Developmental Processes Critical to the Formation of Servant Leaders in China

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DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES CRITICAL TO THE
FORMATION OF SERVANT LEADERS IN CHINA

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Thomas William Horn Jr.
December 2005
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THE FORMATION OF SERVANT LEADERS IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES CRITICAL TO THE FORMATION OF SERVANT LEADERS IN CHINA

by

Thomas William Horn Jr.

Chair: Erich W. Baumgartner
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
School of Education

Title: DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES CRITICAL TO THE FORMATION OF SERVANT LEADERS IN CHINA

Name of researcher: Thomas William Horn Jr.

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Date completed: December 2005

Problem

This study concerns three matters: the leader formation process in general, servant leadership formation in particular, and the application to crossing cultures, with China as the primary context. The central problem of this study revolves around leader formation. What events, experiences, people and other formative processes contributed as critical to the formation of exemplary Christian leaders in China?

Method

The design of this research was a narrative, qualitative study that explored the central phenomenon of leader formation. The researcher was the instrument to collect data through in-depth interviews. This study purposefully selected three exemplary
Christian Chinese leaders. The participants were asked to share their life stories by recounting the significant formative processes. This questioning was done inductively by asking broad, general questions, without bringing preconceived notions to bear. Participant selection included people of different ages in order to describe from multiple perspectives what was formative in the past as well as the present. The differences between the participants provided sufficient coverage so that their combined stories elicited common themes.

Results

J. Robert Clinton’s Leadership Emergence Theory was the theoretical framework for assessing leader formation. The research concluded that leader formation among Chinese Christian leaders occurred mostly through nonformal or informal education, with mentoring and modeling playing a significant role. Of the several process items considered, suffering (internal and external) came across as the most significant life-shaping experience. Formation of being overshadowed formation of knowing and doing. China is changing dramatically, and future leader formation must prepare people to grow holistically while serving the complex challenges of society.

Conclusions

The exemplary Chinese leader embodies honorable qualities and has undergone challenging developmental processes. Chinese culture and worldview have shaped this person’s life, as in every culture. However, the exemplary Christian Chinese leader has been subject to formative processes that are sometimes unique and often distinct from what is considered normative leadership development elsewhere. Suggestions toward a
universal leadership model were presented. Leader formation globally can learn much from understanding the qualities and developmental processes critical to the formation of the exemplary Chinese leader.
To Jesus Christ,
The Supreme Servant Leader
Who is worthy of emulation
by all people in all cultures.

To my godly wife, Lisa,
with love and gratitude.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Foreword

This study concerns three matters: The leader formation process is the backbone, servant leadership formation is the undergirding framework, and the study is applied to crossing cultures with China as the primary context. The purpose was to gain insight into how servant leaders are formed in China.

Leader formation is elusive because there are so many kinds of training available for leader development, especially in formal and nonformal education structures, but when one looks into almost any arena and in almost every location there is an apparent lack of “exemplary” leaders (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kotter, 1999; Lowney, 2003). Some critics might point to the problem as being with the raw material, that is, people who serve as leaders. However, all kinds of leaders do develop and in a variety of contexts. The other variable in leader formation is the actual development process. Rarely does leader formation include balanced and integrated processes that nurture exemplary leadership. For exemplary leaders to be formed, we must look at both the people and the processes.

Leadership is a complex topic of understanding traits in leaders and followers, situations, styles of behavior, structures and systems, values, and cultures (Bass, 1990). In recent days there has been a tragic erosion of leaders because of character flaws that
have resulted in moral failure of one form or another. The downfall of many leaders is not a defect in leadership competence but a defect in character.

In the latter part of the 20th century we saw the resurgence of what is called servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) that seems to integrate competence and character. I say resurgence rather than emergence because the concept of servant leadership is ancient. From my own study of biblical characters and selected religious and civic leaders throughout past centuries, I have learned that many leaders have embodied a servant posture and have empowered followers so that together they accomplished desired results.

I became intrigued with the concept of servanthood as a young follower of Jesus Christ when I read in the Bible how he led through serving. Stedman (1976a, 1976b) showed that Christ both led through serving and served through leading. Jesus modeled doing acts of service for people, with his ultimate act of service being his death on a cross. He was a servant who served and a leader who led. There was congruence between who he was and what he did. Being and doing cannot be separated and Jesus expected his followers to be and do the same (Matt 20:25-28; John 13:1-15).

Through the landmark book by Robert Greenleaf (1977) and subsequently other writers, I became fascinated with the posture of servant leadership in the marketplace as well as in the realm of faith. Questions such as the following captured my reflection: “Is an exemplary leader first a leader who then becomes a servant, or is he or she first a servant who becomes a leader?” and “What is the relationship between personality traits and one who naturally exudes a servant leader posture?” and “Should servant leadership
be viewed as just one among many leadership theories or does it stand out from among
the rest and perhaps have international relevance?"

The use of the term “exemplary” to describe leadership was popularized by
Kouzes and Posner (1995) in their international research study and subsequent
publications on leaders and leadership. The exemplary leadership practices they
identified are relevant to most cultures, and the term exemplary seems to have a
universally positive connotation. In the book *Practicing Servant Leadership* (Spears &
Lawrence, 2004), Kouzes and Posner indicate their appreciation for the work of
Greenleaf on servant leadership and allude to how it is complementary to their study.
However, their term *exemplary* has fewer negative connotations than the term *servant* to
describe this leadership theory.

Although growing in popularity throughout the United States, the term and
concept of servant leadership are not appreciated equally outside the U.S. because of the
cultural connotation of this term. Speaking at the Andrews University Ph.D. Roundtable
in July 2003, Margaret Wheatley noted that “servant leadership does not communicate
well outside the United States and Canada.” Servants are often viewed as people who are
led rather than as people capable of leading. Because the concept of serving has a less-
than-honorable connotation in much of Asia (and elsewhere for that matter), and to avoid
the negative connotation of the term servant, I will use the term *exemplary* as
synonymous with the term *servant* in this cross-cultural study. An exemplary leader will
be considered one who has the blend of leadership components that are recognized as
approaching the ideal within any given culture.
Living for 7 years in Asia marked my life with an appreciation for Asian culture and, I hope, has resulted in a healthy integration of Western and Asian values and practices. I now evaluate learning and life from a perspective much broader than that of my own culture. In light of current trends that indicate that China is becoming more and more of a global influence, I decided to integrate both my passion for servant leadership and interest in the Chinese people. The study of leadership across cultures has come of age (House et al., 2004), and I envision this becoming a life pursuit.

For decades anthropologists have studied leaders within cultures. More recently the cutting-edge research has been in understanding universal versus culture-specific leadership behavior and processes (Bass, 1997; Hofstede, 1984, 1997; Scandura & Dorfman, 2004). Multinational businesses have often learned the importance of understanding cross-cultural leadership the hard way through failure due to lack of sensitivity. Research is mounting on this relevant topic to the point that considerable ongoing intentional study is being conducted and reported (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004):

Multiple authors . . . have documented the accelerating globalization of business, the relative dearth of leadership talent, the inadequacy of global leadership development processes and the continued derailment of international executives. Thus, the goal of the series is to . . . advance the definition, conceptualization, and understanding of global leadership processes and the development of multinational leaders. (p. 303)

If universal leadership principles can be identified and global leadership development processes can be validated, they will enhance cross-cultural dynamics that certainly are needed in our global world. Unless leader development can be enhanced today, the leadership issues of tomorrow will remain in crisis.
Background of the Problem

Human development theory tells us (Crain, 1992; Ormrod, 1999; Santrock, 2002) that people grow in three primary arenas: affective (emotion, attitude), behavioral (skills, habits) and cognitive (knowing). Others theorists (Issler & Habermas, 1994; Kolbe, 1990) include a fourth domain called disposition to will (values, volition, conation); although not as widely accepted as a fourth major category, the matter of “will” is certainly a core component of human beings and an essential part of leadership. Exemplary leaders will have competence in each of these four arenas. However, where are such competencies formed? Formal educational institutions primarily address cognitive and sometimes behavioral development. In our individualistic and relativistic society, the affective domain is usually private. Some organizations seek to address issues of “will” by requiring an understanding of and compliance with stated corporate policies and procedures. Yet holistic growth (the blend of all four arenas of human development) rarely occurs in one educational context. The integration of formal, nonformal and informal education is necessary for optimum adult growth (Freire, 1970; Knowles, 1973; Vella, 2002; Ward & Herzog, 1974).

When crossing into another culture, the visitor must become aware of a variety of dynamics that will influence perceptions. All people have a “worldview.” Although a rather complex subject, worldview has been described as “a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world” (Sire, 1997, p. 16). Hiebert (1998) provided this simple definition of worldview: “Worldview is the fundamental cognitive, affective and evaluative
assumptions a group of people make about the nature of reality and which they use to
order their lives” (p. 2). He also noted on this subject:

To build credibility within other cultures one must first learn to look below the
surface-level cultural differences to the deep worldview assumptions that people
bring. Second we must learn to see as they see even if it is chaotic according to our
perspective. Third, a focus on building people rather than programs is needed. And
finally those in the West need to critique our worldviews and learn from others.
(Hiebert, 1994, p. 145)

Accurate understanding across a culture will be strongly influenced by one’s ability to
understand one’s own and other worldviews.

In a study such as this on leader formation one must recognize that what is
assumed in one culture may not even be considered in another (i.e., serving as an
essential component to leading). Moreover, the means of formation in one culture may
not exist in another nor be as accessible as it is in one’s own culture (i.e., formal
education might be limited to select people in select places). Nevertheless, exemplary
leaders are formed worldwide. Critical formative processes are at work in every culture
that produce exemplary leaders. These leaders are viewed with appreciation
internationally. A clear understanding of formative processes in one culture will
certainly enlighten formative processes in other cultures.

Statement of the Problem

China, the most populated nation on earth, is in a time of unprecedented growth
and change. Reports indicate that the existing structures and the leadership base are
unlikely to be able to support the massive movements within the country (Hale & Hale,
2003; Pei, 2002). The time is right for fresh leaders to emerge who can meet the need of
this new generation. Moreover, the Christian presence in China has mushroomed in
recent years and has either surpassed or is near to surpassing the total number of genuine followers of Jesus in any other country (Barrett, Kurian, & Johnson, 2001). The leadership void within the church of China is great and the need for exemplary leaders to guide the church through the turbulent decades to come is equally as great (Aikman, 2003; Johnstone & Mandryk, 2001).

Jesus Christ is universally recognized as one of the greatest leaders who ever lived. He started a movement that today has followers in every political nation and most ethnic people groups (Barrett et al., 2001; Johnstone & Mandryk, 2001). Genuine followers of Jesus are expected and empowered to live like him, providing service and leadership for the good of society. Perhaps the leadership philosophy he taught and modeled contains the essential elements of what might emerge as the exemplary leadership model for China.

How will the next generation of Christian leaders in China emerge? What can be learned from leader formation in the past that will enhance leader formation in the future? A paradigm of leader formation is required that is holistic and reflective of human learning theory that includes the development of knowledge, behavior, attitude, and will. So the central concern of this study addresses this need and revolves around leader formation. What formal, informal, and nonformal developmental processes do exemplary Christian Chinese leaders go through to become so recognized? What similarities and differences stand out among those who are so recognized? How will emerging Chinese leaders prepare themselves to serve in an exemplary way? The focus of this research was on understanding the critical and formative developmental process for exemplary Chinese Christian leaders.
Historical Background

China with its long and rich history is emerging as a dominant global economic, political, and military force. The Chinese call their country Zhong Guo or "The Middle Kingdom" based on the historic belief that their civilization is at the center of human existence. It was in China that ancient products such as fireworks, the wheel barrow, the compass, paper, printing as well as the abacus for counting were invented (http://www.crystalinks.com/chinainventions.html). This land also boasts the birthplace of Confucius who gave the world one of the most respected moral philosophies and system of education.

China was introduced to Christianity in the 6th century (Latourette, 1967, p. 51), but it was not until 15th century with the entrance of the Jesuits that the Chinese seriously interacted with Christianity. While Roman Catholic missionaries worked through many difficulties to gain a foothold in China the Protestant missionary movement entered a few centuries later. In order to understand China in the 20th century, the historian Latourette (p. 3) states that it is critical to understand the role of the missionary if one hopes to understand China of the 20th century:

Whoever, indeed, would understand the China of 1928 and of the preceding hundred years must not only be familiar with the history of domestic politics, of intellectual movements, and of diplomatic and commercial contracts with the West, but must also know and appraise the missionary and his activities.

Whereas it has been estimated that Christians in China numbered around 1 million in 1900 (Latourette, 1967, p. 831), the Christian population had grown to about 6 million by 1949. On October 1, 1949 the face of China changed in a dramatic way when Chairman Mao announced the beginning of the People’s Republic of China. That year many observers of the church in China expected Christianity to die when the over 10,000
resident missionaries (Hattaway, 2000, p. 1) were forced to leave the country. However, the opposite has occurred. The growth in the number of Christians in the last 5 decades has been unprecedented leading some to estimate that there might be 100 million Christians in China in 2005. It is against the backdrop of this growth and the difficult circumstances often faced by the Christian movement in China that the lives of those studied in this dissertation have to be understood. The following historical and chronological overview will serve as a frame of reference:

1920 The Communist Party dominates most of China.

1937 As the Japanese invade China and the communists shift their attention more to fighting this external enemy than the Christians within the country.

1949 The communists take over control of China naming it the People’s Republic of China.

1951 The Religious Affairs Bureau is formed to rid China of all foreign connections and bring churches under one organizational umbrella.

1954 The Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement is officially named.


1979–1991 General freedom for churches allows them to operate without significant external pressure from the government.

1989 The Tiananmen Square massacre attracts international attention on human rights violations in China.

1991 Governmental policy causes continuous persecution of Christians though the extent varies from province to province.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discern and describe the critical formative processes that those recognized as exemplary Christian leaders in China have undergone. Certain qualities and important leadership functions were identified through the interviews. However, it was the formative processes that were intentionally researched in order to provide insights that will enable future exemplary leader formation to be enhanced.

Research Question

This study sought to answer one central research question: What events, experiences, people, and other formative processes contributed as being critical to the formation of exemplary Christian leaders in China? In order to discover timeless processes and principles, this was a study of a senior Christian statesman now in his 70s, an influential Christian leader in his 60s, and an emerging Christian leader in his 30s. Similarities and distinctions between generations were discerned.

Methodological Assumptions

The design of this research was a narrative, qualitative study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that explored the central phenomenon of leader formation among three purposefully selected, exemplary Christian Chinese leaders. By asking broad, general, inductive questions, the interviewees shared their life stories by recounting the significant experiences, events, and encounters with people from which I gained an understanding of the main formative processes that developed the person into the leaders they became. Through my understanding of the topic and the culture, coupled with analysis and interpretation from the interviews, I arrived at guidelines that can instruct future
exemplary leader formation. Existing Asian research (Crow, 2000; Pye, L., & Pye, M. 1985; Wenquan, Chia, & Fang, 2000) as well as multinational studies (Hofstede, 1997; House et al., 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) discussed trans-cultural or universal leadership qualities. These qualities and concepts were a helpful point of reference in analyzing the data collected from the research.

**Rationale for the Study**

Literature abounds with information about the Western roles and characteristics of leaders and leadership. Research has been conducted, and many people have reflected (Conger, 1992) on whether leaders are born (genetic propensity) or made (developed). Institutions around the world are producing men and women with academic credentials who are assumed to be competent leaders because of their credentials. However, competency based primarily upon what a person knows and does may lack the vital component of who a person is in being and character. Character development involves a cognitive component, but the essence of character development involves processes of attitudinal, behavioral and volitional development. Such formation requires the integration of knowledge into life and goes well beyond formal classroom study. This is not to imply that formal study is of lesser value in the leader formation process. Rather, having a sound theoretical knowledge base is assumed and usually is gained through some formal setting. It is the inappropriate value placed on knowledge and skill over character formation that must not be allowed to continue.

Those who exemplify what is called a servant leader are an impressive blend of knowing and doing with being. These four arenas of leadership formation (knowledge, skill, character, and volition) seem to be universal. However, an analysis of the recent
research and literature on generalizing leadership across cultures (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004) implies that there are no universals and only a few patterns can be identified. Clinton (1988a, 1988b, 1989) has identified what appear to be universal leadership principles through his in-depth analysis from over 1,000 international Christian leaders. Whereas these seemingly universal processes have been identified, the application within a Chinese context is lacking. Research in the context of China will also be enlightening regarding leader formation processes for people other than Chinese.

**Theoretical Foundations**

Theoretical foundations refer to the theoretical framework upon which this study was built. People often think in terms of mental models of how the world works; their perception and understanding needs to be simple, explainable, predictable, and somewhat controllable (Schein, 1999, p. 84). Leader formation is multi-faceted including growth in knowledge, skill, attitude, and volition. Each component plays a critical role in balanced, healthy development. An understanding of how these distinct yet complementary arenas for growth inter-relate sheds light on the developmental process of an exemplary leader. For this study, the important theoretical foundations are theological and cross-cultural, and concern leader formation, adult learning, and servant leadership.

Theologically speaking, biblical scholars believe that when God said, “Let us make man in Our image” (Gen 1:26), he was referring to the fact that he created mankind with a mind, with emotions, and with a will (Pentecost, 1972). Social scientists and psychologists refer to the domains of cognition (mind), affection (emotions), and behavior (which involves acts of the will). As a person seeks to become the mature individual he or she was created to become, there is growth in each of these arenas, and
growth in any one area at the neglect of the others produces an imbalanced person. Jesus, the quintessential person, grew holistically: “Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). We find reference here to intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social growth that all people are expected to develop in as well. Also, by reflection on the life of Christ, the Apostle Paul, and many other biblical leaders, we see that leader formation (John 17:4; 2 Tim 2:2) was intentionally and naturally modeled as the essential means to fulfilling God’s purpose on earth. Human Beings were created for God’s glory, but because of sin people have not been able to attain their potential nor live in community with other people the way God originally intended. Therefore, God forms leaders to model his values and fulfill his purposes.

Along with theological foundations concerning human nature, this study was built upon leader formation theory developed by J. Robert Clinton (1988a, 1988b, 1989). Leader emergence theory suggests that people develop and are formed through stages of identifiable process items and experiences. Clinton uses a six-phase model to describe the development of Christian leaders moving from inner-life growth to convergence of one’s natural design (personality, experience, passion, etc.). The phases are identified and distinguished by differing process items, boundary events, and spheres of influence. This study builds upon Clinton’s analytical framework in describing and analyzing the leader formation process. A complementary model of leader formation is that of Hagberg (1994) who sees six stages of movement from powerlessness to what she calls “power by gestalt.” In this most mature stage leaders exhibit purpose and wisdom coupled with a humble sense of destiny. The data from this study suggest that exemplary leaders have developed to the stage which corresponds with what Collins (2001) refers to as “Level 5
Leaders” or those who build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.

Adult learning theory, which emerges from human development theory, indicates that people grow and learn best when they are self-motivated and engaged in relevant study that builds upon prior knowledge (Freire, 1970; Knowles, 1973; Lewin, 1951; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Vella, 2002). Knowles’s four vital factors for effective adult learning (respect, immediacy, relevance, and retention) and Lewin’s principles of learning formed the backdrop for the study of the learning dynamics observed in the research. Since different arenas in which learning takes place (formal, nonformal or informal arenas) are appropriate for different types of formation, I was interested to see what arenas were most prominent in the formation of exemplary leaders in China.

Theoretical foundations for cross-cultural understanding were included in order to compare Western and Chinese thinking on leadership. An understanding of communication processes is critical for accurate perceptions in another culture. Hesselgrave’s (1978) seven components for cross-cultural understanding—worldviews (how people perceive their world), cognitive processes (how people think), linguistic forms (how people express ideas), behavioral patterns (how people act), social structures (how people interact), media influence (how messages are channeled), and motivational resources (how people decide)—formed a general foundation to approach the cross-cultural communication task.

Lastly, this study built upon the broad framework of servant leadership. Although not always identified as a theory, servant leadership is a model that has widespread acceptance in the West and is most closely linked to transformational leadership theory.
Servant leadership, or its cultural equivalent, was the basis for selection of the research participants.

**Significance of the Study**

This study was important because it provided new insights into leader formation. It will enable those engaged in leadership formation among Christian Chinese to better understand the process certain Chinese leaders went through to become the exemplary leaders they are known to be. This understanding should enhance the developmental processes of future exemplary leaders in China.

This study also enhances our understanding of servant leader formation internationally by the principles and insights gained from the Asian context. The characteristics and formative processes that exemplary Chinese leaders went through provide a point for comparison and contrast with Western views and practices of servant leadership formation. Those involved in formal, informal and nonformal leader development will find the insights gained through this study fertile soil for their reflection and implementation in their contexts.

This study will benefit business leaders with multinational corporations or those who send expatriate workers to China by enhancing their understanding of the cultural dynamics influencing Chinese leaders. Those working in or negotiating with China will be better prepared to relate to these leaders in a contextualized way.

**Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of this study the following definitions were formulated:
**Exemplary Leader:** A person who is recognized by some significant group(s) as a model for emulation. In this study the term exemplary leader will be synonymous with servant leader.

**Leader Development:** The intentional process through which a person grows in his capacity for leadership, especially in the areas of knowledge and behavior. A cause and effect relationship is expected.

**Leader Formation:** The organic process through which a person is transformed internally through learning experiences so that doing is a congruent outworking of knowing and being.

**Servant Leader:** One who exemplifies the integration of competence and character so that knowing, doing, and being are in a healthy balance; one who is a servant at the core of his or her being.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study involved an in-depth look at three exemplary Han Chinese Christian leaders and may not directly relate to Chinese minority leaders or to ethnic Chinese who are generations removed from China. There are at least 56 minority peoples who reside within China who have distinctively different cultures from the Han (Hattaway, 2000). Although there is such a thing as distinct Asian cultural traits that set Asia apart from other continents, to generalize from one Asian culture to another has clear limitations. Another limitation involved the process of obtaining agreement from several sources as to the worthiness of the selection of exemplary leaders in China. Some exemplary leaders are not widely known outside of their social network. Perhaps the most significant limitation was the requirement of translation. Two of the interviews involved
translation since the interviewees could not understand English and the researcher could not understand Mandarin. Having a translator necessitated an intermediary. In order to minimize potential distortion, the translator was the same person yet it is unknown how much was imprecisely translated.

**Delimitations of the Study**

This study was delimited to only leaders who were born in China and lived some significant part of their life in China. The study excluded exemplary leaders who did not hold to the Christian faith and exemplary Christian leaders who did not primarily exert influence over Christian organizations. Non-Chinese Asian exemplary Christian leaders were not studied nor were Chinese Christian leaders born and living outside of China. China expert Ralph Covell (personal communication, June 6, 2004) confirmed that leaders born in China would be distinct from those born outside of China. This study was also delimited to men because of certain complications with the appropriateness of the interview process with women even though many exemplary women Christian leaders are present in China. Only Christian men involved in professional Christian ministry were considered and not business leaders who politically cannot be overtly identified as Christian.

**Chapter Summary and Dissertation Outline**

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction of the background and problems relating to leader formation and its application to China. It includes a summary of the proposed research, the methodology, and the significance of the study.
Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to leader formation in China, relevant cross-cultural studies, servant leadership in general and leader formation in particular.

Chapter 3 discusses in-depth the methodology followed in the research.

Chapter 4 presents the information gained through research interviews. In traditional qualitative form, the data are presented in prose to tell the life stories of those interviewed.

Chapter 5 analyzes the findings and implications of the study for China and elsewhere. The major themes that flowed from the research are integrated with the theoretical foundations upon which the study was based.

Chapter 6 provides a summary, conclusions and recommendations for future research. The essence of this study is concisely restated.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON SERVANT LEADER FORMATION IN CHINA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the relevant literature that pertains to servant leader formation in the context of China. Hart (2002, p. 13) clarifies the purpose of a literature review as,

The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data, and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed.

This review begins in the knowledge arena of leader formation in the context of China. Since culture plays a critical role in education, some review of cross-cultural issues will also be considered. Next, the review turns to servant leadership which is the theoretical foundation undergirding the entire study and has a special relationship to Christian leaders. Finally, leader formation foundations and theory are reviewed as the main thrust of this study.

Chinese Leaders and Leadership

The overwhelming majority of leadership research in the last century has been culturally specific (Bass, 1990) and conducted in the West (Yukl, 1998). Studies on leaders and leadership historically began with the study of the traits of great leaders, then
consideration was given to the behavior of leaders in various situations as well as preferred styles of leadership. There has been a limited amount of research that emphasizes leadership traits in some parts of the world (Dorfman, 2004; House et al., 2004; Scandura & Dorfman, 2004; see Appendix E). Although reflection on leadership traits is no longer cutting-edge research in the West, it might still be very helpful in other parts of the world. Kellerman (2004, p. 19) states that “even though the trait theory of leadership is out of fashion, at least in academe, it’s silly to pretend that traits don’t matter.” Leadership study in China has primarily been in the trait arena. Wenquan et al. (2000) conclude from their study that Western theories of leadership cannot be effectively transposed on Chinese people because implicit cultural factors are different and recommend that “future researchers must continue to explore deeper into the hearts and minds of the Chinese to find out the true Chinese meaning of leader” (p. 739). This insight substantiates the need for ongoing qualitative research of Chinese leaders.

Yao (1996), a mainland Chinese student of leaders, maintains that leadership as an academic field of study is new for the Chinese.

If a reader wants to get fragmentary knowledge in the field of Chinese leadership, one of the best ways would be to read the biographies of famous leaders in ancient Chinese history. The Chinese have not had any systematic research on leadership, because the style of Chinese leadership always depends on experience. (p. 8)

Covell (1986), a long-term resident and astute student of China, would agree with Yao’s approach that, in view of the Chinese respect for antiquity, the best way to understand leadership influences is by drawing out principles from wise men long ago. The current Chinese leadership research has identified many helpful qualities that we should expect exemplary Chinese leader to embody. This review will focus on both existing research on leadership and insights to be gained from biographies of Chinese Christian leaders.
Chinese Biographical Insights

The developmental processes critical to Christian leader formation can be observed in several biographical studies of exemplary Christian leaders. The lives of men who would be called patriarchs of the church have been adequately documented as to how they became recognized leaders, with some still living today. Two well-known patriarchs will be reviewed only briefly due to their unfortunate untimely deaths that did not allow them to experience life after the Cultural Revolution and as such do not allow for a more contemporary assessment.

Watchman Nee (Kinnear, 1973), the founder of the Little Flock Movement that endured significant persecution, was born in 1903 and died in 1972 at age 69. His life exuded spiritual authority (Nee, 1972) because of his strong and consistent faith. Nee modeled a deep commitment to the study of the Bible because of his conviction that the word of God had great power and that the follower of Christ needed to hear from God on a regular basis. He faced numerous times of intense struggle due to harsh conflicts in ministry, sickness, and persecution. He was able to travel internationally to recruit prayer for the church in China and became a famous name outside of China among Christians. Just after his 20th year in detention because of his faith, Nee died a mysterious death. In his last coded letter (so not to be destroyed by authorities) he summarizes his view on life (Kinnear, 1973, p.238):

‘Ask!’ Since God is always there in the Unseen, there is no situation on this earth in which you and I are powerless to do anything. Whether shackled by foes or hampered by circumstances, whether totally paralyzed or walled up in solitary darkness, we can pray, we can appeal to Him, we can ask. We shall surely receive. God will act again. If we will but go on asking, our sorrow will be turned to surpassing joy. ‘And your joy no one will take from you.’
John Sung (Lyall, 1972), perhaps the greatest of the Chinese Evangelists, was born in 1901 and died in 1944 at the age of 42. As with many of God’s great servants, Sung had his deficiencies. Strong willed, hot tempered, and rebellious at times, this scholarly preacher was empowered by God to present the Gospel to thousands and was credited as being the human voice to direct many people into full-time Christian service. Stott (cited in Lyall, 1972, pp. x-xii) points to four reasons why Sung was so powerfully used by God. First, he was a dedicated man with a heart that was fixed to serve Christ. Second, he knew that the place of power was in God’s word and in the cross of Christ, not in his remarkable natural gifts of mind and personality. Third, he was real and evidenced no hypocrisy. Fourth, he honored and worked through the churches so converts could be nurtured in a faith community. Likened to John the Baptist because of his roughness, this humble man of prayer who loved God’s word served Christ throughout Southeast Asia and left a legacy that is still felt today.

Along with Nee and Sung, Wang Ming Dao occupies a significant place of prominence. Patriarch Wang Ming Dao in 1989 pondered the problems facing the House Church Movement in China, those churches that did not align with the Three-Self Churches, and gave this following message to eight key leaders:

There are two religious trends now. On the one hand there is a State-controlled Church, on the other hand there is the House Church Movement. The State-controlled Church has been oppressing the Christian faith through the Three-Self Movement. They are not one in heart and mind with me. I’m adamantly opposed to it. I’m on the Lord’s side. But I regret that not many are on the Lord’s side. Many students and professionals have suffered because of their association with me. But those who do not bow to the government are really rare. (Lee, 2001, pp. 225–226)

Wang identified Samuel Lamb from Guangdong and Allen Yuan Beijing as the two men he most valued as co-workers. The two other patriarchs apparently less known to Wang
but recognized widely for their statesmanship were Moses Xie and Li Tian En, both from Shanghai. To know these five men is to understand the core of House Church history in China in the latter part of the 20th century, and to know how their lives were shaped is to better understand leader formation. Each of these patriarchs had their lives significantly shaped by the dominance of communism and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement which severely restricted Christian leader formation.

**Wang Ming Dao**

The life of Wang Ming Dao is well documented through numerous biographers although with slight discrepancy (Harvey, 2002; Lyall, 2000; Wong, 1981). He is undisputedly one of China’s greatest Christian statesmen of the 20th century. J. Hudson Taylor III, the great-grandson of Hudson Taylor, knew Wang and wrote of him as the best example of a Chinese leader who articulated the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and most poignantly experienced suffering for his faith. For the critical role he played in resisting the efforts of the communist state to control Christianity he became known as the “Dean of the House Churches.” Some of his lasting contributions are as follows:

1. Wang’s commentaries emphasized the necessity of persecution and suffering for all those who would resist idolatry and evil. Suffering, however, was not a sign of defeat and dishonor but rather a badge of honor and a powerful weapon against the enemies of God’s elect.

2. Although the church in China has, like Wang, at times stumbled and cracked under pressure, it always seems to return stronger than before. Decades of opposition and suffering have served to discipline the church and enabled it to persevere when others imagined it would become extinct.
3. He said that the most important lesson he learned during prison was the importance of absolute integrity. Despite the great suffering Christians underwent, he believed that the greatest challenges to the church were not from without but from within—liberalism and unbelief.

4. From the time of his conversion he had a great concern with Christian conduct and character. "A person with a blemished character is a person unworthy to work for God" (Wong, 1981, p. 131). He always appreciated having friends who did not hesitate to reprove and correct him. Such accountability is essential for making a man of God.

5. In comparing Watchman Nee, Wang Ming Dao (nicknamed man of iron), and David Yang, Lyall (2000, p. 154) concluded: "But in strength and nobility of character and in the extent and constructiveness of the influence which he exercised, the 'Man of Iron' must be reckoned as 'chief among the three.'"

Wang Ming Dao is best remembered for his dogged resistance to government-imposed Protestant union and coerced political indoctrination in China. His legacy was his perseverance, tenacity, and faith. The metaphor that seems appropriate for Wang Ming Dao is that of a tree on a rocky cliff. Wang persevered through great adversity and remained standing although significantly scarred.

Allen Yuan

Yuan Xiang Chen (Aikman, 2003; Lee, 2001), who eventually took the English first name of Allen, was born in 1914 in Anhui province but moved to Beijing as a child. He became known as a man who held firmly to biblical convictions, was full of integrity, abstained from gossip, was undivided in attention to ministry, and demonstrated loyalty to his Lord. Major lessons learned from the life of Allen Yuan include:
1. Even though he could not explain his suffering he never doubted the faithfulness and love of God. He believed that whatever he endured originated from God and was for his good.

2. During the years in prison he had no Bible and could only meditate on those verses and hymns that he had memorized.

3. All of Allen’s children chose to follow the example of their parents even though they experienced considerable criticism and prejudice. God graciously did not allow them to become embittered by the difficulties they faced because of their parents’ faith.

4. Although Yuan never received a diploma nor ever wrote a book, his influence touched many. His two prime principles were his refusal to join any organization and his insistence on the house-church model.

   A metaphor that could describe Allen Yuan is that of a sparrow that would not die. Before his imprisonment, the communist government initiated a campaign to kill the massive number of sparrows that lived in Beijing. The way they accomplished this was to mobilize people to never let sparrows find a place to rest. Eventually, from constant flying, most of them died. Yuan, like the sparrows of Beijing, was unceasingly pursued because of his faith, but never falter.

Moses Xie

Moses Xie is a quiet and humble giant of a man. I had the privilege to share a meal with him in Beijing in 2003. Biographical data on him were hard to come by (Aikman, 2003; personal notes from an interview) but today Moses continues to train
house church leaders across the country while living in Beijing. Some of the lessons that emerge from his life include:

1. He believed he had a debt to repay for his salvation. He felt responsible to God to teach wherever he could go.

2. He saw that heresy ran rampant and that Satan was ferocious in his attacks.

3. It is not strange that the Church suffers and is persecuted. It happens in all ages, only the ways, the depth, and the extension of the suffering differ. God’s grace can be seen in suffering by those who are looking for it. Prison is a place for spiritual growth.

4. Nothing is more venomous than putting politics above religion to make the servants of God yield and compromise.

A metaphor that exemplifies Moses Xie is that of a gardener. He enjoys caring for plants and he is a gardener in God’s vineyard, traveling to every part of China to care for Christians.

**Samuel Lamb**

In 1994 I had the privilege of spending an hour with Lin Xiangao, otherwise known as Samuel Lamb, at his church and home in Guangzhou.

One Asian church leader said of Samuel Lamb, ‘Samuel spends every moment of his life thinking how to extend the kingdom of God, how to develop young leaders, how to immerse them in the Word and in the work. He is no fundy but a well-balanced, conservative evangelical who, above all, sticks to what the Bible says. He is uniquely God’s man in China today. (Anderson, 1991, p. 165)

Several significant lessons stand out from the life of this man:

1. Samuel believed that his two decades of imprisonment had been an era of preparation. He was schooled for a future that in the ‘Sovereign One’s’ plan might well exclude calm family life.
2. When people asked Samuel about miracles, he replied that miracles happen at God’s discretion, not ours. These are special phenomena God uses to rebuke atheism and to strengthen his church. He rarely taught about miracles and did not make them a major focus of his ministry. The Holy Spirit should not be viewed as a weapon for Christians to use against the world but the one who uses holy and available Christians for his purposes.

3. For the church of this day to experience awakening, multitudes of Christians must reject the world and give themselves wholly to obeying and serving the Lord.

4. His experience validated a faith principle that the more persecution was applied, the more the church would grow.

A metaphor that could characterize the life of Samuel Lamb is that of a lion. Although a man slight in stature, he had a holy boldness that allowed him with great confidence to stand up to continuing assaults from antagonistic authorities.

Li Tian En

Li was born in Henan in 1928 and eventually lived in Shanghai. His grandfather was converted by Hudson Taylor. He was born last of the patriarchs but according to the research of Aikman (2003, p. 77), it is difficult to overestimate the part Li played in training the next generation of China’s Christian leaders. Biographical information was hard to come by for Li, though his life was and still is of great significance. Li has most recently spent his time preaching and teaching in the Shanghai area as well as throughout the country to strengthen the church and to train younger leaders. The metaphor that perhaps most characterizes this man’s life is that of a trainer. He demonstrated a consistent commitment to train younger leaders who have in turn trained others.
Other Worthy Men

Although the patriarchs stand out above the rest in terms of influence, there are men known as “uncles” or Shushu who are highly regarded and carry on most of the church work today. Most of these men and women were often trained by the patriarchs and exemplify the emerging servant leader posture in China (Aikman, 2003). This brief review should further validate that my research is consistent with published records.

Feng Jianguo was born in 1927 and heads the Tanghe Network. He experienced imprisonment from 1975-1980. He had a significant mentor from Hong Kong who helped him greatly. Xu Yongze was born in 1940 and in 1977 became the head of the Born Again Network. Miao Zhitong was born in 1942, raised by Christian relatives, rededicated his life to Christ in 1965, experienced numerous arrests and imprisonments over the years, and now heads the Zhejiang Network. This Network has sent missionaries all over the world. Zhang Rongliang was born in 1950 and became a Christian in 1963. He was imprisoned for 7 years and calls this his seminary training where his faith and leadership skills were honed. He leads the Fangcheng Network.

The most extensive biographical information published on an uncle comes from the book The Heavenly Man about Brother Yun (Hattaway & Yun, 2002). Born in Henan province in 1958, Yun Zhenying became known simply as Brother Yun or the heavenly man. He had little opportunity for formal education due to helping his family survive. In 1974 he was converted and in 1981 he married Deling. Their modern-day story of serving Jesus in China is powerful and touching. Yun’s life-shaping events included:

1. His mother, though illiterate and ignorant, was yielded to the Lord and many of the house church leaders came to salvation through her. His father recovered from
cancer because of prayer in 1974 but then died in 1977 of other health problems. Parents can play a critical formative role in a child’s life.

2. As a young man he craved having a copy of the Bible and after several months of earnest prayer he was given a copy of the NT. Upon reflecting on Acts 1:8 and the missionary mandate he asked his mother who the Holy Spirit was and she suggested that he pray for an answer like he had prayed for a Bible. This desire to know God and study the Bible marked his life.

3. Christians in China during the last few decades of the 20th century were very committed and practiced regular fasting and long prayer meetings. Other than doing the needed work for survival they invested their time in worshipping God.

4. By being rejected by fellow Christians when the government was searching for Christian teachers, Yun and his associates learned to depend on God alone.

5. When being tortured he would cry out to God and gained strength to persevere. He believed that Jesus Christ modeled suffering because he knew future leaders would need an example in order to endure. Yun was able to focus on Christ and not on suffering. He still does not intentionally make an issue of his suffering but of Christ who enabled him to endure. He escaped many near-arrests because of God’s intervention.

A metaphor describing Yun was established at the end of 1983 when he was arrested and asked his name. He replied that he was a “heavenly man” and this name has stayed with him ever since.

**Formative Processes Identified**

From these biographical studies we can see several issues that played a formative role in the shaping of leaders:
1. The role of education: Most of the church leaders in the last 75 years have had at best a few years of formal post-high-school education. These people have been formed through nonformal and informal education. Much of their biblical knowledge came through personal study of the Bible in the context of ministry. They found the Bible to speak to issues that were relevant to their current situation. Many of these leaders identified significant mentors or role models as formative influences. Close interpersonal observation with regular interaction provided the context to learn and lead.

2. The role of suffering: Without exception, suffering through imprisonment and other kinds of hardship shaped these leaders into the servant leaders they became. There was never an indication that anyone sought out suffering but they never compromised their beliefs in order to avoid discomfort. These decisions often had significant consequences for their families. Character development emerged from the crucible of suffering and provided significant personal and spiritual authority for their leadership.

3. The issue of time: Exemplary leaders cannot be formed quickly. Experience is a primary ingredient for wisdom which basically refers to skill for living. This wisdom or life skill that is so essential for both credibility and competence requires time for formation. How quickly one learns from experience depends on their learning posture and the access they have to great learning situations.

4. The issue of challenge: When faced with a challenge, exemplary leaders arise. This was the case with the biographical studies and within these writings are references to men who did not rise to the challenge and stagnated or regressed. Challenging tasks and opportunities are always present to those who are committed to a challenging vision. Once the vision is discerned, growth opportunities will naturally follow.
Although biographical studies may provide the greatest insight into leader formation in China, a look at the research available can also give insight into what we could call the exemplary Chinese leader. Many qualities of exemplary leadership have been identified through research and help us understand what Chinese culture values.

Chinese Leadership Research

Building upon Hofstede’s classic research on international leadership in the early 1980s (see Appendix D), The Chinese Culture Connection (1987) constructed and administered what was called the Chinese Value Survey (CVS) to university students in 22 countries (20 of which were included in Hofstede’s study). Their goal was to see if Hofstede’s dimensions were truly culturally free. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

Table 1

Chinese Leadership Values Categories (The Leadership Connection)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Confucian Work</th>
<th>Human-Heartedness</th>
<th>Moral Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of others</td>
<td>Personal steadiness</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony with others</td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Courtesy</td>
<td>Having few desires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-competitiveness</td>
<td>Protecting your</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close intimate friend</td>
<td>“face”</td>
<td>Righteousness</td>
<td>Keeping oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial piety</td>
<td>Ordering</td>
<td></td>
<td>disinterested and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chastity in women</td>
<td>relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>pure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Thrift</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contentedness</td>
<td>Respect for tradition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td>Having sense of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Conservative</td>
<td>shame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity with others</td>
<td>Reciprocation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results were arranged in four main categories, two of which had direct correlation to Hofstede’s dimensions (power distance and collectivism), one had some
correlation (femininity), one had no correlation (Confucian work), and one of Hofstede’s dimensions (uncertainty avoidance) was not accounted for. Hofstede (1997) affirms that the designers of the CVS deliberately constructed a non-Western bias questionnaire. The component that was unrelated, Confucian dynamism, could be seen most closely connected to a long-term versus short-term orientation that Hofstede identified after his original research. In summary he says:

The comparison of the results of the (Western) IBM and RVS studies versus the (Eastern) CVS showed that three dimensions dealing with basic human relationships seem to be so universal that they somehow show up in whatever multi-country value study we do. These are the equivalents of the power distance, individualism—collectivism, and masculinity—femininity dimensions in the IBM study. A fourth dimension can be found, but its nature depends on the culture of the designers of the questionnaire. With the Western-made questionnaires (IBM and RVS) a dimension ‘uncertainty avoidance’ was found; with the CVS another dimension ‘Confucian dynamism.’ (Hofstede, 1997, pp. 170–171)

Wenquan et al., (2000) also studied Chinese leadership values and differentiate between explicit theory, which is based on observation and evaluation of the overt behavior of leaders, and implicit theory, which explores the covert conceptual structure of leadership. Their implicit-inductive study of 133 Chinese participants resulted in 2,546 descriptive terms for a leader, which were reduced to 163 items when duplication was removed. These terms were arranged in four main categories: personal morality; goal effectiveness; interpersonal competence; and versatility.

Several other studies sought to better understand Chinese leadership values. Ralston, Gustafson, Elsass, Cheung, and Terpstra (1992) conducted research that built upon the Chinese Culture Connection study and instrument, the Chinese Value Survey. Through a comparison of managers in the United States, Hong Kong, and the People’s Republic of China, they concluded that managers from the U.S. and China were seen as
extremes with Hong Kong in between in terms of values. They observed that Confucian values still remain as foundational even after the Cultural Revolution. Garrott (1995) administered a variation of the Chinese Values Survey through 23 colleagues teaching in 15 colleges and universities in Shanghai, Beijing, and nine widely scattered provinces in a two-part instrument to 512 men and women in equal distribution. Her intentions were to discover relationships between values, age, and sex for pedagogical purposes. Fu (1998) studied the systematic differences in values between middle managers in China and the United States. The results show that compared to the Chinese managers, the U.S. managers had a higher preference for rational persuasion (organization), exchange, consultation, and inspirational appeals whereas the Chinese managers seemed to have a higher preference for personal appeals, rational persuasion (individual), informal approach, coalition tactics, gifts and favors compared to their U.S. counterparts.

These research studies show consistent effort over the last 20 years to understand what the Chinese leader looks like, identifying the traits most preferred in leaders. High value was consistently observed for good interpersonal skill and strong ethical character.

Chinese Culture, Worldview and Values

To date, the study of leadership in China has focused on qualitative biographical or quantitative trait studies. No studies were found that address the developmental processes through which leaders inculcate such qualities. In order to integrate what is known about leaders in China with leader formation processes that have been more carefully researched and articulated in the West, an understanding of culture, worldview and values is necessary to ensure that comparisons are appropriate. The study of leader formation must give attention to the context in which leaders are being formed.
One man who has undoubtedly impacted Chinese culture, values and thinking was Confucius. Dr. Choong (personal interview, May 22, 2004), a China scholar from Singapore who travels frequently to China as a teacher, stated that Confucian thought was very important for the former generations and still embedded in the older people. Confucian’s teaching was very moralistic, public service oriented, and influential. However, Choong noted that the “hero” for younger people today is success. Shenkar, Ronen, Shefy, and Chow (1998) see the following core Confucian principles still at work: harmony, hierarchy, collectivism, and personal relations. Relationship remains more important than skills and tasks. Dai and Zheng (2002) state:

The modern ethic of management in China derives its principles from more than two thousand years of Confucian thinking. With its emphasis on conformity to communal values—moral obligations to society and people—the Chinese ethic of management is not only about institutions, rules, or code books: it is a social management approach aimed at regulating relations between managers and managed. (p. 155)

Tu (2000), the Harvard Yenching Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies, writes that there has been a revival of Confucian teaching since the 1960s in East Asia. There has also interestingly been an adoption of many Western practices that conflict with Confucian teaching.

This positive identification with the West and active participation in the fundamental restructuring of one’s own world according to the Western model is unprecedented in human history. However, East Asia’s deliberate effort to relegate its own rich resources to the background for the sake of massive cultural absorption enhanced the need to appeal to the native pattern to reshape what they had learned from the West. This model of creative adaptation following the end of the Second World War helped to strategically position them in forging a new synthesis. (pp. 261–262)

Nisbett (2003) provides some rather insightful reflections in comparing Asian and Western people (see Appendix F). He summarizes that his research led him to the
conviction that two utterly different approaches to the world have existed for thousands of years:

These approaches include profoundly different social relations, views about the nature of the world, and characteristic thought processes. Each of these orientations—the Western, and the Eastern—is a self-reinforcing, homeostatic system. The social practices promote the worldviews; the worldviews dictate the appropriate thought processes; and the thought processes both justify the worldviews and support the social practices. Understanding these homeostatic systems has implications for grasping the fundamental nature of the mind, for beliefs about how we ought ideally to reason, and for appropriate educational strategies for different people. (p. xx)

The distinct approaches between Western and Eastern thought have emerged from distinct values and perspectives. A Westerner is unwise to assume that what is accepted as appropriate and even effective in his culture would be equally appropriate and effective in China. By recognizing the existence of cultural distinctions a researcher will look for similarities and differences. Culture has been defined in its broadest sense as “the patterned way in which people do things together” (Lausanne Occasional Papers, 1978, p. 6). Culture implies a measure of homogeneity, that it is what holds people together over a span of time, and that it covers everything in human life:

Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity. (p. 7)

Triandis is cited in Pratt (1991) with further nuances on culture:

Culture is to society what memory is to the person. It specifies designs for living that have proven effective in the past, ways of dealing with social situations, and ways to think about the self and social behavior that have been reinforced in the past. . . . When a person is socialized in a given culture, the person can use customs as a substitute for thought, and save time. (p. 287)
Chinese culture is very different from that of the West, and we should expect differences in the way leaders are formed. The student of Chinese culture must consider ancient factors that have deep roots. Graham (2003) distills the essence of Chinese culture down to four thick threads. First, China was and is still predominantly agrarian. Communal living with group cooperation in a harmonious way is valued with high family and near relative loyalty. Second, the Confucian heritage has embedded a certain morality. A benevolent code is preferred by all. Third, the Chinese pictographic language has instilled a way of thinking that tends to be broad and holistic rather than detailed. Fourth, there is a wariness of foreigners among Chinese. China has been invaded and deceived so many times that trust is in one's family and bank account. Graham goes on to identify eight key Chinese values that emerge from these four core cultural threads and are especially relevant for understanding how people think and relate: Guanxi—Significant personal connections; Zhongjian ren—Intermediary as go-between; Shehui Dengji—Respecting social status; Renji Hexie—Interpersonal harmony and trust; Zhengti Guannian—Holistic thinking; Jiejian—Thrift; Mianzi—Face saving and social capital; Chiku Nailao—Endurance and hard work. Two other core values stand out in the literature: Hao Hsiao—Filial piety and Ren—Personality. Although there are significant differences between those living in the urban centers where materialism is overtaking tradition and those living in the rural areas where tradition is still the norm, an understanding of these major Chinese cultural values is essential when seeking to discern culturally based principles of leadership and leader formation. We should be able to observe these complex cultural values as foundational to leader formation in the past and should expect these values to be basic for future exemplary leader formation.
An illustration of culture that has helped many see its complexity is that of layers where the deeper layers represent the core aspects of culture (Hofstede, 1997; Kwast, 1983; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). The outer layer usually represents the behavior and products of a culture or what is visible and obvious through uncritical observation. The middle layers correspond to values, feelings, ideas, and beliefs that require more reflection to discern, while the core inner layer is where we find worldview representing the largely implicit assumptions people have about reality. This core is where the unconscious mind and gut feelings are at work and could be likened to the part of the iceberg that is submerged. Worldview is massive in its influence but unseen to all but those who seriously study culture (Kraft, 1989, 1995).

On worldview, Hesselgrave (1978, p. 194) notes, “When we cross a cultural boundary, we will most likely find ourselves not simply in a new nation or a new continent or a new hemisphere but in a new world.” Understanding this new world, often next door (Sire, 1997), and the view of life people hold takes intentional reflection. The concept of worldview is so important to Hesselgrave that he takes eight chapters to address it from different angles to help communicators when crossing cultures. Although understanding one’s own let alone another’s worldview can take years of study, the degree to which a student understands culture and worldview will correlate with cross-cultural effectiveness.

Summary of Chinese Leaders and Leadership

An in-depth understanding of culture becomes crucial when studying another country. In preparation for this study of exemplary Chinese Christian leaders I sought to understand Chinese culture, worldview and values. From several years of living amongst
and studying Chinese people, I was able to discern cultural factors that played a critical role in leader formation. Without a clear appreciation for cultural distinctions my findings could be deficient. Chinese culture has well-established values that are often misunderstood by Westerners, such as the importance of establishing relationship before addressing tasks and the importance of investing time for a harmonious process rather than making hasty decisions. Ethics and morality, holism and interdependency, flexibility and pragmatism, all have deep roots in this communal society. These and other Chinese values play an essential role for healthy leader formation in China. From looking at the life stories of documented exemplary Christian leaders we also learn powerful life-shaping processes such as the influence of informal education, the role of suffering, a long-term perspective of time, and the benefits of enduring through challenging tasks. These formative processes are a vital part for producing a certain type of leader that in the West has been well captured in the term servant.

In China my focus was not directed toward just any leader but with Christian leaders and even more specifically with Christian servant leaders. Jesus, who should be the model for all Christian leaders, is viewed as a servant leader. Next we turn to a review of servant leadership theory.

**Servant Leadership**

Although the term servant leadership was coined in 1970 (Spears & Lawrence, 2002), and became popularized in 1977 with the introduction of the book with the same name by Robert Greenleaf, the concept is prominent in the Bible. Jesus, who is the most prominent figure in the Bible, is recognized even by atheists as a person worthy to study. According to Hunter (2004, p. 71),
H. G. Wells, the famous author, historian, and atheist, was a harsh critic of Christianity, yet he once remarked, ‘I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as an historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.’

World renown Jesus of Nazareth was the servant leader par excellence. In the classic passage known as the “Last Supper” telling of the night before his death (John 13), Jesus washed his disciples’ feet as an object lesson and instructed them to do likewise. His motivation is stated as an act of love (John 13:1). The extent of love is especially noted because of what Jesus was about to experience in a horrible death. Because he was a servant by his very nature (Phil 2:7), he was still able to serve despite such impending gloom. Whereas another Gospel writer discusses the interaction among the disciples prior to the meal concerning who would be the greatest (Luke 22:24-27), John mentions nothing. Rather, John relates Jesus’ model of greatness—washing the disciples’ feet. Jesus was seeking to impress his high value upon his disciples. This was a more humbling object lesson that any discourse Jesus could have given. He was both leading (influencing their values) and serving (meeting a practical need) when he performed this act. Jesus’ interaction with Peter makes it clear that he had a set agenda in mind. Where he was leading the disciples required their feet to be clean, the symbolic act previewing his atoning death on the cross that would wash away sin. As a servant leader, Jesus acted in a directive way when he said that Peter must have his feet washed, leaving no room for discussion on this matter. A servant leader does what is in the best interest of those he is serving, even when they often do not recognize their best interests being considered (John 13:7).

So, Jesus links together the servant leader who is to serve both for willing and obligatory reasons. The servant leader serves for the good of his followers, the good of
the task or cause, and as the only right response to the responsibility he has been given. The disciples were specifically instructed to recognize that serving was not just an obligation or preference respecting their leader but also an act of service to fellow followers.

Robert Greenleaf on Servant Leadership

Greenleaf, who is credited with popularizing the theory of servant leadership, gives credit to Hermann Hesse for his seed thoughts on servant leadership through the writing of *Journey to the East* where the central figure Leo is first seen as a servant but later emerges as the great and noble leader and guiding spirit of his order. From this story Greenleaf (1977) writes, “But to me, this story clearly says that the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness. Leo was actually the leader all of the time, but he was servant first because that was what he was, deep down inside” (p. 7). About Leo he goes on to say, “Leadership was bestowed upon a man who was by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that could be taken away. His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away. He was a servant first” (p. 8). This perspective was humorously communicated in the popular 1991 Disney movie *Beauty and the Beast* in the song, *Be Our Guest*: “Life is so unnerving for a servant who’s not serving.”

Blanchard, Hybels, and Hodges (1999) see the following difference between those who consider themselves first to be leaders or first to be servants.

Leaders who are servants first will assume leadership only if they see it as the best way they can serve. They’re ‘called’ to lead, rather than driven, because they naturally want to be helpful. They aren’t possessive about their leadership position—they view it as an act of stewardship rather than ownership. If someone else on the scene is a better leader, they’re willing to partner with that person or even step aside.
and find another role for themselves where they can better serve. They don't have the
need to hold on to a leader’s role or position if it doesn’t make sense from the
perspective of service. (p. 42)

Greenleaf noted back in 1977 that the terms “serve” and “lead” were overused
and carried negative connotations. Yet through his influence and those who promoted
this servant leadership theory, the term servant leader has gained a positive connotation in
at least parts of the West. Greenleaf (1977) observes, “A new moral principle is
emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one’s allegiance is that which is
freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to,
the clearly evident servant stature of the leader” (p. 10). Greenleaf himself was more of a
social scientist than a theoretician, but The Robert K. Greenleaf Center has taken his
insights and produced many resources to expand on the theory of servant leadership
while recruiting many well-known authors to write articles in support of this leadership
type. Spears and Lawrence (2002) summarizes the 10 core characteristics of a servant
leader (pp. 5–8): (a) Listening (reflector); (b) Empathy (concerned and expressive); (c)
Healing (help people become whole); (d) Awareness (aware of self and others); (e)
Persuasion (brings positive change); (f) Conceptualization (nurtures vision); (g) Foresight
(integrates history with opportunity); (h) Stewardship (entrusted for the good of others);
(i) Commitment to the growth of people (values human development); and (j) Building
community (values healthy learning and living environments). These characteristics now
can be found in most studies that consider servant leadership.

Servant leadership has gained a respected following over the last 30 years.
Bennis (2004, p. xii) refers to four critical thought-leaders in the discipline of leadership
with Greenleaf being one of them: Mary Follett on constructive, creative conflict;
Douglas MacGregor on how one's leadership behavior, style, and character are determined by how one views people; Peter Drucker for making the study and discipline of leadership respectable; and Bob Greenleaf whose unique writings on servant-leadership cast the leader as one who creates the social architecture that benefits the cartography of the people. Reflecting on the worth of servant leadership Bennis states:

But what, more challenging, more responsible, more life-giving, more important thing can you do, than to be able to create a life for others that can bring about joy and creativity, that can elicit learning and the opportunity to be your best self, that can ultimately bring about human betterment, than being a servant-leader? (p. xvi)

Peter Senge (quoted in Spears, 2004, p. 18) told people “not to bother reading any other book about leadership until you first read Robert Greenleaf’s book, Servant-Leadership. I believe it is the most singular and useful statement on leadership I’ve come across.”

Wheatley (2004, p. 268) also believes that servant leadership is to be preferred above other leadership models:

Servant-leadership is not just an interesting idea but something fundamental and vital for the world, something the world truly does need. The concept of servant-leadership must move from an interesting idea in the public imagination toward the realization that this is the only way we can go forward.

These endorsements and that of other well-respected thinkers and authors such as Peter Block, Jim Kouzes, and Parker Palmer (Spears & Lawrence, 2004) should validate Greenleaf and servant leadership as a very respected model worthy of study.

Related Servant Leadership Literature

A related yet distinct study of leadership theory was introduced by Kouzes and Posner (1988, 1995, 2002) under the term exemplary leader. The author’s original research extended over 15 years and in 30 countries. More than 80% of the behaviors and strategies identified can be summarized in their five practices and sub-points of
exemplary leaders: (a) Challenging the process—Search for opportunities; experiment and take risks; (b) Inspiring a shared vision—Envision the future; enlist others; (c) Enabling others to act—Foster collaboration; strengthen others; (d) Modeling the way—Set the example; plan small wins; and (e) Encouraging the heart—Recognize individual contribution; celebrate accomplishments. Subsequent extensive research (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, pp. 18-19) using a leadership practices inventory (LPI) confirmed these findings. “Overall, the five practices of exemplary leadership framework and the LPI contribute richly to our understanding of the leadership process and in the development and unleashing of leadership capacities.” This model of exemplary leadership has proven application across cultures, genders, and generations with sufficient similarity to servant leadership that comparison is valid.

Building on Burns’s (1978) concept of transforming leadership, Bass (1985) differentiates between transactional leadership where leaders and followers negotiate mutually acceptable and beneficiary outcomes for performance and transformational leadership where leaders empower followers to exceed performance expectations. He created Transformational Leadership Theory with four core characteristics: (a) Charismatic; (b) Inspirational; (c) Uses individualized consideration; and (d) Intellectual stimulation. This theory was studied using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1990), concluding that transformational and charismatic leadership constructs have identified leadership qualities that are exemplary. These qualities of transformational leaders fall within the realm of servant leadership even though servant leadership has not received the attention that transforming leadership has received. Servant leadership may actually be a more attractive term (Ciulla, 2004).
Lowney (2003), a former Jesuit by profession who turned corporate business leader, does a fine job of describing the values that have guided the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) for some 450 years. He calls this approach to leadership, “heroic leadership.” This description of leadership bears many striking similarities to servant leadership. Even Collins (2001, p. 30) and his team of researchers considered using the term servant leader to describe their findings of leaders who took their companies from good to great but settled instead on the term “Level 5 Leader.” The Level 5 Leader is one who blends extreme humility with intense professional will (p. 21). Unfortunately they, like so many, saw the term servant only in its weak connotation. Closely related to servant leadership is stewardship, which carries service as its central idea. Stewardship is to hold something in trust for another. Block (1996, p. 41) states, “There is a pride in leadership, it evokes images of direction. There is a humility in stewardship, it evokes images of service. Service is central to the idea of stewardship.” Boyett and Boyett (2000, p. 16) after studying the thinking of several “gurus” of management identify several statements that fully support servant leadership. “Leadership requires love. The best leaders are servants. You lead by giving to others.”

Servant leadership is a well-accepted model in the West but when looking with cross-cultural eyes, Crow (2000, p. 219) notes that what Westerners mean by servant leadership often uncovers a hybrid of American democracy and management mantras based on egalitarian ideals: “My Asian brothers and sisters (leaders and followers) also value ‘servant leadership,’ but often see it approvingly in more vertical terms. While they value aspects of egalitarian leadership, in other ways they find it anemic, demoralizing and ineffective.” This contemporary concept of servant leadership needs to

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be understood from the perspective of Chinese leaders and this was a focus of the research for this study.

Summary of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership as a concept has existed for millennia, although the form in which we know it today has existed since the 1970s. As a leadership framework it has been broadly researched and has sufficient widespread support (Spears, 2004) to warrant credibility. Several distinct yet related terms fall within this genre such as transformational, exemplary, and heroic. Blanchard et al., (1999) do a good job of summarizing servant leadership with these descriptors:

1. Leaders with servant hearts have certain characteristics and values in common as they make leadership decisions. Their paramount aim is the best interest of those they lead. Personal power, recognition, or greed is never the focus.

2. Servant leaders are willing to share power. Their purpose is to equip other people to become freer, more autonomous, more capable—and therefore more effective.

3. Servant leaders get personal satisfaction from watching the growth and development of those they lead.

4. Leaders with a servant heart want to be held accountable for their behavior and results. They want to know whether they have been helpful to those they are serving. They receive criticism and advice as a gift even when it is not offered for positive reasons. Anything said that will help them do a better job is welcomed since their aim is to serve.

5. Leaders with servant hearts by definition have genuine humility, but they also have confidence. They do not think less of themselves—they think of themselves less.
6. Servant leaders' primary concern is for spiritual significance rather than earthly success. Those who focus on earthly success are usually driven by desires for power, recognition, and greed. Spiritual significance is not about competition or winning, but about whom one is in relationship to God. Leaders are called to serve, and God is the caller.

It is hard to find any author writing about servant leadership as undesirable for followers. Everyone appreciates being led by a leader who leads from a servant’s posture. The most important consideration in servant leadership is how the leader views him or herself. Does one sense at their core that they are a servant? Does the leader naturally find fulfillment in leading by serving or is this posture simply a means to an end? The true servant leader will lead by serving and when appropriate, serve by leading. It is not a contradiction to both serve and lead but there is tension. The best metaphor I can relate to servant leadership is that of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet. This is a picture of humble service and leadership blended together for the good of the follower. It speaks to the essence of a leader—who he or she is at the core of their being. How such a servant leader is formed is the next section of review.

**Leader Formation**

I have reflected upon leader formation in China which has largely been limited to biographical and trait studies and have identified certain cultural realities that influence the formation of leaders in China. I have also reflected upon servant leadership which has great relevance for the Chinese Christian leaders who were studied in this research. Now turning to the heart of the study on the developmental processes critical to the formation of leaders, we first should see formation in the broader historical and
theoretical context of human development, adult learning and the arenas in which training takes place. A natural outgrowth of these theories is the emergence of leadership and leader formation. I will begin with a clarification of terms.

Formation is not about gaining new information or learning new techniques but about drawing out of what is already in your soul. It is about liberating the leader within you and setting yourself free. Palmer (2000) holds this conviction that development must be congruent with what is from within and not some external molding based on the decision of outsiders. "Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. . . . Let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent" (p. 3). Again Palmer notes, "Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God" (p. 10). Formation primarily involves an internal transformation.

In order to better reflect the internal nature of formation, leader formation can be distinguished from leader development. The word development is used in many arenas such as economic development, land development, human development, and seems to imply a cause/effect relationship (Dr. Bill Lawrence, personal communication, November 17, 2004). If certain resources are applied and sufficient time is allowed, the desired result is likely. When it comes to leadership training, this cause/effect dynamic is equally expected. Trainers apply resources for people development and sometimes they produce the desired result. In the Christian leadership context, the concept of spiritual formation (that which gives significant attention to the inner life of a leader and to the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit) is not just an exercise but penetrates all of life. Holland
(1978, p. 98) states that “spiritual formation requires continual attention for the leader to serve effectively. Development of ability to know, do and be in the context of input, reflection, experience and spiritual formation is essential.” This continual attention was historically an essential part of formal education from the early centuries until the Reformation (Banks, 1999) but in recent times has been relegated mostly to disciplines practiced only by individuals who have come to value inner spiritual formation.

The goal of formation is congruence between who a person is at their core and how they appear on the surface. Hyde (1980) tells a gripping story as a former communist leader of the dedication to leader formation by communists. He showed how commitment to a cause provided the fertile soil for nurturing leadership. After converting to Catholicism he processed the lessons he learned for the training of Christian leaders and stated well the importance of the integration of knowing, doing, and being:

The purpose of Christian leadership training is not just to help ambitious men to the top, or to make little men who have done leadership courses feel bigger than they really are. Still less it is to produce führers, either large or small. It has much more to do with the making of integrated people. Ones who understand what they believe, are deeply dedicated to it, and who try unceasingly to relate their beliefs to every facet of their own lives and to the society in which they live. (p. 157)

Form or appearance is defined in contrast to substance. Substance is that without which something does not exist, while form is what can be seen. Substance refers to attributes and other inner qualities. When it comes to influencing another person we can only bring resources to bear on the form. Braumann (1979) studied the biblical Greek words eidos (external form) and morphe (shape or appearance) that are often translated “form” and makes this helpful distinction: “The external appearance is undoubtedly meant not as an antithesis to the essential character, but as the expression of it” (p. 705). So, what is visible (form) should be a clear reflection of the invisible (substance).
Effective leader formation will recognize the complexity of inner transformation by seeking to bring resources to bear that influence more than the mind and then assessing whether the visible change in form is a true reflection of change in substance.

Formation, being more of an organic term (Wheatley, 1994, 1998), better implies the importance of this interconnectedness between outward appearance and inner transformation. It is a term that encompasses all aspects of life. Therefore, in this study, the phrase leader formation is preferred to leader development with the emphasis being on the holistic and organic growth that produces health. In light of this understanding of the term formation, the following terms can be more precisely understood: education is the broadest arena of learning that includes mostly knowledge and skill while training usually refers to some restricted arena of learning knowledge and skill; formation is the broad arena of internal transformation resulting from holistic growth in knowing, doing and being, while development is more restricted to some particular aspect of knowing, doing or being. I will not be addressing education and training from the formal and cognitive dimensions because the core aspects of formation do not result from teaching alone. Inner transformation must be learned through holistic growth and this comes best by informal learning.

Also, the focus of this study is more on the formation of the person (leader formation) than on how the leader functions in relationships (leadership formation). Those committed to leader formation can only help leaders become better formed so that they in turn can exercise better leadership. Bennis (2004, p. xiv) more recently concurs:

I think we in business schools, and in education in general, have sometimes played down the value basis of leadership because it has to do with faith and personal values and belief systems. That threatens us. They should be the key attributes of leadership. Yes, you have to have adaptive capacity and you must set a direction.
You must have business literacy—don’t get me wrong. You can’t lead any organization or any corporation without knowing a fair amount about corporate finance, marketing, and any number of other things that have to do with business. But those things are easy. Those things are perishable. I know that business systems will change, but character, values, and belief—those are not perishable. And it is your character, values, and belief systems that form the basis of how you lead, however aware or unaware you are.

Human Development Theory

Effective leader formation will largely depend on methodologies consistent with human development and adult learning along with fully contextualized approaches. Although most human development and adult learning theory originated in a Western context, some of it has direct significance for China. The identification of universal and culturally specific principles on how people develop and learn will help those involved in leader formation to understand which theoretical foundations are appropriate for China. Historically, human development theory has existed for over 100 years. There has emerged a general progression of reflection on intellectual development (Piaget), moral development (Kohlberg), motivational theory (Maslow) and systematizing theory (Bloom). An insightful approach to human development is taken by Archer (2000) in her study on “being human.” She states that people worldwide are quintessentially evaluative beings,

... showing how it is possible for human beings to become ‘agentially’ effective in these ways, that is in evaluating their social context, creatively envisaging alternatives, and collaborating with others to bring about its transformation. These are the personal powers necessary to giving an account of how we contribute to shaping society, and they themselves are dependent upon the realisation of universal human powers, such as self-consciousness. (p. 308)

From this high view of being human she observes, “Open out the ‘internal conversation’ and we discover not only the richest unmined research field but, more importantly, the
enchantment of every human being” (p. 319). Internal conversation is the exploration of our inner commitments and how they uniquely define personal identity. These statements parallel Maslow’s self-actualization level and for people who can function at this level there is certainly enormous potential for self-development and societal impact. Weaver (2004) reflects on Archer’s theory of agency at an international level and identifies two questions that need to be addressed from field research. Are people destined by their culture and education to be leaders and ministers, or can they escape the normative expectations of society to fulfill a greater level of influence? How do people develop agential characteristics which enable them to move beyond the boundaries set by social custom and cultural bias? These questions are relevant in that they force us to think about how culture naturally molds people and what is required for a person to break out of a normative cultural role to become an agent of change in their culture. Archer’s theory shows (as cited by Weaver, 2004, p. 228) that “culture and structure are important in how people develop as agents and actors.” Not all leaders escape the confining influence of culture and structure and simply end up being advocates of the status quo. Individuals can become actors who break out of the structured cultural norms and go on to transform their culture. Effective leader formation will enable this breaking out for the greater good of a society.

In discussing our ability to generalize about human development across polities and over time, Burns (1978) states:

We of this generation can so generalize because of the concepts and data now available from those working in the field of moral development. These scholars have concluded that all persons in all cultures are not mere internalizers of specific values and beliefs and opinions that surround them, nor are they simply passive inheritors of parental ideology or reflectors of situationist ethics. These scholars believe that they
‘have rather firmly established a culturally universal invariant sequence of stages of moral judgment.’ (p. 428)

Ma (1990), from The Chinese University in Hong Kong, would agree that classical human development theory can be seen at work in Asia. Although noting several theorists, she focuses on comparing and contrasting Chinese human development with Kohlberg and Maslow in six areas. Intelligence for Chinese Taoist falls in two areas, common and great intelligence. Great intelligence refers to intuitive senses of what is right or best without going outside of one’s self. Social judgment is that ability to make moral distinctions with unconscious emotion. Desire must be transcended, for few desires allow for greater harmony. Human relations should be simple and in small intimate groups. Personal characteristics that are valued are child-hearted, softness, and tranquility. Transcendence is the ultimate state of human development where complete freedom is realized. This ideal that Ma states appears to be fracturing with the current globalization of China and diverges from most Western thought which tends to have pragmatic and altruistic ends. Nevertheless, writing on human development is now happening in Asia to fill a void.

Human beings will develop unless something arrests that normal developmental process. People naturally grow through clearly understood stages regardless of the culture in which they live. Human development theory provides the foundation upon which leader formation must emerge. We now move on to adult learning theory, which has significance to leader formation since it speaks to how adults learn, and is especially relevant in China since there are limited arenas through which learning can take place for the Christian leader.
Adult Learning Theory

Ormrod (1999) divides all the major learning theories into three main sections: behaviorists views, cognitive views, and social learning theory. “Learning is the means through which we acquire not only skills and knowledge but values, attitudes, and emotional reactions as well” (p. 3). There are many factors that influence learning and learning influences leader formation: environmental conditions, reinforcement (either positive or negative), timing (immediacy), relevance or interest, relation to prior knowledge, modeling (credibility), capacity to understand (pace), sequence (build congruence), motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), memory capacity and skill, repetition, reflection (evaluation), and social factors. These factors appear relevant in all cultures.

One of the “grandfathers” of adult learning is Knowles (1973), famous for coining the term andragogy as the study of how adults learn. He notes that all the great leaders of ancient time invented techniques for actively engaging learners in inquiry. They perceived learning to be a process of active inquiry, not passive reception of content. Knowles (1973, pp. 57ff.) identifies six assumptions of the andragogical model: (a) The need to know; (b) The learners’ self-concept; (c) The role of the learners’ experience; (d) Readiness to learn; (e) Orientation to learning; and (f) Motivation. Pratt (1991), a keen student on China, suggests that much of andragogy is rooted in an individualistic perspective stemming from the soil of a “Jeffersonian democracy.” The self is perceived as the subject and not the object. “Thus, there may be a fundamental contradiction between a central principle of American andragogy and Chinese conceptions of self, which has important implications when considering cross-cultural exchanges” (p. 303). In time, when more research is available on Chinese andragogy, we will be better able to
evaluate universal adult learning principles. For now, cross-cultural educators of adults should use caution when making broad assumptions.

Kolb (1984) studied learning outside the traditional structures in what he called experiential learning. He drew upon the traditions of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget to develop his learning cycle of four elements: concrete experience → reflective observation → abstract conceptualization → and active experimentation. Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment, therefore he defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). McCarthy (1987), building upon the work of Piaget and Kolb, developed a model of learning styles that has had wide circulation and application. McCarthy notes that “people learn in different ways depending on who we are, where we are, how we see ourselves, and what people ask of us. There are two major differences in how we learn. The first is how we perceive; the second is how we process” (p. 3). Every person, regardless of his or her culture, learns best when certain adult learning principles are observed and when learning is applied to preferred learning styles. The social learning theory of Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Mentoring and modeling emerge as powerful experiential learning processes especially outside of formal earning settings. Of the three arenas for training, informal learning utilizes experiences in social contexts best.

Three Arenas for Training

Context and format of education have much to do with the success of training for leader formation. As Wheatley (1998) notes, “Information is nourishment.” People need
intellectual nourishment just as they need physical nourishment in order to grow healthy, and how this nourishment is presented makes a big difference in how it will be assimilated. In general there are three main arenas through which information can be presented for assimilation: formally, nonformally, and informally. Elliston (1989, p. 243) nicely outlines the three primary options for training and education (see Appendix G). Formal education refers to what is associated with schools and schooling. Nonformal education provides learning through seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. Informal education is less structured or unplanned through a variety of life settings. Formal and nonformal education addresses cognitive and skill aspects, while nonformal and informal education addresses relational, character and spiritual aspects. Whereas formal education can involve 10-20 years of a person’s life and nonformal education combined can occupy a few years, informal education is the longest ongoing form of education. Ferris (1995) expands on this model by observing that formal education is self-justifying, nonformal education is change-oriented, and informal education is spontaneous.

Eavey (1978) identifies another category of education called ‘natural’ education that has to do with how people learn on their own through life observations. This is certainly true of young children who are constantly learning without any outside direction. Smith (1998) would put this kind of learning in the ‘fun’ category. We can learn easily those things of interest, where we have confidence, or prior knowledge. We cannot easily learn that which we find boring, confusing or is associated with fear.

Much of leader formation today is heavy on extraction (removing people from their context of life) and distortion (teaching in a non-contextualized manner). A healthy integration and appreciation of formal, nonformal, and informal training is rare. The
unfortunate result can easily be leaders with degrees that are void of contextualized experience or leaders with much life experience but void of a solid theoretical basis. The sad imbalance that occurs is between what leaders know, what they can do, and who they are in their being.

Balancing Formal With Nonformal and Informal Training

Effective and holistic leadership formation requires a balance between knowing, doing and being (Banks, 1999). The absence of one limits integrative growth. In our generation an overemphasis on knowing has prevailed. “The professional school model now dominates, and this continues to ignore the being of the student, to exalt professionalism over calling and vocation, and to broaden the gap between the formally trained person and the amateur in the pew” (Banks, 1999, p. 135). Spiritual and ministerial formation is foremost a process and not just going through some program.

In other words, theological education can only enhance ministry in progress, not prepare people for ministry. Central to this is pairing more and less experienced people, whether lay or ordained, in a mentoring or apprentice-style relationship. Within this whole process, student excellence is redefined in terms of maturity, wisdom, and influence. It is congregational and denominational groups that should evaluate people's capacity for ministry, not seminaries. (Banks, 1999, p. 136)

Several other Christian writers have alerted the Christian community to the importance of an integrated approach to leader formation. Solanky (1984) speaks to the weaknesses of too much content, no clear end-product, dominance of administrative rigidity, disregard for affective domain, and competition—not cooperation as the prime motivation. “What we need is not just innovations or better methods but a radical change in our concept of education: learning as experience versus gathering content, a body of information” (p. 167). The key question Kornfield (1984) addresses is whether
seminaries are functioning effectively as adult education institutions. Building upon the theorists Knowles, Kohlberg, and Maslow, Kornfield shows that most theological education focused on the transfer of content from a teacher to a student and in so doing neglected proven andragogical principles. He evaluates four models for education (residential, extension, communal, and discipling) with a 32-item scale for efficiency and effectiveness against adult learning theory. Although acknowledging certain limitations of the tool, he still was able to adequately show that the more informal the education, the greater and most lasting were the results.

There should be very real concerns considered by those who are committed solely to a formal education process. Conger (1992, p. 39) perceptively notes that few if any leaders have achieved their positions because of formal training programs. They see themselves as having learned from the “school of hard knocks.” He is certain that this belief permeates their own thinking (and that of the general population) when it comes to leadership training. Why would an organization need to make a formal effort when leadership is learned by experience and fueled by ambitions? All these factors militate against a serious approach to leadership training. “In other words, leadership development in the ideal case should incorporate experiences in personal growth, conceptual understanding, skill building, and feedback. Instead, one approach may dominate at the cost of the others” (p. 52). The core question concerning educational context is how to build upon the strengths of formal education (which are many) while intentionally integrating nonformal and informal educational options. Ward (1972, p. 10) writes: “Something exciting happens when learners get together to put into words how new information relates to their doing an effective job.” In a culture such as China,
where formal education has been limited to few people, experiential learning through nonformal and informal means has had a significant effect on leader formation.

Leader Formation Theory

Turning from a few foundational issues relating to leader formation we now consider specific leader formation theory which includes developmental processes. In the early 1960s, a movement began in Guatemala called Theological Education by Extension (Anderson, 2000) that was based upon adult learning theory and from which a leadership emergence theory developed. This movement sought to address and meet the need for aggressive leadership development in other countries through less formal means of education. The three core essentials of this movement were: self-study materials; practical application; and regular seminars for face-to-face processing. While Winter (1969) was one of the inventors of this movement, Ward (1972) was one of the early model designers. His model of a split-rail fence had three major developmental functions: cognitive input (the upper rail)—dealing with the information being learned; field experience (the lower rail)—dealing with the application of what was being learned in one’s normal work context; and seminars (the upright posts)—dealing with the group meetings centered around dynamic interaction over the information being learned in the context of experience. More recently, Ward (1996, p. 11) summarizes the foundational issues that guided his educational philosophy as:

1. Motivation to learn comes from the inside.

2. All substantial learning comes about as the experiences of one’s past and the perceptions they have created come into interaction with new experiences in such a way as to encourage evaluation leading to the aligning or maturing of one’s understanding.
3. Teaching and learning are most effectively experienced when the two are intertwined.

4. Learning to know oneself and learning about one's learners and their social contexts are never-ending tasks for the responsible educator.

5. Intercultural work experience is a major source of deliverance from narrowness and bias in the understanding of oneself, others, and the diverse meanings of human behavior. Formation across cultures can be both stretching and enriching.

Holland (1978) modifies Ward's split-rail fence model with a train track model that identified the four major components of spiritual formation and dynamic reflection in seminars as the railroad's cross beams along with experience from in-service activity and cognitive input as the rails. His fourth dimension of spiritual formation was added to provide balanced development for the Christian leader. Spiritual formation requires continual attention for the leader to serve effectively. Development of ability to know, do and be in the context of input, reflection, experience and spiritual formation is essential for effective leader formation.

**Clinton's Leadership Emergence Theory**

Clinton (1988a, 1989) combines elements of these prior split-rail and railroad models into what he called a leadership emergence theory. The leadership emergence theory evolved from a comparative analysis of numerous Christian leaders, analysis of historical Christian characters, and studies of biblical leaders. “Technically the theory is called a grounded substantive theory subsumed under the general category of middle-range theories. That is, the theory flows directly from reflective inductive thinking generated from a comparative study of data” (1988a, p. 27). His theory was built upon
three Christian theorists who used a psychological focus in their analysis of development as well as several classical secular theorists. He notes (1988a, p. 21) that his research was not cross-cultural in nature (although 30% of those included in the research were non-Western, they had a Western mind-set) and that further research is needed to validate the theory for cross-cultural usage. I chose Clinton’s theory as the primary model for this study because it deals in the most sophisticated way with qualitative narrative studies.

Richard Clinton (1996) identifies the essence of this leadership emergence theory:

Dr Clinton’s leadership development theory revolves around the interaction of three primary variables: time analysis, processing and response. Each of these variables relate to one another and help us understand how God develops leaders. By integrating these three variables, it is possible to gain an overall grasp of the leadership development process. (p. 13)

“Leadership emergence refers to a leader’s changing capacity to influence and is measured or evaluated in a longitudinal study over time in terms of various factors” (Clinton, 1989, p. 69). The core aspect of Clinton’s theory is the concept of a time-line which identifies the developmental phases that leaders experience. See Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I. Sovereign Foundations</th>
<th>Phase II. Inner-Life Growth</th>
<th>Phase III. Ministry Maturing</th>
<th>Phase IV. Life Maturing</th>
<th>Phase V. Convergence</th>
<th>Phase VI. Afterglow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 1. Clinton’s Leadership Emergence Model.

Clinton’s emergence theory is specifically applied to the development of Christian leaders; however, the principles seem very applicable to any leader. Boyer (1999) paid
special attention in his doctoral research to the developmental stages and transitions of
leaders along with theories of the transformative process. He came to this conclusion:

There is a general paucity of research on the life development of leaders. I can find
no comprehensive schema of developmental experiences of leaders other than
Clinton's (1988) leader emergence theory, and Clinton’s research focuses exclusively
on Christian leaders. (p. 8)

From my review of literature in this field I concur with Boyer that serious reflection on
the developmental processes critical to the formation of leaders is lacking. No
documented studies were found to test his theory outside of the Christian context.

Phase I looks for patterns from family and contextual backgrounds along with
historical events. One reflects on his personality development and in general looks for
root passions and preferences that become more prominent later in life. Phase II focuses
on how the Christian nurtures the spiritual life and begins to develop Christ-like
character. Although often taking place in the context of ministry, the emphasis is more
on internal transformation than on external results. Phase III is the transition to serving
others more than being served. The individual begins to lead and in the context of
ministry discerns God-given talents and spiritual gifts. Certain natural preferences
emerge that give one a sense of satisfaction. In general, the first three phases identify
more of what is happening within the emerging leader rather than what he or she is
accomplishing. The last three phases identify how the leader is formed in the context of
ministry through processes that continually increase one's capacity to be in order to do.

Phase IV is when the leader recognizes certain capacities that allow him or her to
make a meaningful contribution. Fruitfulness is experienced in ministry, and clarity
begins to come into focus as to where the person is uniquely able to lead. Often in this
phase there are major challenges and setbacks that test the leader. Unless the person is
able to wait on God and respond in godly ways, he or she might “plateau” and never pass on to the next phase. Phase V is the wonderful place of convergence. Here the leader has a very good sense of his or her gifts and passions coupled with sufficient experience and affirmation from others to discern a unique role to play. Life is not necessarily easy here but it is where major contributions are made. Phase VI is called “Afterglow” where a person should experience the celebration of having followed their design and see a significant legacy behind them. In this phase the leader has earned the high credibility to be a wise mentor to others on their journey.

Walling (1998) applies Clinton’s theory in a very practical way for people to reflect upon and articulate one’s life in a timeline comprised of significant events, relationships and circumstances. Leadership formation is a life-long process with clearly identifiable process markers along the way such as “providential events, people, circumstances, special interventions, and inner-life lessons that . . . develop potential, confirm the leadership role, and move the emerging leader along to God’s appointed ministry level” (Clinton, 1988b, p. 42). Walling (1998, p. 22) broke Clinton’s core process items into two categories, those that are ongoing in a person’s life and those that deal with conflict or negative processing (see Table 2) which are used as the framework for the research in this study:
Table 2

Walling’s Leadership Emergence Process Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing Process Items</th>
<th>Negative Process Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrity Checks:</strong> a test God uses to evaluate the heart and consistency of inner convictions with outward actions.</td>
<td><strong>Negative Preparation:</strong> special experiences or conflicts that focus and free individuals for the next stage of development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Checks:</strong> tests the capacity to hear from God through his word and apply insights to life situations.</td>
<td><strong>Life Crisis:</strong> special intense situations of pressure in human experiences that test and teach dependence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divine Contact:</strong> presence of a key person at the crucial moment to help ensure ongoing growth and development.</td>
<td><strong>Ministry Conflict:</strong> that which occurs as a believer serves. Used by God to shape values and core convictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faith Challenge:</strong> tests the willingness to take steps of faith and grow in his or her capacity to trust God.</td>
<td><strong>Obedience Checks:</strong> circumstances where God calls for obedience, even in confusion and apparent contradiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destiny Revelation:</strong> tests the capacity to hear from God concerning future direction and willingness to realign life.</td>
<td><strong>Isolation:</strong> the setting aside of an individual from normal involvements to hear from God in a deeper way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Summarized from Walling, 1998.

Clinton defines a leader in the biblical context as “a person with God-given capacity and with God-given responsibility who is influencing a specific group of God’s people toward God’s purposes for the group” (1988b, p. 245). Noting that the development of a leader is complex, Clinton still holds that development can be explained in terms of the timing of significant processes along with the leader’s response. Patterns, processes, and principles are concepts used to analyze life and leadership development. Patterns deal with the overall framework, or the big picture, of a life. Processes deal with the ways and means used by God to move a leader along in the overall pattern. Principles deal with the identification of foundational truths. Leadership
specialists McCauley, Moxley and Van Velsor (1998, p. 21) conclude that “if leaders do learn, grow, and change over time, and if we understand the factors that contribute to that growth process, then development can be enhanced by influencing these factors.”

Several doctoral dissertations have applied Clinton’s leadership emergence theory in different contexts. Bloomer’s (1999) research on leaders within a Christian mission organization concludes that the two most significant process items for the leaders he studied were being placed in a challenging leadership role and the role of suffering or dealing with a crisis. Reese’s (2003) evaluation of leadership emergence in a Christian denomination finds much of the theory, phases, and process items as useful in his application. Shin (2000) evaluates the leadership emergence theory in the Korean context, while Weaver (2004) does so in the Hungarian context. Of particular interest in this cross-cultural study is Weaver’s comment that “much of Clinton’s theory resonates with the findings of this study. People do grow in a variety of developmental areas” (p. 218). However, two differences were identified: Spiritual gift discernment was not an important factor in Hungary, and since Hungary is more of a collectivism culture, the role of the group experience was more important than individual processing. Weaver (2004) concludes that leadership emergence is the result of processes within the individual that prepared and pushed him or her toward leadership, that leadership emergence processes are largely affected but not determined by the culture in which the leader is immersed, and that both the leadership formation processes and the cultural environment are greatly affected by the actions of key agents surrounding the emerging leader. I suspect that some aspects of Clinton’s theory will be affirmed by studying Chinese leaders, while other aspects may not fit the culture of China.
The Role of Experience and Mentoring in Formation

We learn from adult learning theory and from reflection on balance between training arenas that experience is essential to leader formation. In Bloomer’s research (1999) of formative educational experiences in leaders, the findings of the inquiry confirm a central tenet of leadership theory that leaders are formed in situations that demand leadership. Formal education played a minor part in the development of these leaders, with the principal factors cited in their emergence as being placed into leadership, modeling of leadership by senior personnel, encouragement and trust, relationships and peer support, as well as and to a lesser extent, crisis and suffering experiences along with family background. Mentoring also played a vital role in the formation of the Chinese Christian leaders reviewed biographically.

Hiemstra and Sisco (1990), who provide an exhaustive review of material pertaining to leader formation and one of the most comprehensive bibliographies on adult learning, observe that the traditional role of instructors was to impart knowledge to receptive learners. The instructional process they advocate requires the instructor to facilitate or manage the learning process. The learning process is far more important than the content of the course or the body of knowledge being covered. The critical place of experience in leader formation must not be relegated to second place behind content; both are equally essential. Boyett and Boyett (2000, p. 86) studied some outstanding managers and conclude that the best learning occurs on the job (not classroom), is social and active (not individual or passive), and is the rich, nourishing soup of intuition, judgment, expertise, and common sense imbedded in day-to-day activities (not rules and procedures). The cycle of learning works like this: We have experiences in the workplace; we reflect on the experiences, understanding what happened and why; we
form concepts based on those experiences; we test those concepts through new experiences; we repeat the cycle. Mentors are required to assist leaders in maximizing their learning experiences.

**The Role of Character Development in Formation**

Perhaps the definitive element in effective leader formation is the issue of character (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Clinton (1988b, p. 57) also identifies the centrality of character, "Our greatest challenge as leaders is to develop a godly character." If this is true, it is worth reviewing the literature associated with this issue in some depth. Clark (2003, pp. 19–20) reports that the first recorded use of the word *character* in literature was attributed to an Egyptian sage of the 27th century B.C., Ptah-hotep, who wrote, "Precious to a man is the virtue of his son, and good character is a thing remembered.”

The relationship between character and leadership has been recognized from at least the time of the ancient Greeks when Plato wrote in the *Republic* that character is the defining qualification of the ruling class. Clark notes that in the late 1980s and early 1990s a character education movement began to gain momentum so that today there are departments at universities and centers for character education.

The word character carries with it the idea of an engraving that permanently marks something or someone. Training for knowledge and skill is easy compared to character development which must deeply mark and change an individual. Chemers (1995, p. 97) states that "a major gap in most current leadership theories is the lack of attention to the leaders and followers as people." Thrall, McNicol, and McElrath (1999, pp. 1–2) specialize in character development and put it this way:
Character—the inner world of motives and values that shapes our actions—is the ultimate determiner of the nature of our leadership. It empowers our capacities while keeping them in check. It distinguishes those who steward power well from those who abuse power. Character weaves such values as integrity, honesty, and selfless service into the fabric of our lives, organizations, and cultures.

They went on to say that character development results when we obey what we know to be true about ourselves within our environment—this is congruence. In order to become aware of how we need to grow in our character, we need to cultivate relationships where we can be vulnerable and submissive to the insights of others, otherwise leaders will never reach their full potential. Any effective strategy for life-long learning and finishing well must include a major component of character development within a safe community.

When asking people what they admired in a leader, Kouzes and Posner (1993) heard the single concept of credibility identified in many different ways. The three key characteristics were honesty, competence, and ability to inspire. “Credibility is mostly about consistence between words and deeds. People listen to the words and look at the deeds. Then they measure the congruence. A judgment of ‘credible’ is handed down when the two are consonant” (p. 47). More recently Kouzes and Posner (2004b) affirm that the most important personal quality people look for and admire in a leader is personal credibility. “This finding has been so consistent for over twenty years that we’ve come to call it ‘The First Law of Leadership’” (p. 120).

There is much literature that addresses the vital place of character in the formation of a leader. Badaracco (1998), Blackaby (2001), Ciulla (2004), Fairholm (1997, 1998, 2001, 2003), Hunter (2000), Judge (1999), Kellerman (2004), Lucas (1999), Sample (2002), and others have studied character development and show its vital role in leader formation. However, in the West there seems to be a much greater concern about ends
than means. Good leaders have that special blend of competence and character, which in turn produces credibility. Character formation must be intrinsically motivated more than extrinsically imposed. Moreover, internal aspects such as development of conscience in ethical and moral ways happen best when society reinforces character development. Such change requires a long-term learning posture. People must want to grow in character in order to overcome the inertia of human nature and the world in which we live. Since character is identified as such an essential component of leadership by so many people, we would expect by now to see every leadership training program giving significant weight to it. Because of the internal nature of character, because our legal system protects private deviant behavior, and because human nature avoids unpleasant circumstances, character is mostly discussed but not formed. This seems true for both secular and Christian leadership training programs (Tenelshof, 1999).

**Summary of Leader Formation**

Leader formation theory, like human development theory, can be best seen in a series of stages or phases (Clinton, 1989). Powerful positive and negative process items shape leaders through challenging life experiences coupled with reflection and the wise guidance of mentors. Theory and practices of leader formation are most beneficial when there is an integration of formal, nonformal and informal learning in keeping with proven adult learning theory. The term *formation* is preferred to *development* due to its more organic and holistic connotation. Learning through life experience and growth in character are two key formative components. Formation of character is more difficult to help form than enhancing one’s knowledge or skill base but is often the decisive component of effective leadership.
The best metaphor I can relate to leader formation is that of a garden. Three forces are at work in a garden. Seeds are planted in a garden and grow according to their DNA. Plants like people can only reproduce after their own kind. They cannot become something that is beyond their genetic makeup. If the conditions are good, the plant will develop to its full potential. In leader formation this can be likened to the competence and character of a leader. Each person has innate potential and dispositions that can be nurtured (or stifled) into something beautiful. The environment is a second significant force that influences the development of a plant. Resources of water, sun and fertilizer allow for healthy growth. Weeds are normally removed so the maximum amount of the resources is available to the plant. The environment of leadership is relationships since all of life is vitally interconnected. Leaders can grow and serve best when they are surrounded by others with like values and passions to foster a developmental culture.

The third force at work in a garden is the gardener. He or she is the intentional force in overseeing the formation of the plant. In leadership the primary external forces are the leader himself, the followers and the task. The leader is responsible mostly for deciding what influences to be exposed to, whereas one’s relationship to followers and the task is also a powerful forming influence.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

This study is about the developmental processes critical to the formation of servant leaders in China. Although there is a growing base of research on Chinese leadership there are still no apparent studies addressing how Chinese leaders are formed. The best places to identify formative processes are through biographical studies. Such studies of Christian leaders reveal certain process items that may be crucial to formation;
however, there are not yet enough data to draw valid conclusions. Therefore, insights into leader formation must be drawn from theory and practices elsewhere to see if applications are appropriate in China.

It is customary in the West to discuss servant leadership as a model that enables and empowers followers. The modern designer, Robert Greenleaf, and those who followed him have caught the attention of several theoreticians (Bennis, 2004; Spears, 2004; Wheatley, 2004) who recognize servant leadership as an outstanding framework for understanding effective leadership. Transformational leadership theory, which has undergone significant international validation and acceptance (Bass, 1997), stresses similar qualities of servant leadership. Since the dominant leadership posture of Jesus, who has been recognized as an exemplary model in most cultures, is that of a servant leader, servant leadership may best approach universality among leadership theory. It certainly emerged as the preferred posture of the leaders studied in this research.

Leader formation was the heart of the review. Recognized experts on leadership development, Conger and Benjamin (1999), observe that the results from the significant amount of resources directed at leader formation are not promising.

Many organizations know they do not have the depth of leadership talent needed to excel in an increasingly competitive and global economy. This has spurred them into action—so much so that the leadership development field today is a billion-dollar business. But are they taking the right action? . . . Do they produce more and better leaders? Despite the attention and money spent, surprisingly few attempts have been made to answer these important questions. It appears that most companies simply assume that such investments produce results. (p. xi)

They go on to report that a decade ago leadership education consisted of a 1 to 4 week program at a university or training organization. Participants from a number of organizations would receive lectures on decision-making, participation, setting goals, and
so forth. There would be general case studies and simple experiential exercises to ground course concepts and theories. Today, programs are far more customized to an organization’s immediate needs and the issues it faces. Education is no longer focused only on the individual learner, but increasingly on shaping the worldviews and behaviors of cohorts of managers, and in the process, transforming entire organizations (Senge, 1990). In other words, leader formation is being better applied to sound adult learning principles that include significant weight placed upon experiential learning with the help of mentors to guide leaders. Especially true in the faith realm, but increasingly so in the secular realm, is the realization that spiritual and character development are vital to holistic leader formation (Banks & Ledbetter, 2004; Fry, 2003).

The literature review reveals that certain processes are critical in leader formation, but as to which ones are most prominent in China we must turn to the research. Clinton (1989, p. 78), the major theorist utilized for leader formation, believes that “the unique development of a given leader can be expressed in terms of various significant processes experienced and responded to over his or her lifetime.” Everyone is on a journey. This concept of reflection upon one’s journey is the rationale for interviewing exemplary leaders in China in order to discern the critical formative experiences that molded them into the leaders they have become.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods and procedures used to explore the developmental processes critical to the formation of servant leaders in China. This chapter discusses the research design, the research question, the context and participants, data collection and analysis processes, and the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study.

Research Design

The method used in any study is necessarily dependent on the purpose of the study. Patton (1990) emphasizes that “purpose is the controlling force in research. Decisions about design, measurement, analysis, and reporting, all flow from purpose” (p. 150). This study uses a qualitative methods research design. It is exploratory in order to provide a better understanding of the research problem, and illuminative to expose formative processes. Qualitative research was chosen instead of quantitative research for several reasons. First, to address the problem of how exemplary leaders are formed in China one must research the processes that individuals undergo to become a servant leader. Although there are similar processes that most exemplary leaders seem to experience (Clinton, 1989), each person has a unique story of how they became the person they are now. Understanding the components of life stories is more appropriate to
qualitative research. Second, when researching people in China one encounters certain
difficulties because of the political and religious stance of the country. Christians are
closely watched in China today, especially those of higher prominence. The circulation
of surveys would be problematic since, if found by authorities, the individuals involved
could suffer certain harm. Third, I have personal background and experience as a cross-
cultural missionary. I have studied and practiced anthropology, writing my findings in
understanding people and phenomenon through intense and interactive dialogue.
Qualitative research seemed much more appropriate for these reasons.

Speaking to the issue of choosing either a quantitative or qualitative research
method, Yukl (1998, p. 505) states: “It is important to select methods that are appropriate
for the type of knowledge sought rather than merely using whatever methods seem most
convenient. The purpose of the research should dictate the methodology and choice of
samples, not the other way around.” This was done in selecting the qualitative method
for this research.

There are those people who consider qualitative research inferior to quantitative
research. Freebody (2003) concisely addresses this concern when it comes to research
across culture and substantially validates the qualitative process.

Indeed, because of the diversity and fluidity of cultural practice, the onus on the
qualitative educational researcher is to be, compared with other kinds of researchers:

- more objective, in the sense of understanding what constitutes a cultural ‘object’,
  what is phenomenon of interest, in and as a part of the context it inhabits and helps to
  construct;
- more empirical, in the sense of attending meticulously to the anomalies and
  contradictions evident in the findings, as well as to the foreseen and unforeseen
  consistencies, rather than relegating some observed variations to the ‘unexplained
  variance’ or the ‘error’ bin; and
through the use of transparent and consistently-applied techniques for analysis and interpretation, more rigorous, in the sense of resisting the ‘escape of the phenomenon’ into pre-emptive explanatory formulas, into the a priori commitments of the researchers or the participants, or into the themes extracted from other studies or other sites in the study at hand. (p. 43)

Conger (1998) concurs:

As a research tool, qualitative methods have been greatly underutilized in the field of leadership. Instead, quantitative-based surveys have been the method of choice. As I hope I have shown, this latter methodology fails to capture the great richness of leadership phenomena and instead leaves us with only sets of highly abstracted and generalized descriptors. On the other hand, qualitative methods are ideally suited to uncovering leadership’s many dimensions. (pp. 118–119)

Wright (2004) concludes that in light of the lack of clear theoretical understanding in the field of international research, “qualitative research is the most robust way of generating theory” (p. 52).

**Narrative Inquiry**

Qualitative research has certainly gained credibility in recent years (Creswell, 2003). In light of this existing credibility, I chose to explore the phenomena of leader formation through life experience rather than comparative analysis of theoretical frames. Of the major traditions in qualitative research, the narrative design was chosen in order to focus deeply on the lives of a few individuals. The phenomenological tradition involves interviews but focuses more on the essence of an experience. The grounded theory tradition also includes extensive interviews but with the focus on developing a model. The ethnographic tradition deals more with a culture or group than with the life of an individual. And the case study tradition is in-depth but relies on multiple sources of data. The narrative tradition was chosen because it seemed to best facilitate in-depth research with a few individuals (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 73) where no extensive resources other
than the individual are available. Creswell (2003, p. 15) notes that narrative research is a form of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. Through learning the narratives of selected leaders, insights emerged into how these people were formed.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) show how the theoretical frame for narrative inquiry flows from Dewey’s two criteria of experience, continuity and interaction, and builds upon Bloom’s taxonomy composed of six levels of cognitive behavior: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Clandinin reinforced, in her seminar at the 2004 Roundtable for Andrews University’s Leadership participants, that there are three dimensions when listening to narratives: the inward-outward or personal-social dimension where insights emerge from understanding the outward forces and how the person internalizes these experiences; temporal dimension where insights relate to the past, present and future; and a place dimension involving the location and surrounding of the experience.

Through each of the interviews, these criteria and dimensions were observed as leaders told their life stories. For instance, two of the men studied experienced considerable external persecution, and this suffering over time produced significant internal depth in their character and perspective on life. The temporal dimension was seen in all the life stories by how their formation was refined over time. Location played an important part as well, as each man lived and ministered in several places that allowed for a variety of life-shaping experiences. This narrative study permitted the three men to weave their most formative experiences over time and through a variety of places.
Eisner (1991) identifies six features of qualitative study: (a) A field focus where one observes, interviews, records, describes, and interprets; (b) The self as an instrument which requires the researcher to differentiate what is important; (c) Interpretive nature which allows for insight into why things happen and what forces seem to be at work; (d) Use of expressive language to accurately describe the experiences of others; (e) Attention to particulars such as aesthetic features and distinctive characteristics; and (f) Coherence, insight and utility where the facts must be seen in relation to the overall narrative and written in persuasive terms. Eisner went on to note that subjectivity is essential to learning by providing different perspectives, and that there is clear value in one’s personal insights.

In this study direct field observation was not possible due to political security matters. However, while listening to the men tell their stories, I was able to envision the scenes they were reliving and even witnessed the emotion that was stirred within them at times when they recounted sensitive experiences. Such insights are possible only with qualitative research.

Eisner and Peshkin (1990) observe that qualitative inquiries pervade human life and that qualitative thought is a requirement for maintaining one’s humanity (p. 367). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that narrative inquiries are always strongly autobiographical (p. 121). Hatch (2002) believes that narrative inquiries are all based on the notion that humans make sense of their lives through story (p. 28). Freebody (2003) says that in narrative inquiry, people are looked at as embodiments of lived stories (p. 43). These realities were observed and affirmed in this study.
Research Question

The central research question for this study was: What events, experiences, people and other formative processes contributed to the formation of exemplary Christian leaders in China? In order to discover timeless processes and principles, this was a descriptive study from the perspectives of a senior Christian statesman now in his 70s, an influential Christian leader in his 60s, and an emerging Christian leader in his 30s. Similarities and distinctions between generations were discerned. Scandura and Dorfman (2004) note, "The key to conducting cross-cultural research is to select a research question about which you care passionately, but maintain a healthy sense of humor during the project. Both the rewards and frustrations of cross-cultural research are great" (p. 291). I was passionate about my research question.

Context and Participants

The context for this study was China. In light of past and present political realities, it was considered acceptable for a person born and having lived for some considerable time in China to now reside elsewhere. When we consider China, however, we must realize that there is significant diversity within this political nation. There are hundreds of distinct ethnic groups scattered throughout China's territory. Linguistically alone their languages are as diverse as Persian, Turkish, Malayo-Polynesian, Burmese, and Siberian (Hattaway, 2000). It is hard to speak in a way that is true for all the peoples of China.

The participants for the study were drawn from the largest ethnic group, the Han Chinese, which makes up approximately 91% of the population (Johnstone & Mandryk, 2001). From within this group, men from three generations were studied in order to
better understand leader formation over an extended period of time. A significant factor in human development relates to the context in which one lives (Piaget, Erikson, etc.). Life in China has undergone great political and social changes over the last 80 years and it is likely that developmental forces may have undergone changes as well. By studying leaders representing three generations it was hoped that insights would be gained concerning both similarities and differences in developmental processes.

The participants were chosen purposefully or purposively. A “purposive sample is one in which a researcher has a special interest because its members have characteristics that make them an especially rich source of information” (Pyrczak, 1999, p. 56). This type of sampling requires the researcher to purposively select those who will give us the best information (Patten, 2000, p. 45).

The method I used for the selection of the participants consisted of using the following types of “expert” Christian leaders who were accessible to me and who know the Christian leaders of China well.

1. American missionaries who have and/or still live in China and whose ministry is of such a breadth that they are aware of who is widely regarded by Chinese Christians as an exemplary leader.

2. American pastors and church leaders who travel to China with some regularity for ministry among Chinese church networks and interface with the senior leaders of these networks to such an extent that they are considered trusted partners in ministry and worthy of unbiased recommendations.
3. Asian Chinese leaders who travel into China for ministry and have a sense for who those senior Christian statesmen are as indicated by the Chinese Christians they serve.

4. Chinese leaders who have immigrated to North America and still have significant international influence in China to recognize those individuals who can be considered exemplary leaders.

In order to determine which exemplary Chinese leaders to interview, I asked several experts I had visited with during 2004 to identify whom they would recommend in the categories for research. I made note of names offered, and when those identified earlier were mentioned again I made a special note. I would ask the experts what they thought of those recommended by another source to get their opinion. Through this process a few men were mentioned with such regularity that there seemed to be sufficient consensus that they would be worthy subjects for this study. It should be noted that people know of leaders from differing contexts and perspectives and at times total agreement on the worthiness of a participant was not possible.

The logistics of contacting these people, communicating the intent of the research and arranging a time and place for the interview were challenging. Finding a time when these busy leaders were available for an interview that would also fit within my schedule took several tries. Since I did not personally know either of the exemplary Chinese leaders who resided in China, I had to approach them through an intermediary. I needed to have my research abstract concise and my request for the interview well stated so it could be communicated by a third party. The trip to China lasted 9 days so to accommodate the schedules of both participants. The third participant I knew many years
ago who had since moved to Canada so I was able to obtain his contact information and approach him directly.

**Data Collection**

A legitimate question could be raised as to why I, as an American, should expect to gather accurate data in another culture and through means of a translator. Two factors provided the confidence that this approach was in fact valid.

**The Researcher as the Research Instrument**

For this qualitative research, I, as the researcher, brought certain views to the study. These views, for which I am passionate, influenced the design of the research and the approach of the study. The worldview I hold is that of a Christian where my faith is integrated throughout my entire life. I believe that the Bible is a credible and authoritative source on the matters to which it speaks. Human development and leader formation are topics to which the Bible speaks extensively. Jesus Christ came to earth, in part, to exemplify the potential of men and women to live in such a way that we experience the greatest joy while also bringing maximum glory to God. His leadership model is as international as the missional message he brought. Every culture can look at Jesus and find in him a life that is worthy of replication. Core to his message is the reality that life emerges from death and that suffering is the necessary means to certain transformative ends. I acknowledge that throughout this study I was consciously and certainly unconsciously influenced by my Christian convictions.

First, having lived in Asia for 7 years and having traveled back to Asia every year since residing there built into me a certain awareness of Asian culture. When I resided in
Asia it was in a primarily Chinese context so I acculturated to a certain degree. Shenkar (2004, p. 178) states, “Literature acknowledges the importance of foreign experience as a CD-closing mechanism,” where CD refers to cultural distance. Along with small cultural distance, Hiebert (1994, p. 145) believes that to build credibility within other cultures one must first learn to look below the surface-level cultural differences to the deep worldview assumptions that people hold. My cultural distance and knowledge of worldview were sufficiently positive to provide validity. Second, we must learn to see as they see even if it is chaotic according to our perspective. What appears chaotic at first to an outsider can be seen as making sense after learning to interpret matters contextually as I have learned. Third, a focus on building people rather than programs is needed. Good intercultural communication skills significantly enhance credibility. And finally, those in the West need to critique their own worldviews and learn from others. This has been a matter of serious reflection for me over many years. Developing such credibility requires considerable effort and has been a lengthy pursuit of mine.

Few men have more seriously studied and better understood and assimilated into Chinese culture than Catholic and Protestant missionaries, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Hudson Taylor (1832-1905). These men are models I have sought to emulate. Covell (1986) calls Ricci a master at contextualization. Li Zhouwu, a well-known Chinese scholar, substantiates Covell’s claim about Ricci:

He is an extraordinarily impressive person. His mind is lucid and his appearance is simple. When a company of ten or a dozen people are involved in an argument, and each is defending his own view against the other, he stands at one side and does not allow himself to be provoked into intervening, and to become confused. Amongst all the men I have seen, none can compare to him. All who are either too arrogant or too anxious to please, who either display their own cleverness or are too ignorant and dull, are inferior to him. (quoted in Covell, 1986, p. 42)
This is how Ricci presented himself using his Chinese name Li Ma-tou:

Li Ma-tou, your master’s servant, comes from the far west, addresses himself to your Majesty with respect, in order to offer gifts from his country. Your Majesty’s servant comes from a far distant land which has never exchanged presents with the middle kingdom. Despite the distance, fame told me of the remarkable teaching and fine institutions with which the imperial court has endowed all its people. I desire to share these advantages and live out my life as one of your Majesty’s subjects, hoping in return to be of some small use. (p. 44)

It is interesting, as Covell (1986) noted, that the Jesuits chose to identify with the Confucian scholars rather than the Buddhist monks (as did the Nestorians years before) in order to acculturate in such a way that would enable greater access to Chinese society.

Ricci was sought after by the Chinese because of his scholarly competence and his godly character. The Jesuits were criticized for over-accommodating to the Chinese, yet Ricci saw that before he could expect the Chinese to be changed, he had to make his approach and methods attractive. Patience and perseverance were more important than compulsive urgency. He learned that the Orient would not be hurried.

Hudson Taylor made a critical decision in August 1855 to identify as fully with the Chinese people as possible. He could do nothing about the size of his nose or the color of his skin, but he could dress like the Chinese and seek to live like them. This decision was in violation of an existing treaty and not popular among other expatriates (Broomhall, 1982). At a time when Western people living in China considered themselves far above the Chinese in status, Taylor took a thoroughly biblical and what proved to be a very effective contextualized approach.

Hudson Taylor saw the missionary primarily as a servant. It seemed ludicrous to Taylor to suggest that it was beneath the dignity of a Christian missionary to identify with the people in outward appearance if that was truly a barrier to communication. The aim of communication, as he saw it, was to build rapport and respect which can only be accomplished through the crucifixion of one’s own national pride and the taking on of a servant spirit. (Bacon, 1983, p. 43)
Taylor’s identification with the Chinese and the deep love many had for him is seen in this statement by a young Chinese evangelist and his wife who came to see Taylor hours after he died at age 72. Standing by the bedside, the evangelist said:

Dear and venerable pastor. We truly love you. We have come today to see you. We longed to look into your face. We too are your little children. You opened for us the road to heaven. You loved and prayed for us long years. We came today to look upon your face. You look so happy, so peaceful! You are smiling. Your face is quiet and pleased. You cannot speak to us tonight. We do not want to bring you back; but we will follow you. We shall come to you. You will welcome us by and by. (Steer, 1993, p. 366)

Very few people will ever attain the level of cross-cultural effectiveness as that of Ricci and Taylor. Yet because of my experience of living in Asia along with my continuing interest in Chinese studies I have acculturated to a degree that allows me this level of reflection. Several authors have spoken to the important issue of acculturation which is important for accurate data collection.

Kohls and Brussow (1995) provide a very helpful discussion for intercultural learning. They see three key concepts as essential for healthy adjustment across a culture (pp. 25–26):

1. Ethnocentrism (belief that one’s own culture is better than others) is both a negative and positive force and although it makes cross-cultural adjustment difficult, it serves to preserve culture and provides identity.

2. Biculturalism (one who can function well in one of two cultures when appropriate) can be produced through training.

3. Cultural logic (how specific aspects of culture interrelate to the whole) is complex but can be fascinating to discover.
Hannigan (1990) in his review of cross-cultural literature concludes that aspects helpful for cross-cultural effectiveness include the ability to communicate, ability to establish and maintain relationships, interaction management, orientation to knowledge, worldview, cultural apathy, linguistic ability, flexibility, a realistic view of the target culture, and organizational skills. Factors that have a negative effect are dependent anxiety, task-related behavior, authoritarianism, perfectionism, rigidity, ethnocentrism, narrow-mindedness, and self-centered behavior. I have sought to embody most of these principles of cross-cultural effectiveness.

Chin, Gu, and Tubbs (2001) present a very helpful model for understanding and developing cross-cultural competence. They used a triangle-shaped illustration where the base is labeled “global leadership deficiencies” and the apex is “global leadership competencies” (see Figure 2).

In the lower third of the triangle, the cognitive level, movement is made upwards from (a) ignorance or unconscious incompetence where one does not know what is unknown, to (b) awareness or recognition that cultural differences abound, to (c) understanding that results when one recognizes why people do what they do. In the middle third of the triangle, the attitudinal and values level, movement proceeds from (d) appreciation which goes beyond putting up with irritations, to seeing real value, to (e) acceptance and internalization, which is the departure from ethnocentrism. The top third of the triangle, the behavioral level, is labeled transformation, which occurs only when behavior becomes almost effortless. This is the level where one has truly acculturated. In some Chinese contexts, I have obtained this level of effortlessness.
Lui (1999) analyzes the potential a person has for acculturating using the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI), which was designed by Kelly and Meyers in 1993 to measure four dimensions: emotional resilience; flexibility/openness; personal autonomy; and perceptual acuity. The impact of such personal characteristics as general abilities, personality traits, temperament types, and self-appraised problem-solving...
capabilities were evaluated against these four dimensions. This inventory, and other assessments, would be worth administering to any person who intends to study another culture in order to identify natural abilities that could enhance acculturation. As important as personal assessment and awareness of cross-cultural effectiveness qualities are, however, the real test of acculturation potential comes after one enters another culture. A person’s posture and commitment toward learning is vital. Finding a competent guide within the culture can be critical (Hoppe, 1998). Understanding the specific ways in which relationships are structured and behaviors are interpreted will be strongly affected by cultural variation (Triandis, 1993). Therefore the cultural learner must be guided into culturally appropriate approaches. These various principles of acculturation have been a focus of my learning for many years and were applied specifically to this study.

Along with my experience of having lived in a Chinese community to the point of becoming comfortable and effective in society, a second reason why I as an American am able to conduct valid research in China came when discussing my research with an expert who was born in China and is considered fully bi-cultural. He said that I, as a Westerner, would probably obtain better results from an interview than a Chinese person, because I would not come with certain cultural prejudices or security concerns. Therefore, it seemed reasonable that validity could be obtained by the data collection methods chosen because of my cultural awareness and non-threatening presence. When sharing the results from my interviews with two experts (one person who is Chinese and living in Hong Kong and the other a Caucasian American very well connected with China), both of them indicated that my findings seemed consistent with their understanding.
Interview Protocols

Two of the interviews were conducted in China. From previous trips to China, I had learned that as a foreigner I would probably be watched and in order not to jeopardize the participants, I needed to meet these men at their choice of location and time. Neither of these men spoke English, so the use of a fluent and non-biased translator was needed. The translator was a woman in her late 20s, a Bible College graduate with a working knowledge of theological terminology, and who was very fluent in both English and Chinese. She had not met either participant previously and seemed to have an unbiased view of the ministry for which they were leaders. Although it is possible that the translator may have missed some of the nuances of the narratives being told, validity was sought subsequently through triangulation with written biographies and confirmation of data by people with expert knowledge.

In order to establish a rapport with the participant, initial discussion was to take place around a meal. This happened in one case but not the other, at the request of the participant, for security reasons. Because of the nature of the research and the potential harm that could result if recorded documentation was discovered by authorities, tape recording of the interview was initially questionable. It turned out that both participants granted permission when asked if they were comfortable with recording the interview. The participants were told that if at any time they felt that their comments should not be recorded, the machine would be turned off. Also, at the end of the interview, if any participant felt that something should be erased, they were given the opportunity to so notify me. Notes were taken during the interviews as a backup should the recording be lost or confiscated. The notes provided content for reflection between the initial and follow-up interview.
Each participant was told in advance about the nature of the interview, the data collection procedure, and the time it would require. They were informed about my motives and intentions for conducting interviews, the anticipated findings including benefits, the fact that the interview will be held confidential, and that their name would be coded. They were asked to sign an “Informed Consent Form” (see Appendix A) to document that they provided their narrative voluntarily and that no compensation was provided. They were given the contact information for Andrews University should they have any reason to contact the school after the interview. These procedures complied with the human subject approval and ethical requirements of Andrews University.

The interviews were conducted in two parts, with the first set of interviews lasting 3 hours, 2 hours and 20 minutes, and 1 hour and 10 minutes respectively. The interview with the senior statesman did not require translation, consequently it was shorter. The interview began with clarification of the purpose, and then the opening question was simply restated from what they had already been told (see Appendix B), “Please share with me your life story as it pertains to the formative experiences you remember that have shaped you into the person you are today. Please do so as much as is possible in a chronological fashion.” The participants then began to tell their narrative. At times the translator needed to ask for clarification if too much was shared before allowing for the translation, and a couple of times I asked for clarification when something did not come across sufficiently clear through translation. But for the most part each participant was permitted to share his narrative without interruption. Deep respect was communicated non-verbally by the attentiveness expressed by myself as the researcher and the translator.
After completing the first part of the interview, from 1 to 2 hours elapsed during which I read and reflected upon the interview as to what was either unclear or perhaps missing. Follow-up questions were drafted. The follow-up questions for the interviews in China that required translation lasted 90 minutes, while the follow-up questions for the interview conducted in English were asked at the end of the interview since the life narrative seemed sufficiently complete as it was given. This process of allowing for follow-up questions both provided time for the participant and the translator to have a rest and for me, the researcher, to reflect. Such immediate follow-up was desired since a return trip to China from the United States for follow-up was not feasible.

During the actual interview, my research skills of listening and observing were important in obtaining a true life story. Writers on qualitative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2003; Eisner & Peshkin, 1990; Merriam, 1998) identify the researcher's tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, and ability to build relevant questions during the interview as important. The researcher is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data (Merriam, 1998, p. 20). Through the use of a simple open-ended question I allowed the participant to share his life journey according to his perspective without bringing external questioning that could confuse the story-telling process. Key words and experiences were noted with extra value normally placed on opening and closing remarks (Merriam, 1998). The notes taken during the interview complemented the data obtained from transcription.

To assist with note taking, several observational protocol forms were developed to quickly mark what was being heard. These forms included potential experiences, historical timeline markers, significant influences, and core qualities that might emerge
from the interview. However, prior to the interview I decided to only review these notes and not use them as a checklist. This allowed for greater focus during the interview on what was being said. After the follow-up interview these protocol forms were reviewed again and appropriate notations were made.

Holloway and Jefferson (1997, p. 60) comment on the way German sociologists used a similar method successfully:

In practice, for the German biographers, this entailed a single, open, initial question that was also an invitation: “Please, tell me your life story” (Rosenthal, 1990). Beyond that, it involves attentive listening and some note taking during the initial narration to be able to follow up on themes in their narrated order, using the respondent’s own words and phrases, eliciting further narration through open questioning. The art and the skill of the exercise is to assist narrators to say more about their lives (to assist the emergence of their gestalt) without offering, at the same time, interpretations, judgments, or otherwise imposing the interviewer’s own relevancies (thus destroying the interviewee’s gestalt). Apparently simple, it required discipline and practice to transform ourselves from the highly visible asker of our questions to the almost invisible, facilitating catalyst of the interviewee’s stories.

I found this means of data collection both effective and engaging.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews in January 2005 the notes were entered into a computer using word processing. Through the use of ethnographic computer software (ENIT: Ethnographic Notes Input Tool; Caleb Project, 2005) in April 2005, the data were uploaded into the program and separated into segments or chunks. This stage of codification is critical to the analysis since it determines the strength of the data in each thematic area. These chunks were codified using 53 preliminary themes (see Appendix C) or sometimes called domains that included Clinton’s primary process items along with other themes that naturally emerged from reading the narratives. Then the chunks
containing similar themes were arranged together for comparison, resulting in 43 pages of condensed data.

Eisner (1991) suggests that analysis should include descriptions of what appears to be, interpretation of why or why not, evaluation with value judgments, along with the thematic of recurring messages that pervade the situation. The research findings were reflected upon, and through a narrowing process, the experiences that elucidate critical formative factors were identified. Patterns emerged and a clearer understanding of how these leaders were formed became apparent. Certain life-shaping experiences consistent with each leader interviewed emerged, and some points of divergence also became apparent. The research from the interviews was then compared to the insights gained from biographical studies of exemplary Chinese Christian leaders to provide further validation of the research.

Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability

The terms validity, reliability and generalizability are technical terms for quantitative research, and their use in qualitative research requires clarification. I propose that it is better to use terms that have proven usage while noting distinctions rather than attempting to develop new terminology exclusive for qualitative research. Patten (2000) states, “When qualitative researchers speak of research validity, they are usually referring to qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and therefore, defensible” (p. 119). Three primary types of validity can be seen (Patten, 2000, pp. 120–123): descriptive validity that refers to the factual accuracy of the account, interpretive validity that refers to accurately portraying the meaning intended by the participants, and external validity that consistently relates to outside research.
Concerning the first type of descriptive validity on factual accuracy, the transcripts of the interviews along with the taped interviews exist for verification. Signed statements by the participants acknowledge that the interviews took place on a certain day. Concerning the second type of interpretive validity on portraying intended meaning, the raw data can be reviewed to evaluate hermeneutical accuracy. The use of computer software allowed for an objective way to segment data into similar chunks for more proper comparison. Concerning the third type of external validity, published biographies of exemplary leaders in China were read, analyzed, codified and compared with the findings from the interviews. Several dissertations have documented similar qualitative research in the area of leadership development that reported a research process as well as findings similar to this study (Bloomer, 1999; Boyer, 1999; K. Chen, 2002; W. Chen, 2002; Contee-Borders, 2002; Lucas, 1999; Pintus, 1998; Pun, 1997; Shin, 2000; Weaver, 2004; Welch, 1998; Yao, 1996). Through such a comparison with external data, triangulation was possible to substantiate the validity.

Creswell (1998, 2003) also connects validity to other helpful practices. When possible the findings can be taken back to participants for review as to the accuracy. This was not possible in this study because of geographical limitations. However, what he calls “peer debriefing,” where the findings can be reviewed by people familiar with the qualitative process and interview content, was applied. A Chinese man in Hong Kong and a Caucasian American reviewed the interviews and findings and provided feedback that what was written was consistent with their expectations. Also, validity is enhanced as the researcher recognizes certain bias he or she brings to the interview process. As stated elsewhere, I prepared myself prior to conducting the interviews by reminding
myself of certain biases and by seeking not to allow my observations to be unduly influenced.

Merriam (1998) sees reliability as being connected with the ethics of how the research was conducted. The data collection process should be repeatable and consistent. Because I was interviewing people at a specific time in their lives, and there is no way one can repeat the study in exactly the same way, reliability cannot be expected or assured.

Eisner (1991) notes that generalization focuses upon the future and what aspects of the research are relevant and transferable to other contexts. Speaking in regard to qualitative research, Eisner states, “What generalizes is what one learns, and for our purposes these can be regarded as (1) skills, (2) images, and (3) ideas” (p. 199). Concerning skills, he notes that thinking skills can be generalized as we learn to see and write about what we see. For this study the insights gained concerning the role of informal and non-formal learning in China can be generalized to other cultures. Images in the form of word pictures, or in the case of this study as metaphors, can be generalized. Once an image is grasped, a person can generalize that picture into other settings. The image of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet as embodying the concept of servant leadership can be envisioned in every culture. Theoretical ideas, such as the role of suffering in this study, also can be generalized. Although there are certain differences in terms of type and extent of suffering from one culture to another, negative influences are a global reality and highly formative for building leadership credibility and effectiveness.

Once these concepts (skills, images, and ideas) are internalized from one context they are more easily observed in other contexts with a prior point of reference. Eisner
notes that "we tend to seek what we know we can find. . . . The great images of science, often initially expressed as metaphors (Langer, 1976), are among the most generalizable conceptual devices we possess" (p. 200). So in this study I am implying that certain skills, images and ideas gained from the research enable us to have expectations about what we can find to a greater or lesser degree elsewhere. Life narratives provide a rich source for generalization because people all over the world resonate with shared experiences.

The genre of international leadership study and leader emergence theory is just blossoming in the 21st century. Through a growing network of researchers and studies, such findings will prove to be essential for generalization. The findings of this research appear to be generalizable beyond the context of China. However, it should be noted that Xin and Tsui (1996) find virtually no differences in a study of the influence tactics of 141 Asian-American managers and 196 Caucasian-American managers. They interpreted their results as suggesting that differences found in cross-cultural studies may not be generalizable to different ethnic groups within one country.

Conclusions

As the researcher, I recognize that I come with certain limitations of idiosyncrasies and biases. Wright (2004, pp. 61–63) notes that cultural bias is a major issue in international research. Every person brings a bias with them to another culture. Even when a researcher is aware of his or her assumptions and biases it can be difficult to guard against them. Four general concerns are identified with international qualitative research: (a) the research topic, (b) language issues, (c) cultural bias, and (d) not building on established theory. I sought to build upon my strengths and was alert to my
weaknesses. My worldview as a Christian, along with my view of servant leadership and leader formation, influenced my research, but hopefully did not skew what I heard.

There were certain limitations or biases of those being interviewed that I evaluated. I anticipated that issues such as a dislike for the communist party, bitterness toward suffering and inhumane behavior, and the trauma of repressed thoughts could be present. Perhaps due to the high quality of the men interviewed, no such issues were apparent. Rather, there was an amazing sensitivity to the good that can emerge from evil, and this was evidenced by a show of emotions in the form of tears from two of the participants when recounting times of suffering. Those interviewed naturally filtered what they said through their perspective, which may have been unintentionally or intentionally exaggerated or incomplete. Again, through the triangulation of external validation these biases appeared to be minimal.

With this understanding of the methodology used for the research, I will next look at the data obtained. In traditional qualitative fashion, data will be presented in prose form rather than numerically, as is the case with quantitative research. Life stories will be retold thematically and chronologically. To a limited extent, the life biography of those interviewed will be presented. A focus will be placed on telling the experiences and events that participants remembered as being life-shaping. For many people the identification of a common life thread can be seen as weaving throughout one’s life and such a thread can be understood through a metaphor. For each person interviewed, a metaphor was identified to tie together the pieces of his life.
CHAPTER FOUR

EXEMPLARY CHINESE CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Introduction

When a researcher listens to a person's life story it is a precious experience. Each life journey is unique and special. Learning from the life of another is like viewing a masterpiece in process. Learning from the lives of several people is like viewing a mosaic. As one seeks to weave lessons learned from several people's life journey around central themes, the landscape of one's own life is so deeply enriched that he becomes a finer masterpiece to others. In this chapter I will tell the tales of three men who are truly exemplary Chinese Christian leaders. I will show where their journeys have similarities and where they diverge. Through this research my life has been greatly enriched.

Freed (n.d.) recognizes that metaphors are very helpful to the reflective learning process. She notes that "a partially known concept or phenomenon is explored in terms of the known" (p. 11). Citing Kottkamp (1990), she mentions that a metaphor is a powerful and flexible means for reflection (p. 11). In this research, each leader studied was asked if there was a metaphor that described his life. Such an exercise forced the leader to encapsulate his life, and this helped to identify the person he was at his core. In other cases, such as the biographical studies in the literature review, my establishing a metaphor to describe a leader forced me to reflect upon the essence of what I understood...
the leader to be. Metaphors allow one to analyze and distill concepts so that comparison can be enhanced.

**The Tales of Three Men**

For this research, the main distinguishing variable in selection was that of age. In order to understand generational issues and distinctions, selection included a man 39 years old who represented the age range of 30s to 40s, a man 63 years old who represented the range of 50s to 60s, and a man 78 years old who represented the range of 70s to 80s. Each of these men met the criteria for selection and after having the privilege of hearing their stories I can affirm that they are truly leaders of the servant leadership posture. The first two stories were told through a translator and their biography is here written according to the original transcript without significant editing.

**Dreamer**

Dreamer said he longed to see the church in China become like the Moravian Church of old where the believers are bound together deeply and bless the world through godly influence in every sector of society. This will happen only through fervent prayer for revival so the Church lives in unity and inner acceptance for each other. From this more recent vision along with past dreams that significantly influenced this emerging servant leader, the metaphor chosen to characterize his life is that of a dreamer.

This younger servant leader has had a life very full of experiences at the age of 39. Born to humble parents in a village setting, Dreamer lived with poverty and danger from constant flooding. His grandparents were the “lord’s of the land,” and this remote connection with wealth and prestige caused great alienation from his peers during the
Cultural Revolution. He was cursed by his friends and even the adults despised him. It is understandable that he grew up with an inferiority complex.

Seeking to overcome the difficulties of his heritage, Dreamer worked hard at being the best student possible. He was a top student during elementary school but because of an illness his grades later suffered and he dropped out of school. After the Cultural Revolution ended, land was divided and his family received 10 acres. His father was very competitive and his life revolved around work. Dreamer, the first boy of five children, worked with his father. Yet he felt hopeless that life was only about work.

Three dreams summarized his early life. First, he wanted to become an excellent student to escape being despised and to eventually do more than continuous hard work. Illness dashed this dream. Second, he wanted to become a soldier who was respected and could give strength to people. He had at one time hoped to become a General with great influence so he could help the oppressed. His family background eliminated this dream. Third, if he could not become the best at something then he wanted to become a beggar. Although never attaining what is commonly thought of as a beggar, he would go on to live a humble life of serving people, which always included trusting God often for the very food to sustain him.

On October 20, 1985, while selling roof tile to a Christian buyer, he heard about the Bible. China was opening up more to the world and there was greater freedom to explore learning. His only knowledge about the Bible was that it was full of fairy tales. The Christian man he met promised to get him a Bible to read but it was never delivered. His mother had recently become a Christian from listening to radio programs from Hong Kong. Radio was normally government sponsored so he assumed that the message was
credible. He once heard that Jesus would soon descend from heaven and wanted to know more. When his mother learned of his interest she forbade him from listening further out of fear from authorities. These encounters from meeting a Christian man and listening to the radio programs were preparing him for the decisive turning point in his life.

Four days before he was to be married he learned of a very unusual circumstance. A marriage custom said that if a wedding was broken off just prior to marriage that something bad would happen to the woman. This happened to someone he knew and the woman became very ill. She was taken to the temple for help from idols and other remedies were sought, to no avail. Finally she was taken to a church and received healing. When Dreamer heard this story he decided to attend the meetings at the church. His interest was captured. Bibles were very difficult to find, perhaps one available for an entire church. He was loaned a New Testament but because of the complex characters used in writing (his generation had learned only simplified Chinese characters) it was hard to understand. Yet he began to see that the writings were mainly about Jesus, heaven and hell, and not fairy tales.

Dreamer chose to become a Christian and developed a deep desire to study the Bible and to tell his family and friends about this faith. He stopped working, read his Bible day and night, shared the gospel message all the time, and informed his wife that they needed to give up all to follow Jesus. His father wanted to send him to a mental hospital. Often his father was very emotional about the path he had chosen and restrained him to the point that he considered breaking away from his family. His wife was forced to support him because of the threat of divorce. His mother suffered as the outlet from
the father’s frustration. Dreamer looked back and said that his zeal formed without knowledge, initially caused harm to others.

There were few Bible teachers at this time where he was located. He was identified as a potential leader in his church and was intentionally nurtured. Within a couple of years he began teaching beyond his local church. He had no solid theology. The people he taught were pure-hearted, simple and devoted. They always responded well to what he said. Public baptism was an important sign of entering a committed life. They would often perform baptisms in severe weather to highlight the commitment being made. After baptism the person would be considered an adult Christian.

Dreamer did not consider much of his initial teaching as correct yet people still saw a mighty working of God in their midst. In 1988 a teacher from a neighboring county taught on Matthew chapters 1-5. This was the first time he had heard someone teach verse by verse. The depth of the teaching he heard humbled him with how shallow his own teaching was. This led him to seriously learn how to teach better. Another visiting teacher from Romania introduced the importance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that challenged his thinking as well. However, a setback occurred because of the pride he displayed. Friends said he had a spiritual problem and should stop teaching. So from 1988-1990 he stopped teaching, did various jobs for employment, stayed at home, and lived a secluded self-reflective life. In 1990 his wife became sick, needing hospital care, and he saw this as his fault. Several times he asked God for help in healing his wife, but he would break his promises once she recovered and she would get sick again. Finally he and his wife made a serious recommitment to God.
Dreamer worked through his inferiority, shame, and past unpleasant memories by focusing on the teachings of the Bible. Once again he started teaching in various churches. He and a small band of men started an itinerant teaching ministry. Revival began and grew to the point that the Prime Minister stated in 1992 that his part of the country was known not only as a land for floods but for expanding Christianity. Thousands of people were becoming Christians including many men, which was unusual. Miracles occurred, fasting and repentance took place, and people were eager to share their faith.

A very significant conference was held in the winter of 1990. He came to believe that it was now God’s appointed time in China. “The wind of the Holy Spirit was moving.” He had a fresh vision of Chinese churches joining other churches to complete world evangelization. At this conference leaders from all around came together for the first time. Three main topics were discussed: (a) decrees in the Bible, (b) how to study the Bible, and (c) how to explain the Bible. One worship song they sung repeatedly became their heart-cry. This song was a prayer asking the Lord to take them to the ends of the earth and that they would follow forward through storms.

As a result of this conference many of the present-day leaders emerged. One couple was sent to a remote province as missionaries. This was not an easy commitment because leaving was like saying goodbye without ever expecting to see one’s own people again. Difficulty and even death were anticipated. Yet being sent was considered one of the greatest privileges.

In 1991 there was a major flood that was broadcasted internationally. Christians from around the world sent money for the relief, and a sizable portion was set aside to
send out missionaries. Dreamer, along with three men and two women, was sent to a remote province. Again in the summer of 1992 he and a friend were sent to Northeast China where he did not initially adjust well to the food and became sick. The local believers questioned how a godly man could be sick and wanted to send him home. There was heavy rain, and the four women leaders of the church decided to test him. Only if the rain stopped would they recognize them as people sent from God. So Dreamer and his friend prayed for God to stop the rain and it stopped.

Their ministry among these believers was so well received that they were invited back again later that year. Because of ministry opportunities he was unable to return home for Chinese New Year, a very important reunion for the Chinese. Instead he went to the Chinese/Russian border. There were only 20 Christians when he arrived, and a few months later he was told that the church had grown to over 400 believers. Because of the extended length of this trip, he grew weary and wanted to go home. Yet Dreamer’s associate had a dream that the leaders back home were not pleased with them. They decided it was better to visit other provinces. However, after nearly being robbed in a train station, they decided to head home regardless of what the leaders would say.

This extended trip resulted in a life-shaping memory. The people from this province were known for being ruthless. Because of missing a train home they had to sit and wait until the next day. During this wait a gang of men assaulted them at night, forcing them to split up and run from the train station through strange streets. After a long time of running and hiding, Dreamer came to the end of his energy. While hiding in a factory he prepared himself for being captured. Upon reflection on the Bible, for the first time he understood the teaching that one must love God more than family. He asked
God to protect his wife and family since he might never see them again. Since he had no money and was a long way from home, his options were not good. Hopping a train was dangerous and begging at best would take a long time. Even though he had no clear direction he eventually sensed that God would take him home safely. Then he fell fast asleep. At daybreak he heard noises and was wakened by the factory workers who were shocked at his appearance. Thinking he was a criminal they took him to the police where he was beaten during interrogation. After 2 hours and unable to bear any more, God answered his prayer and he was released, since the authorities had no charge against him. Hungry, tired, and moneyless, he wandered into a registered church to ask for help. The people there suspected him of criminal activity and were about to turn him into the police but they saw that he was at the end of his strength and gave him a small amount of money, enough for a train ticket home. Wanting to find his associate but with no idea where to look, he sensed God telling him to go to the ticket office. There he found his friend. They hugged and cried and praised God for their deliverance. Since their village was a long distance from where the train arrived they would have to take a bus. Walking to the bus station without money they were again attacked by robbers. Afterwards a kind lady they met loaned them enough money to take a bus home.

From this experience, Dreamer sensed an affinity with the story of Hagar in the Bible where she came to the end of her strength in the desert with her son and lay down to die. At this point of desperation, God miraculously intervened. He felt very guilty from this experience when at home. No one initially comforted or visited him. Many times when reading the Bible he did so with only his mind. These subsequent days were times when he felt God directly speaking to him. The church leaders did not give him
any further travel ministry so he stayed at home and studied. A teacher from Taiwan came through and taught using biblical principles, a method he wanted to learn and follow. Also a brother from his home church helped him a lot during these lonely days.

Upon recovery Dreamer again traveled back to Northeast China regularly. The people there highly respected him because he had risked his life during his time of ministry with them. In 1995 persecution broke out, and seeing how these believers grew stronger and experienced great power under their difficulty led Dreamer to conclude that his home church was weak by comparison.

He was one of the eight main leaders in his church network and developed into a fine teacher. He taught in their Bible school, especially to younger students. On May 25, 1995, severe persecution emerged in their county largely due to a heresy that another Church Network was teaching. He was suspected by the government, although he did not teach or practice the heresy. It turned out that 50% of their leaders were arrested at some time and the infrastructure of their network was almost destroyed. He himself was not arrested at this time and focused on studying the book of Acts and teaching principles of church growth.

The three most difficult years in the church’s life occurred during 1995 to 1998. There was no growth and no missionaries were sent out. The number of leaders decreased from 300 to 30 leaders. There was no clear direction and no money. Because of his teaching on church life and structure he became recognized as one of four leaders for the entire network. In time their foundations were again strengthened, and in 1999 to 2000 they began more evangelism in the cities and outreach to minority groups. During these years he encouraged co-workers to relate to other networks and expand into new
territories. This progress was challenged by another major wave of persecution that began on August 14, 2001. Just before this time, Dreamer was in one city where he stayed up all night in reflection and considered resigning from a top leadership position. The administration load was overwhelming, and his passion to teach was not being fulfilled. He wanted to promote unity and reconciliation among leaders who had made mistakes in the past. He also wanted to devote himself to prayer and pioneering work. His last few years of study had led him to believe that the goal of the church was the expansion of God’s kingdom and not that of any given church. Leaders were to focus on prayer to ensure that the church is ever expanding.

The church network that Dreamer helps to lead is unique in that leaders are not appointed for life. In other networks when there are problems, divisions often result. In his network they base their leadership philosophy solely on the Bible, where they allow for older leaders to step down and newer leaders to emerge. Since 2001, Dreamer has sought to develop a team of teachers who can serve the network. However it has been a struggle to turn this dream into reality. Dreamer has developed eye problems that limit his ability to read. He developed throat problems that affected his ability to speak strongly or for long times. He developed a foot problem that limited his mobility. His wife fell five floors, breaking numerous bones. He became discouraged and lost his drive. When teaching on the life of Jacob who wrestled with God and became crippled in his hip, Dreamer sensed that God had touched him too much. He was near the breaking point. So he stayed at home and gave care to his wife. Then in November 2004 he experienced revival and a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. He was confident of God’s love but saw his own weakness and could not reconcile the two. One night he cried a long
time and asked God why he was loved. He sensed God say, “I love you because I love you.” This became a very special week of blessing. Every person he meets and every book he reads now has special meaning to spiritual growth.

His philosophy of ministry is based on five core principles from the book of Acts: (a) Discern the quality of calling; (b) Be truth centered; (c) Mature through empowering by the Holy Spirit; (d) Clearly understand your commission and vision; and (e) Commit to fervent prayer. The result should be greater revival for the church and deeper unity among believers. The goal of leaders is not to seek prestige and influence but to partner with God in building his kingdom. A godly Christian leader must grasp Jesus’ model. Three things stand out to him from the model of Jesus: (a) One must have a good quality life full of grace and truth; (b) One must speak the truth; and (c) One must live in love with others. All three components are essential; none can be missing. The deeper one’s relationship with Christ, the deeper their influence on their generation will be.

In order to develop such leaders who exemplify Jesus, Dreamer saw three components. First, God must call a person. People must seek and hunger after God. The greater one’s hunger, the faster one’s growth will be. Second, man must respond. God is always looking for a serious person who will respond. The amount of training is not as important as responding to God. Good leaders at times come from having no teachers or even having bad teachers. Third, we need a spiritual mentor. Exemplary leaders will have a call, they will seek and respond to God, and they will have quality mentors.

The time needed for exemplary leader formation cannot be short. Good leaders in the Bible had long periods of formation. There is no quick way to produce exemplary leaders. Gifts and abilities take time to discern and cultivate. Leaders are greatly needed.
and it is important to find faster ways of learning. The fastest way he knows of training leaders is through frequent reading of the Bible much more than other books. People must read with faith and the intention of obedience. People must also learn to rely on the Holy Spirit, without whom one can do nothing.

Infant Before Cross

Another servant leader interviewed for this study I will call an Infant Before the Cross or IBC. He is 63 years old and he identified four main life-shaping themes running through his life: prayer, baptism/filling of the Holy Spirit, how he learned the truth, and political circumstances. When considering a metaphor to describe his life, he said he saw himself as an infant sitting before the cross.

IBC was born in 1941 into a Christian family and was baptized. His mother died when he was young. He remembers that in 1958 all churches were shut so no services and no prayer were allowed. The government believed that they had stopped the church. Only a few old ladies continued in their faith. Anyone found practicing Christianity was persecuted. But instead of the church being stopped, the church was revived. In 1966 he was converted, the same year the Cultural Revolution began.

He was told about an older Christian who lived some 50 miles away. He believed that the Holy Spirit clearly guided him to meet this man. There was no public transportation so he walked the distance. This man was one of the few survivors of the persecution. IBC and this saintly man talked until 1 a.m. and IBC was so excited he could not sleep. At 3 a.m. the older man told him it was time to start praying. Although dizzy from no sleep he prayed with the man. At first their praying was quiet but soon built into fervent prayer. The man was earnestly asking God with tear-filled eyes for
revival. IBC was very touched and impacted to make prayer a high priority. The next
day when he departed for home he left a note requesting that the older brother come and
visit his town. However, this man’s eyes were so poor that he could not read the note
without glasses. At home he gathered a few people to pray earnestly for China. Every
Friday night they would fast and pray. In 1 month the group had grown to 10 people and
they began to see miracles happen, such as a child being healed of a lethal disease. As
people heard of the miracles, they would come to the church. In 6 months their numbers
grew to 200, which was almost 70% of his village. Every week some form of persecution
resulted, but revival was taking place in the whole county. Now, after almost 40 years,
prayer is still foundational in his life and ministry. Wednesday and Friday nights they
have a special prayer emphasis. In October 2002 he attended a conference in Israel on
worship and the East Gate of Jerusalem was devoted to prayer for China. Now his
church in China reciprocates by praying every hour for Israel.

In 1967 during his prayer times the Holy Spirit came with power that resulted in
his speaking in tongues and having a tremendous spirit of joy. In 1971, 600 people from
over 10 counties came together for prayer during a time of much political unrest. IBC
was one of the three core leaders. They started having revival meetings where people
would repent, cry, and experience the filling of the Spirit, and they saw miracles. Once
some non-believers overhearing the meeting said the sound they heard was like that of
angels singing. Once when police were patrolling the area and saw the house they
thought it was on fire. They were planning how to get water as they approached but
noticed that there were no flames. Rather, they saw many people on their knees praying.
The work of the Holy Spirit is still very strong today. This is especially true with
the young people who are experiencing powerful filling. For example, in his church a
young lady who had a bad reputation came to look for her mother who was praying. This
young lady was so moved that she cried for 3 hours. Then she rushed out of the room
and looked for her father who was gambling. When she found him she pleaded with him
to repent because she had a vision of hell and suffering.

IBC recognizes that the Holy Spirit has been his main teacher of the Bible. There
were no older pastors, mentors, Bibles or spiritual books when he was a young Christian.
A French Chinese Christian had smuggled a few Bibles into the country and IBC was
given a New Testament. His brother copied the entire New Testament by hand to have
his own copy (this handwritten copy is now secure in Hong Kong). There was no one to
teach him how to read and understand the Bible so he relied on the Holy Spirit. As he
and others prayed for guidance, they sensed the leading of God.

Once, a pastor was preaching a message that was being well accepted. He spoke
of three books: a scroll that recorded those who were going to hell, the book of the lamb
containing the names of those going to heaven, and the book of life with the names of
those in between heaven and hell. God impressed upon IBC not to accept this message.
Another time at a conference people were asking about eternal security. Some churches
in the area had invited a speaker who strongly emphasized that no matter how bad
someone was that he could never lose his salvation. He and others felt that something
was wrong with this teaching. Several people had the same vision of the Bible opened to
the book of Hebrews chapter 6 where they read and understood that this message being
taught was not accurate. After dealing with these two heretical teachings, IBC decided
that the leaders needed to study the Bible to learn the truth. They all committed to go home and study on their own, and after 6 months they came back together to share what they had learned. Each person came to the same conclusion: Salvation is totally by grace, but after receiving this gift, believers have the responsibility to hold on to salvation. If they slip they must repent; if they do not repent then they can lose their salvation. When China first opened up, much good teaching came in but also some bad extremes entered. This caused division in the church and some people left. IBC and the leaders always relied on the Holy Spirit to be their source of growth and looked to him as their teacher.

The Cultural Revolution lasted 10 years. Each year IBC was arrested at least once and even beaten near death at times. At the 2002 conference in Jerusalem he was invited to speak a message on how the Chinese Church went through persecution. Retelling these experiences during the interview brought tears to his eyes. His message was that Chinese believers carried their cross as Jesus commanded in Luke 9:23.

Other examples of suffering included that of a man who was preaching in a certain province and was arrested, tied tightly, and beaten. A Christian woman asked the police if she could give him some food and drink. When the man thanked God for the provision the police threw the food down and put him in prison. This man’s wife died from hunger since her husband could not provide for their needs. The daughters came to the prison and asked their father what they should do. He told them they would have to beg for food but to only do so from Christians.

Another very poor family had little food while living in a dilapidated house with six other families. The wife gave birth to the third child, a boy, who brought great joy to the father. However the wife told the husband that they had no food and did not know
what to do. They had a little money but did not know where to buy food. After several unsuccessful attempts to buy some food and with the wife in despair, the husband concluded that they needed to be grateful for the little they had. After a time of prayer they were encouraged to go on. God used poverty to build character. This poor family has now become prosperous with one daughter living in Italy and the rest doing well and serving as leaders in the church.

These kinds of stories are numerous. The believers learned much through their difficult times. When telling these accounts at the Jerusalem conference he summarized the message with four main lessons that were learned. First, we begin life in a lowly state, similar to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. Second, we grow through much difficulty, like the years Jesus ministered in Galilee. Third, we go through lonely times such as when Jesus was at Gethsemane. And fourth, we must follow Jesus to Calvary where we suffer with the Lord and give ourselves for the good of other people.

IBC recounted his own story when in 1995 he was in prison for 135 days. He had come to his end where he could not bear it anymore. Then he heard the Holy Spirit say to him, “Do you know how many people are praying for you?” Yes there were some who opposed him, but many, many supported him. It was the Holy Spirit who sustained him. He had one prayer as he entered prison and it was for protection from the first night. Many prisoners are killed on the first night by other prisoners. He arrived at 2 a.m., was stripped, and told to take a shower. The strongest man and longest prisoner was the leader of the cell. It so happened that when the leader heard that IBC was a Christian he said that Christians are good people so the others knew not to hurt him. As he went to take the bed nearest to the toilet, which was expected for new arrivals, the leader invited
him to share the larger bed with the number two leader. He asked God what he should do in prison and he was told to pray, fast and preach. The prisoners listened to him with amazement. For 4 weeks he had services every day until the guards learned about this and forced him to stop. When the top leader was taken elsewhere, he was appointed by the other prisoners to be their leader. His practice was to fast during breakfast and lunch and he gave his food to others who in turn loved him. When he entered the prison he had some money sown in his underwear that the guards never found and he used this to buy things for the other prisoners. When he finally was released, all but a few of the men in his area had become Christians.

Once he preached at a village crossroad. It was very hot and his topic was the will of God and the end times. Someone was bringing him a cold drink but before he received it eight big men who were connected with the Cultural Revolution beat him to the point of unconsciousness. They dragged him to the city center and threw him in the human waste pile. Somehow unknown to him he revived and jumped out. Since he was covered with waste no one wanted to touch him. He went to a nearby stream to wash, then was forced out and beaten again. He was next taken to the temple and hung for the entire night in a room with coffins.

In 1976 the Cultural Revolution ended and the government began to arrest criminals from the past 10 years. As a Christian leader he was arrested and put into the worst prison with the very worst people. If one can survive in such a place one can survive anywhere. Along with three other Christians they were forced to march through the streets while a drummer beat the drum to attract attention. Such public shame was very humiliating. He was tightly tied to the point of the rope cutting into his muscle. He
was fearful of being beaten again and asked God for relief. It started to rain so heavily that the prisoners were taken inside. They were handed some food but it was rotten. Although hoping for a reprieve, the lady in charge wanted to have a confrontation meeting. This meeting was designed to force the men to give up their faith or be beaten to death. The other prisoners had no hesitancy in beating someone to death. Each prisoner was interrogated. When IBC stood up he felt the Holy Spirit come upon him and forgetting where he was he started preaching. All the people including the lady listened to him closely. This lasted until 4 p.m. when it was time to leave so there were no further beatings.

It was a common occurrence for him to be taken for interrogation. Once he was grabbed by the hair and had his head banged against a wall. He was beaten on his leg in the same place to the point that he now has a permanent scar. Once when asking God for help he had a vision of Jesus with a crown of thorns on his head and realized that his own sufferings were much less than what Jesus endured. He would often sing spiritual songs to gain new strength.

When asked of his most deeply held values, IBC identified prayer, the filling of the Holy Spirit, and enduring suffering and hardship. When asked whether suffering should be considered essential for leader formation he said that suffering has been formative for his generation. When asked if he thought suffering would be formative for the coming generation he felt that the cross and suffering were an essential part of godliness. Persecution may come in different forms and in different places around the world. When asked what a servant leader looks like in China, he said someone who does the will of God exactly and truly follows the Bible. When asked how to train someone to
become a servant leader he said they must be taught the gospel, repent, be born again, have a vital relationship with the Holy Spirit, and then through ministry experience learn the importance of character development. They must learn to discern the will of God. When asked how long such training takes he said that their training program is 2 years before assuming an initial leadership position and that having experience in planting a church is good.

IBC shared about how he dealt with criticism by noting that the late 1970s were the golden years in his province. A good foundation was laid by missionary work of the past. After the Cultural Revolution ended believers were unified. In the 1980s, outside influences brought into China different theologies and 50% of the Christians joined Three-Self Churches. He was greatly hurt by false accusations from leaders he had worked with. He was accused of accepting money from outside sources and had taken bribes though nothing could be proven. This was far more hurtful to him and his family than his prison experience. During this time he adopted the name of the biblical character Nehemiah because of the tremendous opposition he experienced from both outside and inside sources. He also appreciated the message of Nehemiah where the people were connected and worked together in unity. A strong ministry desire of his is to see Christians working together in unity.

The Lord constantly gives IBC fresh visions. At the end of 2003 he had a vision of a Chinese man carrying weights. This man had a sign with 1.3 billion written on his front and back, which he understood to be the population of both China and the combined Muslim people population. He took this vision to mean that the Church of China was to evangelize the Muslim world.
A main priority now is to train young people, especially university students. From attending a conference in the United States he shared three things about reaching the Chinese. First, many overseas Chinese Christians who are well educated are indicating that they desire to serve in China. Second, there is much growing work among university students. Third, the government is sending high officials to the United States for training where one-third become Christian, one-third become knowledgeable about Christianity, and one-third return without being antagonistic toward Christians.

Finisher

Since this senior Chinese statesman could not think of a metaphor to describe his life, and from listening to his life story it is clear that he is one who longs to finish well, I will call him Finisher. Finisher was born in Guangzhou, China, where his father was an educator at the Lingnan University. Later he moved to Hong Kong where his father was a principal of a primary school. When reflecting on the influences in his life he first noted his parents. His father had a big influence on him. He was a man of integrity and very serious. Finisher was raised mostly by his mother because his father focused his energy on his ministry responsibility. His mother was the opposite personality of his father. She was full of humor, laughing much. She had a light attitude and tried to lighten Finisher so he would not be as serious as his father.

He was raised in the Hong Kong Baptist Church which was the first Baptist church in Hong Kong. One couple, Mr. and Mrs. M.K. Wang, cared for the young people and greatly influenced him as a youth. Wang had three distinctions: he cared for people; he taught the Bible; and he focused on who the young people were, more than what was done. This man had a life-long influence on Finisher.
When he attended the Hong Kong Baptist Church there was about 1,000 people in attendance and now it exceeds 4,000. It was the mother of Baptist churches and now there are 170 churches. He learned four key lessons from this model church: Sunday School was the best place to train people; in the youth fellowship it was important for everyone to participate, not just the leaders; in the choir he learned to sing and especially learned the importance of harmony which applies to relationships as well; and he learned the importance of unity among the 12 Baptist churches that existed when he was young. He also believes that Seminary and theological education is important but it means nothing if the student does not have a good background. Knowledge and theory alone are worth nothing.

1953 was a crucial year in Finisher’s life. He was married in May and he departed Hong Kong for Singapore as a missionary in August. For 7 years he worked in church planting, mostly on his own. After being a part of a 1,000-member church it was quite an adjustment to be alone and lonesome in ministry. His major work was personal evangelism which he did regularly and effectively. He believes that personal evangelism, not just learning technique but a lifestyle, is important for all Christian leaders; preaching and administration are not the main things. If a leader does not have this as an example his teaching is incomplete. Along with doing the work of an evangelist, Finisher learned to be an organizer. He started three churches and needed to establish the organization to keep these churches growing. He learned much about shepherding and helping these churches relate to one another. There were seven other Baptist churches in Singapore at that time so he helped in forming a denomination. Here he also learned much about administration.
In 1960 Finisher returned to Hong Kong and spent 4 years in theological education to earn a Master’s of Theology degree. For the following 4 years he assumed the role of rector of academic affairs at the Malaysia Baptist Seminary. The seminary had been dwindling in numbers to the point of having only nine students and six teachers. Being financed by the denomination they did not have a problem with funding but there were many spiritual problems. Over his 4 years a turn around took place and when he left there were 30 students; today there are over 200. Here he learned how to bring about organizational change. During this time he also planted two Baptist churches. Upon return to Hong Kong he served as the chaplain and on the executive counsel at the Hong Kong Baptist College for several years before traveling to the United States for doctoral studies.

In 1975 Finisher returned to Singapore to serve as the principal and a teacher at the Singapore Bible College. Here he learned to be an educator. When he started there were 16 students and when he retired there were 350 students. He learned that education must be considered both in the classroom as well as in everyday life. Every week graduates would come to him for pastoral care and advice. They complained of difficult circumstances and rejoiced in successes. Finisher learned how to help workers during this time. Finally in 1992 he prepared for retirement from a salaried position. His stepping down as principal and how this transition took place was a beautiful illustration of leadership succession. A younger man was identified, sent for sufficient theological training, and upon his return Finisher quickly turned over the responsibility and the authority. He removed himself physically from the school so the new man would not have to function under his shadow. This is very rare for an Asian to do.
Finisher believes that every leader must prepare to retire and two factors are important. One, a leader needs to be psychologically prepared to leave his position of status. Two, the leader needs to prepare financially so he does not need to be dependent on having a salary. Many leaders “die in the pulpit” rather than “beside the pulpit.” By this he means they overextend their usefulness rather than serving alongside to support other leaders. Financial preparation does not mean that one must love money but that it is wise to prepare so one can make a healthy transition. Finisher also strongly believes that a leader must retire when he is still active and with influence. One of his associates asked him, “But everyone loves you, why now?” One must not wait until he is no longer wanted to step down. One should step down when one is happy and has no regrets. If you step down with bitterness and being disliked by others, then many problems will result. The goal should be to retire happy. Finishing well is very important.

When he retired he was prepared to continue working hard into his 80s. Retirement only means something new until physical weakness prohibits further work. But in retirement one does not need to occupy some high position. The options he considered were: become an adjunct teacher; become an interim pastor where he would only preach and provide care but not try to change anything; become an advisory person; begin to write books (he has written 10 since 1992); or serve as a care giver through visitation and other such ministries. He chose to finish his life in Toronto because of proximity to children and friends. Also, the Canadian government has generous retirement policies. But he never wanted to impose on his children. In this aspect he assumed a Western posture and not the typical Chinese role of the children providing and caring for the parents until their death.
When considering life-shaping experiences, Finisher recalled his calling into ministry. He had won two championships as a young man. He was on a debate team in Hong Kong and they won a contest and he also took first place in a speech contest. From these experiences he concluded that he wanted to “give his best to the Lord.” He had a peaceful heart in preparing to enter seminary but shortly before he started he became scared. He developed the flu and had a high fever for a whole month. During this time he read much, especially on the life of Hudson Taylor. This story was a great influence on him. Taylor once said, “If I had 1,000 pounds I would give them all to China. If I had 1000 lives I would give them all to China.” This commitment by a foreigner to China greatly impacted Finisher’s desire to give his life for full-time service to God.

When asked about the role of persecution in the formation of a leader Finisher noted that God can use many kinds of difficulties in shaping a person’s life. The government can use murder and killing and beatings but difficulty can also come through disagreements and rebellion by church members. Good church leaders can bring great pain to a pastor by how they mistreat him. Since 1950 people in China have suffered much in terms of physical persecution. Leaders in other parts of the world suffer by both fellow Christians and non-Christians. The emotional suffering can be such that some leaders think that they cannot bear the agony. They even say that physical harm would be easier than unjust criticism from fellow Christians. The fact is that all leaders will suffer some persecution. This is how the Lord purifies them and how he learns the extent of their love.
Critical Formative Processes

Before analyzing these narratives, I will summarize those aspects of leader formation that were consistent with each of these leaders and what aspects were divergent. This comparison and contrast will set the stage for the findings to follow. Those processes that were consistently observed in each man were:

1. All three leaders received their early education in China. They would have experienced the standard education of all people who could afford to attend school and not have to assist with family income in order to survive.

2. Each man pointed to significant influential people in their lives. Mentors helped them identify values, build skills, and catch visions for the future.

3. The Bible played a critical role in each leader’s life to clarify their life calling. They each had very high esteem for the Scriptures and those who taught the Bible accurately and practically.

4. Parents had a significant formative influence of each leader for their eventual good. Two men had godly parents who guided them early on into identification with Christ and one man did not have his parents come to agree with his chosen path until later in life. Nevertheless, these parents played an important part in his early development.

5. All three men traveled extensively, with two of them visiting different parts of the world. These trips allowed for growth through formal and nonformal education, active ministry to people who were of another culture, as well as opportunity to learn from new situations.

6. Each man had organizational responsibility. As senior leaders, these men felt the responsibility to serve others before a task or vision could be accomplished. They all had to wrestle with the challenges of organizational growth and administration.
7. The training of future leaders was a priority to all these men. They invested energy in leader formation which necessitated their own continuing healthy formation.

8. Each man stated that suffering of one form or another was a significant part of their growth. They all believed that suffering was essential to leader formation.

Those processes where some divergence appeared between each man were:

1. Only the older leader had any formal education past the secondary school age. For the younger two men their education was mostly nonformal and informal.

2. Two of the men had very specific dreams that provided direction for their future ministry. The other man did not state that a dream was a significant factor in his life even though he gave his life to significant visions.

3. One man, the leader with more formal education, identified books as playing a significant part of his development. He had access to materials outside of China that the other two men did not have.

4. Two men spoke of powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit as their teacher and guide. These men also participated in dramatic experiences where the Holy Spirit’s presence was identified as the source of healing.

5. One man spoke primarily of internal suffering as a formative experience. The other two men experienced external persecution through beatings and imprisonment.

Major Themes Identified

Several common themes emerged from the stories of the three exemplary Christian Chinese leaders along with the insights gained from the biographical studies of exemplary Christian Chinese leaders in the literature review. These themes will be identified under three categories and then discussed at greater length in the next chapter.
on findings and implications: (a) Themes that seem normative for leader formation in China; (b) Themes that have strong congruence; and (c) Themes that were inconclusive.

Within the Christian culture of the mid to latter part of the 20th century in China, those who stand out as exemplary have had certain experiences in common. Each man had a deep commitment in his relationship with God through prayer and highly valued the Bible. Since Bibles have been scarce in China during much of the 20th century most of these men were not in a position to take for granted having a copy. They each saw the Bible as their guide and the Holy Spirit as their teacher. There was also evidence of significant spiritual mentors who were instrumental in their spiritual growth at certain times in their lives.

All of these men had defining moments in life that they pointed to as significant markers. They experienced isolation, crises, conflict, and suffering. They experienced times of enlightenment and divine intervention. They all grew in their personal life and leadership role through faith challenges from societal pressures and financial hardships. From the personal interviews and biographical studies, each man exuded a servant’s posture that was certainly in part due to the life-shaping experiences they encountered.

There appeared to be some congruence of other themes with these exemplary leaders. Most of these men discerned and articulated a sense of destiny. Usually this sense of destiny unfolded over time. Some of these destiny revelations occupied their lives for a few years and others extended for many years, some even without an end in sight. These men acknowledged that they never felt abandoned by God although many did reach points of despair. They mostly had a confidence that God was directing and permitting the circumstances and opportunities they encountered. Marriage seemed to
play an important role for these men. They entered marriage recognizing that the life they were living would exact certain hardships. Many men relied on their wives to assume responsibility for running the family during prison terms. Nothing but words of appreciation were identified in regard to their spouses.

A few themes were identified that could not be conclusively stated as congruent. Formal education seemed to be appreciated by those who had the opportunity for such training. For many the reality of life in China just did not provide or permit such a luxury. Yet even those who experienced formal education were quick to state that knowledge without application and character is of little value. Spiritually nourishing literature was also appreciated by those who had access to it but the others made do with the little they had. Some expressed concern that too much access to books and other resources seemed to detract from placing the proper priority on Bible study and direct communion with God. Some men experienced miraculous signs and wonders while others did not seem to make this an important issue. All men experienced the reality of God in very apparent ways but only some seemed to indicate that supernatural experiences should be normative.

The life journeys of the men studied were masterpieces in the making. The themes identified were rich colors that portrayed highly desirable images. Although few people would choose the kinds of experiences these men encountered, every spiritually sensitive person longs for the results that their portrait displays. When reflecting on these men and the richness of their lives together, the mosaic of stories whispers for the onlooker to step into the scene and join the journey. The road is not easy, but it is
satisfying and the destination of servant leadership is worth every inconvenience along the way.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Although the terminology of servant leadership may not have the best connotation in certain parts of the world, the essential elements of servant leadership are certainly evident. My research of exemplary Christian leaders in China showed that they embodied much of what is recognized in a servant leader. Dreamer had a bent from early in his life to help people as expressed in his dreams. His teachable spirit as a growing Christian is consistent with a servant leader posture. However, the leadership philosophy he helped to develop for his church network that encourages a natural rotation of senior leaders being replaced by younger emerging leaders clearly exemplifies a servant leadership perspective. IBC demonstrated a servant leader posture by how he absorbed criticism without striking back and through his commitment to train younger leaders for assuming some of his own major responsibilities. Finisher also demonstrated this noble trait of humility coupled with emotional security by sponsoring the training of his replacement and completely stepping aside once the younger man was ready to assume leadership.

In this chapter I will analyze the results of the research against the initial research problem and integrate the findings with the theoretical foundations reviewed in the literature. First, appropriate terminology for what we call a servant leader in the West
will be considered for China. Second, the research findings will be applied to servant leader formation in China. An application will be made to the theoretical knowledge base of leader formation and adult learning theory. Third, I will address how servant leadership is poised to make a major contribution in the future of the nation of China, especially in our rapidly globalizing world. Finally, I will present what has been learned from this Asian context and some timeless biblical truths as being relevant elsewhere for leader formation. The issue of how this study might contribute to the understanding of universal leadership principles will be considered.

**Chinese Servant Leader Terminology**

The systemic theoretical foundation woven throughout this study is the broad framework of servant leadership. Although not always identified as a theory, servant leadership is a model that has widespread acceptance in the West. It is most closely linked to the well-accepted transformational leadership theory. Servant leadership, or its cultural equivalent, was the basis for selection of the research participants and is the model presented as most possibly positioned for universal application. In order to study the concept of servant leadership in China it is necessary to translate the term into one that is culturally equivalent. Since the concept of a servant has more negative connotations in other cultures (including China) than it does in America today (K. Chen, 2002), a dynamic equivalent term is needed. An understanding of Chinese culture and the related core values help in understanding how the term servant leader best fits within the context of China. The neutral and seemingly universally accepted term exemplary is being used in this research. Several alternative terms may be appropriate.
Crow (2000, p. 246) extracts the following descriptions from Confucius’s teaching on “the superior man:”

The superior man thinks of virtue; the small man thinks of comfort. The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain. The superior man, in his conduct of himself, he is humble; in serving his superiors, he is respectful; in nourishing the people, he is kind; in ordering the people, he is just. A superior man helps the distressed, but does not add to the wealth of the rich. The superior man has neither anxiety nor fear. The superior man seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of men, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities. In governing, a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires, is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect. The superior man is easy to serve and difficult to please . . . the mean man is difficult to serve and easy to please. The superior man has a dignified ease without pride. The mean man has pride without a dignified ease. Superior men, and yet not always virtuous, there have been, alas! But there never has been a mean man, and, at the same time, virtuous.

Reagan (2000, pp. 105-106) finds the following description from Confucian teaching on the “good man that complements qualities of the superior man”:

Living in a time of considerable social, political, and economic unrest and uncertainty, Confucius advocated a conception of the good man (chun-tzu) that emphasizes the twin qualities of benevolence (ren) and propriety (li). . . . Chun-tzu is perhaps best translated as gentleman. The notion of li is a very important concept in understanding Confucian thought. . . . Originally, the term referred merely to proper conduct in general, and in religious and ritualistic settings in particular, but for Confucius, though ritual and its proper performance was an important aspect of Confucian thought, li entailed both knowledge of traditional practice and behavior, and a sensitivity that would allow their modification as required by contemporary circumstances.

Reagan goes on to quote Creel’s comment on li from Confucius and the Chinese Way:

“Li was in fact a kind of balanced wheel of conduct, tending to prevent either deficiency or excess, guiding toward the middle path of social beneficial conduct” (p. 106).

Mark Mir (personal correspondence, July 26, 2004), scholar at the Ricci Institute in San Francisco, believes that virtue, not humility, was the goal of Chinese ethical practice. Mir commented on a cultural equivalent term for servant leader saying,
If the term "virtue" is not sufficient, it may be possible to substitute phraseology from Chinese terms that include "sincerity" or "heart/mind" for xin, or to interpret the term "gentleman (junren, junzi)" as one who has this quality. Leadership in itself is subtle in Chinese traditional thought (as in Western), i.e. the ideal ruler (leader) leads by example and the effect of moral authority. In a business/commercial/financial setting, this authority must be adapted from its originally political/ethical imperative. This is because, as in traditional Chinese, Western and many other cultural traditions (with the notable exception of Islam), trade and the merchant classes were at the bottom of the social ladder. Of course, the Chinese have neatly worked around this, and we can see they are businessmen of extraordinary energy.

Covell (1986, p. 10) goes so far as saying that the character trait most in demand in all relationships is ren, often translated ‘benevolence.’ The Chinese pictogram for it is made up of two symbols, one for person and the other for number 2. By ren or beneficence is meant an attitude of harmony and goodness that is to prevail between two persons. If they cultivate this virtue, both of them will attain to the status of a sage or superior person. Derr, Roussillon, and Bournois (2002) refer to the Confucian teaching that “a worthy man is, in the first place, a benevolent man” (p. 156). They go on: “Mo Zhu, another scholar in early Chinese history, is the first person to develop a systematic view on worthy people. In his essay Honoring the Worthy, Mo Zhu says that worthy people are those who possess righteousness, virtue, and talent” (p. 156). Dai and Zheng (2002, p. 156) also observe that worthy people are those who possess righteousness, virtue and talent. They call the ideal Confucian man the “ethical man,” and that virtue is the most important talent such a man can possess. “Being virtuous, which constitutes being talented, was the criterion most often used in selecting and evaluating officials in China’s history” (p. 166).

Since this study was about Christian servant leaders in China and since the Bible is a trans-cultural reference book, a look at worthy biblical terminology could help in identifying a term most appropriate for China. Two leaders in the Bible stand out and are
described as above others in terms of their character. Daniel (9:23; 10:11) is said to be highly esteemed. The Chinese translation of this word refers to one worthy of great affection or being highly loved. Such a person has enormous intrinsic value. The other outstanding biblical character is Moses, who was said to be the most humble man on earth (Num 12:3). This Chinese word means very humble or humility to the greatest capacity. These men were clearly exemplary and illustrated what Lau Tzo is credited as observing long ago (cited in Bynner, 1944, pp. 34–35):

A leader is best when people barely know that he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worst when they despise him. ‘Fail to honor people, they fail to honor you;’ but of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will all say, ‘We did this ourselves.’

So, the search for an appropriate term to characterize what is identified in the West as a servant leader has resulted in such words as: virtuous, ethical, worthy, humble, and benevolent. Whereas the terms virtuous and humble relate more to the inner life, benevolent and ethical relate more to congruence between the inner and outward life. As was noted in the biblical meaning of the word “form,” the exemplary leader reflects outwardly an internal reality. Benevolent is perhaps the better term for China. However, since this term is not as widely recognized as exemplary and was not recognized as a superior term until later in this study, it was not used as the primary descriptor.

Servant Leader Formation in China

Leader formation for this study has been defined as the organic process through which a person is transformed internally through learning experiences so that doing is a congruent outworking of knowing and being. By organic I mean a natural process where many interacting relationships work together to produce a better-connected whole, in
contrast to a mechanistic process where intentional designs are applied through a cause and effect method to produce a predetermined product. Because moral and ethical character formation is critical to effective leadership, an organic approach is clearly superior. Servant leadership formation in China will be analyzed through the developmental processes items critical in Chinese culture.

Chinese Insights on Leader Formation

As a necessary foundation for this study, cross-cultural dynamics are considered in order to appropriately compare Western and Asian thinking on leadership. An understanding of communication processes is critical for accurate perceptions in another culture. In view of the significant part that culture plays in all of life, it should be expected that leader formation would have certain unique nuances among the Chinese. Reagan (2000) presents a scholarly discussion of educational traditions from around the world. He footnotes extensively and the bibliography is impressive. “Until recently, Western scholars tended to view non-Western educational traditions as largely irrelevant and unrelated to their own concerns, and, when they have dealt with such areas at all, they all too often have done so through a very potent and distorting lens” (p. 205).

Reagan further notes:

Education was the key to Confucius’ view of how the ideal social order could be achieved, and he was far from naïve about the intellectual and moral qualities of many of those born into positions of power and influence. . . . Education should identify those of talent, and help them to become men fit to rule others. (p. 108)

In essence, Confucius believed that a good education would change men for the better, and that education should be available to those capable of benefiting from it. However,
good education was only available to those who could pay for it in China and it required rigorous memorization and recitation that few could endure:

Schooling as such began for the boy around the age of 7 or 8, after he had mastered the basic elements of literacy. Working with a tutor or teacher in a small group, he began an educational process that relied extensively on the memorization of the Four Books (which included both the Analects and the Mencius, as well as two shorter works, the Great Learning and the Just Mean) and Five Classics (which included the Book of Changes, Book of Records, Book of Odes, Book of Rites, and the Spring and Autumn Record). (pp. 111–112)

Chin et al. (2001) believe that the top priority of Chinese leaders is to create harmony because it is the key to successful leadership. They refer to the Confucian tradition that encourages leaders in four practices: (a) Instill in followers a sense of security and peace of mind; (b) Identify each person’s particular talents as they contribute to the organization; (c) Establish oneself by promoting the success of the followers; and (d) Enrich followers by extending to them opportunities for advancement.

When looking at character formation in China, Yao (1996) notes that ethical thought and morality in China began from personal ethics in the context of family and clan, expanded from clan to society, and then to “All-under-Heaven.” If a person can rectify his own heart and cultivate his moral character, then in the family the father will be compassionate, the son filial, the older brother friendly, the younger respectful, and the couple harmonious. Outside the family, one makes friends with trust, leaders and subordinates have a mutual obligation to each other, neighbors are considerate, people get together politely and reasonably in the country, and all people think of others in terms of brotherhood in the whole world (pp. 244–245).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) made the point that how individuals are viewed in China plays a critical role in development. The “self” in China is “externally ascribed,
subordinated to the collective, seeks fulfillment through the performance of duty, and
would have little meaningful existence apart from ordained roles and patterns of
affiliation" (pp. 129–130). Pratt (1991, p. 285) concurs:

Cultural, social, political, and psychological influences are shown to result in
different conceptions of self within China and the United States. The Chinese
construction of self emphasizes continuity of family, societal roles, the supremacy of
hierarchical relationships, compliance with authority, and the maintenance of
stability. Identity is, largely, externally ascribed, subordinated to the collective, and
seeks fulfillment through performance of duty, ordained roles, and patterns of filial
loyalty.

Good education was expected to produce harmonious and moral leaders who would serve
the community more than oneself.

Western adult learning theory in education has points of divergence with China.
Often, attempts to engage Chinese adults in expressing opinions and feelings or
participating in evaluations and dialoguing critically are not successful. The novice may
assume that this is due to certain reticence or courtesy but it actually goes much deeper.
Chinese culture and society shows high respect for those in authority as well as a strong
desire for harmony, making critical dialogue difficult. I found certain adult learning
distinctions during the several years when I was teaching Asians in Singapore. It
required persistence to get students to dialogue in small groups and to feel comfortable in
expressing divergent opinions. However, over time some progress was made. Moreover,
Chinese who had extended contact with Westerners seem to develop critical thinking and
dialogue ability which is only expressed freely in contexts with Westerners or other
Asians who can understand the value of such discussion without shock. Pratt (1991)
observer this same trend with most students coming to North America from China who
reflect standard Chinese values but at the end of their studies they speak much more of
individual desires. After being back in China for a year they often revert to standard Chinese ways.

Throughout the world the Chinese are known as high achievers in work and education. Pye (2000, p. 250) made the point that “although scorning physical exertion and hard work, Confucianism upheld the importance of self-improvement, and hence the culture respected achievement motivation.” Referring to Max Weber as the unsurpassed master of the cultural origins of capitalism, Pye notes that Weber went into great detail describing Chinese character as well-adjusted, having unlimited patience, controlled politeness, insensitivity to monotony, and having a capacity for uninterrupted hard work. These character traits that have allowed Chinese to excel economically were formed in a culture that values certain qualities which also happen to be essential to leadership.

Personal development in China is a high value even though it might not be solely the individual’s decision. Self-development in China is not an individualistic effort but based upon its perceived good for the family and community. “To know what to do, in Chinese society, assumes an understanding and acceptance of the correspondence between a rational sense of duty and a moral sense of obligation” (Pratt, 1991, p. 288). So, it is the community or the state that decides when personal growth is appropriate for the common good.

Concerning methods of education in China, Ward (1974, p. 7) writes:

In just over a quarter-century the world’s largest nation has mobilized human resources in a way and on such a scale as to constitute significant precedents. One of the intriguing characteristics of education in China today is the reduction of the distinction between formal and nonformal education.

Sawyer and Ward (1974) also note that historically China wanted mass education for the population, but recognizing that formal education alone could never do this they utilized
nonformal education widely to accomplish the goal. They shifted from private tutoring of the privileged society to the mass education of the common people.

Although education for common people is more available today than ever before, intentional leader formation is reserved for those of recognized talent. Dai and Zheng (2002) discuss at some length how to identify and manage talented people so they successfully fit into proper positions, which is a central component of Confucian teaching. They refer to Yi Chou Shu in one of the earliest history books in China (The Remnant of the Chou Dynasty) who identified six methods for discovering talented people: observing sincerity, appraising words, listening to sounds, observing expressions, observing hidden signs, and appraising virtue. Liu Shao of the Han dynasty developed seven methods to identify a talented person: determine with whom the person associates, identify the person’s motives, observe changes in emotion to validate the person’s integrity, analyze the person’s level of expertise, observe the person’s interaction with others, ascertain whether the person is modest and polite, and discover the person’s strengths through his or her weaknesses. Dai and Zheng (2000) conclude that “talented people are central to the stability and prosperity of the state, or any other enterprise, and identifying and managing talented are prerequisites for prosperity” (pp. 158–159).

Once talented people are identified, leader formation can be focused. Although the literature does not specifically address the process of leader formation in China (Yao, 1996), it is natural to suppose that general human development theory applies to Chinese. Branner (1983) discusses the three main traditional Chinese leadership formation models. First is an educational model where in the past all scholars were elderly. Confucius primarily used an informal approach to education through questioning and discussion.
Second is a religious model where most religious leaders came from the lower stratum of society beginning with young and inexperienced boys, thus belittling the profession.

Third is a political model where leaders tended to have power but not respect. All three of these traditional models still exist with great influence, although as already noted, the political model is diminishing with the recent globalization trends. Formal, nonformal and informal training are available, but for religious training it is nonformal and informal that predominate, largely because of legal restrictions.

Yang (2002) shows that a shift has occurred from leadership appointments in state-owned enterprises of China for political reasons to knowledge and skill-based competency. Li (2000), a China bank president and board chair, also observes that nepotism no longer predominates to the degree it did in the past. More employees are hired based on their ability, while family members no longer hold the key management positions. In recent years there has been an increasing weight placed on managerial and economic results. There are evident signs that 'virtuacracy' is giving way to 'meritocracy' as the key factor in the selection and promotion of future leaders. Still, a critical element in selection and promotion is the personal network of loyal relationships.

In general, Chinese people value education and development, being by nature high achievers. Identifying talented people and then intentionally nurturing them has been practiced for millennia. Of major importance to leader formation in China is recognizing the role that the family, clan, community and even the state play in deciding what kind of development is best and who should be sponsored for development. Along with development in specific knowledge and competencies, the formation of a person in terms of the heart and moral character is highly valued. The desired end is for leaders to
harmoniously serve the good of the community. From my research I find men who valued education but primarily learned through nonformal and informal means since formal education was not readily available; these men were encouraged by their community to grow in their knowledge and leadership capacity; and they were highly motivated to serve, so much so that they willingly endured considerable suffering. The disposition of each man showed a quiet humility springing from deep character formation. Each man in turn searched for talented men and women to nurture and invested heavily in the training of future leaders.

Application of the Theoretical Basis for Leader Formation

This study sought to answer one central research question: What events, experiences, people and other formative processes contributed as critical to the formation of exemplary Christian leaders in China? Clinton (1988a, 1988b, 1989) has done the most definitive theoretical work on studying process items contributing to the formation of leaders. He identified six developmental phases that leaders go through which are distinguished in three ways: differing process items, boundary events, and differing spheres of influence. Walling's classification of 10 primary ongoing positive and negative process items will be considered in the formation of the participants in the research. When I prepared for my interviews I was wondering which of these items would emerge as prominent. Since this narrative inquiry was inductively approached by allowing each participant to tell his story with only a general direction suggested, sometimes the depth of discussion needed to accurately assess some of these process items was not possible. Positive ongoing process items will be considered first.
Positive Process Items

1. Integrity Checks: tests that include dealing with temptation, conflict in general, values, completing commitments and response to persecution.

This process item requires a good amount of self-disclosure and there was not sufficient time in each of the interviews to develop the trust needed to divulge such information. Forms of persecution fall in this category of integrity according to Clinton but since persecution and suffering were identified as such a major process item, it will be covered separately. One difficult area of integrity is to watch others suffer because of your decisions when you cannot help. Personal integrity is challenged by how one justifies his or her values while watching others suffer.

For example, as a young Christian, Dreamer stopped working in order to give himself to the study of the Bible. His wife and mother in particular suffered; his wife was forced to support him out of threat of divorce and his mother suffered as the outlet from the father’s frustration. Dreamer looks back as one who had zeal without knowledge that caused others’ harm. Also, Infant Before Cross could do nothing when a co-worker had to endure significant suffering. This man was preaching in a certain province, was arrested, tied tightly, and beaten. A woman asked the police if she could give him some food and drink. When the man thanked God for the provision, the police threw the food down and put him in prison. This prisoner’s wife died from hunger since her husband could not provide for her and the daughters came to prison asking their father what they should do. He said they would have to beg for food but to only to do so from Christians.

2. Word Checks: tests that assess one’s capacity to find guidance from God through the Bible and to submit to such direction.
One illustration of how this process item surfaced through the research was stated by Infant Before Cross. We see how the Bible was the source of providing clarity to a potentially divisive situation when a pastor once preached a message about three books that were being well accepted: a scroll that recorded those who were going to hell; the book of the lamb containing the names of those going to heaven; and the book of life with the names of those in between heaven and hell. God impressed upon Infant Before Cross not to accept this message. Another time at a conference, people were asking about eternal security because some churches in the area had invited a speaker who strongly emphasized that no matter how bad someone was, he could never lose his salvation. Infant Before Cross and others felt that something was wrong with this teaching. Several leaders had the same vision of the Bible opened to the book of Hebrews and chapter 6 where there they read and understood that the message being taught was not accurate.

After dealing with these two heretical teachings, Infant Before Cross decided that the leaders needed to study the Bible to learn the truth. They all committed themselves to go home and study on their own and then after 6 months they came back together to share what they had learned. Each person came to the same conclusion that salvation was totally by grace, but after receiving this gift, believers had the responsibility to hold on to salvation; if they slipped, they had to repent, and if they did not repent, then they could lose their salvation. When China first opened up to outside visitors, much good teaching came in but also some bad extremes entered that divided the church, causing some people to leave. Infant Before Cross and the leaders always relied on the Holy Spirit to be their source of growth and to look to him as their Bible teacher.
3. Divine Contact: the presence of some significant individual at crucial times to
guide or challenge a person.

Finisher identified one of his early mentors who marked his life, M. K. Wang,
because of his caring for the young people. Wang had three distinctions: he cared for
people, he taught the teachings of the Bible, and he focused on who we are more than
what we do. Infant Before Cross also had a man who marked his life. When he was
young he was told about an older Christian man, one of the few survivors of the
persecution, who lived some 50 miles away. There was no public transportation so he
walked the distance to meet this man. He believed that the Holy Spirit clearly guided
him and they talked until 1 a.m. when he was so excited he could not sleep. At 3 a.m. the
older man awoke and told him it was time to start praying. Although dizzy from no
sleep, Infant Before Cross prayed with the man; at first the praying was quiet but soon it
built into fervent prayer. The man was earnestly asking God for revival with tear-filled
eyes. Infant Before Cross was very touched and moved to make prayer a high priority.
Dreamer was influenced by a Bible teacher who brought him to a life-changing
commitment to study and teach the Bible. In 1988, when a teacher from a neighboring
county taught on Matthew 1-5, it was the first time he had heard someone teach verse by
verse. The depth of the teaching he heard humbled him with the realization of how
shallow his own teaching was, and he resolved to learn how to teach better. He does not
now consider much of his initial teaching as correct, but he still saw much working of
God in their midst.

4. Faith Challenge: tests that assess one’s willingness to step out in some way
when the results are often unclear, such as at a crossroad or when life has stagnated.
Finisher exemplified this process item later in life when many people tend to rest and plateau rather than continue walking in faith. In 1992 he prepared for retirement from a salaried position and his transition from being school principal is a beautiful illustration of leadership succession. A younger man was identified, sent for sufficient theological training, and upon his return, Finisher quickly turned over his responsibility and the authority. He then removed himself physically from the school so the new man would not have to function under his shadow. This is very rare for anyone to do, let alone an Asian. Finisher believes that every leader must prepare to retire, and that two factors are important. First, a leader needs to be psychologically prepared to leave his position of status. Second, the leader needs to prepare financially so he does not need to be dependent on having a salary. He observed that many leaders “die in the pulpit” rather than “beside the pulpit” because they overstayed their usefulness rather than serving alongside to support other leaders. Financial preparation does not mean that one must love money but shows wise preparation to make a healthy transition. Finisher strongly believes that a leader must retire when he is still active and has influence. One of his associates asked him, “But everyone loves you, why now?” One must not wait until he is no longer wanted before stepping down but should do so when happy and with no regrets. If you step down with bitterness and being disliked by some people then many problems can result. The goal should be to retire happy since finishing well is very important.

Dreamer came to a crossroads in his life where his faith was challenged, and as he submitted to a healthy process of reflection he gained new strength for the future. Since 2001 Dreamer sought to develop a team of teachers who could serve the church network. Sadly, this dream has been beset with numerous problems. He struggled with eye
problems that limited his ability to read. He developed throat problems that affected his ability to speak strongly or for long times. He acquired a foot problem that limited his mobility. On top of this, his wife fell five floors, breaking numerous bones and requiring significant care. So discouraged, he lost his drive for ministry. When teaching on the life of Jacob, who wrestled with God and was crippled in his hip, Dreamer sensed that God had likewise touched him too much. At a near breaking point, he decided to stay at home and care for his wife. Then in November 2004, he experienced revival and a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. He was confident of God’s love but saw his own weakness and could not reconcile the two. One night he cried a long time and asked God why he is loved. He sensed God say, “I love you because I love you.” This resulted in a very special week of blessing. Every person and book he reads now has special meaning to spiritual growth.

Infant Before Cross had several significant faith challenges through times in prison. One occasion in 1995 was particularly faith stretching when he recounted his own story of being imprisoned for 135 days. He had come to his end where he could not bear it anymore and heard the Holy Spirit say to him, “Do you know how many people are praying for you?” Yes, there were some who opposed him, but many, many supported him. It was the Holy Spirit who sustained him.

5. Destiny Revelation: the ability to discern some major future direction that will then captivate the person for some time.

A destiny revelation occurred for Dreamer during a very significant conference that was held in the winter of 1990. He came to believe that it was now God’s appointed time in China. “The wind of the Holy Spirit was moving.” Dreamer had a fresh vision of Chinese churches joining other churches to complete world evangelization. At this
conference leaders from all around came together for the first time. One worship song which they sang repeatedly became their heart-cry as a prayer asking the Lord to take them to the ends of the earth, and that they would follow forward through storms. Infant Before Cross said that the Lord constantly gave him fresh visions but his main destiny revelation came at the end of 2003 when he had a vision of a Chinese man carrying a sign with 1.3 billion written on his front and back. He understood this as representing the population of both China and the combined Muslim people. He took this vision to mean that the Church of China was to evangelize the Muslim world.

Finisher sensed his destiny as a young man, and this divine direction guided him throughout his life. He had won two speaking championships as a young man; his debate team in Hong Kong won a contest, and he also took first place in a speech contest. From these experiences he concluded that he wanted to “give his best to the Lord.” He had a peaceful heart in preparing to enter seminary but shortly before classes started he became frightened. He developed the flu and high fever for a whole month. During this time he read much, especially on the life of Hudson Taylor who greatly influenced him. Taylor once said, “If I had 1000 pounds I would give them all to China. If I had 1000 lives I would give them all to China.” This commitment by a foreigner to China greatly impacted Finisher’s desire to give his life for full-time service to God.

**Negative Process Items**

Along with the previous five positive ongoing process items, there are also negative process items that form a leader. For most people, resisting change is natural and stability is preferred. Change does not usually result until an unpleasant or crisis situation emerges. McCauley et al. (1998) references “Ron Heifetz (1994), director of
the Leadership Education Project at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard
University, as seeing the surfacing and orchestration of conflict as one of the hardest but
most valuable tasks of leadership” (p. 13). They also note that “people don’t develop the
capacity for leadership without being in the throes of the challenge of leadership” (p. 14).
Moxley (1998) discusses the issue of hardships in greater detail. “At the core of any
hardship experience is the sense of loss: of credibility, a sense of control, self-efficacy,
and former identity” (p. 196). Through hardship we turn inward to evaluate strengths and
weaknesses and to determine what is important in life. Some lessons learned from
hardships are the recognition of our limits and blind spots, developing sensitivity and
compassion, coping with circumstance beyond one’s control, balance, and flexibility.
Since hardships are unavoidable, it is wise to recognize that they will come, embrace
them when possible, seek to discern lessons, and learn how to eventually move on

Bennis (2002) discusses what he calls leadership crucibles that can take many
forms. Some are violent, life-threatening events, while others are more prosaic episodes
of self-doubt. Prejudice and illness can be crucibles. On the positive side, a powerful
mentor can be a crucible. For leaders, the important issue is how they were challenged,
how they met the challenge, and became better leaders. Bennis notes several other
formative characteristics that seem common to all leaders—characteristics that were
formed, or at least exposed, in the crucible. Burns (1978) agrees by saying that the
leadership developmental process has the two critical components of conflict and choice.
The sharper the conflict, the greater the role of a leader will tend to be. So, we should
expect negative process items to yield deep insight into leader formation.
6. Negative Preparation: experiences that set the stage for what emerges through failure, restlessness, or longing for something better.

Dreamer was the one man who experienced early in his life the negative preparation that helped to instill within him a desire to give his life for something really worthwhile. Born to humble parents in a village setting, Dreamer lived with poverty and danger from constant flooding. His grandparents were the "lord's of the land," and this remote connection with wealth and prestige caused great alienation from his peers during the Cultural Revolution. He was cursed by his friends, and even the adults despised him. It is understandable that he grew up with an inferiority complex. Seeking to overcome the difficulties of his heritage, Dreamer worked hard at being the best student possible. He was a top student during elementary school, but because of an illness his grades later suffered and he dropped out of school. After the Cultural Revolution ended, land was divided and his family received 10 acres. His father was very competitive, and his life revolved around work. Dreamer, the first boy of five children, worked hard with his father and felt hopeless that life was only about work. He sensed that there had to be more to life.

7. Life Crisis: a crisis situation characterized by life-threatening, intense pressure in human affairs in which the meaning and purpose of life are searched out with a result that the leader experiences God in a new way as the source, sustainer, and focus of life.

Both Dreamer and Infant Before Cross experienced life crises through their many experiences of suffering and imprisonment. A different crisis that forced Dreamer to seriously evaluate his life calling came after coming to recognize the certain arrogance he was displaying. From 1988—1990 he stopped teaching, did various jobs for employment,
stayed at home, and lived a secluded, self-reflective life. In 1990 his wife became sick needing hospital care, and he saw this as his fault. Several times he promised to serve God more faithfully if his wife was healed, but would then break the promise and she would get sick again. Finally he and his wife made a serious recommitment to God.

Infant Before Cross identified one of his life crises just as the Cultural Revolution came to an end. He easily could have died, but providential circumstances allowed him to live. In 1976 when the Cultural Revolution ended, the government began to arrest criminals from the past 10 years. As a Christian leader he was arrested and put into the worst prison with the very worst people. If one can survive in such a place one can survive anywhere. Along with three other Christians he was forced to march through the streets while a drummer beat the drum to attract attention. The public shame was very humiliating. He was tightly tied to the point of the rope cutting into his muscle. He was fearful of being beaten again and asked God for relief when it started to rain so heavily that the prisoners were taken inside. They were handed some food but it was rotten. Although they hoped for a reprieve, the lady in charge wanted to have a confrontation meeting which was intended to force the men to give up their faith or be beaten to death. Many prisoners had no hesitancy in beating another to death. Each prisoner was interrogated and when Infant Before Cross stood up he felt the Holy Spirit come upon him, and forgetting where he was, he started preaching. All the people, including the lady in charge, listened to him closely until 4 p.m. when it was time to leave, so there were no further beatings.

8. Ministry Conflict: those instances in a ministry situation where a leader learns lessons via the positive and negative aspects of conflict with regard to: (a) The nature of
conflict, (b) Possible ways to resolve conflict, (c) Possible ways to avoid conflict, (d) Ways to creatively use conflict, and (e) Perception of God's personal shaping through the conflict. Leadership backlash refers to the reactions of followers, other leaders within a group, and Christians inside and outside the group, to a course of action taken by a leader because of various ramifications that arise due to the action taken. The situation is used in the leader's life to test perseverance, clarity of vision, and faith.

Finisher experienced ministry conflict in the form of backlash from those he considered fellow leaders. This can be a very discouraging form of suffering. When asked about the role of persecution in the formation of a leader, Finisher noted that God can use many kinds of difficulty in shaping a person's life. The government can use murder and killing and beatings, but difficulty can also come through disagreements and rebellion by church members. Good church leaders can bring great pain to a pastor by mistreating him. Since 1950, people in China have suffered much in terms of physical persecution. Leaders in other parts of the world equally suffer emotionally from both Christians and non-Christians. Some leaders say that this emotional suffering can be more difficult to bear than physical harm. The fact is that all leaders will suffer some persecution since this is how the Lord purifies them and learns the extent of their love.

Infant Before Cross also had to deal with criticism from his peers. The 1970s were the golden years in his province, building upon the good foundation laid by missionary work of the past. After the Cultural Revolution ended, believers were unified. In the 1980s outside influences brought different theologies and 50% of the Christians joined Three-Self churches. He was greatly hurt by false accusations from leaders with whom he had worked when accused of accepting money from outside sources and taking
bribes. This was far more hurtful to him and his family than his prison experience. During this time he adopted the name of Nehemiah, in part because of the tremendous opposition Nehemiah experienced from sources both outside and inside his community.

For Dreamer, such ministry conflict came after being physically and emotionally expended from traveling and experiencing significant difficulties. Instead of his peers coming alongside to encourage him, he experienced the opposite when no one initially comforted or visited him. Many times when reading the Bible he did so with only his mind. Nevertheless, these subsequent days were times when he felt God directly speaking to him. Since the church leaders did not give him any further travel ministry, he stayed at home and studied the Bible.

9. Obedience Check: tests that use circumstances to ascertain one’s commitment to move ahead even though the consequences may appear bad and in so doing to show submission.

From attending a conference when the leaders sensed God directing them to send out many missionaries, Dreamer and other leaders had to respond in obedience, even though doing so might be sending people to their death. As a result of this conference many of the current-day leaders emerged. One couple was sent as missionaries to a remote province which was not an easy commitment because leaving was like saying goodbye without ever expecting to see one’s people again. They anticipated difficulty and even death but because being sent was a great privilege they went out with joy. At another time, after a major flood that was broadcasted internationally, Christians from around the world sent money for the relief and a sizable portion was set aside to send out
missionaries. Dreamer and some friends were sent out to a remote province on a difficult assignment where he became very ill and encountered much opposition.

Infant Before Cross often had situations that forced him to respond in obedience. He chose to help others even at personal danger and could credibly tell others how important it was. When telling of these accounts at a conference he attended in Jerusalem, he summarized the message with four main lessons that he learned. First, we begin life in a lowly state, similar to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. Second, we grow through much difficulty, like the years Jesus ministered in Galilee. Third, we go through lonely times such as when Jesus was at Gethsemane. And fourth, we must follow Jesus to Calvary where we suffer with the Lord and give ourselves for the good of other people. Infant Before Cross modeled a lifestyle of obedience and submission.

10. Isolation: the setting aside of a leader from normal ministry involvement in its natural context, usually for an extended time either positively (retreat) or negatively (abandonment) motivated in order to experience God in a new or deeper way.

As has already been explained, Dreamer and Infant Before Cross experienced isolation through imprisonment and suffering. All three men experienced isolation through ministry conflict. Each man also knew what it was to have many people depending on him for leadership decisions and feeling the weight of that responsibility.

In speaking about loneliness, which is a form of isolation, Sanders (1977, p. 107) says, “It is often heartbreakingly to have to make decisions of far-reaching importance which affect the lives of loved fellow workers—and to make them alone. This is one of the heaviest prices to pay, but it must be paid.” The Apostle Paul experienced such isolation in leadership and wrote about it in the same context as suffering: “Apart from
such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches’” (2 Cor 11:28). Isolation can be a powerful formative influence in a leader’s life.

The concept of process items is understood to a certain extent in China. Yao (1996, p. 326) summarizes her study of Chinese leaders with certain qualities and processes of leader formation as positive and others as needing enhancement. The main positive leadership attributes were: persistence, insight, and commitment to the common good. She believed that what is most needed now for Chinese leaders is personal integrity, love of people, being persistent, emphasizing human rights, respecting diversity, attending to the little things, planning programs, and team work.

Through the lens of process items it is possible to understand how leaders are formed. Certain process items are seen as formational through positive influences and others through negative influences. Time is required for these process items to become internalized so they can change results. By looking at the story of a leader’s life chronologically (time line), it is possible to identify those processes most critical to leader formation. The 10 process items considered in this study provided a good structure for evaluating the exemplary leaders who were interviewed. These leaders all met the descriptors identified by Clinton (1995, p. 505) for those he studied who have finished well: (a) They maintain a personal vibrant relationship with God right up to the end; (b) They maintain a learning posture and can learn from various kinds of sources—life especially; (c) They evidence Christ-likeness in character as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in their lives; (d) Truth is lived out in their lives so that convictions and promises of God are seen to be real; (e) They leave behind one or more ultimate contributions; and (f)
They walk with a growing awareness of a sense of destiny and see some or all of it fulfilled.

Application of the Theoretical Basis for Adult Learning

A theoretical foundation for this study concerns adult learning theory, which emerges from human development theory, and informs us that people grow and learn best when they are self-motivated and directed to effectively engage in relevant study that is built upon prior knowledge (Freire, 1970; Knowles, 1973; Lewin, 1951; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Vella, 2002). The arena in which learning takes place (formal, nonformal or informal) must be appropriate for type and extent of formation desired. Leader formation in China, like leader formation anywhere, should be based upon established adult learning theory in that particular context.

Chinese people have the reputation of being outstanding students in the United States, partly because only the most promising students from China get to study outside of the country. Nevertheless, formal education fits many Chinese very well. From living 7 years in Singapore and having my children go through the Singaporean school system, I learned about the rigorous efforts parents expect of their children since as a small country it is dependent on high performance people to keep its competitive economic edge. However, as we have seen earlier, the Confucian mind-set of many Chinese includes a high value for education. Formal education is something in which Chinese people have excelled.

Because of political realities over the last 50 years, formal education for Christian leaders has been restricted to the government-controlled institutions. There has been a natural political bias (Aikman, 2003) exerted through the Religious Affairs Bureau and
the Three-Self Patriotic Movement over the theological training institutions. Even so, there have emerged men who have developed in knowledge, skill and being. Of the men interviewed for this study only one had higher formal theological education and this was gained outside of China. His conclusion about education was that education must be considered both in the classroom as well as in everyday life.

The majority of Christian leader formation in China takes place through house-church training structures which are nonformal in nature and small in size so as not to attract unnecessary attention from government authorities. In 2003 and again in 2004 I was able to teach through translation in two of these training centers, each having a mixture of about 30 younger men and women. I am acquainted with several men who travel into China to occasionally help teach at these centers and others who have taken up residency within the country to assist with training more frequently. The latter group usually has some degree of language fluency. The content for this training depends on the expressed needs of the training center and the specialty of the trainers.

Over the last 20 years, Western trainers have significantly influenced much of the format and content in these training centers. An overemphasis on content presented in a one-directional fashion has grown common. The results appear to show a decline in the quality of church leaders (Webber, 2003). Unfortunately, such bad application of adult learning theory that has not worked well in the West has been uncritically accepted in many parts of China, and with similar results. The preferred approach is for well-intentioned foreigners to learn from Chinese church leaders what content and teaching format are best for the people they serve.
Two of the men interviewed grew up through these nonformal leadership training centers. They learned biblical content through personal and small group study. For the most part they had only the Bible as a text and the Holy Spirit as their primary teacher. Occasionally there would be a conference where some more mature teacher would speak. Security concerns, however, limited such larger group learning opportunities. They also learned informally through sharing with one another as they had opportunity to meet. Skills were mostly developed through on-the-job training. Many times learning happened through trial and error methods. It was their passion to know and serve God that motivated them to learn in any and every way possible.

Sharpe (personal interview, November 4, 2004), who both lived in China for a few years and now travels into China regularly for training, observes that most leader formation in the house church networks emerges through shared experiences. Two Chinese words communicate concepts that explain the importance of relationships. *Tong Gong* is the word for co-workers, and *Tuan Dui* is the word for task group or team. *Tong Gong Tuan Dui* refers to the team of co-workers who develop a deep commitment to each other where there is life-on-life learning in the context of ministry. The Latin term, *primus inter pares*, or first among equals, is often the relationship that exists in these teams. When a person of younger spiritual maturity is brought into such a group he or she undergoes a natural apprenticeship. Often this group finds themselves at odds with governmental authorities, which results in persecution and suffering to a greater or lesser degree. It is from the close relationships that develop in this *Tong Gong Tuan Dui* that a church network emerges with the team serving as the network leaders.
Leader formation practice in China informs us that nonformal and informal training that is highly experiential is clearly preferred. In time as political and religious realities change, formal training will probably take a more prominent role, yet it could never replace the more experiential training formats. There is no question that experience plays a critical role in leader formation, but what is less certain is which types of experiences play a greater formative role. From the research, several experiential process items emerged, with suffering being foremost.

The Role of Suffering

One component of leader formation in China has been heightened in the last several decades and is worthy of attention. This negative process item involves the role of suffering. If one reflects on people who are highly admirable, one finds that they usually have had some significant difficulty and suffering in their lives. The process of dealing with suffering is a powerful life-shaping experience. The leader committed to leader formation is most effective when he or she can speak out of life experience and not just out of academic knowledge and theory. Helping people maximize learning through suffering is a major role for the leader who thinks developmentally.

Yao (1996, p. 26) addresses this subject with some Chinese history:

The ancient philosopher, Mencius (fourth cent. B.C.) once said, “when Heaven is about to confer a great office on any one, it first exercises his mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toil; it exposes his body to hunger, and subjects him to extreme poverty; and it confounds his undertakings. In all these ways it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies.”

Boyer (1999, p. 189) concurs from his qualitative research on 15 men that suffering was an integral part of his participants’ development. “The study’s findings indicate that development toward servant-leadership in these participants was frequently triggered by
their coping with hardship or disturbances.” Choi and Mai-Dalton (1998, 1999) provide a beginning attempt to consider the integration of self-sacrifice and leadership influence. Peck (1978) presents the compelling analysis from the realm of psychology that life is difficult because life is full of problems that must be solved, and the solutions are often difficult. It is human nature to avoid problems and the emotional suffering inherent in them, but learning to deal with suffering constructively is the key for healthy living. Collins (2001) refers to the “Stockdale Paradox” as a core quality of a Level 5 Leader. The major lesson that Admiral Jim Stockdale, the highest ranking United States military officer imprisoned in Vietnam, learned was, “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be” (p. 85).

In September of 1942, a young doctor, his new bride, his mother, father, and brother, were arrested in Vienna and taken to a concentration camp in Bohemia. Events there and at three other camps led the young doctor, prisoner 119,104, to realize the significance of meaningfulness in life. Viktor Frankl’s theory and therapy grew out of his experiences in Nazi death camps. He called his form of therapy “logotherapy” from the Greek word logos, which can mean “study, word, spirit, God, or meaning.” It is this last sense that Frankl focused on, although the other meanings are never far off. He refers to the “logos” of “pathos” or the meaning of suffering. Man's search for meaning is considered to be his most powerful driving force, the primary motivation in his life. We can confidently tell people that life has meaning for each and every individual. Meanings are unique and this uniqueness produces responsibility. Gordon Allport,
former professor at Harvard University, summarizes Frankl’s prison experience in the book’s preface by saying:

To live is to suffer; to survive is to find meaning in the suffering. If there is a purpose in life at all, there must be a purpose in suffering and dying. But no one can tell another what this purpose is. Each person must find out for himself, and must accept the responsibility that his answer prescribes. (Frankl, 1984, p. 11)

Bonhoeffer (1995) also suffered for Christ to the point of being martyred in Nazi Germany. His main concern was the watering down of grace and the Christian life into what he called, cheap grace. Real grace is costly and includes sacrifice and suffering. Suffering is the badge of discipleship. Discipleship means the allegiance to the suffering of Christ. Through suffering God forms his character in the believer. Lewis (1961, 1962) probes the problem and pain and suffering in order to reconcile this life reality with an understanding of the character and purposes of God in a person’s life. Sanders (1977) references Samuel Zwemer, pioneer missionary to North Africa, commenting that the only thing Jesus showed his disciples after his resurrection was his scars. Scars are the mark of faithful discipleship and true spiritual leadership. Furthermore, on the cost of leadership, Sanders identified these factors: self-sacrifice, loneliness, fatigue, criticism, rejection, pressure and perplexity, and the cost to others.

Suffering uniquely forms the character in several ways, one of which is producing perseverance and endurance. The Apostle Paul addressed this connection between suffering and character formation. “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope” (Rom 5:3-4). President Calvin Coolidge picked up on the great value of developing perseverance, which comes through suffering (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 43):
Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with great talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence, determination alone are omnipotent.

To this insight could be added those of Winston Churchill who galvanized Great Britain to “never, never, never, give up,” and Ronald Reagan who was determined to win over communism by “staying the course.”

Chinese leaders Nee, Wang, and Yuan all suffered much for Christ. All preached about the place of suffering in the Christian life, not as something to be avoided if possible but as something to be welcomed insofar as it was a fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. Lyall (2000) concludes his study of Chinese leaders saying, “Suffering is the price to be paid for spiritual maturity and the highest conformity to Christ in His death and resurrection” (p. 154). Each of the Chinese Christian leaders reviewed in the literature and interviewed in the research identified suffering as a critical developmental process in their formation.

This negative process item of suffering has been addressed separately and in greater depth because it rose to the surface as very important in leader formation and because it is not normally considered a prominent process item in the West. Clinton (1989) identifies suffering as one of many leader formation processes, but did not see it as essential as the research from this study concluded. It should be noted that suffering is not confined to just physical abuse, but also includes various forms of emotional and social harm. Suffering, whether physically or emotionally, is potentially a powerful force for producing humility in a person, and humility is a core component of servant leadership. In fact, it is hard to think of a true servant leader who does not also exemplify humility. Only secure people can be humble, and suffering has a way of removing all
forms of security other than those that are internal and spiritual. The Apostle Paul summarizes this discussion concisely when he says, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12).

The Role of Mentoring

One other formative process stands out from the research and biographical literature review that is worthy of noting separately. Mentors played a critical role in the formation of Chinese Christian leaders. Rooted in experiential (Kolb) and adult learning (Knowles) theory, the role of a significant guide cannot be underestimated in terms of influence toward positive life transformation. Every balanced approach to leader formation will include a heavy emphasis on experience along with establishing a network of mentors.

Mentoring is a term that has contemporary relevance but ancient roots. Normally identified as originating in the person of Mentor in Homer’s Odyssey, who guided young Telemachus in the absence of his father Odysseus, the concept of intentionally building into the life of another has both deep biblical and secular references. There are many older people today who mentored without awareness of the term. Perhaps because of how deficient educational structures have been in producing healthy leaders the term has come to new life. Many books today (such as Clinton, 1991, 1995; Cohen, 1995; Zachary, 2000) put detailed structure to a concept that was quite a natural part of society in the past through apprenticeships. This renaissance of personal development through mentoring has huge potential for the future of leader formation.

Krallmann (1994, p. 158), referring to P. J. Decker, agrees that social learning theory specifically acknowledges that most human behavior is learned observationally.
through modeling. Through the process of observing others, an individual forms an idea of how behaviors are performed and the effects are produced by codifying information to serve as a guide for action. Boyer (1999) studied the turning points in the development of male servant leaders and (citing Liebig’s 1990 research of virtuous leaders) he notes that two-thirds of the participants studied identified the influence of a role model to be the most significant factor in their development. Modeling can be a conscious or unconscious process where both behavior and attitudes of one person strongly influences another person through some form of exposure. In fact, Lucas (1999, pp. 127–128) asked the leaders in her study what experiences or events apart from people were their teachers. “None of the respondents identified a formal course or seminar on leadership that in some way influenced their leadership development.” Leadership role models were the primary influence for their development.

A very helpful and comprehensive model of mentoring has been designed by Paul Stanley (Stanley & Clinton, 1992) called the constellation model (see figure 3). This model illustrates the formative human sources in a leader’s formation. Under the broad category of mentoring relationships, Stanley identifies three types of influences for a given individual: those more experienced or mature people who serve as a guide called mentors; those of similar experience and maturity who jointly help each other called peers; and those who look to you as a mentor called mentorees. Mentors can serve in several ways: (a) Discipler; (b) Spiritual Guide; (c) Coach; (d) Counselor; (e) Teacher; (f) Sponsor; (g) Contemporary Mentor; and (h) Historical Mentor. The first three mentor types are intensive since they interact frequently over some period of time. The next three mentor types are occasional when the particular need arises. The last two mentor
types are passive in that they relate informally or through historical resources. Every person serious about the growth and development should have three levels of mentoring relationships active in their life: those they look to as mentors occasionally, those they relate to as peers, and those to whom they serve as a mentor. Mentors help people maximize their learning from the experiences of life. The deepest arena of formation that mentors seek to serve is in character formation.

Figure 3. Stanley’s Constellation Model of Mentoring Types

*Note.* Obtained directly from Paul Stanley and found in *Connecting: The mentoring relationships you need to succeed in life* (p. 162), by Stanley and Clinton, 1992; Colorado Springs: Navpress. Reprinted with permission.

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a guide called mentors; those of similar experience and maturity who jointly help each other called peers; and those who look to you as a mentor called mentorees. Mentors can serve in several ways: (a) Discipler; (b) Spiritual Guide; (c) Coach; (d) Counselor; (e) Teacher; (f) Sponsor; (g) Contemporary Mentor; and (h) Historical Mentor. The first three mentor types are intensive since they interact frequently over some period of time. The next three mentor types are occasional when the particular need arises. The last two mentor types are passive in that they relate informally or through historical resources. Every person serious about the growth and development should have three levels of mentoring relationships active in their life: those they look to as mentors occasionally, those they relate to as peers, and those to whom they serve as a mentor. Mentors help people maximize their learning from the experiences of life. The deepest arena of formation that mentors seek to serve is in character formation.

Each man studied in this research identified mentors and playing a major role in their formation to the point where they in turn intentionally mentored others. Mentoring relationships were often in a small peer community rather than just one-on-one. This form of learning has deep roots in China dating back to Confucius and still finds widespread application today.

Inconsistent Aspects of Leader Formation

From the review of literature on leader formation, a few other critical aspects to the development of leaders were identified that can be compared with the research participants. In most Western-based programs there is a consistent component of assessment to help the emerging leader understand certain aspects of personality, natural talent, spiritual gifting, and the like. There are helpful tests and assessment tools
available to assist leader formation programs in this area. However, only a few of these tools have been used successfully in a cross-cultural setting. Perhaps because of the cultural dynamics in preferring a more informal approach, use of assessments was not identified in the interviews or biographical studies of Chinese leaders.

Along with assessment, an integration of adult learning theory and practice has been heightened in recent days as a significant component in leader formation. Each person has a preferred learning style that should be considered in formation. Depending on the situation, how the leader relates to the follower is important in formation. The literature showed that there are cultural distinctions between the West and the East in andragogy. However, the interviews and biographies seemed to indicate a practical preference when considering adult learning principles and styles in Chinese leader formation. Contextualized adult learning theory did not appear to be developed or at least it did not clearly surface through this study. It also appeared normative to allow young leaders to take on challenging assignments after minimal training and to be given significant responsibility with authority.

Another component recognized in the literature is that leader formation should be a very high priority within every organization and appropriate resources must be directed for this activity. Because of the very fast growth in the church networks, the obvious need for forming leaders has made it a high priority. This need is both expressed by Chinese leaders and recognized as the major arena of partnership by foreign trainers. Significant foreign funding is helping to develop training materials, and many foreign trainers are assisting Chinese leaders with training at training centers on a continuous basis. Intentional leader formation is a real priority.
The process of identifying talented people who are especially worthy of intentional development is vital to leader formation. Clinton (1988b, p. 87) sees this as one of the most important roles of a leader: “A major responsibility of leadership is the selection and development of potential leaders. Mature leaders should openly and deliberately challenge potential leaders about specific needs and ministry opportunities.” Richard Clinton (1996) identifies the following criteria as markers for selecting those for leadership development: appetite for the word of God; orientation toward applying the word of God; orientation toward righteousness; orientation toward prayer; orientation toward hearing from God; and self-starting orientation. Collins (2001) speaks of getting the right people on the bus as essential for companies that became great.

On selecting talent, Buckingham and Coffman’s (1999) research from surveying great managers showed that talent (not experience, brainpower, or willpower) was the driving force behind an individual’s job performance. Whereas knowledge and skill are important, talents are the four-lane highways of the mind that carve your recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior. Selection for leader formation should be linked to those who have served as good followers. The qualities that make a good follower are the same that make a good leader. As Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary would say, “You will never be a good leader until you learn to be a good follower.” This study supported the importance of selecting the right people for intentional leader formation.

A couple areas of concern were identified from the interviews and literature review for leader formation in China. One relates to organizational leadership. All of the house-church networks in China must currently operate in a clandestine manner. Many have observed that the enormous growth of the church in China has been linked to the
political realities which necessitated a highly decentralized organization. What emerged has been a highly organic structure without much hierarchical direction. Yet as with most organizations, there comes a time where things get so big and complicated that intentional organization structure seems wise. From my past visits with leaders of four different networks, I sensed that training in contextualized organizational development for China is a felt need. There are just too many people to be cared for by existing leaders. Future growth will only amplify this concern.

Senior church leaders are very conscientious and carry a great sense of responsibility. My interviews and reading suggest that some of these men have not developed the practice sufficiently of intentionally disengaging for reflection. This only happened as a result of a life crisis for the youngest man interviewed. When a person is passionate about his vision and overwhelmed with opportunity, he may choose to continually give out without regularly taking in. This practice will certainly produce ongoing stress if the leader cannot establish some habit of regularly disengaging for replenishing his or her mental and emotional reservoir.

One observed disparity between Western leader formation programs and what appears to be happening in China relates to the individual in determining his or her ‘own’ destiny. The universally accepted cultural difference of individualism and collectivism is at play here. Chinese leaders do not appear to seriously consider their personal destiny until they have been in leadership for many years. A person could still be rather young, as was the case of the youngest man interviewed, and begin to sense his destiny, but that would happen only after serving in leadership for a long time. Whereas emerging leaders in the West are encouraged to dream big individual dreams and seek to make them a
reality, newly trained leaders in China look to their seniors for direction. Their training helped to form them so they could be a part of a greater community effort. This observation is consistent with the team leadership structure of most house-church networks. Those in leadership serve mostly as equals with an appreciation of and commitment to each other’s distinct areas of strength.

When considering Christian leader formation in China we see this primarily taking place in nonformal and informal settings where mentoring relationships abound. Many process items assist in leader formation; some of these are positive and ongoing while others are negative and time bound. Of all the process items that have been determinative in Chinese Christian leader formation in the last 50 years, suffering certainly emerges as one of the most formative.

Servant Leaders in the Future of China

One of the applications to the research question of leader formation in this study was to better understand the issues facing servant leader formation for China in the future. Globalization and the rapidity of change are having a deep effect on China. Globalization is a rather new term but a very old concept. One of the more complex definitions of globalization is (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999):

A process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions—assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact—generating transcontinental or interregional flows of networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power. (p. 16)

Transformation in China is extensive, requiring a fresh reflection on the type of leaders needed in the years to come. For example, although suffering played an essential role in Christian leader formation in the past, its role in the future is uncertain even though
persecution of Christians still happens quite regularly in China. The Christian periodical *Christianity Today* (January 3, 2005) reported that Zhang Rongliang, one of the ‘uncles’ who leads the Fangcheng Network, was arrested again. He has been held in detention five previous times ranging from 40 days to 7 years. There are indications that with the globalization taking place, the access Chinese people have for obtaining information around the world through the internet, international human rights pressure, and even the requirements surrounding the coming 2008 Olympics, that the current generation of younger leaders may not experience the same degree of physical suffering as those leaders in the 20th century. Nevertheless, exemplary leaders are needed to address the realities facing the nation and the church.

**China Tomorrow**

It is rather common, as we have entered the 21st century, to hear reports about the expanding global influence of China. Certainly the population stands out prominently. The growth of their economy (Yesterday’s Tomorrow, “China’s Consumer Society Booming,” 2005), their national development (Hale & Hale, 2003; Pei, 2002; Tisdall, 2005), and their political structures (Gilboy, 2004; Schell, 2004) along with their military might, to name a few, are frequently the topic of discussion. Although China has sought to maintain its distinctive traditional values and practices in the midst of a rapidly changing world, in recent decades there has been erosion. The change that China is dealing with today is producing challenging dynamics for tomorrow. How the country addresses these challenges will either position them for significant global influence, perhaps dominance (Fishman, 2005; Naisbitt, 1996), in the 21st century or, more likely, will tear the country apart. Even though continued political reform is in their long-term
best interest, a certain kind of leader is needed and they appear in short supply as Yao (1996) states:

This is a period of pursuing self-interest. Presently, this argument is prevalent for the Chinese say, ‘If I don’t like it, why should I do it?’ But, for a leader, the most important quality is a disinterested selflessness, with farseeing and definite views. He cannot indulge in extravagant hopes for self-aggrandizement, or the pursuit of a ‘sense of achievement’. Otherwise, he can never appeal to his followers or expect them to respond. (pp. 245–246)

I suggest that the kind of leaders that China needs are servant leaders who demonstrate a genuine concern for others that surpasses their own concerns.

Naisbitt (1996) foresaw eight Asian megatrends that were having and will continue to have a significant effect on the world. China is at the heart of these trends: movements from nation-states to networks; from traditions to options; from export-led to consumer-driven; from government-controlled to market-driven; from farms to super-cities; from labor-intensive to high technology; from male dominance to the emergence of women; and from West to East. Each of these trends has been requiring responses by China and although positive movement is being made, it is questionable how well it can be sustained. Aikman (2003, p. 288) cites Michael Pillsbury, one of America’s most experienced and best-informed observers of China’s military, who suggests that China will emerge as the top global superpower within a few decades. Rising to and occupying such an international position will draw heavily upon the resources of the nation. Although China is rich in natural resources, it also has more than its share of social complexities. In the past the government facilitated national unity through the use of force, but it is unlikely that the return to such is possible today. The nation must be mobilized around national values if it is to solve its own internal problems and increase
its competitive edge globally. This will require new kinds of leaders who are driven by values that involve people willingly rather than by coercion.

Servant leaders are needed to help the nation navigate these challenging times. Leaders need to address the pressing social issues from a relational perspective and not just heavy-handedly. The Chinese people have been through enough hardship in recent times, and although naturally respectful by nature, they may react negatively to further dictatorial leadership. A servant leadership posture would help the people regain a confidence in their senior leadership and probably willingly harness a synergy of this great people rather than by force. Without strengthening the foundations of society, the increased growth will produce cracks that could compromise their ongoing potential.

The Church in China Tomorrow

The church in China is poised to make a significant contribution to their nation at this time in history. Yang Huilin, director of the Institute of Christian Culture at People’s University, in a 2001 interview says:

China does not need a new religion. It needs a new value system and a new way of thinking. Christianity has been developing in China rapidly for the past ten years. But it may not be good for Christianity. . . . With globalization and post-modernity, we cannot find a clear value system and clear definition and judgment. In this case, Christianity would find a very wide space. It is one of the strong points of Christianity to set up an absolute value system. (as cited in Aikman, 2003, pp. 253–254)

Church communities around the world are noted for serving the social needs of people since it was a high value that Jesus exemplified when on earth. Christianity has historically focused initially on medical and educational needs as a means of demonstrating concern for the physical welfare of people before addressing the spiritual needs of people. With the rising social needs in China such as marginalization of the
poor, public health problems, inadequate housing, unemployment or underemployment, poor provision for education, population movements, and the ever-increasing elderly population, the church in China could be significantly positioned to help address these needs. There is unprecedented opportunity for Christians to serve the social needs of the country through professional services. China has been steadily opening up to outside Non-Governmental Organizations who truly want to help with compassionate activities. Whether it is dealing with the AIDS epidemic, drug abuse, the rising divorce rate, handicapped people, modern agricultural training, or even with helping to establish schools in rural areas, there are openings for Christians to move into these areas and serve legitimate needs while living the love of God before the people.

As materialism replaces communism as the underlying philosophy driving many Chinese people, the Church has potential to model a distinct value system. Chin et al. (2001) record an irony that a person once asked Confucius, and is still very true today:

What surprises you most about mankind? Confucius answered, They lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore health. By thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future and live as if they will never die, and die as if they never lived. (pp. 22–23)

The Chinese church of tomorrow will also have to address the rise in cults. With the increased openness to outside information and resources come both the good and the bad. Money is often used by foreign sources to gain access to leaders and their people. The very thing that men such as Wang Ming Dao, Allen Yuan, Samuel Lamb and others guarded against is happening today. Once large amounts of money are accepted by church leaders, it is expected that they will comply with the directives of foreigners if they want further money. Many church leaders appear to be succumbing to this
temptation and unless this trend can be reversed the potential good of the church could be minimized.

For China to address their own issues and be a positive force of change for the world, new, younger generations of servant leaders must emerge through their own crucibles and processes of formation. As each of the leaders who were interviewed broke out of their cultural norms (Weaver, 2004), so new leaders must also be nurtured to provide the visionary direction needed for China to address the challenges facing the nation and the church. They will need the character to weather difficulties and the competencies to discover contextualized solutions. The critical formation processes are unlikely to change much, but the context and application for them will certainly be different from prior generations. The leaders interviewed in this study are the kind of people needed to lead the church in China into the future. Servant leaders at heart, these men demonstrated the fortitude to face serious challenges and emerged as benevolent godly men. Aikman predicted that “Christianity will change the nature of China in many different ways over the next several decades, and in doing so, will change the world in which we live” (p. 292).

**Servant Leader Formation World-Wide**

Servant leadership, like transformational leadership, is positively viewed around the world. If more leaders assumed a servant leader posture, the people they serve would be empowered and organizational effectiveness in turn would be enhanced. Leader formation in China has provided certain lessons that are worthy of emulation elsewhere. The Bible also teaches leadership principles and practices that are worthy of emulation everywhere. In my context of work I have practiced leader formation in many cultures.
Several practitioners with whom I associate have also developed models that are being tested internationally and are worthy of reflection (see Appendix H). From the research in this study along with the literature reviewed, we can reflect on the possibility of a universal leadership model.

Lessons Learned From China

This study discovered several developmental processes as critical to the formation of servant leaders in China. These processes were seen in the major themes that emerged from the research as essential for Christian leader formation within China and should instruct leader formation in other cultures. Evaluating and accepting these data as valid is the first step toward enhancing leader formation. However, these lessons must be first internalized and modeled by those who are helping to form other leaders if healthy leader formation is to occur.

1. China views life holistically, as does the ancient near east from which biblical leadership models emerged. Family and community are critical components of human development and leader formation. One does not have the credibility to lead in China until he or she has proven relational ability and competence in community. Even if someone goes off to a prestigious foreign university returning with a Ph.D. and full of current technical knowledge, he or she may not be recognized as a worthy leader until respect is gained from associates, and this requires time. Relationships and time are two lessons that China teaches us about leader formation. Leader formation requires a community of relationships for healthy growth regardless of whether the educational structure is formal, nonformal, or informal.
2. An important part of relationship building is the posture of the leader. China expects its exemplary leaders to be humble. Humility does not mean passivity but rather controlled strength. However, humility often decreases with increased leadership responsibility although the opposite is needed. People will follow a leader who knows where he is going and can communicate passion in a manner that does not abuse or misuse people. The word passion by definition involved pain and suffering. A passionate leader is one who has persevered through suffering and helps others through a similar journey while accomplishing some worthy task. Chinese exemplary leaders are passionate in the full meaning of the word.

3. Exemplary Christian leaders of China hold a deep respect for the Bible to the point of memorizing as much of it as possible. All those interviewed and those reviewed from biographical studies invested significant time in the study of the Bible. Bibles in China were and in some places still are difficult to obtain. When a person has his own copy he values it highly. Personal and group study of the Bible is taken seriously. All those who were imprisoned admitted that it was their memory of biblical passages that sustained them through their difficulties.

4. Chinese exemplary Christian leaders aggressively cultivate a lifestyle of prayer as their means of connection with God to know and do his will. It is also their source of spiritual refreshment. Infant Before Cross learned throughout his life that prayer was essential to his life and ministry. One story he told illustrates the impact that prayer had on him. A very poor family had little food while living in a dilapidated house with six other families when the wife gave birth to the third child, a boy, who brought great joy to the father. The wife told the husband that they had no food, only a little money and did
not know where to buy food. After several unsuccessful attempts to buy some food and with the wife in despair, the husband concluded that they needed to be grateful for the little they had. After a time of prayer they were encouraged to go on. God used poverty to build character so this poor family has now become prosperous with one daughter living in Italy and the rest doing well and serving as leaders in the church.

Infant Before Cross told this story about the importance of prayer when he was once entering prison. He asked God what he should do in prison and he was told to pray, fast and preach. The prisoners listened to him with amazement. For 4 weeks he had services every day until the guards learned about it and forced him to stop. When the prisoner who was the leader of the cell was taken elsewhere, Infant Before Cross was appointed by the other prisoners to be their new leader. His practice was to fast during breakfast and lunch and he gave his food to others who in turn loved him. When he entered the prison he had some money sown in his underwear that the guards never found and he used it to buy things for the other prisoners. When he finally was released, all but a few of the men in his area had become Christians.

5. These leaders also demonstrated a dependence upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit for understanding the Bible and for fearlessly serving the church. Regardless of his theological belief about the Holy Spirit, every man sensed a vital connection to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes they would see great signs and wonders that could only be attributed to powerful works of the Holy Spirit.

Each of these five main themes that were identified from the research is relevant internationally in the Christian context. A holistic perspective on life, an appreciation for integration into community, a high respect for and knowledge of the Bible, a lifestyle of
prayer, and a submission to the Holy Spirit are essential qualities that every Christian servant leader should exemplify. Next, a brief reflection on biblical insights into leader formation should show the potential of biblical models for world-wide relevance.

Biblical Insights on Leader Formation

One main theoretical foundation of this study was theological. God made man in his image (Gen 1:26) with a mind, with emotions, and with a will. As a person seeks to become the mature individual he or she was created to become, there is growth in each of these arenas and growth in any one area at the neglect of the others produces an imbalanced person. God also has been active in forming Christ-like leaders who will model his purposes and values so that all of creation might glorify him and fully enjoy life. Christianity is a world-wide faith, and Jesus is recognized as a worthy leadership model in all cultures. By understanding the biblical context of how leaders were formed, we should find potential application for universal leader formation.

In an excellent overview of education in biblical times, Morton (1975) presents the core elements of Hebrew and Greek distinctions. In Hebrew education knowing was not divorced from being and doing, and good character was seen to result from a right relationship with God through the study of the Torah. The primacy of the Torah embraced the whole of life from the cradle to the grave. One was never too old or too young to learn. It embraced every aspect of life also. From the time of Ezra onward, the life of the Jews was Torah-centric. (p. 207) Ward (1982a) would concur, “The purpose of education cannot be examined apart from the purpose of life. The stimulating and deepening of human development is a whole-person issue” (p. 108). Hebrew education was family based (Deut 6; Prov 2; 22:6). The priest had a role of teaching and preserving the Torah (Five Books of Moses) at the Tabernacle and later at the Temple especially during the special feasts and holy days.
Most education was through apprenticeship where sons were taught family trades and daughters were given domestic education.

There was not much of what we might call formal academic education for the Hebrews. With major trade routes passing through Israel, there was surely learning about the nations even as other peoples learned about the Hebrew culture. From international visitors to Israel and expeditions to other lands (2 Chr 9), as well as from Israel being taken into captivity to surrounding nations, the Hebrews were exposed to other cultures. As a pre-scientific and basically agrarian society, the focus was on knowing and living their ethical heritage along with their system of social justice. There were scattered schools for prophets dating back to 1000 B.C. (1 Sam 10). Prophets served as a balancing effect on society to alerting people when they were straying from the truth. Prophets also at times were the voice for things to come. Mentoring relationships for training were apparent (Elijah and Elisha). However, it was not until the time of Exile around 600 B.C. that the more formal approach of specialized education in the Scribal classes began. Still later the synagogue’s educational structure began to better ensure that Hebrew culture was not lost, or that syncretism did not occur. “Although the origin of the synagogue is uncertain, its significance could not be clearer. Scholars have suggested that the importance of the synagogue for Judaism cannot be underestimated. It was this institution that gave Judaism its character” (Morton, 1975, p. 210).

The other major cultural influence prior to and during the time of Christ was that of the Greeks. In contrast to Hebrew education, Hellenistic education included a strong philosophical component (as from Plato and Aristotle). Education was primarily available to the aristocratic class for development of their personality. For those who
could afford education it was a rigorous system until age 18, after which military service was required. “Hellenistic education was characterized by the belief that man’s mind discovered truth. The system stressed the development of reason. This led to the study of science and philosophy” (Morton, 1975, p. 220). The Greek standard for education was aesthetic rather than moral. Ward (1982a) noted that the West has been more profoundly influenced by the Hellenistic philosophy of rationalism and the satisfaction with static content of the mind than the Hebrew (and often Eastern) epistemology of praxis where knowing, doing and being are integrated into positive action. In Greek education there was a distinction between those who knew and those who wanted or needed to know. In the formal education context, social distance was established through artifacts such as lecterns and platform. Communication tended to be one-directional. Knowledge became a commodity to get, sell, and use. Learning was acquisition and knowledge and was seen as a worthy end in itself.

Jesus, like every Hebrew boy, would have been taught by his mother and father in the home which was supplemented by the teaching of the local synagogue. Apparently he had no formal schooling (Luke 2:47, John 7:15) but learned to be a carpenter like his father. Although not much information is available on his early life, we know that by the time he began his ministry around age 30 he had a masterful understanding of Scripture and human nature. From his wholly integrated life he spoke with authority as no one else in his time was able (Matt 7:29). Weber (1947) long ago observed that people follow because of the moral authority that the leader exudes more than his or her appointed authority.

Concerning this spiritual authority that Jesus embodied, Crow (2000) states:
Spiritual authority consists of leaders (ethos) who stand in God’s presence (numinous) in order to influence others (pathos) toward God’s purposes (logos). Such leaders are honest, competent and inspire aspiration for nobler aims. They know their own values and build consensus by honoring the best values of others. They stimulate innovative and risky challenges to the status quo for Christ. They articulate an inspiring and meaningful vision of God’s ideal future. They passionately model the way to get there and live the standards they set for others. They empower others by mentoring them to their highest potential through educating, equipping and encouraging experimentation. They are optimistic, even in adversity, and celebrate progress along the way. (p. 146)

Of the many men who have studied the life of Christ and his relationship with the disciples in great detail (Bruce, 1971; Eims, 1978; Wilson, 1976), Coleman (1974) identifies eight core principles underlying the leader formation ministry of Jesus: (a) Selection—Jesus was discerning in whom he chose to follow him as disciples; (b) Association—having called his men, Jesus made it a practice to be with them; (c) Consecration—Jesus expected the men he was with to obey him; (d) Impartation—Jesus invested all he had in a few men; (e) Demonstration—Jesus practiced what he expected the disciples to learn; (f) Delegation—Jesus’ method was to get the disciples into a vital experience with God and to show them his model before telling them they had to do something; (g) Supervision—Jesus would let his followers experience something or make some observation on their own and then he would use that opportunity as a starting point to teach a lesson about discipleship; and (h) Reproduction—The disciples were taught about and saw a model of reproduction that they were to exemplify. Coleman (2000) later took a different approach to analyzing Jesus’ ministry with his disciples by focusing on six key formative principles he wanted to leave with his men: (a) His source of life was the power of the Holy Spirit; (b) His communion with the Father through prayer provided direction; (c) His submission to the Scripture as his authority was his message; (d) His understanding of the Gospel engaged his love; (e) His way of the cross was a life
of service and sacrifice; and (e) His heavenly vision of God’s glory motivated him to
finish well. These principles provide a complementary approach to Clinton’s leadership
emergence theory.

Other authors who studied the life of Jesus also identified important principles.
Kirkpatrick (1988) observes the following core components of Jesus’ philosophy of
leader formation: how to know God and handle Scripture; the centrality of his death and
resurrection; the cost of discipleship; humility and obedience as their hallmark; the
importance of their relationship with the Holy Spirit; the priority of world evangelization,
and spreading peace; the reality of spiritual warfare and hostile religious leaders; and the
importance of unity (p. 298). Krallmann (1994) identified and developed six leader
formation practices from studying the life of Jesus: (a) Affiliation, where leadership is
relationship oriented from a servant’s posture; (b) Exemplification, where leaders must
live the example they want their followers to value; (c) Contextualization, where the
leader seeks culturally appropriate methods—ones that are dynamically equivalent to
proven methods elsewhere; (d) Integration, where training must result in applying truth;
(e) Multiplication, where leader formation is not an end in itself but the means to a
greater end; and (f) Impartation of the Holy Spirit as their guide. Many of these
observations from the life of Christ were consistent with the research of this study.

On Jesus’ mentoring technique, Krallmann (1994) observes that it was relational,
informal, oral, mobile through modeling, teaching, encouraging, correcting, and enabling
practical application. “He turned the entirety of everyday life experiences into one big
classroom for the Twelve and wove the threads of his instruction most naturally into the
overall patter of ordinary events” (p. 124) When Jesus chose the disciples to be ‘with
him’ (Mark 2:13), they began a journey into informal learning like few if any others have ever experienced. They lived with Jesus around the clock, heard what he said, and saw how he lived in a variety of situations. From the biblical records we must conclude that there was perfect congruence between his expressed values and his lifestyle.

Clinton (1999) comments on five leadership models that were exemplified by Jesus: servant, steward, harvest, shepherd and intercessor. He identified core values and their implications on the servant model (p. 459) as: (a) Leadership must be exercised primarily as service first of all to God, and secondarily as service to God's people; (b) Service should require sacrifice on the leader's part; (c) Servant leadership ought to be dominated by an imitation-modeling leadership style; (d) Abuse of authority by lording it over followers in order to demonstrate one's importance is not compatible with servant leadership; (e) Anticipation of the Lord's return must be a major motivational issue for leadership; and (f) One ought to minister as a duty expected because of giftedness.

From these insights we learn several important aspects of leader formation. Jesus was formed, humanly speaking, through Hebraic nonformal and informal education. He had a clear vision (John 17:4; Matt 28:18-20) of where he was going and communicated that to his disciples. A mark of Jesus as a great leader was his ability to see the big picture with all its complexity and to communicate it in simplicity so all could grasp it. Jesus took great care in selecting those whom he would train as disciples, doing so only after sharing considerable time together and an entire night in prayer over the matter (Luke 6:12). He invested an enormous amount of time with his 12 disciples and extra time with three of them to influence their thinking. Their relationship developed beyond admiration into true friendship (John 15:5). When the time was right, he gave them
challenging tasks to apply and stretch their faith as well as to gain competency (such as feeding thousands of people and casting out demons). When responsibility was given, so was the authority to accomplish their task (Matt 28:18). Since his primary method of training was informal, he had ample time to provide feedback and debriefing after the disciples returned from their assignments (Luke 9-10).

Blanchard applies his situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982) to how Jesus trained his disciples (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003). As enthusiastic beginners the disciples needed a directing style (S1) which applied to their low competence and high commitment, calling it D1. When unskilled or disillusioned, the disciples needed a coaching style (S2) which applied to their low competence and low commitment because of disillusionment, calling it D2. Capable but cautious disciples needed a supporting style (S3) which applied to their moderate to high competence and variable commitment, calling it D3. Peak performing disciples needed a delegating style (S4) which applied to high competence and high commitment, calling it D4. In this analysis Blanchard proposes that Jesus in fact related to the disciples according to the style they most needed at the right time or situation in their formation.

Jesus led by modeling. Adair (2002) notes that the original meaning for both words ‘lead’ and ‘team’ carry the same concept associated with a journey. Influential people in relationship go somewhere together. “Leadership and team working are closely linked. Leaders tend to create teams, and teams look for leaders. As the Chinese proverb says: “The bird carries the wings, but the wings carry the bird” (p. 109).

People are longing to know how more than why (Block, 1996), which is easy to see by the many how-to books in any bookstore. Jesus knew how essential it is for
lessons to be caught by watching. The Navigators popularized the “with him” principle after Jesus’ approach of having his disciples journey with him (Mark 3:13-14). Jesus had such authenticity that what the disciples saw him model was fully congruent with what he taught. Jesus did not take any special privileges as the leader but walked and ate just as those who followed him. He did not even afford himself a comfortable place to sleep (Matt 8:20). For his disciples to carry on after he left, they would need to have a good model to remember. The wise writer of Proverbs observes that one who walks with wise men will become wise (Prov 13:20). Modeling was a powerful learning device for Jesus.

It is important to note that Jesus trained his leaders in the context of a team. Although one-on-one training (or what The Navigators call man-to-man) is very appropriate at times, the dynamics that take place in a group allow for significant interaction and processing. The disciples would often discuss what Jesus did or said. Most leadership books today assume that team approaches (Thrall et al., 1999) are best. Team building is beyond the scope of study for this dissertation but it is certainly an important component in leader formation. Ultimately Jesus led by love, which biblically always involves sacrifice. He came to earth motivated by love (John 3:16; 2 Cor 2:8-9) and loved his disciples right up to the end (John 13:1). In short, love-driven leadership (Lowney, 2003, p. 170) is the vision to see each person’s talent, potential and dignity, it is the courage, passion and commitment to unlock that potential, and it is the resulting loyalty and mutual support to energize and unite teams. Biblical leadership is all about life-sharing relationship, and life-sharing relationship is all about sacrificial love.
Servant leadership was the primary posture that Jesus took in his earthly ministry and in the training of his disciples. From one of the three passages where Jesus specifically teaches on leadership, Ward (1984a) gives the following analysis:


Also beyond the scope of study for this dissertation is a review of the leader formation approach of the Apostle Paul. Along with the life and teaching of Jesus, the life and teaching of Paul dominates the New Testament. Paul grew up as a Pharisee receiving a full Pharisaic education. He had the good fortune of studying under (mentored by) one of the leading rabbis of the day, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Paul appears to have integrated formal training (especially Acts 19:9-10) with nonformal and informal training for the band of men who accompanied him on his travels. He had a strong sense of serving a cause with fellow-workers (2 Cor 1:24). His reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit was evident throughout the Book of Acts. Clinton (n.d.) was able to identify 62 values that drove Paul’s philosophy of ministry from his many writings. Yet Paul is perhaps most famous for the statement made in 2 Tim 2:2, “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of man witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Leader formation is a process of intentionally passing on truth to others through a variety of formal, nonformal and informal means.
Toward a Universal Leadership Model

The pragmatic issue for international leadership research is how multinational organizations in the global world can function effectively by integrating a healthy appreciation for cultural traditions with standardizing certain leadership and management practices. Although it could be argued that the preferred posture should be of relating to each culture in a way it best understands and most appreciates, it is very difficult if not impossible to do this extensively. Both the expatriate organizational leaders entering a new culture and the host people within a culture who are connected with the organization must make movement toward a middle-of-the-road position (whether that final position is midway or clearly to one side of center). Drnevich (2004) correctly observes that international negotiations are more complex than domestic negotiations because of the cultural complexity factor. Some synergistic effort is needed for a win/win solution to result. When attempting leader formation in China, deeply rooted cultural values and worldview must be considered so acculturation can occur leading to contextualized learning practices. Whenever similar leadership values and practices can be identified between two cultures it makes cross-cultural communication less complicated.

When asking if a universally endorsed prototype of an ideal leader exists, Dorfman (2004, p. 283) states, “Although it is unlikely that any single prototype of an effective leader conforms equally well across societies, there may be universally endorsed attributes as well as culturally specific attributes.” Dorfman and Scandura (2004, p. 304) clarify that universals may exist at certain levels of abstraction but those who have internalized the culture may uncover subtle cultural differences about which behaviors are culturally common and which are unique within a universal construct. Bass
(1997) in no uncertain terms believes that, "there is universality in the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm" (p. 13).

From the findings of this study we can draw several conclusions that speak to leadership and leader formation internationally. First, how some Chinese Christian leaders were formed adds to what is known elsewhere. Leader formation that is healthy and enduring requires nonformal and informal means of education. Even in the absence of formal education, leaders can become well formed when they have a learning posture and make the most of the opportunities available to them. Formal education alone does not guarantee well-formed leaders but when available certainly does enhance one's holistic growth. Along with one's posture toward learning, this study affirms that character formation is critical to producing healthy and enduring leaders. The most powerful process item in character formation was seen as suffering in its variety of forms. At least in China, the degree to which a leader has processed suffering relates to his or her credibility and integrity that is inseparably linked to one's character. We could generally say that when suffering has been minimal and proven character has been untested that the leader has not yet reached the depth of formation required for deep and wide influence.

Second, how some Chinese Christian leaders lead reinforces what is called servant leadership elsewhere. The natural leadership posture of the men in this study exuded humility and a genuine concern for the good of those they led. Their life journey took them through experiences that resulted in a perspective that the ends (tasks and goals) must be pursued by enabling and empowering people to have a vital relationship with God who is the ultimate director of lasting results. They served those they led as
Christ served his disciples and serves the Church today. This posture is worthy of consideration in every culture.

A universally applicable conceptualization of leadership is worth pursuing since every society has leaders. Although transformational and servant leadership is not practiced in all cultures, when the people of a culture have been asked what kind of leadership they would prefer, the results point to such models (Bass, 1997). Chinese history tells us that “Confucius discouraged questions relating to God and the other world. He deemed it challenging enough to deal with matters relating to man and this life! Moreover, for all his emphasis on the superior man and his characteristics, Confucius never claimed to have actually seen such a man” (Hesselgrave, 1978, p. 180). Can there really be such a thing as a leader for all people? The literature substantiates that transformational leadership, of which servant leadership is akin, has wide international acceptance.

International leadership research is escalating to investigate and validate more widely universal and culture-specific leadership values. Singer (1991) addresses this issue of universal ethics and values:

For ethics is not a meaningless series of different things to different people in different times and places. Rather, against a background of historically and culturally diverse approaches to the question of how we ought to live, the degree of convergence is striking. . . . Hence what is recognized as a virtue in one society or religious tradition is very likely to be recognized as a virtue in the others; the set of virtues praised in one major tradition never make up a substantial part of the set of vices of another major tradition. (Exceptions tend to be short-lived, societies in the process of decay or self-destruction.). (pp. 543-544)

In time the data will certainly show to what extent a universal transformational or servant leadership model exists.
Most leaders learn to lead by looking to their culture and observing models that seem to work. The Christian, regardless of his culture, will look to the Bible for his models, to Jesus’ model in particular, and discern his or her leading from the Holy Spirit. From the fact that Christianity is universal it should be expected that biblical values are universally applicable. The Christian servant leader draws perspective and strength for leading from God first, and then from the culture when it does not contradict the Bible.

This process of becoming a servant leader, such as Jesus modeled, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian (2 Cor 3:18). The Bible is the tool of the Holy Spirit for bringing about change (2 Tim 3:16-17). Prayer is the means of expressing a submission to God for transformation of one’s life. Not every person will rise to the place of significant organizational leadership responsibility, but every person is a leader in some context. God is ever willing and desirous to form the Christian into someone who resembles Jesus if he or she is willing to be so formed. This is why the study of the Bible, conversation with God through prayer, and submission to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit is essential for biblically based leader formation. Sanders (1977, p. 141) eloquently writes of God’s method for this spiritual leader formation process:

When God wants to drill a man and thrill a man and skill a man,  
When God wants to mold a man to play the noblest part;  
When He yearns with all His heart to create so great and bold a man  
That all the world shall be amazed, watch His methods, watch His ways!  
How He ruthlessly perfects Whom He royally elects!  
How He hammers him and hurts him, and with mighty blows converts him  
Into trial shapes of clay which only God understands;  
While his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands!  
How He bends but never breaks when his good He undertakes;  
How He uses whom He chooses and with every purpose fuses him;  
by every act induces him  
To try His splendor out—God knows what He’s about!
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary
This study concerned three matters: the leader formation process in general, servant leadership formation in particular, and the leader formation application to crossing cultures with China as the primary context. The central problem of this study concerns leader formation. What formal, informal, and nonformal developmental processes do exemplary Christian Chinese leaders go through to become so recognized? The focus of this research was on understanding the critical and formative developmental process of three generations of exemplary Chinese Christian leaders.

The research question was designed to address the central problem: What events, experiences, people and other formative processes contributed as critical to the formation of exemplary Christian leaders in China? The design of this research was a narrative, qualitative study of three purposefully selected exemplary Christian Chinese leaders. Those interviewed were asked to share their life stories by recounting the significant formative processes. This questioning was done inductively, without bringing preconceived notions to bear. Interviewee selection included 3 people of different ages in order to describe from multiple perspectives what has been formative in the past as well

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as the present. The differences between the interviewees provided sufficient coverage so their combined stories elicited common themes.

The underlying concept of leadership for this study was servant leadership which goes back thousands of years. More recently, servant leadership resurfaced through the influence of Robert Greenleaf (1977) into a conceptualized model that has been built upon by others, and now stands as an influential leadership model. A most important consideration in servant leadership is how leaders view themselves. Do leaders sense at their core that they are a servant? Do they find natural fulfillment in leading by serving, or is this posture simply a means to an end? The true servant leader will lead by serving, and when appropriate, serve by leading. It is not a contradiction to both serve and lead, although there is a tension between both dynamics. The leaders studied for this dissertation matched most defining elements of servant leadership. These men also exhibited the mature development of a personal power base identified by Hagberg (1994) as stage 5, power by purpose, and stage 6, power by gestalt. Unafraid of death, they now lead through humility and generosity in quiet service and full of faith. These men would be called Level 5 Leaders by Collins (2001), heroic leaders by Lowney (2003), exemplary leaders by Kouzes and Posner (1988), and servant leaders by Greenleaf (1977).

The theoretical foundations for this study built upon a theological understanding of human nature, adult learning theory, and leadership formation or emergence theory. In addition, the study required an understanding of cross-cultural contexts, especially the cultural context of China. The main theoretical framework for leader formation was that of J. Robert Clinton (1988a, 1988b, 1989) in what he calls leadership emergence theory.
Clinton holds that development can be explained in terms of the timing of significant processes along with the leader's response over six phases of life. Processes deal with the ways and means used by God to move a leader along in the overall pattern. In order to describe how leaders are formed and what processes are critical to such formation, Clinton's theory was used as a source of terminology to describe the critical growth processes. Developed in a missiological context and built upon human development and adult learning theory, the phases of leader formation were seen in the lives of the men studied: the sovereign foundation phase was evident from how these men reflected upon their early life-shaping influences; the inner-life growth phase was apparent in the internal education (nonformal and informal) that took place in their lives as young Christians; the ministry-maturing and life-maturing phases were obvious through defining moments, crucial relationships ("divine contacts"), the challenges of a faith ministry in a hostile environment, the struggles of isolation and interpersonal conflicts, and through persecution (physical and emotional); the convergence phase could be seen in how each man identified what led them to their ultimate contributions ("destiny revelations") and how they emerged with a true servant posture; and the afterglow phase was evident in the most senior man who has become a wise statesman and a model of a leader who is finishing well.

**Conclusions**

Traditionally, leadership development has taken place in the context of formal or nonformal training programs. In China, formal training has been limited for Christians and nonformal training has focused on applied knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge. Training that is most valued is that which is relevant and immediately
applicable. From the research of three exemplary Chinese Christian leaders the data showed that the major themes or core life-shaping influences (events, experiences and people) were: (a) The vital interactive relationship (by prayer) with God, especially with the Holy Spirit; (b) The message of the Bible transforming their minds and hearts; (c) Significant mentoring by parents, teachers and peers who challenged and assisted them toward life-long learning; (d) Informal educational experiences throughout their life and work; (e) Challenging organizational and personal tasks; (f) Extended time for reflection and processing; and (g) Various forms of suffering that developed their characters. Both positively and negatively process items formed these men into the exemplary leaders they have become. All three men exhibited the above mentioned life-shaping influences to a greater or lesser degree. Although one man had the opportunity for higher education outside of China (and he stated that knowledge and theory alone are worth nothing), the others displayed a learner’s spirit, seeking to grow through normal life educational experiences. A commitment to life-long learning and continual growth was evident in all. This trait positions them all to finish well.

This study adds to the research and study of leader formation by identifying the largely nonformal and informal realm as the vital context for formation where inner character growth is best formed. Emphasis should not be primarily focused upon behavioral development but on inner transformation that allows for influencing generations of followers. The exemplary Christian leaders studied were men of great experience, which is compatible with experiential learning theory (Kolb), more than men of great academic knowledge. They were formed through a holistic blend of learning that assimilated knowledge and developed skills in the course of everyday life. Through a
wide variety of process items, they developed deep character qualities that anchored them to stand firm against overwhelming difficulty. This study also identified suffering as an essential process item in leader formation. High credibility and sound perspective correlated with those who endured difficulty and emerged stronger because of suffering.

What this study adds to the research and study of servant leadership is the assessment of a predominantly Western term and concept in the context of China. Whereas the term servant leader is a wholesome term, perhaps even the best term to identify people with an exemplary leadership posture in the West, there are more appropriate terms for use in China. Exemplary leaders in China were identified as ethical, worthy, humble, virtuous and benevolent with benevolent being preferred for its connectivity between inward transformation and outward expression of harmony. From a Western perspective any of these qualities seem appropriate. Apart from the search for terms that might be most appropriate in China, the core concept of servant leadership was evident in the Chinese Christian exemplary leaders. The data from this study suggest that the concept of servant leadership transcends cultural boundaries and can be considered as a universally appreciated leadership theory and practice.

Concerning future leader formation in China and beyond, I can draw a few observations. Politically the country of China is in a state of significant change. More freedom of religion began after the Cultural Revolution ended and it continues to grow, notwithstanding certain setbacks by continuing persecution. Formal education should become more accessible to Christians. This development can be very good for leader formation as long as the essential components of nonformal and informal education are not minimized. Freedom of religion in time may reduce the suffering that has been
characteristic of Christian life in China. Since suffering is an essential formative process item in leader formation, other forms of negative processing will emerge to address this void. With the tremendous growth of the church in China, there will be the natural tendency to systematize and increase organizational structures. A certain amount of increased structure is needed to allow leaders to lead well, but increase in structure can lead to life-stifling bureaucracies. Healthy leadership is organic and often chaotic (Peters, 1988; Wheatley, 1994). Also, serious social issues will only grow in complexity. Whereas exemplary Chinese leaders have relied primarily on the Holy Spirit to guide them in addressing human needs, there may be the tendency to rely more on governmental services and man-made solutions. An appropriate balance must be maintained so that emerging leaders understand how to discern God’s solutions through both human and supernatural means.

Several graphic metaphors have been considered in this study. Men have seen themselves or have embodied concepts such as being a dreamer, an infant before the cross, a finisher, like a tree on a rocky cliff, a sparrow that would not die, a gardener, bold as a lion, and as a great trainer. Servant leadership has been likened to the image of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Cross-cultural principles could be likened to binoculars that take into account one’s host culture as well as the guest culture. Leader formation has been likened to gardening where the proper intentional effort can be significant in allowing the innate DNA of a person to emerge. Metaphors are a beautiful way to encapsulate the essence of someone or something.

Since Christianity has taken root in all cultures, Christ-like servant leaders have or will emerge in all cultures. These leaders will over time be transformed into men and
women who resemble Jesus in their approach to leadership since Jesus resides in every believer (John 17:23) and the Holy Spirit transforms people into the likeness of Jesus (2 Cor 3:18). However, culture itself is so powerful that even after Christianity has been established for some time, Christian leaders may still resemble their cultural leaders more than Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus has such a positive transforming influence on individuals and cultures that after years of gradual progress biblical principles can be seen as dominant in many sectors of society. I propose that servant leadership, as Jesus modeled, has the potential to be a powerful universal model or prototype for leadership. This style of servant leadership will always stress being more than knowing and doing. The formation of moral and ethical character will become the central core of strength from which leaders assimilate knowledge and translate it into action that is service oriented. This type of leader is needed and effective in all cultures.

Recommendations

This study provides insights for leader formation in China and beyond. China is at a time and place in history when its leaders and the strategic decisions they make not only influence well over 1 billion people who call China home but the entire world as China emerges as a dominant global force. Recommendations will be made for both leader formation and for future research.

Leader Formation Recommendations

Leaders engaged in leader formation within China would be wise to integrate principles from this study into their practices. During the second half of the 20th century Christian leaders were forced to experience suffering of one form or another because of
their faith. As governmental policies and procedures increasingly allow Christians to exercise their faith more freely in the 21st century, leaders committed to the formation of the next generation of leaders must identify and enable alternative process items to replace or complement the role that suffering had in the past. Character formation is essential to effective leadership and must not be minimized even if external formative factors might be minimized.

In many parts of the world the church has largely addressed the spiritual needs of people and, as able, the social needs of fellow Christians. When this has happened the church has marginalized its influence and sometimes has been seen as unconcerned or irrelevant to societal needs. With the mushrooming growth of China in almost every sector of society, social needs will escalate. If Christian leaders can show the compassion of Christ by serving felt social needs, the church will appear more Christ-like and perhaps have greater credibility for addressing spiritual needs. Leaders need to recognize the legitimacy of such service as ministry and help nurture emerging Christian leaders to value social ministry. True servant leaders are compassionate and they lead people into holistic development.

This study identified two components as core to the spiritual formation of leaders: appreciation for the Bible as the source of spiritual truth and cooperation with the Holy Spirit as the spiritual guide. In difficult times it is often only the most basic components that people cling to whereas in less difficult times other components seem more significant than they really are. With many other related dimensions (knowledge and skill) of leader formation becoming more accessible, these two core components must
never be minimized or servant leaders of the kind interviewed for this research will not emerge.

Educational opportunities for Christians in China are changing. Prior to 1949 it was estimated that about 50 theological training schools provided formal education to the less than 1 million Christians. Today through the Three-Self Patriotic Movement there are 18 training institutions (personal communication with China Partner, April 8, 2005) and Christian population estimates in China now vary somewhere between 50-100 million. These few schools cannot begin to serve the mushrooming Christian population in China. Although more formal education could greatly enhance Christian leader formation in China, the current political realities make this an unlikely source for the near future. In a recent analysis of leadership training in China, Aikman (2003) counts over 200 training centers just among four of the major church networks. The best I can determine from discussions with people heavily involved in China ministry is that there are about 10 major networks. The need for leadership training is critical. Webber (2003) believes that China is clearly facing a leadership crisis. Therefore, those involved in leader formation in China will need to learn how to blend formal educational opportunities that are becoming more possible with the ongoing nonformal and informal training that has been the educational backbone in the past. This must be done in such a way that formal education serves as one helpful component and never replaces the proven benefits of the other means of training.

Leaders engaged in leader formation outside of China would be wise to reflect upon how the principles of this study could enhance their practices. The study has shown the great benefits of nonformal and informal education in leader formation as well as how
significant mentoring relationships are to healthy and enduring leaders. These components should find their way into the curricula and programs of institutions committed to facilitating leader formation. Although character formation is a life-long process, as much attention as possible should be given to such formation in every training context since leadership credibility is inseparably linked to character.

Future Research Recommendations

First, this study focused on servant leader formation in China. If servant leadership approaches universality in its acceptance, then study within specific cultures is needed to validate it. The servant leader model should be examined quantitatively in terms of those qualities that exemplify a servant leader and whether a culturally specific or universal assessment tool is appropriate. Qualitatively, a database of research is needed to understand how servant leadership is viewed within different segments of society within a given culture. Insight into how culture (as a whole or aspects of) assists or hinders servant leader formation would be helpful. In addition to the call of the disciples to be servant leaders, the Bible also speaks of the spiritual gift of serving that the Holy Spirit gives to some Christians. I was not able to locate any study that sought to compare leaders who live a servant leadership posture with those having or not having the biblical gift of serving. It would be fascinating to see if there is a correlation between the two. Probing the psyche of servant leaders to be able to articulate their worldview would prove to be an enriching study as well.

Second, China is a country that is in the process of being transformed by Christianity, and in time Christians will serve in more positions of authority. This has been the case in Singapore where a sizable minority of faculty in certain fields at their
universities are Christians as well as many people in public office. Research would help us to understand how Christian public leaders have served effectively in various cultures where Christianity is still in a minority. This understanding could be compared with China and how Chinese Christian leaders can best serve their country so that their Christian worldview can enhance national development.

Third, leader formation within China is a strongly felt need among Christians. In recent years China has sent many of its finest citizens abroad for studies. These people return having been influenced by the place they have lived and studied to the point that they sometimes indiscriminately choose to endorse a foreign model of leader formation over one that is contextualized. The same uncritical adoption of leader formation models happens all over the world far too often.

Fourth, quantitative and qualitative research evaluating leader formation through the Three-Self training institutions for the church in China would be helpful in terms of structures, processes, and results. Research on the approaches and results of leader formation through house-church training centers would also be welcomed. This research could initially be approached within specific church networks and eventually a comparative analysis across networks could be made.

Fifth, although there are indications of change within some leadership training institutions in the United States, it appears that strong influences such as those imposed by accreditation agencies impede needed change. While research can conclusively show that methods and processes are not producing the kind of results that end users desire, established training structures often resist change. A deeper understanding of the forces that hinder holistic leader formation would be helpful to encourage needed change.
Sixth, research comparing developmental processes critical to the formation of leaders across cultures would provide insights into forming better leaders who can serve internationally. Further research into culturally specific process items for leader formation is needed (such as the use of suffering in China). Continuing exploration into a universal leadership model would be helpful.

Lastly, younger leader formation, including that of women, is essential to fill leadership voids. Research into the core issues that younger leaders will face and how these issues can best be addressed with methods and processes appropriate for younger people is needed. We must break out of the habit of training current leaders with methods that are no longer effective or valued. Competency-based training built upon established research and theory is needed now more than ever.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
School of Education: Leadership Program
PhD Candidate: Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Development Processes Critical to the Formation of Servant Leaders in China

Purpose: To discern and describe the critical formative processes that those recognized as exemplary Christian leaders in China have undergone. Through interviews certain qualities and important functions will certainly be identified. However, it is the formative processes that will be intentionally researched to provide insights that can influence future servant leader formation.

Inclusion Criteria: I understand that I have been identified as a recognized servant leader by certain credible sources. I was China born and I have previously or am currently exercising a significant leadership role.

Procedure: I understand that I can ask any clarifying questions about this interview prior to beginning. I will be asked to tell my life story as it relates to the leader I have become. This interview is expected to be in two parts and take a few hours.

Risk and discomforts: I understand that there is no risk to me for participating in this interview and that appropriate security procedures are in place so total anonymity will result. My name will not be associated with my comments, only a code will be connected to my comments.

Benefits and results: I understand that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study. I understand that the results may provide others with insights on the leader formation process. I understand that information collected will be included in a Doctoral Dissertation, and may be presented or published in professional meetings or journals.

Voluntary Participation: I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. I understand that there is no compensation in return for my participation.
Contact Information: Should the need arise, the researcher and his advisor can be contacted at:

Tom Horn  
10 W Dry Creek Circle  
Littleton, CO 80120

Dr Erich Baumgartner  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Participant’s Name: ________________________________  
Witness: ____________________

Date: ________________________________  
Witness: ____________________

Location: ________________________________

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Pre-interview: I will share about my background of having lived in Singapore for seven years where I grew to have a love and appreciation for the Chinese people. My now university-age children not only studied in Chinese schools but they have become bi-literate in Chinese, each even studying language for two months during the summer of 2004 in Beijing. My hope is to better understand Chinese culture and how God has been forming exemplary leaders in China, so that in the not too distant future my wife and I might either live in China or serve the church of China in some meaningful way.

Introduction: The reason I am here is to better understand how an exemplary leader is formed. Numerous people have suggested that I could learn much by hearing about your life story and especially what you remember as those critical formative experiences. To capture your comments accurately and allow me to more fully listen without taking detailed notes I would like to audio tape this conversation. Would this be agreeable with you? This interview will be used as the primary research for my Ph. D. dissertation. What you tell me will be confidential and your name will not be connected with your comments. In fact, your name will not be mentioned in print.

Opening question: Please tell me about you life journey. Feel free to begin wherever you like however it would help me to have some sense of chronology. If you
would allow me to occasionally ask for clarification or allow a follow up question I
would be grateful.

**Potential follow up questions:**

1. Please tell me about some of your most deeply held values.

2. Is there a metaphor that you feel would most appropriately characterize your
   life?

3. What does an exemplary Christian leader in China look like?

4. From your background in training future leaders, what processes do you feel
   are critical to help future leaders become exemplary?

5. What challenges do you see facing future Christian leaders in China?
**APPENDIX C**

**LIST OF RESEARCH THEMES**

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<td>Leadership Formation</td>
<td>Societal Problems</td>
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<td>Destiny Revelation</td>
<td>Status/Prestige</td>
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<td>Divine Contact</td>
<td>Suffering</td>
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<td>Faith Challenge</td>
<td>Deprivation</td>
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<td>Integrity Check</td>
<td>Ministry Backlash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Crisis</td>
<td>Prison/Beatings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry Conflict</td>
<td>Watching Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX D

HOFSTEDE'S RESEARCH

Hofstede (1984, 1996, 1997) conducted what now is considered classical research on cultural differences back in the 1970s. He was able to survey over 116,000 IBM employees in more than 50 nations (50 countries and 3 regions) to understand their personal values as related to their work situation. The results have become foundational for most subsequent studies and have been well substantiated. The most recent international study (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, Gupta, & GLOBE Associates, 2004) assumes validity of Hofstede’s work even though all his data may no longer be as relevant (Scandura & Dorfman, 2004). Hofstede’s (1997) four main dimensions are:

1. Power Distance (relating to authority): The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. In small power distance countries there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses whereas in large power distance countries there is considerable dependence and direction.

2. Collectivism versus Individualism: Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose—everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive “ingroups,” which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning
loyalty. Issues such as harmony, shame, face, purpose of learning, hiring, and management are relevant to this variable.

3. Femininity versus Masculinity: The masculine versus feminine variable breaks cultures into those that strive for performance (masculine) and those that tend toward welfare (feminine), the amount of money spent on helping the poor (higher for feminine), and the amount of effort to negotiate conflict (feminine) or to fight (masculine).

4. Uncertainty Avoidance: The extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations and their tolerance for ambiguity.
APPENDIX E
GLOBE RESEARCH

During the 1990s, a large multinational team of 170 researchers and their support
groups throughout the world collected data from more than 17,000 middle managers in
951 organizations and in 62 societies. Project GLOBE (Global Leadership and
Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) builds upon the works of prior researchers of
cross-cultural leadership and added some new dimensions of their own (House, et al.
2004). Their stated purpose was, “Globe is a programmatic research effort designed to
explore the fascinating and complex effects on culture on leadership, organizational
effectiveness, economic competitiveness of societies, and the human conditions of
members of the society studies” (p. 10). They integrate six culturally implicit theories on
leadership with their research (xviii) and the central theoretical proposition was that the
attributes and entities that distinguish a given culture from other cultures were predictive
of the practices of organizations and leaders attributes and behaviors that are most
frequently enacted, acceptable and effective in that culture (House, Javidan, & Dorfman,
2001). Of their six key research questions, the first two are most relevant to this study:
(a) Are there leader behaviors, attributes, and organizational practices that are universally
accepted and effective across cultures? and, (b) Are there leader behaviors, attributes, and
organizational practices that are accepted and effective in only some cultures? Dickson,
Den Hartog, and Mitchelson (2003) reviewed research in cross-cultural contexts and
identified deeper levels of sophistication for studying universal and cultural specific leadership variables that are beyond the scope of this study. The GLOBE researchers (House, et al. 2004) chose nine major attributes to investigate; the first three of which agree with Hofstede’s first three dimensions and they divide what Hofstede calls femininity versus masculinity into gender egalitarianism and assertiveness:

1. Uncertainty Avoidance: the extent to which members strive to avoid uncertainty by relying on established social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices.

2. Power Distance: the degree to which members expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at the highest levels.

3. Institutional Collectivism: degree to which practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.

4. In-group Collectivism: degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their context.

5. Gender Egalitarianism: degree to which the context minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality.

6. Assertiveness: degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships.

7. Future Orientation: degree to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such a planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification.

8. Performance Orientation: degree to which the context encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.

9. Humane Orientation: degree to which individuals encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others.
The GLOBE research is evidence that international leadership study is cutting edge. The data is growing upon which better conclusions can be drawn concerning universal versus cultural-specific leadership factors. With our ever increasing globally-connected world and the need for cross-culturally sensitive leaders, the relevance of such research will be very high.
Nisbett (2003) provides some rather insightful reflections in comparing Asian and Western people. Every Chinese was first and foremost a member of a collective, or rather of several collectives—the clan, the village, and especially the family. The individual was not, as for the Greeks, an encapsulated unit who maintained a unique identity across social settings. The ideal of happiness was not, as for the Greeks, a life allowing the free exercise of distinctive talents, but the satisfactions of a plain country life shared within a harmonious social network. The Chinese were concerned less with issues of control of others or the environment than with self-control, so as to minimize friction with others in the family and village and to make it easier to obey the requirements of the state administered by magistrates. Whereas Greek vases and wine goblets show pictures of battles, athletic contests, and bacchanalian parties, ancient Chinese scrolls and porcelains depict scenes of family activities and rural pleasures. Nisbett summarizes that his research led him to the conviction that two utterly different approaches to the world have existed for thousands of years:

These approaches include profoundly different social relations, views about the nature of the world, and characteristic thought processes. Each of these orientations—the Western, and the Eastern—is a self-reinforcing, homeostatic system. The social practices promote the worldviews; the worldviews dictate the appropriate thought processes; and the thought processes both justify the worldviews and support the social practices. Understanding these homeostatic systems has implications for grasping the fundamental nature of the mind, for beliefs about how
we ought ideally to reason, and for appropriate educational strategies for different people. (xx)

*Western Versus Eastern Values and Perspectives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Values and Perspectives</th>
<th>Eastern Values and Perspectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aristotelian (either/or)</strong></td>
<td>Confucian (both/and)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency (set your own destiny)</td>
<td>Harmony (part of a collective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom (independence)</td>
<td>Obligations to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts</td>
<td>Whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Contradiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective thought</td>
<td>Subjective thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic diversity</td>
<td>Ethnic homogeneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract theorizing</td>
<td>Pragmatic application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objects</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to control</td>
<td>Ability to flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand out</td>
<td>Blend in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ends</td>
<td>Means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple world (stable)</td>
<td>Complex world (changing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow focus</td>
<td>Wide angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power distance small</strong></td>
<td><strong>Power distance large</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralize</td>
<td>Centralize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collectivism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
<td>Group-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push to perform</td>
<td>Shame to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand up for yourself</td>
<td>Remain silent and endure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplish tasks</td>
<td>Create and maintain harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Long term</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The distinct approaches between Western and Eastern thought have emerged from distinct values and perspectives. By recognizing the existence of cultural distinctions a researcher will look for similarities and differences. In this study on servant leader formation in China both similar and different approaches were observed.
APPENDIX G

ELLISTON’S TRIANGLE

Formal, Nonformal and Informal Education Distinctions.

The planned dimension is deliberate, staffed, and financed. The stabilizing dimension is based on socio-political traditions. The functional dimension arises from need and is unrestricted by time and place.
APPENDIX H
LEADER FORMATION PRACTICES

CHURCH RESOURCE MINISTRIES

Dr. Terry Walling is the Vice President for US Ministries with Church Resource Ministries. He has studied leader formation for many years and has developed three questions that guide a leader's self-directed learning (seminar notes in published form from Terry Walling, Church Resource Ministries, 1998):

**THE FOCUSING LEADERS PROCESS**

![Diagram of the Focusing Leaders Process]

Focusing Leaders Process
Reprinted with Permission.

Focusing Leaders is a personal development process designed to bring strategic focus to a leader's life and ministry. Focus is obtained by examining your past (Personal Time Line), clarifying your future (Personal Calling Statement) and identifying resources that will facilitate future growth and development (Personal Mentors). This process will assist leaders in developing those they lead while preparing their local church or
organization to initiate a corporate envisioning process. Seven transformational principles inform this model. Movement is made from personal transformation to corporate transformation. Effective ministry flows from being, deep then wide, where a leader can only go as wide as he or she is willing to go deep. Change happens best in the context of relationships since leaders and churches need safe-places for transformation to occur. Coaching and mentoring is essential for the implementation of change.
Paul Stanley, international vice president of The Navigators (a Christian ministry committed to building leaders around the world), is responsible for leader formation worldwide. He has gained experience in helping leaders develop in many cultures. He understands leadership as having three broad components with development as one essential aspect. Rarely does one person have the ability to lead well in all three arenas so the wise leader will seek to complement his or her weakness.

Stanley’s Shepherd Leadership Model.

Leading refers to providing organizational oversight (inspiring, managing, etc.). Caring refers to personal matters in core relationships (family, work associates, host culture associates). Developing refers to the equipping of others so they can reach their full
potential (both personally and professionally). At the center the effective leader must be both a steward and a servant. Therefore effective leading emerges from a conviction of being a steward and servant at one’s core.
DAVID DOUGHERTY OF OMF

David Dougherty, Director of Plans and Training for OMF International, has been a keen thinker and exponent of leader formation within Christian organizations. Along with designing the leader development program for his own organization called Project Timothy, he was called upon to help design and facilitate training for Leader Link, in which many North American missions agencies associate. The Project Timothy model has been used many times throughout Asia with ever increasing effectiveness and includes four sessions over an 18 month time frame. Each session is four and a half days. In between sessions there are assignments (pre-seminar reading and post-seminar application assignments), and geographic cluster groups which meet once or twice. Ideally there is a local facilitator who meets with the cluster groups. Regular interaction via email takes place between the PT instructors as well. The program components include: Session 1—leader and inner life; Session 2—leader and target/task; Session 3—leader and team; Session 4—leader and the organization. A needs assessment is conducted at the beginning of the training to help leaders determine where they are currently at and where they hope to be in terms of their personal and professional development. A profile of what the organization values in their leader is clarified with learning objectives under these headings: influence, spiritual authority, vision, servanthood, lifelong development, self awareness, and competencies/team relationships.
GREGORY FRITZ OF CALEB PROJECT

Fritz (2004), who was influenced significantly by Clinton, developed the following model for servant leader formation. For the Christian leader the foundation is their spiritual development. Their formation into credible servant leaders requires gaining competency in seven areas. He identifies helpful principles that guide personal development in each of these seven areas. He clearly shows that at the foundation of servant leadership is spiritual and personal growth.

Fritz’s Leader Formation Model

WILLIAM D. LAWRENCE OF LEADER FORMATION

Bill Lawrence, former director of the Leadership Center at Dallas Theological Seminary and now founder/president of Leader Formation (committed to transforming the hearts of leaders who in turn will impact the nations), has been reflecting on leader formation for many years and sees character as a critical developmental component (personal interview with Bill Lawrence, November 17, 2004 and email correspondence April 25, 2005). His formation model works like this: There are eight concentric circles moving from the outside inward in the following order.

1. Passion—a growing desire to pursue ministry confirmed by God's blessing on the service and a developing sense of God's call confirmed by the affirmation of those receiving the ministry.

2. Truth—passion gradually gives way to the reality that the individual don't have enough knowledge to continue ministering effectively, so the desire develops to gain truth through training both in knowledge and skill.

3. Relationships—the individual gains the knowledge and skill and moves into ministry only to face some demanding and frustrating relationships that anger him and cause him to want to leave, but he can't do so, or, if he does leave, he ends up in the very same kind of struggle.

4. Unwanted grace—the unrelenting call of God on the forming leader's life either to endure where he doesn't want to or to carry out a ministry that is so far beyond him he is utterly incapable of getting the job done, but he cannot escape God's call on his life.
5. Brokenness—God's demand that we face ourselves in ways we never would so we can become ourselves in ways we never could by enduring through unwanted grace, often under the hard hand of someone we regard as unrighteous who may actually be unrighteous or in a circumstance, whether in the family, physically, or emotionally that we cannot escape and which strips away all self-reliance and leaves us humbled and vulnerable.

6. Waiting—God's deliberate act of putting us in a place where we can't change the circumstances and where we must; this overlaps with brokenness and unwanted grace as described above and can last for some period of time; much growth occurs in the individual although he isn't aware of all that's happening in him.

7. Renewed mind—as this process goes, the mind is renewed through a change in thinking about God, about himself, about others, and about ministry; by this time there is a radical change in values, desires, drives, and ambitions that shows a growing conformity to Christ's mind.

8. Rest—now there is a sense of peace, security, legitimate confidence, and a clarity of mind that never existed before so the individual is free to be himself, to act with love, to make wise decisions, and to impact others as never before.

The result of this formative process is that the leader lives at rest and is secure in who he is. Security comes from recognizing God's sovereignty in all affairs of life. Security is not based on achievements. The most prominent dimension in leadership is the one least mentioned—the cost. The key formative issue is in giving up control and the most discouraging thing about leadership is moving into darkness. The mark of a true leader is to build and give accountability. Lawrence states that the issue of leadership
style is not which one is best but when which style is best. A servant leader will be
directive when needed and participatory when wise.

Lawrence (1999, p. 99) states that servant leaders lead by doing the following: (a)
put forth a vision that attracts other and takes them into a better future; (b) develop their
followers' gifts; (c) recruit, delegate, orient, evaluate, hold accountable, bring about
change, instruct in areas of ignorance, empower—everything we call leadership; (d) raise
and develop human, financial, and physical resources; and (e) reproduce the abilities they
have in those who follow them so they can do the same thing.
REFERENCE LIST


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Mountain Central Regional Director, 1996-2001

OC International, Singapore
Asia Area Consultant, 1993-1996
Director of Training & Research, 1990-1993

Pioneers, Sterling VA and Singapore
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Nationals Director, 1988-1989

The Art of Family Living, Dallas TX
Director of Operations, 1985-1986

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Crusade Director, 1984-1985

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