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Andrew Pettigrew
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

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CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP AND THE GREAT COMMISSION: FOUNDATIONS FOR BUILDING CHRISTIAN LEADERS

This article aims to articulate a foundational understanding of Christian leadership and a strategy for building Christian leaders. (This author chooses the term “building” leaders instead of “leadership development” to align more closely with Jesus’s terminology of making disciples.) The vast numbers of books on leadership development reveal the myriad of strategies for developing leaders. Furthermore, the endless variety of platforms from which one can lead inspires unique perspectives on developing a leader based on its inherent culture. The vastness of strategies in the leadership arena increases when one discovers principles of leadership that apply to all cultures (Plueddemann, 2009, p. 68). David Livermore (2010) argues that because of global diversity in leadership, it is important to “get rid of one-size-fits-all leadership mantras” (p. 228). Based on these realities, one could propose that the breadth of leadership literature is too complex to limit to one particular strategy. However, this article argues for a root strategy in building Christian leaders based on the command to make disciples found in the Great Commission. Why is the Great Commission so important to Christian leadership? All Christians are leaders by God’s design, and disciple-making is foundational to building Christian leaders.

Every Christian as a Leader

Strategic leadership instills strategic implications for the organization (Hughes & Beatty, 2005). For Christian leaders, God sets strategic implications throughout the Bible, particularly in the Great Commission. This study defines a Christian leader as one entrusted with God-given authority to make disciples for God’s glory.

Andy Pettigrew leads missionary efforts throughout sub-Saharan Africa and the sending agency. Andy completed his BA in Spanish at Union University and his MDiv in Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Andy is pursuing his PhD in Christian leadership at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, studying to influence organizational leadership towards missional effectiveness.

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Matthew 28:18–20, often referred to as “the Great Commission” (Wallace, 2014), is the core biblical text in this understanding of Christian leadership. The framework of Christ’s commission begins with Jesus’s kingly declaration of His supreme authority and dominion in verse 18. Jesus follows this declaration with a command for His followers to “go and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19) and concludes with His promise of continued presence in the life of His disciples (Matt. 28:20). The Great Commission decrees God’s ongoing granting of authority first seen in Adam and now given to all those who are in Christ. Furthermore, the granting of authority for God’s purposes displays the core of Christian leadership with the strategy to build leaders through disciple-making.

Christian Leadership and God’s Authority

When God created the earth, He gave unique attention to the creation of man by creating male and female in His image (Gen. 1:26). However, the attribution of *imago Dei* to man is not the only notable characteristic. God granted male and female authority over His creation. Genesis 1:28 states, “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (ESV). The term “dominion” is *radâ* and is a word associated with power and authority (Dempster, 2006, p. 59). Therefore, leadership is an exercise of being given authority for influence; leadership birthed with the genesis of mankind when God gave him dominion over creation with the command to “subdue the earth” (Gen. 1:28). However, the understanding of dominion links directly how God created man, namely, to be an image-bearer. Ryan Peterson (2016) states that

the connection between image and ruling is not one of definition. On the contrary, the connection is paradigmatic. The logic of the text seems to be thus: God is Creator and Ruler of all things; let God’s image rule over the earth. (pp. 77–78)

The significance of the statement, Peterson continues, is recognizing that “humanity is called to image God by having dominion over the earth precisely because it is God’s dominion over the earth that has been revealed thus far” (Peterson, 2016, p. 78). Thus, God bestows His dominion upon His image-bearers for His divine purposes.

Throughout the pages of Scripture, it is God who has complete dominion. One reads in Daniel 4:34, for example, that God’s “dominion is an everlasting dominion.” Man’s authority, therefore, is only that which has been given by God. Scholars Gentry and Wellum (2018) attest that Psalm 8:5–8 is a commentary on Genesis 1:28, which speaks to man’s authority and divine purpose

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granted by God. They write, “Psalm 8, attributed to David, in verses 5–8 constitutes a word-by-word commentary and meditation on Genesis 1:26–28. The psalmist understands that mankind is at the apex of God’s creation . . .” (Gentry & Wellum, 2018, p. 193). Consider these words from Psalm 8:5–6, “. . . You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet . . .” Mankind’s dominion is a king-like dominion reflecting God as King. Peterson (2016) posits,

The relationship between humanity’s status as representative and its representational function as ruler is better understood as follows: since God determined to create a representative of God on the earth, it is fitting for this representative to share in God’s rule representationally. (p. 40)

In other words, mankind, as created in the image of God, represents God’s supreme rule in carrying out the stewardship of dominion among creation.

God applies His dominion in His representational rule through mankind. In Genesis 1:28, God tells man and woman to “subdue the earth.” The word *subdue* (*kabas*) is a term related to a king conquering territory or kingdoms (Dempster, 2006, p. 59–60). The term is used in 2 Samuel 8:11, illustrated by a king subduing a territory and declaring victory over nations that he had conquered through force. God’s purpose for mankind was to fill the earth with His image so that His glory filled the earth. G. K. Beale (2011) states,

Just as Adam’s son was in Adam’s “likeness” and “image” (Gen. 5:1–3) and was to resemble his human father in appearance and character, so Adam was a son of God who was to reflect his Father, since he was in the “image” and “likeness” of God (Gen. 1:26). This means that the command for Adam to “subdue, rule, and fill the earth” includes uppermost that of him as a king functionally filling the earth, not merely with progeny, but with image-bearing progeny who will reflect God’s glory and special revelatory presence. (p. 36)

God gave man a specific mission to serve as vice-regents in fulfilling His mandate of leading the world to worship God.

In Genesis 2:15, God assigns man to work the ground using the term *abad*, which carries a connotation of service (Matthews, 1996, p. 209). A call to serve did not delineate mankind’s role as ruler but highlights the reality that man and woman still operate under a higher master. Exodus 4:23 also uses *abad* when God instructs Moses to tell Pharaoh to let Israel go so that they may “serve me.” Regarding Exodus 4:23, Theodore Hiebert (1996) states

The language with which the role of the human in the earth is described is not the language of lordship but of servanthood. In this account of cre-

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ation, the theology of the human place in creation is not a theology of dominion but a theology of dependence. (p. 23)

The foundation of leadership is to balance God's original call for humanity to rule the world with the commission to bring mankind under God's dominion. God's original design for His image bearers was to lead, exercising authority over the earth for the worship of God alone. In other words, Christian leadership is both by God and for God.

Recognizing the failure of Adam and Eve in fulfilling God's original intent is significant. Genesis 3 tells the story of Adam's rebellion when he heeds a temptation to subvert the authority of God by seeking equality with God, Himself. Schreiner (2013) notes that "by failing to obey God's command, they [Adam and Eve] manifested their stubborn independence and their desire to be godlike (3:5)" (p. 9). As the Christian leader stewards God's rule in the earth, these two qualities, namely "independence" and the "desire to be godlike" are what undermine the very foundation of what is intended for God-ordained leadership.

When God created man and woman in His image, He intended for them to remain subject and display the greatness of the One upon whom they were dependent. Yet, because of sin, Adam and Eve failed to carry out God's mandate to exercise dominion and fill the earth with His glory. However, God revealed a glimmer of hope to Eve in Genesis 3:15, that from the seed of a woman, the head of the serpent will be crushed by a future king. Isaiah 9:6-7 foretells of the future King: ". . . the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government there shall be no end." Matthew and Luke declare Jesus as the promised King (Matt. 2:11; Luke 1:67-80), He who would fulfill God's purposes originating with Adam and reigning now as the better Adam (Rom. 5:14).

Christian Leadership and God's Commission

Matthew 28:18 reveals the kingly reign of Jesus as the fulfillment of creation's grand design when Jesus declares, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me." Jesus fulfills and embodies the dominion and authority to subdue the earth issued by the creator God. Jesus's kingly declaration in Matthew 28:18 is reminiscent of God's mandate to Adam to subdue the earth, as He begins with *ouv* (*oun*) which "is inferential and indicates that Jesus's command is grounded in His absolute authority" (Quarles, 2017, p. 351). These words display the foundation of Christian leadership. As Jesus declared His supreme authority, He bestows that authority on mankind. Like God's commission to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, Jesus commissions a new cre-

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ation. The title of “new creation” can be seen in passages like 2 Corinthians 5:17, which states that “if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation.” Jesus used the term “born again” with Nicodemus in John 3:3, and Romans 5:12 indicates that in Adam all died; therefore, there needs to be a new life, which takes place in the new Adam, namely Jesus (Kruse, 2012). The new creation, like Adam, now has a mandate to assume their God-given authority and subdue the earth by making disciples (Matt. 28:19).

Acts 1:8 is a similar commission passage and continues the theme of God’s granting of authority. Jesus declares that the disciples will receive power when given the Holy Spirit to carry out the mandate of Christ. Craig Keener (2013) affirms the Spirit’s empowering for mission and demonstrates that Christ’s commissioned power goes beyond Acts 1:8. He writes, “It is no coincidence that not only this passage but the other dominant programmatic biblical texts in Luke–Acts (Luke 4:18–19; 24:45–48; Acts 2:17–18) refer to the Spirit’s empowering God’s agents for mission” (Keener, 2013, p. 690). God again grants divine authority over His creation to subdue the earth for His glory. Timothy Laniak (2006) states,

Our theology of leadership is informed by this breathtaking choice of God to grant royal prerogatives to his creatures. God made man and woman in His image to rule with Him and for Him. Reigning with Him is the destiny of all those who follow the Lamb in the book of Revelation. (p. 248)

The essence of Christian leadership is that God gives mankind authority to execute influence in all of creation by carrying out the divine mission of God to make disciples of all nations all for the glory of God.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus grants His authority to His disciples with a command to carry out a mission. In the phrase “go and make disciples,” the emphasis is not on the going but instead on what one is going to do. Daniel Wallace affirms the statement above on the use of the aorist participle of *poreuomai*. He offers an overview of how to understand the command to “go and make disciples,” writing,

When an aorist participle is followed by an aorist imperative in narrative literature, it almost invariably piggy-backs on the force of the imperative. That is, it is translated like an imperative because the author is trying to communicate a command. (Wallace, 2014, n.p.)

Jesus’s command mirrors God’s commission to His image-bearers in Genesis 1:28 when He gives dominion to man and woman and then tells them to subdue the earth. Similarly, Christ gives His followers authority and then commands them to execute that authority by making disciples of all nations.

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The Great Commission is a mandate for every follower of Christ, and Christian leadership is the practice of living out the mission in whatever sphere of life.

Every Christian Builds Leaders

The foundation of Christian leadership recognizes that God gives all Christians authority to make disciples for His glory. The practice of building leaders is making disciples with its roots in Gospel transformation and the church. The apostle Peter, in Acts 2:14–4, declares the Gospel message of Christ’s death and resurrection for the remission of sin and calls people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; “so those who received the word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” In Acts 2:42–47, the Scriptures reveal that people believed in Jesus and gathered together to form community around the transforming work of Christ in their lives. It appears, then, that disciples passed the message of the Gospel from person to person, even as they granted the authority given in Christ to the next person to make disciples to the glory of God (Coleman, 2018).

Because Christian leaders are those transformed by the Gospel, the term “Christian leader” refers not only to those in formal clergy roles. All Christians have authority to lead and carry out God’s intended purpose on account of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20. Christian leadership includes business professionals, politicians, educators, healthcare specialists, pastors, etc. If these people are Christians, they all uphold the same foundational mandate in Christ. Therefore, every Christian is not only a leader but one who builds new leaders through disciple-making.

Inherent to Christian leadership is the role of the church. Paul articulates in Ephesians 1:21–23 that the full representation of Christ and His dominion is in the church. Paul is writing to a church, “the saints in Ephesus” (Eph. 1:1) and describes them as a people “holy and blameless before Him” and adopted through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4–5). In that same passage, Paul states that the church is “His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:23). The church represents the people of God brought together by their faith in Christ. Daniel Treier and Kevin Vanhoozer (2015) state, “. . . the whole purpose of the cross was not only to reconcile sinners to God but also to create a new humanity. The church is the eschatological harbinger of this new reality, a living demonstration of what is in Christ” (p. 76). Since the church represents Christ, it is important to note that disciple-making ought to recognize the church as its goal and its means.

Treier and Vanhoozer (2015) further claim,

Paul urged the communities he founded not merely to believe the Gospel but also to become its citizens, living worthy of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27),

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reflecting its radiant (eschatological) energy. Like light, the Gospel is essentially missional: “To be in Christ is to be in mission; to participate in the Gospel is to participate in the advance of the Gospel.” (p. 93)

In other words, since Jesus claims absolute authority in Matthew 28:18 and then calls His disciples to carry out that authority in making disciples, God’s means of subduing the earth is His church. Thus, a fully orbed theological vision for building leaders must include seeing the mission of making disciples within the DNA of every Christ-follower in and through the church.

Building Christian Leadership Intelligence

Based on the foundation of stewarding Christ’s authority in the Great Commission, Christian leadership defines the practice of building Christian leaders as making disciples that perpetuate this notion of Christian leadership. The foundation for Christian leaders is to recognize the purpose for which all Christians exist, which is bringing glory to God in all things. Christopher Wright (2006) contends that Israel’s purpose among the nations was that

ultimately they would bring their worship to YHWH, the one living God of all the earth . . . for it is the indefatigable mission of God—a mission in which He invites our participation—to bring such universal worship of the nations to joyful reality. (p. 489)

That purpose must drive strategies of building Christian leaders rooted in Christ’s divine authority declared in Matthew 28:18 and issued to his followers in his command to make disciples (Matt. 28:19–20).

In the genre of leadership instruction and literature, one can find various forms of intelligence such as intelligence quotient (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and cultural intelligence (CQ), and how they shape leadership. Leadership intelligence for the Christian leader will answer the question of what a leader must know, be and do as a leader in God’s kingdom. Using the text from Matthew 28:18–20, building Christian leadership intelligence examines a selection of leadership development principles that further enhance the Christian leader. The selected intelligence foci include biblical intelligence, Christ-centered emotional intelligence, and God-purposed cultural intelligence as it relates to the Great Commission.

Biblical Intelligence

Building biblical intelligence for a Christian leader encourages an increased understanding of God’s word and its application for Christ-followers. When Jesus charged the disciples to “make disciples of all nations,” He

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included specific instructions. He said that the disciples were to come from “all nations.” His command was to “baptize” disciples and “teach them to obey all that Christ commanded.” The concept of baptism relates to a public entry into the community of faith, the church. The element of “teaching to obey all of Christ’s commands” (Matt. 28:20) is a critical application of making disciples and becomes the common core of Christian leadership practice. As Osbourne and Arnold (2010) state,

It is critical to realize that Jesus said, “everything I have commanded you” (not whatever we feel like saying). This is entirely in keeping with 2 Tim. 2:15, where Paul advised Timothy that he would only avoid “shame” when he stood before God if he “correctly handles the word of truth.” (p. 1659)

Thus, biblical intelligence must be increased for passing on truth to others.

In looking to develop biblical intelligence, teaching all that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19) could seem overwhelming. One helpful strategy would be to first examine how Jesus summarized all of God’s commands as a framework for making disciples. Jesus summed up these commands,

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30–31, ESV)

Using the framework of Jesus’s instructions in Mark 12:30–31, one could say the Great Commandment supplies an outline for executing the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20). Jesus is saying that His followers must love God with their whole being. Osbourne and Arnold (2010) state, “To fulfill this principle involves knowing God, obeying all His commandments (cf. Matt. 28:20a), and committing totally to Him. ‘Love’ is much more than an emotion; it involves absolute surrender and selfless giving” (p. 1268). Teaching disciples what it means to love God and love others then becomes a helpful guide in a strategy for leadership development.

The primary means for building Christian leaders built upon the Great Commission is to follow the example of Christ by doing life together in and through the church. Chuck Lawless (2011) writes, “The church loves one another, serves one another, prays for one another, confronts one another, and forgives one another. This body of Christ, when obedient to its marching orders, produces disciples by preaching the Gospel and teaching believers” (p. 8). Jesus modeled life transformation through discipleship as He spent countless time with His disciples seeking at each moment in the journey to show them how to live, teach them what to believe, and counsel them on how

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to accomplish the tasks He had given to them. Again, the context of the church serves this goal, as the local body assumes its covenantal role of pursuing holiness together. Jim Putman (2010) writes in *Real-Life Discipleship*,

If a church believes that the job of the church is to make disciples and that everyone who is saved is designed for a purpose on God's team, its leaders must make it their goal to create environments where people grow to become biblical disciples who use their gifts well and in an organized way in the body. (p. 180)

It is important to understand that each Christian leader has a God-called role to play in fulfilling God's perfect plan.

In Matthew 28:20, the word for "obey" is τηρεῖν (from *tereo*) which carries with it a connotation of keeping or guarding (Osbourne & Arnold, 2010, p. 1654). When Jesus instructed the rich, young ruler in Matthew 19:17, He uses this same word for obeying (or keeping) the commandments. The essence of the word *tereo* means to preserve the commands by ensuring they fulfill their purpose. Making disciples demands displaying the person of Christ to point the nations to the one, true God, as that is the end goal of disciple-making. Therefore, the basis for building Christian leaders involves helping one understand who God is in His Word through proclamation, modeling, and instruction to carry out the purpose for God-given authority. Developing biblical intelligence involves understanding and embodying what the Bible teaches on being a true worshiper of God, defining a clear plan for making disciples, and carrying out the authority to execute that plan.

Develop Christ-Centered Emotional Intelligence

For the Christian leader whose focus is to make disciples, he or she can become better at leading others by loving God with everything and loving others as Christ commanded. Daniel Goleman, known for his 1996 article published in Harvard Business Review, argues that "emotional intelligence is the *sine qua non* of leadership" (Goleman, 2017, p. 79). He further identifies five components of emotional intelligence, arguing that all five are necessary for a leader (Goleman, 2017). For Christ-centered emotional intelligence, Goleman's EQ assessment informs a biblical strategy for building Christian leaders. The first three components presented by Goleman include self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy; for the Christian leader, these are parallels to biblical identity, biblical pursuit, and biblical purpose.

Although the term was not pioneered by Daniel Goleman,¹ he popularized the concept of "emotional intelligence," noted in his writing on this concept (Goleman, 2005). In his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More*

¹See a brief history of emotional intelligence here: <https://www.emotionalintelligencecourse.com/history-of-eq/>

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than IQ, Goleman claims that good leadership is rooted in one's ability to maintain a high degree of self-awareness. The three areas he mentions are (1) the ability to handle impulses, (2) the ability to handle defeats and challenges, and (3) the ability to handle pressure and anxiety (Goleman, 2005, p. 36). He discusses why it is important to achieve self-awareness in these areas and includes research into why it has proven successful. He writes, "Much evidence testifies that people who are emotionally adept—who know and manage their own feelings well, and who read and deal effectively with other people's feelings—are at an advantage with any domain in life" (Goleman, 2005, p. 36). In sum, he argues from a scientific evolutionary worldview for the development of a form of intelligence that is directly connected to one's emotions. Goleman's study is important because, from a biblical worldview, emotional intelligence parallels Christian leadership and can supply key insights into developing a Christ-centered emotional intelligence that helps the Christian leader excel in his or her calling.

Biblical Identity, Pursuit, and Purpose

Christ-centered self-awareness recognizes first that salvation is in Christ alone. A leader's biblical identity is that s/he is in union with Christ and represents Christ to the world. Regarding union with Christ, Bruce Demarest (1997) states, "Christ through His death disarmed the Devil and brought us into solidarity with Himself in the family of His holy people" (p. 330). For the Christian leader, self-awareness is recognizing his or her biblical identity. The Christian tradition affirms that salvation is not of works but rests in the atoning work "by grace through faith in Christ" alone (Eph. 2:8–9).

Goleman also teaches that self-awareness is a form of humility as leaders understand and navigate their moods and emotions. He states, "Self-aware people know—and are comfortable talking about—their limitations and strengths, and they often demonstrate a thirst for constructive criticism" (Goleman, 2017, p. 88). Jesus teaches His followers to examine themselves to know their place before God, stating in Luke 11:14 ". . . everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." The Christian leader must function under an assumed humility knowing there is always a Leader in a higher authority. Contrarily, it is important in self-awareness for a Christian to have confidence in who he or she is in Christ. Consider an office janitor who is suddenly and for undue cause promoted to vice-president of the company. Likewise, one who was once a sinner and undeserving of God's grace receives direct authority and a mission from the God of the universe. Like Paul's commendation of his ministry founded purely in a confidence only in Christ (2 Cor. 3:4), a self-aware Christian leader recognizes that

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s/he must be confident in the mission of God as the leader rests in the assurance that authority to lead is only in Christ.

In addition to humility before Christ or confidence in His command, Jesus instructs His disciples to regularly be introspective but always towards a more Godward view of themselves. Consider Matthew 7:3–4, “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (ESV). Jesus also told His followers to consider those things that affected their emotions and ambition in illustrating, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:34, ESV). These verses drive Christian leaders to regularly put themselves in check and recognize who they are in Christ to rightly be aware of their emotions before God.

The Christian leader must also have a biblical pursuit. Goleman’s EQ parallel is self-regulation defined as “the component of emotional intelligence that frees us from being prisoners of our own feelings” (Goleman, 2017, p. 89). Self-regulation builds on self-awareness in that the leader is aware of his or her emotions and can manage them appropriately. Various impulses drive a leader to make decisions too quickly or too slowly, which can be dangerous. Therefore, Goleman argues for regulating emotions to “enhance integrity” (Goleman, 2017, p. 91). Self-regulation could be paralleled to a biblical fruit of the Spirit known as self-control (Gal. 5:23). A leader whose biblical pursuit is from God identifies with 2 Corinthians 5:14, where Paul states, “. . . the love of Christ controls us . . .” The Christian leader must find his or her strength or power in Christ, thus giving the individual the ability to self-regulate as a leader. In other words, Christ transforms the aim of a Christian leader and mandates self-control to work to that end.

A biblical pursuit also calls for regular self-examination. The Christian leader should focus on God’s standard of excellence. Peter Drucker (1974) is famously known for stating, “Leadership is lifting a person’s vision to higher sights, the raising of a person’s performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations” (p. 318). Jesus declares in the Sermon on the Mount that the standard for following God is perfection (Matt. 5:48). This is the same bar raised for Christian leaders. In performance, this is further verified with passages like Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (ESV). The standard of excellence is clear throughout Scripture and is the key element of representing Christ to those being led. If self-regulation is important to emotional intelligence, a Christ-centered EQ as superior as God’s standard of excellence becomes the barometer for the Christian leader.

A Christ-centered emotional intelligence also includes directing leaders

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towards a biblical purpose. Goleman recognizes motivation is a trait quite common in leaders. However, Goleman (2017) believes a leader has a higher emotional intelligence when his motivation is greater than financial gain or simply climbing the corporate ladder. For the Christian leader, one's love of God drives him or her to do all things for His glory. Wrought at the beginning of time when God created Adam and Eve was a sense of purpose; this must remain in the forefront of every Christian leader's mind. Christian leaders are born with a purpose in mind that stretches beyond anything the world can offer, which is to strive toward God's supreme purposes. Danny Akin (2017) notes in *Pastoral Theology* that "the increase of His glory is God's ultimate goal and humankind's ultimate purpose" (p. 180). The Great Commission is a path for God's people to carry out His purposes, which means building leaders towards a divine purpose.

Biblical Compassion

The final two qualities of emotional intelligence, as presented by Goleman, involve dealing with other people. Goleman (2017) names the societal components of emotional intelligence as "empathy" and "social skills." Empathy addresses how one can sense and empathize with the needs of the team that surround the leader. Empathy is important for knowing how to lead people and equally important for addressing the cultural nuances of a global team. Social skills build on empathy and highlight the importance of being able to work well with others.

These two components of emotional intelligence consider Jesus's second greatest commandment, which is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). In *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Robert Coleman (2018) states that loving one another is displayed in the compassion of Jesus. Therefore, biblical compassion is important to building Christian leaders and drives one to make disciples. Jesus models compassion in Matthew 9:36 to those who were following Him. Coleman states that Jesus "was so successful in expressing to them His compassion and power" that they once wanted "to take Him by force, to make Him king" (Coleman, 2018, loc. 168–169; see also John 6:15). Biblical compassion sees the needs of others and addresses them, which is critical to disciple-making. Akin (2017) argues that "God's compassion toward humankind helps us establish an accurate view of humanity and determines our capacity to live in fellowship with Him" (p. 118). An absence of biblical compassion hinders leaders from fulfilling their God-given purpose as His new creation. Developing biblical compassion, therefore, is critical to executing Christian leadership.

In Mark 10:45, Jesus states He came not to be served but to serve and to

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give His life as a ransom for many. Robert Clinton (2012) defines leadership as “a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group” (p. 25). Leadership is fundamentally about people and ultimately about God’s purposes. Building Christian leaders who pursue God’s purposes and make disciples, developing skills related to empathizing with others, and learning how to manage relationships is imperative for Christ-centered emotional intelligence. Without the maturity of these skills, it will not only be difficult to lead others, but it also creates a barrier to obeying Christ’s command to invest in others for his glory.

Develop God-Purposed Cultural Intelligence

According to the Great Commission, biblical identity, pursuit, purpose, and compassion speak to building Christian leaders, but one must also consider Christ’s mandate. When Jesus entrusted the mantle of disciple-making to His disciples, He said, “Go and make disciples of all nations [*panta ta ethne*] . . .” (Matt 28:19, emphasis mine). Carson, Longman, and Garland (2010) note,

a good case can be made for saying that the full expression, *panta ta ethne*, used four times in Matthew (24:9, 14; 25:32; here), uses *ethne* in its basic sense of “tribes,” “nations,” or “peoples” and means “all peoples [without distinction]” or “all nations” [without distinction]. (p. 995)

Therefore, if one is going to take seriously Christ’s mandate to make disciples, he or she must not neglect the reach of disciple-making to the ends of the earth. The range of God’s command to Adam and Eve was also beyond the garden when He said, “subdue the earth” and confirmed to the disciples in Acts 1:8 when He gave them power to be His witnesses “to the ends of the earth.” Therefore, cultural intelligence is critical for building Christian leaders as it speaks to the breadth of obedience in the commission of Jesus.

David Livermore (2010), a leading scholar in developing cultural intelligence leaders, defines cultural intelligence (CQ) as “the capability to function effectively across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures” (p. 4). As noted above, emotional intelligence drives the leader to be more considerate of others, especially those from other cultures. For Christian leaders, the developmental aspect of leadership is building on their identity of Christ-centered humility and stewardship of His mandate. The global mandate entails viewing diverse cultures through the eyes of God rather than man. In the development of God-purposed cultural intelligence, note three areas of consideration: cross-cultural awareness, cross-cultural interdependence, and cross-cultural adaptability.

Cross-cultural awareness begins with a right understanding of the global

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diversity in Scripture. As noted earlier, the entire earth is in view with the Adamic commissioning. When God called Abram in Genesis 12:1–3, “all families of the earth” were part of that covenantal promise. In looking forward to the New Testament, Bock and Köstenberger (2012) state, “The Gospel message in Jesus’s name knows no national or racial barriers. It is no longer a Jewish message and hope. It starts from Jerusalem (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8) but is designed to go to the ends of the earth” (p. 158). A global perspective of Scripture helps the Christian leader first grasp its importance and gain a God-centered perspective on the nations. Developing cultural intelligence through cross-cultural awareness indicates that the leader should identify and learn about the cultures around him or her. The significant impact of globalization in today’s culture provides significant avenues to increase cultural intelligence (Lausanne Movement, 2004). Christian leaders should sharpen cultural intelligence by reading more about other cultures, listening to global perspectives on current events and news, and building relationships with people of other cultures towards participation in the global conversation on mission.

The culturally intelligent Christian leader should work towards cross-cultural interdependence. Many regions of the world, like sub-Saharan Africa, thrive on interdependence due to their collectivist mindset (Livermore, 2010, p. 237). When leaders operate in their silo and do not function interdependently, not only are they excluding cultures that thrive on interdependence but potentially neglect that which is in the very fabric of the Great Commission. Charles Davis (2015) believes that making disciples across cultures requires interdependence. He writes,

When disciples develop relational interdependence, real community flourishes, teamwork emerges, mutual trust and commitment build. We develop a collective vision both for the church and for mission, within which each individual has a specific and meaningful role. My individual work has value, because it contributes to our collective work. (Davis, 2015, p. 77)

God has ordained the global church to carry out His mission; therefore, the global church works interdependently to accomplish His purposes. Revelation 7:9 foretells a vision of Christ’s church worshiping the Lamb of God from every tribe, people, and language. Developing cultural intelligence means working together with people of other cultures.

God-purposed cultural intelligence includes development in cross-cultural adaptability. Jesus said in Luke 9:58, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Jesus’s statement of not having a home illustrates the adaptability of Jesus to take whatever situation, not settling in His own comforts, to fulfill His mission. Jesus

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issued these words just before sending out His disciples throughout the towns to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 10). In terms of the foundational core of Christian leadership, leaders must adapt to whatever circumstance to carry out the mission. Adapting begins in humility, recognizing that no culture is superior to another. Reflecting on basic cultural systems, Livermore notes correctly that most believe they have the correct answer on which system is right. He continues,

You don't need to be an expert on how the entire economic system works in every culture; but a general awareness of the differing ways in which economic systems are organized will enhance your ability to negotiate and develop a working relationship outside your home culture.

(Livermore, 2010, p. 84)

Cross-cultural thinking will certainly help when doing global business, but it is important for the Christian leader.

Cultural adaptability forces the Christian leader to be a learner of other cultures, working to understand language, morals, rules, and worldview, leading to a better understanding of how to make disciples cross-culturally. It also aids in understanding how the person of another culture reads Scripture and views its application. An ethnocentric view of life diminishes one's ability to make disciples across cultures and perpetuates a misdirection of God's purpose for the world. Therefore, it is essential to build Christian leaders with a God-purposed cultural intelligence that better equips them for their fundamental duty as a leader set apart by God in His Great Commission.

A Summary of Building Christian Leaders

Building Christian leaders includes focusing on God's intended purpose for His creation fashioned in the garden and then fulfilled in Christ. That foundation further declares that Christ gives authority to all those who are born again in Christ to carry out His divine mission to the nations. Therefore, all those who claim to be Christian must recognize that they are Christian leaders with the authority to make disciples. Christian leaders obey Christ's command in Matthew 28:19–20 and adapt certain skills that he or she could attain that help the disciple-maker become more effective in that task. Developing Christ-centered emotional intelligence and God-purposed cultural intelligence enables the Christian leader to display the person of Christ more aptly to those he or she is leading on a global scale. The church is the platform for building Christian leaders as the people of God collaborate to disciple one another and send more out into the world to carry out His mission.

The connecting thread of Christian leadership is the Gospel. Transformed disciples make disciples. Loving God with “all your heart, soul, mind, and strength”

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(Luke 10:27) is not possible apart from the work of Christ in one's life. One is not part of the church and cannot glorify God, the ultimate end of mankind, apart from being made new in Christ. As noted above, the practice of making disciples can be seen through the two summary commands of God (i.e., "love God" and "love others") and will no doubt require elaboration through the teaching the Scriptures, modeling Christ-like living, and shepherding the disciples to not be "lovers of the world" (1 John 2:15). The purpose of Christian leadership is the glory of God, which means the bar is set high for the leader. Peter Drucker (1974) is known for stating, "Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations" (p. 318). For the Christian leader, the standard for excellence is Christ, which is possible as He dwells within the life of every believer through the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the ability to obey is now possible because of the work of Christ in that Christian leader.

Conclusion

Enhancing the development of Christian leaders could include further topics such as time management, leading teams, public speaking, and more. Development of these skills helps the Christian leader increase in effectiveness for the glory of God. However, the operative question for every Christian leader is: "What does God desire?"—for that desire shapes the life and purpose for every Christ-follower. Even more, it helps the Christian leader keep priorities in check as the s/he faces an onslaught of opportunity in the journey of leadership. Rick Langer (2014) writes, "The theological roots of any biblical understanding of leadership must grow in the soil of God's authority. There is no authority that is not from God (Rom. 13:1). Therefore, human authority is always a delegated authority" (p. 68). As one rests in that authority, s/he can trust that wherever the Father directs is where the Christian leader must go. In considering that every Christian is a leader who builds other leaders through making disciples, it is now the joyful obligation of the church to carry out the Great Commission in leading the world to know and worship the one, true God.

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