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L E A D E R S H I P   R E S O U R C E S  
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I travel a lot. This has given me many opportunities for surprises. It is amazing to see the many different ways in which humans have invented living and communicating. Languages seem to have their own hum and rhyme, accompanied by body language used to underscore meaning. The first time I experienced an African welcome gesture I was very unprepared. There was the wonderful welcoming smile, handshake, and embrace. But when my welcoming host, who was a few years older than I, insisted on carrying my heavy suitcase up the steps to my room, I have to admit that I was embarrassed. It did not feel right to let an older gentleman do the heavy lifting for me. It took me awhile before I could truly experience this act of servant leadership and gracefully accept the local protocol of hospitality. It reminded me of the tension in the Upper Room when Jesus took off his clothes to wash his disciples’ feet and thus seriously disrupted Peter’s sense of appropriateness in the face of the difference between master and disciple.

Culture sometimes prevents us from appreciating the very gifts offered to us, at least at first. In one place I learned a dimension of friendship that my culture does not allow me to experience easily. It happened when I was teaching Leadership Development to teachers and administrators of religious organizations in India. The first thing I noticed was their eagerness to learn in the classroom and their desire to share the beauty of their city and cultural sites with me. I enjoyed both, the classroom and the time outside the classroom. But I was unprepared for a gesture of friendship which men do not commonly practice in my country: men holding hands with men. Every time I walked with my students on campus, one of them would reach for my hand. I had to learn that this was perfectly acceptable in their context, even though it wasn’t in mine.

If you have traveled to other countries and cultures, you probably have...
your own well of stories to tell of amazing encounters and gifts received through gestures of grace not always recognized easily. Unfortunately, culture not only connects us, it also divides us in ways that can be more profound than we care to admit. This is also true of the culture of academic disciplines.

I still remember when one of the most exciting books about servant leadership hit the market in 2014. That amazing tome, edited by Skip Bell, carried the simple title *Servants and Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*. Apart from the paradox of the title, which connects the idea of servant with friend, the book also contained an interesting divide that illustrated why it has been difficult for many years to start a meaningful conversation about spiritual leadership outside the seminary classroom. On the one hand, this edited volume assembled some of the most insightful collections of Old and New Testament thinking about servant leadership. In addition, it also contained solid contributions from scholars of ministry. But as I started to analyze the different chapters, I made a discovery which surprised me. Both groups of scholars quoted the Scriptures liberally. However, the theologians quoted predominantly other theologians with little input from leadership scholars, and the ministry and leadership experts often cited social science scholars with very little input from theologians. In other words, with few exceptions, each scholar stuck to their own guild. While they had plenty to say about the leadership texts of the Bible, it was almost as if the protocol of their own discipline prevented real dialogue with the “other side” of the scholarly universe.

This reality is of course nothing new. In fact, many would argue that this is the way it should be, until they discover that leadership scholars have now reinvented spiritual leadership—and without the benefit of genuine interdisciplinary dialogue. In fact, after a slow start in the 1990s, servant leadership theory has become one of the latest social science attempts to conceptualize leadership for organizational contexts (Fairholm, 1996; Fry, 2003, 2008; Fry, L., & Cohen, M., 2009; Fry, L., Hannah, S., Noel, M., & Walumbwa, F., 2011). What this means is that we now have a theory of spiritual leadership that was not born in the seminary, but in the halls of secular leadership thinking concerned about the well-being of ordinary people in ordinary organizations. And it seems to have a similar trajectory as servant leadership theory which was also born in the mind of a non-theologian, Robert Greenleaf, a leadership philosopher at AT&T.

The *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* lives in this tension between theological and secular thinking about leadership. It seeks to create a conversation beyond the barriers of disciplines and culture in order to enable Christian leaders to become more effective servant leaders. Spiritual
leadership is a perfect example of the need for dialogue between disciplines in order to address the growing restlessness among leaders regarding the inability of leadership thinking to help develop better leadership in our organizations, communities, and in our society. We present this issue in the spirit of dialogue and exploration.

To get us started, Alex Sosler, a Baptist pastor, reflects about the way Jesus used the ordinary context of life to grow the ability for extraordinary sacrifice. Then Petr Cincala, Director of the Institute of Church Ministry, interviews Jon Dybdahl, the President Emeritus of Walla Walla University and author of the book, *Hunger: Satisfying the Longing Longing of Your Soul*, focusing on the spiritual life of Christian leaders. Students at Andrews remember his seminars on Christian spirituality as “islands of peace” in the midst of the pressures of seminary life.

Sigve Tonstad’s article on “Transparency in Leadership” is one example of theological thinking at its best that deserves a deeper dialogue with leadership scholars. In his article, Tonstad makes the startling observation that the apocalypse is not a book meant to confuse, conceal, or frighten us—as in the popular understanding of the word—but a book to make God’s system of governance transparent as He deals with the politics of deception in a cosmic war. This article was originally published as a chapter in the above-mentioned book, *Servants & Friends: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Bell, 2014).

Leadership is always a dynamic phenomenon often involving the need to fit into multiple roles. Nowhere is this more evident than in the lifecycle of a new church plant which is the focus of the case study, “Creating a Spiritual Learning Space.” In this article Erich Baumgartner, Senior Editor of *JACL*, and Andres Flores, founding Pastor of Epic Church in Chicago, take a look at the changing leadership roles experienced by a church planter over the lifespan of a church plant. Their insights should prove helpful to regional leaders of denominations with connectional systems and regional church governments.

Spiritual leadership and organizational knowledge processes may not strike you as obvious cousins until you read Lorena Martinez Soto’s research report of WHOLEGRAIN, a Columbian food factory run by a Christian organization. Next, Morris Thompson, a professor at Washington Adventist University, explores the role of accountable relationships for the development of spiritual leaders in “The Need for Spiritual Leadership.”

Finally, Boubakar Sanou, a Professor of Mission at Andrews University, enters the dialogue about a problem which can no longer be ignored: the relationship between spiritual giftedness and God’s calling to ministry beyond gender stereotypes.

This issue brings together contributions from social scientists, theologians,
and leadership practitioners who wrestle with how to live out the implications of our Christian commitments in our roles as leaders. We hope that this issue will find its way not only into your library but also into your learning space, where you allow God to challenge you to turn new thinking into new practice.

References
ALEX SOSLER

LOVE IN THE ORDINARY: LEADERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Introduction

James K. A. Smith (2016) observes a pair of intriguing questions at the beginning and in the end of the Gospel of John. When Jesus calls His followers He asks, “What do you want?” (John 1:38 NIV). When He calls Peter to leadership in the church, He asks, “Do you love me?” (John 21:15-17 ESV). Between these two questions, Jesus forms the disciples’ love by teaching and modeling what it means to be a leader. As Smith (2016) explains, “our wants and longings and desires are at the core of our identity, the wellspring from which our actions and behavior flow” (p. 2).

Jesus did extraordinary things. The Gospel of John includes seven miraculous signs that point to Jesus’ true identity as the Son of God. God incarnate is no ordinary concept. However, the first 30 or so years of His life seem rather ordinary. Just look at some of the regular patterns of His ministry as recorded in the Gospels: attending weddings, hiding from crowds, going to the synagogue. At the end of His time on earth, as Jesus asks the question, “Do you love me?” He calls His followers to be ordinary in the ordinary. It is these regular moments that shape our loves and desires. It was the motif of love for Jesus and shepherding His sheep as imaged in the narrative of the Gospel of John that defined leadership for Peter in John 21.

The Question: Do You Love Me?

As one of the earliest leaders in the church, Peter is a telling case study in leadership development. Indeed, he gives hope to all floundering, misdirected leaders. As the last words of a person are usually some of the most important, so Jesus’ last words to Peter take on special emphasis. Furthermore, Jesus repeats His question three times—an emphatic mark on one’s last words. The question Jesus asks is one every human creature must answer: “Do you love me?”

Alex Sosler, is the Associate Pastor at Milwood Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, and an Ed.D. student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
First, note what Jesus does not ask. He does not ask, “Do you know me?” Nor does He ask, “Do you believe in me?” He does not even ask, “Are you willing to serve me, Peter?” The lingering question of Jesus is about desire, longing, and love. And Peter responds affirmatively all three times: “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you” (John 21:15–17). By the third time, there is a sense of aggravation and exasperation in Peter’s response: “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you” (v.17). At each response, Jesus gives direction: Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep. These are ordinary practices of a shepherd. Every day a shepherd leads his sheep to find food. Every day a shepherd guides and protects the sheep. Tending and feeding are very ordinary acts in a pastoral life. They are verbs—ways of being, not positional titles. Even the image of a shepherd proposes an ordinary way of living.

Love demands an object. Unlike the modern, New Age, Oprah sentimentality, love is tangible. It never exists merely ethereally as some type of feeling. Love does not thrive as theory. Jesus ties love to Himself and to people. A love for Jesus executes itself in a concern for His sheep. Notice, too, that Jesus refers to the sheep as “my sheep.” The lambs belong to Jesus. Tending and feeding Jesus’ sheep are the means by which Peter shows love toward Jesus. These ordinary activities shape and prove love.

With this story planted in the mind, consider what it means to love and what it means to feed or tend. How might the rest of the Gospel influence these verbs? Johannine imagery is used “as a rhetorical tool” (Van der Watt, 2006). Both love and shepherding are not abstract concepts, but tangible realities that Jesus describes. For Peter, it was a long way to grasp this ethic.

**What Does It Mean to Love?**

There are two primary verbs in John 21: love (agape and phileo), and feed or take care of (bosko and poimano). John 13 defines the way of love in the eyes of Jesus. The chapter opens with these words: “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (v.1). What follows is an image of Jesus’ love. Love is displayed in washing the disciples’ feet. Merrill Tenney (1948) comments on this act: “Divine love leaped over boundaries of class distinctions and made the Lord of Glory the servant of men” (p. 198). Toward the end of the evening, Jesus gives a new commandment: “That you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (v. 34-35). Jesus provides an example of love. This is not abstract teaching; it is concrete demonstration.
To love means to serve in an ordinary way: like washing the feet of a weary guest. Love is active; it takes the initiative in day-to-day moments.

In John 15, Jesus repeats the command to love one another and intensifies it in the most tangible result. The greatest love in the world, says Jesus, is “that someone lays down his life for his friends” (v. 13). So what does it mean to love? It means laying down one’s life through ordinary service.

Earlier in the narrative, Peter overestimated his ability to love when he insisted that he was willing to die for Jesus (John 13:37). Yet, when his life was on the line, Peter denied Jesus three times (John 18:15-18; 25-27). Faced with possible death, he was not willing to lay down his life for Jesus. Yet, the resurrected Jesus gives Peter a second chance. Would he lay down his life for Jesus by tending and feeding His sheep?

**What Does It Mean to Shepherd?**

When Peter heard Jesus tell him to guard and feed the sheep, he understood the context regarding what Jesus was asking of him. Jesus did not speak in a vacuum. Augustine explains a necessary connection. In John 10, Jesus had already introduced these pastoral terms. The call for Peter to tend and feed the lambs and sheep was explained in an earlier context. In John 10:12 Jesus declares Himself the Good Shepherd. Following Laniak (2006), the word “good” may better be translated “model.” When Jesus proclaims this identity, He connects it to a purpose: the person of God has come to die. There are at least four explicit times that Jesus states this purpose in these few verses (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18). The shepherd has come down to lay down his life for his chosen sheep.

In the same way, Peter’s call to Shepherd comes by laying down his life, for to love is to lay down one’s life. The Good Shepherd does the same. Thus Jesus calls Peter to do what He does when He says, “Follow me.” To love and to shepherd is to lay down one’s life. Augustine (2008) notices this connection when he writes, “So all of these were good shepherds, not just because they shed their blood, but because they shed it for the sheep. You see they didn’t shed it out of haughty self-esteem, but out of love.” The narrative of John in chapter 21 confirms that this is the exact thing to which Peter is called: “to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God” (v.19).

This love is what fuels the leaders’ suffering for the sheep. Augustine (2008) writes,

Love for Christ in him who shepherds his sheep, should grow into such a spiritual ardor that he could conquer his natural fear of death, because of which we do not want to die even when we want to live with Christ. . . . But great as the annoyance of death might be, it should be conquered by
the force of love with which he is loved who, since he is our life, wanted even to ensure death for our sake. (pp. 446–447)

Peter denied Jesus three times around a charcoal fire. In John 21, Jesus searches Peter’s heart by asking him three times, “Do you love me?” As Jesus asks these questions, the smell of charcoal fire again ascends to sting Peter’s bitter memory (John 18:15-18; 25-27). His fear of death must be met with a greater love for Jesus. And this love displays itself in pastoral care for the sheep.

**Ordinary Faithfulness Leads to Great Love**

A survey of history may contradict this thesis. On one hand, loving Jesus by tending and feeding His flock is very ordinary. It is the shepherd’s daily rhythm. On the other hand, these daily rhythms are also a call to lay down one’s life—no ordinary thing. The reader may question this above dilemma by pondering the great things to which great leaders are called. After all, extraordinary people do extraordinary things. The world remembers great people as defined by their great acts.

For example, the world remembers George Washington as the first American president, as he is enshrined in the painting “Washington Crossing the Delaware.” His fame is connected to the extraordinary feat of leading troops across a frozen river on Christmas night to the surprise of Hessian forces. Likewise, no one would remember Winston Churchill were it not for his relentless voice of courage in the midst of war with Nazi Germany. Would people remember Christ had he not done the unthinkable: die and rise again three days later? Tradition has it that Peter was crucified upside down—no little, ordinary thing!

On the other hand, these leaders were prepared for the extraordinary leadership situations for which we remember them by ordinary acts of habitual faithfulness. It was Christ who said, “He who is faithful in little will be trusted with much” (Luke 16:10). In essence, habits form virtue—small, repeated acts that shape one’s character. David Brooks (2015) defines character as “a set of dispositions, desires, and habits that are slowly engraved during the struggle against your own weakness. You become more disciplined, considerate, and loving through a thousand small acts of self-control, sharing, service, friendship, and refined enjoyment” (pp. 263-264). Yale Professor Anthony T. Kronman (1995) has defined “character” in a similar way: “an ensemble of settled dispositions—of habitual feelings and desires” (p. 16).

The culture of a generation past valued this ordinary, slow growth. For Dwight Eisenhower “conquering your own soul” was “the moral ecology in
which (he) grew up” (Brooks, 2015, p. 53). This means “the essential drama of life is the drama to construct character, which is an engraved set of disciplined habits, a settled disposition to do good” (Brooks, 2015, p. 53). In this context, Eisenhower, who was by no means a brilliant student, was able to cultivate this steadiness over time. His parents developed these habits, and the military engrained them in him. We remember Eisenhower as a great leader today because he negotiated peace and navigated towards prosperity. But he cultivated these leadership qualities through earlier, ordinary habits.

Albert Schweitzer also valued ordinary gifts. Schweitzer was a German medical doctor, musician, and Biblical scholar who began his missionary career to West Africa in 1913 (Tucker, 1983). He describes how he selected those with whom he wanted to work in the medical compound. He only wanted people who would perform constant acts of service with a no-nonsense attitude to simply do what needed doing. “Only a person who feels his preference to be a matter of course, not something out of the ordinary, and who has no thought of heroism but only of a duty undertaken with sober enthusiasm, is capable of being the sort of spiritual pioneer the world needs” (Schwen & Bass, 2006, p. 34). In short, to use the language of Jesus, ordinary tending and feeding are the regular habits where love is born. This is how a person lays down his life.

**Jesus as Teacher and Model**

The genius of Jesus’ leadership is how He exemplified the way of ordinary love. In John 13 He washed His disciples’ feet—a servant’s task. No great, amazing, revolutionary thing! He was not focused on building big churches, multiplying campuses, or creating huge organizations, as admirable as those things may be. He was doing a very ordinary, humble thing: washing dirty feet. After modeling love, He taught by explaining its meaning. When Peter put up a fight in receiving Jesus’ service, he asks, “Lord, do you wash my feet?”, the assumption being that this was unbecoming of a person with authority. In the next moment, another objection arises. (Peter seems to be strong-willed). “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus gently insists, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me” (v. 8).

When opposition to leadership arises, many leaders resort to two basic human responses to conflict: fight or flight. By the authority vested in Him, Jesus could have demanded His right and grabbed Peter’s feet, forcibly washing them. But Jesus does not rage in anger—acting in aggression and fighting. Jesus could have complained saying in effect, “Fine. Have it your way. Do what you want. It is not my problem.” He did not pout in sadness—acting in passivity or fleeing. Rather, Jesus patiently and humbly teaches. He
feeds His lambs with truth, and He guides them into a reality they do not yet see clearly.

What He models, He also explains. As always, He delicately interweaves teaching and modeling. Jesus habituates the disciples to give them a taste of the good life, and then explains why the commitment is worthwhile (Sanders, 2015). Here is the Master Teacher posing a question that starts the disciples on a journey of learning, “Do you understand what I have done?” Explanations give meaning, invite appreciation, and ultimately bid love toward action. As their Teacher and Lord, He has given them an example. Now, they, as His disciples, should do likewise.

The pattern of Jesus is teaching, modeling, and inviting to follow. Jesus is not content with mere cognitive recognition. As Richard Hays (1996) writes, “Those who follow Jesus of the fourth Gospel . . . will learn an ethic that love’s not in words or speech, but in truth and action (1 John 3:18)” (p. 156).

Conclusion

Peter, like all leaders, was a complex being. He was not just a brain; nor just an economic material to manipulate for maximal production. His intellectual capabilities needed cognitive instruction. But his intellect was limited. He needed to also see the teaching at work. And in both, he needed an invitation to practice what he was learning. Jesus provided the example when He called a disciple: “Follow me” (John 1:43). “Example is the best teacher. Moral improvement occurs most reliably when our heart is warmed, when we come into contact with people we admire and love and we consciously and unconsciously bend our lives to mimic theirs” (Brooks, 2015, p. xv). Only love is adequate for this undertaking.

Following Jesus in leadership may not be earth-shattering. It may not be radical or spectacular. Jesus does not ask us to rise from the dead. He already did that. But our Lord calls us to follow Him. Christians follow a Good Shepherd. Now Jesus asks leaders to feed His sheep and tend His lambs. Christian leaders love a Good Shepherd and serve Him as under shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-5) who give their lives for His sheep.

References


LOVE IN THE ORDINARY


LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW
INTERVIEW WITH JON DYBDAHL
THIRSTING FOR GOD

Petr Cincala, M.Div., M.S.W., Ph.D., is married, has four children, and served as a freelance missionary among Czech atheists for 10 years. Presently, Petr works at Andrews University as Director of the Institute of Church Ministry, Assistant Professor of World Mission, Director of NCD America (Natural Church Development), and as Managing Editor of the Journal of Applied Christian Leadership.

Jon L. Dybdahl Ph.D., is a Professor Emeritus at Walla Walla University and Andrews University. After a midlife personal spiritual crisis and subsequent renewal, Dybdahl became deeply interested in the area of the spiritual and devotional life. As he began to do research, he came to see that most Protestant churches and seminaries gave little time to the personal spiritual lives of students and church members. As a university and seminary professor, he discovered that one could go through the seminary and receive advanced religious training and never have a class which explored in depth the personal spiritual life of students. He, himself, was a product of that kind of training.

As Dybdahl studied and explored, he found the whole area of religious studies that had been hugely neglected by most Protestants. The more he studied, he began to find personal renewal and a satisfying of the hunger of his soul. He also developed a deep desire to share what he had learned and experienced with his students.

Over the next few years, Dybdahl had the opportunity to initiate classes on spiritual life at both Walla Walla and Andrews Universities. He found students to be deeply interested and personally hungry for that kind of training. Fortunately, in the last number of years, this lack has been acknowledged by many Christian colleges and seminaries and efforts have been made to do this kind of training. Over the last 10 years, Dybdahl has been in 35 different countries speaking and teaching on this topic. Part of what he has learned through his experiences can be found in his book, titled Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul.

Journal of Applied Christian Leadership: What role does personal spirituality play in the life of a leader?

Jon Dybdahl: For Christian leaders, personal spirituality is foundational and a prerequisite for effective leadership. Communication with Christ and being in touch with God in their spiritual life is absolutely essential, and has to be something that is not just assumed, but deliberately brought about, meditated
upon, and practiced by any leader expecting to be effective and to see God’s blessing on his/her work.

For a lot of people, particularly in Western culture, what is commonly seen are business and managerial forms of leadership. There is nothing wrong with that, but Christian leadership is different. Leadership is something that needs to be practiced. Leadership needs to have a reflective side. A Christian leader must take time to think, consider, and have a period of quietness rather than just making quick decisions. A Christian leader must be reflective and learn to listen to God. This is a key part of spirituality.

**JACL:** How does God speak to a leader?

**JD:** God speaks in a number of ways to leaders. He speaks through His Word, the Bible, but He also speaks through people who are seeking His will, such as colleagues in a leadership team where people can share and talk together about God, His will, and His leading. God also speaks in times of silence, when we take time to examine our lives and ask, “How am I doing?”

**JACL:** This notion of encountering God in silence and asking: “How am I doing?” is intriguing. So is spirituality then a form of self-knowledge?

**JD:** A life filled with personal spirituality gives leaders a sense that God is active in their life and work. This can help them face the challenges that come to them day by day. God becomes their partner in leadership, which makes the difference.

Self-knowledge and knowledge of God go together. The closer we get to God, the better we understand ourselves. Understanding who we are makes us more dependent on God and on what He can do in our lives.

Personal, emotional, spiritual, and psychological healing takes place as we practice the core values of Christianity. Experiencing love and being honest about our situation helps to heal us. Leaders may see their spirituality as one of the tasks needed to done, but they should to look at spirituality as an island of peace.

**JACL:** How do you get to seeing the spiritual life as entering an island of peace?

**JD:** If we are doing something in our daily spiritual lives that feeds us, that gives us peace and a sense of God’s presence. Our walk with God gets exciting, and we look forward to getting up early in the morning or whenever we spend time with God.
The idea that I can hardly wait to spend time with God because He is renewing me spiritually, emotionally, and even physically is at the core of spirituality. If we look at spirituality in this way, it changes the way we respond to God. It is just like looking forward to a great meal. When you are looking forward to something good, you anticipate it and it becomes a source of deep satisfaction. A spiritual life that looks forward to a live encounter with God changes everything completely.

**JACL:** How important is corporate spirituality for Christian leaders?

**JD:** Corporate spirituality is very important. Oftentimes in our individualistic society we can forget that. A careful reading of the book of Acts shows that the spirituality of leadership in the early church was very corporate. The coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is a result of corporate prayer. Leaders who are persecuted flee to the place where corporate prayer is being practiced (Acts 4:31). Acts 3 shows us that early leaders practiced corporate types of prayer much the same as their Jewish brothers. Unfortunately, too many Christian leaders have never been trained in the practical steps to be spiritual leaders.

Recently we prepared a series of studies for Christian leaders working in India. We found that they had not been adequately trained, so we set up a training program in spirituality for them. These were all people who were supposed to be spiritual leaders. We prayed every day plus we had one full day of corporate prayer seeking God personally and seeking Him as a corporate group. Our leaders were amazed and said, “We have never prayed so much. We wish we could do more of it.” It struck me how we usually do corporate prayers: a “quick” prayer in the beginning and at the end of a meeting to make sure the meeting goes well. There is nothing wrong with that, but having a serious time as a group praying together would have a tremendous effect on leadership. It would give us much more a sense that God is really near and we are part of His work.

**JACL:** What are some of the ways you have found effective to lead corporate prayers?

**JD:** There is a variety of ways on how corporate prayer can be led. If there is a particular issue, start with a Scripture text, have people meditate on it in private, and then come back and pray as a group over the things about which each individual thought. Let it happen naturally. Or organize a conversational prayer.

If a local church or a Christian organization needs special help with a par-
ticular issue it is facing, organize a spiritual retreat to corporately seek God’s guidance. It can happen in many different ways, but just having a group experiencing it together and praying over the key issues not only gives a sense of corporate identity, fellowship, and togetherness, but also a sense of corporate purpose.

**JACL:** In what ways do spirituality and religiosity overlap and differ?

**JD:** True spirituality is an internal heart issue. Spirituality, as it should be understood, is a personal thing that involves the whole being in relationship to God. Religiosity speaks more to outward behavior that may or may not include a personal heart response. Spirituality is more relational, emotional, and more thoughtful, whereas religiosity is more about performance.

When teaching leaders about the spiritual life, I like to spend time with them in a one-day spiritual retreat. Then at the end of that day, people testify how God has made a difference in their lives. There is a need to emphasize corporate spirituality more. We should not be afraid to talk about sensing and experiencing God’s presence when we gather in His name. If we invite God to be there, we expect Him to be there, and people’s lives are going to be changed. This can happen corporately as well as individually.

**We should not be afraid to talk about sensing and experiencing God’s presence when we gather in His name. If we invite God to be there, we expect Him to be there, and people’s lives are going to be changed.**

**JACL:** Do you have any helpful tips for leaders on how to nurture balanced spirituality?

**JD:** True spirituality involves time. We must commit to making the spiritual side of our lives a priority in our daily schedule. Anything we seriously need to practice, we must create space and time for it to be done. We need to include it in our planning.

When leaders are planning, they should have a corporate prayer discussion to be able to move forward in a certain direction as a group so people can make a personal commitment, pray together for God’s leading and seek God’s guidance. This is how they will recognize the difference between the plans their leaders have and God’s plans. It makes a difference how people feel about their work.

Part of planning may be a regular time set apart for prayer and meditation.
in a corporate setting. Sometimes people are led to pray more in their personal lives after they’ve experienced corporate encounters with God, but it goes the other way as well. Some of it depends on the personality of the leader, as well. Some people lead more outwardly while others are more private.

Daily reflection, listening to God, laying before Him the plans for the day or our long-term plans—those kinds of things are helpful and make us more thoughtful.

**JACL:** How can a leader pass on spirituality that transforms life?

**JD:** Anyone who expects to affect another person or a group spiritually must model the kind of spiritual life that they are teaching. Only as leaders demonstrate in their own personal life the value and fruit of genuine spirituality can they affect others. If we are teaching others that they should pray 15 minutes every day, the leader would probably do well to practice 30 minutes of prayer daily.

**JACL:** Can leaders grow spiritually? How would you know that you are growing spiritually? Is it the length of time I pray and study Scripture or are there other ways?

**JD:** It is extremely difficult to evaluate spirituality solely on the basis of time spent. Spirituality is like any relationship. Valuable time must be spent, but a precise accounting of that time is not necessary. Quality and intimacy of the relationship are some of the ways we can evaluate spirituality.

Christians originally described the growth process as the way, the path or the journey. There are different parts of the journey we do not experience until we travel for a while. As we travel, changes take place. We need to be ready to see and experience new things, and see God at work in new ways both in our lives and in the lives of the people with whom we work. There is always more, and so our spirituality is a journey.

**JACL:** Pastors are often expected to be managers, to keep things under control, or to reach numerical goals. What impact does this organizational striving have on their closeness to God?
JD: Leaders can be overcome by the stress of mundane responsibilities. Having a structured spiritual life can help keep things in balance. Leaders would do well to ponder the story of the apostles in Acts 6:1-4. In this passage, the early leaders were faced with needs beyond their capacity to address without compromising their spiritual calling. So they made decisions and took actions that addressed the ministry challenge, yet freed them to practice their spiritual life and ministry.

There is no one spiritual secret to success, no magic formula—do this, this, and this, and you will see success. You need to seek God, and He will help you to see what needs to happen.

JACL: We know that even good leaders can get burned out. How can prayer help?

JD: We can come to prayer with very different attitudes. Some come to prayer with the frenetic attitude of praying as a means to accomplishing part of my daily “to do” list and finishing part of my daily activities. In contrast, we can come to prayer as a place of quiet rest in a peaceful garden where we come to be refreshed and live in God’s presence. The first kind of prayer contributes to burnout, while the second kind leads to calm peace, and is an antidote to burnout.

Leaders need to be open to new things. Jesus said, “There are many more things I could teach you but you could not bear them now” (John 16:12). I suggest we see every instance of a burnout as a time for growing and learning. “God, what are you trying to teach me?” There are types of burnouts that should be prevented, but the general kind of burnout may serve as an opportunity for learning.

You need to seek God, and He will help you to see what needs to happen.

JACL: We are all shaped by the environment and culture we grow up in. Christians tend to develop spiritual pride that may serve as a drive for their ministry as well as their life with God. In what ways can spirituality foster humility?

JD: Spiritual pride can be a real danger. One of the best ways to avoid it is to take seriously the Biblical teaching on repentance. If we take the time to ponder our own lives and bring our thoughts and actions under the scrutiny of God in sincere heart repentance, humility is a result. In doing this self-exami-
nation, God’s presence daily will bear much fruit.

Leaders need to be sensitive to how God is leading. Journaling is helpful. I often journal things that are happening and through it I can see better how God is leading. It helps me to constantly hear His voice and follow His will. That is really the solution. Do not force yourself into some kind of mode. Leaders may tend to say, “If I was like so and so, if I could do this or that . . .” Well, it is better to ask what God has for you.

**JACL:** Innovative leaders may tend to borrow spirituality that is popular in the world. How can leaders successfully avoid the traps of New Age and non-Christian spirituality?

**JD:** Christian spirituality must be centered in Jesus and the personal God of the Bible. We can say that the twin principles of Christ and the Scriptures form a foundation and criteria by which to evaluate and judge all other spiritualities. Leaders should model that kind of Biblical spirituality and in so doing will encourage others to do the same.

The main competitors to spiritual life come from eastern religions, such as Hinduism or Buddhism. The key theological difference affecting spiritual life is faith in a personal God. Christian spirituality is about a personal relationship. God is alive and we can communicate with Him. In Eastern spirituality, god is more like a force. You need to do the right things, say the right things. Certain meditation techniques are emphasized for different occasions, but in an impersonal way.

Christianity also teaches there is good and evil. Most of eastern spirituality is blind to the conflict between good and evil. Their goal is to overcome ignorance; however, Christians seek to be delivered from sin. There is a difference between Christian and Eastern meditations, and it affects our spiritual life. They are founded on different principles.

**JACL:** Do you have a closing message for church leaders?

**JD:** Prayer and communion with God is the heart of spiritual leadership. Often we approach prayer as a form or ritual. That can leave us in a dry patch. When I pray with leaders from Africa—I do not know how to explain it—it is like praying in a different key: the fervency, the belief, the openness, the sense that you are really talking to somebody, that I wish Western culture would catch more. May leaders truly expect God to work. If we want to see a prayer renewal in the church, we as leaders need to get serious about it.

Abstract: This paper analyzes the dynamics arising from interactions between typical elements of organizational culture such as leadership, strategic processes, and knowledge management. More specifically, it seeks to establish possible relationships between leadership based on spirituality and the processes of creating, sharing, and reusing knowledge. The goal of this analysis is to establish a link between spiritual leadership as a strategy of the study of spirituality in the workplace and knowledge management.

The research is focused on the application of Louis Fry’s theory of spiritual leadership to a group of organizations made up of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) located in Medellin, Colombia. Owing to the fact that the study’s interests are aimed at comprehending human actions in an organizational context, the ethnographic method, direct observation, and in-depth interviews were used as techniques for data collection.

The most important findings of the research indicate that spiritual leadership fosters knowledge processes of the company being studied as it lays down an organizational culture that binds both beliefs and individual and corporate interests. This culture, based on spiritual values, promotes an organizational environment in which employees perceive that their spiritual needs are being satisfied and as a consequence, develop the required motivation to carry out actions and processes, including knowledge processes directed at the achievement of organizational goals.

In addition, it was found in this particular case that the Adventist religion provides a set of beliefs which, when put into practice, strengthens leadership and the ability to influence others. Finally, it was noticed that even though there are potential benefits provided by spiritual leadership to the company’s knowledge management processes, its impact is limited because the company which was analyzed is unaware of the importance of these processes and the way to manage them.

Keywords: spirituality in the workplace, spiritual leadership, knowledge management, organizational knowledge processes
Introduction

In the context of the macroeconomic and social policies promoted by today’s knowledge economy, an organization’s capacity for innovation and competitiveness is determined by its ability to manage knowledge as a strategic resource (Nonaka, 2007). Some researchers attribute the success of implementing knowledge processes to leadership styles that promote workplace environments where employees feel motivated to develop processes that contribute to effective knowledge management and to the achievement of the company’s goals. (Singh, 2008; Rodríguez-Ponce, Pedraja-Rejas, & Delgado, 2010; Von Krogh, Nonaka, & Rechsteiner, 2012; Analoui, Doloriet, & Sambrook, 2013).

In this regard, Singh (2008) states that much of the success of knowledge processes is associated with leadership styles providing employees freedom to experiment and innovate, instead of those in which they feel controlled and monitored. Factors like autonomy, the ability to make decisions, the opportunity to develop their own skills, open communication, and trust create a high level of motivation and commitment to organizational goals in the staff (Analoui, Doloriet, & Sambrook, 2013).

Workplace spirituality is an emerging field of knowledge, offering perspectives and strategies based on spirituality as a source of relationship transformation. This transformation nurtures an atmosphere of satisfaction with regard to spiritual needs and provides meaning for one’s job in their lives. The success of this new field has led organizational behavior researchers to acknowledge that workplace spirituality has become one of the most influential management tools for motivating human beings. (Pawar, 2008, 2009, 2014; Karakas, 2010; Birasnav, 2014).

Since knowledge processes are deeply subjective, relational, and experiential, spiritual leadership is a new perspective that can enrich traditional leadership theories. It can contribute to the management of organizational knowledge as it uses spirituality as a mechanism for cohesion of person-organization relationships. The purpose of this research is to provide empirical evidence on how the spirituality paradigm in the workplace can enrich leadership and transform it into a key tool for managing organizational knowledge processes.

This paper is structured as follows: the first section establishes the theoretical basis of the spiritual leadership model as well as the processes of organizational knowledge used in this case study. The next section presents the adopted methodology. The following section describes the implementation of the model, and the final section covers the research discussion and conclusions.
Spiritual Leadership as a Strategy for Managing Organizational Knowledge Processes

Nonaka (2007) defines a knowledge-creating company as one whose sole purpose is continuous innovation through an ongoing process of adaptation to dynamic and complex environments using the creation, dissemination, and implementation of knowledge in new products and technologies. This means that both the capacity to learn and adapt as well as the continuous creation of organizational knowledge are intangible resources that can create differentiation, competitive advantage, and ensure long-term viability.

In order to increase innovation in a knowledge-creating company, it is necessary to manage knowledge processes. This involves every action associated with the transformation of information into knowledge potentially useful in creating new products and services. As people are responsible for collecting, sharing, storing, and transforming knowledge into new products and services, these processes demand employees’ personal commitment, a sense of company ownership, and commitment to the company’s mission. Because of this, there is increased importance placed on factors like motivation and leadership in implementing strategies linked to the management of organizational knowledge.

There are numerous researchers who support the influence of leadership styles in the processes of organizational knowledge (Singh, 2008; Rodríguez-Ponce, 2010; Analoui et al., 2013; Birasnav, 2013). According to these authors, consultative and delegative leadership proposed by Hershey and Blanchard (1982), and transformational and transactional leadership proposed by Avolio and Bass (2004), help in the enhancement of knowledge processes, since they offer the employees freedom to experiment and innovate, instead of directive leadership styles in which people feel constantly controlled and monitored.

Louis Fry’s spiritual leadership theory, as an alternative proposal to traditional leadership approaches, focuses on spirituality as a tool for the creation of meaning and well-being for employees in the working environment. For this purpose, spiritual leadership proposes the creation of an inspiring vision that binds individual and organizational interests, motivates people, and leads to a spiritual well-being that translates into greater organizational commitment and productivity.

Operationally, spiritual leadership involves values, attitudes, and behaviors required to intrinsically motivate people and to generate a sense of well-being. Therefore, this perspective is considered relevant to enhancing the organizational knowledge processes, as it integrates spiritual needs with creating work environments that are conducive to the management of processes such as the creation, sharing, and reuse of knowledge.

This research is part of the theoretical field of knowledge management; thus,
the review of literature is steered to search for background information documenting possible relationships between leadership and knowledge management. Special emphasis was placed on the quest for research that could evidence the bond between spiritual leadership and organizational knowledge processes. After a thorough review, it was found that even though there are quantitative studies which demonstrate the correlation between traditional leadership styles and knowledge management, there are none documenting the link between leadership models based on spirituality and organizational knowledge processes.

There are two spiritual leadership models in literature. The first is Gilbert Fairholm’s (1998) spiritual leadership model of which there is very little literature and no evidence regarding its implementation in organizations. The second is Louis Fry’s spiritual leadership model of which much research has been done resulting in empirical evidence for its implementation and replicability.

When both models were analyzed, it was concluded that Louis Fry’s spiritual leadership model was the most appropriate to be applied at the company under consideration because its theoretical and conceptual framework is consistent with the company’s practices and beliefs. This coherence between the theoretical proposal of Fry’s model and the reality observed at the company under study was considered a determining affinity criterion for the choice of model, inasmuch as it offered not only the opportunity to check its applicability in practice, but established real impact produced by spiritual practices on corporate results.

**Theory of Spiritual Leadership by Louis Fry**

The theory of spiritual leadership defines the organization as a dynamic space of social interaction which promotes the spiritual growth of individuals by the creation of an inspiring vision and the practice of spiritual values, both of which give a special meaning to the workplace and make it a scenario of transcendence (Fry & Cohen, 2009). The theory of spiritual leadership defines itself as a causal model of intrinsic motivation based on the satisfaction of people’s spiritual needs such as calling and membership, seeking in this way to channel their potential to greater productivity, lesser absenteeism, and higher volume of business. This model divided into three interrelated stages.

The first phase is called *spiritual leadership*. This stage is focused on the exercise of leadership understood as premeditated actions aimed at maintaining a dynamic interaction between three categories: organizational vision, hope or faith, and altruistic love. The second stage is a consequence of the first and is called *spiritual well-being*. In this stage, the concrete results from leadership actions carried out during the first stage are observed, namely, the satisfaction
of spiritual needs which is conducive to a sense of calling and membership in individuals, denominated by spiritual well-being. The latter maintains intrinsic motivation that drives people to work for organizational goals.

Spiritual well-being leads to the third stage called organizational and individual outcomes. In accordance with Fry, if there is spiritual well-being, organizational outcomes arrive as a natural result of an employee’s motivation and commitment. According to the model, these outcomes are evidenced through organizational commitment, productivity, financial results, etc. (Fry et al., 2011). (See Figure 1).

The following briefly discusses each of the stages that make up the spiritual leadership model, with the purpose of going into detail about the theoretical and conceptual basis proposed by the author and which is useful to contrast the empirical evidence obtained from the fieldwork.

**Spiritual Leadership**

According to Fry, the essence of the first stage is to fulfill spiritual needs (calling and membership) of people by means of the organization’s vision, hope or faith, and altruistic love. If these three elements are properly integrated, the successful coherence between values and practices required by spiritual leadership is achieved.

**Vision:** Refers to a convincing, desirable, and challenging vision of the future for the organization. Its value lies in having the inspiring potential that

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**Figure 1.** Spiritual Leadership Spiritual Well-being Organizational Outcomes (Fry, 2003, 2005, 2009).

The leader’s attitudes, values, and behaviors

- Effort
- Performance
- Calling

(Vision)

(Makes the difference)

Life has a meaning

Organizational commitment and productivity

Reward (Altruistic love)

Membership

Be understood

Be appreciated

The leader’s attitudes, values, and behaviors

Follower’s spiritual survival needs

Organizational outcomes

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**Figure 1.** Spiritual Leadership Spiritual Well-being Organizational Outcomes (Fry, 2003, 2005, 2009).
allows it to connect with the sense of mission of what people are and do. In this way, a collective identity arises in which a system of values is shared that fosters hope or faith at the fulfillment of the vision. Proper interaction between vision, hope or faith, and altruistic love provides a favorable environment for people to find a transcendent meaning in their work experiences (through calling and membership), and guides their attitude towards the achievement of corporate results.

**Hope or faith:** In the fulfillment of the vision, hope or faith is the intrinsic motivation that emerges when people have been connected to its inspiring potential. Even though there is opposition and difficulty, this motivation produces a personal commitment. People with hope or faith have a clear understanding of where they are going and how to get there; they are ready to face opposition and endure difficulties in order to reach their goals. Hope or faith provides direction and willingness to persist with the confidence that the result will bring meaning to life. Some of the qualities of hope or faith are resistance, perseverance, willingness to do what is necessary, and an open mind to expand goals and expectations of reward and victory.

**Altruistic love:** This is a component of organizational culture. It is the set of shared principles, values, and beliefs that are considered morally correct and build collective identity. Altruistic love is defined as the feeling of plenitude, harmony, and well-being produced as a result of coexistence in an organizational environment in which leaders and followers show real attention and esteem for each other. Altruistic love is nourished by values such as patience, kindness, forgiveness, humility, abnegation, self–control, trust, loyalty, and truthfulness.

**Well-Being**

Fry bases his definition of well-being on several authors. According to Fleischman (1994), Maddock and Fulton (1998), and Giancalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), spiritual well-being at the workplace is composed of two aspects: a sense of vocation or calling on a professional level, and the need for social connection or membership.

**Vocation or calling:** Calling refers to the transcendent experience, how the difference is made by service to others from which meaning and purpose of life are derived. People not only look for professional competence, but the feeling that their job has a social meaning or value. Pfeffer (2003), referred to in Fry (2011), mentions that people search for: a) interesting and meaningful work that allows them to learn, develop, and have a sense of competence and expertise; and b) significant employment that offers a sense of purpose. These two elements can be considered as a part of their vocation.

**Membership:** Membership refers to the social and cultural structures in
which people find themselves, and through which they seek to be understood and appreciated. This sense of membership is achieved when people feel that they are an active part in the construction of a collective vision supported by altruistic love. This sense of belonging encourages hope or faith which motivate the member to take the necessary steps to find a transcendent vision which gives their life a sense of meaning and purpose. During that process, both leaders and followers acquire a sense of mutual care and concern in which a social connection and positive relationships with their coworkers are attained, and they are able to live a life integrated with others.

**Individual and Corporate Outcomes**

The enhancement of well-being produces positive results in the organization. Group members gain a positive sense of calling and membership, and become more united, loyal, and committed. Fulfilling these basic spiritual needs ensures trust, intrinsic motivation, and the necessary commitment required for people to feel encouraged to make an additional effort, more willing to cooperate, and improve performance and productivity.

In the interest of measuring “organizational commitment,” Fry proposes the measurement of affective organizational commitment developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). According to these authors, organizational commitment has three components: an affective component which refers to the emotional connection, identification, and participation in the company; a continuity component, which refers to the commitment based on the costs that employees link with leaving the organization; a normative component, which refers to the feelings of employees regarding the obligation of staying in the organization. For the sake of measuring “productivity,” Fry uses the group productivity scale developed by Nyhan (2000), which proposes to increase productivity by means of three elements: employee participation in decision making, feedback from and to employees, and employee empowerment.

**The Processes of Organizational Knowledge Management**

Organizational knowledge is defined as an organization’s collective body of knowledge. It is extracted from employee’s experiences, internal processes accumulated over time, and from the peculiarities of the organization as compared with its competitors (Wee & Chua, 2013). As a strategic resource, knowledge needs to be managed by the organization. However, a study conducted by Holm and Poufelt (2003) reveals that most of the SMEs do not have action plans in regard to knowledge management, and only a small percentage have formalized strategies in this area.

Literature records multiple approaches linked to organizational knowledge
Generally speaking, organizational knowledge management refers to the development of a series of processes that contribute to the use of knowledge resources or the organization’s intellectual capital. Some taxonomies linked to organizational knowledge processes are configured around the processes of creation, collection, organization, sharing, and reuse of knowledge. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Organizational Knowledge Management Process (Prepared by Lorena Martinez).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of the literature</th>
<th>Creation</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
<th>Reusing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruggles (1997)</td>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>Codification</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruggles (1998)</td>
<td>Generation/access</td>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Integration/Use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alavi and Leidner (2001)</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Storage Recovery</td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin et al. (2001)</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holsapple and Joshi (2002)</td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>Selecting</td>
<td>Internalizing</td>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabherwal and Sabherwal (2005)</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Exchange or sharing</td>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee and Lee (2007)</td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td>Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhao (2010)</td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>Accumulation</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td>Application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the most-used names are: creation, generation, detection, selection, representation, organization, storage, transfer, transformation, application, integration, use, reuse, and protection of organizational knowledge.

In the literature, some of the most common definitions are:

- **Creation**—the development of new knowledge and procedures from patterns, relations, and meanings in previous data, information and knowledge.

- **Compilation**—the acquisition and recording of data, information, and knowledge on media.

- **Organization**—the establishing of relationships between elements through synthesis, analysis, generalization, classification or affiliation, and creating a context in which those who need the collected knowledge can easily gain access and understanding.

- **Distribution**—the sharing of knowledge with people who should have access to data, information, or knowledge, and blocking those who should not.

- **Use**—the delivery of data, information, or knowledge to the tasks that create value for the organization.

Hutchinson and Quintas (2008) state that particularly in SMEs, it is very diffi-
cult to adopt a unified approach, due to the fact that knowledge processes are embedded in the formal and informal actions of an organization, and there is no clear awareness of the potential for knowledge, or of the actions that must be carried out from which it is benefited. Hence, the need to apply less prescriptive approaches that, according to the nature and distinctive features of every organization, help to understand the way companies manage their own knowledge (Alavi & Ledner, 2001).

Since in the studied organization knowledge processes happen naturally without the existence of a formal knowledge management policy, and the company is unaware of its own intellectual capital and the actions that must be taken to make the most of it, this research focuses on analyzing three interdependent processes, namely: knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge reuse.

These processes are briefly described for the purpose of going into detail about the theoretical and conceptual basis. They are used as a reference point to contrast empirical information sources, a quick and low-cost strategy for obtaining knowledge (Egbru et al., evidence obtained from the fieldwork).

**Knowledge Creation**

Knowledge creation involves designing processes focused on identifying new opportunities for innovation and organizational growth (Popadiuk & Choo, 2006 cited in Wee & Chua, 2013). Especially in SME's, limited economic resources make external information sources a quick and low-cost strategy for obtaining knowledge. (Egbru et al., 2005 cited in Hutchinson and Quintas, 2008).

Knowledge creation arises as a result of sharing between subjects or by external sources that provide pertinent information for the organization. Nonaka et al. (2000) and Nonaka (2007) define knowledge creation as a process that happens by virtue of four interconnected stages: Socialization (tacit to tacit), externalization (tacit to explicit), combination (explicit to explicit), and internalization (explicit to tacit).

According to preliminary studies, individual factors that encourage knowledge creation are related to positive attitude, intrinsic motivation, and the absorption capacity of the subjects (Wee & Chua, 2013). Lack of motivation, rivalry, and individualistic cultures discourage knowledge creation. Organizational factors that encourage knowledge creation are related to the existence of a research and development (R&D) department and open communication. Lack of stimulus to create new ideas, low tolerance for mistakes, and lack of policies and procedures to support new ideas are organizational factors that limit knowledge creation.
Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing involves sharing tacit or explicit knowledge so that the recipient applies the acquired knowledge in new contexts (Bechina & Bommen, 2006). This process is eminently relational. Therefore, its success depends on the values, interests, and motivations of the employee (Bock et al., 2005, cited in Wee & Chua, 2013).

Environments with high levels of trust and social interaction, flat organizational structures with few hierarchical levels, decentralized cultures, high levels of communication, social activities, and low employee turnover can contribute favorably to knowledge sharing and the flow of resources (Politis, 2003; Wong & Aspinwall, 2004).

On the other hand, in highly formalized cultures (Chen & Huang, 2009), the reluctance of employees to share knowledge for fear of losing their unique value (Renzl, 2008) or their jobs (Damodaran & Olphert, 2000), lack of time to convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, ignorance about what knowledge must be shared (Levy et al., 2010), fear of disclosing confidential information (Paroutis & Saleh, 2009), and lack of an organizational culture or structure that fosters knowledge sharing (Ling, 2011) limit this activity.

Knowledge Reuse

Knowledge reuse is the capture and systematization of knowledge for future use (Markus, 2001), applying it to improvements or to developments of a new product or service. Knowledge reuse involves collecting key information in order to apply that knowledge into new ideas, proposals, and initiatives that can be used to improve processes, create products, and provide services for activities that imply innovation.

Absorptive capacity and the familiarity of employees with the knowledge needs of the organization and the context in which that knowledge could be acquired, are some of the factors which contribute to knowledge reuse (Szulanski, cited in Wee & Chua, 2013). On the other hand, the lack of a knowledge-oriented culture, fragmented work environments with communication gaps, high levels of work stress with pressure to comply with goals, the lack of useful information systems for collecting and using information by all the staff, and lack of resources for research and development projects are limiting factors.

Methodology of the Study

WHOLEGRAIN is a company that produces and markets food products (bread, soy milk, cereals). It is 40 years old, has 85 employees and a portfolio of 90 products distributed throughout Colombia. It is a branch of the Inter American Health Food Company (IAHFC), a conglomerate of companies that
belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America, and is located in Medellin, Colombia, on the campus of the Corporación Universitaria Adventista. The company has a three-level organizational structure that is composed of executive management, managerial staff (heads of processes), and operational staff (salespeople and operators in the production area).\(^1\)

As mentioned above in the theoretical framework, Fry’s spiritual leadership theory operates by a model with three interdependent elements: spiritual leadership, well-being, and organizational outcomes. Fry states that his theory of spiritual leadership has been validated by means of its application in more than one hundred organizations. Usually, the documented studies about the application of this model use the quantitative approach and correlational method (Fry et al., 2008, 2011).

In accordance with Fry, this is a causal model in which the first stage (spiritual leadership) predicts the second stage (spiritual well-being), and this in turn predicts the third one (organizational outcomes). While reviewing empirical evidence of Fry’s research, it was found that in stage three (organizational outcomes), Fry does not limit his inquiries to “organizational commitment” and “productivity” categories, but according to the interests of each researcher, adopts new categories in which the influence of spiritual leadership and well-being could be evidenced.

Considering the interests of this research, the freedom to apply new categories for assessing organizational outcomes has been used. In this case, the original categories were superseded by the processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and knowledge reuse. In this way, processes of knowledge management were integrated to the model and are not exogenous categories related to the spiritual leadership model. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Spiritual leadership for the management of organizational knowledge processes. (Prepared by Lorena Martinez, based on Fry, 2003.)

\(^1\)Proposal for the operationalizing of Fry’s spiritual leadership model in WHOLEGRAIN.
Research Approach and Data Collection Process

In this research, Fry’s theoretical and conceptual structure of the model’s categories were kept. In previous studies, the author has utilized the quantitative approach and correlational method to validate his model; however, since the purposes of the current research were not to verify the correlation between variables, but to understand how they are interpreted and applied into the reality of the organization, a qualitative design was used. This created room for more in-depth interviews, which allowed the researcher to compare and contrast within the theoretical model in order to better understand the organizational reality.

This study used an ethnographic method for describing organizational characteristics and human actions that are oriented by spiritual leadership and that affect processes of knowledge management. Direct observation and in-depth interviews were the techniques used to collect the information. This information, collected in interview transcripts, observation records and field notes, was coded and analyzed using the software for the treatment of qualitative data, Atlas.ti 7.0:

Ethnography disaggregates cultural objects into more specific objects, such as the characterization and interpretation of socialization patterns, the building of values, the development and expressions of cultural competence, the development and understanding of interaction rules, and so on. (Sandoval, 2002, p. 60)

The ethnographic fieldwork of this research implied the development of three stages carried out between January and December, 2014. The first stage involved exploring information with the CEO (two interviews) in order to promote confidence and explain the goals of the research. The interviews lasted about four hours. In the second stage, the information collected during the first interview was used to develop a semi-structured guide to compile the information that combined the categories of spiritual leadership (vision, hope or faith, altruistic love, calling, and membership) and the knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge reuse processes.

Finally, in-depth interviews were carried out with nine informants. Each informant required three different sessions to complete the semi-structured guide resulting in about 27 sessions. Data from the interviews were systematized using the coding procedure proposed by Strauss and Corbin (2002). One informant came from the strategic level (management), seven from the managerial level (production, quality, maintenance, finance, logistics, talent management, systems), and one from the operational level (production supervisor). The criteria for the selection of the informants was their level of organizational knowledge, empowerment, and participation in administrative decision-making (members of the administrative board).
Procedures and Data Analysis

Information was validated in a process of double triangulation: a) triangulation of sources which compared data obtained from employees with institutional information (official data), and b) theoretical triangulation which focused on contrasting Fry’s model categories with categories emerging from the study.

Initially, the process of data coding consisted of examining the paragraphs of the interview transcripts, field notes and corporate reports, and classifying them into emerging subject groups. Secondly, for each subject, the categories that reflected a relationship to spiritual leadership and its implications for the processes of organizational knowledge at the studied company were identified. Thirdly, these categories were contrasted with Fry’s model and separated into two groups: those aspects predominantly associated with spiritual leadership and knowledge processes and those that were not.

Results

This study focused on operationalizing Fry’s spiritual leadership model in the WHOLEGRAIN corporation with the purpose of validating if the theory of spiritual leadership could be considered an effective strategy in the processes of organizational knowledge management. For this reason, the findings of this research are organized around the three stages comprised by the model: a) spiritual leadership, b) spiritual well-being, and c) organizational outcomes, that, in this case, correspond to the three processes of knowledge management: creation, sharing, and reuse.

Stage 1: Spiritual leadership: Vision, Hope or Faith, Altruistic Love

In the model, the phase named “spiritual leadership” is based on the dynamic interaction between three categories: vision, hope or faith, and altruistic love. According to Fry (2003), the fact that the spiritual leader establishes an inspiring vision creates in the employees hope or faith in its fulfillment, which becomes the intrinsic motivation that inspires them to reach the vision. This dynamic between vision and people is moderated by altruistic love, namely, shared spiritual values that lead everyone to perceive a feeling of interest and appreciation for others. The spiritual leader’s role is to ensure that the interaction of these three categories lead to “spiritual well-being,” which, according to the model, is obtained by satisfying spiritual needs of calling and membership. In this section, the most important findings about the stage named “Spiritual Leadership” are presented.
Vision. During this stage of the model, it was found that most of the employees of WHOLEGRAIN associate the elements of corporate mission (mission, vision, values) with the religious beliefs promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDAC). Additionally, WHOLEGRAIN’s mission explicitly mentions its religious vocation. This, along with a corporate culture based on Christian values, leads the staff to give a new more transcendent meaning to the vision, which increases its inspirational potential:

The Adventist Church has certain beliefs and values. For example, health is very important to us. A healthy lifestyle is not only (a matter of) education. If you are healthy, you have to prevent disease and keep your body in good health because our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and this is going to help you all your life. The idea is that you eat properly, eat foods as natural as possible, try to take care of your body, and exercise. So, if the company belongs to the church and there is some knowledge about healthy lifestyle, we, as a company, want to contribute to this. If God has given certain guidelines for people to live well, they must be applied.

(Interview 8)

Another reason that explains the high level of staff commitment to the corporate vision is the process of how it came about. Interviews reveal that the vision arose from a collective exercise involving all the staff. According to the interviews, the WHOLEGRAIN vision has inspired employees to exert themselves in establishing a greater agreement between what they believe and what they do. This is reflected in a healthier lifestyle, better social relationships, and greater care with their use of time and money:

Trust, clarity, a very honest and clear way of doing business. People believing from the start, and always believing. People trusting us. That is worth more than any high price. I liked that the manager got authorization to add the Adventist Church logotype because that is what we are.

(Interview 1)

Hope or Faith. Interviews reveal that the religious calling of the company is a predictor of hope or faith. The interviewees expressed that they felt motivated by the sense of transcendence which the religious calling lends to the corporate vision. This motivation generates a degree of commitment which exceeds the contractual sphere because it is assumed in the spiritual sphere. By participating in a transcendent vision, employees develop a sense of purpose.

Another element that strengthens hope or faith is the supernatural; the interviews revealed that employees consider the company to be a product of God’s will. Therefore, if the company fulfills its essential purpose, that is, the purpose
for which the company was created, God will resolve any problem that arises. In this regard, thinking that one is a part of a company that is guided by God reinforces the trust in the fulfilment of the vision and the company’s success regardless of the circumstance:

It is a commitment. I always work thinking that what I’m doing is not done for men but for God. It generates greater responsibility, dedication, and care, and I have experienced how God has guided us. There have been many times when we didn’t have enough resources to cover all our costs and expenses, but the Lord has never abandoned us. When we least expect it, we see the solution and the miracle. (Interview 2)

Altruistic Love. It was found that WHOLEGRAIN implemented a corporate culture based on Christian values called “WHOLEGRAIN Culture” since 2012. Its implementation includes choosing a new value every month. This value is socialized in work activities dedicated exclusively to reflection, collective prayer, and exchange of spiritual experiences that reinforce faith and confidence in the fulfilment of the Bible’s promises:

Every month we have a value that is everywhere: on the website, computers, walls, and everything else. Reaching people with our products, with quality, loyalty, punctuality, and honesty. These values are our philosophical underpinnings and foundation. They remind us how we should achieve the vision; they refer us to the transcendent purposes of the vision. (Interview 2)

The interviews revealed that this corporate culture based on spiritual values has made much progress towards the construction of a common ethical framework in which individual and organizational values come together. This becomes a collective identity that motivates employees to keep the structure of values with which they identify and to support consistent actions with these values:

What we seek with the principles we have in the church is to perform the vision properly. For example, I wouldn’t think of putting a product on the market that reads 480 gr., when it only weighs 460 gr. The product must be exactly what the product characteristics say it is. The influence of the church compels us to work honestly. (Interview 2)

In contrast to traditional approaches of transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership that focus on the leader’s abilities, skills, and knowledge, Fry understands leadership as a process of social influence in which the entire team participates in holding the spiritual environment of the organization. The findings reveal that in WHOLEGRAIN there a spiritual environment
exists, that is guided and supported by the CEO. In this case, what Fry (2003) postulates about the existence of a leadership environment is only partially true because, although the managerial staff provides support in their area of influence, employees do not perceive spiritual leadership as a collective process:

He (the manager) has a worship service every Monday with sales agents and does his work. The work involves promoting a value in WHOLEGRAIN every month. This month we are working on the value of prudence. It has very good subjects. People are reminded, everywhere there are posters. That part works. (Interview 1)

Who promotes the subject of spirituality, vision, and goals? Of course, the manager. Don’t you notice this from the other areas or managerial staff? No, it is all about what the manager says. (Interview 9)

**Stage 2. Well-Being: Calling and Membership**

According to Fry (2003), the stage defined in the model as “spiritual well-being” emerges from the satisfaction of two spiritual needs: calling and membership. Calling refers to the sense of call related to the altruistic service offered from what it is and what is done regarding helping others from what is known. Membership is related to the necessity of being part of something and feeling accepted and valued by that community. In accordance with Fry, if the company provides a proper environment for meeting the calling and membership needs, it creates a sense of purpose that strengthens intrinsic motivation and leads employees to strive to achieve organizational goals. Here are the most important findings about the “spiritual well-being”:

**Calling.** In WHOLEGRAIN, community service activities are meant as a chance to teach, change habits, influence, and help others. For that matter, evidence was found that employees not only participate in activities organized by the company, but some of these activities are promoted by the employees themselves as they perceive these activities as an opportunity to strengthen team unity and reinforce the practice of values such as unity, friendship, camaraderie, generosity, and service to others. These actions not only allow for a sense of calling to develop, they also contribute to creating and supporting an environment of spiritual well-being:

Service to others outside of work was an opportunity for us all to be united. Maybe the purpose of sales agents was only to go and deliver bread to street people without thinking that Adventists and non-Adventists might unite, but as others heard about this, they began to join in. Sales agents have meetings every morning. In fact, they were the first to give their own
Another aspect, according to the theory of spiritual leadership, that is part of calling is that people expect to have the possibility of finding an interesting and meaningful job that allows them to learn, develop, and have a sense of expertise and competence. It was found that some interviewed individuals feel restricted, due to fact that the company currently does not have a training program for the staff nor do they allocate resources for new projects or programs for staff training. When asked for the reasons, people said that the company was in a difficult financial situation. They appeared understanding and were prepared to postpone their expectations. However, analyzing the interviews, it becomes noticeable that in the medium term this could be a constraining factor for employee motivation as they feel that their job does not offer them the chance for learning and developing themselves professionally:

There are times when I feel stagnant because there are no resources for doing many things that I want, that issue is limiting, but, on the other hand, there are a lot of things to improve, there is always something different to do. (Interview 8)

**Membership.** The second element of spiritual well-being is “membership.” Inquiring about this aspect, it was found that some years ago WHOLEGRAIN was characterized by having difficult labor relations, and communication between managers, employees, and departments was tense. This damaged relations and decreased employee motivation and commitment to the company. Currently, employees state that the corporate culture based on spiritual values has allowed them to regain trust and improve relationships. The daily practice of collective prayer and meditation has helped them to draw closer to each other on a personal and family level, which has allowed them to experience positive relationships with coworkers and participate in an environment of connection and friendship.

Additionally, it was found that social service activities developed inside the work environment are a space where the bond among employees is strengthened, since these kind of activities are a source of satisfaction of spiritual needs. They channel calling by means of selfless service and assistance to others and strengthen the sense of calling by providing the opportunity for one to live a life integrated to a group. That has a transcendent purpose:

I have a lot of to do with clients since I was in the Quality Department. Now I’m in the Production Department. They still call me and ask me; they say, a lot of people are avid for knowing what to do to be healthier; that is something I like a lot. If I can do something for someone, that motivates
me to teach them, explain to them about their questions. There are many that say: “I only consume WHOLEGRAIN because it is what helps my health”, those things also motivate me a lot. I’m doing something productive for humanity. (Interview 8)

Stage 3: Organizational Outcomes: Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Sharing, and Knowledge Reuse

In accordance with Fry, the stage defined as “organizational outcomes” rises up naturally as a consequence of the two previous stages. Organizational outcomes reflect the benefits that the organization obtains after implementing the initial stages. The goal of this research is to determine whether the previous stages succeeded in influencing the company’s processes of knowledge management.

Here are most important findings:

Knowledge Creation. Research shows that most of the SMEs do not create knowledge, but acquire and adapt knowledge to their needs because of the scarcity of economic resources. This limitation implies negotiating the acquisition of strategic resources and services on which its own activities depend (Teece, 1988; Vangen et al., 2005; Hutchinson & Quintas, 2008). In WHOLEGRAIN, the recent projects for developing new products have relied on the procurement and adaptation of existing knowledge through purchases from or donations by allied companies.

Interviews disclose that in WHOLEGRAIN there is a favorable condition for knowledge creation, since the certainty that the company is guided by God, the commitment of employees, and low employee turnover create an environment of cooperation and generation of ideas. However, it was noted that the economic factor is the biggest limitation for the creation or acquisition of knowledge. Interviews revealed that due to the company’s precarious situation, the CEO restricts investment in research and development projects and focuses on survival. Another aspect which arose from interviews is that some staff members consider the absence of a supportive attitude toward new products initiatives as the real limitation for knowledge creation:

We recently started a new project. This project is hardly new actually, as it had been suggested to the boss, many years ago. When it was initially suggested the boss’s reply was: “Yes, that’s a great idea but let us do it sometime in the future’. It took years to get this project started. I understand that projects require money, but I don’t know if it is all about money, or the leadership just don’t want to do it . . . . The process of entering new products into the company is very slow. I mean, there is no cul-
ture of acceptance of new ideas, of wanting to innovate all the time. (Interview 3)

According to the interviews, the absence of a culture of innovation is reflected on a lack of budget allocation for these activities, slowness, and centralization of decisions related to new projects, a lack of technical processes accompanying the development of initiatives from their incubation to their launch, and lack of incentives to promote and reward new ideas.

Knowledge Sharing. The interviews show that one of the most important contributions of WHOLEGRAIN’s organizational culture based on its Christian values is the building of staff trust. Moments of reflection and prayer stimulate the sense of membership and strengthen relationships. They also create an environment in which spiritual values such as harmony, forgiveness, and acceptance are exercised. Good relationships among employees have achieved greater interaction, better work environment, and greater willingness to cooperate and share ideas which have made the training processes easier among former and new employees. They also fostered communication by creating safe spaces to resolve problems, to generate new ideas for improving processes, the implementation of small innovations, and enhancement of working positions through staff initiative. All of these aspects could be considered activities inherent to the processes of organizational knowledge:

Of course, when we see the same value every day, it influences all of us indirectly. Besides, it allows us to have more interaction, since we were so distant. However, a bond of trust was built, and now we are not workmates, but friends. (Interview 5)

Knowledge Reuse. Finally, it was found that knowledge reuse is made by direct interaction among employees who, based on experience, create and modify processes in a quick and flexible way because there are no established processes for knowledge transformation from tacit to explicit. People share tacit knowledge, since the company does not have practices for collecting and transforming this information into explicit knowledge. The creation and modification of the processes are made easier due to the seniority, experience, and ability of employees who knew and understood key business processes, and solutions for improving processes of one department in relation to other departments. Aspects like familiarity among employees, experience, and low staff turnover makes employees a valuable source of tacit knowledge:

Head of the Department of Information Systems: I saw that the Payroll Department calculated a seller’s commission only at the end of the month.
I talked to the heads of the Payroll Department and Sales Department so that the commission would be calculated as soon as a sale was made. This way, sales agents don’t have to wait until the end of each month to know their commission, and they can feel stimulated to sell more. (Interview 5)

In addition, it was found that in WHOLEGRAIN, technological devices such as computers were used for managing operational processes like sales, inventory, and storing historical data by departments, but not used as a mechanism for information storage for later analysis and reuse. Even though the data stored in these devices could be freely accessed, it was not used, since its relevance and usefulness was unknown.

Moreover, it was found that the employees themselves were responsible for making the decision about what kind of data was stored, how long, and with whom it was shared with. There was no a formal policy on information storage and analysis for the sake of improving processes or making decisions. That probably happened because the company is unaware of the knowledge potential such information has to it and how it to best utilize it.

We have common files on the server where I have my folder and keep everything. I have schedules, supplier lists, information about replacement parts, prices, where I can get something, how long ago it was bought. That is my information. The sales department has its own folder and information. I don’t use sales information because even though I can, I’m not going to understand anything. The same happens to them and my folder. (Interview 3)

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to establish the influence of spiritual leadership on knowledge processes by means of the application of the spiritual leadership model, proposed by Louis Fry, to WHOLEGRAIN, a medium-sized company. At this stage, two questions need to be considered.

First, how applicable was Fry’s spiritual leadership model to WHOLEGRAIN’s organizational reality? The results of the study indicate that the model is relevant to WHOLEGRAIN’s organizational reality. Therefore, this model can be considered as an operationalization strategy of workplace spirituality. The significance of religion in the validation of the model is one of the most important findings of this study. Fry allows organizations to feel free to choose their references on which to base their own spirituality. However, by analyzing his writings, it is possible to demonstrate the repeated use of religious concepts and texts from the Bible to explain his categories.

This connection between Fry’s model and religion highlights the theological sense underlying his model. In accordance with what was observed at the com-
pany, the spiritual leadership model points to a spiritual transformation that happens when people live a religious experience at the organizational level. In this case, the company is an organization with an obvious religious vocation, hence religion is directly and significantly linked to spirituality. Religious beliefs are the source of its principles and values, nourishing the spiritual experience of its people and of the entire organization, over which it is possible develop a successful spiritual leadership.

Osman, Gani, Hashim, and Ismail (2012) define religion as an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols designed to facilitate proximity to the sacred and transcendent, and to foster the mutual responsibility of everyone living in community. At the same time, they specify that spirituality is the personal search to find answers regarding life’s most fundamental questions.

In this case, the findings revealed that at the studied company, the spirituality and religion constructs are related, due to the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church provides a complete system of principles, values, and beliefs directing the SMEs’ corporate culture and influencing the channels through which spirituality was built which provided meaning to the personal and professional life of employees.

This conditioning of the spiritual to the religious has had deep implications in the behavior of individuals at the company. Since religious principles influence actions, perceptions, personal decisions, and increase the employee’s morale and productivity, these elements have an impact on organizational outcomes (Connolly & Myers, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; McCarty, 2007; Vasconcelos, 2009).

The second question asks whether the initial stages of the model (spiritual leadership: vision, hope or faith, altruistic love and wellbeing, calling, and membership) were able to have an impact on the third, namely, organizational outcomes. This third stage is composed of the processes of creation, sharing, and reuse of knowledge. Indeed, this study showed that stages one and two of the model did create a favorable condition for the company’s processes of knowledge management. This allows for the conclusion that spiritual leadership may be considered a strategy for leading processes of organizational knowledge. However, it should be noted that the company’s poor awareness about knowledge processes was a limiting condition for managing these. The company is unaware of how to use knowledge as a strategic resource for developing new products that enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the company.

One of the favorable conditions for the processes of knowledge management turned out to be the corporate culture that brings principles and beliefs of the employees together with the company’s beliefs and religious values. This alignment unifies the collective and individual identity, and fosters a proper work
environment that generates actions directed to the processes of creation, sharing, and reuse of knowledge. Many descriptive researchers have identified culture as a significant catalyst or a major obstacle to creating and sharing knowledge. A favorable organizational culture of knowledge is one of the most important conditions for achieving success in initiatives of organizational knowledge management.

**Knowledge Creation**

Two restricting aspects of WHOLEGRAIN’s knowledge creation were the absorptive capacity of new ideas from the market and the ability to translate them into new products. Dou and Dou (1999) state that when an SMEs’ information environment is poor, demonstrated by the company’s quality of the sources and information, managers remain isolated and innovation is scarce. This statement was confirmed by the observed reality, since it is showed that the lack of external information sources (trainings, travels, events, participation in guilds) and the restricted capacity to manage internal resources and ideas generated little creativity for knowledge creation resulting in concrete products. Cohen and Levinthal define this ability as the firm’s absorptive capacity (1990).

A second aspect considered as limiting knowledge creation is that employees do not perceive an attitude of interest and commitment from management to the knowledge processes. Researchers point out that this situation is potentially damaging to the organization, since management has a key role to resolve what kind of resources should be allocated and how long employees are allowed to carry out knowledge management activities (Singh, 2008; Durst & Edvardsson, 2012).

**Knowledge Sharing**

Ragab and Arisha (2013) state that organizational culture has been identified as a key determinant of knowledge of management’s success or failure. The analysis of the process of knowledge sharing in WHOLEGRAIN identified that corporate culture based on Christian values is a favorable condition for socialization, creation of collective identity, and building of trust among employees. Davenport and Prusak (1998) argued that this is achieved because culture becomes a catalyst in fostering an environment whose values encourage the employees to share, interact, communicate, cooperate, and more.

The consistency between values, rules, and practices at WHOLEGRAIN has created a collective identity that reinforces the interaction among workers, strengthens the bond with stakeholder support groups, and establishes a common ethical framework for making decisions. This finding is consistent with Hamdan and Damirchi (2011), who suggest that environments with high levels of trust and social interaction, in terms of frequency of approaches and
communication, foster knowledge sharing and flow of resources.

A limiting aspect for knowledge sharing is that operational activities requiring teamwork, process improvement, and decision-making processes are affected by failures of communication. Employees argue that although management has made efforts for promoting spaces that allow interaction among departments, those are not enough, but are focused on routine issues like vacation approval, contract renewal, and more. Frustration is caused by a lack of space for discussion and attempting to solve every department’s critical problems; this weakens the interest in cooperating, creates an attitude of indifference, delays the process improvement, and discourages the sense of team.

Wee and Chua (2013) state that organizations in which there are few interactions, regular working meetings, and management discussions restrict the knowledge of functions, responsibilities, and processes among departments, and at the same time, reduce chances for management and employees to propose operational solutions and collaborative initiatives contributing to process improvement.

Knowledge Reuse

The last knowledge process that this research analyzed was knowledge reuse. This study found that the company was unaware of the importance of managing knowledge processes and has not developed deliberate actions allowing it to benefit from organizational knowledge in order to increase its competitiveness. This finding is consistent with Hutchinson and Quintas’ (2008) ideas, which indicate that SMEs tend to develop informal processes of knowledge, understood as those practices that are not labeled or constituted in terms and concepts of knowledge management.

One of the reasons associated with informality is job stability. Employees are a valuable source of tacit knowledge, obtained by years of experience. This condition makes them information providers for the control and monitoring systems of administrative management and production processes (quality management system). Notwithstanding, this strength is not being exploited by the company, since it has left this pool of tacit knowledge residing in employee expertise unused. The company doesn’t seem to understand or know how to manage the benefits provided by this transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

Therefore, this study concludes that the influence of religion and spirituality is important in order to create a proper corporate culture for bringing together individual and organizational interests. In this regard, this research validates Fry’s theory of spiritual leadership as a conceptual tool for the practice of spirituality at the workplace. Nonetheless, at the studied company, the conditions allowing the development of strategies for the management of knowledge processes are incipient, which significantly weakens the impact of spiritual leadership.
References


ERICH BAUMGARTNER AND ANDRES FLORES
CREATING A SPIRITUAL LEARNING
SPACE: THE CHANGING LEADERSHIP
ROLES IN THE LIFE CYCLE OF A
CHURCH PLANT

Abstract: The role of a church planter is multifaceted and unique. Church
planters and their teams venture out as faith entrepreneurs in obedience to
Christ’s commission to share the gospel in every community. They have to
experiment with creative ministry approaches in a particular context. Then,
as they find methods which meet the needs of people in that community con-
text, experimenting gives way to more predictable ministry structures. Church
growth requires constant fine-tuning of leadership roles to deal with new
challenges and growth pains, calling often for new skill sets that the original
church planter may not possess. Thus, as church planters have to steer a path
between creative vitality and routinized programming, they are faced with
multiple demands to adapt their leadership to new circumstances.

This study tracks the transformation of a successful Chicago church plant
in its first five years from an experimental ministry laboratory to a mature and
effective ministry community. It also describes the related leadership role
changes of the original church planting pastor and his team at EPIC Church
in Chicago. As EPIC church celebrated its fifth anniversary, it launched its
second campus at the end of October 2017.

Keywords: entrepreneurial leadership, church plant, organizational life cycle

The Vision

When Andres Flores drove up to the conference building that housed the
headquarters of his denomination, he wondered how his dream to plant a
multicultural congregation in the heart of Chicago would come together. After
a few minutes of cordial small talk, he came right to the heart of his question:
How will the conference support this venture in new church planting?

Andres had recently finished his coursework for the Master of Divinity degree
at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs,
Michigan. After weighing several options for ministry he started to dream about a new type of urban church right in the center of the city of Chicago. He, an inspiring preacher, and his wife, a professional musician, had been a formidable team when ministering to second-generation Latino young adults. What would happen if that youthful energy was harnessed into venturing out for God through church planting? After talking with some church leaders, he had been encouraged to pursue this dream vigorously. So here he was, just weeks after the birth of his first daughter, resettled into the Chicago area, ready to get started. But how and where and with what resources? This is where the role of the conference comes in. In a connectional system like the Adventist denominational structure, the support of the conference office is crucial.

“Andres,” came the reply, “We do support you. We pay your salary and we will back the development of the congregation. But you have the most important element to get started right in your own hand: the attractiveness of the vision.” This was not the answer he had expected, but it turned out to be crucial advice that put Andres on the right path. Church planting, like any new enterprise, starts with a vision that becomes a catalyst to do something new for God.

To venture out on the basis of a dream without any concrete direction felt, at first, a bit disorienting. But there was no going back. So he turned to a small group of co-conspirators who had been attracted to the vision for the new church. Together they designed a series of four open-house events to draw attention to the project and recruit a core team. They began to run announcements of the events in local Adventist churches and to pass out flyers in the community and on street corners. Rather than bringing people to a building, they invited them to a rooftop, store-front, theater, and school, all places familiar to the community. The events were to appeal not only to young adults from the church, but also to members of the community. These open-house meetings gave people a foretaste of the new church and an opportunity to join the team.

The results of the open-house meetings were amazing and energizing as people began to spread the news in their social circles and bring their friends: first a few dozen, but soon over 200. Each open house event brought a few more people willing to commit to being part of the launching team. In these intense conversations about what the new church should look like, the vision of a multicultural, multigenerational church emerged. They would name it EPIC. As they looked for a facility that would be suitable for their new venture they settled on Pritzkel School in the heart of Chicago, where they started EPIC Church on October 20, 2012.

**Church Planting and Leadership**

Thus started the journey of EPIC Church and Andres Flores as a church
planter. It is a journey that has been lived in one form or another since Christ commissioned His disciples to go into all the world to spread the Good News about God’s love. But as exciting as the apostolic task may be, success is not assured. Ever since two of the earliest church planters had a “sharp disagree-ment” over the qualifications of a missionary that split the team (Acts 15:39-40), church planting has been a calling to leadership that is fraught with peril.

New churches are as diverse as the people who plant them. Yet, the growth trajectory of a church plant tends to go through predictable life cycle stages: inception, birth, adolescence, maturity, old age, and even death (Moberg, 1999). Each of these phases is characterized by different challenges and needs that require different leadership responses (Adizes, 1999; 2007, pp. 21-32). Thus church planters are confronted with the reality that their leadership role changes over time. As the church plant grows, the skill set of the founding leader may get overwhelmed by problems that demand different strengths than those required for its launch. While church planting books often describe the changing role of the church planter, few studies have documented the actual roles of a church planter accompanying the growth of a church plant. This study describes the changing leadership roles the church planter experienced at EPIC, from its inception to its fifth birthday, when it gave birth to a new church, thus achieving one of the signs of adulthood.

Tracking Organizational Life Cycle Roles

Organizations have life cycles. They are born, grow good at what they are doing till times change, and they begin to fade away. One of the most prominent models of the organizational life cycle comes from Adizes (1999), author of the book Managing Corporate Lifecycles. He describes three major phases: (1) initial growing stages encompassing courtship, infancy, go-go, and adolescence; (2) the prime stages with several subphases including “The Fall;” and (3) the aging stages of aristocracy, Salem City, bureaucracy, and death that can only be avoided if the organization find ways to adapt to constantly changing contextual realities. For a long time, many business writers and literature on church planting have shared the conviction that the initial startup of any enterprise requires a high dose of entrepreneurship (McClelland, 1965; Schumpeter, 1939). But researchers have also noticed that while the energy and personality of an entrepreneur is a crucial ingredient of successful startups, that same personality can also become a problem that has brought many enterprises down (Brockhaus & Horwitz, 2002; Kets de Vries, 1985). Kets de Vries (1985) describes “the dark side of entrepreneurship” when he claims that some entrepreneurial personalities have a hard time fitting into a typical organization because they are “misfits who need to create their own environment” (p. 162). Thus, as the
organization grows, major tensions should be expected.

What does that mean for this study? First, this study was designed to look for these tensions and document the leadership roles of the founding pastor-entrepreneur during the first five years of the church plant as it grew from a new plant to a mature congregation recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Second, in the Adventist denomination, new church plants are usually spawned by a mother church and organized as a company until they have grown in membership and financial strength to become a duly recognized church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual leaves no doubt that becoming a “normal” church comes with a host of expectations that regulate the typical internal church life and structures. These structures often differ from the more flexible forms of church life developed and valued by the new church plant as they experiment with new ways to reach the people in their community. The present study was designed to explore how the new church plant navigated these expectations to conform to traditional church practices.

A review of the short history of EPIC Church revealed several phases that seemed to require different ways to lead. In the prenatal phase, which Adizes (1999) calls the courtship phase (pp. 21-32), church planters are entrepreneurs that attract people through their vision. In order to become a viable church plant they have to find ways to attract people and turn them into responsible followers of Jesus Christ. In this phase, the evangelistic role of the leader grows prominent as the church plant seeks to attract new members. If the church is able to keep up the momentum, the founding pastor soon sees the need to train leaders to head different ministries to support the members in their Christian journey. The roles thus described move from visionary entrepreneur to creative evangelist and teacher, and finally leader developer to consolidate growth. As I interviewed Andres Flores, I saw many of my early hunches confirmed, yet there were also some surprising twists I had not expected.

**Vision Caster and Recruiter/Entrepreneur**

The early experiences of Andres as a church planter demanded incredible determination and initiative to connect people with the vision. The role of a church planter differs from that of a typical pastor of already established churches. Church planters are faith entrepreneurs, willing to venture into something new, and possibly fail. They don’t know how the dream will work out. But they have a sense of calling that carries them forward and that is infectious. Very early, Andres was joined by a small group of people excited to be involved in the new venture. For them the experimental nature of the journey designed to reach the people in the community was an exciting adventure with God. Designing the open-house events gave them an opportunity to recruit their own
friends into the venture. On October 20, 2012 when they saw 157 in attendance, they were excited and hopeful. EPIC had started with a bang and they were on the road to something good.

Attracting a crowd soon turned out to be the easy part. Developing a community of committed members structured for continuous growth turned out to be difficult. In fact, for weeks they experienced a decline in attendance they had not expected and that created contentious discussions they had never before experienced. What was happening? Why did people not continue to come and join something so good? The glitter of newness soon gave way to some basic realities that led them to change worship venues and move into the fabled Den Theater in Wicker Park.

There the atmosphere changed. The place was more welcoming. Attendance became more stable. It was here that they asked serious questions about the type of people they were trying to reach. At the time, the average age of attendees was about 27. But they sensed that beyond focusing on reaching urban millennials they wanted to be open for all generations. This conversation prepared the way for also attracting families with children and teenagers.

Most of the programming revolved around worship and Bible conversations, called Sabbath School in traditional Adventist churches. Since they met in a theater, that conversation took place near a bar, which is a typical place unchurched people meet other people. It turned out to be an environment in which many visitors felt comfortable. A tender moment came when a bartender who had been listening to the inspirational messages started to participate in the conversations. One day she confessed that she had been thinking about going back to church for some time, and now God had brought the church to her. That church was EPIC.

For Andres, this was one of those moments that helped them see the value of community for discipleship and outreach. For some time, he had been concerned that their small groups tended to be insider fellowships that would meet for hours. The problem was that these groups tended to absorb a lot of energy without ever reaching out to unchurched community people. It soon became clear to the leadership team that if EPIC were to grow, a more serious conversation was needed around what the church was all about. The open-house events had brought church and community people who were eager to check out the new initiative and hang out with friends. What was needed now was a commitment to a deeper journey for the purpose of discipleship.

Not everybody in the audience and even in the core team was ready to buy into that new truth. The dwindling attendance of the first few weeks had been a painful reality. For Andres, it required taking on a new role. The church not only needed a chief vision caster and recruiter. EPIC now needed a leader able to foster a dialogue about the core mission and its implications for how they did church.
Mission Educator and Course Corrector

For Andres, this time of dialogue was also a time of correcting course. This was a role that he had not expected. He knew that many in the congregation had been drawn to the welcoming culture they had developed. But how was he to transition people into buying into a discipleship culture that asks for a commitment in time and resources? It was a role that meant clarifying issues, dialoguing, and also disappointing some. He started with the governing team where he faced serious questions about what kind of church they wanted to be. Leading that team Andres had to learn that at each stage of the church plant’s life cycle the leadership role of a church planter has to adapt to the challenges at hand. In the process he had to be willing to deal with ambiguous situations, help the team to deal with the challenge they were facing, while learning in conversation with those he led and listening to that which God was calling them.

Managing Expectations

In the face of the initial dwindling attendance, Andres felt a bit in a pressure cooker with the heat rising. Now that they were an official company of believers, pressure came from several corners. There were those who came from traditional Adventist churches who had a rather predictable Bible school and worship pattern. This pattern is governed by what Adventists call the Church Manual. It contains guidelines about what an organized Adventist congregation looks like and which are followed with some cultural adaptations around the world. The value of such a manual for church planters is that they can connect to a system of established configurations of activity and resources.

The potential friction point comes with those who consider the Church Manual the legal contract for a franchise which does not tolerate creative variation. Such attitudes make it hard to relate to millennials, who have been called the most entrepreneurial generation in history (Irving, 2016; Waldorf, 2017). It is also a generation which holds against the church that it is (1) “intolerant of doubt,” (2) “elitist in its relationships,” (3) “anti-science in its beliefs,” (4) “overprotective of its members,” (5) “shallow in its teachings,” and (6) “repressive of differences” (Jenkin & Martin, 2014, p. 96). Yet the leadership team of EPIC sensed that its core vision of the pursuit of discipleship called for a form of church that put its activities and events into the service of discipleship. This vision had been established with the desire to create an environment where anybody could explore their quest for a meaningful life and a faith that wrestled openly with the questions. How could EPIC become such an environment where young adults would experience the thrill of becoming committed disciples of the Lord Jesus? This was not just a rhetorical question for the EPIC team. It turned out to be the crucial axis around which the real life of the church began to turn.
The Power of Metaphor

In this search for ways to make discipleship central in EPIC, the first challenge was to find a metaphor that would speak to this generation about what discipleship means today. Interestingly, the church team soon found this metaphor in the story of the *Karate Kid*. This 1980s movie features a badly harassed boy, Daniel, who is rescued by a caretaker, Mr. Miyagi, from a group of bullies. Mr. Miyagi soon takes an interest in the boy and teaches him not only karate, but the art of life. Could discipleship be depicted as an “art of life,” centering around how to follow the Master Jesus Christ?

As the leadership team explored the implications of the metaphor, they had to wrestle with the role of leaders in the discipleship process as disciple-shapers. They launched the *hajime* discipleship training in the last month of their first year of existence. *Hajime*, the Japanese word for beginning, is used in the traditional Japanese martial arts like karate as a verbal command to “begin” (Wikipedia Contributors, 2018). *Hajime* communicated to those attending EPIC church that in order to become a Christian, there needs to be training to become a Daniel yielding to the discipline of a Mr. Miyagi, their metaphor for disciple-building Christian leaders. But as in the *Karate Kid*, discipleship aims at making every disciple of Jesus also a disciple maker.

Moreover, the leadership team soon decided to adapt the key structures of the church to the new vision. Discipleship training replaced the vague fellowship focus of the small groups who were now discussing how to be a Christian in everyday life and how to use their own experience as a basis to share their faith to invite others to become part of the journey of discipleship. The small groups, also supported by the Sabbath morning sermon, started flourishing under the new emphasis. Just as Mr. Miyagi, the karate master who was investing himself into Daniel, leadership was now redefined as finding “sons” and “daughters” in order to cultivate them as disciples destined to become disciple makers. As people caught the vision new language developed that made sense only to those guided by the new vision: “Hey, Andres, God gave me a Daniel-daughter (or a Daniel-son) to invite to our group.”

A month after the launch of the Hajime Discipleship training, on the first anniversary of EPIC, Andres Flores, its founding pastor, was ordained as a Seventh-day Adventist minister. Looking back, Andres feels that this realignment of expectations and leadership commitments led ultimately to ministry structures that became the vehicles to attract new members. This discipleship vision became also enshrined in the official mission statement of EPIC which reads “Disciples Making Disciples.”
As Andres developed the *hajime* discipleship vision through sermons and the intentional training of his leadership team, his team became intentional disciple makers. Through this process and the implementation of small groups, an additional leadership role of church planters began to surface: the church planter as a systems designer, shaping the organizational culture of the church plant.

**Ideas Have Consequences**

When the leadership team began to embrace the vision of the *hajime* discipleship model, it soon had structural system consequences. First, it redefined the role of church leaders to embrace their role as trainers responsible for cultivating disciple makers who can self-reproduce. Second, it made the small group the crucial matrix for growing discipleship makers. Third, it underlined the importance of supporting intention with structural reform. Fourth, it turned the discipleship process into a leadership development process. Fifth, it led them to see the need to make the central church programs serve the new vision.

For example: the traditional Bible school program called Sabbath School in traditional Adventist congregations soon became “Discipleship Conversations.” These conversations focus on issues of vital importance to the daily walk of emerging disciples. The traditional church board became a board of ministry leaders fostering accountability to the mission of the church. The sermon supports what is going on in the small groups. Thus being a member of EPIC church became something precious. And each part of the structure served and reinforced the new vision. One of the positive results of this consistent emphasis on discipleship was the steady growth in attendance and a more solid commitment to the church’s mission among those attending.

**Systems Shape Behaviors**

In this phase, the church was no longer just experimenting with new ways to be church, but designing a system that could faithfully embody and transmit its values. Once the leadership team had first-hand experience in being discipled by the pastor and in winning and training new disciples, EPIC’s model became reproducible. They now knew the processes that had been shown to be effective in living out the mission of the church. More importantly, they had found a way to honor the *Church Manual* in spirit while developing their own “system” of structures that put the typical SDA structures into the service of the central vision and mission of EPIC:

- The traditional Adventist Sabbath School was intentionally restructured as discipleship training.
- The church board became a Ministry Council.
The church developed a culture of small groups that focuses on discipleship, developing maturity that leads to reproduction.

Ministry leaders were now expected to mentor emerging leaders.

**Reflections**

My conversations with Andres about the history of EPIC were very productive. They revealed an amazing array of issues that need to be addressed by church planters, even as they journey with their congregation. One issue was the importance of collaboration as a mode of leading. Another was the crucial role of evaluating what was happening on the ground floor to the balcony (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). A larger perspective was necessary to make sense of what was happening or not happening in the day-to-day operations of the church. But ultimately, the church planter had to be willing to step in to help the leadership team and congregation decide what was most important to them, what they were willing to give up in order to build the new community, and then to put the structures in place that would enable the congregation to become in reality what they had intended to be in principle.

**Support for Creative Deviants**

The story of EPIC as a multicultural, non-traditional church plant reaching urban millennials in Chicago challenges traditional Seventh-day Adventist expectations of what it means to be a church. While it was expected that in the early phases the church planter had to be an entrepreneur, traditional expectations do not expect the church planter to be a system re-designer. To the contrary, in the mind of traditional Adventists, the shape of the church is already spelled out in the *Church Manual*. What we have not recognized enough is that many faith-entrepreneurs use their need for independence to create something new that may not easily fit traditional expectations. Thus, many new church planting efforts have failed because they could not find support for innovation and creativity. Sometimes, new approaches are labeled “congregational,” insinuating that any deviance from accepted practice is contrary to the character and mission of the denomination. Fortunately, in the case of EPIC, both conference and union leaders actively monitored and supported the non-traditional methods and structures that emerged in the process of giving shape to the vision of EPIC: to be an intentional community that focuses on developing mature disciples that can disciple others.

**Resisting Patterns of Rigidity**

The literature on organizational life cycles recognizes the role-shift from entrepreneur to professional manager (Adizes, 1999; Flamholtz & Randle,
2007; Mintzberg, 1984; Queen & Cameron, 1983). This literature also predicts that organizations then shift to more predictable patterns sanctioned by the central office. But in most cases, the organizational life cycle eventually steers towards old age and oblivion. This seems to be the stage of many traditional congregations around the country who are now struggling to survive. Will EPIC be able to keep their life cycle in the dynamic growth stages? The fact that they have already spawned a new congregation at the end of their fifth year is a good early sign.

One issue needing urgent attention is the fact that traditional denominational systems are often unprepared to deal with the unconventional ministry patterns of church plants that are out of step with typical Adventist church life. Church plants often have to prove their orthodoxy over and over again and justify their deviation from accepted practice to those who have a stake in maintaining the status quo.

The Abiding Value of Entrepreneurial Leadership

Adventist institutional expectations typically see church planting as a pre-pastoral role in an initial entrepreneurial interim period. This study has described a more complex role that retains entrepreneurial characteristics even when the church has reached maturity. This role complexity is rarely recognized and needs broader discussion. It is hinted at by experts (Comiskey, 2009; Logan & DeVries, 2013; Moore, 2009; Ott & Wilson, 2011; Robinson, 2006; Stetzer & Bird, 2010; Towns & Porter, 2003). But it may also be important in the revitalization of congregations (Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006).

Where Do We Go From Here?

There is a need for more systematic research accompanying successful church planting attempts. The current study focused on a young church plant which just celebrated its fifth anniversary by launching a new campus. This milestone indicates that it has reached initial maturity. Will it be able to buck the trend towards fossilization and decline predicted by Moberg (1984) and Saarinen (1986)? Only time will tell.

The role of the church planter at EPIC does not conform to traditional expectations. Rather than settling into a traditional pastoral role, the founder of EPIC found it necessary to rethink and redesign traditional congregational structures and use his influence and authority as the founding pastor to re-educate the leadership team and the members into a new paradigm of congregational life. This shift needs further documentation and exploration. Have other successful church plants followed a similar path? Do church planters in other denominations face similar issues? What are the implications of such
shifts for the broader outlook of the church?

We would be interested in continuing this conversation beyond this article. Please feel free to contact us at baumgart@andrews.edu.

References


Transparency in Leadership: The Divine Governance Challenge from the Apocalypse

Keywords: transparent leadership, accountability, transparency

Academic approaches to Revelation treat the opening word revelation (apokalypsis; Rev. 1:1) as an opportunity to discuss the literary genre of this remarkable piece of ancient literature. Quite a few interpreters are content to leave it at that. To my knowledge no one has attempted to explore this word as a declaration of ideology, and much less as a statement that this book is committed to a particular form of leadership. The following, therefore, is a consideration of the leadership implications of the word that gives the last book of the Bible its title. The working hypothesis is that the book of Revelation is committed to transparent leadership. This ideology is announced in the opening word. With such a reading, Revelation strikes a blow to religious, political, and other institutions that thrive on secrecy and concealment.

Beyond the Question of Genre

Preoccupation with the genre of Revelation is legitimate, bolstered in part by force of habit and by the fact that the word apokalypsis has lent its name to the genre of apocalyptic literature. Awareness of genre, in turn, facilitates interpretation because it gives the reader a head start in terms of what to expect from the type of work he or she is reading. Needless to say, such “knowledge” is less helpful if the reader gets the question of genre wrong.

The risk of error on this point is considerable. While many features of Revelation support the notion that this is an apocalyptic book, it is not only

Sigve K. Tonstad is professor of Biblical interpretation at Loma Linda University in California. He completed medical school and a residency in internal medicine at Loma Linda University and a PhD in New Testament studies at the University of St. Andrews. He is the author of Saving God’s Reputation (2006), and God of Sense and Traditions of Non-Sense (2016), as well as other books. He is married to Serena Hasso Tonstad, and has two grown daughters.

1E. D. Hirsch defines genre as “that sense of the whole by means of which an interpreter can correctly understand any part in its determinacy.”

2John Collins and others give the following definition of the apocalyptic genre, a definition that is still widely accepted: “‘Apocalypse’ is a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an other-worldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.”
that. Assigning it to the apocalyptic genre overlooks characteristics that align the book closely with the genre of prophetic literature. John Wick Bowman is correct when he says that the use of the word *apokalypsis* in the opening verse of Revelation has had consequences that the author “neither intended nor foresaw.” As Morton Smith notes, we can be sure that this word was not a signifier of literary genre at the time of the writing of Revelation. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza sees the opening verses of Revelation in a similar light, arguing that the author meant to write “a revelatory prophetic letter.”

Interpretations that build on generic similarities alone should therefore be treated with caution. In comparing Revelation to the non-canonical apocalypses, R. H. Charles insists that the superiority of John’s book “is not merely relative but absolute.” All of the above indicates that the genre of Revelation is elusive and that the word *apokalypsis* is not meant to cue the reader into the genre of literature he or she is reading.

Moving beyond the question of genre, it is likely that the author used the word *apokalypsis* because it fit his message. We are thus well advised to begin by considering the root meaning of this term.

Looking at the word itself, it is best approached through its verbal counterpart, *apo-kalypto*. This compound word consists of the verb *kalypto* and the preposition *apo*. Starting with *kalypto*, the action envisioned is straightforward. This verb means to “remove something from view,” to conceal, hide, or cover the item in question. We might picture the action by imagining an item that is placed in a chest whereupon the lid is closed. The item has now been hidden from view. Transliterating the Greek word and giving it an English ending, the item has been *kalypted*.

If we wish to reverse the action, we can do it by placing the preposition *apo-* in front of the verb. *Apo-kalypto* describes an uncovering, a removal of the lid in order to bring the hidden item into full view. The word itself pictures the opposite of concealment and is actually the reversal of concealment. In the context of Revelation, the notion of revealing what another party might wish to hide goes to the heart of the matter. When the concealed item is exposed in broad daylight, it has, in our makeshift Greek–English transliteration, been apo-kalypted.

It is not contrived to begin here, delineating the meaning of the word through this contrast and counterpart. The message of Revelation is not given in a vacuum. Anton Vögtle writes that God “is not the only one who is at work in this world—as the Apocalypse makes so abundantly clear.” Looking at the message of the book as a whole, we are justified in viewing the notion of *revelation* against the background of its opposite. We are, in fact, quite amiss if we do not keep this perspective in view. *Apokalypsis* confronts *kalypsis*, just as

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3Emphasis added.
uncovering stands against cover-up. In Revelation, the attempted concealment is exposed and reversed.

This scenario does not weaken or diminish the value of the ideology of uncovering, providing transparency, which is central to the word we are exploring. What we find, as announced in the very first word of the book, is the ideology of transparency and transparent leadership. Transparency lies within the semantic field of the notion of revelation (apokalypsis). Transmuting this into an ideology and principle of leadership offers transparency as a core value in leadership relationships in the book of Revelation.

Exploring Transparency in Revelation

Revelation leaves no doubt as to who is the prime mover in the expanding circle of initiates that come into view in the opening verses. “The revelation [apokalypsis] of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw” (1:1–2). The initiative begins with God. God gives His revelation to Jesus in a way that makes Jesus both the mediator and the content of what is revealed. Jesus, in turn, sends His angel to John, the primary human recipient of the revelation. John, for his part, is not meant to keep the disclosure to himself. He put the message into letter form, addressing it “to the seven churches that are in Asia” (1:4). However, a wider audience was immediately assumed because the introductory greeting pronounces a blessing on “the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and . . . those who hear and who keep what is written in it” (1:3). Broadly speaking, the message is addressed “to whom it may concern.”

The verbal parameters in ever-widening circle are striking. At the center there is the apokalypsis itself, “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This revelation is transported from the center to the world’s utmost periphery by a series of dynamic action verbs. It is given “to show”; it is “made known”; there is a person who testifies (John); there is writing; and there is a person who “reads aloud” (1:1–3). Whether as noun or as verbal action, the opening passage of Revelation resounds with openness, transparency, and publicity.

Transparency in leadership cannot happen unless there is access. In Revelation, the notion of access leads to God. In this book, John is given access not to an earthly hall of power but to the innermost chamber of the heavenly council. If we read this story as a text that brings to light a certain type of leadership, the scene is stunning, almost beyond comprehension. “After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open!” (4:1). The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) appropriately adds an exclamation mark to its trans-

*Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations in this chapter are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.
lation, emphasizing not only the sense of surprise at the open door, but also its location. Open doors have been in short supply in the halls of power throughout human history. If ever an exclamation mark was warranted, this must be the place. And what is the open door but a signifier of access? What is the open door but proof of transparency? What is the open door but a signal that the heavenly authority grants what earthly authorities often deny, even authorities that profess commitment to openness? John is certainly justified in conveying a sense of amazement at the discovery that “in heaven a door stood open!”

More is to follow. The open door is not a publicity stunt that has no bearing on policy. As if aware that John is unsure how to relate to the open door, the vision goes on to tell him how to proceed. “And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this’” (4:1). This, particularly, is a place to take seriously Richard Bauckham’s contention that in Revelation “scarcely a word can have been chosen without deliberate reflection on its relationship to the work as an integrated, interconnected whole.” John recognizes that the voice in question is the voice he heard earlier, “speaking to me like a trumpet” (4:1; cf. 1:10). We are not amiss if we assume that the voice is still speaking “like a trumpet.” The voice is at once prodding and commanding; it proclaims access without the slightest reluctance; it speaks in the tenor of the trumpet blast as if to make sure that the reluctance that must be overcome is on the human side and not on the side of the heavenly authority.

Spurred on by the open door and the voice speaking “like a trumpet,” John, now in the Spirit, enters through the door (4:2). The open door leads into the very presence of God. Once more the New Revised Standard Version resorts to the exclamation mark: “there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne!” (4:2).

John’s audience in the heavenly council has a substantive purpose. We cannot conclude otherwise if we allow ourselves to ponder the next item in the narrative. “Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and sealed with seven seals” (5:1).

Discretion and disclosure go hand in hand in this verse. The discretion, maintained consistently throughout Revelation, relates to John’s depiction of “the one seated on the throne” (4:2, 9; 5:1, 7, 13). Disclosure is highlighted by the sealed scroll “in the right hand of the one seated on the throne” (5:1). Revelation could have tried to overwhelm John with an appeal to the senses, a dose of shock and awe. It could prioritize a display of pomp and circumstance, an aesthetic experience never to be forgotten, as the means by which to keep human beings obedient and submissive.

But the core of Revelation’s disclosure relates to policy. As Adela Yarbro
Collins writes perceptively, “the heavenly council is faced with a serious problem.” The problem relates to God’s way of dealing with a reality that seems long on disaster and short on hope. To this end, the sealed scroll must be unsealed. John has been invited into the heavenly council in order to witness the breaking of the seals. There, in his presence, one by one, the seals are broken by the Lamb that appears “in the middle of the throne” (5:6; 6:1–8:1). Breathtaking disclosures come to light. At last, when the seventh seal is broken, we read that “there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (8:1).

Policy concerns are at the center of these disclosures. In leadership terms, God chooses the road of painstaking and principled openness. Secrecy is out, and transparency is in. What has been concealed, obfuscated, and misrepresented by the opponent in the cosmic conflict is revealed, explained, and made right in God’s revelation of his ways through Jesus. A more complete account of the theological implications of this policy may be pursued, but the leadership implications do not need the full account to be appreciated. “When the slaughtered Lamb is seen ‘in the midst of’ the divine throne in heaven (5:6; cf. 7:17), the meaning is that Christ’s sacrificial death belongs to the way God rules the world,”5 says Richard Bauckham. Jesus, the only One who can break the seals “in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth” (5:2–5), has confirmed that the heavenly leadership rests on the foundation of transparency.

The modus operandi of God’s ways thus sets forth openness as a prized value. The first of Revelation’s revelatory cycles, the cycle of the seven seals, is replete with transparency. There is an open door to God, a trumpet call to step into God’s immediate presence, and a sealed scroll that will be opened before our eyes. We are brought face to face with leadership that is committed to openness. Trust in this leader rests on divine transparency and not on unquestioning submission. Revelation envisions faithful discipleship as much as any other book in the Bible (13:10; 14:4), but its notion of discipleship is predicated on understanding (13:18; 17:9).

The subsequent cycles of seven in Revelation do not retreat from this theme. In the trumpet sequence, it is precisely the policy of transparency that runs its course. As this cycle draws to a close, John’s accompanying angel explains that “when the seventh angel is to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants the prophets” (10:7). If we allow the Old Testament to illuminate this statement,6 the transparency that underlies the disclosure will shine even more brightly. God did speak to “his servants the prophets,” as this allusion to the prophet Amos indicates. God did speak again and again in human history until the full account was out (Heb. 1:1) because

5Emphasis added.

6Bauckham, The Climax of Prophecy, xi, says that “Revelation’s use of the Old Testament Scriptures is an essential key to its understanding. . . . Reference to and interpretation of these texts is an extremely important part of the meaning of the text of the Apocalypse. It is a book designed to be read in constant intertextual relationship with the Old Testament.”
transparency is not an accidental feature of what comes to light in Revelation. When we read Amos in his own context, we realize that transparency must be a core element in the divine ideology. God says, “Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

When the last of the cycles of seven, the bowl sequence, rolls across the screen, transparency, as principle and policy, completes its course. In this scene (Rev. 15:2–4), transparency is written on the structure of the scene. The final edifice of the redeemed is represented as a sea of glass, as if to say that where God leads and reigns, obfuscation and concealment are banished.

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: “Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! Lord, who will not fear and glorify your Name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed.” (Rev. 15:2–4)

Here, too, the emphasis is on bringing things into the light, driving back the forces of misrepresentation and concealment. The proclamation that God’s “judgments have been revealed” means that God’s way of governing is incontrovertibly manifest. Those who sing this song, a song that recapitulates God’s redemptive intent throughout human history, sing it with understanding. God’s way meets with admiration. Indeed, we should be prepared for the possibility that those who praise God in this song praise Him not only because “God’s judgments” have met their comparatively modest standards, but also even more because those judgments have far exceeded their standard and transformed their view of how to make right what has gone wrong.

Where there is transparency, there is also accountability. These are reciprocal and mutually dependent values. Accountability is impossible in the absence of transparency because the latter is the precondition for the former. On the other hand, transparency is the stance of one who has nothing to hide and who, for that reason, invites and solicits accountability. Two texts in Revelation are especially noteworthy as to how and why God will not lead in any other way. John says of the redeemed that they are people who “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (14:4). The followers cannot follow unless they know where to go, and they know because the leader has led the way by personal example.

In the context of Revelation, it is implicit that followers prove the quality of their training by their ability to perform in the absence of their mentor. The principle that was modeled in the life of Jesus has been understood and inter-
nalized in His followers to the point that they will continue the course mapped out by the leader even when they are physically left to themselves. This, to be sure, is no easy task because, in the final analysis, Revelation describes the prospect of martyrdom. “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed” (13:10, NIV). This text appears at one of the points in the story where there is direct eye contact between the reader and the audience so as to make sure that the take-home point is not missed.7 “This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints,” the narrator interjects (13:10, NIV).

John also says of “those who share in the first resurrection” that “they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years” (20:6). From the point of view of the leader, the mentoring that has taken place is not meant to be passive. If transparency inevitably means accountability, it also brings empowerment. To be “priests of God and of Christ” suggests the ability to speak authoritatively on behalf of God and Christ; to “reign with him” suggests a genuine power-sharing arrangement. At this point those who were led have themselves become leaders. This was God’s purpose from the very beginning. The redeemed have received the capacity to explain God’s ways in a way that represents God correctly, and they have a mandate to execute policy.

On this point Revelation seems to be fully in tune with the leadership ideal that is envisioned by Jesus in the Gospel of John; “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (John 15:15). This ideal is not scaled back or rescinded in Revelation, where disciples will be “priests of God and of Christ” and “reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6). In Revelation, too, the servant has been told everything that Jesus has heard from the Father (1:1–3; cf. John 15:15); the disciple knows what the Master is doing, and the relationship rests on the transparent rock of divine revelation.

**Revelation’s View as Corrective**

In the Roman imperial system, the *imperator* lived according to the definition of his title: he was “the ruler answerable to none.” He ruled by decree, not by persuasion or consent. Accountability in the imperial system of government took the form of assassination. Transparency is decidedly not the first word that comes to mind in this type of governance and leadership. It goes almost without saying that Revelation’s God is not an imperial figure even though notions of imperial sovereignty are widely diffused in Christian theology.

Plato (427–347 BC), the foremost political philosopher of the ancient world and probably of all time, did not advocate an outright imperial system of gov-

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7Similar exclamatory and hortatory phrases are found in Revelation 13:18, 14:12, and 17:9.
ernment, but transparency was low on the scale of values in his Utopian state. His ideal was stability. To achieve stability, expediency must trump transparency. “I mean,” Socrates says in Plato’s Republic, “that our rulers will find a considerable dose of falsehood and deceit necessary for the good of their subjects.” Lying is justified because it has a corrective medicinal purpose, in this case to facilitate Plato’s vision of state-sponsored eugenics, to depersonalize motherhood, and to prevent parental bonding. The specifics are in the present context less important than the principle, and the principle is unequivocal: It is legitimate to practice falsehood if the governing body is doing it for the common good.

In Laws, another of Plato’s books on statecraft and leadership, the ideal is for the subject to follow orders and have no mind of his or her own. To this end, it should not be in the mind of anyone “to do anything, either in jest or earnest, of his own motion, but in war and in peace he should look to and follow his leader, even in the least things being under his guidance.” Defenders of Plato have reacted with outrage at the suggestion that Plato deserves to be seen as the most beguiling ideologue of totalitarian systems of government along the lines suggested by Karl Popper,8 but even Plato’s most ardent defenders will be hard pressed to defend transparency, accountability, and the rule of law on the basis of Plato’s writings. Indeed, as I. F. Stone suggests in his discussion of Plato’s representation of the trial and death of Socrates, it is likely that Plato conveniently omits mentioning Socrates’s opposition to Athenian democracy and his intimate relationship with some of the leaders who violently tried to overturn it. “In the elegant and seductive phrases of his Apology, Plato does not allow these political events to obtrude on the reader, though they were fresh in the memories of the judges. Nor does he mention them anywhere in his many dialogues,” says Stone. If this is correct, neither Plato nor those who try to honor his legacy are particularly fond of transparency.

Writing over a century before John on Patmos, Posidonius of Apameia (135–51 BC) is similarly unable to accommodate the values found in Revelation. In his view, too, genuine leadership values commands over explanations and authority over transparency.

A law should be brief, so that the unskilled may grasp it more easily. Let it be like a voice from heaven; let it order, not argue. Nothing seems to be more pedantic, more pointless than a law with a preamble. Advise me, tell me what you want me to do; I am not learning, I am obeying. (p. 654)

In this vision of leadership, the leader does not fret over process. Speaking to both sides of the issue, of the leader and of the person being led, Posidonius wants commands and not explanations from his leader. As Seneca later para-

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8The first volume deals with Plato, the second with Hegel and Marx.
9Seneca, quoted in Patrick D. Miller, “The Ethics of the Commandments.”
phrased this saying, “Tell me what I have to do . . . I do not want to learn. I want to obey.” The leadership ideal in Revelation corrects this vision for leadership in two directions: the leader as well as the person being led.

Nicolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) ranks far below Plato in terms of influence, but he stands out in the annals of thinkers who have espoused enduring theories of leadership. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli writes approvingly of the cunning with which Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), the former Rodrigo Borgia and one of the great Renaissance pontiffs, managed to get his way in the power play of Europe. “Alexander VI was concerned only with deceiving men, and he always found them gullible,” says Machiavelli. “No man ever affirmed anything more forcefully or with stronger oaths but kept his word less. Nevertheless, his deceptions were always effective, because he well understood the naivety of men.” The principle of transparency does not appear in Machiavelli’s thought any more than in Plato’s dialogues. For the Florentine political handyman, the good leader is results-oriented and not overly concerned with principles. To win the war counts more than to ascertain whether the war is just. The ruler who wins the battle will also win in the court of public opinion even if his cause is unjust. “For the common people are impressed by appearances and results,” Machiavelli says knowingly.

These thoughts on leadership have to do with affairs of government. A discussion of the leadership ideals in Revelation could obviously turn in other directions, to corporate leadership, church governance, or leadership in institutions. Revelation is in a sense a secular and world-oriented book, deeply concerned with issues of governance in the world. Beginning with the Roman Empire in the days of John, Revelation provides a sketch of powers vying for domination on the world scene until the return of Jesus. In Revelation 13, for instance, the topic of concern even extends to powers that appear to profess loyalty to God while actually subverting them. For this reason it is appropriate, in closing, to allow Revelation’s ideal of transparent leadership to speak to the ideals of both religious and political powers in the world today. In the religious arena, obviously one significant power in society is the Roman Catholic Church. In the realm of politics, the United States of America is obviously such a power. The message of Revelation reveals a principle of leadership—transparency—that applies throughout all creation, the political and social world as well as the spiritual.

How does Revelation’s commitment to transparent leadership resonate in the leading democracy in human history and in the leading religious institution of all time?

The answer to this question has many facets, but the overall trend is unmistakable: Transparent leadership has fallen on hard times. The Roman Catholic
Church may be the least transparent institution human civilization has ever seen, and, arguably, it reflects the nature of other religious institutions in that regard. It has successfully weathered modern demands for openness, substituting vigorous public relations for transparent policy. The sex scandals that have come to light in the church toward the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the new millennium may be seen as aberrations in terms of priestly behavior, but they are not aberrations in terms of church governance. Those who have tried to make headway against the terrible wrongs that have been committed against them have confronted a wall of silence. It is not an anachronism to single out absence of transparent leadership as the most characteristic feature of this institution throughout much of its history. Its leadership, not unlike that of the Roman imperial system, is essentially and explicitly a leadership accountable to none. Where Revelation espouses a commitment to transparency, the church, in its ideology and arcane structure, embodies commitments that are imperiously contrary to the transparency that lies at the heart of Revelation’s message. Again, this characteristic is reflective of other religious institutions as well, in Christianity and in other religious traditions.

The national and international affairs of nations have also been marked by an absence of transparency. For about a century or so, even the government of the United States has backed away from this commitment. In a book on government deception and secrecy in the United States in the twentieth century, David Wise writes that “the governed must know to what they are consenting” for democracy to work. This requirement is in a precarious state. Wise shows that secrecy and state-sponsored deception are on the rise not in some underdeveloped foreign land but in the country that leads the “free” world. Concealment is in; openness and accountability are out. The Orwellian vision is coming to fruition not only in totalitarian systems of government, but also in countries that profess a commitment to openness. Expediency, as in Plato’s Republic, trumps transparency in the modern state. The late senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, also chronicling the rise of secrecy in the US government, writes ruefully toward the end of his book, “The Cold War ended; secrecy continued as a mode of governance as if nothing had changed.” In the introduction to Moynihan’s book, Richard Gid Powers quotes Lord Acton with the understanding that the latter gave a succinct account of what is at stake. “Everything secret degenerates, even the administration of justice; nothing is safe that does not show how it can bear discussion and publicity.”

Revelation concurs with this judgment. Trustworthy leadership must be transparent. This book offers no refuge to leaders who place results over principles or who bypass the pain of transparency for short-term gain. The transparency that comes to view in Revelation aims to expose deception at its
source and to banish it from the society of created beings in heaven and on earth. Revelation looks to God as the source and defender of transparent leadership. It poses a formidable corrective to human expediency, speaking to the physician who relates to his or her patient with an attitude of paternalism; to the lender who conceals from the borrower the actual risk; to the board that votes in secret on some matter or person, knowing that they will not have to explain their decision; to the guardians of archives who try to limit access to information; to persons who censor books and opinions; and to religious institutions that behave as though they are absolved from accountability. Quite apart from the particular and specific attempts to subvert God’s ways that are exposed in Revelation, this book holds its reader to a standard that those who claim to revere its message often miss.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the leadership implications of the word that gives the last book of the Bible its title. The principle discovered in the nature of the book of Revelation is transparent leadership. This ideology is announced in the opening word. Revelation corrects religious, political, and other institutions that thrive on secrecy and concealment. “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near,” says the narrator in Revelation (1:3). Blessed, too, is the leader who takes Revelation’s quest for transparency to heart, and the fellow member of the community who demands transparency from all engaged in leadership.

References


LEADERSHIP LIVED
Abstract: Leadership comes in different shapes and sizes within our society. Some leadership practices are characterized as good, and other forms are toxic. However, within the 21st century, spiritual leadership is necessary as Christian leaders focus on growing the next generation of leaders. This article focuses on the importance of the spiritual leader within today’s society, and will first discuss the need for dedicated spiritual leaders. It will then discuss how spiritual leaders affect the spiritual growth of others. Finally, it will discuss the need for spiritual accountability.

Why We Need Dedicated Spiritual Leaders

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is found in Mark 2:1-12. In this story Jesus was staying in a small home in a town called Capernaum. Word had spread that he was there, and so the crowds grew. They grew so large that people were spewing out of the doors and windows. During this time four men carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher attempted to enter the house because they believed that Jesus could heal their friend. Apparently it was difficult for these four men to enter the crowded house the conventional route (through the front door), so they decided to make a hole on the rooftop and lower their paralyzed friend into the room with Jesus.

Seeing their faith, Jesus decided to let this paralyzed man know that his sins were forgiven. Upon saying this, the Pharisees began to question His authority to forgive sins. They rightly believed that only God has the authority to forgive men and women of their sins. Jesus knew their thoughts and decided to prove to them that his authority (as God) was, in fact, bona fide. He then said to the man, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk.” Immediately the paralyzed man got off of his stretcher and began to walk.

There are so many amazing moments in this story, but there is one thing that stands out to me: the fact that it took a group to bring this paralyzed man to Jesus. This man was not only physically paralyzed, but spiritually paralyzed as well. In the years that I have worked in small group ministry I have...
found people from all walks of life enter a group and find healing, but the one commonality is that they are all paralyzed. Whether it’s physical, financial, emotional, or spiritual paralysis, they have been paralyzed in an area of their life that is preventing them from growing spiritually. In the story, it took four other people to recognize this man’s pain and lead him to the One who could heal him from his physical and spiritual paralysis. The close encounter led that man to both a literal and physical confrontation with Jesus. That is what defines the role of a spiritual leader. A spiritual leader is someone who leads others to a closer walk with Christ.

This is why spiritual leaders are so important for the spiritual growth of others. Without other people helping us to grow in a closer walk with Christ, we will never find true healing. In my churches, I frequently preach that it is impossible to grow as a disciple of Jesus by yourself. In order to grow spiritually, we need other people that God strategically places in our lives. These individuals help us to get from that point of paralysis and into a healing relationship with Jesus Christ. Those four spiritual leaders in the story went to the extent of destroying a stranger’s roof in order for their friend to find healing. The wonderful thing about spiritual leaders is that they will stop at nothing in order for others to meet Jesus.

**Spiritual Leaders Make or Break the Growth of Others**

I have always been interested in sports, especially team sports. I feel an interesting combination of fascination and impressiveness with winning teams. Some of the greatest teams that come to mind are the 2001 Los Angeles Lakers, the 2007 New England Patriots, or the 2014 San Antonio Spurs. Oftentimes we look at these teams and give credit to their star players. The Golden State Warriors would have been nothing without Steph Curry, Draymond Greene, and Klay Thompson. The New England Patriots would not have had a winning team without Tom Brady as the starting quarterback. However, I would venture to say that these players’ incredible abilities and skills would not have been manifested without an even better coach on their side.

I have seen examples time and again of mediocre players playing under the leadership of mediocre coaches who never reach their true potential until they play for a great coach. As good as Tom Brady is, he would not be who he is today without the leadership of Coach Bill Belicheck. Steph Curry, Klay Thompson, and Draymond Green were developed into the star players that we see today by Coach Steve Kerr. I believe that if these three players played for a mediocre coach, the Golden State Warriors would just be another mediocre
team. Behind every star player is a great coach because players will only play as good as their top leadership. John Maxwell describes it as “The Law of the Lid.” Your team will only be as good as its top leaders (Maxwell, 2007).

The same principle holds true in spiritual leadership. Those that spiritual leaders lead oftentimes are only as strong as their leader. If people are following spiritually weak leaders, one of two things will occur. Either they will follow suit and become spiritually weak as well because they are not being poured into effectively, or they will get frustrated with the weak leadership and seek a stronger leader. In order for spiritual leaders to lead effectively they need to closely follow the Master Leader, Jesus Christ.

When training small group leaders, I emphasize the need for that leader to have a strong devotional and prayer life. If the leader does not have a close walk with Jesus, how can he or she lead others to a closer walk with Christ? The small group will only be as spiritual as its leader. Group members that have a higher level of spirituality will grow frustrated and eventually leave the small group. As spiritual leaders, small group leaders are to model a close relationship with Jesus for the rest of the group members. However, if the leader does not have a close relationship with Christ, it is impossible for the leader to model it for the rest of the group.

Staying connected to Jesus is the difference between a strong or weak spiritual leader. Paul wrote, “Follow me as I follow Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul is essentially saying that in order for him to lead effectively, he needs to continue to follow Christ.

As the spiritual leader, Paul is calling his followers to follow Christ along with him in his spiritual journey. This is the mark of a great spiritual leader; someone who is growing closer to Christ and calling others to journey in the process of spiritual growth with them. The job of the spiritual leader is to hold his or her followers accountable during their journey of spiritual growth.

**Spiritual Accountability**

Accountability is essential in spiritual leadership. Throughout the disciples’ growth as spiritual leaders, Jesus held them accountable. Although all spiritual leaders hold their followers accountable, it is important for the spiritual leader to remember that they need to be held accountable as well. The spiritual leader is held accountable by two groups of people.

First, the leader is held accountable by their followers. Accountability is reciprocal. As much as the spiritual leaders holds others accountable, the spiritual leader’s followers hold them accountable as well. When spiritual
leaders do not allow themselves to be held accountable, they turn into dictators. Earl D. Radmacher writes, “Human leaders, even Christian ones, are sinners and they only accomplish God’s will imperfectly. Multiple leaders, therefore, will serve as a ‘check and balance’ on each other and serve as a safeguard against the very human tendency to play God over other people” (Strauch, 1995, p. 43). It takes humility for the leader to recognize that they need to be held accountable in order to lead from a spiritual place.

The second person who holds the spiritual leader accountable is God. “So then each of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). Although the spiritual leader holds their followers accountable, both the leader and the followers are all held accountable by God. Spiritual leaders who neglect to remember this tend to become toxic leaders. These leaders lead as though their decisions are the final word and cannot be assessed or critiqued by anyone. Spiritual leaders submit their imperfect wills to God through prayer and filter it through His Word. King David’s prayer to God was, “Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life” (Psalm 139:23-24). Although David was King of Israel, he still allowed God to hold him accountable in his leadership. When the spiritual leader allows God to hold them accountable, they are essentially allowing God to grow their spiritual life leading to a more effective spiritual leader.

Although spiritual leaders may see the importance of accountability, it is essential that they build an environment in which accountability can grow and thrive. Constructing a life surrounded by accountability gives the leader many ways in which they can be held accountable. In my time leading small group leaders, I stressed the need for each leader to be a part of a small group as well as an even smaller group called a “triad.”

Although the leader was leading the small group, they were still to be held accountable by their group members just as they held their group members accountable. The reciprocity of the accountability provided an environment for the spiritual leader to be held accountable by other people on a journey of spiritual growth. The triad was a group of three people: the small group leader and two other individuals. These two other individuals did not have to be a part of the small group, but they added a more intimate level of accountability for the small group leader. These individuals prayed together on a daily basis and met regularly to discuss their personal life, struggles, and spiritual growth. John Wesley, the Founder of the Methodist Church, trained his small groups to place an emphasis on transparency within their group meetings (Comiskey, 2014). Without this transparency the groups could not get to a
level in which the group members could hold one another accountable. Because of the sensitive nature of the triad the things discussed between the three individuals were to remain confidential. The small group leaders who took part in these triads expressed a deeper level of spiritual growth, commitment, and accountability.

As God grows spiritual leaders he expects them to have a daily devotional and prayer life in which they talk with Him regularly. Jesus, as a spiritual leader, spent time with God on a regular basis so much so that Luke writes that it was His custom (Luke 22:39-46). God wants the spiritual leader to spend an ample amount of time with Him because it provides accountability from God. This heavenly accountability helps the leader to grow spiritually. Although this is important, God also stresses the need for the spiritual leader to find accountability in a group of trusted individuals. Spiritual leaders that rely only on accountability from God limit their spiritual growth and allow themselves to be vulnerable to pitfalls in their leadership. Removing the triad form of accountability out of their environment is like removing the leg off of a three-legged stool; it is impossible for it to stand.

**Conclusion**

Oswald Sanders (1986) writes, “True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one’s service but in giving oneself in selfless service to them” (p. 20). Whether they lead in or outside of the church organization, the world needs spiritual leaders. Without their leadership and influence, the importance of spirituality will not be appreciated by the next generation of leaders. The world needs spiritual leaders who will help others to grow spiritually within their own leadership. The world needs leaders who are willing to be held accountable no matter the cost. We need spiritual leaders who are committed to helping others reach their true God-given potential.

**References**


DIALOGUE
BOUBAKAR SANOU
SPIRITUAL GIFTS, PASTORING, AND GENDER: AN ONGOING DIALOGUE

Introduction

In Joel 2:28-29, God promises an innovation regarding how He will make His Spirit available in the last days. He promises, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” As David Baker notes, the innovation in this promise is:

... not in the means of revelation but in its recipients. The beneficiaries of the Spirit-gift and its accompanying revelation will not only be a special class, the prophets, or even a few folk ... Rather, this bestowal will be universal, blessing young and old, male and female, free or slave; it will affect all of humanity. (2006, p. 108)

In other words, God promises to give His Spirit and gifts without discrimination to both genders (“your sons and daughters,” and “both men and women”), young and old, from all walks of life, races, and social strata. In Acts 2:16-21, the apostle Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32 to assert that the equal filling of the Spirit for the 120 disciples (among whom were women, cf. Acts 1:14) was an element of the fulfillment of God’s promise through the prophet Joel. He also points out that, from then on, the pouring out of God’s Spirit on believers will be an ongoing process: “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

The subject of women’s ordination to pastoral ministry is a hot-button issue that has divided many Christian denominations into two sharply contrasting groups (Zikmund, 2003; Zagano, 2008; Deasy, 2009; Bauer & Sanou, 2015; Campbell, Sanou, & Williams, 2017). This article examines the role of women...
in the gospel ministry from the perspective of spiritual giftedness. The main focus will be to see if the gift of pastoring is gender-specific or not. In the following reflections there are unanswered questions for each reader to personally ponder.

**What Are Spiritual Gifts, Their Prominence, and Purpose in the Bible?**

It has been pointed out that the number of times a Biblical principle or teaching is referred to in the Bible can often help determine its importance (Moskala, 2015, p. 7). Using this principle of Biblical hermeneutics, the subject of spiritual gifts is a vital one, since spiritual gifts are directly mentioned in four different parts of Scripture: Rom.12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7-16; and 1 Pet. 4:10-11. In Eph. 4:12, Paul summarizes the core purpose of spiritual gifts as that of equipping God’s “people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Spiritual gifts are thus special abilities given by God to believers to fully equip them to serve Him, the church, and witness to the world (Eph. 4:12-13). The Bible is unequivocal that spiritual gifts are apportioned to every believer (1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10-11) only as the Holy Spirit determines (1 Cor. 12:11). The body of Christ will truly be built up as every single believer, male or female, is allowed “to use whatever gift they have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pet. 4:10). Good stewardship of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is what is emphasized in 1 Pet. 4:10. Just as believers must give an account of the use of their time, body, and material things God has blessed them with, they will also be accountable for how they used their spiritual gifts (Eph. 5:15-17; 1 Cor. 3:17; Matt. 25:14-30).

**Is the Spiritual Gift of Pastoring Gender-Specific?**

According to 1 Cor. 12:12, the church is a body of interdependent members upon all of whom the Spirit bestows His many and diverse gifts. Among those gifts, Eph. 4:11 states that the Holy Spirit gives some of the members of the body of Christ the grace, power, and authority to serve as pastors. As such, service as a pastor is first and foremost a spiritual gift rather than a mere profession or office. Therefore, deciding who gets what spiritual gift(s) is not the prerogative of an ecclesiastical body. Being gifted spiritually means that those extraordinary abilities have their source in the Holy Spirit, who then “dis-
tributes them to each one, just as he determines” (1 Cor. 12:11). I personally view 1 Cor. 12:11 both as a call for humility to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in matters of the distribution of spiritual gifts to believers and as a warning not to interfere with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in any person’s life.

There is no indication in the Bible that some spiritual gifts are only given to particular genders. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit and any of the gifts He dispenses can be given to any person who: (1) repents and is baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); (2) obeys God (Acts 5:32); and (3) understands and appreciates spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:13-14; Eph. 4:17-24). There is no gender-specific condition for receiving the Holy Spirit or any of His gifts. Because Paul previously included both men and women as part of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27), the action of bestowing spiritual gifts on “each one” in 1 Cor. 12:11 is necessarily gender neutral. Since it is the Holy Spirit who determines who gets what spiritual gift(s) in the body of Christ, why do some Christians still insist that women have not been called to serve as pastors? If no spiritual gift is gender-specific, should a woman, called by God and gifted by the Holy Spirit, be denied any role of ministry or leadership in the church just because she is a woman?

Convinced of her calling to the gospel ministry and that of other women, Ellen White, a female pioneer and recognized prophetess of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, strongly believed that “there are women who should labor in the gospel ministry” because “the cause [of God] would suffer great loss without this kind of labor. Again and again the Lord has shown me that women teachers are just as greatly needed to do the work to which he has appointed them as are men” (1990, p. 325). By recommending that the tithe (which was used in the Old Testament to take care of the all-male Levites and priests) be used to pay women in pastoral ministry (1990, p. 324), Ellen White evidently saw no viable distinction between men and women serving as pastors. Men, as well as women, can rightly serve as spiritual Levites and priests.1

I not only believe that Christians will give an account to God about what they did with their spiritual gifts, I also believe that any person, whatever his or her motivation, who prevents others from faithfully stewarding their spiritual gifts will be accountable to God. I think of Pharaoh Necho, who warned

1Some Seventh-day Adventists may want to argue that Ellen White was writing here about pastors’ wives as co-laborers with their husbands in pastoral ministry. My response is that Ellen White did not say “there are pastors’ wives who should labor in the gospel ministry,” but rather “there are women who should labor in the gospel ministry.” Could “women” be limited to “pastors’ wives”? Evidently not. Should a woman be married to a pastor before she is allowed to exercise her spiritual gift of pastoring? There is no such biblical condition.
King Josiah not to interfere with what God was doing through him (Necho) lest God destroy him (Josiah). Sadly, good King Josiah died because he “did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God” (2 Chron. 35:20-24). I also think of Gamaliel, who when the disciples were persecuted for preaching Jesus, warned his colleagues in the Sanhedrin to “consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. . . . For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God” (Acts 5:34-39). If the great job many women do in pastoral ministry is from God, it means that trying to restrict them from fully utilizing their gift of pastoring amounts to fighting a losing battle against God; with Him on their side, no one will be able to stop these women.

What Role Should Women Occupy in Pastoral Ministry?

The answer to this question is straightforward and simple. Because the gift of pastoring is not gender-specific, women called to pastoral ministry should have the same roles and privileges as their male colleagues. Is it not unthinkable that the Holy Spirit would give the same spiritual gift to a man and a woman and expect the woman to play a lesser role in exercising that gift? If both men and women are equally qualified by the Holy Spirit to serve as pastors of God’s flock, could treating them differently solely because of their genders, over which they had no choice, be seen as a form of unfairness?

What Does the Church Make of the Fruit Born by Women in Pastoral Ministry?

Jesus states in Matt. 7:15-20 that it is the fruit a person bears that determines the truthfulness or not of what that person claims to be or have. First, John 4:1 also recommends that the church test every spirit to ascertain if it is from God before believing it. How does the body of Christ evaluate the claim a person makes that they have this or that gift? We allow the person to exercise the spiritual gift they claim to have, and then affirm or not affirm them on the basis of how effective they are in exercising that gift in building up the body of Christ. This has been the case for both men and women regarding all other spiritual gifts except that of serving as a pastor. Has the church failed to see how some women are effective at building up the body of Christ in pastoral ministry? Have we failed to see the tangible evidences that the Spirit is using many women to grow their congregations spiritually, sometimes even more than their male colleagues? If their capability and effectiveness is palpable
and can in no way be denied, why are some Christians still adamant in denying their call to pastoral ministry? If their fruit and effectiveness testify to their calling, why are they denied ordination? Could it be unfair and discriminatory that a man and a woman who both feel called to pastoral ministry and who both capably serve as shepherds of their congregations not be given equal opportunity towards ordination (Johnsson, 2017, p. 15)?

Does It Make Sense to Ordain Women as Elders but Not as Pastors?

The New Testament speaks of pastor/shepherd (poimen) as a divinely endowed ministry function rather than a role or office formally appointed by the church (Eph 4:7, 11; cf. 1 Pet 5:1). Even in the early church, pastoring was not a separate office of its own but a ministry carried out by elders or bishops. As far as we know, it was not until the Reformation, in correcting the abuses of doctrine and power brought in by the traditional system of bishops and priests, that the term pastor became the title of a role formally identified and appointed by the church (Reeve, 2015, p. 203).

Some Christian denominations have made the choice to ordain women as local church elders but not as pastors. This choice is in stark contradiction to the New Testament precedent of pastoring as a ministry fulfilled by elders. Two questions that keep demanding Biblically-based answers are: “If women qualify to be ordained to the Biblical spiritual leadership ministry of elders, what really prevents them from also being ordained as pastors?” and, “Can women only be good as elders but not as pastors?”

What Is Ordination Really About?

To begin with, it is noteworthy to mention that there is no Biblical command to ordain or not ordain women to the gospel ministry (Rodriguez, 2015, p. 378; Moskala, 2015, p. 1). The contemporary practice of ordination to pastoral ministry is in stark contrast with the New Testament practice of choos-

2An example of such denominations is the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA). In 1975, it officially voted that “both men and women are eligible to serve as elders and receive ordination to this position of service in the church.” That historic decision was reaffirmed in 1975 [See The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventist minister’s handbook (Silver Spring, MD: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association, 2009), p. 94]. According to the SDA Church Manual, elders play an important role of spiritual leadership in the church [See The Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventist church manual (Silver Spring, MD: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Secretariat, 2010), p. 71]. Although the SDA Church Manual says that “the authority and work of elders are confined to the church in which their election has been made” (p. 73), does that make their spiritual leadership of a lesser grade than that of local church pastors?
ing, appointing, setting apart, or commissioning believers to ministry (Johnsson, 2017, p. 13). Some have argued against women’s ordination to pastoral ministry from the perspective of headship in reference to Gen. 3:16: “To the woman he [God] said, ‘I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you’” (emphasis added). But as stated earlier on the basis of Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, ordination to the gospel ministry is neither about headship nor is it about authority (see also van Bemmelen, 1998, pp. 297-311). Serving in the gospel ministry is simply about accepting one’s divine call and using one’s spiritual gifts to serve God and others. Ordination to pastoral ministry should then be subsequent to a public recognition of a man’s or woman’s divine call and enabling of the Holy Spirit to function as a pastor. That recognition should not be tied to any policy but based only on the undeniable fruit of the person’s ministry (Matt. 7:20).

What Do We Make of John 16:12 in Relation to Women’s Ordination?

Jesus said to His disciples in John 16:12, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.” Could it be that it was because of His contemporaries’ cultural limitations that Jesus did not say or do many things such as recruit women among His twelve disciples? If so, is such a principle of cultural sensitivity applicable in every context today? I strongly believe that Biblical principles have a universal application. At the same time, God’s recorded dealings with people in their cultural contexts also reveals that, because He works in redemptive ways within human contexts, in some cases He made room for human culture with its weaknesses (e.g., Gen 15:9-21 where God offered to go through a Near Eastern covenant ratification ceremony that Abraham could relate to as definite surety). As Bruce Bauer and I pointed out:

In many instances, knowing the effect of drastic change, God chose to patiently work to change people’s practices in a culture rather than forcing things so quickly on a people that they could not handle the change. It is therefore quite appropriate to suggest that the revelation of God’s principles has often been progressive rather than spelling out God’s ultimate ethic or ideal. For example, he tolerated Jacob’s marriage to two sisters (Gen 29:15-28), a practice that he later outlawed (Lev 18:18), and in the New Testament there is no frontal attack on slavery, yet who would argue for a Biblical basis for slavery? (Bauer & Sanou, 2015, pp. 176-177)
The good news is that every human culture is dynamic rather than static. Because cultures are always changing, there is hope that the cultures where women’s ordination to the gospel ministry may be very detrimental to the mission of the church would one day be able to fully embrace the Biblical fact that the call to pastoral ministry is not gender-specific. Who could think in 1930s America that women would one day be wearing slacks, even to church? Who could imagine in Jesus’ days that there would be women graduating from rabbinical schools and being ordained in orthodox and conservative Judaism (Hein, n.d.)? Where there are no reasonable cultural limitations to women being ordained to pastoral ministry, the church needs to do its very best to side with the Holy Spirit, who indiscriminately dispenses His gifts to both men and women for the building up of the body of Christ.

Conclusion

The question of whether or not to ordain women to pastoral ministry has been an ongoing issue in several Christian denominations. My reflection on this issue from the perspective of spiritual giftedness convinces me that because there is no single gender-specific spiritual gift, the Christian church’s theology of the call to pastoral ministry and ordination should be solidly “grounded in the endowment of the Spirit, the divine calling, and a life of commitment to God, to His people, and to the world” (Rodriguez, 2015, p. 379). However, because of the negative impact the ordination of women might have on the church’s mission and ministry in some contexts, it is wise to also be mindful of the cultural contexts within which the church ministers (Bauer & Sanou, 2015). In applying Biblical principles, “there needs to be great sensitivity to the standpoint of the listener at a given time. Truths that may be sweet at a later time can provoke unnecessary opposition when given before the listeners are ready” (Paulien, 2011, pp. 91-92).

References


The New Adapters: Shaping Ideas to Fit Your Congregation

By Jacob Armstrong, Adam Hamilton, & Mike Slaughter
Kindle edition, 120 pages

Reviewed by Mark Magnusson

The book The New Adapters by Jacob Armstrong, with added conversation from Adam Hamilton and Mike Slaughter, addresses the need for the church of today to adapt its methods to meet a culture that is continually changing. The author maintains that the church is “God’s designed vessel” in carrying forward the mission of sharing the “timeless story” of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that the gospel will always remain constant, but the methods of sharing the gospel have changed and will continually change over time and over different cultures in America and in the world (loc. xiv-xv). With an emphasis on North America, the author shares his ideas based on principles of church leadership to address the need of church leaders leading members into a work of adapting the methods of their current church in order to become relevant in the community in which their church is located.

The question of relevance has become increasingly prevalent in church leadership, and is ever present in “millennial” discussions. The difficult question comes down to how churches should adapt their visions, messages, and/or worship styles in order to be relevant to those they are trying to reach with the gospel. As leaders, it is imperative to acknowledge the fact that times have changed. Methods of door knocking, phone soliciting, and mass mailing have had their success in the past but have increasingly become less effective. In addition, there has been a paradigm shift where the focus today is “less on buildings and more on building communities of people” (loc. 5, 29). As the author points out, it’s only by “listening to and learning from the community” that we can become acquainted with them in order to connect with them and minister to them in order to get a response from them (loc. 3).

The author also importantly alluded to the fact that Christ Himself engaged not only in the synagogues but also in the communities where the poor, needy, and disconnected were in order to meet them where they were and make the gospel known to them (loc. 14-15). Christ’s methods have been written in the Word of God and are lasting examples of how the church will be able to reach those in the community around them. One thing to note about Christ is that He did not become like the people He ministered to; they became like Him. Should there be caution in the wind for leaders adapting their church and members in a way that they become like the world? God’s people are to be a peculiar people living in the world but not being of the
world. There is always a need for prayerful discernment when attempting to adapt methods in order to reach out to the community.

At the onset of the book the author established that the “vision of a church has to fit the mission field” in which the church is located (loc. 2). This point is clear and can apply to all leaders and congregations. The way people dress, think, and act will vary from place to place. For example, a church in preparation for a wedding in a rural area which is decorated with empty shotgun shells loaded with flowers and the bride and groom using a branding iron making their mark on a prepared log is going to vary from a wedding in an upscale urban environment.

Human tendency is to create a vision that fits our own preferences and what we think it should be before considering those we are trying to reach. The first step in creating that vision, after prayer and seeking God, is to “listen to and learn from the community” (loc. 3–9). Leaders must be aware of the demographics, unique opportunities or challenges, and must spend time in the community by creating community events or getting involved with events that are already in place in the community (loc. 3–9). Once a vision is created that gives sight to a congregation, all other aspects of how the unchanging message of the Gospel is to be proclaimed, how the church is going to look, how liturgy in worship is practiced, down to how members are discipled, can be adapted to fit that vision.

Another point the author addressed throughout the book is for leaders and congregations to reach out to those who feel disconnected from God and the church (loc. xv). This includes both those who have been in the church to some degree and those who have not. We need to be aware that we often create a “closed-loop” in our congregations (loc. 40). The way we talk, worship, or act often excludes those that are not connected with the group. Creating a “closed-loop” pushes away those who feel disconnected rather than inviting them in. Members need to be aware of this and make sure that they create an environment that is open and accepting to all.

Overall, I would recommend the book to leaders who are endeavoring to be continuously relevant today as time moves on and cultures change. The author is straight to the point and does not overwhelm the reader with vast amounts of information that can lead to tedious reading and often lead to more questions. There is a need to adapt to changing cultures in order to be relevant while guarding against the danger of ceasing to be relevant to the mission and methods of Jesus.

MARK MAGNUSSON is a pastor in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

SUPERBOSSES

By Sydney Finkelstein
Paperback, 268 pages

Reviewed by JOSEPH BATES

Sydney Finkelstein’s book, Superbosses, provides a thorough, yet concise summary of discipleship (mentorship) at its highest level. Finkelstein brings to life his philosophy as he explores the mindset and techniques of superbosses with proven records and phenomenal results. The success and failures of superbosses in the corporate, sports, and small business world beautifully
illustrate the power of the “super-boss.”

The opening chapter highlights what a superboss is and gives the background to how the superboss concept was discovered. As I started reading the book, I began to question if the concept was out of touch with the common leader. Finkelstein highlighted, in my opinion, super exceptions rather than superbosses. However, as I continued to read, my misguided attitude quickly shifted to an enthusiastic belief in his philosophy.

Finkelstein examined some of the most successful coaches, publishers and business owners of our time. The success these men experienced is very clearly connected to the superboss philosophy. Over the course of the book the author weaves his superboss philosophy into the life and experience of these men.

Leadership theory and books often focus on the leader and his ability to effectively accomplish change, increase productivity, and grow the bottom line. Superbosses was a unique read in that it focuses on creating a team of the highest level skill, talent, and effort. Superbosses places the highest value on developing a team of people that will often exceed the skill, knowledge, and talents of the boss himself or herself.

A primary focus for the superboss is developing people who will ultimately be so highly developed that they become overqualified and eventually outgrow their positions. The example of Bill Walsh the football coach was absolutely perfect. This one football coach is personally responsible for producing “almost twice as many active NFL coaches as the next most prolific spawner” (p.16).

The book Superbosses is essentially a playbook for leaders seeking to grow their influence beyond the borders of their own organization. As a church leader, we should seek to find ways to reach beyond the pages of our church membership rolls. This book, although written in a secular context, provides clear and practical insights, methods, and principles that will positively affect the reach of the gospel.

There has long been a disconnect between church membership and discipleship. Superbosses provides leaders of Christian churches access to a discipleship model that is proven to work. The author emphasizes the personal development of each person within the organization. As people realize their true potential, are inspired, trained, equipped, and set free to accomplish their God given purpose in life, they will grow and pursue excellence with a passion rarely seen.

I will be implementing the concepts in this book within my business and my church throughout the next several months. One area where I have experienced this concept is through the apprentice relationship. My training is as a plumber. Plumbers in my state serve a five-year apprenticeship under a master plumber. I was blessed to be able to work rather than attend school and have flourished as an employee, owner/operator of my own business, and now an employer and owner of a larger plumbing company.

As a lay pastor, I have had the opportunity to work under other pastors and church leaders to receive my training. As illustrated in the book, there is no substitute for a hands on, mentor/mentee relationship to develop the skills and experience necessary to be successful. The premise of Superbosses rests on the relationship between the leader and those being led. Discovering and developing the people under the leader is paramount.
in the success of the leader.

Superbosses do not focus on the success of the company they manage. Superbosses focus on their passion. The leadership of the church would do well to focus their attention on what stirs their hearts and what inspired them to enter ministry. As the leader continues to pursue their passion, Jesus, they will move those under them to pursue the very same thing. Nothing inspires people more than someone who is inspired. There are stifling effects to maintaining a structure over pursuing passion.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough. The author challenges the leader to the very core. He attacks the one thing that makes a leader great and at the same time is the greatest weakness—pride. Humility is the key to becoming a superboss. One must be willing to see the disciple surpass the teacher. The disciple must become more capable than the teacher. In so doing, the leader’s influence will multiply beyond their imagination.

JOSEPH BATES makes his home in Aitken, Minnesota, where he serves as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor.

ESSENTIALISM: THE DISCIPLINED PURSUIT OF LESS

By Greg McKeown
Paperback, 260 pages

Reviewed by Bradley D. Cassell

Greg McKeown, writer, speaker, and Harvard Business Review blogger, creates a step by step plan to help busy people set priorities and attend to what is most important. According to McKeown, “Essentialism is not about how to get more things done; it’s about how to get the right things done” (p. 6). The author calls upon the busy reader to take control of their own choices and learn to say no to what is not important or essential in their professional and personal lives.

He utilizes three steps in discovering and embracing what is most important: explore, eliminate, and execute. Intertwined in these steps are practical stories of corporate executives who discovered their niche and priorities by following these principles. The author gives practical counsel such as getting plenty of sleep, taking time to play, gathering the courage to eliminate things that are not important even if it offends others, and even getting into a flow or routine of doing a few things well while cutting out the non-essential priorities that others place in our path.

I believe McKeown hits on a very important topic that goes beyond corporate America into the lives of many struggling to navigate the mass of tasks bombarding their lives. I feel that his approach is overly optimistic at times, especially in the realm of elimination of the non-essentials. There are tasks that must be accomplished in a work setting, even if we do not always find them to be essential to us personally.

The author’s approach on sleep is a bit overgeneralized as he uses research to share that at least eight hours of sleep is essential for maximum productivity and creativity in the workplace. I am all for sleep, but my personal sweet spot is seven hours, and anything over eight can be disastrous for my day. Could McKeown be going to an extreme to bring those who are getting three hours of sleep to find a middle ground?

Even though I feel McKeown can be overly optimistic and somewhat extreme in his three step approach to essentialism, I believe that it is a great read for anyone who feels over-
whelmed with their daily tasks. The author does an excellent job of sprinkling in relevant stories along with practical counsel to get the reader to bring balance to a life that can easily become chaotic when attempting to embrace everyone else’s priority lists as our own.

BRAD CASSELL lives in Tampa, Florida and is the Lead Pastor of the Tampa First Seventh-day Adventist Church.

GROWING YOUNG: SIX ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE DISCOVER AND LOVE YOUR CHURCH

By Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, & Brad Griffin
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books (2016)
Paperback, 330 pages

Reviewed by David Chimwaso

The authors of Fuller Youth Institute have made a valuable contribution to the ongoing quest for church growth by providing not only a theoretical model for relational church growth that can “Energize [the] entire church congregation,” but also a description of a practical application of the concept. The model has been explored in the context of “six core commitments,” or strategies, “of churches that are growing young.” The profiled churches are thriving because they are attracting and engaging young people ages 15 to 29, who are growing spiritually and emotionally, which gives credence to this concept (pp. 19, 20, 23). Engaging young people is key (p. 29). It is in this context that the authors believe churches that engage young people, metaphorically, grow young.

As churches across North America experience “Aging, shrinking, or plateauing congregations,” an effective model for church growth becomes essential. “The decline in overall church attendance is linked with young people’s religious practices or lack thereof” (pp. 15, 16). What this means is that many young people are leaving the church.

Growing Young offers strategies that attract young people. These strategies involve leadership, empathy, a Christ-centered message, warm relationships, being good neighbors, and giving priority to young people. These strategies have become the yardstick of churches that are growing young (p. 43).

Powell, et al, discount models with preconceived ideas for attracting young people such as, “popular denomination, big modern buildings,” or “watered-down messages.” Instead, “for young people, community and relational warmth is the new cool” (pp. 26, 27).

The model appeals to the life of the church. There is need for intergenerational relationships or mutual dependence. The church needs young people, and they need the church. Young people bring curiosity and authenticity to Scriptures and relationships, which can be refreshing. On the other hand, “young people need a thriving church,” that will “ground them in community” and missional activities (p. 14).

It is necessary that older adults empathize with young people. According to the authors, young people know that they are not perfect. They need a church where they can ask questions or make mistakes and learn from them without being judged. The last thing they want to hear is criticism at every turn. They need a warm, caring, and empathetic community, “a community of grace” (pp. 91, 128). The aim is to under-
stand and uplift young people.

“Keychain leadership”—many congregations start growing young involves first implementing this strategy—by entrusting young people with not only leadership roles but with church keys, which is a smart move. The book has testimonies on how young people felt when they began to receive church keys. They also felt free to hang out at church, which gave them a sense of belonging (pp. 44, 51).

What the authors fail to mention is the positive impact of involving young people, in not only leadership roles, but in programing and worship services. But one may argue that it is implied. The authors make a strong case that when we entrust young people with leadership roles, they in turn trust the church, and they become an avenue to the rest of the youth, which I think is a valid observation (p. 55).

There are many books on church growth written in recent years. However, many of them have focused on exponential growth—using various strategies such as discipleship, as is the case with *Discipleship that Fits* by Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom, or mentoring—as is the case with *Mentor for Life* by Natasha Sistrunk Robinson, both of which are very good on fostering relationships as a vehicle for church growth.

*Growing Young*, however, is different. It is concerned with bridging the generational gap, which, if not checked will have a negative impact. Therefore, while growing numerically, churches that grow young are those which are attracting young people ages 15 to 29. This is because this group has no interest in church and can easily get distracted or disillusioned and leave (pp. 16, 19). Yet every church needs young people.

Presenting Christ-centered messages means a lot to young people—which I think translates into expressions of love, sympathy, and empathy—not only focusing on doctrine. Many times, young people are faced with do’s and don’ts that do not recognize that spiritual growth is progressive. No one can become spiritually mature overnight (p. 151).

These strategies are not new. One learns that when congregations begin to recognize and implement these strategies, change begins to happen.

However, these strategies go beyond ideas, *Growing Young* inspires action. It identifies strategies, generates dialogue, and encourages taking action. There is something to learn from the research findings. The strategies are not exhaustive. While only six strategies are presented, the reader is led to think of many more.

The last chapter offers ideas on how to create a plan for action, which I think helps eliminate procrastination. The success of these strategies will depend on church leaders engaging a common vision for young people. It would be beneficial for leaders to study the book together. There is need to brainstorm, put the strategies into context, and take action. For this to work, leaders and the entire church family must get involved.

I strongly recommend this book to all church leaders, parents, and other adults who have a passion for young people. It will help them create a warm, relational church, with special focus on young people as a vehicle for church growth—a church where young people “feel known, accepted, and valued” (p. 51), and in turn fuel the life of the church.

DAVID CHIMWASO is the associate first elder of Bridgeland Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calgary, AB, Canada, and is engaged in a Masters in Pastoral Ministry program at Andrews University. He is also the author of *The Pain of Loving*.
The author has made a significant contribution to pastors and leaders by discussing “congregational leadership, cultural captivity, and how pastoral leaders and congregations can adapt practices and roles for engaging God and His mission in a changing world” (loc. 152-158). He addresses some of the issues that are causing conflict within the church and offers solutions to the problems. “Pastoral leaders often are perceived as a threat to the status quo. These men and women have spent years of training to consider carefully what and how the church should best represent God’s mission in the world” (loc. 500). The author feels that collective leadership would be the best for the church’s community since pastors must work together with the laity for a better outcome.

“In the hiring process as in the educational processes, pastoral leaders are often expected to demonstrate certain skill sets that promote leadership as visionary and driven by expertise. Yet so often, these technical skills and preparation leaves such women and men ill-prepared to address the deepest kinds of change most churches are in need of experiencing, as well as the conflict which results from resistance to adaptation” (loc. 503-508). “Sometimes pastors will make changes through technical leadership application but the results can be disastrous. These results include diminished congregational vitality through loss of mission, disempowered laity, personal burnout and exhaustion” (loc. 503-508). When this happens, members have a difficult time trusting the pastor. Some members believe pastors are responsible for their spiritual well-being and yet, at times, the members themselves do not spend time with the Lord in prayer or Bible study. Some members come to church expecting the sermon to give them the quick fix that they are expecting. They do not come prepared spiritually to meet the Lord in His temple. This is one of the biggest areas in the church that needs to be addressed. Members then leave the church because they “feel the pastor is not meeting their expectations” (loc. 954-957).

One of the reasons for this is “the system has eliminated the laity from the equation. Because the system funnels expertise into the ‘expert’ by training the pastor to be the leader of the church; this creates lay dependency upon the pastor for vision, initiative, and preparation in order to perceive and pursue the church’s mission; this mission is conceived through the expert system’s design” (loc. 945-947). Members don’t realize they—and not just the pastor—are called by God to do mission work. He is called to educate and train the laity according to the Word of the Lord that says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11, 12 KJV). “As the church ceases its witness to Christ’s activity,
it attempts to replace Christ and establishes itself as the source and place of salvation. Hence, the current status of the church as a ‘vendor of religious services’ becomes apparent. The critical issue may be that the institutional church in the West ceased living for Christ’s sake and began living for its own self-preservation” (loc. 995-999).

“One critique is that this form of leadership actually ‘deskills’ the church. This lay deskilling is largely the result of an expert system designed by professionals to be operated only by persons with specialized training in the language and processes of the system” (loc. 1000-1008). This deskilling has led to members going to pastors for answers to their questions facing the church and to also fix the problems the church is facing. When pastors don’t have the answers, the members get frustrated and the work of the Lord suffers (loc. 1008). Kinnison proposed to leaders to use Jesus Christ as the shepherd who will give them the insight they need to be a congregational leader, as they continue to seek His direction and guidance in their ministry.

Pastors should know that elders are also called to work with them to oversee the flock’s well-being (loc. 1756-1760). Some pastors do not like to work with their elders and when this happens, it causes problems in the church. It causes lack of trust for both parties. The author highlights the fact that “there is no easy answer for overcoming negative effects of modernity and its expert systems approach to life. But everyone should get involved, the two-tier system of personal value in the church should be eliminated; since God speaks through the Holy Spirit to all His people and is often best heard in modes of corporate discernment” (loc. 2866-2878).

“Collective leadership does not necessarily escape the effects of conflict. This sense of systemic awareness should cause church leaders to be aware of the conflicts occurring within congregations. By avoiding direct conflict about secondary issues, pastoral leadership can help the congregation to lessen anxiety and create ways of helping the system to become a healthier system” (loc. 3219-3225). While this true, sometimes the pastor will need to address direct conflict within the congregation to promote respect and unity. “Conflict reminds us of the need to seek God’s initiatives and it restores a need for one another in the community. The leadership triad helps congregational leaders understand how conflict occurs in congregational systems and demonstrates one way to help conflict to be positive and transforming” (loc. 3228-3232).

“This book is a bridge between the current state of the church as a culturally captivated entity and a future church where shared leadership guides us into life as a significant aspect of our witness to God’s ability to discover and engage God’s mission in the world” (loc. 3672-3681). As we go through changes, we must remember that God is in control of His Church and we must always seek Him for guidance and direction. This is an excellent book to help pastors who are seeking to honor God in a society that is ever changing. It helps pastors to recognize that our ultimate Leader is Jesus Christ, and we should follow the example that He has set for us. I strongly recommend this book to all pastors.

EVADNE WILLIAMS-HENRY is a lay pastor working in the capacity of lay pastor/elder for the Meadowvale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mississauga, Ontario. She is also a trained chaplain and a registered nurse working for the Ministry of Long-term Care for the Province of Ontario. She lives in Port Dover Ontario, Canada, and is engaged in a Master of Arts program with Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA.
GOOD LEADERS ASK GREAT QUESTIONS

By John C. Maxwell
New York, NY: Center Street (2014)
Hardcover, 320 pages

Reviewed by Jimmie Gibson

John Maxwell has been one of the leading contributors to leadership growth and development. He has touched on four major areas: leadership, equipping, attitude, and relationships. Many times leaders look at financial and physical aspects to sustain or improve company growth. The art of asking the right questions is the most valuable tool to have in your leadership tool belt. Maxwell comments on page 3:

Questions—for forty years I’ve asked questions on the subject of leadership. You might think that as time has gone by, and I’ve received thousands of answers, questions have become less important to me. But the opposite has been true. The more questions I ask the more valuable I recognize them to be.

Pretty amazing thought considering his vast experience.

Questions have too frequently been seen as an indication of incompetency, especially in a leadership position. I believe the perception that leaders should have all the answers has played a significant role in this misperception. Wise teachers in high school always told us that the only dumb question is the unasked one. Most organizations have people in them from various cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds where leadership is seen differently. This is frequently the case in church or religious organizations. Reducing the distance between people from different cultures, etc., can be done by simply encouraging dialogue beginning with questions.

The use of questions in religious and or volunteer type organizations can be empowering when used in the right way. When you ask questions that allow members’ input to be used in the building up the overall growth of the organization, it empowers the members and improves engagement. In a quote from Peter Drucker on page 7, Maxwell says that he knew the secret: “Successful leaders relentlessly ask questions and have an incurable desire to pick the brains of the people they meet.”

Maxwell later places a chart in his book (p. 75) and lists four things that help to create an environment that values questions. The points are: 1. Value each team member, 2. Value questions more than answers, 3. Value the potential of your team, and 4. Value the improvement of a good idea.

Having an environment that embraces the use of questions will allow subordinates to feel comfortable in asking questions from leaders without feeling inferior or a potential liability to the company or organization. I have seen churches where pastoral leadership did not value the questions nor the team members. This lowered morale and enthusiasm to actively participate in the ministry of the church. Not only did leaders not appreciate the questions, they did not like the answers or the suggested solutions to grow the church.

There are not many deficiencies in this book to mention. If I could ask Mr. Maxwell one question, it would be why was the section on “What questions do I ask myself as a leader?” significantly shorter (20 pages) than the “What questions do I ask my team members?” I feel there may have been more he could have expounded upon in terms of what
questions can be used or asked when successful. We have looked at our failures and shortcomings, and have found out a way to ask the necessary questions to correct them. However, most leaders do not ask questions while in the middle of success. I would like to know how to creatively ask questions to maintain the current success? This can be vital for a church or volunteer organization.

I would recommend this book to anyone in leadership or moving into leadership. A leader cannot and should not think that they know everything there is to know. Maxwell did an excellent job of showing the importance of asking questions and allowing them to be asked. I think one of the important things he brings out is that questions are just as important as the answers. He states, “By asking questions, I harness the horsepower of every member of my team, and together we pull the weight of the organizations” (p. 289).

JIMMIE GIBSON is a Masters of Arts in Pastoral Ministry student at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA.
DISSERTATION NOTICES


The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the experiences of Master of Divinity students while enrolled in the seminary and their level of spirituality upon completion.

A quantitative research design with a limited qualitative piece was used to survey M.Div. students who graduated in 2004. Exactly 100 participants completed the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile and an instrument that explored the degree of effort put into formal curriculum offering, and the frequency of participation in nonformal curriculum and socialization activities. Participants were also asked to share a positive experience and to recommend changes to the seminary curriculum. The Pearson correlation and ANOVA procedures were employed to analyze the data.

Spirituality correlated positively with the following: the effort students made in the formal curriculum, the frequency of participation in the nonformal curriculum and socialization areas, and the perception of faculty modeling. The effort students made in the formal curriculum produced the highest correlations with both current spirituality and the reported change in spirituality during the seminary years. Black students ranked highest in spirituality and white students the lowest. Faculty involvement in student activities made a difference in how an activity was perceived to have influenced spirituality. Outside of the seminary experiences, some of the supportive influences and/or obstacles were found to have significant relationships to the spirituality of all M.Div. students.

Intentional spiritual emphasis in the formal and nonformal curricula, socialization, and Christian modeling of faculty enhances the spiritual growth of students. Students need to take responsibility for their own time management in order to invest enough time for regular personal devotion and in-depth study of the Word. Finally, the seminary should provide a strong community experience where fellowship among students and faculty can flourish.


While the field of leadership can trace its roots to Plato, Sun Tzu, and Machiavelli, among many others, it has become a focus of contemporary academic studies in the last 50 to 75 years. And while spirituality can trace its origins to Muhammad, Jesus, and Buddha, the exploration of the nexus of leadership and spirituality is much more recent and as a result, a limited body of knowledge exists and thus, is ripe for study.

Many challenges exist, including the fact that the study of leadership is a multidisciplinary academic field which includes a myriad of topics from a vast array of disciplines and spirituality, which are extraordinarily diverse. This study explored a set of theories and tools enabling leaders to develop and support qualities within themselves and those with whom they work and interact. Specifically, this work is a qualitative study exploring...
the nexus of leadership and spirituality, addressing the gap in the literature that considers this intersection, as evidenced by the Venn diagram that includes leadership, spirituality, thinking, and behavioral attributes.

While a qualitative study, the quantitative element used is Emergenetics, a 30-year-old psychometric tool that looks at the four thinking attributes of analytical, structural, conceptual, and social, and the three behaviors of expressiveness, assertiveness, and flexibility. With more than 630,000 profiles completed in 21 languages by people around the world, the universe for this study consisted of 14 one-to-one interviews and two focus groups of 14 people each, one in person and one online. The myriad of faith traditions with which the participants identified in their youth is provided. With regard to the tradition with which participants identify today, of the 42 participants, 24 identify as Science of Mind/Religious Science and 18 identify with other faith traditions or no faith tradition.

The primary question was does spirituality influence leaders’ thinking and behaviors. The secondary questions included an exploration around ways spirituality influences thinking and behaviors. It also explored the questions as to spirituality informing the ways leaders can be challenging within their organizations, and if acknowledging one’s spirituality publically helps or hinders building effective teams.

The highlights of the research include the finding that spirituality does indeed influence everything a leader does and is, whether thinking or behavior attributes, and the process of a leader’s questioning. As well, while publicly acknowledging one’s spirituality is thought to be positive, there are some confounding circumstances and those ideas are also presented.

The study also includes the group Emergenetics profiles for the two focus groups and all of the individual interviews as one profile, respectively, with an explanation as to how that informed the research.

Finally, the implications of this research to the study of leadership, the study of spirituality and leadership, and the use of the Emergenetics tool in such work is explored.

Gyuroka, T. C. (2016). *What do pastors in German-speaking Europe perceive as important leadership competencies in order to be effective pastoral leaders*. Ph.D., Andrews University, Dissertations. 1600.

Leadership competency models for teaching leadership to pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church—if used at all—usually have been adapted from business leadership models. The curricula for seminary leadership courses and continuing education programs are usually shaped by what seminary teachers or administrators deem important. Their criteria are often based on anecdotal evidence rather than on a research-based understanding of what Seventh-day Adventist pastors actually need in order to be successful leaders in their local churches. This study seeks to address this need within the Seventh-day Adventist church in German-speaking Europe, and globally by developing a competency model of pastoral leadership.

The study used a mixed-method research design. The explorative qualitative phase (phase 1) of the study worked with five focus groups. Four focus groups consisted of pastors in the Austrian Union, the German-Switzerland Conference, the North German Union, and the South
German Union. An additional focus group was organized with the conference presidents of the seven German conferences. This phase resulted in a list of 104 competencies encompassing skills, abilities, personal, and spiritual characteristics.

In phase 2, a questionnaire was developed listing the 104 competencies from the qualitative phase and distributed to 311 ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastors in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland to evaluate the competencies from four different perspectives: (a) the importance of the 104 competencies for pastors generally, (b) the importance of the 104 competencies in view of one of the churches they were responsible for, (c) the frequency with which they personally used these 104 competencies in their work, and (d) their own proficiency in each of the competencies. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations coefficient, and ANOVA multiple regression analysis.

Thirty-nine of the 104 competencies from the qualitative study were rated 5.00 and above. Four of them were leadership competencies, four were management competencies, and 31 were other competencies. Few regional differences were found in the German-speaking fields except for the North German Union. Only 29.9% of the pastors rated the leadership competencies associated with the core tasks of leadership as high. In contrast they tended to attribute more importance of those competencies they used on a more frequent basis and with greater proficiency.

These results suggest the need for training in actual leadership competencies. Thus, in the final step, a leader competency model was developed to serve as a basis for adjusting the curriculum for pastoral leadership development.

The data and findings that emerged from this study showed the need to more adequately understand and teach how the basic task of leadership, which is energizing a system for change, relates to pastoral ministry. Since the leadership toolkit of pastors is still limited, a systematic leader development master plan for pastors in German-speaking Europe should be formulated together with a curriculum for reaching leadership on the basis of the leader competency model of this study.

Henson, J. D. (2015). An examination of the role of spirituality in the development of the moral component of authentic leadership through a sociorhetorical analysis of Paul’s letter to Titus. Ph.D., Regent University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 3682828.

This study examined the role of spirituality in the moral development component of authentic leadership in comparison to leadership principles found in the Epistle to Titus. The study of moral development was drawn from literature on authentic leadership theory, spiritual leadership theory, and preexisting frameworks of moral agency, self-concept, and the stages of moral development. The exegetical process followed the methodology of sociorhetorical analysis and was interpreted for the moral, ethical, and leadership principles found in the pericope. The study yielded five themes of leadership from which 10 principles of leadership were discovered as found in Paul's letter to Titus. It was found that the principles in Titus generally support the literature on the moral development component of authentic leadership theory. In the case when there were differences, it was found that principles of Titus expand and elevate...
the standards found in the literature. The study concluded that there is an intimate relationship between sacred and secular contexts, such that the moral and ethical standards of the Christian community engage the moral standards of a given social and cultural context and reconfigures them in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The 10 core values of ethical behavior discovered in Titus were compared to the constructs of authentic leadership theory, spiritual leadership theory, and the core values of spirituality, and they were found to transcend each construct. The study created a framework for the future study of the core values of morality and ethics in multiple constructs: Biblical, secular, and sacred.

Koko, A. S. (2017). The role of spirituality in the leadership style of organizational leaders. Ph.D., Capella University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 10270632.

People perceive and practice spirituality in ways that are unique and personal. Studies in the field of psychology and related psychological theories have suggested that personal spirituality and human beliefs may influence behavior, leadership styles, and the day-by-day or lived experience of organizational leaders while in their leadership role. Leaders are the image of their organizations, and their role can significantly affect the profitability and success of their organization. Understanding the role that these leaders’ everyday experiences, mind state, cognition, and perception of being spiritual play in their style of leadership becomes important. The goal of this study was to investigate how organizational leaders experience and describe the role of spirituality in their leadership style. Previous studies have been mostly quantitative, and none of the qualitative studies investigated spirituality from an experiential perspective based on the interpersonal-oriented and task-oriented leadership styles. The transcendental phenomenology research design was used to investigate the essence or meaning of these leaders’ experiences regarding their spirituality and leadership style as they were currently experiencing it. The knowledge obtained from this study explained spirituality, consciousness, and cognition’s role in leadership style, which can be applied to the fields of sports, politics, organizational management, coaching, mentoring, leadership, employee recruitment, and other areas of society or within any organization where leadership performance is important. The conclusion from this study was that organizational leaders who self-identified as being spiritual demonstrated compassion when relating with their employees and others. These organizational leaders also demonstrated core ethical values, and were more interpersonal-oriented than task-oriented in their leadership style.


This study argues that it is necessary to present the Christian faith in such a way that it allows the Vietnamese to follow Christ and yet remain within their Vietnamese culture. To do so, the study resonates theologically with what has already been done, and offers some relevant contributions to the Vietnamese contextualization efforts by proposing a paradigm shift in the development of
a Vietnamese mission theology which requires it to be both evangelical and Vietnamese. The proposed paradigm shift seeks to narrow the gap between the way evangelical mission theology has been practiced and the Vietnamese syncretistic spirituality. Within the larger context of East Asia, the study has navigated the religio-cultural dimensions of Vietnamese spirituality that have hindered the Christian faith being assimilated into the Vietnamese spirituality. The failure of Christian missionaries to identify the simultaneous “resisting” and “assimilating” forces characteristic of Vietnamese spirituality became the reason why Christian contextualization efforts have failed. At the same time, however, it seems promising that contextualization efforts could be possible once the dual force nature of Vietnamese spirituality is recognized, that is, identifying what needs to be resisted and what are the crucial religio-cultural elements or concepts needing to be assimilated. This nature would serve as the lens through which the contextualization processes would review the essential elements of Vietnamese spirituality which can be redeemed for evangelical Christian beliefs and practices, for instance, the concept of God the Dao (the Way) and the Vietnamese extended family perspective for both the Trinitarian relationship and the Vietnamese Christian community of both living people and ancestors. A Vietnamese mission theology must begin with the Vietnamese concept of God the Dao. Acknowledging that the Dao is Christ, the Incarnate God, is the key to unlocking the problem of believing in a God who is alien and strange to the Vietnamese. Any attempt at Christian contextualization in Vietnam, therefore, cannot overlook the dual forces of “resisting and assimilating,” and the nature of the Dao of Vietnamese spirituality.


Research has not yet identified one specific style or set of characteristics that represents overall leadership effectiveness among Christian pastors. This grounded theory qualitative study examined spiritual leadership in religious organizations in order to develop a theoretical model of effective leadership for pastors. The use of grounded theory design was appropriate in order to develop a new theory on pastoral effectiveness, grounded in the data collected from pastors and their congregation members. Twenty pastors and 20 congregational members of various non-denominational Christian churches throughout San Diego County were selected as participants. The data was obtained by querying the perceptions of the pastors and congregation members through the use of an open-ended electronic questionnaire. To ensure the accuracy of coding, data collected through the questionnaires was downloaded into NVivo10 qualitative data analysis software to uncover and analyze trends. The results of this study suggested the presence of five themes related to pastoral effectiveness in non-denominational Christian churches: (a) communication; (b) personal development; (c) business acumen; (d) religious practices; and (e) relationships. A key finding of the present study pointed to the integration of spiritual leadership theory and transformational leadership theory for use in religious organizations. The integration of the components of the two leadership theories may provide pastors with a means and common framework for understanding the process of leadership effectiveness.
THE JOURNAL OF APPLIED CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP MISSION

“To provide a peer-reviewed published dialogue of applied research in Christian servant leadership across denominational, cultural, and disciplinary environments.”

This mission involves several elements that provide a greater sense for what the Journal seeks to accomplish. Explaining key words serves as a window into the “culture” of those operating the Journal of Applied Christian Leadership.

Peer-reviewed: This element describes the editorial nature of the Journal. The Journal encourages articles for publication that will be reviewed by peers in the field of leadership for evaluation both in content and style. This process will include ways of improving and/or other resources that might be considered as part of the dialogue. This will also allow for an expansion of the field to occur so that at the time of publication the article can have a wider audience.

Published: Our initial goal is that the Journal be a semi-annual publication with an eye of shifting toward a quarterly and then possibly monthly at some future point.

Dialogue: Descriptive of the nature of the inquiry, the Journal seeks to encourage a respectful dialogue between scholars, students and practitioners of leadership. Writers will present their findings in ways that while prescriptive also encourage dissent and a shared conversation.

Applied: The content of what is presented derives from strategies, principles, philosophies, and dynamic elements of leadership put into practice in a host of varied environments. What is presented is not an untried theory but a “theory-in-use” applicable to a place and time. Therefore, editors ask writers to use non-technical language accessible to practitioners.

Research: There are many leadership journals that provide an “anecdotal” approach to understanding leadership. While this approach is vital to growth in understanding, the rigor of research-based studies is vital as well to give a more rounded viewpoint toward leadership. Therefore, the vast majority of approved articles will consist of a research base to understanding. This is a core component of the Journal.

Christian: A second core component of the Journal is the focus of Christian principles as they intersect with leadership in action. While there will no doubt be “Christian” principles located in non-Christian environments, the tenor of the Journal will be based upon Scriptural elements of leadership.

Servant: A third core component of the Journal is the centrality of Servant Leadership. While this nomenclature is widespread today (even outside Christian circles), we recognize that “servant” leadership arises largely out of the life and leadership of Jesus Christ and as expressed powerfully by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2. It is our dynamic understanding of His life and this passage that serves as a platform for our understanding of this core component.

Leadership: Every endeavor in human history has involved a leader of one type or another. The Journal is about leadership. It is about the way people motivate, inspire, and lead others to accomplish as a group what could never be accomplished by themselves, all the while providing a dynamic transformation of all involved.

Across: Leadership is exemplified across religious, racial, and national boundaries. Fundamental to a dynamic understanding and application of leadership is a soul belief that no one group has sole propriety of leadership wisdom. In fact, when the discourse concerning leadership transcends all time and space our comprehension expands and our practice of leadership moves with greater effectiveness.

Denominational: This first of three environments demonstrates the Journal’s fundamental worldview that learning can take place regardless of creed and denominational divides. In fact, the more one studies various leadership issues throughout the denominational world, the clearer becomes the commonality of our leadership challenges. Since the Journal centers upon Christian leadership, it is imperative that our research expand beyond denominational borders.

Cultural: One of the greatest challenges facing any organization in the 21st century is the growing expanse of globalization. Whether that globalization is reflected in micro-globalization through immigration or macro-globalization through increased universal communication and transportation, fundamental to any leader of the 21st century is the ability to lead across national, sub-cultural, and multi-cultural boundaries.

Disciplinary: A final arena where boundaries can be removed for the benefit of leadership comprehension is this vital area of academic disciplines. More often than not, various schools have made leadership the focus of study. Each school has provided incredible insight into the theory, philosophy, and practice of leadership. However, if our leadership comprehension is to expand, it will require the synergy of cross-disciplinary dialogue to occur. Increasingly in the leadership world, contribution is coming from such schools as history, sociology, theology, and even philosophy. To deny the interdisciplinary dynamic of leadership comprehension would substantially minimize and/or prevent leadership learning.

Environments: Finally, the Journal recognizes that the culture of leadership is influenced by the various environments where leadership is practiced and the skills honed. From the military arena (in either a peace-time environment or war-time environment) to the entertainment arena, leadership spans the limitations of environmental factors. Leadership is played out in the symphony hall as well as the science lab as well as the sports arena. If leaders are to grow so that followers and organizations and our world can become a better place, it is imperative that our understanding of leadership cross the expanse of time and space.
THE JOURNAL OF APPLIED
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The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership seeks submissions from a multiplicity of disciplines by those researching various areas of Christian leadership throughout the world. We are looking for manuscripts engaging readers in areas like Christian ethics and leadership, diversity, organizational culture, change, mentoring, coaching, self-leadership, team building and a host of other leadership issues. We are most interested in those who are conducting research in any of these areas from a distinctly Christian perspective, including those investigating various leadership theories and how they influence or are influenced by Christian principles and practices. Abstracts should be between 400-800 words and emailed in MS Word. All submissions can be emailed to jac@andrews.edu. Conformity with APA style is preferred. See instructions online: www.andrews.edu/services/jacl

Contact Info

The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-0111
Tel. 269-471-3487; Fax. 269-471-6506
Email: jac@andrews.edu
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The Christian Leadership Center is an interdisciplinary organization of Andrews University providing inspiration, on-going leadership development, coaching, consultation, and research for a network of church and community leaders throughout the world. It also sponsors the *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*.

**VISION**
Our vision is people transformed and empowered by Christian principles who provide outstanding leadership for the local church, and church and educational organizations throughout the world.

**MISSION**
Our mission is to accompany and develop people in their journey as servant leaders in the church and as Christian market-place ambassadors in a changing world.

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1. Dynamic understanding: A shared and dynamic understanding of a Biblical model of servant leadership that informs the global practice of church and community leaders

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**CONTACT**
Stan Patterson, Director
Christian Leadership Center
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI 49104
269.471.8332 (leave message)
clc@andrews.edu