, you have an agenda: "you are also leading them or influencing them or teaching them how to lead at the same time when you're serving" (HPD3 32:09). Overall, the HPD responses shared a clear attitudinal focus on being a servant coupled with a shouldering of the responsibility of being in charge and influencing people.

Moving now to the MPD respondents, as mentioned in the last chapter, they were similar to the HPD respondents in that they were easily able to distinguish between servanthood and Servant Leadership. However, they had a broader range in how they described it, with somewhat more emphasis on the service dimension compared to the HPD responses. For example, MPD1 shared:

> Of course we serve. But at the same time, it doesn't mean Jesus doesn't give the disciples things to do . . . I think as a leader like Jesus, we start off with the servanthood. But the same time doesn't mean we don't teach, and we don't give them a vision, and we don't affirm, and we don't give them a competence to serve. I think as a leader, we need to do that. We just say, if servant leaders just wash feet, you can wash a lot of feet, but is that the way Jesus to lead? . . . Not, it's a lot of teaching . . . clear what's the kingdom, and telling the disciples what they need to do and waiting for the Holy Spirit . . . I think there's a lot of encouragement, and lots of teaching. A lot of vision sharing, but starting with serving, washing the feet. (MPD1 40:12)

MPD3 also expressed some of the complexity of Servant Leadership: they began by saying that "a servant leader is to lead by serving other people" and then shifted to the idea of being "a servant of God," going on to say that "God have put me in the ministry to lead the church, right, because I'm a pastor. So I have to lead the ship." They then spoke of leading in a way that others would see that they serve God: "I should be an example to other people to see that I serve God" (MPD3 36:15). These few phrases reveal a variety of ideas that can all be located in the seemingly simple term Servant Leadership: serving others, serving God, leading, and being an example. MPD6 said that

"Servant leadership is much, much more than just [being] a servant" and that it is more demanding and requires more reflection because the Servant Leader is responsible to guide and direct the people. Their caution was about asking whether they were really leading or just serving: "we need to continuously reflect upon how you, I'm a servant leader. How I serve at the same time I might really leading or just be a servant there without leading" (MPD6 22:33).

The complexity of ideas expressed by the respondents as they engaged the phrase Servant Leadership is not surprising. The term "servant" and the term "leadership" are seemingly opposites for many, so when they are put together descriptions of what Servant Leadership looks like are varied, complex, and somewhat ambiguous. Greenleaf's term was attention-getting! But this does raise questions about what it actually is, if in fact there is any singular "is" that is there. Is it about servants who lead? Is it about leaders who serve? Is it saying that leadership is a type of service or that service is a type of leadership? Is Servant a noun or an adjective that modifies leadership? Who, exactly, is served? At a theological level, is it appropriate to combine terms found in Scripture—servant and leader—but which do not appear together as a singular term (or, debatably, a singular concept)?

The difficulty in describing the concept is reflected in the diversity of ways the clergy respondents spoke about what it meant to them and how it shaped their leadership. Higher Power Distance respondents were better able to articulate the leadership dimension inherent in the term Servant Leadership, but all the groups found meaning and resonance with servant imagery, even if there were qualifiers or addendums that they used to nuance the idea. The clergy responses revealed that the

image of servant, or servanthood, are helpful and important to undergird Christian leadership, but that how that gets expressed in leadership may vary a great deal, and likely has much to do with differences in cultural contexts.

Enacting Leadership

To this point the data have shown noticeable differences in how clergy leaders from differing Power Distance backgrounds conceptualize their leadership: how comfortable they are with that term being applied to their role, how comfortably they engage with the thought that they have power and influence, and how they describe their practice of Servant Leadership. In the review of leadership theory in Chapter 1, I showed that leadership theory attends to the Person (the identified leader and others), Process (what happens), and Purpose (what is the end goal).[9] The areas explored so far in the interview responses focus on the Person of the leader, specifically on how they think about and experience leadership, and it has been seen that the way that person thinks about leadership varies based on their cultural context as expressed by their power distance. It might be expected, then, that there would be some variance in the Process (what happens, how leadership is enacted) and the Purpose of leadership.

The interviews focused on the interior aspect of the respondents' leadership (how they thought about it), with less discussion about specific practices or ways of enacting. At times a respondent would speak of a specific enactment as an example of their leadership, but the interview did not ask specific questions about the kinds of activities that made up their weekly schedule, what activities they engaged in that they

[9] Dugan, *Leadership Theory*, 70.

thought were most important, what activities they did that they thought of as leading, and so forth. However, the data did show some differences in enactment between the various Power Distance groups.

Making Decisions

There were differences between the PD groups when it came to decision-making. Four HPD respondents mentioned "decisions" thirty-four times (although a majority of these mentions were made by only two respondents) while five LPD respondents mentioned it fifteen times, and six MPD respondents used the term nineteen times. All the PD groups recognized that with leadership comes the need to sometimes make decisions, but in general the LPD group expressed more reluctance in relation to decision-making. LPD3 equated decision-making with a harder type of power and said that empowering others to make decisions is a softer type of power: "I would say influence is more empowering than using power. Because you're giving guidance . . . you're empowering people to make those decisions. Right. Power insinuates that you're making choices and decisions, okay. And my goal as a church is to empower the body of Christ and the work of Christ" (LPD3 41:56). At the same time, this respondent recognized that there are times when the ability to make decisions quickly is a benefit. Recalling the COVID crisis, they shared,

> I mean, that was the wonderful thing with COVID—our leadership said you're responsible for management, the church, we're Policy Governance, keep us in the loop. Right. And so I was able to make decisions on the fly as decisions are coming out on the fly. And I watch other friends like, well, I have to go to the board, or we don't have a board meeting for three, four weeks. So we won't know what we're doing until a month from now. I'm like, how are you shepherding a flock if you can't make any decisions? (LPD3 40:31)

It is interesting to note how LPD3 was somewhat negative about solo decision-making when discussing it at a conceptual level but was positive when speaking about a particular instance. LPD4 was also negative about making "a decision without input," continuing "I think I could do those things, but I'm not really interested in doing those things. I would much rather have that more indirect kind of left-handed power, which is more about bearing pain with someone or influencing someone through a conversation" (LPD4 43:23). Likewise, LPD5 shared "The influence I use most is questions. I want to invite people to think. I will challenge I will encourage, I will influence in almost different kinds of ways. Because I want you to think about and personally choose what you're going to do" (LPD5 44:35).

HPD respondents expressed a similar preference for team-based decision-making, but more easily spoke of making decisions on their own when needed. Indeed, they were able to articulate this with greater ease and confidence than did the LPD respondents. HPD4 said,

> Because I am not a lone ranger. I'm a team player. As a Filipino as an Asian, we grew up in a kind of environment that is more of a family. Talk to your family members. And then with regards to churches, you're a family so talk to other leaders as well. But sometimes, as a leader, you have to stand up and make decisions, right. But of course, I am a team leader. So I have to make a decision according to what others says . . . I don't dictate, sometimes I need to be dictator, you know, a given situation, you have to do something, you have to lead the people without any consultation or whatsoever, you just make decisions, but they are but most of the time I lead people with people. (HPD4 10:23, 32:50)

HPD2 also spoke of the need to occasionally make decisions on their own and how it might create disappointment in their team: "it depends on the time element that you make a decision . . . we're the team, when I see the team, leader, the leadership team is not aware but you have to make a decision on that particular time, without collaborating

with them. So you make a decision. And probably on the other end, we will feel disappointed that we were not part of the decision making" (HPD 3:01).

Given how Power Distance shapes understandings and acceptance of leaders and leadership, the interviews revealed how in higher Power Distance settings leaders are more comfortable at making decisions (even on their own). Moreover, they also showed how context grants leaders a greater degree of freedom to make decisions than is generally permissible in lower Power Distance settings.

Developing Leaders

A noticeable difference between the higher and lower Power Distance groups was that all the HPD leaders and nearly all of the MPD leaders spoke explicitly about developing leaders, especially by discussing coaching and mentoring. The one MPD leader who did not explicitly mention leadership development did speak about starting their church with fifteen families and structuring the ministry of the church into five areas, and that they "work together as a team" to lead the areas (MPD3 7:59, 9:22) with themselves as clergy providing overall leadership. In contrast, only one LPD respondent spoke about this—LPD2, who was again an outlier within the LPD group.

HPD3 said that they train and disciple leaders: "What I learned . . . is that to train leaders that could also lead others just like what the Apostle Paul told us in Timothy, right, to train. Leaders at church and also those who could handle the word of the Lord and also who desire to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. So I'm discipling, mostly my leaders, I'm influencing them to do the work of the ministry" (HPD3 05:14).

MPD4 spoke of following the model of Jesus who spent most of His time with the twelve disciples: “And if I expand it a bit more that how Jesus spending time with the 12 disciples and spending time with the core people. And that that’s, that’s Jesus influence or the model. Right?” (MPD4 21:45). MPD6 spoke of intentional time with their pastoral team and board members:

> So I’m still figuring out ways to do on my pastoral team. Yeah, I have three other pastors serving with me. And we will add one more time person soon. So I’m still figuring out but at least the regular meeting and communication, either as a group, or one to one. Yeah, I commit myself to spend time with them. When one to one to regularly. Yeah, it’s not they come to me and reporting. No, I just want to spend time with them. Right. Right. And for my relation of other leaders, I will schedule regular meetings with each board member. Right. Right. So because I’m the senior pastor, I need to do that to keep the communication going. Right. Right. And in various different some I meet in person you possible, somebody just over the phone, right? But at least I’m in touch with them. Right? Not just in board meetings, right? When things happen. (MPD6 36:49)

Level of Structured Intentionality

An area of enactment that emerged in the interviews is the level of structured intentionality a clergy leader has in their enactment of leadership. One way to think of this is to imagine a spectrum, with “Proactive” at one end and “Responsive” at the other end, with “Facilitative” in the middle. Different labels could be used to describe the parts of the spectrum. Given how Power Distance varies and how the acceptance of leadership varies, one might wonder whether higher Power Distance leaders are more proactive in general while lower Power Distance leaders are more responsive. This was not an area that the interviewees were asked about directly so the data in this study does not provide conclusive answers. However, it is interesting to note that several of the HPD and MPD clergy spoke of the structured ways they approach their leadership (as seen above in the training of leaders). MPD5 said simply, “I kind of selectively like find

out who is ready and I was put more time I will spend more effort with them" (MPD5 19:11). In response to a question about how their leadership is influenced by Jesus, MPD1 spoke of resisting being driven by the expectations of the crowd, and instead proactively structuring the relationships into which they invest:

> Some of the some of the guiding principle I took from Bible and Jesus, as a senior pastor of a big church. I can lead by people's expectation, driven by people, but I'm more driven by the principle of Jesus, like, I always lay down [unintelligible] to lead 1 3 12, and 70. So the influence circle. So I got to spend time with the Lord reflect on the grace of God every day with Jesus -- the one. And I try to have the three, the closest circle, that's why I pick three or four that I coach, mentor, and to have constant dialogue. And I have my 12, on my staff team, and also the deacons. I have 24 deacons. So in my first three months, I am I am, I met, every single one of them one by one. And I also have the 72 or larger, and also the crowd 1 3 12 70 and the crowd. So if I lead by pleasing the crowd I think I can go anywhere. So I stick with Jesus principle to me. And also to love to love to more relational in the sense because by default, I'm more like a logical person, because I was trained as an architect IT architect. I think God transforming the way that to lead is to build the relationship. And then also using [the] 1–3–12–70–and crowd principle to lead. (MPD1 30:54)

HPD1 spoke of the need to be intentional in training people:

> You know, it's hard work of, you know, leader influencing coaching, mentoring, because you have to dedicate the time and effort to do it, like you said, being intentional. Like in the workplace, I develop, like a mentoring agreement of some sort. So I would set out some learning goals with my team, get them through a process of understanding where their needs are. And so through the course of projects we do and the work we do, we constantly monitor our mutual participation in that exercise. (HPD1 14:56)

HPD2 has a structured way of strategic planning with their leadership team:

> Every November, December, I always got together my core leaders, the term I use core leaders, we are five, five individual, as I pick that we come together in one week. And I tell them, Okay, we have to gather here. What's the plan? Following Of course, you have to go and already I have my Manila paper on the wall, I have a sticky notes and give the sticky to each one of them. Think about what we're doing in the past. Just think it's think what we're doing in the past. What are we doing is still the relevance to the current situation, because before the pandemic, the pandemic time, and now, we could see post pandemic, we have different things. It's a different game. So I asked the congregation or the core leaders, okay, you have your sticky notes, give you 30 minutes, think

> anything, what would be doing in the past? That's still relevant, that we can do it next year? is irrelevant. You have to pick it off. And I think a situation that what would be out this trend of the church, what would be the weaknesses? Or what would be our opportunity that we could introduce for next year? So that would be sticky notes. But if there, then we have to summarize, then we have to, we have to summarize and put it in us? Probably three, five priorities. Okay, this is the plan that we're doing. And after in December or early January, we have to communicate to the congregation this is what we're planning to do. So that's something that we do a year by year. (HPD2 10:22)

The level of intentionality and structure represented in these excerpts contrast with some of the comments from LPD leaders. LPD4 said, "I've never been one to be very good at strategic plans, like I'm terrible at five-year plans and ten-year, like, I'm just don't think that way. But interestingly, COVID has played to my strengths, because any plan that anybody had couldn't be realized . . . it needs to be something much more modest. Much more nimble, much more creative and responsive. And I know how to do that" (LPD4 4:04). LPD5 put it simply: "one of the things I've noticed about myself is that I have moved away from leadership stuff" (LPD5 51:14). LPD2 continued to be the outlier in the LPD group, expressing a collaborative leadership that is vision-centred: "I had to set the vision and be the leader and all those things. However, I would say I tried my best and the team would, I think, reiterate this, to involve them in conversations, the collaboration, the dreaming the visioning. Along the way, so I would say my style was still the same. It was just recognizing when you as the leader at the front had to be the more of the voice or more of the pusher" (LPD2 08:54).

Servant Leadership Practices

The review of Servant Leadership literature in Chapter 1 looked at a 2019 study that reviewed the Servant Leadership research trajectory to that point. This study identified

three earlier studies that measured concrete practices. Combining all the practices and dimensions from these three studies results in this list of servant leadership practices:

- emotional healing
- creating value for the community
- conceptual skills
- empowering
- helping subordinates grow and succeed
- putting subordinates first
- behaving ethically
- relationships
- servanthood[10]
- voluntary subordination
- authentic self
- covenantal relationship
- responsible morality
- transcendental spirituality
- transforming influence[11]
- empowerment
- accountability
- standing back
- humility
- authenticity
- courage
- interpersonal acceptance
- stewardship.[12]

The above is a daunting list for any individual leader to think of fulfilling, and thus it is questionable whether it is an effective summary of core practices related to Servant Leadership. Indeed, I am not arguing that combining lists from different studies is a pathway forward in identifying Servant Leadership practices; rather, I am simply attempting to demonstrate the complexity inherent in naming any particular set of practices as being definitively expressive of Servant Leadership. In addition, just to look

[10] Liden et al., "Servant Leadership."
[11] Sendjaya et al., "SLBS-6," 942.
[12] van Dierendonck and Nuijten, "Servant Leadership Survey," 251–52.

at a list of words such as this gives us little helpful information; what really matters is what the words mean *in a context* and what concrete observable practices were measured. This list of words on a page stands apart from the lived reality of human experience, in which practices and dimensions may be conceived of and thought of differently by different people, contexts, family systems, and cultures. For example, what looks like courage in one context may look like foolish riskiness in another, and what looks like wise caution in one context may look like a leadership vacuum in another. Since leadership is a specific form of relationship, varying cultural expectations of relationships will play a role in how leadership is conceived of, enacted, and experienced.

The questions asked in the interviews did not produce data about specific Servant Leadership practices as found in the literature, and therefore did not result in enough information to map interviewee responses against the above list of practices. However, based on the differences already seen among the different Power Distance groups, I expect that the practices in which leaders engage vary between the groups. I have already noted a possible difference in the level of structured intentionality, in making decisions, and in developing leaders. Even when there are practices in common across varying Power Distance groups, they can be expressed differently. For example, within a practice such as mentoring, it is possible that all Power Distance groups do some mentoring but that the inter-relational dynamic in the mentoring relationship varies based on Power Distant. Hofstede notes that higher Power Distance contexts have boss-subordinate relationships that have greater emotional distance than lower PD

contexts,[13] which would imply that relational values such as authenticity and acceptance, to name a few from the above list, would be expressed differently in settings with more emotional distance than with less.

As already stated in Chapter 1, there is a dearth of Servant Leadership research that takes cultural differences into account, and, clearly, much more research needs to take place if Servant Leadership continues to be articulated as a leadership theory that is applicable for all cultures.

Conclusion

In summary, Higher Power Distance clergy identify more easily with the role of leader than lower Power Distance clergy, even while all Power Distance groups speak of the necessity of leading through relationship. Similarly, higher Power Distance clergy discuss with greater ease the reality of the power and influence they hold and speak with confidence in how that is to be used, even while all Power Distance groups express caution about power and know that it can be abused. While this project did not focus on enactment, when enactment was mentioned it also signalled some differences between the Power Distance groups: higher Power Distance groups appear to find it easier to make decisions as a leader, they seem to be more attentive to developing leaders, and they may be more intentionally structured in their approach to leadership. In terms of the image of servanthood, all the Power Distance groups resonated with servanthood being the motivation for their leadership, but they differed in being able to articulate a leadership dimension when the term Servant Leadership was used. Moreover, there is no

[13] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 61.

agreed-upon set of practices related to Servant Leadership, and this study did not obtain enough data to map clergy responses against any list of practices, revealing an important avenue for future research.

These findings show enough difference between the Power Distance groups to suggest that Servant Leadership understandings and future research, whether academic or theological, needs to be attentive to cultural variation. The questions raised out of the earlier review of Servant Leadership literature continue to be worth raising. Is Servant Leadership a Western construct? Is it just a motivational image or is it a leadership theory? Who exactly is served (God, staff, individual congregations, the congregation as a whole, the mission of the Church, the neighbourhood, etc.) and what happens when those various groups have different agendas from each other? The interview responses show that "servant" as a motivational and shaping identity is helpful across all Power Distance groups and resonates with them; however, how this gets expressed as leaders "show up" to their context varies, and more research is warranted in order to better under differing enactments of Servant Leadership. Alternatively, it may make sense to say that Servant Leadership as a term is not helpful, and may actually create unnecessary conflicted expectations, and should therefore be abandoned.

The next chapter will engage in theological reflection on the project's findings by looking at variation in leadership enactment from some New Testament examples, and will consider themes that should be present in Servant Leadership across cultures.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON VARIATION IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Important questions were posed at the end of the previous chapter about the use and ubiquity of Servant Leadership as a term, but before addressing these, it is important to reflect theologically on the variation that was found in the data. At the core of this reflection is the need to wrestle with the fact that all the clergy respondents identified with the image of Servant in terms of how they thought of their leadership, and yet they varied in how they enacted their leadership and how they put together Servant and Leader. This raises a question: to what extent can variation take place and the leadership still honestly be Servant Leadership? As an extreme example, could an oppressive dictator who self-identifies as a Servant Leader actually *be* a Servant Leader? Surely there must be some boundaries to acceptable variation. Also, what might be some themes or principles that are present in the conceptualization and enactment of leadership, regardless of variation, for that leadership to be considered authentic Servant Leadership? Caution needs to be exercised in this discussion, given that much of the research into Servant Leadership has been in lower Power Distance contexts, since norms and boundaries in non-Western cultures may be different than in Western cultures. In addition, Christian ethics and morality will likely establish norms and boundaries that are different than the surrounding cultures' norms. And yet, Christian ethics is done by individuals who are embedded in particular cultures, cultures which are different than other cultures that also have individuals embedded within them doing

Christian ethics. This means that theological reflection and ethical formation must take place within a Practical Theology framework, which includes an attentiveness to cultural backgrounds. Theologizing should not take place abstractedly, distanced from human experience, but instead should happen as lived experience dialogues with sources of revelation, primarily (for evangelicals and Baptists) the Scriptures.

As has been argued, much of the discourse around Servant Leadership assumes that there is one right, moral way to lead, including some specific practices. This type of approach does not wrestle theologically with the obvious diversity that exists across cultures and makes an implicit assumption that the cultural embeddedness of the author is irrelevant to their view of morality. Hofstede's Power Distance framework maps the differences across cultures in how they view the ethical use of power, and the clergy responses analyzed in this research project revealed some of these differences: how easily respondents identify as a leader, how comfortable they are in using the power and influence they have, and how they think of themselves as a Servant Leader. However, the fact that differences exist is an answer to what is, not an answer to what should be: it does not deal with moral rightness. Hofstede deliberately took a morally neutral view, but a Christian view cannot ignore the dimension of morality.[1] This chapter will reflect theologically on themes of variation that arose from the clergy interviews. In the end, I will argue that while there are theological themes that should inform Servant Leadership in a Christian context, specific enactments should be discerned in each cultural context within a Practical Theology framework.

[1] Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations*, 25.

A Practical Theology Approach to Leadership

As was noted in Chapter 2, leadership is a human practice and therefore belongs to the field of Practical Theology. It is performative, enacted by humans and affecting humans. Good leadership theology should not settle for theories, ideas, or principles, but insist that these be concretized in practice by asking what the theories or principles look like when embodied in action. This is because embodied practice is precisely what is experienced by those being led; they do not experience ideas that exist inside the leader's mind. Leadership theology should acknowledge that human practice can be a source of learning and guidance about God's intention in a particular context, and that the Spirit works within human practice. For example, a leader may come up with an idea for a new program after reading a book or going to a conference, and then upon sharing that idea with other leaders in their congregation discover that the other leaders think that it's a bad idea. This is a simplistic example, but it is being used to illustrate the idea that the Spirit can be leading and revealing God's guidance for that congregation through the feedback from others. The leader, if wise, can reflect on this and refine their leadership approach moving forward. Alternatively, if the leader does not believe that human experience can be a source of God's guidance, he or she may see the resistance from others as simply a challenge to be overcome, instead of considering that, perhaps, God may be speaking through that resistance. Edward Farley states what is obvious and too often ignored in overly-theoretical theological approaches: "All human beings exist and act in situations and engage in interpretation of situations."[2] Swinton and Mowat say, "In opposition to models that view Practical Theology as applied theology, wherein

[2] Farley, "Interpreting Situations," 11.

its task is simply to apply doctrine worked out by the other theological disciplines to practical situations . . . Practical Theology is seen to be a critical discipline which is prepared to challenge accepted assumptions and practices."[3] Practical Theology is critical of "theologians who do not take cognisance of the importance of contextual questions [and who] often fail in significant ways to address the needs and problematics of particular situations that are of vital significance to the people of God."[4] Theologizing leadership should take seriously the need for reflection on concrete leadership practices in particular contexts, and not privilege theoretical discourse that remains abstracted at a trans-cultural level of ideas or principles. Given that leadership is enacted through influence within relationships, it is a human experience that exists only at the level of interactive experience. In other words, what the leader is thinking or intending is not what is experienced; what is experienced is what he or she enacts and how that enactment is read, received, and experienced by those being influenced.

Leadership Variation in the New Testament

In this section several examples of leadership in the New Testament will be considered. Differences in leadership posture and enactment amongst the examples will be highlighted, and connections made to the data from the clergy interviews. In the next section, I will take a thematic approach, reflecting on themes that are present in both the New Testament examples and the data obtained from the clergy interviews. Following that, I will discuss specific themes that may help churches and other ministries establish

[3] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, Locations 256–59.
[4] Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, Locations 373–75.

norms and set boundaries in order to express Servant Leadership in their context. Finally, a framework to synthesize the complexity will be discussed.

In taking this approach, I am not arguing that, say, because Paul did something and some of the clergy leaders interviewed also did that same thing, that that makes it Servant Leadership. The differences in culture and time and context between the New Testament leaders and the clergy leaders interviewed are too vast to make such arguments. Further, the term "Servant Leadership" as such did not exist, as far as we know, in the early Church; at the very least, it is not a term in the biblical text. Rather, the core of my argument is that the New Testament contains variation in leadership enactment, all of which are used by the Spirit to build the Church; this must mean that some variation in leadership enactment, at least, falls within the bounds of leadership that is Servant Leadership. More simply, I am arguing that there is not just way one to be a Servant Leader, and that the New Testament narratives exemplify this variety. At the same time, it is worth noting that there are indeed similar themes present in both the New Testament examples and the clergy leader examples, meaning that the variation is not unbounded.

For the purposes of this reflection, I will avoid debates relating to biblical criticism and engage with the text as the narrative that has been received and stewarded by the Church.

Paul, the Apostle

Apart from Jesus, the person who most dominates the pages of the New Testament is the Apostle Paul. Tradition ascribes thirteen of the epistles to his authorship. He took three

missionary journeys that are recorded in the New Testament and planted multiple churches. He is the only person to have directly encountered and be called by Jesus after Jesus' Ascension, making him an apostle in the same category as the disciples who spent time with Jesus during His earthly ministry. Within this apostleship, he had a unique calling to reach out to Gentiles (Acts 9:15).

Paul is a complex character. On the one hand, as will be seen, he holds authority easily and can project it when needed. This is similar to findings from the HPD and MPD leaders. On the other hand, he was clearly relational, given the number of people he mentions with affection in his letters. This, too, is similar to the HPD and MPD leaders, who were comfortable with their authority but who approached their leadership roles relationally, seeking to influence and collaborate.

In his letters and in his actions, Paul comes across with a high degree of confidence and authority. No doubt some of this has to do with his personality: in his pre-conversion persecution of Christians a similar fervor and passion can be seen (Acts 9:1,2). But it is also reasonable to think that a good deal of this confidence and authority is rooted in his experience of encounter with Christ on the Damascus Road, and from knowing that he was specifically called by Christ to evangelize the Gentiles. Galatians 1:1 is just one of many examples when Paul speaks of his call, saying that he was "sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father." Don Howell states that "Paul occupied a unique place of leadership in the early church through his direct commissioning by the risen Lord" and that "he is conscious of being a mediator of divinely revealed truth to the churches."[5] This makes him, along with the other apostles,

[5] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 256.

a steward of the apostolic tradition, which is "the established doctrinal and ethical charter for the emerging churches."[6] He sees himself as the "single apostolic link between God and these churches."[7] In 1 Tim 2:7 he says that "for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle – I am telling the truth, I am not lying – and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles." Paul's clear, dramatic call to the specific ministry of reaching the Gentiles gave him a confident authority. When needed, he could easily claim and project his authority as an apostle and insist that the message he preached should not be contradicted: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!" (Gal 1:9) In dealing with the troublesome Corinthian church, Paul adopts a caring attitude in Second Corinthians but also argues for his apostolic authority in chs. 10–13. Even as he begins this argument, however, he appeals to them by the "humility and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor 10:1). Colin Kruse states that "It is important to remember that in the case of Christ, meekness and gentleness did not mean weakness, and this was also true of Paul."[8]

At the same time, Paul is not a solo pioneer who is cut off from others. As is evidenced by the list of people who are named in his epistles and to whom he sends greetings, he had a community of co-labourers and friends. None of the clergy interviewed for this project saw themselves as solo, individual leaders; all of them worked with and through others.

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[6] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 256.
[7] Bassler, *1 Timothy*, 35.
[8] Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, 228.

Paul mentored younger leaders, such as Timothy, which is similar to the intentional proactive mentoring that HPD leaders spoke about in the interviews. The gentle, intimate tone of Paul's letter to Philemon, advocating on behalf of Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus, is evidence of the depth and warmth present in some of Paul's relationships. N. T. Wright describes this intimacy:

> (a) Beginning by claiming Philemon and Apphia as his brother and sister (v. 1) and giving to Philemon in particular the description "beloved" and the title "co-worker," he identifies fully with him in verses 4–7: Philemon's love makes him glad and grateful. To this point he will return (v. 20). In the meantime, he notes Philemon's love for "all the saints" (vv. 4, 7) and prays that this will have its full effect (v. 6). (b) He then turns round and identifies himself with Onesimus. He is "my son" (v. 10), "my very heart" (v. 12), "very dear to me" (v. 16); and Paul will take responsibility for his debts (vv. 18– 19).[9]

Paul also remained very aware of the grace offered to him by Christ and remained humbled by it: in his poignant farewell to the Ephesians elders he said, "I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (Acts 20:24).

Clearly, Paul is a very large character, both in terms of the New Testament narrative and in terms of who he was as a person. He is confident, persuasive, authoritative, passionate, and strong. At the same time, he can be vulnerable, intimate, and humble. His sense of confidence and authority came from his personality and his call on the Damascus Road, which enabled him to persevere through much suffering and persevere in his call. Paul certainly saw himself as a servant to Christ and to the Church (1 Cor 4:1; 2 Cor 4:5), but his servanthood was expressed through his apostolic ministry of leadership. Paul is somewhat unique: his is considered an apostle because of his

[9] Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 84.

encounter and call from Jesus *after* the Ascension, and his ministry was also unique in that he was a pioneer in intentional outreach to the Gentiles. Paul's motivation was to serve, and this service was expressed through his leadership. Here, again, is some similarity to how HPD and MPD leaders understood the relationship between leadership and servanthood, that is, they saw their leadership as a way of serving the Church.

Timothy

Timothy is perhaps best known as a young pastor mentored by Paul. There is a clear tone of affection in Paul's two letters to Timothy, which reveals much about both Paul and Timothy and their close relationship. In contrast to Paul, Timothy appears to have a gentle, timid disposition. Paul reminds him that "the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline"(2 Tim 1:7). Howell states that, "Timothy is the paradigmatic missionary who is called on to do a variety of tasks, some of which he feels well-qualified to fulfill and others that are clearly out of his comfort zone."[10] Further, "several texts imply that Timothy was timid by nature and needed encouragement to step forth and assume the leadership roles Paul needed him to fulfil."[11] John Gillman states that "Timothy is portrayed as a youthful, inexperienced protégé of Paul, intimidated by strong opposition, requiring the encouragement and instruction of his mentor on both personal and Church matters."[12] Timothy is clearly gifted but, especially when he is younger and less experienced, appears to be less confident than Paul, and less at ease at holding and using power. This is similar to some

[10] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 249.
[11] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 249.
[12] Gillman, "Timothy." 559.

of the comments made by LPD clergy in the interviews, as seen in Chapter 2, which in their cases is not an expression of youth, but of culture.

At the same time, there are several events narrated in the New Testament that indicate Paul's deep trust in Timothy. Timothy is first mentioned in Acts 16, a man living in Lystra with a Jewish mother who was a believer and Greek father, meaning that Timothy grew up at least to some extent in a multi-cultural family. Paul may have seen this as an advantage for Timothy, given the nature of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. Paul evidently holds Timothy in high regard because he chooses Timothy to accompany him on his journey. Paul entrusts Timothy with a significant mission to the Corinthian church, which is experiencing divisions, immorality, and jealousy. Paul writes a letter to challenge the Corinthian church and sends Timothy to remind them of Paul's "way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor 4:17). It appears that Timothy's mission was not successful because Titus was later sent to the church as well, and his mission was apparently more successful (2 Cor 7:6–14). Perhaps Timothy's gentle disposition was not able to deal with the intensity of the personalities and behaviour in Corinth. However, there is no indication that this caused a rupture with Paul nor that it was seen as a negative mark on Timothy. Timothy continues to be in close relationship with Paul and is eventually entrusted with pastoral leadership at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3).

There is no doubt that Paul saw Timothy as a gifted leader who was able to serve the Church in accompaniment with Paul, on behalf of Paul, and in his own right as a pastor. Timothy's disposition stands in contrast to Paul's, and yet this does not appear to have harmed their personal relationship or partnership as colleagues in ministry. Much

of our knowledge of Paul comes from his own voice, in his letters, but we have nothing of Timothy's voice in the New Testament, meaning that we cannot be certain how Timothy would self-identify. However, it is certainly fair to assume that, given the close and enduring relationship with Paul, and given the ministry assignments he took on, Timothy was a significant leader in the early church, but in a different way than Paul. Somewhat similarly, all of the LPD clergy interviewed were in positions of pastoral leadership, mostly as Lead Pastors, indicating that despite their relative unease at identifying as a leader, they were nonetheless in positions of leadership.

Titus

Titus is "Paul's trusted emissary for the Corinthian community"[13] and plays the role of "Paul's troubleshooter."[14] He is clearly a trusted colleague of Paul's who accompanies him on some of his missionary journeys (Gal 2:1) and whom Paul entrusts with difficult situations. As noted above, Timothy's timid, gentle personality may have made his mission to the troubled Corinthian church unsuccessful, because it appears that Paul later sent Titus into that situation. In Paul's second letter to that church he speaks of meeting Titus in Macedonia and of Titus's positive report about the Corinthians (2 Cor 7:5–7). While we cannot be certain how much of the change in the Corinthians was due to Titus's influence on them, clearly he has played some part. Paul also entrusted leadership of the new church on Crete, saying that he left Titus in charge in order to finish the work Paul was not able to complete (1:5). Based on the rest of Paul's letter to

[13] Gillman, "Titus," 581.
[14] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 250.

Titus, it is apparent that the Cretan church had challenges that required strong, wise leadership.

Paul clearly values Titus's gifts and abilities. In addition, the intimacy of their friendship can be seen when Paul expresses his hope that Titus can join him in Nicopolis, where Paul plans to spend the winter, and the intensity of this hope is apparent given that Paul makes plans to send someone to take Titus's place in Crete (Titus 3:12). In comparison to Paul and Timothy, the New Testament contains less information about Titus. However, Titus is clearly a core part of Paul's inner circle of colleagues and companions and was trusted by Paul to be able to lead in very difficult situations. If Paul can be characterized as confident and strong, and Timothy as gentle and less self-assured, perhaps Titus is perhaps somewhere in the middle. Titus's leadership capacities are obvious, given the difficult assignments he took on, and while we don't have his own voice in the New Testament we can assume that his motivation was to serve the Church: it is difficult to imagine Paul having a close ministry relationship with someone who did not have this posture.

When it comes to the issue of conflict, which Titus had to navigate in both Corinth and Crete, many of the clergy interviewees mentioned it as a challenge they had to face in their leadership practice, sometimes between them and congregants and sometimes between congregants. Clearly, the reality of conflict in a congregation is not a modern-day phenomenon, as can been seen from the New Testament examples above, and the need to deal with conflict is a needed leadership skill. Not all of the clergy interviewees explicitly spoke about how they dealt with conflict, but there is some indication of a slight difference between the PD groups. MPD3 said when they "come

across some crisis, or some conflict, I try to make peace" (MPD3 10:56). This indicates a direct, proactive way of dealing with conflict. In contrast, LPD5 said "When push comes to shove, and suddenly we're in a conflict at the church, I could use my power. I very intentionally will not. For instance, at the business meetings we have, rarely do you hear me talk. Because my words have weight" (LPD5 40:57). This indicates a deliberate stepping back, to not influence (although it could be argued that choosing not to speak is also a form of influence). LPD4 was more nuanced in articulating how they used power when facing conflict, speaking of "influencing someone through a conversation [so that] a potentially conflictual interaction becomes less conflictual as a result of gracious interaction" (LPD4 43:23).

Barnabas

Barnabas is another senior leader in the early Church, often mentioned at pivotal moments in the Church's development in the book of Acts. J. Daniels says that Barnabas was "prominent in the church of Antioch-on-the-Orontes in Syria, and an early leader in the mission to gentiles."[15] He is Jewish but is a part of the diaspora, coming from Cyprus (Acts 4:36). It is possible that this made him more open to other cultures, and to complexities of identity and practices. Howell sees Barnabas's Cypriot upbringing as accounting "for [his] more tolerant attitudes with respect to external matters."[16] Barnabas is the man who comes alongside the relatively newly-converted Paul and advocates for him to the disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26, 27). When the first Gentile church forms in Antioch, Barnabas is sent by the Jerusalem leaders to give leadership

[15] Daniels, "Barnabas," 610.
[16] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 230.

and guidance to this situation that had not been experienced before (Acts 11:22). In narrating this event, the text takes a pause from the activity to make a brief testimony about Barnabas's character and talent: "He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord" (Acts 11:24). Later he is listed first among the leaders of this church (Acts 13:1) and is commissioned along with Paul for a missionary journey. He is clearly trusted by Paul, to such an extent that Paul expresses surprise when "even Barnabas was led astray" by the Judaizers who were leading the Galatian church astray (Gal 2:13).

Barnabas's name means "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36) and his early mentoring and advocacy of Paul shows the appropriateness of this name. He exhibits a generosity of spirit, time and financial resources: "Barnabas is shown to typify the spirit of communal sharing which Luke emphasizes in the earliest Jerusalem community."[17] Later, as he and Paul prepared for a second missionary journey, Barnabas advocated to bring along John Mark, who had abandoned them during the first journey, leading to a conflict with Paul and their parting of ways (Acts 15:36–41). While Barnabas and John Mark disappear from the New Testament narrative at this point, we can see that here again Barnabas is an encourager and advocate. He is certainly a central figure in the New Testament church, a peer of Paul but perhaps overshadowed by Paul's personality strength and missionary gifting. Barnabas is encouraging, discerning, and wise, and, given the warm language used in the New Testament to describe him, was probably well-loved and respected.

[17] Daniels, "Barnabas," 10.

Barnabas is known as an encourager. Many of the clergy interviewed in this project spoke of encouragement, but used the term in different ways. Some spoke of the encouragement that they had received as part of their discernment process towards becoming a pastor, while others spoke of the encouragement they offer to congregants. MPD4 specifically mentioned Barnabas when describing what they wanted in their relationship with their interns (MPD4 25:21). HPD4 spoke of encouraging and empowering people to bring out their potential (HPD4 04:38). Others, such as MPD6, spoke of encouraging in a way that is more akin to comforting (MPD6: 23:56). Clearly, encouragement is a word used often by clergy, but the specifics of what they mean by the word shows some variation.

Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)

The last example of leadership to be considered isn't that of an individual, but of a group of leaders facing a difficult decision. The growth of the Gentile Church was creating a crisis for the early believers, all of whom were Jewish and who saw Jesus as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. The entrance of non-Jews into the Church was a crisis because non-Jews had not been awaiting a Jewish Messiah and they did not follow Jewish Law or practice Jewish religious rituals such as circumcision. The Antiochean church was beset by Judeans who insisted on circumcision for Gentiles and sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to consult with the apostle and elders. There is disagreement on this issue in the Jerusalem church as well, with some believers insisting on circumcision (Acts 15:5). The apostles and elders meet and "much discussion" ensues (Acts 15:7). At one point Peter stands to address them, arguing for full inclusion without

circumcision (Acts 15:7–11). Paul and Barnabas recount their stories of Gentiles coming to faith (Acts 15:12). Finally, James speaks up. He quotes the prophets and speaks in favour of the Gentiles, arguing that it should not be difficult for them to be included. James articulates what could be considered a small compromise, or, at least, a politically wise solution: while Gentiles will not need to be circumcised, they will be required to "abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (Acts 15:20).

This narrative is of interest because it is one of the only times that the process of decision-making in the New Testament is made more transparent. And yet, it is not clear how the differences were resolved. What is clear is that there was division and difference of conviction, requiring plenty of listening, discussion, and even debate. Also clear is that this leadership group of apostles and elders was a clearly identified group, so the decision was not made by the entire Jerusalem church. "Much discussion" took place, meaning that various voices were heard. James's speech at the end could be considered an articulation of a reasonable pathway forward for the Church that is now both Jewish and Gentile, but it is not clear how the decision was reached in the end. Barrett views this as a narrative highly edited by Luke, positioned as the pivotal point in Acts to illustrate the transformation of the Church from a Jewish movement into a multi-cultural people. In his description, he notes that James has primary voice and that the group agrees with him:

> At the outset there is much debate, which Luke does not report. He assigns speeches to Peter, who is in favour of a liberal attitude; to Barnabas and Paul, who show that God, by granting miracles, has blessed the Gentile mission; and to James, whose attitude is less clear. He agrees with Peter, but indicates that some concessions must be made to Jewish convictions. *The whole company agree with their leader*, and a letter is written in the name of all, disowning those

> who have caused trouble at Antioch and stating the Decree proposed by James. The paragraph is rightly described as the centre of Acts. It is the best example of a pattern that occurs several times. A difficulty is encountered; steps are taken to deal with it; as a result not only is the problem solved, a notable advance takes place.[18] (emphasis mine)

F. F. Bruce uses stronger language to indicate James's role as primary authority:

> The eyes of all now turned to James, the brother of the Lord, a man who enjoyed widespread respect and confidence. If the elders of the Jerusalem church were organized as a kind of Nazarene Sanhedrin, James was their president, *primus inter pares*. The church's readiness to recognize his leadership was due more to his personal character and record than to his blood relationship to the Lord. (There were other brothers, but they were shadowy figures compared with James.) When he said "Listen to me," they listened.[19]

In the end we cannot be sure whether James's speech at the end reflects the consensus of the group or whether it was his way of charting a course forward that the two sides could live with. But it is clear that James is a senior leader in the Church, and so it is he who articulates the final decision. While we do not know the details of the process, this narrative reveals a blend of communal discussion, advocacy by key leaders, and a final articulation of a pathway forward that may or may not have been consensus.

This is blend of individual and group leadership also shows up in the responses from clergy interviewees. All the clergy were formally accountable to a senior leadership group in their church (since they were all baptistic settings), but this does not mean that the nature of the relationship between the clergy leaders and the leadership groups was the same across Power Distance groups. Chapter 2, above, showed some variation in how proactive versus reactive each clergyperson is in their relationship with their senior leadership group. Further, the data showed that higher Power Distance leaders are more comfortable at making decisions, even on their own.

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[18] Barrett, *Acts of the Apostles,* 317.
[19] Bruce, *The Book of the Acts,* 211.

Themes in Leadership Variation: Project Data and the New Testament

The New Testament does not claim to be a manual on Christian leadership, and by looking at New Testament examples of leadership the argument is not being made that the New Testament prescribes how to lead. Rather, the New Testament narrates some key elements of the development of the first communities of believers, and in this narrative, various types of ministry and leadership can be seen. All these types of leadership are used by God to further the development of the Church, so it is legitimate to consider all of them as expressions of Christian leadership, without necessarily making them prescriptive or excluding other expressions.

Identifying as a Leader and Using Leadership Authority

The clergy interviewed in this project showed significant variation in how easily they thought of themselves as a leader, and how easily they identified in having and using power and authority. The New Testament examples of leadership identified above also show some degree of variation in this regard. Timothy was perhaps more reluctant to be a leader, and perhaps more afraid of dealing with situations of conflict. This might be related to his mixed parentage, or to his youth, or it may simply be his temperament. On the other hand, Paul displays a deep confidence in the authority granted to him by Christ. Much of this is rooted in his encounter with Christ on the Damascus road, but it is notable that even pre-conversion, Paul (or, as he was known then, Saul) displayed a streak of zealous passion and proactive confidence in his persecution of the early Christians (Acts 8:3; 9:1–2). There is also in him a sense of pride in his Jewish heritage

and family background (Phil 3:4–6). Overall, compared to Timothy, Paul seems to hold the identity of leader more easily, as well as more easily using the authority that accompanies that identity. This variation is similar to the variation found in the data between HPD and LPD clergy leaders: HPD clergy hold the identity of leader more easily than LPD clergy, and also more easily acknowledge and use the authority that comes with that identity.

Leaders Mentoring Leaders

Barnabas is somewhat different than Paul. Both are strong, senior leaders who have high profile in the early Church, but Barnabas may have had more attentiveness to the mentoring and encouraging of younger leaders, as he did with Saul post-conversion and with John Mark some years later. Paul did this as well, with Timothy and Titus, but perhaps with Barnabas it was more of an ongoing orientation. The strength of Barnabas's conviction in disagreeing with Paul over the issue of whether they should bring John Mark on their second journey shows that he has a strong sense of himself as a leader. He is willing to disagree with someone like Paul, another strong leader, for the sake of mentoring a younger leader. The clergy data from the interviews showed that all of the HPD leaders and nearly all of the MPD leaders spoke explicitly about developing leaders, especially by coaching and mentoring. It may be that clergy who have a stronger identification with being a leader also value training and mentoring other leaders.

Decisions in Teams and as Individuals

The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) is an intriguing example because it includes individual and group leadership, along with communal listening and discussion. Elements of this narrative are indicative of a servant posture on the part of the leadership group: the issue being brought before them is one that comes from the margins of the Church at that time (Antioch, not Jerusalem) and did not have direct personal relevance to this Jewish leadership group; the leadership group gives ample opportunity for key people to speak; and, finally, substantial time is taken for discussion, which implies that there was no clear answer apparent to everyone at the start. Other elements of the narrative, however, indicate a structured approach to leadership that perhaps had varying levels of authority: there is a bounded leadership group (the apostles and elders) who take on the responsibility for making the decision, and, after the ample discussion takes place, it falls to one person, James, to articulate the decision of the leadership group. As noted above, it is not clear whether this was a consensus decision or a majority decision. However, the decision does appear to have some elements of compromise, not complete abandoning of all aspects of Jewish ceremonial law, while still making a significant break with the Church's Jewish heritage by not requiring circumcision for Gentile believers.

Overall, this example of leadership shows both serving and leading aspects. Similarly, the clergy data showed that while HPD respondents preferred team-based decision-making and preferred to work collaboratively, they were willing to make decisions on their own if needed.

Variation in Gifts, People, and Roles

There is variation not only in how leadership was expressed in the New Testament, but in the terms used to describe leaders. Eph 4 states that specific types of people are given to the Church to function in different ways: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:11–13). Andrew Lincoln states that ". . . the gifts are now explained as the ministers whom the writer lists. They are seen as the royal largesse which Christ distributes from his position of cosmic lordship after his triumphant ascension. In fact Christ has given these ministers as part of the overall purpose for which he ascended – that his work of filling all things might be brought to completion."[20] This means that the variation in persons and roles is not random or just a result of personality or culture, but that there is an intentional diversity in leadership expressions, given as gifts from the ascended Christ.

This is not to say that this variety of leadership expression was necessarily codified into roles in an organizational structure. Markus Barth, also commenting on Eph 4, argues,

> It is often asked whether functions or offices are involved in the list of 4:11. The superficial answer is neither. The writer talks about groups of persons, not about either their activities or their positions. But obviously the question can then be pursued. Do these persons receive the name they have been given simply because they perform certain functions from time to time or also because they occupy some clearly defined position within their communities? . . . The answers given are highly disputed, and it may simply be the case that a question is being asked of the text for which there is neither enough data in the text nor sufficient

[20] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 248.

> knowledge of church organization at this time and in this area to provide a convincing answer.[21]

It goes beyond the scope of this project to articulate and assess the emergence of gifts, roles, and structure in the early Church; for our purposes, what matters is that there was variety in leadership enactment and that this variety was intended by Christ, and are in fact gifts to accomplish His purpose.

Varying roles have differing requirements that call for different expressions of leadership. Paul was a pioneering church planter with a specific mission to the Gentiles, which no doubt required a level of confidence and proactivity. Timothy appears to have developed into being a good pastor but was likely less suited to pioneering work. Titus also appears to be a good pastor and is able to deal with conflict and strong personalities. James, who was the primary leader in the Jerusalem leadership group, may have been gifted at facilitating and leading a group's communal discernment and decision-making.

Among the clergy interviewees, while all had the title "pastor," their specific roles and context varied, which may account for some of the variation in how they expressed leadership. Two of the interviewees had planted the church they now pastor. A few of the interviewees were at larger churches and so had staff members reporting to them. A couple were not the Lead Pastor, but at an Associate level. A couple were solo pastors.

This project was focused on Servant Leadership and so "leader" was the term most used in the interview questions. This term is not foreign to the New Testament:

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[21] Barth, *Ephesians 4–6,* 252.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully" (Rom 12:6–8). However, the New Testament has a broader range of terms, as has been seen, to describe various expressions of leadership in the Church, and it may be that some of the variation found in the clergy responses is related to the variation in gifting, calling, and role that they have.

Given this variation in roles, gifts, functions, and enactments, it would be difficult to argue that there should be only one way to lead, or one way of being a Servant Leader. This project focused on differences between cultures with varying Power Distance scores. The New Testament examples are all fully or partly ethnically Jewish, but even in this relatively culturally homogeneous group, significant variation in types of leaders can be seen, all of which are used by the Spirit to serve the Church. At the same time, it would be expected that there would be some aspects that are common to these various expressions, both in the New Testament and among the clergy interviewed for this project. The next section will explore these aspects.

Themes That Should Inform Servant Leadership

In Chapter 1 the complexities relating to the term Servant Leadership were explored. In brief: the term was proposed by Robert Greenleaf to describe a motivation for leading, not a particular type of leading; two separate and rarely interfacing trajectories of discourse have taken place, with the academic focused on developing a model based on

specific practices, and the theological attempting to argue that this type of leadership is essentially the equivalent to Christian leadership; and, finally, neither the academic or theological discourses have done adequate work to explore how this type of leadership functions in non-Western cultural settings. These complexities call into question the appropriateness of the ubiquity of Servant Leadership terminology in the Church, and the assumption that it is nearly a synonym for Christian leadership. Nonetheless, the term *is* prevalent, and so it is important to reflect more deeply on what ideas might be present in the minds and hearts of those who use the term in a non-academic non-technical sense. The sections below are overlapping but somewhat distinct lenses I will use to theologically reflect on the internal state and external enactment of Servant Leadership seen in the clergy interviewees and in the New Testament examples.

Motivation: Service

All the clergy interviewed in this project were motivated by a desire to serve. As noted in Chapter 3, all respondents identified with servant terminology in the sense that they saw themselves as serving. The brief review of New Testament leaders conducted above indicates that they, too, were motivated by a desire to serve.

However, as has been seen, enactment of this service motivation may vary significantly. As was discussed in Chapter Three, higher PD leaders were more able to distinguish and discuss the leadership aspect of Servant Leadership, and saw their leadership as a way of serving. They also saw Servant Leadership as being more than simply serving. In contrast, lower PD leaders tended to see serving as an enactment of leadership, i.e. that a key aspect of leadership is service. This difference between higher

PD and lower PD understandings may appear to be subtle, but it is actually quite significant: in one case (higher PD leaders), service is the motivation and leadership is the expression (which implies that there can be other expressions of service), while in the other case (lower PD leaders), service is an enactment of leadership. While lower PD leaders were also motivated by service, they saw service as an enactment as well.

The review of New Testament examples conducted above also shows variation in enactment. While Paul sees himself as a servant to Jesus Christ and was commissioned by a church (Rom 1:1; Acts 13:1–3), once he begins his missionary journeys he appears to be fairly self-directed (or, Spirit-directed), in that there are no further indications of him being directed by the church that commissioned him. Paul is serving, but is not taking direction other than from the Spirit. On the other hand, both Titus and Timothy appear to take direction from Paul; while they operate fairly independently on a day-to-day basis (since Paul is not nearby), they receive letters containing instructions from him and they are sent by him on specific missions.

The image of servant, or serving, is present throughout Scripture. Don Howell conducts an extensive survey of the Old and New Testaments to trace how the terms servant and slave were re-purposed into positive terms, used to describe service to God. This re-purposing climaxes in Jesus, who is the Servant who fulfills the Servant songs found in Isaiah. In the New Testament, the meaning is expanded to include service to the household of faith.[22] The notion of servanthood is strongly related to how Jesus used power in relation to others. The narrative often used to explicate Jesus' approach to servanthood is that of Jesus taking a towel and washing the disciples' feet, filling the

[22] Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 6.

role of a servant. He then explains His actions: “Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (Jn 13:12–15). The example Jesus set for His disciples, especially in foot washing, embodies His self-description as a servant from the Gospel of Mark when, after James and John requested seats of honour in His kingdom, Jesus says,

> You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:42–45)

Clearly, Jesus sees Himself as one who serves, and identifies as a servant. But He is not *just* a servant. Jesus uses other images to self-identify or permits them to be used by others, such as shepherd (John 10:11), master (Luke 9:33), friend (John 15:15), and the vine (John 15). In identifying as one who serves, Jesus does not give up his lordship. Further, Jesus does not take orders from His disciples: He serves them but does not take direction from them, which indicates that He is more than just a servant. Similarly, the higher PD leaders who were interviewed would describe Servant Leadership as more than just service.

This focus on motivation as the core part of Servant Leadership resonates perfectly with Greenleaf’s original proposal, where he argued that service is the motivation and leadership is an expression of that motivation. As has been discussed above, post-Greenleaf attempts to describe and define a specific type of leadership as being Servant Leadership, while possibly helpful in some instances, were not what

Greenleaf intended. It may be that what is needed is to return to a focus on motivation, and allow for greater variety in enactment.

Serve God, Serve the Church

All the clergy respondents and presumably all of the New Testament examples were motivated by a desire to serve, and more specifically, serve God and the Church. There is obviously a Servant Leadership discourse that exists outside the Church, but as Chapter 2 indicated, Servant Leadership has become a primary term within the Church and has become a near-synonym for Christian leadership. The focus of this project and the interviews with clergy leaders was to investigate Servant Leadership within the Church, and, not surprisingly, not only did we find that the desire to serve was held in common, but, specifically, it was a desire to serve God and to serve the Church.

However, this seemingly simple idea also has complexities. What, or whom, exactly, is the Church? Is it a local church, or is it the Church as a whole? Paul often describes himself as a servant of God, not specifically a servant to the Church. And yet, as was seen above in 1 Cor 9:19, Paul states that he willingly becomes a slave in order to win as many as possible to Christ. Even for clergy leaders who see themselves as serving their particular congregation, how they put together leadership with servanthood will shape their practice of Servant Leadership. There is no indication in the data that any of the clergy leaders saw themselves as simply taking direction from their congregations. At the same time, as will be discussed below, they saw themselves as accountable to their congregation. As was discussed earlier, higher PD leaders were likely more proactive in their interaction with their congregation's leaders, while lower

PD leaders were more responsive. In all cases they see themselves as serving, but the shape of this service varies.

Called by God

It is a common understanding and almost an assumption that clergy leaders have a sense of "call" to their vocation and to their specific leadership role; questions related to this sense of call are often a part of ordination processes and interview processes for specific roles. This understanding can be seen in the New Testament leaders mentioned above and in the responses from clergy interviewees. This sense of call signifies something more than ability, gifting and passion: it signifies something rooted in the will of God. This is likely a good thing, given the complexities and hardships of leadership in the Church, and for clergy who have a teaching role it likely increases the possibility that congregants will listen to what they have to say. When we consider clergy leaders in the Church, it makes sense that a sense of call is an important aspect of identity as a Servant Leader.

However, there are complexities in this understanding. For example, what about non-clergy leaders in the Church? In the author's experience, it is less common to insist upon a sense of call for someone to serve in a volunteer capacity, though this idea is not completely absent. Another complexity is the tension between a call to serve the Church as a whole, versus a call to serve a specific church. It is not unusual for clergy to occasionally leave one congregation to lead another, ostensibly because their sense of call to the Church as a whole is prioritized over their sense of call to a specific church.

Perhaps the call to a specific church is for a period of time, while the broader call lasts many years, perhaps a lifetime.

At one level, if someone describes a sense of being called by God to pastoral work, it would seem to affirm that they are being called to serve through leading and that they are therefore a Servant Leader. But what happens when they are in conflict with other leaders in their church? Does their sense of call give them a special authority? To paint an extreme picture, if an oppressive tyrant is a pastor because he or she says they are called by God, does that mean that they are a Servant Leader? Clearly, a sense of being called by God may be an important part of Servant Leadership for clergy, but it needs to be accompanied by the other markers of Servant Leadership in this section.

Accountability and Relationality

The New Testament does not describe a clear organizational structure of the Church or of local churches, and there is a diversity of titles and functions that are present. There do appear to be people and groups viewed as senior leaders. For example, as has been seen in the Jerusalem Council narrative, the church at Jerusalem is seen to be the authoritative voice, and within this church, it is the leadership group of apostles and elders that hold authority, and within this group, James appears to have special authority and voice. Paul's first church-planting missionary journey was out of the local Antiochean church, which heard the Spirit's call to Paul to engage in this task (Acts 13:1–3). These and other examples reveal a type of accountability that was present. It was perhaps primarily relational and somewhat organic, as opposed to being formalized in Job Descriptions and reporting relationships. But it existed.

This can also be seen in the responses from the clergy participants. None of the respondents exhibited a posture of independence and autonomy; all spoke of being collaborative with others in their church. They also spoke of the relationality of leadership. HPD respondents focused on working with and developing leaders in their congregation, while LPD respondents had a broader focus, with the entire congregation, but they were all attentive to how leadership was enacted through relationships. All of the clergy interviewed were Baptist or baptistic and functioned within this type of congregational governance, meaning that they saw themselves as accountable to the senior board of elected leaders. In an episcopal or other type of hierarchical system, accountability would be to one's bishop or equivalent. In the case of independent churches started by the individual who is still the primary leader, accountability may be unclear.

Serving and Leading

Given both the complexities in the term Servant Leadership as well as the common usage of the term, it is not surprising that the clergy interviewees not only exhibited variation in their leadership, but also differed in how they would describe their Servant Leadership. The differences were most clear in their descriptions of the interface between the seeming opposites of serving and leading. In using the term, or at least identifying with it, it is doubtful that the clergy were identifying with the academic conversation that is trying to develop a model; rather, they were self-describing as people who serve. In HPD and MPD situations they saw leadership as a way of serving, while in LPD situations it was more common to see serving as an enactment of

leadership. All PD groups valued serving, but HPD and MPD tended to see their leadership as a way of serving the church, while LPD tended to see service as an aspect of their leadership (e.g. washing dishes at a church event).

This variation of self-understanding can also be seen in the New Testament examples. Paul, the most confident and proactive of the leaders we looked at, regularly refers to himself as a servant of Christ (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1). On the one hand he sees himself as choosing to become a slave to everyone for the sake of the Gospel while on the other hand he states that he is free and belongs to no-one, but voluntarily becomes a slave "to win as many as possible" (1 Cor 9:19). He certainly did not see himself as taking orders from the churches he served, which would the implication if he was literally a slave. In the verses that follow (1 Cor 9:20–23) he describes how he adjusts himself in order to fit into and connect with various types of people.

The Jerusalem Council also exhibits service to God and the Church, since the issue they wrestle with is not one that is for their own benefit (i.e., they are all Jewish) but for the benefit of others. Both Titus and Timothy exhibit service to the Church overall, as they take direction from Paul, and to the specific churches to which they are sent.

Clearly, there is some diversity in how Servant and Leader are put together in the conceptualizing and enactment of leadership, both in the New Testament and in the clergy responses. This implies that if the term Servant Leadership continues to be commonly used, the meaning ascribed to it needs to be broad enough to encompass this diversity.

Synthesizing the Diversity: Person, Process, Purpose

It has been seen that both the New Testament examples and the clergy respondents displayed variation in self-understanding and enactment, but also had some common aspects as described above. How, then, practically, might a local church or ministry conceptualize the type of leadership that will be appropriate and effective in its particular context? How will they allow for diversity and variation, while ensuring that it remains "Servant" leadership in a Christian context? The clergy that were interviewed were all in settings that were "working" to one degree or another, but there are plenty of examples where conflict erupts in a congregation because of leadership enactments that don't fit with the congregation's expectations (or, at least, with a sub-set of the congregation). How might congregations and clergy be more proactive in describing the shape of leadership needed and offered, without defaulting into binary language, i.e. "good" vs. "bad" leadership? Given the variation that is present in the New Testament and the variation that is present among cultures with varying Power Distance (and given other variations not considered in this project), it seems clear that churches and clergy need to grow in their ability to discern the shape of leadership needed and offered.

In the review of leadership theory conducted in Chapter 1, it was noted that an important framework for analyzing leadership theories contains three categories: Person (the identified leader and others), Process (what happens), and Purpose (the end goal). This framework may provide helpful guidance for reflection on Servant Leadership and for churches as they seek to discern the shape of leadership they need. Each church or ministry likely has some stated purpose that is their understanding of the mission they believe God has entrusted to them. Part of the evaluation of leadership should be

whether the leader (or leaders) is helping the church move forward in its mission. Chapter 1 noted that Servant Leadership has been differentiated from its near-cousin, Transformational Leadership, because it focuses more on the persons involved and the processes used, with less attention on the purpose. Given that churches and other Christian organizations desire to participate in God's mission, surely the purpose of their work should be of significant importance, not of lesser importance. Another way of saying this is that the effects of the church should not be just internal, within its ecosystem of relationships, but also external, in its geographical and relational community. This lower attention to purpose may be a weakness of Servant Leadership (as it is academically understood) when applied to church and ministry settings.

The Person-Process-Purpose framework is helpful in that it holds together aspects that are or may be in tension (ideally, a creative tension) with one another. The data from this research and the examples from the New Testament indicate that process can vary widely, depending on culture, context, and roles. However, I would argue that from a theological and ethical perspective, the effects on persons and the intended purpose should be somewhat similar for churches and Christian ministries, regardless of culture. Questions such as the following, which focus on person and purpose, are questions that can and should be asked in every Christian context: are the persons involved displaying the fruit of the Spirit? Is the church growing in its love of God and neighbour? Are disciples being made? Is the story of Jesus being shared? Even though the way these questions are answered may vary to some extent, at face value the answers to all of them, aspirationally at least, should be "yes." In other words, I am arguing that the person and purpose aspects of this framework should exhibit substantial

commonality across varying contexts that are Christian, while the process aspect may vary more substantially. Clearly, the clergy responses showed significant variation in process, based on Power Distance backgrounds, as did the New Testament examples.

In summary, from a theological perspective there are certainly some ideas that should inform Servant Leadership in any context that has a self-understanding as being Christian. These ideas include a motivation to serve God and the Church, a sense of accountability, a sense of calling, and a desire to work relationally with people. At the same time, the specific enactment of those ideas may vary widely, depending on culture, giftings of individuals, individuals' sense of call, and so forth. What is critical is that implicit, hidden ideas about leadership be surfaced so that congregations and other ministries can discern the shape of leadership that they need, and that this happen within a Practical Theology framework.

Conclusion

When Robert Greenleaf proposed Servant Leadership, he wasn't suggesting another leadership theory. What he was calling for was a whole new motivation for leading: service. His call was not just to individuals, but to institutions, and his aim was far larger than trying to improve leadership. He believed that society had significant problems that needed to be addressed, and that Servant Leader individuals and institutions would be needed to address them. For Greenleaf, serving was the motivation, and leading was the expression. This type of thinking fits well with the data from the clergy respondents, and from the New Testament. In all cases there was a motivation to serve; what varied was the enactment. Greenleaf would have no problem with this. It fits with what he said:

"The servant-leader is servant first . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions."[23]

It does not fit, however, within the discourses that have taken place within the academic and theological conversational trajectories that have been spawned by Greenleaf's idea. In both cases there has been an attempt to articulate enactment. As was seen earlier, in Chapter 1, the academic discourse is attempting to find a model, while the theological discourse has a more practical approach, aiming to improve and shape the leadership of practitioners and to essentially describe Christian leadership. This attempt to articulate enactment is not a bad thing, but both the academic and theological trajectories have been rooted in Western contexts, and they do not engage with the reality of cultural differences that vary with regard to the right use of power. This lack of engagement would not be harmful if the discourses acknowledged the reality of cultural diversity, and specifically situated their discussions within their stated culture. However, they do not. Rather, comments and proposals are made as absolute statements, supposedly applicable to all people and all cultures. This privileges Western culture, which is where the writings are situated, when it comes to leadership discourses, whether academic or theological. Given that many churches in Canada have congregants from multiple cultures, any assumption that there is only one form of Servant Leadership may inadvertently exclude some cultures from participating in leadership groups. Given that many Canadian global mission agencies and theological colleges are

[23] Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 27.

involved in training leaders in the Global South, any assumption that there is only one form of Servant Leadership may be embedding Western cultural assumptions into what is meant to be a Christian understanding of leadership. This is not an insignificant problem. At the very least, any teaching or articulation of leadership should situate it within the cultural context that formed it. Even better would be to engage in discussions with people from multiple cultures, especially if the cultures vary in their power distance. Assuming that they all have a desire to pursue leadership that is Christian, these discussions may allow for ideas about enactment to be nuanced by cultural expectations, while at the same time remaining framed within each culture's understanding of Christian norms. More ideally, it would be beneficial if each setting, whether congregation, ministry, school, or denomination, goes through a discernment process that surfaces implicitly-held assumptions about leadership, and seeks to bring a common understanding and articulation of the type of leadership that the context seeks to practice.

CONCLUSION

This research project was the result of two fundamental questions. First, what is Christian leadership, exactly? This question led to an exploration of what leadership is, including a recognition that different types of contexts (including cultural contexts) call forth and recognize different types of leaders. Second, given that Servant Leadership was proposed as an ethical way of using power in leadership, is Servant Leadership the only Christian way to lead? This question resulted from the prevalence of Servant Leadership vocabulary in church and Christian contexts, seemingly elevating this one leadership approach above all others. Significant complexities were discovered in Servant Leadership as an idea and theory, including the fact that the originator of the term, Robert Greenleaf, did not propose it as a way of leading but as a motivation for leading. There are also questions about who, or what, is served: is it each individual in an organization, the group as a whole, the organization as a whole, the mission of the organization, or the organization's external context? Also, Servant Leadership research and discussions have been Western-centric, with almost no exploration for how it could be or should be adopted by varying cultural contexts.

To investigate these questions, a total of fifteen clergy leaders from three different Power Distance backgrounds were interviewed. Questions were asked about their self-conceptualization as a leader, including how they view their use of power and authority. The interview responses revealed clear differences between the varying Power

Distance groups in terms of how easily they saw themselves as leaders, and how easily they saw themselves as having and using power and influence. All groups affirmed that leadership takes place through relationships, and all groups affirmed that power and influence can be mis-used. However, higher Power Distance clergy were much more comfortable with the idea of being leaders and of having and using power and influence. All the groups saw themselves as serving their congregations, and even saw themselves as servants, but higher Power Distance groups were more able to distinguish between servanthood and Servant Leadership. The results of the interviews are significant in that they align with what was expected, calling into question the ubiquity of Servant Leadership vocabulary within the Church unless it is unpacked, and calling into question the assumption that Power Distance backgrounds have no impact on understanding leadership theories and approaches.

Next Steps

Nothing in this research questions the idea that, from an ethically-grounded Christian perspective, leaders should serve. It is quite clear that Jesus came to serve and saw Himself as a servant. Greenleaf argued that service should be the motivation for leadership. What this research critiques is the idea that this motivation should lead to one particular type of leadership, or that somehow the leader is meant to serve each individual and the whole and the greater good all at once. In other words, what is being critiqued is an arbitrary and naïve reductive simplifying.

Servant Leadership has become a much-used term within churches and other Christian ministries and is also a known approach to leadership within the broader world

of businesses and other organizations. At its core is something good, which was key to Robert Greenleaf's initial proposal, namely, that leaders should be motivated by a desire to serve. What is missing, however, from both the academic and theological discourses, is an attentiveness to cultural differences with respect to how they view the ethical use of power.

This missing aspect leads to my primary conclusion: that the understanding and discussion of Servant Leadership should be expanded to make space for cultural variation in Power Distance. Both the academic and theological conversations need to do this. The academic discourse's search for a model of Servant Leadership need not be abandoned; however, as the model is developed it should include space for variation based on Power Distance. Future research should focus on non-Western cultures in order to understand Servant Leadership enactments in those contexts. This new data could be combined with existing, Western-based data, to develop a comprehensive model. The theological discourse can do something similar but in a more simplified manner, by including a variety of examples of enactment that come by varying cultures. For example, books or articles could be written that, in the first section, focus on particular themes in Servant Leadership, and then in latter sections include examples or case studies of each theme that are contributed by authors from various cultures.

For churches and other Christian ministries, however, becoming familiar with current discourses in Servant Leadership is less important than discerning the shape of leadership that they desire to enact in their setting. This can be done by surfacing hidden and implicit assumptions about leadership that are held by persons in that setting, bring those assumptions into dialogue with important theological and biblical themes, and

then develop an explicitly stated consensus about the shape of leadership they desire to enact. A suggested discernment process is offered in Appendix V.

The increased mobility of people and the significant globalization of economies and popular cultures means that more than ever before, organizations of all sorts contain people from multiple cultures. While much of the early research and thinking on culture was on national cultures, individuals and organizations are also a part of other cultures, such as generational, organizational, and regional cultures. It is likely that even a small church congregation has multiple cultures within it. It is important, therefore, to become more aware of cultural influences related to expectations and enactments of leadership, in order for leadership to be effective, and so that it may truly serve the contexts it is leading.

APPENDIX I: SEARCH RESULTS FOR "SERVANT LEADERHIP" ON INTERVARSITY PRESS WEBSITE

Search Conducted July 3, 2022 (Key Words Underlined + Bolded)
https://www.ivpress.com/Search?q=Servant+Leadership

1. Steward Leadership:
    - Kent Wilson presents a comprehensive model for steward leadership, where leaders act as **stewards or trustees** rather than owners, managing resources on behalf of others for the good of others

2. Transforming Leadership
    - Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values Empowering Change, by Leighton Ford
    - Description from Amazon: Ford realizes that desperately needed Christian and transformational leadership will not emerge until we have a model of the transforming leader. And what more powerful example of leadership could there be than Jesus? Insightfully examining Jesus' work and the best recent books on leadership, Ford presents
        --the leader as strategist
        --the leader as seer
        --the leader as seeker
        --the leader as servant
        --the leader as struggler
        --the leader as sustainer

3. Basic Christian Leadership
    - Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry, by John Stott
    - Leadership today is no easy task. Too often our models of leadership are shaped more by culture than by Christ. John Stott rejects popular models of leadership and holds up instead **the servant leadership** exemplified by Paul in his ministry to the church in Corinth. Stott reassures us that God is at work even in the midst of human weakness.
    - John Stott offers an alternative vision in **this biblical approach to servant leadership,** exemplified by the apostle Paul in his ministry to the church in Corinth. Above all, Stott reassures us that God is at work even in the midst of our human weakness.

4. The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People
    - Tracing a Biblical Theme Through the Canon

- NEW STUDIES IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY, by Matthew S. Harmon
  Series edited by D. A. Carson
- In this NSBT volume Matthew Harmon carefully traces the title of "servant" from Genesis to Revelation with the intention of seeing how earlier servants point forward to the ultimate Servant. Harmon shows how the **title "servant" not only gives us a clearer understanding of Jesus Christ** but also has profound implications for our lives as Christians.

5. Organizational Leadership
   - Foundations and Practices for Christians, Edited by Jack Burns, John R. Shoup, and Donald C. Simmons Jr.
   - This comprehensive text for Christians on organizational leadership provides theological foundations while tracing the historic roots of management, organization and leadership theories. All of this leads to five essential challenges and practices--communication, negotiation, decision-making, financial stewardship and personal development.

6. Excellence in Leadership
   - Reaching Goals with Prayer, Courage and Determination, by John White
   - As Christian leaders, should we solve our problems using the secular strategies of best-selling management books, or is there another way? John White says that Nehemiah provides the model we need for excellence in leadership. With wisdom and biblical insight, he shows how to be action-oriented and prayer-oriented, a firm leader and a **servant, a realist and a visionary.**

7. Relational Leadership
   - A Biblical Model for Influence and **Service**, by Walter C. Wright, Jr.
     Foreword by Richard J. Mouw and Eugene H. Peterson
   - Walter C. Wright develops a biblical management model that fosters an environment of active participation in an organization's mission. Foreword by Richard J. Mouw and Eugene H. Peterson.

8. Making Room for Leadership
   - Power, Space and Influence, by MaryKate Morse
     Foreword by Leonard Sweet
   - MaryKate Morse looks at how leaders can exhibit presence, openness and power through the way they take up physical space in group situations. Through greater awareness of their use of personal space, leaders can effectively invite others in.

9. The Leadership Ellipse
    - Shaping How We Lead by Who We Are, by Robert A. Fryling
      Foreword by Eugene H. Peterson
    - *The Leadership Ellipse* by Bob Fryling is designed to help Christian leaders embrace both halves of the tension of being in leadership--our internal relationship with God and our external relationship with others--to find a truly authentic, integrated way to lead.

10. Church Leadership: Following the Example of Jesus Christ
    - By Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke
    - Description from Barnes & Noble: This book clearly spells out the scriptural implications of the present rule of Christ in the church and the calling of church leaders to be, first of all, **servants**.

APPENDIX II: EXAMPLE OF RECRUITMENT EMAIL SCRIPTS SENT BY TYNDALE INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES CENTRE

Initial Recruitment Email

Email subject line: You are invited to participate in a study about pastoral leadership and cultural diversity

Greetings! A friend of the TIM Centre is conducting research about how pastors lead differently depending on their cultural background, and we thought of you as a potential participant. The researcher's name is Rev. Sam Chaise, and his invitation text is below. Please contact him directly for further information.

> *The ways that pastors lead differently based on cultural background. has been an area of growing interest for me in my own ministry, and now I'm studying the topic in the Doctor of Practical Theology program at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. I'm working under the supervision of Dr. Lee Beach, of McMaster Divinity College.*
>
> *I'm inviting you to participate in a 1-1 interview with me that I expect will take 60-90 minutes. I'm planning to do this over Zoom. The purpose of the interview is to explore how you experience pastoral leadership – what motivates you, what has influenced you, what you do as a leader, and so forth. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. This is totally about YOUR experience, not mine or anyone else's!*
>
> *Anything you say will be kept in strict confidence and at no point will you be identified in any of the writing that results from this research.*
>
> *Any of us who have led for a while know that there is a great deal of diversity of leadership approaches and styles. What I'm exploring in this research is the level of similarity within cultural groups, and differences compared to other cultural groups. This is an important topic as Canadian churches grow more and more multi-cultural and as our world gets more globally connected. I hope that what we learn as a result of this study will result in us being able to better understand, name, and accept the cultural influences that shape our leadership, and also learn how to work better with others who have been influenced in other cultures.*
>
> *I hope you'll be willing to participate!*

To be eligible to participate in this study you need to currently be a pastor or have spent much of your career as a pastor. In addition, you need to fit into one of these categories:

- *you grew up in another country and arrived in Canada as an adult within the last five years.*

OR

- *You arrived in Canada more than five years ago but who have served in a context that is largely the same culture as your childhood culture.*

For the full details of the study, please see the attached Letter of Information.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

If you are interested in participating please email me at chaises@mcmaster.ca and I will confirm your eligibility and then we'll set up a time for an interview.

If you would like more information before deciding, you are welcome to email me or my supervisor, Dr. Lee Beach, with your questions.

- *Student name: Sam Chaise chaises@mcmaster.ca*
- *Faculty name: Dr. Lee Beach beachl@mcmaster.ca*

I may send you a one-time follow-up reminder in a week just to check-in.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Thank you!

Sam Chaise

Follow-Up Email Reminder, Sent One Week After Initial Email

Email subject line: REMINDER: you are invited to participate in a study about pastoral leadership and cultural diversity

Greetings! Last week we sent you an email inviting you participate in a study being conducted by a friend of the TIM Centre on pastoral leadership and cultural diversity. There is no pressure whatsoever to participate, but we did want to reach out to you one more time to see if you're interested. If you're not interested, just ignore this email and we promise we won't bother you again! But if you are . . . below is the text of the original email.

ORIGINAL EMAIL TEXT:

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>
> *I'm inviting you to participate in a 1-1 interview with me that I expect will take 60-90 minutes. I'm planning to do this over Zoom. The purpose of the interview is to explore how you experience pastoral leadership – what motivates you, what has influenced you, what you do as a leader, and so forth. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. This is totally about YOUR experience, not mine or anyone else's!*
>
> *Anything you say will be kept in strict confidence and at no point will you be identified in any of the writing that results from this research.*
>
> *Any of us who have led for a while know that there is a great deal of diversity of leadership approaches and styles. What I'm exploring in this research is the level of similarity within cultural groups, and differences compared to other cultural groups. This is an important topic as Canadian churches grow more and more multi-cultural and as our world gets more globally connected. I hope that what we learn as a result of this study will result in us being able to better understand, name, and accept the cultural influences that shape our leadership, and also learn how to work better with others who have been influenced in other cultures.*
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> *I hope you'll be willing to participate!*

To be eligible to participate in this study you need to currently be a pastor or have spent much of your career as a pastor. In addition, you need to fit into one of these categories:

- *you grew up in another country and arrived in Canada as an adult within the last five years*

OR

- *You arrived in Canada more than five years ago but who have served in a context that is largely the same culture as your childhood culture.*

For the full details of the study, please see the attached Letter of Information.

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- *Student name: Sam Chaise chaises@mcmaster.ca*
- *Faculty name: Dr. Lee Beach beachl@mcmaster.ca*

I may send you a one-time follow-up reminder in a week just to check-in.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Thank you!

Sam Chaise

APPENDIX III: LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT

Study Title: Clergy Enactment of Servant Leadership in Cultures with Varying Views on the Distribution of Power

Principal Investigator:
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What I am I trying to discover:
Does the experience of pastoral leadership vary depending on one's cultural background? What are some of those differences? I am especially interested in discovering how different cultural contexts expect influence (or, power) to be used, and how this shapes the experience of pastoral leadership. I am also interested in the influence of Servant Leadership, if any, in various cultural settings.

I am doing this research for my dissertation in the Doctor of Practical Theology program at McMaster Divinity College, under the supervision of Dr. Lee Beach.

What will happen during the study?

1. If you decide to participate in the study, I will contact you to confirm your eligibility for participation (see criteria below).
2. I will set up an interview time with you that is convenient for your schedule. This interview will take place on Zoom and will take 60-90 minutes.
3. The interview will focus on your experience of pastoral leadership. I will have some questions planned but it is meant to be an informal conversation where you can talk about anything you want to talk about that has to do with your experience of leadership. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers – this is about YOUR experience, not my experience or anyone else's!
4. A transcription (written record) will be made of the interview. The interview will be video and audio recorded to assist me in producing an accurate transcript.
5. I will summarize the key themes that you discussed in the interview and email this to you so that you can correct anything I misunderstood and clarify anything that is unclear. I will ask you to respond to this within two weeks or receiving my email.

Are there any risks to doing this study?
The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable thinking about your own experience of leadership. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?
The research will not benefit you directly but I anticipate it benefiting pastors and congregations across Canada and even further afield. I hope to learn more about how cultural diversity shapes expectations that congregations have of pastoral leadership and expectations that pastors have of themselves. I expect to discuss the extent to which the idea of Servant Leadership is helpful – or not – across all cultures. Understanding how cultural diversity affects leadership expectations will be increasingly important as Canadian churches become more multi-cultural.

Confidentiality: Who will know what I said or did in the study?
With your permission, I would like to record audio and video from the interviews to help me as I sort through the data. Only I will have access to these recordings. The information/data you provide will be kept in two places to ensure it is not lost and to ensure security:

- My computer hard-drive which is password-protected and where only I will have access
- A password-protected secure Dropbox folder

To protect participants from unwanted ZOOM infiltrators, protocols will consist of using a password protected account, and entry into the call will be given through the waiting room feature.

Please note that ZOOM is an externally hosted cloud-based service. While this service is approved for collecting data in this study by the McMaster Research Ethics Board, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the researcher.

You are participating in this study confidentially. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. No one but me will know whether you were in the study unless you choose to tell them. The Director of the TIM Centre will be aware of the names of potential participants who received the invitation email, but they will not know who ended up participating. A transcript (written record) will be produced from the interview. Your name will not appear in the transcript: you will be assigned an alphanumeric ID in place of your actual name.

Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, without identifying information, will be maintained for future reference.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop the interview at any point and withdraw your consent.

If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any data you have provided will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. If you want to withdraw, you must do so by October 31, 2022. If you do not want to answer some of the questions you do not have to, but you can still be in the study.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?
I expect to have this study completed in mid-year 2023. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study: If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at: chaises@mcmaster.ca.

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
C/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sam Chaise, of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until October 31, 2022.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____
Consent Questions:

If you give consent:

1. Would you like a copy of the study results? If yes, where should we send them (email, mailing address)?

2. Do you agree to audio and video recording?

3. Do you agree to allow your anonymized study data to be stored and used for future reference as described in the Letter of Information?

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Let's start with a broad question: what words would you use to describe your experience of Christian leadership? (Or, how would you describe your experience of being a pastoral leader?)
    - Possible follow-up prompts: how does it feel? What are the emotions you experience?

2. When do you feel like you're doing a good job at leading?

3. When do you feel like you're doing a poor job at leading?

4. When is it hard?

5. When is it joyful?

6. Do you think of yourself as a leader?
    - Possible follow-up: What does this mean to you?

7. I'd like to hear how you decided to become a pastor. What influenced you? What did you hope to accomplish in becoming a pastor?
    - Possible follow-ups
        - When did you first consider doing this? What were the significant stories in your life that moved you towards this, or the significant people?
        - Did you always assume you would be a pastor? Do you know why?
        - Whom did you talk with as you were considering becoming a pastor?
        - Were there any experiences you had where God seemed to speak to you, or where something in Scripture spoke to you?

8. How is your leadership influenced by Jesus?
    - Possible follow-up: What examples of his leadership are meaningful to you?

9. What stories or passages from the Bible are meaningful to you as you lead?
    - Possible follow-ups: what is meaningful about that story/image? How does it apply to you? How does this story/image affect what you DO?

10. Are there any particular leadership styles or approaches that you follow?
    - Possible follow-ups: what is meaningful about this approach? What do you do as a result of it? Do you expect that people will listen to you? How do you respond if they do not?

11. [if needed] Have you heard of the term "Servant Leadership"?
    - If yes: what does it mean to you? Is it something that shapes you as a leader?
        - To what or whom is your service directed? i.e. who are you serving? (God? A cause? Congregation? Individuals in the congregation? Staff? Volunteers?)

- If no: what do you think it might mean?
- Possible follow-ups: how is "serving" a part of your experience as a Christian leader? When you think of serving, who or what do you see yourself serving? In your interactions with members of your congregation (if applicable: members of staff team), what effect do you hope to have on them? As you relate to volunteers in your congregation, what are you hoping to achieve in your interaction with them?

12. In your experience of leadership do you sense that you have power? You might also call it "influence."
    - If yes: how do you use that influence/power? For what purpose? Do you expect that people will listen to you and do what you tell them to do?

13. To what extent do you think your cultural background has influenced your leadership?
    - When you think of the other pastoral leaders you know, do they lead similarly to you or differently? What are the similarities and differences?

APPENDIX V: OUTLINE OF A SUGGESTED PROCESS FOR CONTEXTUALIZING CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

I envision the following process being used by a local congregation that desires to contextualize Christian leadership for their particular setting. Sometimes the motivation for engaging in this type of process comes from an immediate presenting need, such as a crisis or change-point in the congregation's life. Examples would include the retirement of a long-serving pastor, decline in the health and mission of the congregation, increased challenges in recruiting people to volunteer leadership, and conflicts over leadership styles. The suggested process could be adapted to the needs and situation of a particular congregation.

The process has a number of key purposes and desired outcomes:

- Participants will become self-aware of their assumptions in regard to Christian leadership and be able to articulate them to others so that the group as a whole grows in communal self-awareness.
- The group will begin to see the diversity that is present and how it might be an opportunity for formation, learning, and greater maturity.
- The group will step away from simplistic understandings and from a desire to find one, right solution; it will begin to recognize that leadership is negotiated implicitly or explicitly, and that under the leading of the Spirit it may be different in various contexts.
- The group will begin to communally articulate (and write down) a way of leading that they have discerned.
- Participants will grow in their capacity to notice, locate, name, and navigate differences moving forward

The process is also designed with some key assumptions:

- The average congregant has limited time and little desire to read extensively; they are not scholars. However, they care about their church and are willing to engage in some learning that is presented in an accessible manner.
- Congregants already have ideas about what leadership should be but are often unaware of those ideas until they are challenged by other perspectives

- It is critical to articulate both values and practices. Values are internal and are invisible to observers. Practices are external and observable and values are often inferred from what is observed.

It will be critical that an experienced, trained facilitator be used for the process, especially for the in-person day. A variety of facilitation techniques may be employed, which will be dependent on group size, level of group anxiety and conflict if any, participants' background and level of education, and aspects that are related to the cultural mix of participants (for example, direct vs. indirect communication, high vs. lower power distance, etc.). The outline below articulates the content that should be covered; the facilitator should choose what techniques to use. The facilitator should be listening for consonances and dissonances, for influences from personal and communal histories, and for explicit and implicit emotion. It will be important for the facilitator to attentively and artfully sow both seeds of dissonance and seeds of hope, the timing of which will depend on how the process is going. Overall, though, the tone is one of hope, for this process is not a one-time project in order to solve a problem but an invitation to deepening relationships within the congregation so that there can be greater transparency, mutual understanding, companionship, and mission effectiveness as the congregation journeys into its future.

Overview of Design

This process is centred on an in-person one day event, which is preceded by individual or group work to prepare, and followed-up by the creation of a draft document that articulates shared understandings. The overall process is:

- Six weeks of preparation work, approximately fifteen minutes per week
- One day in-person session
- Production of a document articulating the shared understandings

- Participants meet online or in-person in sub-groups to review and discuss the document.
- Document is revised.
- Document is rolled out to the congregation on a one-year pilot project basis, with an expectation for a significant review at the one-year mark. This roll-out should be multi-dimensional, including things such as a sermon series, Town Hall, Small Group curriculum, videos, children's curriculum, and so on.
- Follow-up one year later, where participants reflect and self-evaluate and revise the document and re-align themselves with it.
- Ongoing: this is meant to be a living document. Moving forward it can be used to monitor and re-align leadership practices as needed. The tone of it should be aspirational; it should be seen as a way of navigating and not as a legalistic straitjacket. The congregation may choose to re-visit the document more intentionally on an occasional basis, say, every three to five years.

Outline of Content

1. Preparatory Work

The preparatory work participants do before the in-person event helps them start to become aware of the assumptions, ideas, and metaphors they hold about Christian leadership. Participants will self-reflect at Week 1 and Week 6; in-between they will read short articles that expose them to topics that are embedded within the leadership construct; they will also reflect on their reading. Details are outlined here:

- Introductory commentary
    - Why this is happening? Describing what the presenting issue is in their context. This produces motivation and engagement.
    - Frame this as a way of journeying together. This is not a problem to solve but a deepening of relating to one another so that there may be transparency, mutual understanding, greater companionship and greater effectiveness.
    - Remind them that this is not about staff positions or specific laypeople in leadership positions. It *is* about how leadership functions in their community, as well as how spiritual gifts of leadership/governance and other gifts function. This is not about one (clergy) leader; it is about how leadership—how influence—best works in their particular context in a manner that is ethical in its use of power and Christian in its practice.

- Week 1:
    - They will write down descriptor words for how they think of Christian leadership.
    - They will rank a list of values from "most like" to "least like" Christian leadership. These values will be chosen beforehand collaboratively by the facilitator and key leaders in the context. All of the values will be good ones; the purpose is to help participants see the complexity of leadership, and to help them identify what matters most to them and what matters least.
    - Examples of values that could be included: honest, effective, good listener, focused on goals, confident, does not need the limelight, empathetic, visionary, good communicator, humble, passionate, respectful, flexible, stays on mission, authentic, team-builder, able to take criticism, able to give constructive feedback.
- Weeks 2-5: participants will read short articles (1-2 pages) to spur thinking on various issues. These are chosen or written by the facilitator in consultation with the congregation's leadership. In response they will write a few questions or ideas that emerge from what they have read. The content of the articles should be as follows:
    - Week 2: What is leadership? What is culture?
    - Week 3: What is a theology of culture and cultural diversity?
    - Week 4: Cultural Intelligence – what is it? Discuss cultural differences, especially Power Distance.
    - Week 5: Leadership approaches that have been characterized as Christian, including a short descriptor of each. Examples include Servant, Shepherd, Stewardship, Moral, and Spiritual Leadership.
- Week 6: repeat Week 1 exercise. Note if anything has changed from Week 1.

2. Schedule -- In-Person Day

This is designed to run for approximately five hours (for example, 9:00–2:00) including lunch and breaks; this is short enough to not dissuade people from attending, but long enough that they can experience some modest transformation over the course of the day. We will assume a group size of twenty or less. The outline below describes the content but as mentioned earlier the facilitator should use a variety of techniques. The timings are suggested but the facilitator should shape the pacing of sessions and timing of breaks

based on how the group is experiencing the process. It is more critical that the group have an authentic well-paced experience than that all of the content be addressed.

9:00 Welcome and Introduction to the day

9:15 SECTION ONE: YOU

Each person articulates their leadership values/metaphors/images. Each person describes where they started at Week 1 and what if anything changed by Week 6.

9:35 SECTION TWO: US

Articulate the values/metaphors/images in the history of the congregation with regard to Christian leadership. Brainstorm the values/metaphors/images for the leadership the congregation needs at this point in their journey. (The facilitator should not try to synthesize or build consensus at this point; this is just a mapping exercise.)

10:00 SECTION THREE: SCRIPTURE.

The group is divided into small groups of 3-5. Each passage is briefly looked at by at least two groups, which responds to these questions and then shares their responses with the large group. There are three rounds of 15 minutes; groups may remain the same or be changed for each round. There is no reporting back to the larger group because at this point the purpose is just to open up cognitive space in the participants.

Questions:

- What in this passage look like leadership to you, if anything?
- How is authority being expressed in this passage?
- How is service being expressed in this passage?

Round 1: Jesus' actions

- John 13:1–17 -- Jesus washing the disciples' feet.
- Mark 11:15-17 -- Jesus overturning moneychanger tables in the Temple.

Round 2: Jesus' relationships

- John 6:35–38; 15:1, 9-10 -- Jesus and his Father.
- Mark 1:16–20; Matthew 28:16–20 -- Jesus and his disciples.

Round 3: the Church

- Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:1–6; 27–31– spiritual gifts; members of one body.

10:45 BREAK

11:00 LARGE-GROUP SESSION

The earlier sessions served to dislodge participants' assumptions and to hear each other's diverse perspectives; this makes the issue more complex for them so that they are open to a communal journey towards richer understandings and practices. For the rest of the morning and after lunch the facilitator moves into a posture that nudges the conversation forward, by asking questions, making comments, challenging assumptions, and engaging in short bits of teaching that are responsive to the felt experience of the moment. Exactly what happens at this stage depends on what the group has surfaced in the first part of the morning, and especially on whether the current emotional climate of the group is positive and hopeful, or tensioned and anxious. It also depends on how much explicit diversity and/or conflict has been surfaced. In general, the facilitator's goal is to help the group summarize their current thinking and to seed hope into them if they are feeling frustrated at the level of complexity or diversity. They will then engage in a process that captures areas of consensus and areas of diversity as they imagine what leadership may look like in their shared future. The questions and concepts listed below are meant to be representative of the types of things that could be addressed; the facilitator will choose among them based on what the group conversation is surfacing. Questions to summarize and clarify the current thinking might include:

- Is the idea of leadership simpler or more complex for you right now?
    - What is changing? How do you feel about that?
- Should we lead like Jesus led?
    - In what ways does his leadership model something for us?
    - In what ways should we be cautious about emulating him, given that we're not Jesus?
    - In what was his leadership appropriate for his context but not necessarily universally applicable?

- Did anything change when the Spirit came at Pentecost and gave spiritual gifts? If so, what? What place does the gift of leadership have in and among the other gifts?
- Is there one Christian way to lead?
- What are some things that would be included in leadership that is Christian?
- What were the values that guided Jesus' leadership?
- What did Jesus want to see happen as a result of his leadership?
    - What were the desired outcomes in his disciples?
    - What were the desired outcomes in the world as a result of the disciples' being with Jesus?
- What do we long for in how we lead and are led in this congregation? What are the values we desire to see expressed? What are the practices that express those values? What are the outcomes we desire to see in terms of our impact on our community?

When the time is right, the facilitator clarifies key categories for thinking about leadership and proposes them as a framework for moving the conversation forward. This framework will then serve as a template for the group's communal self-description:

- Leader's internal sense
- Leader's actions
- Effects on the person (or group) being led
- Effect of the person (or group) on its surroundings

(This may be a natural time to break for lunch.)

12:00 LUNCH (around round tables to facilitate informal discussion

The lunch break gives the facilitator time to make notes on salient points to bring into the final session.

12:45 FINAL SESSION

The facilitator should begin this session by summarizing key learnings from the readings that were engaged before the in-person session, and asking questions to ensure that there is understanding. They should then list the salient points from the morning's sessions. This prepares the group to begin to articulate their shared understanding of Christian leadership that is contextualized to the particular context in which they live

and which represents the distinctive community that they desire to embody. As ideas are offered, the facilitator will locate them within the template mentioned above.

It will likely be easier for the group to come to consensus on *values* and *effect on the surroundings* than on concrete acts. Values are nebulous and invisible because they are internal; this means that each person may interpret them slightly differently in a way that aligns with them, which is why it is easier to find consensus on them. Similarly, the effect on the surroundings is often articulated in conceptual global terms, such as "bless the neighbourhood," and again individuals will interpret the concepts in ways that align with them, and so it is easier to find consensus. In contrast, concrete acts by their nature can be interpreted multiple ways and they evoke a response in others that is tied into their past experiences. For example, one person may perceive an in-person home visit from a leader as an act of caring, while another may perceive it as an imposition on their time or privacy or even as manipulative. An email may be perceived as efficient by one person and impersonal by another. However, despite the reality that it will be harder for the group to name specific leadership practices, the facilitator should push them to do this and avoid the temptation to stay at the level of values and outcomes.

The facilitator should recognize that both the consensus items and the ones on which there is not consensus are equally important: it is important for a community to hold onto their shared understandings while they have conversations about areas where there is difference. The purpose of this session is not to wordsmith or discuss nuances, the purpose is to identify broad areas of consensus as well as areas of difference. In addition to conceptual framings, the facilitator will encourage the sharing of metaphors,

images, and other forms of non-rational expression; this ensures that different learning styles, personalities, and spiritual temperaments find expression.

3. After the In-Person Day

The data gathered from the in-person day will be used to produce a short document that articulates shared understandings and areas of difference and diversity. The production of this document should be assigned to a small group of gifted writers; if the church is in significant conflict it may be wise for this group to be from outside the congregation (in which case they should liaise with the facilitator). The document is not meant to express an enforced commonality, but rather to articulate a centred-set description of what the group has in common and what diversity it has. The document should be framed with eschatological hope, as the group is reminded that discerning and contextualization is a way of life, and not a project. The document should also remind the group of the posture it holds as it navigates its diversity in love.

After the draft document is produced, a process should be followed as outlined in the Overview of Design section above, in order to report back to the group that was at the in-person session in order to test the document against their recollection of the event, and perhaps revise the document. After this it can be rolled out to the congregation, as outlined above. The intention is that this is a living document that can be referred to in a way that is similar to a navigational beacon; it can help a church stay on course in its journey. Another way to think about it is to compare it to a personality or temperament test, such as the Myers-Briggs, in which people are able to identify their distinctives and what makes them different from others, and which gives them tools to be in relationship

with people who are different than they are. It is important to constantly hold up to one another the reminder that the congregation is not trying to erase difference or homogenize diversity, but rather to locate it in relationship to Christ and therefore to one another.

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