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BETHEL UNIVERSITY
BETHEL SEMINARY ST. PAUL

THE DISCIPLINE OF APPLYING THE GOSPEL
FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE
IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP FOR TEAM AND
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

BY
MATTHEW P. ANDERSON
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

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DEFINITIONS

Discipline: An intentional activity or process within one's ability that is engaged in with the purpose to do that which is beyond one's own ability (e.g., servant leadership).¹

Gospel: Good news about what God has done in Jesus Christ for salvation. This good news includes the facts of Jesus Christ's birth (incarnation), perfect life (i.e., without sin), crucifixion, and resurrection from the dead.² It also includes the God-given interpretation of these facts, which include the reality that Christ was God's son and his death on the cross was in the place of humankind (substitutional) for the forgiveness of sin.³ The gospel is received by faith and restores people by sheer grace into a right relationship with God.

Gospel application: The intentional process of connecting the truth of the gospel to specific areas of life so as to live in obedience to God (i.e., loving God and loving others).

Sanctification: The life-long process of becoming more like Jesus in love for and dependence on God, love for others, and personal character (displayed by the Fruit of the Spirit).

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 200.

² Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster Press, 2000), 106-107.

³ Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, 106-107.

ABSTRACT

This research project looked at the relationship between the gospel and servant leadership development. The project sought to show the need for a process to develop servant leaders at the heart level and propose a servant leadership development model that uses the discipline of applying the gospel. A theological and biblical study revealed the heart to be the central feature of a person whereby faith and practice are directed. Love for God and others is a response to the revealed love of God in the gospel. A God-moved heart enables people to serve the needs of others first. Subsequently, the Christian life is to be one that continually applies the gospel as a discipline resulting in the Fruit of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul is a biblical example of a person transformed by the gospel from a non-servant to a servant leader.

Recent studies and developments of servant leadership literature are based on Robert Greenleaf's writings, which place the source of servant leadership in the heart of the person. Regrettably, much of the literature that has followed Greenleaf's vision for servant leadership focuses on servant leadership practices to the neglect of the leader's inner-heart formation. However, variations of a virtues model of servant leadership consider the inner disposition/character of the leader as the source of servant leadership practices. Patterson and Ayers put forth virtues models that have love as the catalyst for servant leadership practices.

Research data came from Westwood Community Church (WCC) in Excelsior, Minnesota, through an instrumental case study method including personal interviews with pastors/directors, the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) with WCC staff, and examination of organizational documents. Themes related to servant leadership motivation, development, and practices were identified. Pastors/directors indicated that the gospel has influenced the way they treat and respond to people. However, only two indicated that spiritual development was foundational to their leadership development. Therefore, the need for a gospel-based servant leadership development model was verified. The research indicated the importance of leader awareness, gospel clarity, and the need to move from a virtues-based to a faith-based model of servant leadership. The researcher proposed a gospel-based servant leadership development model.

To my wife, Elizabeth, who loved me, believed in me, encouraged me,
and reminded me throughout the entire doctoral process that God uses both the good and
challenging parts of life to accomplish his good and perfect plan

INTRODUCTION:
THE GOSPEL AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

A servant leadership model advocates putting the needs of others above the leader's own needs. A servant leader is a servant first because he or she possesses an inner motivation to serve. In light of this, the question, "Why does one put others first?" falls into the realm of leadership ontology. Much of the servant leadership literature, however, focuses on servant leadership practices and neglects the process of developing the inner heart of the leader. Therefore, there is a need to further explore servant leadership ontology and to develop a process that fosters a servant heart in leaders. The researcher seeks to explore the difference between putting others first as a practice and putting others first as an outflow of inner being. Is it, as Aristotle proposed, the practice of virtue (*arête*) by which one becomes virtuous?¹ Does one become a servant leader by practicing servant principles or virtues? The emphasis on servant leadership practices within the literature suggests, perhaps inadvertently, that it is possible.

However, in stark contrast to the emphasis in current servant leadership literature, the Bible and the Augustine tradition of Christianity, highlighted in the Protestant Reformation, stress the importance of the inner life. The origins of one's actions were of primary concern in these sources. For example, the Protestant reformer Martin Luther proposed a faith-based perspective on the origin of good works. The gospel is the factor that forms the inner life. Does one become a servant leader by performing actions or

¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1985), 33-34, 388.

because one has a servant heart? Servant leadership is more than practicing what “works”; it is an outflow of the new creation one becomes in Christ. It is incomplete to solely look at servant leadership practices to determine the presence of servant leadership. Inner motivation must be considered. If servant leadership is an outflow of being, it follows that a servant leadership development process or model be proposed that intentionally applies the gospel to one's leadership development and practice.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE NEED FOR A GOSPEL-BASED
SERVANT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The Problem and Its Context

Statement of the Problem

The problem this thesis addresses is the relationship between the gospel and servant leadership development. As a result, the researcher engaged in a theological and biblical study of the gospel's impact on servant leadership development. He reviewed relevant literature on servant leadership, servant leadership practices, leadership motivation, and leadership development. Next, he administered the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) at Westwood Community Church (WCC) in Excelsior, Minnesota, with its top leaders, managers, and workforce to ascertain the organizational health of the church. Thereafter, the researcher conducted interviews with pastors and directors from WCC regarding the gospel's role in servant leadership development. Finally, based on the project findings, the researcher proposes a model and process for servant leadership development, which uses the gospel and the discipline of applying the gospel to leadership as core sources for developing servant leaders.

Delimitations

The field research for this paper was limited to WCC, a Converge Worldwide-affiliated church. Leaders interviewed serve in either the role of a pastor or director at WCC. The focus of study for servant leadership models presented in relevant literature is in regard to servant leadership practices, motivation, and development.

Assumptions

The research for this thesis assumes that the Bible is God's revealed word to humankind regarding his will and eternal plan which includes creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration – and is, therefore, relevant to the research question.

Sub-problems

The first subproblem is identifying the gospel's impact on servant leadership development in the New Testament. The second subproblem is analyzing relevant literature on servant leadership, leadership development, and leadership motivation to determine if there is evidence that the leader's internal motivation has been considered in the development process. The third subproblem is discovering the gospel's role in individual leader's motivation to lead and leadership-development approaches. The fourth subproblem is creating a leadership development model that uses the gospel as its core motivation for authentic servant leadership.

Setting of the Project

The context of this project was WCC, a Converge Worldwide-affiliated church that actively pursues and engages in leadership development (through ministry programs and clearly stated organizational goals). WCC states in its 2013-2014 goals that they seek to develop more servant leaders and offers leadership development classes to the congregation at-large through Wellspring ministry.

The Importance of the Project

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

The researcher's two passions are the gospel and servant leadership. The researcher's life purpose is to live, and develop in others, a gospel-changed life of

service. Researching the relationship between a life of authentic service and the gospel excites and benefits the researcher personally. The researcher believes that leadership development shaped by the gospel leads to servant leadership. This project aims to answer the question: “How does one become a servant leader?” This project brings together what the Bible, current leadership literature, and practicing leaders say about inner motivation and the development of servant leaders.

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Context

The researcher’s ministry context is a growing church that seeks to develop servant leaders to support the lay ministry of the local church at Westwood Community Church. WCC values both leadership development and staff-supported lay leaders and workers. Constructing a gospel-based servant leadership development model fits WCC’s focus and could potentially provide a new and effective framework for achieving its leadership development goals.

The Importance of the Project to the Church at Large and Academic Community

There seems to be a lack of emphasis on internal motivation in leadership development in general, as well as in servant leadership literature. Servant leadership has its source within the individual. While there is much study on practices and values that uniquely inform and define servant leadership, the researcher desires to provide a model and process to fill this gap between leadership inner being and external practice. The New Testament focuses on how the gospel changes and creates new people (e.g., 2 Corinthians 5:17 calls people “new creatures” in Christ). Such a generation of new people results in new leaders. The gospel changes people from the inside out. Therefore, a leadership development model that is based on the life-changing truth of the gospel is

necessary to shift the focus to the source of a leader's practice. The research intends to bring the transforming emphasis of the gospel to the servant leadership stream of literature.

Research Methodology

This project was qualitative in nature. The researcher desired to acquire detailed information from the data sources to understand the relationship between the gospel and servant leadership development. The research method was an instrumental case study.¹ Research data included personal interviews, the OLA, and examination of organizational documents. The goal of the research was to identify themes among leaders related to leadership motivation, leadership development, and servant leadership practices to support the idea that inner motivation is important in leadership development and leadership motivation, derived from the gospel, drives servant leadership practices. Data collected from such an approach helped inform, along with the theological and biblical study, the formation of a gospel-based servant leadership development model. A case study approach provided the researcher flexibility in data collection.

The first step was to examine and argue the biblical and theological evidence for the gospel's impact on servant leadership development. The second step was to review relevant literature to discover and identify aspects of leadership development practices and models pertaining to the leader's inner motivation, specific leadership motivations, and servant leadership antecedents and practices. The third step was to develop research interview questions exploring the relationship between leadership development and leadership motivation and obtain organizational documents relevant to leadership

¹ Karin Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership* (Binley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2008), 59-60.

development. The fourth step was to conduct personal interviews with leaders (pastors and directors) of a local church. The fifth step gathered discoveries from the theological and biblical study, literature review, the OLA, personal interviews, and organizational documents to develop a servant leadership development model and process based on the discipline of applying the gospel to leadership.

CHAPTER TWO:
A THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATION
FOR THE GOSPEL'S IMPACT ON
SERVANT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Motivation Is a Matter of the Heart

Leadership Comes from Inner Motivation

Servant leaders are motivated to be servants first. It is important to formulate a leadership development model that impacts the potential leader's motivation center (i.e., the heart). The researcher believes that the Bible, particularly the gospel, by the work and power of the Holy Spirit, provides such a source of motivation. The dramatic change demonstrated in the life of the Apostle Paul provides an example from the New Testament of gospel-changed, authentic servant leadership. The theological and biblical evidence shows the need, and provides the basis for, leaders to intentionally apply the gospel to their leadership for servant leadership development.

The Importance and Meaning of the Heart in Scripture

Scripture provides an extensive look into the inner workings of people, the word "heart" designating the multifaceted, and yet rudimentary, part of the human person. Beyond the physical organ, the heart can refer to personality, intellect and memory, emotions, and the will.¹ This is a person's true self. Karl Barth concluded, "According to biblical usage the heart denotes the cent[er] of life in which a man is inwardly what he is,

¹ Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., "Heart," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1998), 368-369.

and from which he is also what he is outwardly, in all his acts and attitudes.”² The heart houses thoughts and desires. Dallas Willard calls the heart “the executive center of the self.”³ The heart flees from fears and seeks out comfort. The heart moves people one way or another when they decide and act. The heart’s importance is noted in the warning of Proverbs 4:23, which says, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”⁴ God searches (Ps. 139:23), and judges (Jer. 11:20 and 17:10) the heart of individuals. Philip Melanchthon accents the magnitude of the heart and its affections with this statement, “For since God judges hearts, the heart and its affections must be the highest and most powerful part of man.”⁵

Throughout the New Testament, the prominence of the heart is emphasized in Jesus’ teachings. When asked what the greatest commandment was in the Law, Jesus answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). Jesus puts the heart at the forefront of obeying God. A person’s relationship with and response to God is to be one of love with all his or her heart. Jesus also taught on the heart’s impact on a person’s spiritual and moral culpability, declaring in Matthew 15:18-20,

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.

² Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. 4.4, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1969), 8.

³ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 80.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

⁵ Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, in *Melanchthon and Bucer*, vol. 19, *The Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 29.

This teaching brings out the central problem of humanity: sinful actions spring forth from a sinful heart. Scripture states in Jeremiah 17:10, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” The heart makes people morally guilty.

The most significant point about the heart is that God desires to have the devotion and affection of people’s hearts. God says, “You shall have no other gods before me. . . . I the LORD your God am a jealous God” (Exod. 20:3, 5). According to Luther, when a person does not love and trust God supremely he has committed idolatry. Luther, in his treatment of the First Commandment in his *Larger Catechism*, writes:

If you have a heart that can expect of Him nothing but what is good, especially in want and distress, and that, moreover renounces and forsakes everything that is not God, then you have the only true God. If on the contrary, [the heart] cleaves to anything else, of which it expects more good and help than of God, and does not take refuge in Him but in adversity flees from Him, then you have an idol, another god.⁶

Idolatry is substituting another person, object, or status for God. Luther states, “Upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god.”⁷ He finishes his treatment of the First Commandment by saying, “Where the heart is rightly disposed toward God and this commandment is observed, all the others follow.”⁸ The outflow of one’s obedience to God’s commands depends on the observance of the First Commandment to have and worship no other gods but God. A heart that loves and trusts God above all else lives a life of obedience. Therefore, a heart rightly related to God will rightly relate to others in word and deed.

⁶ Martin Luther, *The Larger Catechism of Martin Luther* (Radford, VA: Wilder Publishing, 2008), 15.

⁷ Luther, *The Larger Catechism of Martin Luther*, 12.

⁸ Luther, *The Larger Catechism of Martin Luther*, 17.

Luther's emphasis on the heart suggests that it is the primary faculty of the human person for directing action toward others. What a person is comes out in what he or she does. G. C. Berkouwer notes that for Luther, "being antecedes action."⁹ A heart that loves and trusts God will act in a certain way. If a person's relationship with God directly impacts his or her relationship with others, it is then necessary to establish a right relationship with God as a first step to developing a servant's heart toward others. However, as noted above, the heart is corrupt and does not love properly.

Simon Chan notes that the Reformation utilized an Augustine understanding of sin as relational in essence (i.e., a matter of the heart).¹⁰ Sin is disaffection toward God. Chan cites Ephesians 2:1, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sin in which you once walked."¹¹ The heart is incapable of responding to God because it is "dead." Luther states, in Thesis 17 of his *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology*, "Man is by nature unable to want God to be God. Indeed, he himself wants to be God, and does not want God to be God."¹² A person should want God above all else, but does not. Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp posit, "We all want the wrong things, but God is in the business of changing what we want."¹³ Because people's hearts need to change, Scripture tells of a day when God will perform a miraculous work in people's hearts:

⁹ G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1952), 33.

¹⁰ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: A Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1998), 60-61.

¹¹ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 61.

¹² Martin Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," trans. Harold J. Grimm, vol. 31, *Luther's Works: Career of the Reformer: I*, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1957), 10.

¹³ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2006), 40.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to keep my rules (Ezek. 36:25-27).

The Affective Tradition of Augustine and Protestantism

Since the heart is foundational to Christian life and faith, it is necessary to develop a theology that builds on it. Affective theology builds on the theme of the heart's importance in salvation and subsequent Christian obedience to God's will. The affective tradition finds its initial development beyond Scripture in the writings of Augustine.¹⁴ Augustine placed the heart at the center of the Christian life. Ronald Frost notes, "In Augustine's model of the human will, the affective component is primary, so that the love of God is the motivating feature of salvation – God draws the elect to himself apart from any initiative on their part towards God."¹⁵ Augustine concluded that the affections were the primary director of human choice.¹⁶ Philippians 2:13 was one such scriptural text upon which Augustine based his idea of a God-moved will rather than a self-moved will: "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." God influences a person's affections to act and will obedience to God. Also in the affective model, a person is moved by what he or she loves. Action contrary to the heart is considered hypocrisy and a lie.¹⁷

¹⁴ R. N. Frost, "Ethics Class Notes – Fall 2004" (printed class notes for Contemporary Theology and Ethics course, Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Portland, OR, Fall 2004), 13.

¹⁵ Ronald N. Frost, "Aristotle's Ethics: The Real Reason for Luther's Reformation?," *Trinity Journal* (1997), 226.

¹⁶ Frost, "Aristotle's Ethics," 229.

¹⁷ Melancthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, 28.

Augustine wrote a number of works refuting his contemporary Pelagius (e.g., *A Treatise on Nature and Grace*).¹⁸ Central to their theological dispute was the nature and role of grace in salvation and Christian life, specifically regarding the will of man and woman.¹⁹ What moved the will? Was the will self-moved, thus able to choose to love or not love God in faith, as Pelagius held, or was the will moved to faith and love in God by God, as Augustine held? How did God's grace contribute to the will's ability to choose? For Pelagius, grace enabled the will to choose to love.²⁰ Augustine, however, saw grace as God's disclosure of love by the Holy Spirit which captured the heart's affections causing a person to respond in love and faith to God.²¹ For Augustine, the will was God-moved or love-moved rather than self-moved as a choice. The will, for Augustine, has no power but to choose what the heart loves most. The problem of sin, however, is disaffection towards God and love of self above all else. Frost states that for Augustine, "Sin is a loss of love for God – the 'hardened heart' – and grace is God's love brought to the soul by the Spirit himself."²² Self-love is broken, in Augustine's understanding, by the self-revelation or disclosure of God's love by the Holy Spirit. Frost states: "The will

¹⁸ Philip Schaffer, ed., *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, vol. 5, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st ser. (repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997).

¹⁹ Cairns E. Earle, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 131-132.

²⁰ Earle, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 131.

²¹ Frost, "Aristotle's Ethics," 229-230.

²² R. N. Frost, "Sin and Grace," in *Trinitarian Sounding in Systematic Theology*, ed. Paul Louis Metzger (New York, NY: T and T Clark, 2005), 105.

is viable only in response to God's revealed love."²³ This vivifying result of the love of God on the heart causes the will to respond appropriately to God.

Affective theology posits that a person chooses what he or she wants. The problem, as noted above by Augustine and Luther, is the heart does not want God and is captive to sin. Melanchthon called the affections a "despot."²⁴ The will is not free in that it is controlled by the affections; it is captive to the heart. The solution is new affections that enable the heart to love and serve God. This comes by the gospel through the Holy Spirit. For Augustine, according to Frost, "Grace is actually God's *immediate* disclosure of his love that transforms the will" [emphasis his].²⁵ The will is transformed by new affections. John Piper quotes Jonathan Edwards who defines affections as "the more vigorous and sensible exercise of the inclination and will of the soul."²⁶ Piper notes that Christian conversion entails a change of heart whereby the person experiences new affections. Saving faith is faith that receives Christ as both Savior and Treasure.²⁷ To cherish someone or something is a matter of the heart. Affective theology holds that a person is able to trust and love God, do good works, and love others as a response of the heart to the love of God manifested to him or her in the gospel of grace by the Holy Spirit.

Luther attacked the scholastic theology of his day because it had adopted the integration of Aristotle's categories of ethics and reason into Christian theology regarding

²³ Frost, "Sin and Grace," 103.

²⁴ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, 24.

²⁵ Frost, "Sin and Grace," 103.

²⁶ John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, 2003 ed. (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 89.

²⁷ Piper, *Desiring God*, 90.

the freedom of the will, good works, and justification.²⁸ The idea of the self-moved will in scholastic theology came from the writings of Thomas Aquinas who sought to integrate Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* with Christian theology.²⁹ Luther makes a powerful statement in Thesis 41 when he writes, "Virtually the entire *Ethics* of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace."³⁰ The ability to choose to act virtuously, and thus become righteous through works, is against the idea that the heart is "dead in ... trespasses" and sins (Eph. 2:4). The heart needs the grace of God first. In Thesis 76, Luther pronounces, "Every deed of the law without the grace of God appears good outwardly, but inwardly it is sin."³¹ Such deeds are sin because they are not done out of love for God. The heart does not naturally want God, as noted above. Therefore, without the grace of the revealed love of God, the most seemingly excellent deeds are performed from a heart that is disaffected from God and focused solely on self or towards another idol.

Philip Melanchthon, in his 1521 *Loci Communes Theologici*, follows and expands on Luther's ideas regarding the nature of the heart and will of humankind. Melanchthon makes the following charge against his contemporaries: "We ... have embraced Aristotle instead of Christ."³² The primary concern in this statement is the ability of the human will to love God in true faith. Melanchthon divides a person into two parts: the cognitive and the affections.³³ Regarding inner affections he notes, "Internal affections are not in our

²⁸ Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," 6.

²⁹ Frost, "Aristotle's Ethics," 225.

³⁰ Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," 12.

³¹ Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," 14.

³² Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, 23.

³³ Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, 23.

power, for by experience and habit we find that the will (*voluntas*) cannot in itself control love, hate, or similar affections, but affection is overcome by affection.”³⁴ If affections control the will, and thus actions, stronger affections are needed. The Holy Spirit introduces an overpowering affection. The attractiveness of God through the Spirit vivifies the affections within to respond in faith to God’s call in the gospel.³⁵ Effectual calling, as the Reformed tradition understands it, is expressed as an awakening of the heart’s affection to God so that God is embraced by faith.³⁶ Scripture proclaims, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4-5). Syntactically the subject, verb, and object are “God made alive us.” The Spirit’s awakening of the affections by grace moves one to respond to God with faith and love.

Right acts come from being made righteous by faith. Luther pronounces in Thesis 40 that “We do not become righteous by doing righteous deeds but, having been made righteous, we do righteous deeds.”³⁷ Luther further articulates these ideas in his “Heidelberg Disputation,” Thesis 25: “He is not righteous who does much, but he who, without work, believes much in Christ.”³⁸ Here faith in Christ is seen as a type of virtue, but this faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8). Similarly, Jesus declared, “No one can come

³⁴ Melancthon, *Loci Communes Theologici*, 27.

³⁵ Frost, “Aristotle’s Ethics,” 235.

³⁶ Walter A. Elwell, ed., “Order of Salvation,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 870.

³⁷ Luther, “Disputation Against Scholastic Theology,” 12.

³⁸ Martin Luther, “Heidelberg Disputation, 1518,” trans. Harold Grimm, vol. 31, *Luther’s Works: Career of the Reformer: I*, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1957), 55.

to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). Faith to believe in Jesus Christ is a gift from God. Luther goes on to explain Thesis 25 by stating:

For the righteousness of God is not acquired by means of acts frequently repeated, as Aristotle taught, but it is imparted by faith, for “He who through faith is righteous shall live” (Rom. 1[:17]), and “Man believes with his heart and so is justified” (Rom. 10[:10]). Therefore I wish to have the words “without work” understood in the following manner: Not that the righteous person does nothing, but that his works do not make him righteous, rather that his righteousness creates works.... Thus Rom. 3[:20] states, “No human being will be justified in His sight by works of the law,” and “For we hold that man is justified by faith apart from works of law” (Rom.3[:28]). In other words, works contribute nothing to justification. Therefore man knows that works which he does by such faith are not his but God’s [Scripture verses superimposed by editor].³⁹

For Luther, works done by faith in God’s righteousness in the gospel are God-moved.

Where does a servant nature come from? It does not come by practice but by faith. Faith produces works. One is rightly related to God, others, and the world by faith in the gospel of grace. The Spirit provides the power by disclosing the love of God in Christ, which kindles and shapes the affections of the heart towards God and outward to others in love. Scripture instructs people to consider, gaze at, and treasure the gospel and all of its vast implications for their lives and eternity (e.g., Heb. 12:2-3, Col. 3:1-4, Rom. 6:10-11, John 3:14-17, 1 Cor. 1:26-31). Faith creates the servant leader. Luther states in Thesis 90 that “The grace of God is given for the purpose of directing the will, lest it err even in loving God.”⁴⁰ It is possible to “love” God for the wrong reasons. Timothy Keller makes the point in his book *The Prodigal God* that it is possible to do all the right acts or works not out of love for God but as a means of getting blessing or favor from God.⁴¹

³⁹ Luther, “Heidelberg Disputation, 1518,” 55-56.

⁴⁰ Luther, “Disputation Against Scholastic Theology,” 15.

⁴¹ Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2008).

The Spirit's Influence on the Heart

Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit directly impacts the human heart with the gospel so that it responds to God with faith and love. In the Old Testament, the coming of the Holy Spirit was connected to the giving of a new heart: “And I [God] will give you a new heart....And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (Ezek. 36:26-27). This giving of a new heart is commonly called regeneration, which Wayne Grudem defines as “a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to [people].”⁴² Jesus told the Pharisee Nicodemus that he must be “born again” or “born of the Spirit” (John 3:3, 6). A new kind of life must come from the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 2:29, “But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.” God must do a work within the person so that he or she responds with obedient faith and love from the heart: “For with the heart one believes and is justified” (Rom.10:10). The Apostle Paul rejoiced in God’s work in the Roman Christians: “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). Paul qualifies their actions as coming from the heart.

As noted above, Augustine emphasized the Holy Spirit’s role in bringing the love of God to bear on the heart to produce faith and love. The Apostle Paul portrays the Holy Spirit’s work in Romans 5:5: “Hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

⁴² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 699.

Immediately after this statement the Apostle Paul describes the gospel, claiming “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6), then explaining that God showed “his love for us” in sending his Son to die for guilty sinners (Rom. 5:8). Likewise, Paul writes to the Corinthian church these words: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). It is not mere cognitive understanding that brings about faith, love, and right actions. There needs to be a heart understanding that only the Spirit can reveal. Berkouwer expands upon this idea: “God does not merely illuminate the mind of believers – confronting them with new data – but powerfully changes heart and will.”⁴³ The Spirit causes change by pouring the love of God demonstrated by the gospel into the hearts of men and women.

Virtues of the Heart

Character Comes from God

Virtues, as shown above, do not develop through practice but are given as a gift. God’s grace opens the heart to exercise the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13). The heart is transformed by the disclosure of God’s love in Christ by the Holy Spirit, and as a result, the inner self is moved to act in obedience. Willard defines character as “the inner directedness of the self.”⁴⁴ Character is the heart’s inclination to respond in a certain way, reflecting the truest dimension of the person. Regarding love, Willard explains, “Love is an emotional response aroused in the will by visions of the

⁴³ Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, 94.

⁴⁴ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 379.

good.”⁴⁵ Love, thus loving acts, is aroused within by the goodness of God displayed in the gospel. Frost notes that in the Bible, “Goodness isn’t treated as a feature of our behaviors but as a quality attributed to God alone. Our goodness, then, comes from relationship to His goodness.”⁴⁶ Goodness manifested in servant leadership is an outflow of the goodness of God within a person (i.e., the indwelling Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit is the life and character of God displayed through the heart filled with the love of God in the gospel. Character, then, is the goodness of God displayed in a person’s life.

Character Development as Spiritual Growth/Sanctification

Spiritual growth is the discipline of sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit. Willard presents a threefold model for spiritual growth, the “Golden Triangle,” that captures the dynamic of the Holy Spirit’s work in the life of the Christian.⁴⁷ He explains, “The function of the Holy Spirit is, first, to move within our souls, and especially our minds, to present the person of Jesus and the reality of his kingdom. This is through the word of the gospel.”⁴⁸ He goes on to say that “the action of the Spirit must be accompanied by our response.”⁴⁹ The Apostle Paul instructed the Philippians to “work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). The “working out” refers to obedience since the Philippians are to obey the will of God just as Christ did when as servant he submitted himself to the will of God, even to the point of death (Phil. 2:8, 12). This working out of one’s salvation through obedience, however, is not by a person’s

⁴⁵ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 323.

⁴⁶ Frost, “Ethics Class Notes,” 12.

⁴⁷ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 347.

⁴⁸ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 348.

⁴⁹ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 348.

own strength or ability. Berkouwer paraphrases Karl Barth's position with these words: "Progress in sanctification never meant working out one's own salvation under one's own auspices; on the contrary, it meant working out one's own salvation with a rising sense of dependence on God's grace."⁵⁰ Obedience is always a work of God. The discipline of spiritual growth, on the part of the Christian, is depending on the grace of God.

The Discipline of Applying the Gospel to One's Life

There is a need for discipline in the Christian life. Willard aptly defines discipline as "an activity in our power that we do to enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort."⁵¹ He notes that spiritual disciplines are "designed to help us be active and effective in the spiritual realm of our own heart, now spiritually alive by grace, in relation to God and his kingdom."⁵² Scripture indicates that Christians need to keep the reality of God and his love toward them in Christ continuously before their mind and hearts. Willard emphasizes Scripture's appeal: "If anyone is to love God and have his or her life filled with that love, God in his glorious reality must be brought before the mind and kept there in such a way that the mind takes root and stays fixed there."⁵³ The Apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers would be granted the ability to experience the love of Christ in their hearts and be made complete:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the

⁵⁰ Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, 112.

⁵¹ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 200.

⁵² Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 353.

⁵³ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 324.

breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:14-19).

The Apostle demonstrates the need to pray for the Holy Spirit's strength to comprehend the love of Christ. Christians must intentionally gaze at Christ in the gospel allowing him (and it) to affect their lives. "Accordingly," Willard says, "we bring the heart-wrenching goodness of God, his incomprehensible graciousness and generosity, before the mind of disciples by helping them see and understand the person of Jesus"⁵⁴ Willard concludes, "The key, then, to loving God is to *see* Jesus, hold him before the mind with as much fullness and clarity as possible."⁵⁵ Paul, in the above passage, emphasizes the importance of comprehending and knowing the love of Christ for mature Christian living. That which enables Christians to resemble Christ in their service toward others is the supernatural presence of the love of Christ in their hearts.

The Christian life begins, lives, and ends by faith in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Berkouwer notes that "there is a danger that, when the victory of Christ is lost sight of, the warfare degenerates into self-reliant activism."⁵⁶ As seen in the Galatian church, the danger is to begin with faith and end with law. Paul asks in Galatians 3:3, "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" This emphasizes the Christian's continual need to return to the "victory of Christ" in the gospel by the Spirit. Keller, in considering how the Apostle Paul motivates his readers to change their behaviors, writes, "[The Apostle Paul] moves their hearts through a spiritual

⁵⁴ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 334.

⁵⁵ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 334.

⁵⁶ Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, 63.

recollection of the gospel.”⁵⁷ He offers 2 Corinthians 8:8-9 as a prime example. The Apostle Paul appeals to the Corinthians with the gospel to be generous in giving writing, “I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:8-9). The reality of the gospel that Christ became poor to make Christians rich kindles the heart to give as Christ gave. Regarding motive for obedience to God, Keller writes, “In the short run, we should simply obey God because it is his right and due. But in the long run, the ultimate way to shape our lives and escaped the deadly influence of our besetting sins is by moving the heart with the gospel.”⁵⁸ The Apostle did not command obedience but motivated it through presenting the gospel to his listeners.

Character resides in the heart’s inclinations and is always the Fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-25). Willard talks about character as an automatic behavior formed by discipleship to Jesus. It cannot be assumed, however, that a person becomes formed as if to possess some kind of “glow.” A person does not possess the Fruit of the Spirit but displays the will and work of God through his or her actions. It is never the fruit of one’s strength or inner strength of character. It is always action originating from God. The Christian’s part is “abiding” in Christ as Jesus called his followers to do in John’s Gospel (John 15:4). That is the discipline of dependence. It is depending on the gospel. It is keeping the gospel ever before one’s self so that it changes

⁵⁷ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 68.

⁵⁸ Keller, *Center Church*, 70.

the heart. Then one can love and, in effect, serve others authentically. A person never becomes able to do righteous deeds on his or her own from an established character. It is always a result of God moving the Christian by his Spirit as the Christian trusts the gospel of God's goodness. It is as one warms and kindles him or herself at the fires of the love of God in Christ Jesus by the Spirit that he or she bears the fruit of Christ's own character and obedience.⁵⁹

The Apostle Paul: A Case Study for the Gospel-changed Servant Leader

A look at the Apostle Paul's pre-Christian life would indicate that his life work and focus were to enhance his status and sense of accomplishment. Paul, who was first called Saul, was rapidly succeeding as a Pharisee. He admits that professionally he was advancing far beyond his contemporaries (Gal. 1:14). Paul states in his letter to the Philippians that he had more reason than anyone else to put confidence in his "flesh" – self-sufficient, religious observance, and moral mode of life (Phil. 3:4). One senses, when reviewing Paul's list of "flesh" items to put confidence in, that Paul found his place, security, sense of importance, and righteousness from his self-advancing pursuits (Phil. 3:4-6). As a leader Paul appears self-focused, his actions to imprison and execute Christians driven by a sense of rightness disregarding others. Paul, when writing to his opponents, stated, "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem" (Acts 26:9-10). From biblical evidence, his main concern was to maintain the way of self-righteous adherence to the traditions of his people.

⁵⁹ Ronald N. Frost, "The Bruised Reed: By Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)," in *The Devoted Life: An Invitation to the Puritan Classics*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Randall C. Gleason (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 88.

Paul's inner mode was transformed by the grace of God, and he commented, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10). He had worked diligently to earn acceptance from God as Saul the Pharisee and persecutor of the Christian church. His sense of success was in his zeal for the pharisaic traditions – works righteousness. Paul discovered the love of God on the road to Damascus where he encountered the gospel, the good news of what God had done through his Son Jesus whom he was persecuting, and God changed him (Acts 9:5). His acceptance before God was now based on the finished work of Christ on the cross for his sins, not on his own works of righteousness based on the law (Rom. 3:21-22). This freed Paul to live and lead as a servant, his influence no longer based on self-driven, career-advancing, striving- in-the-flesh works of righteousness. A changed heart through the gospel was his inner motivation to serve and seek the best in others, his love for them a result of his prior reception of divine love (Rom. 5:5).

Paul bemoaned the unbelief of his fellow Jews who displayed a zeal for God not based on gospel. Their life mode was establishing their own righteousness by works rather than receiving the righteousness by faith revealed in Christ (Rom. 10:1-4). Because of sin the human heart is self-focused and self-promoting, religious (works-righteousness) or irreligious (rebellion toward law). It is curved in on itself, self-love its natural inclination.

This gospel that did its first work at salvation needs to continue to do its daily work of sanctification. Paul never forgot the work of God in his life through the gospel. He was daily dependent on the gospel, applying its truth to his circumstances, living out of a righteousness not his own but by faith in the Son of God (Phil. 3:9 and Gal. 5:20).

Likewise, the servant leader lives her life by faith through the power of the Holy Spirit. This life of faith is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who loves her and gave himself for her (Gal. 2:20). The life of the authentic servant leader is continuous gospel application, being expressed in the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:6, 22-25). In 2 Corinthians 5:20, the call to be reconciled to God is a call to stop living out of the flesh and embrace by faith what God has done in Christ, freeing people to be servant leaders. They are not self-motivated but gospel-motivated, like the Apostle Paul, operating out of a changed heart transformed by faith in the gospel.

God’s Love in the Gospel Frees People to Serve

The love of God is made known through the gospel reception so as to transform the heart. The Holy Spirit’s work to strengthen a person’s “inner being,” so that the infinite love of God in Christ may be known (supernaturally and experientially), produces a gospel-changed person who is – like Jesus was – others-focused (Eph. 3:16). Theology professor and writer Paul Louis Metzger states that the Christian’s union with Christ by faith enables him to give freely to others because he is “unburdened by anxieties bound up with [his own] performance.”⁶⁰ The gospel frees the Christian to serve others, which is what the Apostle Paul writes to the Galatian Christians: “You, my brothers, were called to be free....serve one another in love” (Gal. 5:13). The focus is not on one’s self. The fear of not knowing one is accepted before God is removed by the truth of Christ’s work on one’s behalf. One does not need to be driven to bolster or advance his or her own self-

⁶⁰ Paul Louis Metzger, *Connecting Christ: How to Discuss Jesus in a World of Diverse Paths* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 137.

promotion. The gospel-changed individual is driven by the love of Christ – “Christ’s love compels us” (2 Cor. 5:14).

If one is motivated to serve out of love it must be a love that comes from a changed heart by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; 8:1-11). Such leadership is supernatural and is Christian (or “of God”). “Servant” leadership as moralism resembles “authentic” Christian servant leadership, but it is not the same. Robert Greenleaf’s original vision of the servant leader (which will be seen in Chapter Three of this research paper) saw servant leadership coming from one’s own being. It was not mere acts but a display of the real person. Motivation to serve must come from the gospel and love for God, as Scott Thomas and Tom Wood write:

Gospel-centered productivity is not achieved through using others, manipulating them, or leading them by force. Neither is it driven by a need to produce results to promote one’s own security or comfort. Rather, the efforts are rooted in the gospel and motivated by love for God and a humble willingness to serve others, to seek their good, and to put their needs before our own.⁶¹

A person cannot be servant first if he or she is trying to get his or her needs, security, and importance from the leadership role. A person must be resting in the gospel in order to be a true servant to others, for the other person’s good (not his or her own). It is impossible to be selfless when a person is trying to establish his or her self through others. Servant leadership, then, must flow out from an established security through the gospel, and as such, servant leadership cannot be the basis for one’s security. Servant leadership derives from the person’s identity in Christ.

⁶¹ Scott Thomas and Tom Wood, *Gospel Coach: Shepherding Leaders to Glorify God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 80.

Chapter Summary

The Bible teaches that the heart is the central feature of a person whereby his or her faith and practice are directed. According to the Bible, the heart, because of sin, needs to be changed so that it loves and obeys God and, in turn, loves and serves others. Similarly, the affective tradition of Christianity posits that a person's action flows from a heart that loves God as response to the revealed love of God in the gospel by the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is to be one that continually applies the gospel (i.e., working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling) as a discipline. It is God who moves one to action according to his will. The Fruit of the Spirit (i.e., love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, etc.) is God's goodness displayed through the life of the abiding Christian. These God-moved qualities enable people to serve the needs of others first. The Apostle Paul is a prime case study of a person being transformed by the gospel from a non-servant leader to a servant leader. Just as Paul was freed by the gospel to serve out of love the needs of others first, so must the servant leader also be moved from the love of God in the gospel.

CHAPTER THREE:
LITERATURE REVIEW OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP THEORY AND PRACTICE,
SERVANT LEADERSHIP MOTIVATION, AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT

Servant Leadership Theory and Practice

The headwaters of servant leadership literature flow from Robert Greenleaf's 1977 publication of *Servant Leadership*.¹ Greenleaf proposed an idea of leadership applicable to both for-profit and non-profit organization. With this leadership model placing the leader as servant first, he envisioned a future society that flourished because it was led by leaders who held the needs and growth of others as the primary responsibility of leadership. Greenleaf notes that his idea of the leader being servant first emerged from his reading of Hermann Hesse's book *Journey to the East*.² The main character Leo sustains a group of travelers by his servant acts and was, in essence, the group's leader. Greenleaf proposes that "[Leo] was servant first because that was what he was *deep down inside*. ... His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away. He was servant first" [emphasis his].³ The proof, for Greenleaf, that true servant leadership is present is: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being

¹ Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 25th Anniversary ed. (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2002), 21.

² Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 21.

³ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 21-22.

served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”⁴

A key component in Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership is the origin of servant leadership behavior. As noted above, the servant leader has a servant nature, he or she is not leader first and then servant. Greenleaf conceptualized servant leadership as originating from the leader’s inner being, thus servant leadership consists of acts that represent the leader’s true being: servant. Not only is servant leadership a new kind of leadership, it puts forth a new kind of leader: “It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”⁵ For Greenleaf there seems to be a clear difference between conscious choice for and a person’s nature. Contrasting leader-first and servant-first types of leadership, he claims, “The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served.”⁶ Through the acts of the servant-first leader, the proposed result is followers who become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants.

Love is an important element in Greenleaf’s vision of servant leadership. Greenleaf uses the phrase of “unlimited liability” to describe his idea of love within a community context:

Love is an undefinable term, and its manifestations are both subtle and infinite. But it begins, I believe, with one absolute condition: unlimited liability! As soon as one’s liability for another is qualified to any degree, love is diminished by that much. ... All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass

⁴ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 27.

⁵ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 27.

⁶ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 27.

movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group.⁷

The servant leader loves by taking responsibility for serving the highest good of others in the context of community. Therefore, servant leadership will entail the building of community through the loving service of servant leaders.

Servant leadership literature has developed and expanded since Greenleaf's original publication on the subject. The work of Jim Laub, more recently, has added to the literature of servant leadership by honing a definition for servant leadership and providing clarification of what servant leadership looks like in practice within an organization. Laub set out in his research to answer three questions: "How is servant leadership defined?"; "What are the characteristics of servant leadership?"; and "Can the presence of these characteristics within organizations be assessed through a written instrument?"⁸ To answer these questions, Laub conducted a three-part Delphi survey with fourteen recognized contributors and teachers in the area of servant leadership, including Larry Spears, Ann McGee-Cooper, Duane Trammell, Jim Kouzes, Bill Millard, Lea Williams, Joe Roberts, Jack Lowe, Pam Walker, Ann Liprie-Spence, Deborah Campell, Ted Ward, and Bishop Bennett Sims.⁹ The fourteen participants listed at least ten servant leadership characteristics and received an extensive literature review of servant leadership characteristics to consider. Participants were instructed to add to their own list of servant leadership characteristics any additional characteristics from the literature

⁷ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 52-53.

⁸ Jim Laub, "From Paternalism to the Servant Organization: Expanding the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) Model," *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (August 2003), accessed May 5, 2009, http://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/laub_from_paternalism.pdf, 2.

⁹ Laub, "From Paternalism to the Servant Organization," 2.

review that they deemed as being representative of servant leadership. Finally, Laub asked each participant to rate each characteristic of servant leadership on his or her completed list.

From this study Laub defined servant leadership “as an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader.”¹⁰ He also distilled six main characteristics of servant leadership: the servant leader values people, develops people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, and shares leadership.¹¹ An initial Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) was constructed using the list of servant leadership characteristics that the fourteen participants rated from “necessary” to “essential.”¹² The final OLA consisted of sixty items with an additional six items used to measure job satisfaction.¹³ Testing of the OLA showed it to be reliable and viable for servant leadership research.¹⁴

Servant Leadership Motivation

Leadership motivation involves the inner workings of a leader. The inner working of the leader is critical to this study because leadership behavior, according to Greenleaf, flows from the leader’s nature, (i.e., servant nature). However, according to Michale Ayers, there is a deficiency of research in this particular area.¹⁵ Most research examines behaviors, principles, and practices but not the components of the leader’s inner life. This

¹⁰ Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 3.

¹¹ Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 3.

¹² Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 4.

¹³ Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 4.

¹⁴ Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 4.

¹⁵ Michale R. Ayers, “Agapao in Servant Leadership,” *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (May 2008), accessed May 5, 2009, http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2008/ayers.pdf, 12.

type of study into the originating and inner workings of a leader is described as the ontology of leadership. Ayers provides this definition: “Ontology of Leadership is the study of the inner disposition of leaders.”¹⁶ He adds, “Servant leadership converges with the theory of ontology of leadership as it explains expressed behavior that flows from the servant character.”¹⁷ The study of leadership ontology holds promise in answering why leaders lead as servant first versus leader first.

Kathleen Patterson presented a virtues model of servant leadership to address the matter of leadership behaviors coming forth from the inner qualities of a person’s character. Patterson, citing Whetstone, writes, “A virtue is qualitative characteristic that is part of one’s character, something within a person that is internal, almost spiritual.”¹⁸ Patterson proposed servant leadership as consisting of seven virtues: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service.¹⁹ Unique to Patterson’s theory of servant leadership is the “processional pattern” that these virtues follow. Each virtue, starting with agapao love, cascades to the next ending with the virtue of service. One virtue leads to the next, then to the next, and so forth. Patterson’s model expands the idea of a certain kind of leadership practice flowing from an antecedent characteristic or inner state.

James D. Lanctot and Justin A. Irving continue the study of servant leadership as a virtues model. They highlight the distinction that a virtues approach specifically studies

¹⁶ Ayers, “Agapao in Servant Leadership,” 12.

¹⁷ Ayers, “Agapao in Servant Leadership,” 12.

¹⁸ Kathleen Patterson, “Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model,” *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings* (August 2003), accessed May 5, 2009, http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/patterson_servant_leadership.pdf, 2.

¹⁹ Patterson, “Servant Leadership,” 2.

personal attributes and character traits (i.e., being) rather than behavior (i.e., doing).²⁰

They propose the following definition of a virtue:

A set of related personal attributes or dispositions that (a) is universal and not contextual, (b) has moral implications that extend beyond the individual, (c) has recognition that possessing it without excess is considered good and lacking it is considered harmful, and (d) can be attained through practice.²¹

Lanctot and Irving present a character/virtue model based on a Judeo-Christian worldview that is comprised of virtues observed in both the Old and New Testaments.²²

The categories of virtues include: integrity, discernment, love, respect, humility, diligence, temperance, and courage.²³ Each category attaches subsets of behavior. The main idea is that servant leadership behavior emanates from the leader's internal character/virtue or state of being. Lanctot and Irving's fourth component in their definition of virtue is that it "can be attained through practice."²⁴ It is compared, by L. Strang, to forming a habit.²⁵ By doing good, one establishes a character or virtue of being good. It is unclear how one begins the process of forming virtues. Leaders must look to a mentor who models virtuous actions, such as Jesus' example mentioned by Lanctot and Irving, for doing good in order to form a being that is good (character/virtue).²⁶ Further

²⁰ James D. Lanctot and Justin A. Irving, "Character and Leadership: Situating Servant Leadership in a Proposed Virtues Framework," *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (July 2007), accessed July 21, 2013, http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2007/lanctot-irving.pdf, 2.

²¹ Lanctot and Irving, "Character and Leadership," 3.

²² Lanctot and Irving, "Character and Leadership," 9, 10.

²³ Lanctot and Irving, "Character and Leadership," 11.

²⁴ Lanctot and Irving, "Character and Leadership," 3.

²⁵ Lanctot and Irving, "Character and Leadership," 3.

²⁶ Lanctot and Irving, "Character and Leadership," 5.

work in clarifying definitions needs to be pursued in the consideration for the philosophical grounding of servant leadership as a virtues model.

Ayers' analysis of Patterson's virtues model of servant leadership posits the idea that servant leadership behavior results from one's response to God's demonstrated love in Jesus Christ. Ayers notes that in Patterson's model, the leader's love "serves as the independent variable and possesses a priori value as an imperative."²⁷ Ayers' study provides an overview of the concept of "love" within secular and religious contexts. He concludes, after an examination of the Christian concept of "love" in the Bible, that "by experiencing God's love (i.e., by faith appropriate the love supremely expressed through the sacrificial death of Jesus), Christians are to respond in deep gratitude with passionate love for God, and selfless, sacrificial love for others."²⁸ He further suggests that "leader agapao [love] serves as the catalyst for leadership that benefits others and evokes response within them."²⁹ The leader displays servant leadership practices out of the inner virtue of love, a response to the love of God demonstrated matchlessly in the death of Christ for sinners. The foundational virtue of love is formed by an inner response to the love of God. In this model virtue is formed not from doing but receiving and responding.

Servant Leadership Development

Right Environments

One proposed pathway of servant leadership development is the need for the right environment. Greenleaf, in his *Teacher as Servant*, pictured servant leadership development as occurring within the medium of a supervised environment that allows the

²⁷ Ayers, "Agapao in Servant Leadership," 2.

²⁸ Ayers, "Agapao in Servant Leadership," 9.

²⁹ Ayers, "Agapao in Servant Leadership," 11.

student to both learn theory and engage in servant leadership practices.³⁰ Servant leadership development entails learning concepts, developing skill capacities (e.g., listening, empathy, collaboration, and contemplation), and experiential learning.³¹ All of this happens within community. Servant leaders are formed by learning and doing servant leadership practices while being served at the same time by others within the community. Similarly, Harold L. Longenecker postulates that the development of servant leaders requires a climate of authentic servant leaders (Jesus as the archetype), a formed relationship (followers are with servant leaders), a bonded group (community), and imitative learning (discipleship/mentorship).³² Likewise, Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and Ken McElrath refer to environments of grace, which they describe as follows:

Most people know an environment of grace when they see it. They simply point to the results: people feel safe, they grow up, they trust each other, they live authentically, they celebrate each other, they laugh a lot, they produce better.... People feel empowered. They sense that who they are is OK, even though they know greater things are expected of them. They perceive the freedom to make important contributions, even when their suggestions require significant changes or their questions test long-held assumptions. They discern a positive spirit that acts as a catalyst in their soul, giving them a sense of hope that “here is a place where I belong.” This is home.³³

Their description of environments of grace mirrors, in many ways, Greenleaf’s vision for servant leadership: followers become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more

³⁰ Hamilton Beazley and Julie Beggs, “Teaching Servant-Leadership,” in *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the 21st Century*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2002), 55.

³¹ Beazley and Beggs, “Teaching Servant-Leadership,” 57-60.

³² Harold L. Longenecker, *Growing Leaders by Design: How to Use Biblical Principles for Leadership Development* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Resources, 1995), 31-36.

³³ Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and Ken McElrath, *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 30-31.

likely to become servants. The presence of servant leadership is verified by its results. The right environment changes people to be servant first rather than leader first.

Personal Awareness

A number of servant leadership practitioners describe the development of servant leadership as a process of moving away from self to focusing on others, a process that manifests itself in numerous ways. The assumed leadership problem is a leader's inclination to be self-focused. Such a development approach requires great personal awareness. Joyce L. Ndoria lists Larry Spears' ten central characteristics of servant leadership, of which awareness is one.³⁴ Part of awareness, for Spears, is to be "sharply awake and reasonably disturbed about one's self."³⁵ Similarly, James Autry, when asked how leaders can improve on developing their own servant's heart, said that the "move to the servants heart is a move away from ego."³⁶ He implies the natural tendency to lead out of one's ego by using the language of "overcoming acting out of ego."³⁷ This requires development of the inner life. A leader nurtures the inner life through silence, mediation, reflection, prayer, yoga, etc. He highlights the first step of identifying when one is acting out of the ego.

Awareness is important if one knows there is a natural proclivity toward a self-centered action. This intentional mindfulness requires a continual examination of one's

³⁴ Joyce L. Ndoria, "Servant Leadership: A Natural Inclination or a Taught Behavior," *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (August 2004), accessed December 9, 2013, http://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference_proceedings/servant_leadership_roundtable/2004pdf/ndoria_joyce_servant.pdf, 3.

³⁵ Ndoria, "Servant Leadership," 3.

³⁶ Larry Spears and John Noble, "Love and Work: A Conversation with James A. Autry," in *Practicing Servant Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness*, ed. Larry Spears and Michele Lawrence (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 67.

³⁷ Spears and Noble, "Love and Work," 56.

actions throughout the day.³⁸ For example, Autry asks questions of followers rather than providing his own solutions to work-related problems.³⁹ He knows his proclivity is to do the work himself; therefore, the discipline of asking questions helps him regulate his ego. Autry advocates that one conditions his or her heart to act as servant first. He does not give a specific way to do this other than listing various ways people try to focus on the inner life. Awareness requires focused times of reflection and self-examination.

Autry also suggests imitating leaders one admires as being others-focused. He states that one has to “start with what *you yourself* are wanting to become” [emphasis his].⁴⁰

Awareness enables the leader to see where he or she is internally so that intentional acts can then be chosen to move one away from self and toward others for their betterment.

When considering developing the inner life it is imperative to have awareness and understanding of one’s own destructive leadership tendencies. Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima describe these harmful predispositions as the dark side of leadership.⁴¹ The building blocks of the dark side of leadership are pride, selfishness, self-deception, and wrong motives.⁴² They describe the dark side of leadership as “a natural result of human development” that passes through four stages: needs, traumatic experiences, existential debt, and dark side development.⁴³ Leaders become a particular kind of person

³⁸ Spears and Noble, “Love and Work,” 57.

³⁹ Spears and Noble, “Love and Work,” 58.

⁴⁰ Spears and Noble, “Love and Work,” 69.

⁴¹ Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

⁴² McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 59-63.

⁴³ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 28, 79.

through this process, indicated in the ways they respond to daily challenges. McIntosh and Rima list five types of leaders: compulsive, narcissistic, paranoid, codependent, and passive-aggressive.⁴⁴ These inner workings of a person are revealed under pressure. They conclude, “When we are outfitted with a proper understanding of our unique dark side, possess a willingness to honestly examine ourselves, and apply divine, spiritual truth, we can overcome our dark side and drastically minimize its negative effects in our life and leadership.”⁴⁵

Awareness is essential to overcoming one’s non-servant, dark side inclinations. McIntosh and Rima offer five steps for leaders to take in the process of overcoming their dark side of leadership, which include acknowledging one’s dark side, examining the past, resisting the poison of expectation, practicing progressive self-knowledge, and understanding one’s identity in Christ.⁴⁶ These, along with Scripture reading, personal retreats, journaling, and devotional reading, are some spiritual disciplines that cultivate the inner life of a leader.⁴⁷ McIntosh and Rima postulate, “Christian growth takes place as we appropriate what we already are in Christ (our position) by faith and then practice that in our earthly lives (our condition).”⁴⁸ Inner development comes by disciplined activity driven by self-awareness.

⁴⁴ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 146.

⁴⁵ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 157.

⁴⁶ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 165-219.

⁴⁷ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 200-204.

⁴⁸ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 214.

Practice of Servant Leadership

Jim Collins, in his research of companies that went from good to great, discovered a certain kind of leader behind the companies' transition and subsequent longstanding success, calling such leaders "level 5" leaders.⁴⁹ These leaders possessed both "a compelling modesty" and "an unwavering resolve."⁵⁰ These two qualities dramatically impacted the organizational workforce culture beyond that of what mere highly capable leaders can produce. Collins entertains the question, "Can Level 5 [leaders] be developed?"⁵¹ He surmises there are people who possess the potential to become Level 5 leaders and others who simply do not. Collins's research, however, cannot answer how those who have the potential develop into Level 5 leaders. He directs developing leaders to practice the good-to-great disciplines, and he suggests, by doing so, that practicing leadership principles will create a certain kind of person.

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner state that leadership is "*an observable set of skills and abilities....* And any skill can be strengthened, honed, and enhanced, given the motivation and desire, along with practice and feedback, role models, and coaching" [emphasis theirs].⁵² They break exemplary leadership down to five practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.⁵³ The way that a person develops as a leader, in this view, is through practicing

⁴⁹ Jim Collins, "Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve," *Harvard Business Review* (January 2001), 68.

⁵⁰ Collins, "Level 5 Leadership," 72.

⁵¹ Collins, "Level 5 Leadership," 75.

⁵² James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 4th ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 339-340.

⁵³ Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 14.

leadership skills. An exemplary leader is one who is able to develop and perform these five leadership practices. Similarly, Spears distilled from Greenleaf's writings the ten characteristics of listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community, as "central to the development of servant-leaders."⁵⁴ Spears assumes that practicing and developing these characteristics make one a servant leader. In other words, a person becomes (e.g., a servant leader) by what he or she does. Collins, Kouzes, Posner, and Spears represent a large section of leadership literature that puts forth the idea that leadership practices form the leader.

Chapter Summary

Recent studies and developments within servant leadership literature build on the writings of Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf saw servant leadership as coming from a person's heart or inner being. However, much of the literature that has followed Greenleaf's robust vision for servant leadership focuses primarily on servant leadership practices to the neglect of inner-heart formation of the leader. Variations of a virtues model of servant leadership consider the inner disposition or character of the leader as the source of servant leadership practices. Lanctot and Irving develop a Judeo-Christian-based virtues model that categorizes servant virtues and offers expanded descriptions of each virtue. The basic premise in their virtues model is that virtues are developed through practice and the imitating of servant leader role models. Patterson and Ayers, however,

⁵⁴ Larry C. Spears, "The Understanding and Practice of Servant-Leadership," in *Practicing Servant Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 13-16.

put forth virtue-based servant leadership models that have love as the catalyst for servant leadership practices.

Regarding the development of servant leaders, numerous authors proposed the need for having the right environment that fosters servant leadership. Also, personal awareness of one's non-servant leadership tendencies was thought to be a key part in developing the inner life of a servant leader. Finally, performing servant leadership practices was suggested for developing servant leaders. The idea, much like Lanctot and Irving's virtues model, is that if one does specific leadership practices he or she will become a certain kind of leader, whether that be a "Level 5" leader, an exemplary leader, or a servant leader.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Focus

The researcher seeks to study the phenomenon of servant leadership development and practices as it relates to the gospel. He assumes that a person can develop as a certain kind of leader who exhibits servant leadership practices as a natural outflow of inner being. The researcher aims to understand the underlying realities behind a person's servant leadership development and practices. Westwood Community Church (WCC) was selected for this research because of the researcher's personal experience with the ministries offered and personal knowledge of the organization's stated goal to produce servant leaders. The researcher has personally experienced servant leadership practices through WCC's Wellspring ministry, care ministry training, and Lifekeys classes.

Research Type: Instrumental Case Study

A qualitative method was used to study the phenomenon of servant leadership development and practice at WCC. The researcher believes that an instrumental case-study approach best addresses the research problem because servant leadership development is a complex phenomenon requiring deep investigation from multiple data points.¹ As an instrumental type of case study, WCC is not the primary focus but rather instrumental in researching the phenomenon of servant leadership development as it

¹ Paul D. Leady and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, 2005), 133.

relates to the gospel.² The data points used included WCC's OLA results, personal interviews of pastors and ministry directors, and organizational documents. A case study method provided the most flexibility for collecting data; it also matched the researcher's personal characteristics. Case study researchers need to be good listeners and possess the ability to process large amounts of data into a synthesized conclusion.³ A case study approach also allowed the researcher to investigate the research topic from a theory-based starting point.

The research sought to identify and validate the gospel's role in servant leadership development and also the need to incorporate the discipline of applying the gospel to one's servant leadership development and practice. To do this the researcher looked for patterns, themes, and omissions within the raw data. The researcher analyzed areas of agreement and discrepancies between the OLA and pastor/director interviews. This approach was taken to gain understanding of the whole case in relation to the research topic.

Use of the OLA for Research

The research approach included WCC's pastors, ministry directors, and staff, all levels of which were represented in the OLA. The results enabled the researcher to identify WCC's organizational health in relation to perceived servant leadership practices. The OLA gave a picture of servant leadership practices within WCC. The designated health from the OLA results is from the perspective of the workforce, which consisted of WCC staff members. The OLA ranks organizations on a continuum with

² Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, 59-60.

³ Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, 59.

“toxic health” as the lowest level and “optimal health” as the highest level of perceived servant leadership practices among top leaders, managers, and workforce.⁴

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews were conducted with pastors and ministry directors and provided a follow up to the OLA. The organizational health index generated through the OLA is based only on WCC’s staff member’s answers to the assessment questions. It was, therefore, necessary to conduct in-depth interviews with pastors and ministry directors, allowing for insight into the development and practices of the pastors and ministry directors. The goal was to discover themes and patterns within each person’s story that contributed to his or her servant leadership development and practices. It was assumed that servant leadership practices were present in each person’s leadership. The questions for the personal interviews were intended to uncover personal motivation for servant leadership and dynamics within each person’s story that contributed to the development of servant leadership.

Interviews were limited to a representative sampling of WCC’s pastors and ministry directors. Each person was invited to participate in a 60-minute follow-up interview one month after completing the OLA. The researcher, in preparation for the personal interviews, referenced the suggested guidelines for conducting qualitative research interviews found in Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod’s *Practical Research* book.⁵ Each participant signed an informed consent document that delineated the purpose and use of the interviewee’s information and also the researcher’s

⁴ Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 7.

⁵ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 146-149.

commitment to maintaining confidentiality. There were eight personal interview participants, with seven of the eight agreeing to audio recording during the interview.

Interview participants were asked to answer 19 questions related to servant leadership practice and development and the gospel.⁶ The researcher's theory of the gospel's role in servant leadership development influenced the development of the interview questions. The researcher approaches the data from a "theory-derived" position, investigating if and how the gospel contributes to servant leadership development.⁷ The researcher seeks to validate or solidify the theory or need for gospel application to leadership development as a discipline. The interviews were "semistructured".⁸ The interviewees were asked the same set of questions in an open-ended format that allowed the researcher to gain greater understanding of each answer through follow up interaction clarification.

The nature and focus of the interview questions were to achieve understanding in the interviewee's personal practice of servant leadership as it relates to motive (e.g., "What do you want for the people you lead?"). The researcher sought, through the questions, to unearth personal desire to put others first as it relates to the development and success of followers. The idea of operational motivations was applied to the development of a number of interview questions. David Powlison notes that a person's "operative motivation theory" is exposed by how he or she answers the "why" or reason

⁶ Appendix A: Interview Questions for WCC Pastors and Directors.

⁷ Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, 61.

⁸ Klenke, *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, 126.

behind his or her actions.⁹ Numerous interview questions sought to understand what motivated each interviewee to lead in the way he or she does. Interviewees were also asked how the gospel may contribute to servant leadership development and practice in general and in their own lives.

Organizational Documents

The case study approach also incorporated organizational documents. Several interviewees referenced and provided literature used for leadership and team development. These included the Stages of Spiritual Growth, the 4-R Model by Mark McCloskey, and WCC staff agreement statements. The researcher was aware of the 2013-2014 church goals or five initiatives, which include the goal of developing servant leaders.

⁹ David Powlison, *Seeing With New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P and R Publishing, 2003), 125.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter Overview

The following chapter reports and provides analysis of the field research gathered from WCC. The researcher highlights patterns and themes from the interviews. Areas of agreement and discrepancies between the interview data and the OLA data are noted. Organizational documents are also considered. Lastly, core findings are listed and analyzed.

Personal Interviews with Pastors and Directors

Overview and Special Note

The following examines the responses and themes from the personal interviews with WCC pastors and directors. Each interviewee was asked the same set of questions. The full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix A. Answers to question number one are omitted due to confidentiality. Each interviewee signed an informed consent form indicating his or her understanding that confidentiality will be maintained by the researcher. Question number one allowed the researcher to better understand each interviewee's specific responsibilities as a pastor or director at WCC.

Interview Findings

People-Oriented Results Excite WCC Pastors and Directors

Seeing people positively impacted through leadership excites WCC pastors and directors. When asked what excites them most about their role at WCC, pastors/directors

answered in terms of results which included seeing people experience joy when they see God use their gifts and talents to bless other people. Pastors and directors also enjoy hearing stories of lives impacted through the ministries at WCC. Two said that people's transformational experiences excite them most. One said it is exciting seeing a compelling vision come alive through her efforts. Another mentioned the results of investing in people, both student and adult volunteers, so that they can grow and be successful. The results mentioned were others-focused or people-focused. A few mentioned specific aspects about their roles or specific tasks that were exciting. One person was excited about the challenge her role presented while another enjoyed having the opportunity to be with people in times of need. For the most part, though, excitement was related to leaders seeing other people positively impacted through their leadership.

The Process God Used to Bring WCC Pastors and Directors to Faith in Jesus Christ

Each person had his or her own unique journey to Christian faith and Christian ministry leadership. Christian youth groups played a significant role in many WCC leaders' faith journeys. Half of those interviewed had a positive, faith-impacting, and ministry-directing influence through Christian youth group experiences and Christian youth group leaders. One person described this influence as nurturing a love for God, reading Scripture, and a personal relationship with God in Christ. An introduction to faith, and subsequent faith formation, came for many WCC pastors and directors at an early age through youth ministry of some form.

Many WCC pastors/directors recalled a specific point when faith became real for them. Four people could recall a dramatic point of crisis or conversion to faith. One person said he had a "dramatic spiritual conversion." From this conversion God became the center of his life. This was followed by a strong desire to read Scripture, have

personal times of worship, and devote himself to prayer. Another person described his conversion experience to faith as hearing the message of the gospel “in a different light” and feeling “a real heart tugging to respond to Christ.” The third person recounted a “crisis of faith” moment where he was confronted and convicted of his own spiritual need through the words of a college friend. This encounter “brought home” that he needed to turn his life “in the direction of Christ in a more surrendered way.” A fourth person stated that when he “heard the gospel in terms of a relationship with Jesus Christ for the first time...it warmed [his] heart.” Two other people noted that at a young age they remembered hearing the gospel presented in a church setting and personally responding with faith. One said, “[The gospel] made sense to me at that point.” Each person could think of a specific point in his or her journey where faith was placed in Jesus Christ.

The Process God Used to Bring WCC Pastors and Directors to Christian Ministry and Leadership

Each person discovered his or her unique gifts, passions, and strengths along the journey that led him or her to Christian ministry leadership. A common theme was God’s use of both experiences and the encouragement of others to direct each person to Christian ministry and leadership. Two people connected their marketplace experience, organizational, and administrative gifts to the context of ministry at WCC. Four people mentioned discovering their unique gifts and strengths while being involved in ministry settings. One person noted how he had confirmation of his gifts of pastoring, shepherding, and teaching through ministry involvement during college. Two other people also noted that while they were ministering, key people came alongside them and pointed out areas that they saw as strengths and gifts for Christian ministry. Others noted a passion and desire to serve in a specific capacity. One person stated that God continued

to put the desire in his heart to “shepherd people into [God’s] presence.” Another had a strong feeling and realization that God had gifted her, given her a passion, and presented her with numerous opportunities to serve in her current ministry and leadership role. One person discovered that he liked working with people and applying biblical truth to life. Through experience and the encouragement of others God led WCC pastors and directors to Christian ministry and leadership.

Describe Yourself as a Leader

The majority of pastors/directors at WCC described themselves in terms of leading in a team context. Five people overtly or implicitly described themselves as “team-oriented,” “team-focused,” and “team-building”. One person said, “Team is super important to me,” while another person noted he approaches leadership by asking the question, “How can I bring people together to move it, rather than move [the mission forward] myself?” Another person stated, “I like change....I surround myself with change agents that help bring about that change.” Two people described their leadership as “relational”. For the most part people describe their leadership by *how* they lead versus *what they do* as leaders. The emphasis is on approach. Those with shepherding gifts invest in their people. Others are vision-oriented. These leaders think about the future and connect it to what they are doing or what their teams are doing. Overall, leaders see themselves as influencers of teams; they seeking to bring the whole group forward rather than doing the work by themselves.

What Leaders Want for the People They Lead

Leaders at WCC want those they lead to develop both spiritually and professionally. One person desires people to experience the blessing of God working

through them to impact the lives of others. Six people stated that they want to see those they lead grow as people and leaders. Two people referenced desiring to see those led reaching their God-given potential, whatever that might mean for them. One person noted the desire to see those they lead care for others and be leaders who produce more leadership. Another person mentioned being transformed into the image of Christ and quoted part of Romans 12:2, which says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” This person continued, “Our character, the Fruit of the Spirit, becomes the evidence of our salvation.” Overall, leaders want to see forward progress in spiritual and leadership development in the lives of the people they lead. Two ways leaders make this happen are by creating opportunities for those led to reach the desired goal and by investing time into those they lead.

What People Think of When They Hear the Term “Servant Leader”

WCC pastors and directors see servant leaders as people who are other-centered. A servant leader was described as a “there-you-are” kind of person, someone who is other-centered and wants to see others succeed. Two people thought of Jesus as an example of a servant leader, mentioning Mark 10 and John 13. One person thought of a person’s heart regarding the motivation for serving. Someone else mentioned that “a servant leader is looking beyond self-motivated factors.” Another person said a servant leader meets the needs of others out of the resource of the love of Christ that he or she has received. A person can only give what they have already received.

An important element in the idea of servant leadership noted by WCC pastors and directors is a person’s inner motivation to lead. Three people mentioned the motivation behind servant leadership. This is first seen in the statement, “A servant leader is looking

beyond self-motivated factors.” The focus is off of self and onto others. Secondly the idea of motivation is seen in the statement, “I think of the person’s heart; why they are serving.” Why people lead is as important as how they lead. Thirdly, a servant leader was described as “one who is able to meet the needs of others out of a place where he or she has been resourced by God.” This person says that servant leadership is “resourced out of the place of the love of Christ.” Because of a heart resourced by the love of Christ, the servant leader is motivated to see the needs of others met through his or her leadership. Motivation is a critical factor to WCC pastor/directors’ conceptualization of servant leadership.

Ways Leaders See Their Leadership Fitting the Description of Servant Leadership

WCC pastors and directors value people. The servant leadership practice of valuing people clearly appears on the answers of three people. One person emphasized how she concentrates time and energy into walking alongside, helping, coaching, teaching, and supporting new staff members. She values people by serving them first. A pastor/director, the second one, recognizes that he cannot do what he is required to do without teams. He values people through believing and trusting them to help accomplish what needs to get done. Likewise, a third pastor/director indicated that she wants to accomplish ministry objectives through her team and that she trusts her people to do what they do best. She values people by believing and trusting in team members. Caring for people and communicating that they matter is important to WCC pastors/directors.

Another servant leadership practice described through the pastors/directors was sharing leadership. One person noted that she is spending time envisioning together with her team. It is not her vision alone but one that is shaped and owned by the team. Team

members have a voice in making important decisions regarding the direction of a particular ministry area. Another pastor/director noted that it takes humility to realize that you cannot do your job alone. Such recognition helps him to prioritize his time in building relationships and concentrate on getting the right people in the right places so that he can release the team to accomplish their goals.

A third servant leadership characteristic demonstrated by a pastor/director is authenticity. Displaying authenticity is the way he handles areas of his leadership that he sees not fitting servant leadership. However, what he practices to counter his inclination to not be servant led is actually a quality of servant leadership. This person is open and accountable, teachable, and honest. He is honest about his consciousness of not being servant driven, admitting his need to pause and reflect on his leadership so that it will be driven by his love of Christ and not by self-motivation. “Where is my leadership coming from?” he asks. “Is it more about a need that I have, or is it about being in step with what the broader purpose is and movement of God?” This is a good awareness question regarding one’s ontology of servant leadership. Such awareness enables authentic interactions with God, self, and others.

Motivations to Lead as a Servant Leader: Extrinsic and Intrinsic

Pastors and directors were predominantly motivated to lead as servants because of the positive outcomes that servant leadership practices create. One person noted that people are more receptive to servant leadership. Others said, “it’s the most fulfilling” or “it’s the only way that we will get somewhere without running over people.” Another person was motivated by leaders who have positively impacted her through their humility and investment of time. She wants to be that kind of leader. These outcomes may be true

of servant leadership and a possible motivator to practice them. However, they are all extrinsic motivators and not intrinsic. The implication is that servant leadership will be practiced because it is merely a best-practice approach.

Only one person answered regarding a motivation to practice servant leadership from within. This person said that he is motivated to lead as a servant by “Keeping [his] eyes fixed on Jesus.” He goes on to say, “The gravitational pull is toward self.” Therefore, there is a need to be motivated by something that overcomes self. This person continues,

The motivation to be able to be as others-centered in life requires the identity of Christ...it is a choice that we make because the inclination is to self, self-protection, self-identification, self-esteem....I resonate with Henry Nouwen’s words, “I am not what I have, I am not what I do, I am not what people say about me, I am the beloved son of the living God.” That’s my motivator.

This person is motivated to serve others because of the truth of who he is in Christ. The reality of Christ in him motivates him from within to be others-centered. Another component that he mentioned was the active choice he makes to live out of that reality each day. Keeping his eyes fixed on Jesus was the daily discipline for being motivated to lead as a servant. It is unfortunate that only one pastor/director noted an inner motivation to lead as servant first.

Ways Leaders Do Not See Their Leadership Fitting the Description of Servant Leadership and How They Handle It

Leadership challenges and stresses inhibit WCC leaders from practicing servant leadership. One leader realized that when his followers resist his leadership he has the choice to either continue to do more of what he knows how to do in and of himself, or to step back and gain a different perspective on God’s leading, as well as on the needs of those he leads. Other leaders noticed that they lose sight of servant leadership when they

are task-oriented and overwhelmed. They become demanding and caught up in the daily tasks. People handle this reality by seeking accountability within other leaders and taking time to gain clarity through prayer and Scripture reading. One leader described his process for conquering sin by falling in love with God. He says, “It’s like losing your taste for sin for a better taste. So falling in love with the results of servant-hearted leadership strengthens my resolve to do that.” Regaining focus of servant leadership outcomes helps this leader realign his leadership to be more servant-oriented. Leaders noted that servant leadership dwindles in the midst of leadership stresses and workload. Finding clarity and focus were some ways leaders handled regaining a servant-oriented mindset.

Descriptions and Summarizations of the Gospel

Each person described or summarized the gospel differently. Three people referred to the gospel as “good news”. Six out of eight people mentioned the gospel as including Jesus Christ or Christ. Seven out of eight either overtly or implicitly indicated that the gospel had to do with a relationship with God. Seven out of eight described the gospel as dealing with a problem (e.g., shame, guilt, saving, sin separates, made a way, remove sin barrier, or sin). Three out of eight state or imply that Jesus Christ died (“dying on Calvary’s cross for our sin,” “gave himself up,” “at Christ’s expense”). One person mentioned the resurrection of Jesus Christ as part of the gospel. Another person referenced John 3:16 as the “foundational essence” of the gospel and another described it as “the greatest example of love”. Two people mentioned the presence of the kingdom of God or Jesus as king. And one person mentioned the opportunity to respond back to the love of God in the gospel.

There seemed to be a lack of unity and clarity among the pastors and directors on how to best describe or summarize the gospel. While many people shared similar elements in their descriptions, there was an apparent confusion as to what it clearly is. The researcher inferred from some pastors and directors that there is an assumption that everybody knows the gospel. The perceived attitude from some of those interviewed was, “Why do I have to describe the gospel; it’s a given?” Yet some had difficulty clearly articulating what the gospel is. Each person had his or her own take on what elements comprised the gospel.

Ways the Gospel Contributes to Someone Becoming a Servant Leader

Overall, the gospel contributes to a leader becoming more other-focused as displayed by the Fruit of the Spirit and one’s consideration of the interests of others first. There were various ways mentioned concerning how the gospel contributes to a person’s development as a servant leader. One person said that the gospel “empowers us to relate well with ourselves, to others, and foremost opens a way to relationship with God.” In a similar vein, one person highlighted how the gospel calls people to a “relational priority”. Another person said Jesus’ example of giving his life for others inspires servant leadership. One person said the gospel casts vision for living out the truth of God’s love for all people. Regarding the inner transformation of the heart, one person said this about the gospel:

It changes our hearts. So I think as we spend time in God’s Word and we live in his love, it changes our hearts and it changes our habits, and it changes our language, and it changes our patience...the Fruit of the Spirit becomes more a part of us and more pronounced. It has a lot of power.

For this pastor/director, continuing to live in the love of God through the gospel is connected to a changed heart that displays in actions the Fruit of the Spirit. Another

person said, “I don’t think you can become a servant leader the way God envisioned us to become it without Christ in us.” He goes on to say,

Christ teaches us to be what our sin nature makes us not want to be. How do you love your enemy? The gospel transforms my worldview...[I talk about] the three laws of love. To me it’s the application of the gospel to see people the way God sees people...to treat others the way you want to be treated...to love people the way God loves you. Learning to receive the love that God has for you and know how he loves you, and when you receive it to begin to give that love even to your enemies. So the gospel is the transformative force that takes our eyes off of self and allows us to serve the best interests of others. Otherwise, I don’t think that we would do it. I think we would do everything for our own selfish need and betterment.

The gospel is a paradigm-shifting reality for the development and display of servant leadership. A person begins to take eyes off of self so that the needs of others are met.

These last two pastors/directors focus on the inner transformation dynamics caused by the gospel. According to them, spending time in the love of God through the gospel brings about an inner desire and ability to serve others. The character of God or Christ is displayed in the Fruit of the Spirit as a direct result of the gospel.

How the Gospel has Changed and Continues to Change WCC Leaders

The gospel makes leaders people-focused. It motivates the leader to put other people before self. WCC pastors and directors consistently thought the gospel changed their perspective of others and moved them to act differently. Leaders want to work through others and not over them. The gospel makes one leader more patient with people, welcoming, and wanting to listen in order to understand others. Another leader finds hope for transformation in the gospel. For example, if God can bring hope through the death and resurrection of Christ, he can interject hope in whatever situation this leader faces. As a result of that hope, he has confidence to lead even in seemingly impossible circumstances. Another pastor/director noted how the gospel challenges his desire to

overpower people through his position rather than serve and work through them. The gospel impacts how a leader interacts with those he or she leads.

The Most Challenging Aspects of Leadership for WCC Leaders

The two biggest challenges for WCC pastors and directors are managing people's expectations and being overwhelmed by the amount of work or responsibility they have. A third challenge is the adjusting to WCC organizational restructuring. Numerous pastors and directors indicated that they are still trying to get a handle on their new responsibilities and roles. One pastor noted that when working through any change process leaders have to take care of people, which takes tremendous emotional energy and time. Organizing, prioritizing, delegating, and focusing are all ways various pastors and directors handle their challenges. Two pastors/directors deal with impatience and the desire to do the work for people they lead. One of these pastors/directors uses personal awareness and feedback in an effort to manage the daily pull to work over rather than through others. The other pastor/director handles this challenge either through coaching or taking on extra personal work to get the job done. Positional responsibility and expectation drives this last pastor/director response to challenge.

That which is Foundational to Leadership Development

Nearly all pastors and directors interviewed named trusted feedback in some form as a foundational element to their leadership development. Types of feedback included feedback from peers, direct reports, supervisors, other leaders, trusted friends, and significant others. One pastor/director said honesty is the biggest developmental component. Honesty is the essence of good feedback. Gaining an awareness of reality through the eyes of others is a part of being a servant leader just as is displaying

authenticity with others. In addition, wanting feedback indicates that people want to learn and grow. One pastor/director mentioned spiritual development as foundational: “My soul development is the most important piece of [leadership development].” Only two leaders mentioned spiritual development as foundational to leadership development. The second pastor/director mentioned her relationship with the Lord as foundational to leadership. This included times of meditating on the God’s Word and pausing to see where God is at work in her ministry.

Types of Leadership Development and Training through WCC

All of the pastors or directors noted their training and development in 4R model or transformational leadership model. This is a leadership model embraced by WCC. A major component within the model, as mentioned by pastors and directors, is working in and through relationships to accomplish a compelling vision. The model starts with one’s relationship to God and then goes to a leader’s relationship with self and others. WCC also incorporates one-on-one coaching with supervisors. Several pastors/directors indicated that coaching sessions with their supervisor has helped in learning better management principles and skills. One particular pastor/director’s sphere of responsibility has grown and changed following the growth of her ministry area. As a result she needs to learn new management skills. Her pastoral role has changed to one that manages many staff and volunteer leaders. Leadership development is periodically incorporated into the WCC pastors and directors’ meetings. One pastor/director said that she would like to see more time devoted to ministry leadership development during the pastor and director meetings. This same leader noted that most of the meetings have been more tactical in focus than developmental.

Types of Leadership Training WCC Leaders Believe Would Be Helpful to Receive

WCC pastors and directors want to develop their inner life. Three specific answers stand out: “I want to respond to people in a way that Jesus would want to,” “deeper study in the Bible,” and “leading through conflict.” These answers relate to the inner life of a leader. Regardless of the situation, leaders respond from the heart. Responding like Jesus means responding from a heart like Jesus. Therefore, cultivation of the heart as it relates to leadership is necessary. Also the desire for deeper, spiritual nurturing indicates the need for WCC’s pastors, directors, and staff to cultivate the inner life.

Leadership character and inner development cannot be neglected in the process of learning new managerial skills and ideas. When talking about practices versus character, one pastor/director commented that it is assumed that people have high character and are growing spiritually. However, such an attitude could lend itself to the neglect of the inner life and the intentionally developing of it in leaders. The third answer, leading through conflict, accents the necessity to have a God-moved will because conflict-laden situations are potentially high-stakes interactions. In such situations people must put others first, be patient, listen well, and be welcoming. These are characteristics pastors and directors said the gospel brought about in their lives and leadership. If a leader’s natural tendency is to be self-focused and self-protective, how much more so in a conflicted situation? Therefore, the gospel’s formative application to the inner life is essential for leading through conflict. It is more than practices and techniques because it involves the heart.

OLA Results

Purpose and Participation

The OLA was used to identify the organizational health of WCC as it relates to perceived servant leadership practices. Thirty-six people participated in the OLA at WCC. There were 23 respondents who identified themselves as “workforce.” Workforce at WCC consists of paid staff members who work in roles other than pastor or director. Nine people identified themselves as “management”. Management included both pastors and directors who were not the senior and executive pastor. Four people identified themselves as “top management.” Top leadership was to include both the senior pastor and executive pastor. Two other people mistakenly identified themselves as top leadership. This reality likely skewed the perception match between top leadership and management. However, it would not affect the overall organizational health level due to this level being based on workforce responses.

Organizational Health Level

WCC’s health level, according to the OLA results, was a moderate health or org⁴.¹ Workers perceive the organization as positively paternalistic.² Leaders who are paternalistic see themselves as parents and treat the workforce as children, placing the needs of the organization first over the needs of the led.³ According to Laub’s description of moderate to good organizational health, training given by leaders is to aid workers in

¹ James A. Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” (2014), 4.

² Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 4.

³ Laub, “From Paternalism to the Servant Organization,” 5.

completing company goals.⁴ Organizational tasks often supersede relationships and the culture is such that occasional risks can be taken but there is a fear of failure. A number of pastors and directors indicated that WCC is a fast-paced environment with a high expectation for excellence. It can be understood why there is a fear of failure in such a demanding workplace. Laub says, “Trust can be lost very easily” and openness is only exercised “between select groups of people.”⁵ The outlook for WCC as a moderate health organization is positive and it is in “a good position to move towards optimal health in the future.”⁶ Table 5.1 lists all six health levels measured by the OLA with an accompanying description.

This health level was lower than the researcher expected. Interviews with pastors and directors revealed that WCC recently implemented a major organizational restructuring. As a result, staff, pastors, and directors are all experiencing change and uncertainty as they take on new and different roles. There is confusion over areas of responsibility and new direct reports. In addition to these organizational changes, the former worship pastor has transitioned into a new ministry area that focuses on the maturing generation with a new, young worship pastor taking his place. The church as a whole has undergone major adjustments within a short time, which happened to be relatively close to the administration of the OLA. These new realities for WCC add

⁴ Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 7.

⁵ Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 7.

⁶ Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 7.

important narrative to the perceptions measured by the OLA and perhaps contribute to the lower-than-expected organizational health level.

Table 5.1 Description of the six organizational health levels

Org. Level	Org. Health	Organizational Health Level Description
Org ⁶	Optimal Health	Workers experience this organization as a servant-minded organization characterized by authenticity, the valuing and developing of people, the building of community and the providing and sharing of positive leadership. These characteristics are evident throughout the entire organization. People are trusted and are trustworthy through the organization. They are motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. Leaders and workers view each other as partners working in a spirit of collaboration.
Org ⁵	Excellent Health	Workers experience this organization as a servant-oriented organization characterized by authenticity, the valuing and developing of people, the building of community and the providing and sharing of positive leadership. These characteristics are evident throughout much of the organization. People are trusted and are trustworthy. They are motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. Leaders and workers view each other as partners working in a spirit of collaboration.
Org ⁴	Moderate Health	Workers experience this organization as a positively paternalistic (parent-led) organization characterized by a moderate level of trust and trustworthiness along with occasional uncertainty and fear. Creativity is encouraged as long as it doesn't move the organization too far beyond the status quo. Risks can be taken, but failure is sometimes feared. Goals are mostly clear, through the overall direction of the organization is sometimes confused. Leaders often take the role of nurturing parent while workers assume the role of the cared-for child.
Org ³	Limited Health	Workers experience this organization as a negatively paternalistic (parental-led) organization characterized by minimal to moderate levels of trust and trustworthiness along with an underlying uncertainty and fear. People feel that they must prove themselves and that they are only as good as their last performance. Workers are sometimes listened to but only when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Conformity is expected while individual expression is discouraged. Leaders often take the role of critical parent while workers assume the role of the cautious child.
Org ²	Poor Health	Workers experience this organization as an autocratic-led organization characterized by low levels of trust and trustworthiness and high levels of uncertainty and fear. People lack motivation to serve the organization because they do not feel that it is their organization or their goals. Leadership is autocratic in style and is imposed from the top levels of the organization. It is an environment where risks are seldom taken, failure is often punished and creativity is discouraged. Most workers do not feel valued and often feel used by those in leadership. Change is needed but is very difficult to achieve.
Org ¹	Toxic	Workers experience this organization as a dangerous place to work... a place characterized by dishonesty and a deep lack of integrity among its workers and leaders. Workers are devalued, used and sometimes abused. Positive leadership is missing at all levels and power is used in ways that are harmful to workers and the mission of the organization. There is almost no trust and an extremely high level of fear. This organization will find it very difficult to locate, develop and maintain healthy workers who can assist in producing positive organizational change.

Source: James A. Laub, "Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church" (2014), 8.

Ranking of the Six Servant Leadership Characteristics

The OLA measures six servant leadership characteristics within an organization: values people, builds community, provides leadership, displays authenticity, develops people, and shares leadership. Table 5.2 lists each of the six servant leadership characteristics with a corresponding description. Each characteristic relates to organizational health.

Table 5.2 Servant leadership characteristics and description

Servant Leadership Characteristics	Characteristic Description
Values People	By listening receptively, serving the needs of others first and trusting in people
Builds Community	By building strong relationships, working collaboratively and valuing individual differences
Provides Leadership	By envisioning the future, taking initiative and clarifying goals
Displays Authenticity	By integrity and trust, openness and accountability and a willingness to learn from others
Develops People	By providing opportunities for learning, modeling appropriate behavior and building up others through encouragement
Shares Leadership	By creating a shared vision and sharing decision-making power, status and privilege at all levels of the organization

Source: James A. Laub, "Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church" (2014), 3.

The OLA ranks the six characteristics of the organization from highest to lowest. The order for WCC starting at the highest was: values people, builds community, provides leadership, displays authenticity, develops people, and shares leadership. The researcher was surprised to see develops people as the second lowest characteristic because one of WCC's 2013-2014 was to develop more servant leaders. Through the promotion and offering of the Wellspring ministry and Lifekeys classes, WCC appears to be development-focused. What was more surprising was the ranking the workforce gave for develops people, which was in the limited health category. WCC workers do not feel they are adequately trained and empowered to do what is expected of them and beyond.

Table 5.3 provides a relationship between the scoring for each characteristic and the six organizational health levels of the OLA.

Table 5.3 Relationship of OLA scoring to organizational health level

OLA Score	Health Level	Organizational Health
1.0 to 1.99	Org ¹	Autocratic (Toxic Health)
2.0 to 2.99	Org ²	Autocratic (Poor Health)
3.0 to 3.49	Org ³	Negative Paternalistic (Limited Health)
3.5 to 3.99	Org ⁴	Positive Paternalistic (Moderate Health)
4.0 to 4.49	Org ⁵	Servant (Excellent Health)
4.5 to 5.0	Org ⁶	Servant (Optimal Health)

Source: James A. Laub, “Key Information for Evaluating OLA Raw Dataset Scores for Research Purposes”.

The OLA provides a report of both the highest and lowest individual items (i.e., individual servant leadership practice question) for workforce, management, and top leadership. This is helpful to see where a specific area within a broader leadership practice –such as develops people–is perceived by the participants. An area that scores high overall may have an individual item that lies significantly outside of the overall average score. Table 5.4 shows six of the highest ranking servant leadership practice items perceived by the workforce. The workforce sees the organization as a caring and compassionate place where diversity is valued and people are trustworthy and act with integrity. The workforce feels appreciated by their supervisor for their work.

Table 5.4 Six highest ranking servant leadership practice items of workforce

Characteristic	OLA Statement	Score
Values People	People in this organization are caring and compassionate towards each other	Org ⁵
Displays Authenticity	People in this organization maintain high ethical standards	Org ⁵
Builds Community	People in this organization value difference in culture, race, and ethnicity	Org ⁵
Values People	I feel appreciated by my supervisor for what I contribute to the organization	Org ⁵
Displays Authenticity	People in this organization are trustworthy	Org ⁵
Displays Authenticity	People in this organization demonstrate high integrity and honesty	Org ⁵

Source: James A. Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church” (2014), 14.

Table 5.5 lists the six lowest ranking servant leadership practice items of the workforce. Workers feel that important, direction-setting decisions are made for them by their leaders. The workforce has a sense of separation between them and top leadership characterized by a lack of listening and learning on the part of top leaders. Finally, workers do not agree that they have one-on-one relationships with leaders to contribute to professional growth.

Table 5.5 Six lowest ranking servant leadership practice items of workforce

Characteristic	OLA Statement	Score
Shares Leadership	Leaders in this organization give workers the power to make important decisions	Org ²
Shares Leadership	Leaders in this organization allow workers to help determine where this organization is headed	Org ²
Builds Community	Leaders in this organization work alongside the workers instead of separate from them	Org ²
Displays Authenticity	Leaders in this organization are open to learning from those who are below them in the organization	Org ²
Displays Authenticity	Leaders in this organization are open to receiving criticism and challenge from others	Org ²
Develops People	Leaders in this organization provide mentor relationships in order to help people grow professionally	Org ²

Source: James A. Laub, "Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church" (2014), 15.

There were high and low score result items that the workforce, management, and top leaders shared. Both the workforce and management/supervisors gave high scores to feeling appreciated by their supervisors. All three groups agreed that people at WCC maintain a high ethical standard. WCC is a place where people feel valued. The lowest scores shared among the three groups fell into the categories of develops people and shares leadership. Table 5.6 lists the lowest individual items shared between the three groups. An "X" indicates which group ranked the item lowest. Both workforce and top

leaders perceive that leaders do not give workers a say in making important decisions regarding organizational direction at WCC.

Table 5.6 Lowest scores shared between workforce, management, and top leaders

Characteristic	Individual Item	Workforce	Management	Top Leaders
Shares Leadership	Leaders in this organization give workers the power to make important decision	X	X	X
Shares Leadership	Leaders in this organization allow workers to help determine where this organization is headed	X		X
Displays Authenticity	Leaders in this organization are open to learning from those who are below them in the organization	X	X	
Develops People	Leaders in this organization provide mentor relationships in order to help people grow professionally	X	X	X

Source: James A. Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church” (2014), 15.

Perception Match

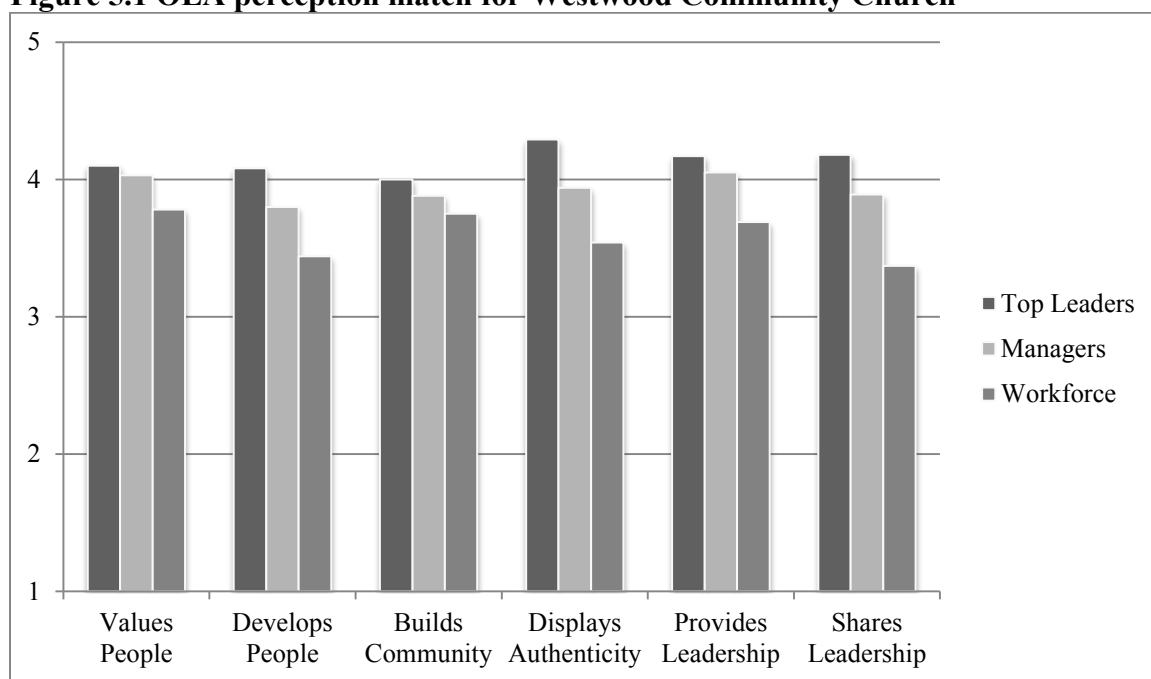
The OLA gives WCC a moderate match for its perception match between top leadership and workforce. Laub notes that such a difference “suggests a limited level of shared awareness and open communication” between the workforce, managers, and top leaders.⁷ Each group holds a different perception regarding the health level of WCC as indicated by figure 5.1. The workforce gave WCC the lowest ratings and top leaders gave the highest ratings. Perception of organizational health degrades from the top down with top leadership and the workforce having the lowest perception match. It can be seen that values people and builds community have the closest perception matches between all

⁷ Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 5.

three groups. The two lowest perceptions by the workforce (shares leadership and develops people) can be seen in relation to the other perceptions by the workforce. These perceptions provide leaders insight for future development and positive change.

Information provided through the OLA gives WCC's all-staff meeting discussions potential direction and content.

Figure 5.1 OLA perception match for Westwood Community Church



Individual items of the OLA were compared. The lowest perception match between top leaders and workforce was the statement: “Leaders in this organization are open to learning from those who are below them in the organization.”⁸ The researcher did not observe any all-staff meetings at WCC to see what kind of openness was present regarding workforce, manager, and top leadership interactions. One pastor/director noted

⁸ Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 16.

that all of the staff provided input into the generation of the staff agreement.⁹ The staff agreement serves as mutually-accepted guidelines for interpersonal staff interactions at WCC. It is unclear how much collaboration and interchange occur between the workforce and top leaders outside of the example of the staff agreement. The second lowest perception match item between workforce and top leader was the statement: “Leaders in this organization work alongside the workers instead of separate from them.”¹⁰ This item happened to be the sixth lowest perception match between managers and workforce. A question that comes to mind is, “What would leaders working alongside workers look like at WCC?” In what ways do those in top leadership and management separate themselves from the workforce? There needs to be intentional work initiated by leadership to address this low perception match so that workers can experience a greater sense of togetherness in influencing others for the realization of WCC’s vision.

Organizational Documents

Five Invitations (WCC 2013-2014 Goals)

Westwood leadership started the 2013-2014 year with a set of five organizational goals. These goals are listed in Table 5.7. Three goals relate to the research topic. The most obvious is the leadership innovation goal to develop more servant leaders. Both the service breadth and spiritual depth goals connect to servant leadership development. The pursuit of these goals should be reflected in the OLA results. The researcher was unable to ascertain the year-end outcomes for these goals. There were no written reports available to provide a measure for the level of achievement made toward these five goals.

⁹ Appendix B: WCC Staff Agreement Statements.

¹⁰ Laub, “Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church,” 16.

Table 5.7 2013-2014 organizational goals for Westwood Community Church

Organizational Goal	Goal Description
Service Breadth	Encourage, equip and inspire each generation to serve others within Westwood, our community and across the world.
Footprint Expansion	Expand community reach using our current campus as well as a multi-site strategy.
Leadership Innovation	Develop more servant leaders and release them to make a greater Kingdom impact.
Financial Strength	Accelerate a culture of generosity by exponentially leveraging our ability to resource long-term ministry.
Spiritual Depth	Engage each attender in growing spiritually through three core avenues: personal spiritual disciplines, a small group experience and a weekend worship service.

Source: Joel K. Johnson, "Vision Message" (message notes, Westwood Community Church, Excelsior, MN, September 8, 2013).

Seasons of Spiritual Growth

WCC developed a resource for gauging one's stage of growth in his or her spiritual life. This tool is called Seasons of Spiritual Growth. The Seasons of Spiritual Growth resource is meant to be a tool that helps a person connect to ministries at WCC based on his or her current season of growth. It is an awareness resource for making intentional next steps. Pastors and directors referenced this resource during the pastor/director interviews as part of WCC's approach to personal and leadership development. Table 5.8 lists each season of spiritual growth and gives a description.

Table 5.8 Seasons of spiritual growth tool

Season Name	Season of Spiritual Growth Description
Planting	Connecting with God or reconnecting with him. Learn to open your hands, receive all God wants to give you and make Jesus the center [of] your life (John 3:1-12; 6:44, 65).
Taking Root	Increase your understanding of God's heart and character. Scratch the surface with Bible basics or dig deeper into a book of the Bible. Explore spiritual practices; gather the tools to grow your faith for a lifetime (John 14:26; 16:12-13).
Pruning	Allow God to help you confront the wounds, losses, sins, bitterness and disappointments that entangle us. Receive God's healing and restoration, as he refines your character. (2 Cor. 3:18)
Bearing Fruit	Discover your God-given gifts and apply them to the needs around you. Share your gifts by giving them away (1 Cor. 12:7).
Scattering	Scattering seeds impact the hurting, broken world with the message and ministry of the Gospel. Find your place reaching others with the love of Jesus by spreading God's Kingdom (Acts 1:8).

Source: Kevin Sharp, "Seasons of Spiritual Growth" (Westwood Community Church, Excelsior, MN).

Core Findings

Positive Aspects of Servant Leadership

WCC is an organization that values people, builds community, provides leadership, and displays authenticity. Most leaders hold the understanding that servant leadership is a type of leadership that seeks to meet the needs of others. There are several findings that highlight servant leadership at WCC. One such finding is that the workforce and management feel appreciated by their supervisors for the work they contribute to the organization's mission and goals. Also, WCC is a place where people do the right things. All three groups (workforce, management, and top leaders) ranked as one of their top six servant leadership items the statement, "People in this organization maintain high ethical standards."¹¹ This was verified by pastors and directors who stated that WCC values excellence and expects much from its leaders. WCC workers note that their job satisfaction is "good". Finally, WCC, as an organization, is in a good position to advance forward to greater servant leadership health.¹² All of these are positive factors of an organization and leadership that are striving to be servant-focused. Leaders understand what a servant leader is and does. They have a desire to lead as such.

Developing People

WCC pastors and directors noted that they want those they lead to grow both spiritually and professionally. They said they achieve this desire to see growth by creating opportunities for development and investing time in those they lead. However, the OLA indicted that developing others was the second lowest perceived servant

¹¹ Laub, "Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church," 14.

¹² Laub, "Organizational Leadership Assessment Evaluation Report for: Westwood Community Church," 7.

leadership practice at WCC. Leaders providing opportunities for workers to grow, as well as offering mentor relationships for the purpose of facilitating professional growth, were two notable items from develops people within either the limited or poor health range.

There is a discrepancy between what pastors/directors desire for their followers and what followers perceive is actually occurring regarding their personal and professional growth.

The researcher found it interesting that managers/supervisors ranked these two categories low. A number of pastors/directors mentioned that they receive periodic, one-on-one coaching from supervisors. Two pastors/directors noted that the coaching sessions were beneficial for their leadership and management growth. It is possible that the one-on-one coaching is a new aspect of leadership development at WCC thus the low ranking. Nevertheless, the workforce, who may or may not receive periodic coaching sessions from supervisors like the pastors/directors do, perceive a lack of personal and professional development provided by their leaders. This is also an interesting discrepancy because WCC's Wellspring ministry provides leadership education based on the 4R model. This ministry is not meeting the perceived needs of WCC workers to grow personally and professionally.

Servant Leadership Motivation

Motivation to be servant leaders was predominantly extrinsic rather than intrinsic. Pastors and directors mainly noted that servant leadership has the best results and was considered best practices for working with people. Leaders were motivated to be servant-oriented because it works. Only one person noted an intrinsic motivation. This person acknowledged his natural proclivity to be self-focused rather than servant-oriented. He described his biggest need being to have his inner identity in Christ. He is motivated to

serve others out of the fact that he is a beloved child of God. That was this pastor/director's motivation to be servant first as a leader. The researcher notes this finding because it indicates a primary absence among pastors and directors of connecting actions of service as coming from within. This is not saying that the extrinsic results of servant leadership should not be desired. However, leading out of a motivation for results is not leading out of who a person is from the inside.

Separation between Top Leaders and Workforce

A dramatic finding was the perception of separation between top leadership and the workforce. This gap is felt mostly by the workforce. Workers do not feel that leaders work alongside them in their jobs. Likewise there is a perceived wall preventing open and honest communication. Workers disagreed that leaders promote open communication, are open to learning from those under them, and are open to receiving criticism or challenge from others. This reality minimizes collaborative relations and promotes a top-down leadership structure. As a result, leadership is not shared. Shares leadership was the lowest ranked perceived practice at WCC. Workers feel that important decisions are made for them rather than with them. There is a need for WCC to disperse leadership power so that workers are empowered to take ownership of the vision and work that they do. As a result, others will be served so as to become servants first themselves.

Understanding the Gospel and Its Implications for Servant Leadership

There were a variety of answers given by pastors and directors regarding the key components of the gospel. Each summary was different in terms of descriptors used and areas of emphasis. There was also a perceived assumption that everybody knows the gospel, and therefore, "why do I have to describe it?" However, many of the

pastors/directors stumbled, with some difficulty, to produce a clear summarization of the gospel. The researcher found this alarming because the vision of WCC is to “demonstrate God’s love in creative and compelling ways that lead people to know God, worship Him authentically, grow spiritually, serve joyfully and connect relationally.”¹³ If the gospel is the ultimate example of God’s love, then it is imperative that there is a unifying understanding of what that gospel is so that leaders can teach and train others to both understand the gospel and apply it to their lives and ministry leadership.

Numerous WCC pastors and directors noted how the gospel has made, and continues to make, them people-focused, evidenced in relating to others with patience, listening, understanding, etc. However, only two pastors/directors voiced spiritual life as foundational to their leadership development. One of the pastors/directors stated that his willful choice of remaining in vital union with Jesus Christ was the most important part of his leadership development. He called this his “soul development”. Unfortunately, soul development through application of the gospel is not recognized by most pastors and directors as connected to leading as servant.

Areas of Awareness

The practice of awareness was an important part of recognizing non-servant tendency within pastors’ and directors’ leadership. Pastors and directors who could express their personal non-servant tendencies could articulate intentional steps they are taking to be servant-oriented. One pastor/director illustrated this well with his awareness of his own tendency to power over people rather than powering through. His non-servant tendency is to be impatient and do the work for people. Personal awareness enables him

¹³ Westwood Community Church, “About Westwood: Who We Are,” Westwood Community Church, accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.westwoodcc.org/home/about-westwood/about-westwood/who-we-are>.

to make intentional steps to be patient, trust, and empower others. This particular pastor/director saw the gospel as challenging his non-servant tendency and desire to power over people. Another pastor/director noted how awareness of the way his leadership is being received by followers allows him to pause and reflect on where his leadership is coming from. When there is resistance or forced acceptance of his leadership he takes time to reflect on whether his leadership is coming from his own ideas and strength or if they are coming from God's leading and resource of love. Pastors and directors who displayed humility through self-awareness practiced a form of discipline to be more servant-oriented in their leadership approach. This was done through either reflection or personal feedback from others.

Need for a Unified Spiritual Discipline for Servant Leadership

There was no consistent theme regarding spiritual disciplines and servant leadership development. Only twenty-five percent of pastors and directors interviewed noted spirituality or spiritual growth as foundational for their leadership development. All pastors and directors referenced the 4R model and/or transformation leadership in regard to leadership development and training received at WCC. However, while the 4R model is an important part of WCC leadership understanding and practice, only one pastor/director noted it as foundational to his daily leadership decisions. Therefore, there is first a need for leaders at WCC to integrate spiritual disciplines with servant leadership development. Secondly, WCC leaders need to specifically define, understand, and apply the gospel to their lives and roles within WCC. The 4R model's focus on relationship with God, self, and others needs to be gospel-informed, centered, and directly connected to leadership development and practice at WCC.

CHAPTER SIX: SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION

Chapter Overview

Looking at the theological and biblical study, literature review, pastor/director interviews, OLA results, and organizational documents, the research reached the following conclusions that will be expanded in this chapter: there is a need for a faith-based model of servant leadership; awareness is a prerequisite to servant leadership development; and gospel clarity is essential to servant leadership development. From these conclusions the researcher proposes a gospel-based servant leadership development model. The chapter concludes by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis project.

Summative Conclusions

From a Virtues-based Model to a Faith-based Model of Servant Leadership

The research indicated a need to move from a virtues-based model to a faith-based model of servant leadership. Inherent in a virtues approach to servant leadership is the philosophical understanding and influence of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. This is seen in Irving and Lanctot's study and categorization of biblical virtues. Praiseworthy acts (i.e., virtues) come out of a person's character/disposition that has, in turn, been formed by the consistent performance of virtuous acts. Good character comes from doing many good acts. An Aristotelian understanding of virtues, however, undermines the biblical and theological understanding of the human heart corrupted by sin, as noted by

affective theology of the Protestant Reformation. The human heart cannot do that which is right and good because it is self-focused by sin. Actions that appear virtuous and praiseworthy on the outside are actually sinful without faith (i.e., disaffected toward God).¹ This even includes virtues or character qualities derived from examples in the Bible. What matters is the human heart where actions originate.

Patterson and Ayers lay the ground work for a new trajectory towards a faith-based approach to servant leadership development and practice. In their study of leadership ontology, the inner life of a leader is changed and motivated as a response to the love of God in Christ's death for sin (i.e., the gospel). Love is the propelling virtue (as seen in Patterson's cascading virtues model). The difference in Patterson's and Ayers' approaches to that of an Aristotelian understanding is found in the source of one's character. Love, as Ayers notes, is a response of gratitude to a love received from God.² There is nothing that a person does to form love from within; it is a result of receiving love. Repeated loving acts do not make the heart loving. The heart loves as a response.

Several pastors and directors of WCC described their initial response to faith in Jesus Christ as a dramatic point of crisis or conversion. These experiences were characterized by strong, new desires, which included reading Scripture, worshiping, and praying. Pastors and directors said the gospel affected their hearts in a way that directed them to Jesus Christ. The gospel changed WCC leaders. One pastor/director said the gospel changes what he wants so that his desires reflect what God wants. Another leader said the gospel changes one's actions to demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit. A third pastor/director described servant leadership as leadership that is resourced out of the love

¹ Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," 15.

² Ayers, "Agapao in Servant Leadership," 9.

of Christ in the gospel. All of these experiences of faith highlight the work of God through the gospel in the hearts of men and women so as to respond and act anew. The source of the changed perspective and action is God and what he has done in Christ. This coincides with Luther's two points that the heart naturally wants the wrong things³ and needs a work of God to be transformed and made righteous.⁴ Servant leadership is God-moved and God-resourced leadership. The result is more of Jesus Christ's life (i.e., character) displayed in a person's actions. This is by faith in the gospel. The gospel transforms the heart and produces the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). God is moving in and through the person to accomplish these acts (Phil. 2:13).

A faith-based approach to servant leadership challenges the common view of character as a personal attribute. A virtues approach holds that a kind of attribute is formed within the person—he or she possesses qualities of character—by practice or work. A person becomes good by doing good works. Conversely, a faith approach holds that God is the source of character qualities (i.e., the Fruit of the Spirit). These character qualities are displayed in a person's life by faith and the work of God (Gal. 5:6 and Phil. 2:13). Believing much in Christ, as Luther posited, results in righteous deeds because it is the mechanism by which the heart is set free to serve others in obedience to God's will.⁵ Willard called character an inner directedness. The virtues view is self-focused where a faith-based view is God-focused. God moves and directs the heart to will what is pleasing to God. This is by faith.

³ Luther, "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," 10.

⁴ Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation, 1518," 55-56.

⁵ Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation, 1518," 55.

A faith-based approach addresses the true barrier to servant leadership: self-focus or self-interest. Self-interest can include many things. The Apostle Paul listed a number of interests that he once considered important such as pedigree, religious observance, moral superiority, a sense of importance, being zealous, etc. (Phil. 3:4-6). All of these things are self-focused. Paul says he does not focus on them anymore because he has come to know Jesus Christ and depends completely on the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ (Phil. 3:7-11). Paul's eyes turned off of self and on to Jesus Christ, resulting in faith-driven action. Paul was a different kind of person because he was a gospel-moved person by the Holy Spirit. One does not become this kind of person by doing servant leadership practices. Rather, one becomes a servant first through the divine disclosure of the love of God in Jesus Christ and trusting that reality by faith every day. Paul's point is that he stopped doing all of the things that he thought would make him the kind of person he believed he needed to be. He presumed God was pleased with all of his works. But, in reality, he was disaffected toward God and operating out of a self-focused heart. A faith-based approach acknowledges the barrier of self-interest and provides the source for motivating and empowering servant leadership.

The Necessity of Leadership Awareness

Awareness is an important part of servant leadership development. The general idea is that one must know where he or she is before progress can be made. The theological and biblical portion of this research showed that people are naturally self-focused and disaffected toward God because of sin. As a result, the natural proclivity of an individual is to further self-interest rather than the interests of others. One WCC pastor/director stated, "Christ teaches us to be what our sin nature makes us not want to

be.” Servant leadership development, then, means turning away from one’s natural tendency to be self-focused and moving toward others. The theological problem, however, is the human will’s inability to be self-moved to act as servant. A work of God must be wrought in the person’s heart. This is done through the Holy Spirit’s revelation of the love of God in the cross of Christ and the resulting response of faith and love. From this faith a person’s heart is changed and able to obey God. Servant acts flow out of a God-directed motivation and power. There must be an awareness of one’s spiritual need for God’s work to move a person’s heart to faith and love, thus servant leadership.

The literature review showed that servant leadership development is the process of moving away from one’s self (i.e., non-servant or self-serving acts) toward serving others. The assumption is that the leadership problem to not be servant-oriented is the leader’s proclivity to be self-focused; therefore, inner-life development is required. This agrees with the theological and biblical evidence. Autry described servant leadership development as moving away from the ego in a process of cultivating the inner life. That process begins by a leader being aware of non-servant tendencies. Likewise, McIntosh and Rima emphasized the need to be aware of one’s dark side of leadership. Like Autry’s idea of the ego, the dark side represents the inner inclinations to be self-focused and self-directed rather than others-focused. McIntosh and Rima maintain that these dark sides are revealed by how a leader responds to daily challenges and pressures. Actions display the kind of person he or she is on the inside.

Challenges bring out the dark side of leaders, according to McIntosh and Rima. Pastors and directors at WCC were asked about their biggest challenges to their leadership and how they handle it. What was found was that awareness is essential for

acting against one's natural pull inward toward self. The remedy proposed by McIntosh and Rima is to "apply divine, spiritual truth" (i.e., one's identity in Christ) to one's life and leadership.⁶ A person must "appropriate" what a person already is in Christ to daily life, and thus leadership.⁷ The leader must confront non-servant inclinations. Those who are cognizant of their proclivity to be non-servant under pressure are in a better position to develop as servant leaders. This is because they can begin applying the gospel to their lives and hearts where servant leadership is absent or difficult. One pastor/director said it this way,

The gospel is the transformative force that takes our eyes off of self and allows us to serve the best interests of others. Otherwise, I don't think we would do it. I think we would do everything for our own selfish need and betterment.

Willard described this process as bringing before one's mind the glorious reality of God in Christ so that it becomes established and permanent.⁸ God's love, established in the leader's heart, replaces self-love and self-focus with Christ's love to move towards others in service. Awareness allows a leader to apply the gospel to a specific area of need so that the heart can depend on God's truth and grace rather than self.

Pastors and directors handled their leadership challenges in a number of ways. Some addressed challenges externally. They organized, prioritized, or worked harder to overcome the challenges. Others addressed their leadership challenges internally. These people took time to cultivate the inner life. They responded to challenges by spending time with God and resting in who they are in Christ. This shows a measure of awareness.

⁶ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 157.

⁷ McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, 214.

⁸ Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 324.

Like Autry, one pastor/director noted that his biggest challenge is to let his people do their jobs rather than do it for them. He recognizes this tendency in his leadership and described it as a “strong pull” that is experienced daily. From self-awareness, he has intentionally taken steps to develop sensitivity to non-servant tendencies and openly asks for feedback. Although he did not explicitly say he needs to display patience, it is a leadership characteristic that this leader needs in order to let his people do their jobs. He stated that the gospel challenges his desire to power over others by calling him to serve as Christ served and not lord his power over his followers. This was an intentional step to apply the gospel to one’s leadership for the development of servant leadership. Realizing the implications of the gospel for one’s leadership is the starting point to servant leadership that requires personal awareness.

Gospel Clarity and Servant Leadership Development

The researcher chose WCC for this project’s case study because he believes it is a church that gets the love of God correct in its mission and practice. WCC has a compelling vision to demonstrate God’s love that is servant-oriented, as evidence by its motto: “We are a community with open hands, receiving from God all He wants to give, believing He wants to give us a lot. And with open hands we give it away, believing we cannot out-give God.”⁹ There are many positive ministries and results happening at WCC. The church is experiencing growth and is in the midst of significant transition as it reorganizes and prepares to begin launching satellite churches in a multi-site paradigm.

However, there was a lack of unity and clarity among the pastors and directors on how to best describe or summarize the gospel. While many leaders shared similar

⁹ Westwood Community Church, “About Westwood: Who We Are”.

elements in their descriptions, there was an apparent confusion as to what the gospel clearly is. The researcher also inferred from some pastors and directors that there is an assumption that everybody knows the gospel. The perceived attitude from some of those interviewed was, “Why do I have to describe the gospel; it’s a given?” Yet some had difficulty clearly articulating what the gospel is. Each person had his or her own take on what elements comprised the gospel.

There needs to be a clarion call when declaring and explaining the gospel. WCC seeks to honor God through reaching people with the love of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ If the love of Jesus Christ is not clearly defined by the gospel then the mission loses its focus. And if, as this thesis proposes, the gospel is the key to servant leadership development, then a clear understanding must be established in order to develop more servant leaders. If this is true for a church like WCC, how much more is it necessary for churches that are plateaued or declining? If a church like WCC, that embraces the love and generosity of God as its core vision, has difficulty acquiring unity on what the gospel is and its significance for leadership, then it is even more important for churches in general to gain clarity around the gospel. A person cannot apply to his or her leadership development and practice that which is unclear. Therefore, there needs to first be an agreed upon and fully understood summary of the gospel. The implications of such a robust gospel understanding can then be connected to leadership development and practices.

Cultivating the Discipline of Dependence

There is a need for intentionally helping pastors, directors, staff members, and volunteers cultivate a gospel-focused life and leadership. Pastors and directors talked

¹⁰ Westwood Community Church, “2013 Ministry Review: Utilizing the 4-R Leadership Model Framework” (Westwood Community Church, Excelsior, MN).

about the high intensity of expectations and responsibilities at WCC. Some are able to perform their tasks out a high capacity of skill or talent. However, servant leadership is a matter of a person’s heart directed by God, not skill, talent, experience, or knowledge. It is not that those elements are unimportant to leadership; rather, they need to operate out of a heart that is servant-oriented through the movement of God. Otherwise, servant leadership becomes an accessory to leadership rather than the engine of leadership.

From an external perspective, leadership that operates out of a leader-first approach with servant leadership practices added may *work* and not “run people over,” as one pastor/director put it. But, as Keller notes, practicing servant leadership out of one’s own strength or capacity will only work as a short-term solution.¹¹ The true way to remove the barriers to servant leadership is to motivate the heart with the gospel. Leadership moved by the gospel results in people being developed so that the organizational vision is realized through people. Pastors and directors need to be better equipped with a clear understanding of the gospel and its immense implication for life and leadership so as to better serve and support those under their leadership. That way, WCC leaders will operate out of a servant, God-moved heart and not primarily out of leadership capacity and strengths.

A Gospel-based Servant Leadership Development Model

A gospel-based servant leadership development model centers on the importance of an individual’s heart in relation to action. The research indicated a need for a model that specifically addresses the inner life (i.e., the heart) of a leader thus addressing the ontology of leadership practice. The proposed model builds on the idea of moving from a

¹¹ Keller, *Center Church*, 70.

virtues-based approach to servant leadership to a faith-based servant leadership approach. There are three distinct stages within the gospel-based model that will be described and supported from the research: development, motivation, and practice.

Stage 1: Development

The first stage is development. The leader begins by saying, “I want what I want” (table 6.1). This is based on Luther’s description of sin as people naturally not wanting God to be God but wanting rather to be God themselves.¹² Critical to servant leadership development is personal awareness. Self-awareness, seen through honest reflection of one’s heart, reveals non-servant tendency in a person’s life and leadership. A person (or organization) must know where development is needed. One pastor/director noted that the gospel challenged his natural desire to overpower rather than work through people. This is an example of taking a specific leadership challenge and applying the gospel to it. A possible question to ask is, “How does the gospel move one’s heart to lead through people rather than over people?” Another possible application of the gospel to leadership is taking servant leadership practices (such as those listed in the OLA) and seeing them through the grid of the gospel. For example, “How does the gospel inform valuing people, sharing leadership, displaying authenticity, developing people, building community, and providing leadership?” This provides a platform for evaluating and generating personal awareness so that the gospel can be applied to leadership.

Table 6.1 Stages of gospel-based servant leadership development

Leadership Stage	Leader’s Heart	Description
Development	“I want what I want”	Awareness, believing, applying
Motivation	“I want what God wants”	Response
Practice	“I do what Jesus does”	Fruit of the Spirit

¹² Luther, “Disputation Against Scholastic Theology,” 10.

The development component is continually receiving and believing the gospel in relation to leadership challenges. A person hears the gospel and applies what the gospel says to his or her life and leadership. Critical to the first stage is the Holy Spirit revealing the love of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:5 and Eph. 3:14-19). The theological and biblical study presented the way God awakens the inner affections to respond to the gospel by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. Such an inner-awakening experience was described in four pastors/directors' stories as a crisis of faith, dramatic spiritual conversion, heart response, and warming of heart. These experiences occurred while hearing the gospel with one person noting that he was hearing the gospel "in a different light." Even though he had heard the information before, something different inside of him moved his heart to respond in faith. A second person noted an accompanying desire to read the Scriptures, worship, and pray. These instances appear to correlate with the idea that God, through the Holy Spirit, moves the heart to respond to the gospel. The development component, therefore, is receiving and believing the gospel. That is the faith component. A person hears the gospel and applies what the gospel says to his or her life.

Stage 2: Motivation

The development stage generates new internal motivations. Motivation is the second stage in servant leadership development. A person is being transformed by the application of the gospel to his or her life (i.e., through faith in what it says). The transformation is the new motivations within the heart (e.g., love). The leader begins to say, "I want what God wants" (table 6.1). The heart is moving away from what the person originally wanted (i.e., self-interest) to what God wants. Ontology of leadership

looks at where leadership action originates. Unlike the virtues model, God is working both to will and to work through the heart of an individual (Phil. 2:13). A person's inner directedness is changing so that one sees people differently and responds to others as a servant.

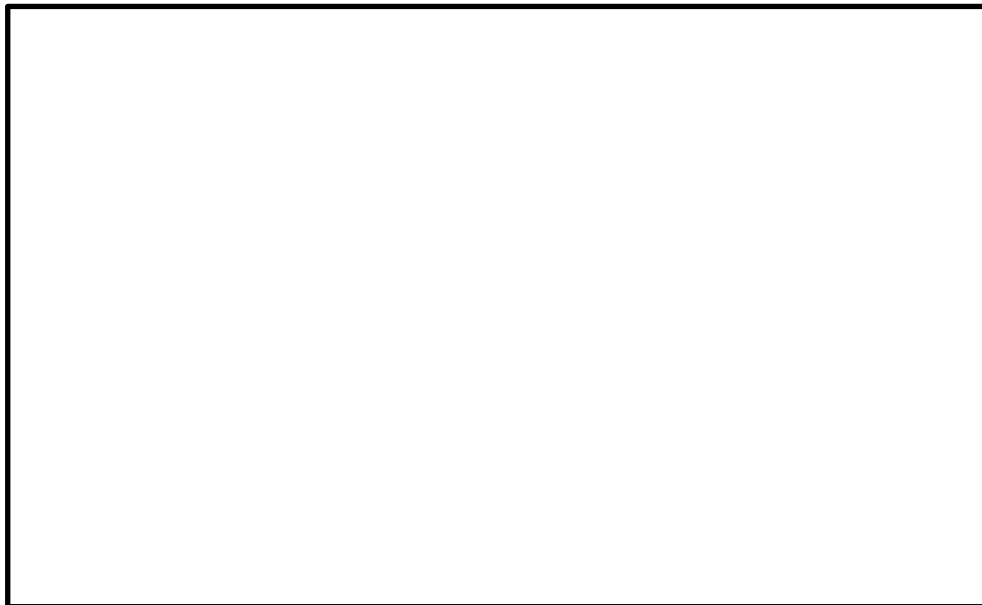
Three pastors/directors mentioned the motivation behind servant leadership as coming from within. This is first seen in the statement, "A servant leader is looking beyond self-motivated factors." The focus is off of self and onto others. Secondly, the idea of motivation is seen in the statement, "I think of the person's heart; why they are serving." According to the prior theological and biblical study, Scripture teaches that action flows out of the heart. Thirdly, a servant leader was described as "one who is able to meet the needs of others out of a place where he or she has been resourced by God." This person says that servant leadership is "resourced out of the place of the love of Christ." Because of a heart resourced by the love of Christ, the servant leader is motivated to see the needs of others met through his or her leadership.

Stage 3: Servant Leadership Practices

Gospel-based development and motivation produces servant leadership practices, the third component of the model. A heart that is moved by God is others-focused evidenced in tangible displays of love (Eph. 3:14-19 and 1 Cor. 13:1-7). Each step in the process is by and through the Holy Spirit. Servant leadership practices are the Fruit of the Spirit in the life of the leader (e.g., love, kindness, patience, gentleness, etc.). The leader says, "I do what Jesus does" (table 6.1). The deeds done as a result of servant leadership development and motivation are God-moved. Leaders serve with the love of God from within.

Development is hearing, believing, and applying the gospel. Motivation is the desire generated by the reception of the gospel through the Holy Spirit. Servant leadership practices are the outflow or out-working of the new, gospel-generated motivation. Figure 6.1 indicates a continual process through the loop. This demonstrates the daily process of applying the gospel for servant leadership development and practices. Such a process is the discipline of dependence, as mentioned in the prior theological and biblical study. Jesus is the example and source of servant leadership. A person becomes like him via a process that involves abiding in him and not purely mechanically imitating him. It is about him and not the person's work. The more a person rests in him the more a person becomes like him in action because God works and moves his or her heart by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works and produces fruit in the person's life: the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). A person's servant inclination is God's life flowing out of his or her heart because of faith in the grace of God in Christ.

Figure 6.1 Gospel-based servant leadership development model



Servant Leadership Is a Matter of the Heart

The heart is important to leadership. The Bible teaches that out of the heart a leader acts. In order for a person to display servant acts he or she must become a servant from within. This was an essential component to Greenleaf's description of servant leadership. Even though servant leadership has been extensively defined and categorized, as seen in Laub's work with the OLA, there is a blatant need to advance the servant leadership literature in the area of inner life cultivation for servant leadership development. If the gospel, and the subsequent, continual application of it to one's life, changes people to live and love like Jesus from the inside out, then it must be used in the process of forming servant leaders. The theological reflection of the affective tradition highlights the need for the human will to be God-moved. According to Scripture, the love of God in Christ through the gospel and the working of the Holy Spirit changes hearts to respond in faith, love, and obedience.

WCC pastors and directors indicated that the gospel has influenced the way they treat and respond to people. They indicated an interest to develop as leaders who respond as Jesus does to leadership challenges and successes. However, only two indicated that spiritual development was foundational to their leadership development. For most interviewees, the gospel was not connected to leadership growth and practices. Yet the biblical evidence points to the gospel as the formative force behind a person's inner life. Therefore, a servant leadership development model must be proposed that uses the gospel and the discipline of applying the gospel to leadership as core sources for developing servant leaders.

Recommendations to WCC Leadership

Based on the findings through the OLA perception match, the researcher makes the following recommendations. The first recommendation is in response to the workforce indicating a perceived separation between leaders and them. Three notable items include openness to learning, working alongside each other, and making important decisions. Workers do not perceive leaders as being open to learning from those under them. Secondly, workers do not sense that leaders work alongside of them. Thirdly, workers feel that important decisions are made for them by leaders rather than with them as partners. WCC staff members have limited time to provide feedback and input regarding ministry direction. There are occasions when leaders seek input from all of the staff members concerning ministry matters such as WCC's staff agreement statements (Appendix B). The researcher recommends WCC leaders engage in more intentional dialogue with workers around ministry details and operation. The workforce and managers need more opportunities to provide input and perspective regarding important direction-based decisions.

The second recommendation is based on the findings related to the servant leadership characteristic of develops people. Surprisingly, WCC workers indicated a low ranking to leaders developing people in terms of personal and professional development. However, OLA items for develops people related to encouragement and building people up were higher. In light of this, the researcher recommends that leaders provide workers the opportunity to list desired growth areas both personally and professionally (perhaps based on WCC seasons of growth or the 4R model). Then, create a setting for those areas of development to be assisted by the supervising leader. Currently, the workforce

perceives WCC's leaders as being more focused on the organization than the workers within it. Development at WCC needs to be about people as much as how it contributes to the organizational needs. Such efforts may boost the perception among all three groups that WCC is an organization that develops people.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Project

Strengths

This project found evidence that the gospel impacts servant leadership development and practice. Pastors and directors who demonstrated servant leadership practices had a humble awareness of their need to depend on God and come underneath those they lead. They also showed an understanding of how the gospel informs their leadership and spiritual development.

The project also collected evidence for the need to develop the inner life versus merely learning management and leadership practices. WCC is a fast-paced environment that demands a lot from its pastors and directors. Some are able to lead out of gifting, skill, and experience. However, these higher-capacity pastors or directors indicated a tendency to overwork and do projects for people. Leading out of gifting, skill, experience, or expertise is not leading out of the inner life (i.e., the character of Christ).

The research revealed that a great church like WCC has room to grow in servant leadership as an organization. The OLA revealed a need to gain a greater match in perception of servant leadership practices between workforce and top leadership. WCC set out in its 2013-2014 goals to develop more servant leaders. The OLA findings suggest the need for continued efforts toward developing servant leaders. There is a need for a

servant leadership model to address this that can couple with WCC's 4R Model approach. A gospel-based model may be an appropriate supplement for WCC.

Weaknesses

The researcher did not observe any all-staff meetings or pastor/director meetings at WCC. Such observation may have provided greater insight into the OLA results indicated that workers do not perceive leaders as being willing to learn from those under them. The perceived separation of leaders and workers may have been observed in the interactions between each group (top leaders, managers, and workforce) and the overall meeting atmosphere. Witnessing leadership development and interaction may have provided greater depth in understanding the OLA results and interviews.

The OLA provided the only perspective of servant leadership practices from the workforce. Interviewing followers of WCC pastors and directors may have provided greater insight into why certain servant leadership items on the OLA were ranked as they were. For example, the workforce disagrees that leaders provide opportunities to develop personally and professionally. A number of pastors/directors interviewed emphasized how they love and trust their team and take time to invest in their team members. Getting a more detailed perspective from the workforce regarding leadership time investment may have provided insight into the discrepancy found in the research. Getting the workforces' perspective also may have strengthened or helped validate the pastor/director interview answers regarding how they see their leadership fitting the description of servant leadership. Are leaders' actions perceived as servant-oriented? There may need to be a common language or understanding regarding what servant leadership is and why leaders do what they do. This way, workers can connect leadership actions to servant

leadership and have a basis for providing constructive feedback to their leaders regarding whether or not actions are being perceived as servant-oriented.

The researcher did not explore how the 4R model relates to each pastor/director's daily leadership development and practice. Each leader knew the 4R model and could give a brief overview. However, the researcher did not probe how each pastor/director incorporated the model into his or her personal leadership development. The 4R model's emphasis on relationship with God, self, and others relates to developing the inner life of a leader as proposed in the gospel-based servant leadership development model. Further exploration may have provided greater insight into how pastors/directors engage in personal spiritual disciplines for servant leadership development.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF
THE GOSPEL AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Personal Insights and Growth

I personally benefited from the process of learning and thinking through the ideas presented in this paper. I was made aware of ways that I do not apply the gospel to my life and leadership. It was, and still is, challenging and convicting to reflect on where my actions sometimes originate. I am grateful for the pastors' and directors' openness and honesty with me. Their own challenges and ways of coping and leaning into God were encouraging. We all deal with sin in our hearts. The pastors and directors graciously opened their hearts to me and provided invaluable information on the inner workings of servant leadership development. The pastors and directors have a full schedule and face innumerable challenges. I was encouraged to persevere this last year through my own personal challenges and struggles.

I connected with various pastors and directors who had similar gifts, interests, and passions to mine. I am vision-oriented. I like thinking through processes, asking questions about making ministry more effective, and going back to the "Why?" question of what the church is doing. To hear other pastors and directors talk about those things excited me. I also gained breadth of understanding regarding my own personality, gifts, and passions and how they might serve potential leadership roles in the future. For example, I enjoyed listening to each person's faith and leadership story and hearing their thought processes as leaders. One of my professional goals that came from this research

project is to provide consultation with church leaders and pastors regarding organizational and pastoral leadership challenges and transitions. I enjoy thinking along with other leaders and helping them construct a clearer mission, vision, and objectives so that the ministry they lead can be effective and gospel-centered.

It was fun to hear what excited people about their role at WCC. I am a member at WCC who benefits from the hard work each pastor and director puts into his or her ministry and calling, so it was encouraging to learn more about them, their faith, and leadership journey. My hope is that the research I have done and the findings I have made will benefit in tangible ways the leaders and leadership culture at WCC. I believe in the work God is doing at WCC and want to contribute as much as I can through my study and conclusions. My prayer is that God would take this doctoral work and use it to expand the reach of WCC through its efforts to develop servant leaders to reach people with the love of Jesus.

Suggestions for Further Research

The theological and biblical section predominantly covered the affective tradition from the writings of Augustine, Luther, and Melancthon. This area could be further developed using the writings of John Calvin and Richard Sibbes. There is a rich theological history that can further shed light on the application of the gospel for servant leadership development.

There is need for further study of the area of servant leadership and the ontology of leadership. This paper has shown that there is a need to move servant leadership from a virtues-based model to a faith-based model of leadership. Servant leadership is a leadership of faith because the key component is the inner life of a leader who trusts in

the goodness and love of God in the gospel. Servant leadership flows out of that reality. A heart that trusts and applies the gospel is a heart that displays the Fruit of the Spirit and, as a result, servant leadership. Virtuous acts that are praiseworthy can be performed out of a heart that is disaffected from God. Therefore, servant leadership research needs to go beyond practices and beyond a virtues model.

The gospel-based servant leadership development model proposed as a result of this study requires further consideration and development. Specifically, the researcher suggests developing an understanding of how the gospel relates to the six servant leadership practices identified and defined by Laub: values people, develops people, displays authenticity, shares leadership, builds community, and provides leadership. Clearer understanding is needed concerning how the gospel provides a grid by which to look at each of these servant leadership characteristics within an individual and organization. There is also a need to fully demonstrate how the Fruit of the Spirit informs servant leadership characteristics. A complete model/method of servant leadership development based on the gospel would be a constructive, positive next step based on the project finds.

APPENDIX A:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WCC PASTORS AND DIRECTORS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WCC PASTORS AND DIRECTORS

1. Describe your present leadership role at WCC?
2. What excites you most about your role at WCC and why?
3. Please describe the process God used to bring you to faith in Jesus Christ and now Christian ministry and leadership?
4. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
5. What do you want for the people you lead?
6. How do you make that happen?
7. What do you think of when you hear the term "servant leader"?
8. In what ways do you see your leadership fitting that description?
9. What motivates you to lead as a servant leader?
10. In what ways do you not see your leadership fitting that description, and why?
11. How do you handle that?
12. How would you describe or summarize the gospel?
13. In what ways do you think the gospel contributes to someone becoming a servant leader?
14. How has the gospel changed you as a leader?
15. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of your leadership role at WCC and why?
16. How do you handle that?
17. What is foundational to your leadership development?
18. As a Westwood Pastor or Director, what type of leadership development and training have you received? If any, please describe.
19. Are there any types of leadership training that you believe would help you as a leader? If so, what?

APPENDIX B:
WCC STAFF AGREEMENT STATEMENTS

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We will honor God and seek to preserve unity by agreeing to:

1. Live in vital union with Jesus Christ
2. Support each other with prayer, loyalty, encouragement, and advocacy
3. Respect and celebrate each other's unique gifts, personalities, stages of life, and personal story
4. Communicate by listening well and putting words to our feelings
5. Work with diligence and follow through on what we say we will do
6. Think of Westwood first and our ministry area second
7. Use humor honestly
8. Manage conflict biblically and not harbor frustration
9. Embrace change as an opportunity to learn and grow
10. Encourage fun, creativity, and innovation
11. Be positive – it's contagious

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