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Biblical Foundations of Christian Leadership, Part 2

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BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP, PART II

Leadership Applied in the Early Church (1 Pet. 5:1–5)

In the first part of this two-part series we explored the concepts of self-ascendant hierarchy introduced by Lucifer at his rebellion (Isa. 14:12–15) against his Creator. This led to dominance behavior and rebellion against God with cosmic impact. Humanity is impacted due to the distorted nature of our understanding of leadership as influenced by dominance for most of earth's history. The narrative of Matthew 20:20–24 reveals the degree to which Jesus' disciples were impacted by self-ascendant and dominance tendencies. The mother of James and John sought to persuade Jesus to honor her sons with high positions in his kingdom, and the jealousy and anger among the other disciples reveals that unhealthy ambition lurked just below the surface among them. Leadership as service was not enough! They sought the advantage of honor and glory that attends high position.

One of the ten who heard these words and experienced the emotionally heated reaction to the proposal by the mother of James and John was Peter. As he matured as a leader in the early church, his wisdom grew to understand the essential nature of Christian leadership as service apart from position. Chapter five of his first epistle echoes the counsel of Jesus referenced above:

> To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them— not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Pet. 5:1-5, NIV)

It is in this word of counsel that we are able to see a demonstration of the wisdom of Matthew 20:25–28. Peter places the shepherd positionally (ἐν ὑμῖν), *among* the believers (1 Pet. 5:2) rather than over the believers. This ter-

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minology is used by John (14:10–20) in the "oneness" narrative where Jesus is quoted as saying to the Twelve that the Holy Spirit who is with you (παρ' ὑμῖν) will be in you (ἐν ὑμῖν) (14:17). Jesus says, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." The oneness passage concludes with a description of the Godhead and the church as being "in" (14:20) one another. Thus, the elder (Christian leader) is a part of, drawn from, and serves in the community with no reference to the hierarchical term of "over" others. Since the participle "serving as overseers" is missing in some earlier manuscripts, we should be reminded that common understandings of hierarchy may not be intended by the writer. But, if the word "overseer" is a legitimate part of the original text, it is here modified by a careful description that rejects the common understanding of overseer as manager or boss.

Rather, guarding and caring for (ἐπισκοποῦντες) the believers (v. 2) contrasts with forbidden authoritarian behavior (κατακυριεύοντες) (v. 3) that Jesus refers to as "lord it over" (Matt. 20:25). Coercive methods (ἀναγκα–στῶς) are replaced by the freedom that is implied in the willing attitude (ἑκουσίος), and the eager (προθύμως) heart unsullied by desire for personal gain. The concluding note references Christian leadership as a stewardship relationship between the leader and God. The people are entrusted to the steward leader (κλῆρος) who bears the responsibility rendering caring service as a shepherd. It is to this stewardship that the leader is called to serve and lead by personal example (τύποι) (cf. Matt. 20:28).

The approbation of the crown of victory from the Chief Shepherd (ἀρχι–ποιμενος) may be conceptually linked to the Good Shepherd of John 10 who, though "over" the sheep, chooses to serve the welfare of the sheep even to the point of death. The stress created by the irony of having a leader who is over those led but who eschews the autocratic behavior associated with the superior position remains a mental model challenge and is hard to reconcile because of our close association with "over" and "dominance." Yet it serves as an illustration of the model presented in verses 2 and 3. The Good Shepherd loves the sheep to the extent that he will die for them. This is the degree to which God is calling leaders to serve his heritage and it is to this degree that he contrasts the selfish use of people for gain with the transformational serving of people to whom the leader is called to build up.

In moving from a command and control structure of rulership to the model of Godly service, it must be kept in mind that it is not a move toward undisciplined behavior nor is it a move into unstructured community. Recognition of social structures which reinforce order is an essential aspect of self-discipline that leads to healthy community. Respecting authority in an interdependent system mutually requires becoming a subject to one another (ὑποτάσσω) (1

Pet. 5:5), which is a matter of choice made in the context of personal freedom. The one putting on the "slave's apron" (την ταπεινοφροσυνην ἐγκομβω– σασθε) does so by choice, not compulsion. The Chief Shepherd leads loving-ly, and the follower serves respectfully in order to honor the one placed in authority and demonstrate solidarity with the freely associated community of faith that remains connected by of the bonds of love.

The counsel to humble oneself is to the leader an inoculation against the natural propensity to migrate toward authoritarian behavior. To the "younger" or subordinate leader, the garment of humility enables a discipline of self that inoculates against disrespect of duly appointed authority and self-ascendant behavior that can lead to discord and rebellion. The aggregate out-come is unity and oneness akin to what we observe in the interactions of the Godhead.

Leadership as a Relational Process (John 15:12–15)

Christian leadership assumes a relational process in pursuit of a common purpose. It is a process which, while expecting obedience to Jesus' commands (John 15:10), is devoid of coercive structures that require accomplishment. Rather, the community of leader and followers is driven intrinsically by values that support both mission and process. Obedience in the absence of coercion assumes an intrinsic motivation—love. Jesus speaks of love for one another as essential to Christian identity within the larger community (John 13:35). He strengthens the argument for love as a foundational value related to mission accomplishment by identifying his love for them as the basis upon which they followed him (John 15:12-17) and by which he sent them to "bear fruit" in a hostile world.

This powerful relational element is largely absent as a consideration for leadership in most organizational contexts. It should be noticed that at the time just prior to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, he is speaking not to novice followers but rather to the leaders of a new movement who will plant church-es across the world and come to be known as Christians. This would suggest that love for one's fellow leaders is where the process of creating a Christian leadership paradigm begins. Christian leaders start by loving one another and embrace new disciples as followers to whom they extend the blessing of love. This may seem a strange thought when considered as a leadership model apart from the church, but Christian leadership cannot or should not be viewed dualistically but rather as a consistent model of leader behavior appli-cable in the marketplace as well as the temple.

Covey and Merrill (2006) divide the essence of trust and, by extension, lead-ership, into two essential elements: "character and competence." Most leader-

ship scholars (Barna, 1997; Berkley, 2007; Blackaby & Blackaby, 2011; Covey & Merrill, 2006) agree that these two elements constitute the essence of leadership. But what does the New Testament present in this regard? Paul's description of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:1–31; Eph. 4:1–16) clearly presents them as the source of our ministry competence. By these gifts we contribute to the advance of the mission of the church in response to our commissioning (Matt. 28:18–20). A careful look at all three of the spiritual gifts passages above reveals a relational context that cannot be ignored without cost.

In Romans 12:3 the apostle prefaces his presentation with these words, among others:

> For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

If the gifting of the Holy Spirit mandates that we contribute to the leadership of the body by means of our spiritual competencies, then Paul is addressing leaders with the counsel to be careful not to inwardly assume an attitude of superiority over others within the body. He thus introduces spiritual gifts in the context of respectful personal relationships within the body. After presenting spiritual gifts in verses 4–8, he follows in verses 9–21 with one of the New Testament's most powerful exhortations to foster healthy relationships within the community of faith.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the discourse on spiritual gifts is followed by a passionate appeal for unity based upon the metaphor of the body wherein he says, ". . . care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (vv. 25, 26). This relational exhortation is followed by chapter 13, the "love chapter." This reveals a consistency between the combination of spiritual gift competency discussed in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 in that they both cast the introduction of spiritual gifts in a nest of relational health.

Ephesians 4 follows suit in that the first six verses address the relational context of the church. It includes this counsel: ". . . with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:2, 3).

Jesus chose a specific and novel word in John 15 with which to address the disciples—friends (φίλους). This is not a common term employed by Jesus when speaking of the disciples. Prior to the time represented in the narrative of John 15, the only recorded instance is Luke 12:4 where we hear him use this word to designate his disciples. The common use of the word "master" (κύριος) by the disciples to address Jesus assumes the disciples' positional counterpart of slaves (δοῦλους). This "master/slave" relationship is replaced

by "friends" at the discretion of Jesus, the master. It is as he chooses to identify with his followers that his incarnation is recognized not so much as an event than as a process that is here unfolded. The one who occupies the power position makes a choice to associate on the relational level of "friend." The friend relationship has no positional counterpart. The insistent interjection of position into the dynamic of friendship destroys the relationship.

In this act Jesus is pressing his followers into a leadership community similar to what we observe in Genesis 1 where the leadership process is built upon creative conversation rather than command. "Let us" (Gen. 1:26) is our glimpse into the court of creation where a divine team works as equals without positional stress or tension over who gets the credit. Jesus, by assuming the relational position of friend embraces his disciples in a mission with purpose marked by trust, and where information is freely shared as opposed to commands demanding obedience without expressed purpose as would be expected of a slave:

> The servant executes the individual orders of his master but is not privy to the whole idea which informs his government; moreover, he executes the individual order simply as under authority, without being in full unison with it, because it is not instilled into him as an idea and a motive—and in respect of this fact, it is his master that does such and such things through him; still less does he understand what his master does personally, or through the medium of other servants. He, with his unfree individual performances, does not understand the free doings of his lord, Rom. 7:15. The friend, on the other hand, is the confidant of the thought of his friend and exerts himself in harmony with him. And so the exaltation of the disciples from Christ's service to friendship is accomplished by His confiding to them the fundamental idea of His life, His sacrificial death of love in accordance with the loving counsel of God; it was by this confidence that He sought to arouse them to a loving activity that should rejoice in sacrifice. (Lange & Schaff, 1865)

Too often the identity of a leadership team such as that emerging near the end of Jesus' earthly ministry does so as a context of privilege wherein the leaders rise above those led. The friend relationship between Jesus and these budding Christian leaders does not promise privilege but hardship (John 15:18–25) and they, like Jesus, are focused on serving those they lead. The patriarch Abraham demonstrates this well in that he was a friend of God (James 2:23) but his life as a leader was both purposeful and challenging:

> It is absolutely crucial whenever one discusses the subject of election to realize that election is not about privilege but purpose. As early as the summons of Abram to leave his home and receive the blessing of God, to receive a new name and become a great nation, that blessing was accompanied by a divine purpose—to be a blessing to all the people of the earth. (Gen 12:2–3; Borchert, 2002, pp. 150–151)

The relationship we share with Jesus, though at his initiative is embraced as friendship, nevertheless does not alter the subordinate role of the disciple to the divine role of our Savior. It magnifies the greatness of a leader who retains power and authority but chooses to relate to his followers as friends. In so doing his supremacy is undiminished.

Leading as a Servant

Jesus washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:5–17) stands as the pre-eminent example of service and egalitarian attitude modeled for the church. But how do we lead as a servant? There are some cultures where the chasm between servant and leader is so great that it is almost impossible to bridge. The mystique and honor granted to leaders simply cannot be formed into a concept of the leader as servant without violating cultural norms. Jesus demonstrated a willingness to challenge such norms. Peter's resistance to Jesus washing his feet and Jesus' strongly stated insistence is a case in point (John 13:6–9).

For others it is less difficult to operationalize service as the defining element in leadership. Once again, the Master provides an answer. He had three and a half years to transform twelve ordinary men into world class leaders who could competently bear the burden of establishing the Christian church upon this earth. During that period of time there was no sense of him providing service that pampered the twelve. He never did for them what they needed to do for themselves. In fact, Jesus trusted them with most of what we would consider the professional functions of pastoral ministry. There is, for example, no record of him performing a baptism, but rather him commissioning the twelve to perform these rites that today we reserve primarily for clergy.

The Service of Transformation

Jesus' service was directed at the development of twelve men. He served them by serving their developmental needs—spiritual, social, ecclesiastical, and personal. Leadership service should not be seen in the context of the servant who provides for the luxury of the church. Jesus took the raw human material that he found in Peter, James, John, and the others, and transformed their characters and their competencies in a manner that qualified them for the responsibility of leadership. He directed all of his resources to that end—teaching, encouraging, modeling, rebuking, and whatever was needed to create leaders who would emulate (Smith, 1998) him in a world that was perched on the edge of monumental change.

If the model of Jesus was about developing leaders to engage in the expansion of the kingdom of God, then it stands to reason that the primary function of Christian leaders is the stewardship of developing leaders (Spears, 1995, p.

207). Parents who model leadership in a child's life bear the responsibility of developing their children as faithful followers of Christ but also as capable leaders who can serve others (Burns, 1978). Some leaders are tempted to look upon their organizations as an assemblage of followers who must be managed and directed. The pastor-centric model that has emerged in many cultures supports this centralized approach to authority. The New Testament model would have members viewed as a gathering of potential leaders for whom active leaders bear the responsibility of training and equipping for leadership service according to their gifts (Berkley, 2007) rather than as subjects who must bow to the authority of positional leaders.

Task accomplishment grows out of the development of spiritual leaders. Discipleship is the New Testament model of leadership development even though we commonly think of it as being follower development. Jesus took followers and transformed them into leaders! The tendency for leaders to function as managers who coordinate the human resources of members can overshadow the spiritual leader's call to "make disciples" which suggests the developmental responsibilities toward others as modeled by Jesus. Secular leadership developmental specialists (McCauley, Center for Creative Leadership, & Van Velsor, 2004, pp. 85–115) have learned that this relational development model employed by Jesus leads to greater and more consistent productivity. Jesus proved that the development of competent and committed leaders would result in the accomplishment of mission more effectively than efforts to direct compliant followers to accomplish the same end. Stated simply—it works.

Leadership as a Distributed Model

The relational model also provides the context for the original organizational leadership structure. As early as the narrative of the conflict between Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1–5) the preeminence of the firstborn is implied. What would eventually emerge as the law of the firstborn (Exod. 13:1–16) ordained that every firstborn son would be dedicated to the Lord as his. This dedication assumed leadership responsibility by the firstborn in both the familial and community context spanning both spiritual and civil matters. This design was a buttress against the individualistic leadership behavior demonstrated by Moses and for which he was rebuked by his father-in-law, Jethro (Exod. 18:1–27). Anchoring the leader structure in the family assured that the weight of priestly and governance responsibility would be distributed broadly even as the numbers of people and families increased.

[2]Great man theory is the idea, popularized by Thomas Carlyle in the 1840s, that history hangs (largely) on the "impact of 'great men,' or heroes; highly influential individuals who, due to either their personal charisma, intelligence, wisdom, or political skill, utilized their power in a way that had a decisive historical impact" ("Great man theory," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/).

This divine commitment to a broad distribution of leadership responsibility as a preferred norm remains constant throughout the biblical record. Though a king was authorized by God, it was done with a stern warning of the consequences attending the consolidation of authority in a single individual. God's intervention in times of apostasy and crisis reveals a consistent strategy of distribution of leadership authority as opposed to centralization. Examples of this abound while the following serve as samples: the Tower of Babel results in subdivision and distribution of earth's population (Gen. 11:1–9); confederated tribes of Israel at the time of Judges have no central ruler (Judg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 24:25); the captivity of Israel results in diaspora (2 Kings 15); the captivity of Judah results in diaspora and emergence of the community-based synagogue (Jer. 39); the demise of the Levitical priesthood at the crucifixion of Jesus is replaced with a radical distribution of priestly authority among the Christian believers (1 Pet. 2:4–10); and the founding of the Christian church is built on a relational community model rather than on the centralized temple model (Acts 14:23; 16:1, 5, 19; Col. 4:15). Beyond biblical history we see this same pattern in the Protestant Reformation where not one but many church organizations emerge from the controversy between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Spiritual Priesthood as a Distributed Model

The assigning of priestly responsibility linked to the firstborn created, by its very nature, a distributed model of spiritual authority in that every new family resulted in the appointment of a new leader on the family level. The tribal society under the patriarchal model appears to have recognized the firstborn of the extended family as the tribal leader (i.e., Noah [Gen. 8:20], Abraham [Gen. 12:7, 8], Jacob [Gen. 31:54], etc.).

When Israel rebelled against Moses and by extension, God, the Levites stepped forward to restore order, and a part of God's response to the unfaithfulness of the people was to transfer the spiritual leadership responsibilities from the firstborn to the Levites (Exod. 32:29; Num. 3:11–13; 8:18, 19). When the Jews revealed their unfaithfulness in rejecting the Christ, the Levites' assignment as the designated spiritual leaders ended. Jesus became high priest (Heb. 7; 8:1) and his faithful followers—each of them—serve that vacated spiritual leadership function (Rev. 1:5, 6; 1 Pet. 2:4, 5, 9). The history of this spiritual leadership process suggests that God will do what He has to do to provide spiritual leadership for his people but always on an inclusive, distributed basis.

This epic drama, in the context of the leadership and governance of God's people, plays out a radical shift during and after the earthly ministry of the

Messiah. We find the new covenant church organized under a distributed model where spiritual leadership responsibilities are radically distributed among the people. Each member of the body is now entrusted collectively with spiritual authority (Matt. 28:18–20) as opposed to a central human ruler who is appointed by birth or force of arms. This historical context is essential to understanding spiritual leadership and the organizational context in which it is taught and practiced in the New Testament. Every member, whether male or female, is called to serve as a priestly leader in the body of Christ. This broad distribution of leadership responsibility in the New Testament church returns it to its firstborn roots except that the nature of the model is more radical in that every member is included as firstborn—no exceptions.

Dual Service of the Holy Spirit

Covey and Merrill's (2006) combination of words to define the elements of leadership (competency and character) are mirrored in the New Testament in that it joins the relational health of the members with spiritual competence in the primary passages dealing with spiritual gifts. This should not be a surprise when we consider the two primary functions of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the New Testament—spiritual gifting for competency, and engendering the production of spiritual fruit for Christ-like character.

The fruit of the Spirit as detailed in Galatians 5 (see also 1 Pet. 1:5) reveals a standard of character possible to those being transformed by the indwelling Spirit. These items constitute the relational standard of spiritual leadership. Though character may be treated as a desired trait but not necessarily required in some secular contexts, the expectation of consistent Christ-like character patterned after the relational standards of Galatians 5 and related texts is an essential component of spiritual leadership. Even business models are demonstrating an increased awareness of the need for character-driven leadership following the financial meltdown of 2008 and other failed character-driven debacles. Likewise, spiritual leadership is not supported on competency alone. The spiritual aspect is forfeited without the contextual elements of the fruit of the Spirit which serve as relational standards of behavior (Gal. 5:22–23: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control") that are character-based.

Spiritual gifts are distributed at the will of the Holy Spirit in quantity and combinations determined solely by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4–6). As such, the diversity options for the members of the body of Christ are almost infinite. The fruit of the Spirit, however, carries with it a uniform expectation of Christian character. Our temperaments may differ; our mind styles may reveal different ways of thinking and ordering life; our mental orientation of right and left

brain will vary, but the standards of character are the same for all. Leaders don't, by conferral of position, inherit the privilege of demonstrating impatience or loss of self-control or any of the other spiritual graces simply because they occupy a position of authority. Positional leaders and ministry leaders within the body are alike subject to the expectations established by the standards of the fruit of the Spirit for Christian treatment of followers and other leaders alike.

The good news in this combination of competence and character is that both emanate from the Spirit of God. A relationally healthy context in which ministry competency is exercised is a winning combination—the relational context supports the content of ministry action. Leaders, both visible and obscure, have the assurance that competence for ministry and leadership contribution is ours as a result of the willingness of the Spirit to dwell within us. A transformed character and a calling with the competencies to support it are ours to claim according the promise of God.

Discipleship

Discipleship and the process of developing a disciple are often associated most closely with following. We hear the invitation of Jesus, "Come follow me . . ." and we rarely take the time to consider that discipleship implies taking someone to a destination (Brown, 1975, p. 481). Consider for a moment what lay before the 12 disciples. Three and a half years of intense, socially connected, spiritual and intellectual conditioning with the Messiah! But was that the terminal point Jesus had in mind when he voiced the invitation? They were still on the journey with him when he informed them that he would be leaving them—but not as orphans (John 13:33–35). At Pentecost their spiritual Companion took up residence within them (John 14:17) but their function changed dramatically in that transition. They went from being disciples to apostles. The discipleship process developed them as leaders and under the influence of the indwelling Spirit these *sent men* planted the Christian church and changed the world—forever.

Discipleship has as its goal the making of a leader. It is a leadership development process. His intent for his people on this earth is that they become effective ministers regardless of specific calling, whether lay or clergy, whether gifted as a pastor or gifted as a healer, we are called to become leaders in the context of our giftedness. Our call to make disciples is to identify giftedness and develop spiritual leaders for the kingdom.

Calling

Jesus demonstrated a method in the process of transforming common men

from being fishermen, tax collectors, farmers, etc., to becoming effective spiritual leaders. It started with a selection process and an invitation to enter into a journey of personal transformation. "I will send you out to fish for people" (Mark 1:17) revealed a purpose in the mind and heart of Jesus that communicated value to these men and superseded the value of their current occupations. Jesus' call was an invitation to personal transformation, and they followed him. The discipling relationship was personal, intense, and accompanied by risk. But they followed and their lives were changed.

Invitation Leads to Following

The first step in discipleship today is the same as it was on the day that Jesus called Peter, James and John from their boats and nets—selection and invitation. The invitation was personal and involved the promise of relationship. Discipling is personal and it must be intentionally relational in nature. Our modern obsession with efficiency tends to relegate relational elements of leadership development to the dark corners of ministry while we apply economy of scale principles and assess on the basis of efficiency rather than effectiveness. We need to consciously seek out and identify giftedness in people and invest personal effort and time to aid the Spirit in transforming them into effective spiritual leaders.

Following Leads to Mentoring

The invitation leads to following. It is in following that the relationship is developed which allows the sort of learning that Frank Smith (1998) refers to as *classical learning*, or mentoring. When the 70 (Luke 10:1) embarked upon their respective journeys, they did so in company with another—35 teams of two—wherein peer mentoring occurred as a benefit of the natural dialog that would take place in such a situation. This dialogical model is the foundation of effective discipleship and leadership development in the kingdom of God.

Such learning takes place in a natural relational context where the learning is most generally immediately connected to events and activities of life and is a highly effective learning model. It is the common form of learning enjoyed by children where observation prompts questions that are answered in the context of doing. It is a form of learning that is effortless and effective. Most of the questions associated with this learning find their origin in the learner rather than the teacher—a condition that increases the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This transformational learning requires close personal contact and honest relational commitment but is attended by a forgetting curve that is almost negligible.

Empowering Leads to Sending

The disciples enjoyed such an environment with Jesus. They learned as they lived together. They were transformed in the context of observing their Leader even as a child's formative introduction to leadership behavior occurs in the relational environment of the home (Bass, 1990). This prepared them even as good parenting behavior prepares a child for the empowerment that attends responsibility and authority for effective contribution to the needs of the family. The leader who trains must also assign responsibility and empower to affect growth. Care must be exercised to avoid the error of confusing abandonment for empowerment. The two may look similar, but the empowering leader remains as a resource for the ones empowered. Empowerment is not only for task accomplishment but also has a generative and maturing effect on the learner. Once done, sending is the next step.

Sending Leads to Leader Multiplication

The sending of the 70 (Luke 10:1–24) reveals the connection between empowerment and sending. The assignment was clear and the parameters of empowerment were clear—proclaim the presence of the Messiah and heal the sick (10:9). Only in executing these two assignments did they discover that their empowerment also authorized authority over demons, which says something about the abundant nature of the Master's empowerment.

The plan of sending the seventy has an essential link to leadership development. Pairing them in teams of two creates a relational learning context (peer mentoring) which moves the learners from a mentoring relationship with Jesus into the more mature mentoring context of co-learning (Anderson & Reese, 1999, p. 15). The disciples had the advantage of a social group plus an active, contextual environment necessary for optimal learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, pp. 119, 279). In a sense the "two by two" model provided a weaning strategy in the leadership development process that resulted in less dependence upon the physical presence of Jesus and paved the way for the internalized influence of the Holy Spirit. It appears to be a flat structure without consideration for assigning a "leader," but rather a co-equal team. Thus disciples were multiplied to form a continually growing army of spiritual leaders built upon an interdependent relational model.

The principles related to the two by two ministry model implemented by Jesus challenges the traditional practice of assigning lone pastors rather than co-equal teams to ministry assignments. It is predictable in a world that embraces a predominately hierarchical philosophy of organizational structure and ecclesiastical structures which follow suite that a flat model of team leadership among those assigned to field ministry would be slow to gain accep-

tance. This model merits experimental application at the very least.

Conclusion

The Bible presents a leadership model enriched by a cultural history of internal tension relating to divine expectation and human failure but also impacted by external tensions of war, occupation, and captivity. God's service as ruler of his people, within a covenant relationship, involved no human buffer between him and his people. He began by providing the firstborn model, a fully distributed leadership model down to the family level followed by a tribal assignment (Levites) of spiritual leadership responsibility. The centralized leadership model to which God reluctantly submitted in the placement of a king as ruler of Israel (1 Sam. 7–9) and the consolidation of priestly responsibility in a tribe instead of the familial model of the firstborn ended that direct role and relationship. This was radically reversed in the New Testament record when Immanuel was realized and the Spirit of God took up residence in the hearts of his people. The need for the intermediate ruler was no longer present in the context of the priesthood of all.

Christian churches emerged with no formal ecclesiastical structure to govern them other than that of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Apostles and the Scriptures. Yet leaders emerged from the body in what seems to be an egalitarian process of selection and commissioning by the church but wherein the apostles and their disciples involved themselves intimately in the spiritual formation and leadership development of others.

The natural human tendency toward dominance behavior was modified by efforts to instill in the body of believers an attitude of equal value for members regardless of a person's position or giftedness. The follower's leadership role was determined by spiritual giftedness and a demonstration of Christ-like relational behavior. These two Spirit-given qualifications—character and competence—establishes the spiritual foundation for leadership in the kingdom of God. Each member serves as a steward of his or her spiritual gift and contributes specific service to the process of leadership that addresses the mission (Matt. 28:18–20; Rev. 14:6, 7) to which the church has been called by the Master.

Challenge

So, how then shall we lead? We must recognize that the forces that motivate the man of sin in II Thessalonians 2—self-ascendance and the desire to dominate—remain a constant threat to godly, biblical leadership. Lucifer's legacy is never far removed from those God has called to lead. Thus it is essential that we carefully and consistently walk in the Spirit of God. The

regenerated heart must be maintained by an ongoing conversation with God that reminds us that the glory is his, the gifts are his, and even the fruit of a righteous character is his.

Our concept of church must emphasize the oneness of community marked by a model of ministry wherein authority is distributed broadly among its members. Leaders are drawn from among the congregation with clear guidelines for leadership as service motivated by love. The consequence of service is the transformation of those who make up the community. Followers are discipled to become effective leaders. Both followers and leaders enjoy mutual respect built upon the same foundation—love.

God knows that we are not capable of such behavior on our own. It is by the gift of the Holy Spirit, willing to take up residence in every believer, which allows for both the content (gifts) and the context (fruit) to be present. Competency and character come through the ministry of that same Spirit. From the point of invitation, through the discipling of self and others, even to the end of life the Spirit of God is the enabling agent for those who would lead in Jesus' name.

Reflection Exercise

Consider the metaphor of the human body introduced by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. Now, imagine the major systems that require "leadership" in order to dependably provide the contribution to the whole that results in healthy and productive function of the body. What about the "leadership" of subsystems? Consider the concept of interdependent systems and how they might inform our understanding of hierarchy? How does this impact the valuation of people who serve essentials post within the body (organization)?

Discuss the nature of a non-hierarchical organization (flat) and how radically different it would be from the hierarchical structures with which we are acquainted. What happens to the flow of authority when your leader assumes the relationship of friend (John 15:15) and not commander? If authority is assumed by the members of the body, then to whom are you accountable? How would you graph this organizational design in a way that depicts the directional flow of authority which is usually top-down in a traditional hierarchy?

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