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EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING BIBLICAL  
LEADERS AT BRIDGEWAY CHURCH IN  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
Jonathan Jonah Seid  
May 2018

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING BIBLICAL  
LEADERS AT BRIDGEWAY CHURCH IN  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

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This project is dedicated to my wife and best friend, Kristen, whose beauty is exceeded only by her wisdom. She daily exemplifies servant leadership as she cares for our children—to whom this project is also dedicated. Eisley, Schaeffer, Ryle, and Brinker, may you increase in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man.

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## PREFACE

I shudder to think what it would have been like to attempt this degree and project without the steady support and unselfish love of my wife. Three of our four children were in diapers over the entire duration of the program, but Kristen constantly and graciously made the sacrifices necessary for me to read, think, and write in the midst of the controlled chaos of diapers (theirs), sickness (mostly theirs), tears (ours and theirs, but mostly theirs), and laughter (ours and theirs, but mostly ours).

Our families, and especially our mothers—Carole Seid and Sallye Hof—devoted countless hours to helping Kristen with the kids whenever I boarded a plane for yet another week on campus (in one particular month, *two* weeks on campus). I am not sure I would have been able to leave Kristen alone like that in good conscience without the peace of mind that came from knowing our mothers were there to walk alongside her during those long weeks.

Very few men will ever know the privilege of serving under, learning from, and flourishing in the care of a man like Sam Storms. I have never known a man with more character. In 2009 he was gracious to hire me, and with great patience he taught me how to love and embrace the doctrines of grace, though I went kicking and screaming. He disciplined me into a deep grasp of the gospel for all of life that will have ripple effects in my marriage and parenting for years to come. His constant and unselfish support of all the Bridgeway pastors as we have pursued our education has been an unparalleled blessing that few associate pastors get to experience.

Dan Dumas pursued me and encouraged me when I doubted my ability and my chance of academic success. Without his ingenuity and vision for catalyzing young men, I would never have mustered the confidence to embark on this journey. But further than



acquiring a degree, I am grateful to gain Dan as a friend. Dan is the guy you want in your foxhole when you are under fire. He is truly a “friend who loves at all times . . . a brother . . . born for adversity” (Prov 17:17).

Dr. Shane Parker constantly exceeded my expectations for a supervisor. All Christians are called to encourage each other, but receiving encouragement from someone who has the gift of encouragement is a powerful experience. I would hang up the phone from our advising conversations and shake my head at how much hope and endurance Dr. Parker had yet again instilled in me through a simple phone call. He not only believed in me, he believed in what I was trying to wrestle to the ground in writing, and that reenergized and renewed my commitment to pursue excellence.

I would be some other version of myself today—less self-aware and more arrogant—if it were not for the Bridgeway pastors and elders. Ryan Gikas, Andy Edwards, Andy Dowdell, Eddy Helker, Kelcy White, Seth Stewart, and Tyler Hayes are godly, humble, kind, and faithful ministers of the gospel. Bridgeway’s lay elders are a model of giving not only the gospel but also of themselves for the sake of their spiritual children (1 Thess 2). I am especially grateful for Tom Ball, Dave Morris, Ian Steedman, and Paul Wright for investing their time and wisdom into the Men’s Leadership Development Cohort. Almost to a man, they barely let me finish pitching them the cohort before they interrupted me and accepted, such is their hunger to make disciples, and it shows in the lives of the men alongside whom they have walked in the cohort.

Thank you to Keith Adams, Bridgeway’s Director of Biblical Counseling Ministries, who has spent countless hours counseling me and collaborating with me in building Bridgeway’s biblical counseling training program. I always leave his office with a spring in my step after yet another conversation ranging over presuppositionalism, shame, healing prayer, the dynamics of biblical change, and the beauty and brokenness running through all our hearts. Our conversations have certainly informed my thoughts and my writing.

Without Trevor Joy, Todd Engstrom, Josh Patterson, and Kevin Peck, I would not be writing this preface. They lovingly and patiently coached me in their cohorts, and were the ones who counseled me to consider this degree as the next step in my development. Josh was then kind enough to introduce me to Dan Dumas and help make it happen. I knew I signed up for a degree, but I have been joyfully surprised to discover that I also signed up for new, lifelong friendships. Jeremy Bedenbaugh, Adam Griffin, and Noe Garcia have become particularly dear brothers. We have laughed together, prayed together, and grown together. Gaining their friendship means more to me than any letters after my name ever could. Lucas Pace, Mike Powers, Justin Paslay, and Jeremy Nottingham have listened to me, loved me, and pastored me well through our two years together. Walking alongside such genuine shepherds has led to the shepherding of my own soul in the journey, for which I am deeply grateful.

Thank you to my diligent, capable, and godly executive assistant, Christy Burke, for the myriad ways she helped and supported me in this process. Her arrival to our team was very timely, and I doubt I could have succeeded without her co-laboring with me. Thank you to my pastoral intern, Jon Patterson, who has labored compassionately and competently, especially when doctoral travel has taken me away from my duties at Bridgeway. Thanks to him, our people were shepherded well in my absence. Thank you as well to the anonymous donor who has generously funded the tuition portion of the continuing education of the pastoral team. May God richly bless you as you have blessed us. Lastly, thank you to the body of Bridgeway, especially the coaches and community group leaders, who labor daily in the cause of the gospel as they look to the reward. May you be repaid a hundred fold in this life and the life to come.

J. J. Seid

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

May 2018

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Healthy shepherds produce healthy sheep. Fortunately for the members of Bridgeway, the elders who founded the church in 1995 were unwavering in their commitment to pastoral care. Nearly a quarter-century later, the majority of those elders remain and continue to faithfully shepherd the people of Bridgeway. However, today, with over 1,000 regular adult attenders, and over 400 children, Bridgeway is no longer just different in degree but different in kind. Because Bridgeway has grown so large, the elders are no longer physically able to pastor all the people by themselves. They must increasingly multiply their methods of pastoral care if they want to ensure that the quality of their pastoral care remains unchanged. Since the elders can no longer pastor all the people of Bridgeway by themselves, therefore, even as they continue to pastor the people directly, the elders must also increasingly and additionally pastor them indirectly—by calling and equipping a myriad of leaders to do the work of the ministry alongside of the elders.<sup>1</sup>

If the elders are to continue to faithfully shepherd the sheep (1 Pet 5:2), they must also shepherd shepherds. The elders must become experts not just at being leaders, but also at making leaders. The task of making more leaders is often referred to as

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<sup>1</sup>In Randy Pope and Kitti Murray, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 32, Pope writes,

The question I am most often asked is, What’s the difference between equipping and [teaching truth]? It’s simple. Equipping is massaging the truth until it becomes understandable and usable. . . . Equipping adds modeling, explaining, and asking questions. . . . You have to learn to ask questions. To prod to see if there is understanding. Massage the truth until, as the leader, you perceive it’s now becoming understood and usable in the disciple’s life.

Pope similarly observes that all too often we “give our people truth and then delegate the mission of living for Christ without the necessary equipping and accountability.” *Ibid.*, 45.

*leadership development*, and when anyone creates, captures, and concretely executes a plan for that development in a particular context, that plan is often referred to as a *leadership pipeline*. Bridgeway’s continued growth demands that the elders develop and implement a robust leadership pipeline if they are to remain faithful to the biblical charge of keeping watch over all of the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers (Acts 20:28). The elders and pastors are to be commended for faithfully doing the work of the ministry, but the work they do must increasingly include developing the body to do the work of the ministry as well (Eph 4:11–16). As Putman and Harrington point out, making disciples is not unique to elders—discipleship is on the job description of every Christian.<sup>2</sup> In addition to making disciples like everybody else, the elders and pastors of Bridgeway are also called to, in the words of Putman and Harrington, “lead in the development of a church-wide system that will make disciples who make disciples. . . . Church leaders are to be equipper-coaches, and the people are the ministers.”<sup>3</sup> Such systems do not create themselves, nor do they maintain themselves. It takes much prayer, great effort, and sustained focus on the part of local church leaders to create and sustain a fruitful church-wide disciple-making system.

### **Historical Context**

In many ways, Bridgeway was born out of spiritual renewal. A contingent of elders in a local cessationist church were shifting in their convictions regarding the continuation of the spiritual gifts described in the New Testament, and their lead pastor made it clear that their new embrace of charismatic belief and practice was not welcome or permitted.<sup>4</sup> As a result, after much prayer, they quietly left that church and began meeting

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<sup>2</sup>Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman, *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*, Exponential Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 120-21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>See Wayne Grudem for an explanation of continuationism and cessationism, as well as a

and praying on their own. At the same time, a group of college students led by a mentor couple was also meeting and praying and experiencing a measure of corporate gospel renewal. This group of college students eventually joined the church after it launched when they felt assured the church would be willing to form “house churches” (e.g., strongly decentralized and self-contained community groups) and pursue the full range of spiritual gifts detailed in the New Testament. Edmond Christian Fellowship officially opened its doors in September, 1994. In June 1998, the name was changed to Bridgeway. Several of those founding elders—still serving and leading at Bridgeway today—recall that they wanted to found the church on the contents of John Piper’s *Desiring God*, coupled with an active pursuit of all the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14:1). Needless to say, pursuing Charismatic Calvinism left them with few exemplars and even fewer options for pursuing and appointing a lead pastor. Several of the founding elders had personal relationships with Sam Storms—himself a well-known and frequently published Charismatic Calvinist—and actually offered him the position of founding lead pastor but he declined, feeling led elsewhere at that time.

Bridgeway Church has had three lead pastors in its twenty-four-year history. In 2008, after the second lead pastor stepped down, the elders of the church reached out to Sam Storms and asked him to take leadership. Storms accepted, bringing to Bridgeway over thirty years of pastoral experience. After four years of teaching theology at Wheaton College, and an additional four years of itinerant writing and speaking ministry, he felt called to resume a life of ministry in the local church.

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description of how a broad swathe of Evangelicals probably fall somewhere in between those two views. Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1031.

## **Rebuilding Community Groups**

When Storms replaced leadership and oversight for the community groups ministry in 2010,<sup>5</sup> the community groups ministry had dwindled to a mere five groups intended to serve approximately 600 attendees, but those five groups only had the capacity to accommodate approximately 100 attendees. For a local church that had always purported to be a church of small groups rather than merely a church with small groups, there were not nearly enough community groups to serve the number of people desiring to connect beyond Sunday mornings.<sup>6</sup>

In the last three to four years the pastors, elders, and lay ministry leaders have created a healthy level of theological and philosophical alignment between themselves. This alignment has allowed the pastoral team to begin exploring what a truly church-wide set of leadership qualifications might look like, which will in turn enable the pastoral team to begin building systems that can develop potential leaders to eventually meet those pre-defined qualifications.

## **Moving from Recruiting to Developing**

It is heartening to see people being fed by Bridgeway's faithful, gospel-centered, Christ-exalting expositional preaching, and Spirit-filled, cross-focused worship in song, but Bridgeway is still growing in the ability to connect people beyond Sunday mornings. Bridgeway currently has 590 adults in forty community groups. Married couples lead thirty-nine of those groups, and a team of singles leads one of them. Four of the forty

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<sup>5</sup>The associate pastor overseeing community and discipleship at the time of Storms' hire had been himself hired by the second lead pastor and was not replaced until he departed for another local church out of state—a full two years after the second lead pastor resigned in June 2008, and was succeeded by Storms in September 2008.

<sup>6</sup>Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry: A Troubleshooting Guide for Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 20-21, write, At one end of the continuum is the 'church with small groups' category. In this model, small groups form a department, one of many in the church. At the continuum's other end is the 'church is small groups' category. This model views each cell group as a little church. The 'church of small groups' category views each group as a little community within the larger church. This church's staff and ministries are all built on a small groups skeleton, so that every member is connected through community to the church.

groups are high school community groups, where mature couples lead groups formed out of attenders of Bridgeway's student ministry, held in parent host homes. Thirty-three of the forty groups have a coach with elder-level character meeting once a month face-to-face with the male leader (coaching is required for all male leaders). The remaining seven groups are led by elders (five of whom also serve as coaches. A parallel coaching structure for the female leaders has just been relaunched for the second time in the last five years (female leaders are not required to meet with a coach but can request one).

Leaders are permitted to designate their groups as (1) open by public invitation, (2) open by private invitation, or (3) full pending multiplication, as their groups fluctuate numerically either through growth, loss, or multiplication. Because there are so few groups for so many people (i.e., over 1,000 adult attenders), and because group multiplication is infrequent (at most, only one to two groups multiply each year), only six of the forty groups are currently open by public invitation—meaning that they are visible and accessible to a visitor on Bridgeway's website and in a brochure at the Connect Counter. Because Bridgeway subscribes to the philosophy that new groups are best for connecting new people, new groups are primarily launched through the Connect Course—a six-week small group experience held on Sunday mornings during the first of two services.<sup>7</sup> The Connect Course is held quarterly, and blends a Sunday School experience with a Bridgeway community group experience as a means of meeting people where they are in order to draw them into deep community that moves beyond Sunday mornings. In a given quarter, dozens

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<sup>7</sup>Larry W. Osborne, *Sticky Church*, The Leadership Network Innovation Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 79, writes,

There is one grouping that works particularly well. It's what we call New Groups for New People. In this case, the strong similarity among the group members is not so much a shared interest or station in life as it is a shared lack of established relationships. I think of people as being like Legos. We all have a limited number of connectors. Introverts have a few. Some extroverts have dozens. But either way, once they're full, they're full. And when that happens, we tend to be friendly but to not connect. It's what happens when you move to a new town and are excited by everyone's friendliness, only to be discouraged three months later that you haven't connected with anyone.

of people request help in joining a community group, but very few people in that same span of time will request permission to launch and lead a community group.

Until now, the pastors and elders have been able to get by with recruiting leaders as much as or more than developing them, in part because Bridgeway steadily receives an influx of transfer growth of mature believers with a taste for Storms' expository preaching. An informal survey of those forty community groups reveals that at least fifteen of them are served by leaders who arrived at Bridgeway already equipped and ready to lead. As mentioned, an additional seven groups are currently led by an elder. Many of the remaining twenty-two leaders have "grown up" spiritually at Bridgeway over the course of many years, and are therefore a product of an ultimately fruitful but slow and informal pipeline. The relative slowness of informal pipelines is demonstrated in part by the fact that, of those remaining twenty-two leaders who were neither recruited nor already serving at the highest levels of leadership at Bridgeway, many of them have attended for a decade or more before transitioning into leadership. Here is where a formal leadership development pipeline could be beneficial, since a formal pipeline—if functioning clearly and effectively—will often move people into leadership far more swiftly than an informal one.

Often these inherited, mature, transfer-growth leaders are mature precisely because somewhere at some time in the past they were personally disciplined. This has been confirmed through multiple conversations with many of them, exploring when and how they became "activated" as leaders. Time and again, these leaders have told stories of (1) knowledge being conveyed to them, (2) in the context of a loving coaching relationship, (3) coupled with concrete opportunities to apply the knowledge and coaching they were receiving.<sup>8</sup> In short, these inherited, recruited leaders are often the products of

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<sup>8</sup>Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 61, write, "The Transformational Sweet Spot is the intersection of



intentional relationships with mature believers who personally invested in them, typically over a long period of time, either through or apart from another local church's leadership pipeline. Whether that local church no longer exists, is located in another state, or has gone through a cultural decline, the end result is the same. In recruiting these leaders rather than developing them, Bridgeway has reaped where others have sown and watered.

### **A Recruitment Mindset**

Developing leaders in a sustainable and replicable way is not easy. Bridgeway is not alone in the tendency to recruit volunteers more than proactively develop leaders for both the local church and the world at large.<sup>9</sup> As a church grows numerically a recruitment mindset can slowly squeeze out development as long-term priorities are drowned out by short-term urgencies. There is a danger in stopping at just raising both the level of qualification for and expectations of shepherd leadership. Raising the bar without also providing clear pathways of development can unintentionally create a whole new barrier to leadership. Potential leaders are in danger of sitting out leadership due to self-disqualification, intimidation, and lack of clarity as to how to go about acquiring the requisite character, confidence, and shared convictions necessary to become qualified. When there is no explicit leadership pipeline, people are left uncertain as to their qualification or lack thereof, and in that silence, they might easily assume the worst about

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truth given by healthy leaders when someone is in a vulnerable position.” Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 151, write, “The sweet spot of leadership development is the intersection of knowledge, experiences, and coaching. Scholars from a variety of fields have emphasized the convergence. . . . You likely recognize this intuitively and experientially. Your development occurred as knowledge was combined with coaching and experiences.

<sup>9</sup>Putman, Harrington, and Coleman, *DiscipleShift*, 124, summarize the problem this way: “So we really face three problems. First, most leaders are too busy trying to do the work in the church themselves, and they don’t have time to see and develop the leaders God has sent them. The machine needs feeding, and they have to feed it. . . . The second problem is that church leaders are looking for already-developed leaders. They don’t see the potential in their midst because it’s not yet visible. . . . Third, pastors tend to look for a person who can do everything—an all-star player, if you will—rather than a person who can play a specific position on a great team.”

themselves and their leadership potential. It is easy for potential leaders to feel stuck when they have been given no clear path to grow.

Plugging volunteer-need holes with volunteer bodies is not a permanent or sustainable solution. Charan, Drotter, and Noel—speaking in the context of the business world—agree.

Hiring gifted people makes sense as a tactic but not as a strategy. Certainly if there's an enormously talented individual you can recruit for your organization, you should do so. Strategically, however, this approach falls apart because of the scarcity of highly talented individuals.<sup>10</sup>

Leadership development, in contrast, takes the long view, but consequently does not quickly produce plugs for holes, and thus often looks unattractive and thus tends to be left untried. Leadership development is more like farming than manufacturing in its pace and outcomes. It is slow, inefficient, yet ultimately fruitful work, and thus it cannot be neglected simply because it lacks near-term appeal. Urgencies may drive leadership development, but only principles will sustain it through the long growing season needed to produce a fresh crop of leaders.

### **A Size-Culture Ceiling**

To compound all this, Bridgeway is also on the cusp of perhaps the most significant of all size-culture transitions—breaking the “800 barrier” in a sustained and healthy way.<sup>11</sup> Bridgeway currently averages approximately 750 attenders on Sunday mornings. The elders have voiced frustration that they increasingly see people whom they do not know. Bridgeway is at a pivotal pastoral point in its numerical growth. The pastors and elders are growing in their conviction that they must increasingly shift from only directly shepherding all the flock to also increasingly devoting a portion of their time to

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<sup>10</sup>Ram Charan, Stephen J. Drotter, and James L. Noel, *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 4.

<sup>11</sup>Carl F. George and Warren Bird, *How to Break Growth Barriers: Revise Your Role, Release Your People, and Capture Overlooked Opportunities for Your Church*, updated ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 190-208.

shepherding shepherds who can help the elders shepherd the flock. The elders realize that if they do not make this shift, the church will have to contract to the size of their own structural span of care—which lies around 500-700. Timothy Keller writes:

Up to the “800 barrier,” churches can still get away with having a mediocre or poor small-group system. The people may still be getting shepherded mainly through larger programs, affinity classes, and groups that are run by staff people directly. But if God keeps sending you new people, so that you are bumping up against the 800 barrier, you must have the majority of your members and adherents in small groups that are very well run and that do pastoral care, not just Bible study. Multiple services were more important when addressing the 200 or 400 barrier, but small group life is the key to navigating this change.<sup>12</sup>

To break through the span-of-care ceiling of 800 requires leaders to change their shared convictions, in order that they might shape a new culture with new constructs that form shepherd leaders (Acts 20:28). Again, Keller writes,

Because a very large church is marked by *change*, the overall vision may stay the same, but few or no programs or practices are sacrosanct. Because it is *complex*, it is not immediately obvious whom to talk to or who needs to be in on a given decision; many new events may have unforeseen consequences for other programs. Because there is a need for greater *formality*, plans have to be written down and carefully executed, rather than worked out face to face and relationally. In a very large church, all of these traits must be considered the inevitable cost of ministry. There should be little hand-wringing and no moral significance attached to these traits (calling change “instability,” formality “being impersonal,” etc.). Different cultures are just that—different, not inferior.<sup>13</sup>

This need for greater formality—written and carefully executed plans rather than face-to-face, relational judgment calls—will be a challenge for Bridgeway’s leadership to internalize, but a necessity for Bridgeway to flourish in its current size-culture. To make this shift in conviction is to in a sense increasingly hem in senior leadership, and leave less wiggle room to make exceptions borne out of built-up personal relational collateral—especially when it comes to determining who is qualified for leadership under the auspices of the elders. Until now, a benefit of the face-to-face relational approach has been the ability for the pastors and elders to be graciously flexible and positively inclusive whenever

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<sup>12</sup>Timothy J. Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics,” March 2, 2010, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2n4EzO8>, 11.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 13.

possible. Currently a person may not be completely aligned with the theology and convictions of the elders, but their built-up relational collateral can still permit them a measure of freedom to move up the ladder of leadership influence.

A growing negative of this approach in a very large church is when every deliberation as to whether or not to promote a particular parishioner into leadership leads to a unique and non-replicable outcome. When senior leadership approaches every situation as unique and every call as a judgment call, then few ministry decisions are replicable by mid-level leadership without the constant supervision and input of senior leadership. In this way, senior leadership can increasingly and unwittingly create a decision-making bottleneck. Mid-level leaders who consequently lack the necessary clarity and autonomy to make independent decisions can grow increasingly discouraged, and strategic momentum can slow to a crawl across the entire church. Constructing a clear, agreed-upon leadership development pipeline can aid in removing this kind of bottleneck.

### **Collectively Owning the Mission of God**

For a local church body to increasingly grow in building itself up in love (Eph 4:16), every member will need to increasingly own the work of ministry. Todd Engstrom observes that as pastors and elders seek to equip members for that work, the pastors and elders will inevitably face two fears in calling potential leaders out of hiding: (1) lovingly correcting and rebuking the flock, and (2) asking the saints for more. Engstrom points out that it is easy for pastors to place weight in the wrong places. Therefore, pastors must ask themselves, “Where are we unduly putting weight on the saints that they should not bear?” But on the flip side, pastors must also ask, “Where are we not putting weight on the saints where we ought to be putting biblical weight that should belong there? How do we call them to increasingly own the ministry of the local church?” Engstrom concludes that no local church will be truly healthy until its members collectively own the mission

of God.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, George and Bird have observed that in previous generations, church members expected their paid pastoral staff to do the majority of the work of the ministry, and while that expectation is gradually shifting in many churches to a more robustly-biblical vision of every-member ministry, too many churches still place unhealthy pastoral care expectations on their pastors.

The bottom line was that if anything needed to be done for God, the pastor was the hired hand who would do it. If a congregation did not guard itself it could become lazy, because its main activity was to give money and vote, while its pastor worked hard and was tired all the time. Even in congregations that learned how to release lay leaders for ministry, the pastors were still expected to do much of the work of the church. Over time, as some churches grew very large, those patterns still remained, even though a lot more volunteers were helping out. . . . In my observations of large churches, a prime source of ministerial fatigue still traces back to a pastoral staff that operates under the model of pastors as primary caregivers. Whether unwittingly or not, ministers continue to train the parish to expect them to be available in ways that no human can consistently deliver.<sup>15</sup>

George and Bird go on to observe that this persistent expectation for pastors to be unrealistically available can tend to put a lid on a local church's ability to grow, as well as creating in the pastoral team fear and resistance to numerical growth, who already feel that they cannot do any more. In the pastors' minds, numerical growth does not equal multiplication of ministers and ministry efforts, but rather addition to their own already maxed-out ministry responsibilities.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Todd Engstrom, notes from group coaching session, February 27, 2015, Austin, TX.

<sup>15</sup>George and Bird, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 192.

<sup>16</sup>Dave Kraft, *Leaders Who Last* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 137-38, writes, Today, the crying need is for more leaders. To grow by addition, you recruit more followers. To grow by multiplication, you add more leaders. . . . The reason there is a dearth of leaders today is that too little of the average leader's time is focused on leadership development. . . . The single greatest way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development.

Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 12, write,

We need a radical change in the typical twenty-first-century pastor's church-leadership paradigm, especially if the pastor attended a classical seminary or is an older person. Pastoral ministry certainly includes the central responsibilities of teaching and preaching the Bible, but far too many pastors stop there. Leading a church in today's and tomorrow's world involves training leaders who will develop other leaders to carry the ministry torch to the third and fourth generations. The danger is that some . . . pastors will continue to believe that a single initiative program, such as preaching the Bible or

## Rationale

Both this history and this broader cultural context lead to the present, urgent assignment of constructing a functional leadership pipeline, with clear pathways into leadership, that is integrated across all of Bridgeway's ministry areas, and supported by all of Bridgeway's pastors, elders, coaches, and community group leaders. Ministry leaders are learning that they have been better at *asking* the saints to do the work of the ministry than they have been at *equipping* them to do the work of the ministry. As a result, the pastors and elders are becoming increasingly convicted that they must bring Bridgeway to a place where the people of God are strategically equipped to serve instead of merely asked to serve.

## Conviction, Culture, and Constructs

Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck provide helpful diagnostic questions for this stage of the process.<sup>17</sup> *Conviction, culture, and constructs* (e.g., structures) are all necessary when creating and engaging in leadership development. Bridgeway has now entered its twenty-fifth year, and the existing strata of conviction, culture, and constructs (assuming that each exists) need to be assessed to determine which end to begin working the problem from.

In the last eight years, under the leadership of Sam Storms, Bridgeway's pastors and elders have: implemented a formal membership, equipped and installed a new wave of lay elders who possess a clear theological grid for their role and function, begun practicing church discipline consistently, firmly, and lovingly when instances of public, serious, and unrepentant sin present themselves,<sup>18</sup> formalized a process of church-wide

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pastoral care, accomplishes the ministry. Our churches need the mind-set of the military, which has made leadership development a part of their leaders' daily lives and an essential path to success.

<sup>17</sup>Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 14-16.

<sup>18</sup>Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*, IX Marks (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 319.

catechesis through a two-semester systematic theology course written and taught by Storms entitled *Foundations*, installed systematic equipping of parents for family discipleship from birth to baptism and on into adulthood, and created and launched a four-semester curriculum and training process for lay biblical counselors to serve the body through biblical counseling. Not only community group leaders, but also all community group members are gathered and equipped for the work of the ministry twice a year through the *All-Church EQUIP*, and once a year in the *Discipleship Conference*. All members of the body are encouraged to attend prayer ministry trainings offered throughout the year as a first step towards being released to pray for people at the conclusion of the weekly corporate assembly.

As regards the public ministry of the Word, Storms has taught expositionally, verse-by-verse, through the entirety of: Mark's Gospel, 1 Corinthians 12–14, Joshua, Jonah, Proverbs, Philippians, Hebrews, James, and John 13–17. He is currently working his way through the entire book of Revelation. Other pastors on staff have taught expository sermons on key passages related to community and the mission of God, such as Colossians 3:12-14, Ephesians 4:1-16, and Romans 12:3-8.

Therefore, the *conviction* at Bridgeway for equipping the saints for the work of the ministry—of which leadership development is a part—is robust and well-supported in principle by the leaders and the members of the body at large. Culturally, key texts and theological concepts around equipping the saints are embedded in Bridgeway's foundation documents (e.g., the mission statement, Bridgeway's four values, theological distinctives, covenant for membership, etc.), and the language of equipping is frequently used by Bridgeway's leaders.

As previously mentioned, Bridgeway is currently caught in a significant size-culture transition, and most of the pastors and lay elders are still working to diversify their ministry efforts to include not only directly pastoring the body but also pastoring the body through called and equipped leaders within the body. They are not unwilling to

make the strategic shift of focusing more of their energies on equipping for ministry over and above directly doing the work of the ministry themselves, but the structures have not been built for them to easily make that shift and do so in good conscience—knowing that as they directly minister less and equip more, a ministerial vacuum will not be left in their wake.

### **A Constructs Problem**

Therefore, Bridgeway currently has a *constructs* problem, more than a *conviction* or *culture* problem. (That being said, culture in many ways leads to and creates constructs, so if the constructs are not built soon, then that delay may reveal that there is also, in addition, a culture problem.) What is the proof of the conclusion that Bridgeway primarily has a constructs problem? Geiger and Peck point out—in light of their definitions of those three concepts—that constructs without conviction will result in apathy.<sup>19</sup> In other words, the framework for equipping may exist, but there is not shared urgency around the need for equipping. By contrast, there is a shared urgency around the need for equipping at Bridgeway, as indicated by how frequently it is a topic of discussion and prayer by the pastors and elders in monthly strategic, quarterly off-site, and monthly elder meetings, and how frequently members of the body focus on its presence or absence (e.g., relating how they are flourishing under their community group leader if they are fortunate enough to have one, or expressing a deep desire to be gathered and led into deeper community if they are not).

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<sup>19</sup>Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 15, explain the three concepts: Conviction is a God-initiated passion that fuels a leader and church. Conviction is at the center of the framework because without conviction to develop others, leadership development will not occur. . . . Once the church leaders share this conviction, this ambition must become part of the very culture of the church itself. *Culture is the shared beliefs and values that drive the behavior of a group of people.* . . . Wise leaders implement constructs to help unlock the full potential of a church that seeks to be a center for developing leaders. By constructs, we mean the systems, processes, and programs developed to help leaders. (emphasis added)



Similarly, Peck and Geiger argue, constructs without culture will result in exhaustion. Holes are being feverishly plugged and everyone is running at a high clock speed, but exhaustion and burnout are just around the bend. This is also, by God’s grace, not descriptive of Bridgeway’s culture. The pastors generally observe rhythms of rest. Guilt and manipulation are increasingly absent from invitations to connect, serve, or lead, and tasks are viewed as useful for getting people done, rather than people being viewed as useful for getting tasks done.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, Peck and Geiger point out how conviction without constructs will result in frustration. This is Bridgeway’s current position. The pastors and elders share conviction that the church flourishes most when the people are equipped for the work of the ministry, and the people themselves—even if they have acquired bad consumeristic habits—have typically responded readily and hungrily to any opportunity to be equipped, especially when it is detached from pragmatic recruitment to meet urgent ministry needs.<sup>21</sup> However, opportunities to be equipped are few and far between, and a clear vision of what a fully-equipped and mobilized member of Bridgeway looks like has not been written down, shared with the body at large, or translated into a concrete strategic plan for equipping. People at Bridgeway often have little to no idea how to go about becoming a leader, or what would qualify or disqualify them for leadership. As far as they are concerned, the process and the qualifications for leadership at Bridgeway are almost completely opaque.

Up until the present time, the majority of equipping has tended to happen incidentally and informally, and has often been triggered by urgency or request. Those

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<sup>20</sup>William M. Easum and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 35.

<sup>21</sup>To give one example, the inaugural Men’s Leadership Development Cohort, launched as part of this project’s goals in September 2017—with very little run-up or promotion comparative to other announcements or programs, and with a lengthy upfront written application—produced nineteen eager, quality applicants for only nine possible roster spots. Those who were not accepted were generally disappointed and asked to be notified of any similar opportunities in the near future.

who get equipped tend to be those who draw the attention of the pastors and elders due to their circumstances, or who simply ask directly and boldly. Even though Bridgeway is a church of 1,000 adults, any congregant can still successfully ask any member of the executive pastoral team to lunch—however it only occurs to a select few to ask. Others tend to assume by their own admission that such a request would be inappropriate or impossible. These reactive, small-church approaches to equipping are not inherently bad, but in this size-culture they tend to unintentionally cater to extroverted, proactive, assertive personality types, while dramatically underserving the shy, self-effacing, introverted, and even the conscientious. And indeed, these two contrasting personality types find themselves in two very different relationships with the pastors and elders, and interviewing both groups might lead an interviewer to conclude they were talking to people attending two completely different churches. When the tail wags the dog in equipping in this way, equipping can unintentionally become haphazard and discriminatory.

### **A Growing Gap between Ministry Needs and Volunteers**

Also, while it is good that the people of Bridgeway are not manipulated into meeting ministry needs, ministry needs are nevertheless increasing rapidly. Children’s ministry staff are noting unusually high turnover in children’s ministry volunteers. When new community groups launch they fill to capacity almost immediately. Some staff pastors are admitting that they have not sat through an entire one of Bridgeway’s two morning services in a year or more, as they are constantly pulled out of the service to meet urgent and unanticipated needs.

To further aggravate this growing gap between ministry needs and ministry volunteers, Christians in the West are notorious for church-shopping and church-hopping among a plethora of megachurches. As a result, people constantly cycle through Bridgeway’s doors looking to connect, and if they are unable to intuitively connect beyond Sunday mornings at the speed which they personally expect (which varies widely)—they

tend to move on quickly.<sup>22</sup> Because of the constant flow of visitors that cycle through large churches, and because of the high number of churches in the Oklahoma City metro area, Bridgeway can experience rapid transfer growth at any given time. For example, five families will suddenly appear because of how another local church’s leadership transition was handled. Then those couples might invite five more families from that same church. However, Bridgeway’s average weekly attendance still has not exceeded growth by fifty to seventy-five people per year over the past five years, revealing that, though the front door is wide open, so too is the back door. Similarly, Bridgeway’s quarterly, two-week covenant membership course, Blueprints, in any given quarter might have as few as ten or as many as fifty attend. Furthermore, exit conversations with people who leave reveal one of the common reasons given for leaving is the inability to get connected beyond Sunday mornings.

Very large churches and megachurches<sup>23</sup> in one sense are products created to meet the demands of church-shoppers, and in another sense are taste-makers shaping the demands of church-shoppers. David Wells refers to this as evangelicalism’s increasing “consumer mentality.” He writes,

The constant cultural bombardment of individualism, in the absence of a robust theology, meant that faith that had rightly been understood as personal earlier on was now becoming merely individualistic. It was self-focused and consumer-oriented. It was a faith in search of comfort and assurance in the midst of all the anxieties created by modern life.<sup>24</sup>

He explains further,

As consumers we expect to get what we want immediately, without waiting, on our own terms, and with the right of return. . . . Today we come confidently seeking,

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<sup>22</sup>Bridgeway’s all-church survey—administered physically one Sunday a year in both services—suggests that approximately forty visitors are present on any given Sunday.

<sup>23</sup>The numerical definition of a megachurch is always shifting. Currently, a megachurch is typically defined as a church with an average weekly attendance of 2,000 or more. “Megachurches,” *Christianity Today*, accessed November 10, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/topics/m/megachurches/>.

<sup>24</sup>David F. Wells, *The Courage to Be Protestant: Reformation Faith in Today’s World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2017), 9.

assuming an instant welcome, an immediate access when we have time for this in the midst of our busy lives. We are in the market for some spiritual dimension to complete our lives, some solace to fill what has been lost somewhere along the road to modernity. We expect access to the sacred without cost, without thought, without pain, without waiting. We have learned this in the malls. After all, this is our right. It is also our right to walk away from our experience of the divine if we are not satisfied. And many of us do. To see this at work we need not look for strange cults or covens. It is there among our most ordinary neighbors. It is going on at the next desk over on the office floor, in break rooms, in meditation rooms, and on the way home in the car. And it is going on in the garden-variety evangelical church of a seeker-sensitive or emergent kind, too. There you can see this very same consumer spirituality at work, completely unafraid, buying, matching product to need, at work in all these ways. Instant access! Help when we want it, but on our terms.<sup>25</sup>

While it is good that visitors to Bridgeway are not pushed into the work of the ministry through guilt and manipulation, it is *not* good that their cultural idols continue to tempt them to relate to the local church like consumers of goods and services, in such a way that they are in danger of viewing the pastors and elders as those who are paid to perform the work of the ministry so they themselves do not have to.<sup>26</sup> This instinct to outsource and abdicate the work of the ministry through payment—this clericalism, as it were—must be consistently and gently corrected from the top down if the people of Bridgeway are to flourish, reach maturity, and effectively engage in the mission of God.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Wells, *The Courage to Be Protestant*, 157-58.

<sup>26</sup>Pope and Murray, *Insourcing*, 20-21, trace the most common local church models over the years, which they call the “pastoral,” “attractional,” and “influential,” before commending what they refer to as “life-on-life.” Of the pastoral model, Pope and Murray write,

It is a model of ministry whose basic building blocks are a small, stable flock and a loving, multitalented, maintenance-oriented shepherd. Simple means of grace are emphasized. . . . [It worked well] when the world was simpler and the gap between faith and culture was less wide. . . . In its day, the pastoral model was virtually devoid of consumerism. In times past, the gap between what church members wanted and what they needed was relatively narrow. Most people didn’t notice a difference between the two. Today the dichotomy between the wants and needs of churchgoers is as wide as a megachurch parking lot. What people want, they don’t need, and what they need, they often don’t want. No wonder church leaders are often stymied!

<sup>27</sup>Chip Ingram writes, “Even our most successful churches and programs are not producing mature, godly, high-integrity followers of Christ who, in turn, lead others to Christ and make disciples.” Chip Ingram, foreword, in Pope and Murray, *Insourcing*, 9.

## Conclusion

This project is a logical extension of seeking to help the elders be faithful stewards. In a sense, there is nothing inherently problematic with economies of scale when it comes to pastoral care. But if structures and systems of care do not change as a local church grows, there will eventually be far too many sheep and far too few shepherds, and the flock will begin to suffer unintentional neglect. Unless something is done to correct this dilution of pastoral effectiveness, the church must shrink to fit the span of care, or become spiritually shallow.

Otherwise, the pastors and elders will become increasingly imbalanced in the way they live. They will become less and less mutually accountable as their roles become more and more hierarchical, and they will work more and more, and, as a result, be available to equip the saints less and less. This discussion of leadership in a large church is therefore really a discussion about how to get the whole church to own the mission of God, where the body is increasingly healthy, and each member is functioning cooperatively in their God-given gifts in such a way that the body builds itself up in love. It is not that difficult to identify the qualifications for eldership in Scripture, and not that difficult to assess specific men according to those qualifications. It becomes much more challenging to ask what these men—once vetted and assembled—are to do strategically, in their particular context and size-culture, in order to be maximally faithful to the mandate to shepherd all the flock of God entrusted into their care.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Putman, Harrington, and Coleman, *DiscipleShift*, 170, write, We believe in the priesthood of every believer, and we want to get people into the game. Yet there is only so much energy and so many resources in your church, and you must use them for the most important things. You can end up doing a lot of things not very well and become a mile wide and an inch deep. You must direct your people to things that make the biggest impact. There is also a difference between what you allow and encourage people to do organically (on their own time) and what you back with your church's time, energy, and resources. *Problems arise anytime a church doesn't think through this intentionally and strategically.* (emphasis added)

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to develop a leadership development pipeline at Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, that would provide clear pathways to concretely and effectively lead attenders from first-time visitors all the way to Great Commission character, competency, and calling.

## **Goals**

Several of the pastors and elders of Bridgeway have expressed a desire to increasingly shift from a culture of leader recruitment to a culture of leader development, since only 59 percent of Bridgeway's regular attenders are currently participating in a community group. 590 adults currently attend a Bridgeway community group, out of approximately 1,000 regular attenders. (Those 590 adults also contain within their respective family units 388 children under the age of eighteen.) Average weekly attendance at Bridgeway is approximately 750. That number of 1,000 regular attenders is derived from the conservative estimate that at least 25 percent of any given local church's regular attenders are absent on any given Sunday (some estimates range as high as 33 percent). Therefore, 590 is 79 percent of the average number of weekly attendance, but only 59 percent of the estimated total number of attenders.<sup>29</sup>

In other words, roughly half of the people of Bridgeway can currently be accommodated in Bridgeway's structure of systematic pastoral care. In addition, in the last five years, there has only been one training and one symposium that have addressed faith and work, and no sermon in that time has taken faith and work as its primary subject. Finally, no systematic training program for leadership has been launched in the last three years. Previous to that, Storms single-handedly built and led three highly-effective year-long pastoral internships, processing over 30 men through that particular

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<sup>29</sup>There are currently 632 covenant members at Bridgeway, with 364 of them participating in a community group. Therefore, interestingly, only 59 percent of covenant members participate in a community group—a nearly-identical percentage of groups participation as for non-member attendees.

pipeline, including several of his current staff pastors, myself included. Other participants have gone on to serve in pastoral roles in other sister churches, or in lay leadership roles within Bridgeway.

However, new, permanent, and ongoing development structures need to be built that will continually produce biblical leaders who will lead faithfully and fruitfully both at Bridgeway and all throughout the greater Oklahoma City metropolitan area. Furthermore, Bridgeway is at the intersection of a size-culture transition that requires the pastors and elders to increasingly shift Bridgeway's leadership qualifications from oral to written. Therefore, because the pastors and elders desire to combat clericalism, and because the pastors and elders have appropriate convictions and a conducive culture, but are feeling a growing frustration due to the absence of any tangible constructs, this project aimed to create a tangible and functional leadership pipeline at Bridgeway through three goals:

1. The first goal was to increase the knowledge of the staff pastors of Bridgeway regarding the culture, conviction, and constructs needed to develop a functional leadership pipeline.<sup>30</sup>
2. The second goal was to develop a leadership development curriculum that aligned with the vision and values of Bridgeway's pastors and elders.
3. The third goal was to create and launch the Men's Leadership Development Cohort, utilizing that curriculum to equip the men of Bridgeway for leadership both inside and outside of the local church.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>The further hope is that, because of and subsequent to that training, at some point in the future when sufficient alignment is achieved, the pastors and elders of Bridgeway will work together to develop universally agreed upon, church-wide leadership qualifications for at least three broad levels of leadership within Bridgeway (leading self, leading others, and leading leaders) with accompanying explicit development-opportunity pathways.

<sup>31</sup>The intention is to eventually launch a leadership development cohort for women as well, working from the template of the Men's Leadership Development Cohort. In the meantime, the first Women's Shepherd Leadership Cohort was launched in September 2017 (see appendix 6 for curriculum), which was built for the more specialized purpose of equipping women to mentor, make disciples, lead, instruct, equip, and teach other women at Bridgeway. According to Scripture, if Christians are to be equipped to "teach and admonish one another in all wisdom" (Col 3:16b), they first will have to devote themselves to the increasingly neglected discipline of "let[ting] the word of Christ dwell in [them] richly" (Col 3:16a). The assigned readings aimed at concretely and practically equipping the participants for

Each goal's success depended on a defined means of measurement and a concrete benchmark of success. The research methodology and accompanying instruments that were used to measure each goal's success are described in the following paragraphs.

### **Research Methodology**

The first goal was to increase the knowledge of the staff pastors of Bridgeway regarding the culture, conviction, and constructs needed to develop a functional leadership pipeline. This included the requisite convictions, culture, and constructs required to build and maintain a functional pipeline, as well as how to uniquely tailor the concepts to the construction of ministry-area-specific pipelines. The pastoral staff is made up of the lead pastor and his nine-person, full-time pastoral team.<sup>32</sup> Increasing the knowledge of the pastors was accomplished by holding an intensive and interactive two-day training with Kevin Peck, lead pastor at the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas. The success of this goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-Leadership Pipeline Training Assessment,<sup>33</sup> which measured the change in concrete knowledge of the pastors in four significant areas on which Peck taught: (1) why developing and implementing a leadership pipeline is important (conviction), (2) how the presence, absence, or quality of a particular local church's leadership pipeline is deeply revelatory of that local church's implicit beliefs and values (culture), (3) how to create ministry-specific and church-wide pipelines that provide clear qualifications, training plans, and assessment tools (constructs), and, finally, (4) how to identify and remove clogs that stop people's progress through the

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shepherding—pastoral care of other people—which requires at a minimum, according to Scripture, wisdom in knowing how to know, feed, lead, and protect others.

<sup>32</sup>Several of the pastors are also on the elder board. Ideally, the entire elder board would have been present for the training, but Peck was available only for a weekday training, which prevented the lay elders from attending.

<sup>33</sup>See appendix 1. Note that all research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.



pipeline, as well as how to create and maintain good pressure in the pipeline that will keep people moving steadily through it.<sup>34</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically-significant difference in the pre- and post-training scores on the survey.

The second goal was to develop a leadership development curriculum that aligned with the vision and values of Bridgeway’s pastors and elders. The curriculum was built around the three broad components of learning, experience, and coaching. A team of lay elders began walking alongside the participants in one-on-one coaching relationships that supplemented monthly reading and writing assignments and monthly whole-group gatherings. The second goal was measured by an expert panel comprised of the four lay governing elder coaches recruited to serve as group instructors and individual coaches in the Men’s Leadership Development Cohort (Men’s LDC hereafter). This expert panel utilized the Leadership Development Cohort Curriculum Evaluation Rubric<sup>35</sup> to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum for the cohort. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to create and launch the first two-semester Men’s LDC—utilizing that curriculum to equip the men of Bridgeway for leadership both inside and outside the local church. The cohort began in September of 2017, and concluded in May of 2018. The third goal was measured by administering the Leadership Development Cohort Progress Assessment—a pre and mid-training survey<sup>36</sup> to measure the LDC participants’ knowledge, confidence, and motivation to increasingly take initiative for the good of others in the spheres of home, work, and the local church, as well as possibly

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<sup>34</sup>Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 20.

<sup>35</sup>See appendix 2.

<sup>36</sup>See appendix 3.

locate discernible fruit of a changed life that may have emerged in the process of participation.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, as LDC coaches walked alongside cohort participants through assigned one-on-one coaching relationships, the coaches assessed their leadership character, competency, and calling, all in the context of community.<sup>38</sup> The third goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically-significant difference in the pre and mid-training survey scores.

### Definitions

*Constructs.* This technical term is used here to describe any concrete plan that is built and used to develop leaders. Geiger and Peck write, “Wise leaders implement *constructs* to help unlock the full potential of a church that seeks to be a center for developing leaders. By constructs, we mean the systems, processes, and programs developed to help leaders.”<sup>39</sup>

*Culture.* Any group, like the people that constitute a local church like Bridgeway, or more particularly the pastors and elders of Bridgeway, have a shared set of implicit, core assumptions and beliefs. The key here is the word “shared.” People believe many things as individuals, but their beliefs do not create culture until their beliefs are shared by the group. Helen Spencer-Oatey’s definition of culture is helpful here:

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<sup>37</sup>As previously mentioned, the Leadership Development Cohort began in September 2017, and concluded in May 2018. The limitation of the doctoral program deadlines required administering a mid-training survey in January 2018, rather than a post-training survey in May 2018. However, since participants had just completed four solid months of focused reading, study, coaching, and mutual discipleship in community, that initial semester still provided enough time for the possibility of statistically significant variation in the pre- and post-test scores to emerge. Furthermore, this allowed the results of the mid-training survey to be analyzed to determine whether any mid-stream adjustments to the program needed to be made in the second semester.

<sup>38</sup>Carson Pue, *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

<sup>39</sup>Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 15.

Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the "meaning" of other people's behavior [sic].<sup>40</sup>

Edgar Schein similarly defines culture as a "pattern of shared, basic taken-for-granted assumptions."<sup>41</sup> He explains,

[T]he culture will manifest itself at the level of observable artifacts and shared espoused values, norms, and rules of behavior. In analyzing cultures, it is important to recognize that artifacts are easy to observe but difficult to decipher and that espoused beliefs and values may only reflect rationalizations or aspirations. To understand a group's culture, you must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions evolve.<sup>42</sup>

If these assumptions are not identified and properly interpreted, there will be no way of figuring out what has gone wrong when the artifacts produced by a staff culture suddenly do not match up with the stated beliefs and values of that staff culture. People can easily act contrary to what they profess to believe, but it is much more difficult for them to act contrary to what they actually believe. The artifacts produced by any group, when they do not align with the group's stated beliefs, will predictably be found to be the product of the group's actual, implicit beliefs.

*Biblical leadership.* Biblical leaders exercise influence and take initiative for the benefit of others. In Scripture, the focus is on the character, motives, and agenda of the biblical leader much more than on any particular style, role, or setting.<sup>43</sup> This focus is clarifying and helpful because it permits a limitless application for biblical leadership principles. Helping any potential leader to bring their character, heart motives, and goals increasingly in line with Scripture is never wasted and will always reap dividends,

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<sup>40</sup>Helen Spencer-Oatey, ed., *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Continuum, 2008), 3.

<sup>41</sup>Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 32.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Don N. Howell, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 9.

regardless of where and how that person ends up exercising influence and taking initiative for the benefit of others. People who possess biblical character, biblical motives, and biblical goals will enrich any leadership environment into which they are injected.

*Leadership development.* Here it will be argued that leadership development is not synonymous with discipleship, but is rather a subset of leadership development, in part because not every disciple will ultimately lead at every conceivable level of leadership.<sup>44</sup> However, every disciple is a potential leader at any and all levels and should be given opportunities to reveal that potential. Trevor Joy writes,

Fundamental to establishing a leadership development pipeline [is] to identify the distinctions between a disciple and a leader. Every Christian leader is first and foremost a disciple of Jesus Christ. Each stage of a leader's development runs parallel with their maturation as a Christian and growth as a disciple. Put simply, every Christian leader is a disciple; however, not every disciple is also a leader. The point where a disciple becomes a leader is when their sphere of influence moves beyond themselves and they begin using their gifts, experiences, and influence to serve the mission of the church. . . . The trajectory of a disciple to also become a leader is demonstrated when their sphere of influence moves beyond themselves (leading self) and grows to include leading others and eventually leading leaders.<sup>45</sup>

Leadership development takes this definition of how a leader differs from a disciple and reverse-engineers it into a plan of development. A discipleship relationship has moved into leadership development when the one discipling a particular person begins to equip that person to effectively and fruitfully take the initiative to exercise influence for the benefit of others.

*Leadership pipeline.* There are a variety of ways to use this phrase. Here are three ways to define it that each approach the phrase from a different conceptual angle. (1) To describe something as a *leadership pipeline* is to say that it is both a program and a process that sets common standards for individual performance and potential. (2) Another

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<sup>44</sup>See the section entitled "Matthew 28" in chap. 2 for further support of this claim that leadership development is a subset of discipleship.

<sup>45</sup>Justin Trevor Joy, "Establishing a Leadership Development Process for Gospel-Centered Multiplication at The Village Church, Flower Mound, Texas" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016) 86-87.

way to define it is to point out that the metaphorical phrase *leadership pipeline* is intended to communicate a solution to a common problem—the shortage of qualified leaders at every level of the local church. How can pastors fill positions of leadership? How can they develop people in such a way that they move people through a process that qualifies them for leadership? (3) Lastly, the idea of a *leadership pipeline* is based on the fundamental assumption that potential—defined as the kind of work someone can do in the future—is not fixed.<sup>46</sup> People can grow and change—their potential can be called out. Charan, Drotter, and Noel write,

To capitalize on this potential, you need to discern the true work requirements at key leadership levels and what’s needed to make the transition from one layer to the next successfully. Matching an individual’s potential with a series of requirements is how pipelines are built.<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, summarily, a leadership pipeline can refer to (1) common standards for leadership performance and potential, (2) concrete solutions to the common problem of leadership shortage, and (3) calling out the potential of future leaders.

*Pathway.* In the days before everyone carried a GPS in their pocket, when someone stopped at a gas station to ask for directions they did not expect to be handed an atlas, which might be overwhelming and not particularly helpful. Instead, they probably hoped the gas station attendant might jot down some personalized directions for them. Presenting the entire leadership pipeline to an individual member of one’s local church would be akin to handing them an atlas. The term *pathway* is intended to communicate the idea of presenting to any given person the pipeline in an individualized form tailored just for them. It is a way to refer to the leadership pipeline using non-technical language that will hopefully be more self-evident and inviting to the body. Geiger and Peck note,

A pathway is simply a view of the pipeline that is tailored for the individual. It may be as simple as showing a person his place in the pipeline and the training plans designed for him. It may be as simple as helping a leader see how the training the

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<sup>46</sup>Charan, Drotter, and Noel, *The Leadership Pipeline*, 6.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*

church offers is designed to develop her. Give the people you serve a map, a picture of their development, and not merely a menu of all your church does.<sup>48</sup>

Showing local church members the whole model—the pipeline—is overwhelming and confusing, but showing them their particular next step in order to make progress in their development is clarifying and empowering.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The most significant delimitation was the decision to only launch and assess a men's LDC. The ultimate goal is to launch a women's LDC that runs alongside of the men's, and it is a realistic expectation to launch that the following year, hopefully alongside of a second men's cohort. The neglect of equipping women for the work of the ministry is a very real and subtle blind spot in leadership development in the local church—which can be unintentionally exacerbated in certain ways in complementarian churches—and the pastors and elders of Bridgeway aspire to be exemplary in equipping women for the work of the ministry in the local church. In the meantime, several excellent development initiatives are currently in the works that will serve the Bridgeway women well while these project goals are being carried out—including the Women's Shepherd Leadership Cohort, which I recently launched in partnership with the female Director of Bridgeway Women, in order to lead a select group of women through a year-long discussion of a significant systematic theology, supplemented by other works in the spheres of pastoral theology and biblical counseling.<sup>49</sup>

A limitation of this project was the timing of the leadership pipeline training on June 21-22, 2017, which was the only available date that worked with both the schedules of Kevin Peck and the pastors of Bridgeway.

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<sup>48</sup>Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 201.

<sup>49</sup>See appendix 6.

CHAPTER 2  
A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR EQUIPPING  
THE SAINTS FOR BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

Instead of seeking to elevate themselves, biblical leaders go low (3 John 1:9), shepherd, and seek to serve (Mark 10:44), and in so doing run cross-grain to much of the world's philosophy of leadership (Mark 10:42-43). Biblical leadership is therefore paradoxical since it assumes initiative but not superiority.<sup>1</sup> It also carries with it a mandate to equip others for leadership and ministry (Eph 4:12). Further, biblical leadership is deeply personal and self-sacrificial (Phil 3:8-10; 1 Cor 4:8-13), and is focused on the character, motives, and agenda of the leader rather than on any particular style, role, or setting of leadership.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, understanding clearly what biblical leadership is and is not should deeply inform the construction of any leadership development plan or process, as it provides clarity on how a potential leader should be developed and to what end.

Passages like Ezekiel 34 and 1 Peter 5 focus on how leaders should relate to those entrusted into their care: the horizontal or pastoral aspect of leadership. It should be noted as an aside that an equally important biblical-theological theme outside the scope of this writing is how leaders should relate to God while leading those in their care: the vertical aspect of leadership.<sup>3</sup> The most common metaphor for the vertical aspect of

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<sup>1</sup>John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 89, writes, "Leadership does not assume it is superior. It assumes it should take initiative."

<sup>2</sup>Don N. Howell, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 9.

<sup>3</sup>It is difficult to talk about the horizontal aspect of leadership without also touching on the vertical to some degree. However, the difference in focus can be shown by looking at the metaphor under consideration in these passages—people in some sense shepherding other people. The shepherding metaphor

leadership in Scripture is slavery. Paul frequently turns to the slavery metaphor to describe the way he relates to God while he is apostolically and pastorally leading the church. This biblical-theological theme of “slave leadership” has been ably handled by Harris and others.<sup>4</sup> Cochrell provides additional practical application of slave leadership.<sup>5</sup>

### **Ezekiel 34**

Ezekiel 34 provides a biblical-theological backdrop for God’s eventual installation of a *true* Shepherd who will not prey on the sheep, but rather protect them. God’s judgment of the unjust shepherd-leaders of Israel reveals his standards and expectations for shepherd-leadership, which foreshadows not only Jesus’ role as the true shepherd, but also Jesus’ installation of under-shepherds who, empowered by his Spirit, will shepherd the flock he entrusts into their care rather than exploiting them or lording it over them (Mark 10:42-45). Like the leaders in Ezekiel 34, they too will be held accountable for their stewardship.

The oracle in Ezekiel 34—indicated by the introductory phrase “the word of the LORD came to me” (v. 1)—immediately sets two actions in stark opposition.<sup>6</sup> The

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invites the reader of passages containing that metaphor to primarily consider the horizontal relationship between leaders and those in their care. The vertical leadership metaphor of slavery forms the backdrop for any biblical leadership discussion and must be firmly established before moving on to consider the horizontal leadership metaphor of shepherding. Understanding the biblical leadership mandate as handed down from metaphorical master to metaphorical slave removes any option for deviation, insubordination, or self-seeking. The leader’s own rights and self-preservation are simply no longer in view.

<sup>4</sup>Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 8 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001). See also Edwin Yamauchi, “Slaves of God,” *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 9, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 31-49.

<sup>5</sup>Cochrell names seven components in his paradigm of applied slave leadership: Owned by the Master, Derived Identity, Representative Authority, Subjection to an Alien Will, Unconditional Obedience, Complete Dependence, and Vulnerability to Mistreatment. Timothy Robert Cochrell, “Foundations for a Biblical Model of Servant Leadership in the Slave Imagery of Luke-Acts” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 258.

<sup>6</sup>All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.



shepherds have been feeding themselves, and thus by definition not feeding the sheep. God points to the metaphor itself as proof of which of the two actions is morally required of them: “Should not shepherds feed the sheep?” (v. 2). Most scholars agree that the shepherd metaphor is a clear indication that the kings of Judah are primarily being addressed in this oracle, as it was a common rhetorical device in Ancient Near Eastern literature to compare a nation’s king to a shepherd tending his flock.<sup>7</sup> However, Block is correct in pointing out that, while Ezekiel may have merely been drawing on a common literary device in the Ancient Near East, the parallels to Jeremiah 23:1-6 are too close to be accidental, and Jeremiah’s use of the shepherd metaphor may be a nearer referent for Ezekiel.<sup>8</sup> Because of the numerous parallels in the two texts, it is likely that Ezekiel had Jeremiah’s chronologically prior passage laid out before him while he composed this oracle, perhaps even presenting his oracle as an exposition of Jeremiah 23:1-6.<sup>9</sup>

In a striking reversal of the shepherd metaphor, God accuses the leaders of cannibalizing those for whom they should care, and plundering those whom they should protect. Instead of feeding the sheep, they are feeding themselves on the sheep (Ezek 34:3). Instead of protecting the sheep from harm, these leaders are actually clothing themselves with their sheep’s wool. They selfishly rule with force and harshness—what Calvin calls a “lust for dominion.”<sup>10</sup> This phrase in verse 4 (“with . . . harshness you have ruled them”) occurs only three times in the Old Testament, one of which is a description

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<sup>7</sup>Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel: A New Heart and a New Spirit*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 274; Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 275; Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 394.

<sup>8</sup>Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 275.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 276.

<sup>10</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: In Two Volumes*, ed. John Thomas MacNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 1227.

of how the Egyptians mistreated their Hebrew slaves.<sup>11</sup> Through their harsh rule, they are actually unweaving and reversing God’s liberation of Israel from slavery.<sup>12</sup>

All of this abuse and neglect becomes even more significant when God refers to these exploited and neglected sheep as “my sheep” in verse 6. These rulers are not actually in possession or control of these sheep, but merely hold them in trust. The sheep actually belong to God, and this fact automatically makes these rulers completely and unavoidably accountable for their treatment of the sheep.<sup>13</sup> There is a strong parallel for New Covenant shepherd leadership in Hebrews 13:17, where Christians are exhorted to submit to their elders joyfully in order to not make their elders’ work harder than it already is, in the knowledge that those elders will have to give an accounting of their pastoral care when Christ returns. Thus Hebrews 13 shows that shepherd leaders should labor under a vivid sense of someday being required to answer to Christ for how they shepherded those entrusted into their care.

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<sup>11</sup>Werner E. Lemke, “Life in the Present and Hope for the Future,” *Interpretation* 38, no. 2 (April 1984): 173, writes,

The Hebrew expression *rādāh bepārek* ‘to rule with harshness’ (v. 4) occurs in only two other passages of the Old Testament. In Exodus 1:13–14, it refers to the manner in which the Egyptians treated their Hebrew slaves, and in the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26), it is forbidden to treat a fellow Israelite in such a manner (cf. Lev 25 43, 46). Ezekiel’s polemic is thus quite pointed. He accuses Israel’s rulers of doing what their own history should have taught them to abhor and what the law of Moses expressly forbade.

<sup>12</sup>John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2011), 311, suggests that there *is* a self-feeding and a pursuit of “selfish” pleasure (in God) that is commanded in Scripture (Ps 16:11; 37:4; Deut 28:47-48). However, the selfishness in view in Ezek 34 seeks its own good *at the expense* of others. In contrast, the Bible commands Christians to seek their good *in* the good of others (Rom 15:1-3). On pp. 115-16 Piper, notes,

This is . . . the point of Romans 15:1-3, where Paul says we should not please ourselves, but instead should please our neighbor for his good, to edify him. This too is an application of the principle “Love seeks not its own.” He does not mean we shouldn’t seek the joy of edifying others, but that we should let this joy free us from bondage to private pleasures that make us indifferent to the good of others. Love does not seek its own private, limited joy, but instead seeks its own joy in the good—the salvation and edification—of others.

<sup>13</sup>Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 275; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 284.

The tone of Ezekiel’s oracle becomes incredulous as God wonders aloud at the way in which some of the sheep not only reserve the best pasture and water for themselves, but go further and tread down what they do not eat, and muddy what they do not drink (Ezek 34:18-19). Duguid and Block argue that here in verses 17-24, Ezekiel turns from criticizing the kings of Judah to criticizing a broader class of Jewish leaders—the wealthy and the powerful lay leaders in the community—who, in addition to the kings of Judah, have also used their wealth, position, and power to exploit their fellow sheep.<sup>14</sup> They not only reserve the best for themselves but actively spoil the leftovers, leaving them inedible and undrinkable. Their spoiling of the leftovers shows not just wastefulness, but probably, further, arrogant malice. That something more than wastefulness is in view here is confirmed by God’s description of their behavior in verse 21: “You push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns.” These Jewish leaders are using their superior size and strength to push around the weak instead of using that combination of size and strength to protect the weak. Simply put, they are bullies. This bullying produces a predictable constellation of traits in the weak and bullied sheep, who are described as being afraid, vulnerable, hungry, enslaved, exposed to danger, and preyed upon (vv. 27-29). They have long forgotten what safety and security feel like, and they suffer the reproach of other nations (v. 29).

After naming these sins of commission, God also names the leaders’ sins of omission. The weak, sick, injured, strayed, and lost all require vigilant care in order to preserve their life and well-being, and the leaders have failed in these tasks as well. They have not only actively exploited those in their care, but they have also, unsurprisingly, neglected them (v. 4). It is a commonly-accepted aspect of animal husbandry—particularly in the Ancient Near Eastern context of Ezekiel’s readers—that sheep are notoriously incapable of caring for themselves, and thus the shepherd by virtue of his role

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<sup>14</sup>Duguid, *Ezekiel*, 395; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 293.

in relation to the sheep is bound to help the weak, tend to the injured, redirect the strayed, and recover the lost if the shepherd is to maintain the flock's health.<sup>15</sup> God uses these common physical dangers sheep face as a metaphor for the physical and spiritual dangers the people of Israel face.

The result of the leaders' exploitation and neglect is two-fold. The people have been both scattered and devoured. In contrast to these unfaithful shepherds, God has historically gathered and fed them. Thus, this scattering and devouring is a radical departure from God's intended purposes for his covenant people—a people whom God himself gathered together, led out of exploitation and harsh slavery, and fed with bread from heaven. God has constituted this people to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa 49:6)—bearers of good news to the nations. Now this same people have been scattered again, ruled harshly yet again (v. 4), and instead of being fed and sustained miraculously through their wilderness journey, they are themselves being devoured in the wilderness (v. 5).

It is important to note that Ezekiel is addressing God's people in exile—who have just been led into captivity by Babylon. Jehoiakim, a reluctant vassal-king, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, was killed in battle, and was consequently succeeded on the throne by his son Jehoicachin.<sup>16</sup> He lasted only three months on the throne before being deported to Babylon alongside 10,000 Jews—Ezekiel among them (2 Kgs 24:14).<sup>17</sup> Now in exile, they have recently received news that Jerusalem has been destroyed (Ezek 33:21) as a sign of God's judgment against his people (33:29). Not only have they been taken from their home, but now their home has also been taken from them. To destroy

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<sup>15</sup>Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 53, notes, "The condition and growth of a flock depends greatly on the care, attentiveness and skill of the shepherd."

<sup>16</sup>John H. Walton, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 4:477.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

Jerusalem is to destroy the City of David and the temple where God dwells in the midst of his people.<sup>18</sup> To destroy Jerusalem is in a sense to destroy the Jews' identity as God's people.

It is in *this* context of exile, despair, and hopelessness that Ezekiel addresses these unfaithful shepherds in chapter 34, in the hearing of the "sheep" they have exploited and neglected. Mercifully, after Ezekiel has delivered oracles against the sins of all Israel, as well as the foreign nations, in chapters 6-32, he now begins to slowly shift to what Dillard and Longman describe as "preaching dominated by the themes of hope, restoration, mercy, and grace for Israel (Ezek 33-48)."<sup>19</sup> Because this exilic scattering of God's people is, at least in part, the direct result<sup>20</sup> of these Jewish shepherd-leaders neither feeding nor searching for the sheep (34:5, 6, 8), the only hope for these scattered and preyed-upon sheep is for God—at some undeclared future time—to himself rescue them by snatching them from the jaws of these shepherds-turned-predators (34:10).<sup>21</sup>

God declares that as their Shepherd-King, he will rescue them by giving them a Davidic descendant who will "feed them and be their shepherd" (34:23).<sup>22</sup> The goal of this eschatological restoration project? That God's people would know that God is with them and that they are his people (vv. 30-31). If the Davidic descendant's care will cause God's people to know experientially and concretely that God is with them and they are his, conversely it can be legitimately inferred that the predatory neglect of these

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<sup>18</sup>Walton, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, 4:477.

<sup>19</sup>Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 316.

<sup>20</sup>The shepherds are primarily, but not exclusively, to blame, as the blame for these sheep being scattered and preyed-upon is also placed on "the nations" (Ezek 34:28, 29).

<sup>21</sup>Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 286, concurs, noting, "Yahweh is compelled to intervene and rescue . . . his sheep from their jaws."

<sup>22</sup>Block notes a beautiful parallel in Mic 4:6-8 as well. *Ibid.*, 290.

unfaithful shepherds is strongly tempting God's people to doubt whether God really is with them and whether they really are his people. Neglectful and exploitive spiritual leadership creates an atmosphere ripe for spiritual orphan thinking and behavior.

However, this predominantly dark oracle is finally shot through with hope as God concludes by promising to someday rescue them (v. 22) and bring them into an experiential knowledge of his protection and parentage (vv. 30-31). He will not do this primarily because he has taken pity on their condition, but because he is the God who keeps his covenant promises (Deut 4:31; 26:17-19).<sup>23</sup>

Of this passage and other similar passages in the Old Testament, Calvin writes, "Now, where solace is promised in affliction, especially where the deliverance of the church is described, the banner of trust and hope in Christ himself is prefigured."<sup>24</sup> Calvin is correct—it *is* striking to realize that God's preferred method of providing comfort and hope to his Old Covenant suffering saints, especially when they are suffering under the neglect and exploitation of unfaithful shepherds, is to point them to the promised Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). The only ultimate hope for the sheep is for the Son of David (Matt 21:9) to someday be installed as Chief Shepherd, which sets the stage for a non-negotiable principle of spiritual leadership for the New Covenant people of God; namely, that no human under-shepherd can hope to serve faithfully who is not first and fully submitted to, dependent on, and empowered by Jesus the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). In this way, Calvin writes, "salvation flows from the Head to the whole body."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 301; Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 282.

<sup>24</sup>Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:345. Of messianic passages like Ezek 34:23–25; 37:24, 26; Hab 3:13; 2 Kgs 8:19; Jer 23:5-6 and others, Calvin goes on to say, "Here I am gathering a few passages of many because I merely want to remind my readers that the hope of all the godly has ever reposed in Christ alone." Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1:346.

## Applying Ezekiel 34 to the Present Day

Can thoughtful readers of Ezekiel 34 take these historically-specific words of God addressed to these historically-specific leaders and legitimately derive universal biblical leadership principles that can be applied in the here and now, some 2,500 years later? A simple way in which to answer in the affirmative is to consider God’s chosen metaphor in Ezekiel 34. God’s use of the shepherd metaphor in this oracle to illustrate both what these Jewish leaders ought to have done and what they ought *not* to have done is significant for modern application because this metaphor runs right through the whole canon of Scripture and is deliberately taken up by the apostles in laying out leadership expectations for local church leaders. How are elders to care for God’s New Covenant flock? Peter exhorts them to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:2-4). The fact that Peter would deliberately choose this metaphor set forth by Ezekiel and pull it into the church age—of which modern-day Christians are still a part—demonstrates that God still desires those who lead other believers to practice the behaviors the leaders in Ezekiel 34 neglected, and avoid those behaviors in which the leaders in Ezekiel 34 indulged (1 Pet 5:3).<sup>26</sup>

Further, if this is God’s standard for how believers ought to lead other believers, it is hard to imagine that his standard for how believers ought to lead unbelievers (e.g., in leadership contexts outside the local church) would be any lower, considering his stated desire that believers conduct themselves among nonbelievers blamelessly and innocently in order that they might thus “shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15). While there may be a priority in pastoral leadership, where care for Christians comes first, there cannot be a preference in pastoral leadership, where care for non-Christians is worse (Gal 6:10; Matt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:12).

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<sup>26</sup>Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 309, concurs and also highlights 1 Pet 5:1-5, noting, “In this eminently ‘pastoral’ text, Ezekiel has offered the OT paradigm for NT ministerial ideals.”

## **Principles for Biblical Leadership Development from Ezekiel 34**

Ezekiel 34 provides clarity on how leaders should relate to those entrusted into their care, and thus provides direction as to what character, skills, and convictions a developer of biblical leaders should seek to cultivate in those being developed. Many principles for biblical leadership can be derived from Ezekiel 34. Here are just a few.

**Nourishing leadership.** First, biblical leadership is nourishing leadership.<sup>27</sup> Leaders are to provide nourishment for those in their care, and biblical leaders are to certainly not provide less than spiritual nourishment for those in their care. This activity of providing spiritual nourishment is urgent and necessary for the health of the flock, and having provided it yesterday is no replacement for providing it today and yet again tomorrow. Like the unceasing need for physical nourishment, there is something very inefficient about this task, but also something meaningful and beautiful about it as well. Leaders who do not see and fulfill their duty to feed the flock with God's truth are at best foolish and ignorant and at worse selfish, lazy, and worldly (Acts 20:27).

**Selfless leadership.** However, what is primarily in view in Ezekiel 34 as it relates to the metaphor of feeding the flock is the idea of leaders meeting their own needs rather than the needs of those in their care, and worse, meeting their own needs at the expense of those in their care. Therefore, biblical leadership is selfless leadership.<sup>28</sup> The focus is on a fundamental difference of understanding as to who exists to serve whom.

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<sup>27</sup>Common-grace glimmers of this theme can be increasingly found in the current business leadership literature. Simon Sinek, *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2017).

<sup>28</sup>Again, this is a theme that has been famously advanced by Robert K. Greenleaf, but while the wording is parallel, and there is much to be commended in Greenleaf's framework, Greenleaf's conception of servant leadership lacks the depth of the biblical conception, and even more importantly, while using the same language, does not mean the same things. Jones ably critiques Greenleaf and offers a contrastive biblical reading of the concept. Robert K. Greenleaf and Larry C. Spears, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). Galen Wendell Jones, "A Theological Comparison between Social Science Models and a Biblical Perspective of Servant Leadership" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012).



Do those entrusted into the leader's care exist to serve the leader, or does the leader most fundamentally exist to serve them? A leader's fundamental belief about this distinction will inevitably reveal itself in his or her leadership.

**Loving leadership.** It does not merely matter to what end a leader leads, but also in what way a leader gets there. "By any means necessary" can form no part of a biblical leader's mission statement. Pragmatism and an obsession with results, even at the expense of people's wellbeing, should be constantly and vigilantly resisted. Manipulation is never justified (1 Thess 2:5). Bullying, force, harshness, class-driven superiority, flattery, and preferential treatment of the famous, wealthy, or powerful must be condemned and uprooted. The fruit of a genuine work of the Spirit of God will bear itself out in visible patience, kindness, gentleness, unselfishness, and impartiality (Gal 5:22; 1 Cor 13:5; Jas 2:1). Therefore, biblical leadership is most fundamentally loving leadership.

**Protective leadership.** Furthermore, biblical leadership is protective leadership. Safety, security, and stability should be the normal and expected experience of being led biblically. People should be protected from spiritual danger through instruction, warning, walking alongside, prayer, encouragement, love, and active defense from outside injustice, exploitation, deception, attack, and bullying. Vulnerability should not be (unthinkably) a reason for leaders to take advantage of the weak, but a reason for leaders to direct extra-vigilant care toward the weak in order to protect them from being preyed upon (1 Pet 3:7). Predatory leaders actually present a double-danger to those in their charge—they fail to protect the flock from other predators as they themselves simultaneously prey upon the flock.

**Dependent leadership.** Biblical leadership is dependent leadership—leadership of sheep by shepherds who strive to never forget they too are sheep. Biblical leaders constantly seek to prayerfully and humbly cultivate a deep awareness of their own frailty and inability to ultimately fix or protect anyone. As a result, biblical leaders

continually go to God on behalf of those entrusted into their care, teaching those in their care to cry out to God themselves rather than cry on their beds (Hos 7:14), as well as teaching them to ask God for healing and protection in the confident knowledge that he hears and answers.

**Accountable leadership.** Finally, biblical leadership is accountable leadership. Biblical leaders lead in the knowledge that their leadership is in “trust” and does not ultimately belong to them. They lead in the knowledge that those entrusted into their care do not belong to them—they do not “own” their people, nor do they have the right to do with them whatever seems best to them. Biblical leaders are obligated to care for those entrusted to them as they have been directed by the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4), and they firmly expect to give an account of that stewardship on a definite and yet-future day (Heb 13:17).

**Summary.** According to Ezekiel 34, a leader is unbiblical if he or she is not nourishing, selfless, loving, protective, dependent, and accountable. The emphasis on the character and pastoral care required of biblical leaders is unmistakable.

### **First Peter**

In contrast with Ezekiel 34’s portrait of what biblical leadership is most decidedly not, 1 Peter 5:1-4 provides a positive picture of the motives, manner, and method of biblical leadership.<sup>29</sup> At the conclusion of his epistle, Peter addresses a brief and pointed exhortation to “the elders (πρεσβύτερος) among” (5:1) those whom he describes at the beginning of the epistle as the “elect exiles of the Dispersion” (1:1).

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<sup>29</sup>Schreiner and Jobes agree that there is a strong contrastive parallel in Ezek 34. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 233; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 304.

Peter begins by signaling the urgency and unction he feels about what he is about to say by confessing that he wants to “exhort” (παρακαλέω) the elders. Peter wants to strongly urge them to carefully attend to and carry out the instructions he is about to give them.<sup>30</sup> Almost as an aside, in 5:1, Peter first points out that he exhorts the elders as one who is conjoined with them in their labors in three distinct ways: as one who likewise carries the charge and obligations of eldership, as one who has witnessed the sufferings of Christ and now shares in suffering with them (see also 4:12-13), and, lastly, as one who is likewise motivated by “unblushing promises of reward” (see also 5:4).<sup>31</sup> The center of his exhortative instruction to them is that they must “shepherd” (ποιμαίνω) the “flock of God” (5:2); they must “watch out for other people.”<sup>32</sup> It is important to note the immediate context of Peter’s exhortations to these elders is the suffering due to persecution that these faith communities addressed in Peter’s epistle are enduring. Achtemeier wisely notes, “Discussion of the necessary characteristics of leaders within the Christian community is placed here . . . because in the testing situation discussed in 4:12-19, effective pastoral leadership is indispensable if the community is to survive.”<sup>33</sup> These character considerations Peter offers the elders are not theoretical or ethereal, but have very real consequences for the spiritual survival of the people entrusted into their care.

Taking these character considerations one step further, Timothy Witmer writes, “If you have been convinced that leaders in the church are to be shepherds, what are these shepherds to do? After all, ‘shepherd’ is both a noun and a verb. It is not only something

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<sup>30</sup>Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 764. Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 324, goes one step further, writing, “The verb ‘exhort’ (παρακαλῶ) represents the purpose of the verse, if not the entire letter.”

<sup>31</sup>C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2001), 26.

<sup>32</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 842.

<sup>33</sup>Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 322.

you are but something you do.”<sup>34</sup> When scholars trace this metaphor as a biblical-theological theme throughout all of Scripture, they happily land on nearly-identical action verbs to conceptually summarize the meaning carried by the metaphor. Laniak summarizes the biblical data surrounding the shepherding metaphor under the headings of *provision*, *protection*, and *guidance*. Similarly, Witmer offers the headings of *knowing*, *feeding*, *leading*, and *protecting*.<sup>35</sup> Provision and feeding correspond, as do leading and guidance, and it could be easily argued that knowing is implicit in provision, protection, and guidance. Regardless, Witmer notes that the beauty of these functions is that they address “our most basic needs.”<sup>36</sup>

Peter goes on to say in 5:2 that a significant “basic commitment” undergirds their pastoral care.<sup>37</sup> They are to watch out for other people as those who first “accept responsibility for [their care]” (ἐπισκοῦντες).<sup>38</sup> The verb ἐπισκοῦντες is related to the noun commonly translated “overseer” (ἐπίσκοπος) (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1; Titus 1:7), which is an interchangeable term for referring to the office of elder (πρεσβύτερος) in the local church.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010), 101.

<sup>35</sup>Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 53, 111; Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader*, 102.

<sup>36</sup>Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader*, 102.

<sup>37</sup>John Frame discusses the concept of “basic commitments.” John M. Frame and Joseph E. Torres, *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2015), xvii, xxxii.

<sup>38</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 379.

<sup>39</sup>Because all three of these concepts (ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος, and ποιμαίνω) are used fluidly and interchangeably here in 1 Pet 5, this passage serves as yet another pillar supporting the biblical case for plural-elder leadership in the local church as being not only exegetically defensible, but exegetically persuasive. Perhaps the most telling is the listing of qualifications for eldership in Titus 1:5-9. White notes of this passage, “Here the two terms ‘elder’ and ‘overseer’ are used in a completely interchangeable manner in consecutive sentences. No basis can be provided, biblically, for creating distinctions between the terms (though this surely took place over the course of history in the traditions of men).” For yet another example, the words are used in a similarly interchangeable fashion in Acts 20:17 and 20:28. James R. White, “Sufficient as Established—The Plurality of Elders as Christ’s Ordained Means of Church Governance,” in

Peter’s point in verse 2 is that their pastoral responses are not to be governed by their subjective level of willingness or unwillingness to shepherd any particular person on any particular day. They are not engaged in an open-ended process whereby they reactively and subjectively decide whom to care for and when to care for them as they go along in their ministry endeavors. Pastoral leadership is by definition devoid of neutrality or passivity. Peter assumes they have already self-consciously accepted a divine obligation to provide for, protect, and guide a particular people in a particular place—these fellow believers who are “among” (ἐν ὑμῖν) them.<sup>40</sup>

However, this mandate to shepherd begs the following kinds of questions: In what manner are they to shepherd or tend the flock? By what motives are they to shepherd? To what degree are they to shepherd? In what time, place, or circumstance? In order to clarify this mandate to shepherd even further, Peter lays out three contrasting pairs of adverbs, all modifying the exhortation to “shepherd (ποιμαίνω) the flock of God” (v. 2): “Not under compulsion, but willingly . . . not for shameful gain, but eagerly . . . not domineering . . . but being examples” (vv. 2-3).

“Willingly” is a transitive concept, and begs the question, “Willing to do what?” In verse 2 the preposition κατὰ paired with the accusative θεὸν indicates that this exercise of each elder’s will, this willingness to shepherd—over against compulsion constraining their will—is to be brought into conscious conformity with God’s will for them to serve

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*Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity*, ed. Chad Brand and R. Stanton Norman (Nashville: B & H, 2004), 275. See also Jobes, *1 Peter*, 303.

<sup>40</sup>Metzger notes that it is “difficult to decide” if the absence of “exercising oversight” (ἐπισκοποῦντες) in some manuscript traditions is “the result of deliberate excision” or “ecclesiastical conviction.” He notes that the UBS translation committee decided to place ἐπισκοποῦντες in brackets in order to indicate “a certain doubt that it belongs in the text.” Regardless, the presence or absence of ἐπισκοποῦντες does not alter the overarching meaning and thrust of the passage. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 625. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 234, surveys the manuscript evidence and argues for its inclusion. Most persuasively, and echoing Metzger’s suggestion, Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 320, posits that ἐπισκοποῦντες may have been omitted by some manuscripts, “perhaps because it implied that a presbyter exercised the office of a bishop.”

joyfully.<sup>41</sup> They are to serve eagerly according to God’s will. The contrasting word, “compulsion” (ἀναγκαστῶς), is what scholars term a *hapax legomenon*—a word occurring only once in the New Testament corpus, which obviously makes it more difficult to translate.<sup>42</sup> “Willingly” (εκουσιῶς) is nearly a *hapax legomenon*, with only one other occurrence in the New Testament (Heb 10:26). Regardless of what semantic nuance might be inaccessible as a result, it is clear that Peter uses this word pair to strongly emphasize the need for these leaders to not shepherd those entrusted into their care because they have to, but rather because they want to.

One might object here that they are in fact obligated to shepherd, inasmuch as they are being commanded to do so by an apostle in this passage and other passages similarly addressed to elders (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17). Edward John Carnell provides a helpful solution to this apparent contradiction: “Suppose a husband asks his wife if he must kiss her good night. Her answer is, ‘You must, but not that kind of a must.’ What she means is this: ‘Unless a spontaneous affection for my person motivates you, your overtures are stripped of all moral value.’”<sup>43</sup> Carnell goes on to explain that Christians are to be always “informed with a sense of cordial pleasure in doing what is right.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, the moral obligation for a husband to perform the duties of love toward his wife is always present and must be obeyed, but left alone, his obligatory obedience devoid of genuine heart-level affection for his wife doubles back and empties his

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<sup>41</sup>G. K. Beale, William A. Ross, and Daniel J. Brendsel, *An Interpretive Lexicon of New Testament Greek: Analysis of Prepositions, Adverbs, Particles, Relative Pronouns, and Conjunctions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 60.

<sup>42</sup>The Greek word ἅπαξ is a “numerical term pertaining to a single occurrence.” Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 97.

<sup>43</sup>I and many others are of course indebted to John Piper for calling attention to this relatively unknown but insightful passage through his writing and teaching. Edward John Carnell, *Christian Commitment: An Apologetic* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 160-61.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 161.

obedience of any moral value. Carnell’s argument for the necessity of heart-level affection is precisely the argument of Isaiah 29:13, where God declares that the lip service the people of Israel are paying him is emptied of its value because, even as they are going through the motions of outward obedience, “their hearts are far from me.”

These elders addressed in 1 Peter 5:2 in one sense are being told they are obligated to shepherd those in their care, and yet in still another sense are being told that they must not be motivated by a kind of dutiful obligation that is devoid of joy. Why? Because it dishonors God—for whom their service is ultimately being performed (2:5).<sup>45</sup> Peter is urging these elders that while outward obedience to the shepherding mandate is non-optional, it is also not enough, and its moral value can even be unwoven if done out of duty rather than delight in God (4:10-11). Their pastoral care for those entrusted to them cannot rise to the level of true and lasting worth unless it is performed as a spiritual act of worship. As they delight in God in this way, their worship will unavoidably overflow in joyful service of others (Rom 12:1-8). They are to serve willingly rather than dutifully—because they want to and not because they have to—and they cannot truly “want to” if their work is not an act of worship.

In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter goes on to offer a second pair of contrasting adverbs, urging the elders to shepherd “eagerly” (προθύμως) rather than out of a desire for “shameful gain” (αἰσχροκερδῶ). While this adverb (αἰσχροκερδῶ) only occurs here in 1 Peter 5:2, it is derived from an adjective (αἰσχροκερδής) that is tellingly used to describe character disqualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy and Titus.<sup>46</sup> A deacon cannot be “greedy for dishonest gain” (1 Tim 3:8), and an elder cannot be a “lover of money” (1 Tim 3:3). Again, in Titus 1:7, an elder must not be “greedy for gain.” While this word group

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<sup>45</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 304, concurs, noting, “[B]egrudging service is not to be offered, for leadership so motivated will ultimately not be pleasing to God.”

<sup>46</sup>Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 326, helpfully points out that this warning against being greedy for gain is not only echoed in the elder qualifications given in 1 Timothy and Titus, but it is also used to “characterize untrustworthy teachers who teach for money” (1 Tim 6:5; Titus 1:11; 2 Pet 2:3, 14; Jude 11).

can and does refer to dishonest gain, it is by no means limited to dishonest gain, as though as long as the elder or deacon comes by it honestly, he is free to greedily pursue wealth in or through his office. This word group can also simply communicate the idea of being “shamelessly greedy for money.” A shamelessly greedy pursuit of money could theoretically be indulged in such a way that it does not run afoul of the laws of the land—and is in that strict sense “honest.” Yet, according to 1 Timothy and Titus, it will still run afoul of God’s higher, moral law. Shameless greed may not be illegal but Peter declares it to be idolatrous.

However, it is still not self-evident why Peter contrasts this greedy desire for financial self-enrichment with “eagerness.” The explanation lies in considering precisely what Peter says they are to be eager for. They are not to shepherd for shameful gain, but rather they are to shepherd eagerly. In either case, the motive is gain, but two entirely different kinds of treasure are in view (Matt 6:19-20). Peter wants them to “be eager to meet the needs of others rather than seek gain for themselves.”<sup>47</sup> Peter is contrasting the currency of two different realms. Elders should never be “in it for the money,” but instead should make it their chief aim to spiritually enrich others and in so doing ultimately spiritually enrich themselves (1:6). Schreiner concurs, noting, “The leaders of God’s flock do not serve because they have to, as if it were simply another job, nor do they serve to skim off money for themselves.”<sup>48</sup>

Paul makes a similar contrast in 2 Corinthians as he attempts to reassure the Corinthians of his motives in ministering to them: “What I want is not your possessions but you” (2 Cor 12:14b NIV). He then writes, “So I will very gladly spend for you

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<sup>47</sup>Peter’s caution against seeking gain does not mean that those who labor pastorally ought never to be financially compensated for their labors—Paul is vocal on this point in Gal 6:6 and elsewhere and eschews any kind of false spirituality that does not recognize the need for “the one who is taught the word” to “share all good things with the one who teaches” (see also 1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Cor 9:7).

<sup>48</sup>Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 235. Similarly, Jobes, *1 Peter*, 305, writes, “The proper attitude of an elder is an eagerness to give, not a desire to get.”



everything I have and expend myself as well” (2 Cor 12:15a NIV). Money, like sex or power, may be in and of itself morally neutral, but the soul-destroying love of money (Mark 4:19; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:9-10) is dangerous precisely because it forces those it enslaves to choose between greed and God. God and money are two masters that cannot be simultaneously served by any leader (Matt 6:24). There is a promise of future wealth that leaders must be motivated by lest they “grow weary of doing good” (Gal 6:9) and begin to believe that their labor is “in vain” (1 Cor 15:58). This wealth is stored up and paid out in the currency of another realm—one that is not subject to economic forces, theft, or decay (Matt 6:19-20). After listing all three contrasting adverbial pairs, Peter concludes by pointing the elders to that reward, as he reminds them that if they continue faithfully in doing good, they can confidently look forward to the day when they will receive “the unfading crown of glory” (5:4).

Peter offers a third and final pair of contrasting adverbs in verse 3, warning the elders to not “domineer” (κατακυριεύω) over those in their charge, but rather to serve as “examples” (τύπος) to them. The word κατακυριεύω is found in a nearly-identical topical context in the words of Jesus in the parallel passages Matthew 20:25 and Mark 10:42, and it is hard not to believe that Peter has these words of Jesus in mind as he addresses the elders.<sup>49</sup> Jesus tells his disciples that unlike secular rulers in their day who “lord it over” (κατακυριεύω) those they lead and “exercise authority” (κατεξουσιάζω) over them, preeminence in his upside-down kingdom requires going low and counter-intuitively leading by functioning as “servants” (διάκονος) and “slaves” (δοῦλος). Κατεξουσιάζω, in the context of Jesus’ discourse, communicates more than the mere amoral idea of exercising authority, and is meant to describe the strong wielding power over the weak in a way that is cruel, selfish, arbitrary, or unfair. In other words, Jesus is not talking about leadership *qua* leadership, but more specifically tyrannical leadership. Similar contextual

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<sup>49</sup>Jobes, *1 Peter*, 305, agrees that v. 3 “echoes the teaching of Jesus himself.”

uses of the word in the LXX carry the idea (either positively or negatively) of dominating or subduing (Ps 118:133; Gen 1:28).

This extra-Petrine background of what it means to be “domineering” (5:3) lends clarity to what Peter means by contrast when he urges them to instead be “examples.” When a leader domineers, he simply forces his followers to do what he wants. He is strong, they are weak and at his mercy, and he can consequently make them conform to his will and wishes.<sup>50</sup> Though, for the sake of argument, suppose that *what* a particular leader desires to make his followers do is in one sense outwardly good and moral. After all, that is the immediate context of this passage. Peter is addressing spiritual leaders who, it can be assumed, are at least endeavoring at some level to help their people grow in sanctification. However, there is a danger that they be “domineering” in the endeavor, and so Peter strongly warns them off of this method. In order to embrace domineering spiritual leadership, the leader must believe at some level that the ends justify the means. When an elder endeavors instead to be a “moral life example” (τύπος), though he may be working toward the selfsame outcome as a domineering elder, he will work at it from an entirely different direction, by entirely different means, and with an entirely different effect upon those in his charge.<sup>51</sup>

If an elder is not simply going to make his followers conform, but rather seeks to serve as a moral life example to them, then it begs the question—a moral life example of what? Asceticism? Secret knowledge? Rigorous observance of dietary restrictions? The implicit biblical answer to that question provides an alternative power and means of spiritual transformation to domineering. If not manipulation, coercion, and force, then what? Dependence. The example Peter is calling these elders to demonstrate is ultimately one of dependence on God’s transforming power. They are to “entrust their souls to a

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<sup>50</sup>Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 235, writes, “Elders are not to enter the ministry so they can boss others around but so they can exemplify the character of Christ to those under their charge.”

<sup>51</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, v.

faithful Creator while doing good” (4:19). They are to humble themselves in the knowledge that they will in this way receive gracious help and empowerment (5:5-6). They are to bring their anxious worries to God who will respond to their real needs with real care, provision, and protection (5:7). They are to suffer patiently and hopefully, in the confidence that God himself will ultimately and completely preserve, strengthen, and perfect them (5:10).

Within the epistle the closest parallel to this passage occurs earlier in 2:18-25, where Peter reminds his readers that Jesus himself has left them the ultimate example of what it looks like for a man or woman to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit and fully dependent on the Father in the face of suffering.<sup>52</sup> He “continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (2:23), and in so doing has provided them with “an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (2:21).<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, this is the example of dependent, faith-filled weakness that Peter calls them to model for their followers (5:5). On one level, domineering is wrong because the act itself damages humans made in the image of God. Though on a deeper level, by contrasting domineering with setting an example, Peter shows that domineering is also wrong because of what it produces; it “de-gods” God<sup>54</sup> by relying on the arm of the flesh (Jer 17:5) rather than God’s power, which can only be displayed in and through human weakness (2 Cor 12:9), lest God’s glory be stolen and blasphemously credited to mere conduits (2 Cor 4:7; Eph 2:9).

Finally, in 1 Peter 5:4, Peter reminds these elders—who are probably bearing the brunt of suffering in faith communities enduring widespread persecution—that while

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<sup>52</sup>So too Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 328.

<sup>53</sup>Peter uses a different word than τύπος here, but ὑπογραμμός is a *hapax legomenon* with a nearly identical meaning to τύπος (which can be corroborated in its extra-biblical occurrence in passages like 1 Clement 5:7, 16:17, and 33:8). Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1036.

<sup>54</sup>Carson coined the phrase and concept of idolatry as the “the de-godding of God.” D. A. Carson, “What Is the Gospel?—Revisited,” in *For the Fame of God’s Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper*, ed. C. Samuel Storms and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 170.

they are shepherds, they are first and foremost themselves sheep, which is good news, because that means they too have a shepherd who is none other than the soon-to-be-bodily-appearing “chief Shepherd.”<sup>55</sup>

What is the “unfading crown (στέφανος) of glory” with which Peter seeks to entice them (1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10; 3:11)? Another word also translated “crown” in the New Testament, διάδημα, primarily refers to kingship or authority. However, the image Peter evokes for his readers with the word στέφανος is the victor’s wreath ceremonially presented to an athlete. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9, “In a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize. . . . [T]hey do it to receive a perishable wreath (στέφανος), but we an imperishable” (1 Cor 9:24-25). David Gill notes that Paul’s description of this “crown” as a perishable wreath is literal—it was typically woven out of pine or olive branches.<sup>56</sup> This crown’s value was not inherent to the object; its value was in what it represented—potential victory and honor for the athlete. A modern parallel would be an Olympic gold medal. It is vastly easier to save up and purchase the amount of gold contained in an Olympic medal rather than train, compete, win, and subsequently be awarded an Olympic medal. An Olympic medal cannot be bought; it must be won, and thus its value greatly exceeds its monetary worth as an object. Its value is found in what it symbolizes about the athlete’s acquisition of victory and honor.

This distinction between inherent value and representative value is important for understanding Peter’s argument, because Peter is holding before these elders the prospect of reward in order to motivate them to persevere through suffering (Heb 10:35-36). But if the object being metaphorically invoked here—crown/wreath/medal—is not

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<sup>55</sup>First Pet 5:4 is the only occurrence in the New Testament of this phrase “chief Shepherd.” Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 329, notes, “The only other comparable reference in the NT is found in the concluding doxology of Hebrews” where Jesus is described as “the great shepherd” (Heb 13:20). Also, Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 234, observes that as elders, these men would have borne a lion’s share of the suffering.

<sup>56</sup>Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 3:149-50.

inherently valuable, then what precisely *is* the prize symbolized by the metaphor of a crown or wreath which they are working to achieve? Johannes Vos is helpful here, as he synthesizes the references in Revelation to the “crown of life” (Rev 2:10; 3:11) and Paul’s reference to the “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8), and explains what lies behind the metaphorical prize:

The “crown of life” and “crown of righteousness” are not to be thought of as separate or distinct glories to be received by the Christian at the Lord’s coming; rather, both signify absolute and total victory, the “crown of life” emphasizing the idea of victory over death, and the “crown of righteousness” stressing the idea of victory over sin.<sup>57</sup>

Peter is saying that if these elders will persevere, then the prize they will receive is total and lasting victory over both sin and death, and that indeed is a tantalizing prospect for them. To those who are daily enduring persecution from without, and daily wrestling with the sin that so easily ensnares from within (Heb 12:1), it is hard to imagine a greater reward for them if they succeed in running “in such a way as to get the prize” (1 Cor 9:24 NIV).<sup>58</sup>

Lastly, it is important to note that sin and death are both chiefly evil because of whom they are an affront against, and whom they separate mankind from—God himself in all his glory and beauty. Paul expresses longing for the crown of righteousness in 2 Timothy 4, and then he goes on to name the Lord, “the righteous judge” as the one who will present Paul with that crown; furthermore, the Lord will present it to Paul in the context of Paul being one who has “loved his appearing” (2 Tim 4:6-8). In other words, victory over sin and death could theoretically be enough of a reward to compensate for all the sober-minded endurance of suffering and self-mortification necessary in order to run in such a way as to get the prize, but they are not enough of a reward if one’s goal is ultimate and unending joy. Ultimate and unending joy cannot be obtained without the

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<sup>57</sup>Johannes Vos, “The Crown as a Symbol of Victory,” in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moisés Silva, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 1:1106.

<sup>58</sup>Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, 330, nuances the meaning slightly differently: “It is the divine, unfading crown, emblematic of God’s approval and reward, that awaits those elders/shepherds who bear their responsibilities appropriately and effectively.”

vanquishing of sin and death, but their vanquishing is not in and of itself that joy. Sin and death are the last enemies that must die before Christians obtain ultimate and unending joy. However, this joy is only obtained by not merely aiming at getting good things from God like the cessation of sin and death, but rather aiming at finally and fully getting God himself (1 John 3:2).<sup>59</sup> Even more than the cessation of sin and death, Paul has loved and now longs for the appearing of God himself as the source of all satisfaction and delight (Pss 43:4; 16:11; 21:6; 42:2; Hab 3:17-19). Therefore, Peter likewise entices these elders in 1 Peter 5:4 with the promise that if they persevere they are guaranteed to conquer sin and death and subsequently receive the greatest gift as they step into eternity—God himself as their supreme and unending source of satisfaction (Titus 2:13).

### **Principles for Biblical Leadership from 1 Peter 5**

To summarize and make explicit the principles for biblical leadership found in 1 Peter 5:1-4, first recall Peter’s overarching request—if they do nothing else these elders must shepherd the people entrusted to their care. At the very least, this requires that they intimately know, faithfully feed, diligently lead, and vigilantly protect each and every person for whom they have already accepted this heavy responsibility of care. To corroborate Don Howell’s claim that Scripture focuses on the character, motives, and agenda of the leader rather than the style, role, or setting in which the leader leads, Peter then spends the majority of his argument urging the elders to examine what is motivating their care, with what heart attitude they go about their care, and what kind of methods they use in their care.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>For more on this concept of God being even better than his gifts, and the good news of the gospel being ultimately getting God himself, see especially the writings of John Piper. John Piper, *God Is the Gospel: Meditations on God’s Love as the Gift of Himself* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

<sup>60</sup>Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 9.

Consequently, first, biblical leaders must be driven by delight in God rather than joyless, dutiful obligation. Second, biblical leaders must not merely be motivated by their need to pay the bills, and they must never be motivated by a greedy desire to get rich. Rather, they must be of supreme earthly good precisely because they are heavenly-minded—striving to store up treasure of another kind. Thus, they will serve a single master with undivided hearts, and relentlessly pursue their own joy and satisfaction in God.

Third, biblical leaders' methods must never be characterized by control or coercion but instead tender care and patient pursuit. They must clearly recognize control and coercion as the fruit of self-reliance, arrogance, and spiritual impotence, and reject these in order to diligently pursue and constantly cultivate humility before God, dependence on God, and continual infilling of the Spirit of God (Eph 5:18). Only then will they have any hope of acquiring and using God-glorifying methods of pastoral care (1 Thess 5:14).

### **Matthew 28**

Leadership development can be considered as a subset of discipleship rather than a synonym for discipleship or a separate category from discipleship.<sup>61</sup> Malphurs and Mancini caution against viewing leadership development and discipleship as synonyms precisely because leadership development begins with “targeting a limited number of maturing disciples,” while discipleship “targets everyone.”<sup>62</sup> In light of this nested relationship between leadership development and discipleship, it is wise to examine the broader category of discipleship in which leadership development sits. In what is

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<sup>61</sup>R. Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2012), 149. Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . . How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 207-8. Pope and Murray, *Insourcing*, 151.

<sup>62</sup>Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 33.

commonly referred to as the “Great Commission,” Matthew’s gospel gives us a perspective of Jesus’ last words to his disciples just prior to his ascension into heaven (Matt 28:16-20). The Great Commission is widely considered to be a foundational text for understanding discipleship, and is therefore a relevant text for understanding the broader realm of discipleship in which leadership development is a subset.<sup>63</sup>

Only Luke and Acts provide amplifying parallels of Matthew’s description of this particular charge Jesus offers his disciples. The conclusion of John’s gospel gives no description of Jesus’ ascension at all. Of the other synoptics, Mark’s “longer ending” (Mark 16:9-20) is problematic,<sup>64</sup> and thus should be passed over, leaving only Luke’s two-fold account of Jesus’ ascension at the conclusion of his gospel and again at the beginning of Acts—a companion volume that resumes the story where Luke’s gospel leaves off, and actually gives a fuller description of Jesus’ last words to his disciples (Acts 1:6-9) than does his gospel (Luke 24:44-53).

In verse 18 of Matthew 28, Jesus begins his address to his eleven remaining disciples by announcing that “all authority (ἐξουσία) in heaven and on earth” has been “given” to him. The inference is that this authority has been given to him by God the Father (Matt 11:27; John 3:35; 5:22, 26; 8:28; 20:21). Throughout Matthew’s gospel, ἐξουσία is alternately used to refer to Jesus’ authoritative teaching (7:29), ability to heal sickness and disease (8:8, 13; 9:6-8), ability to forgive sins (9:6), and ability to cast out

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<sup>63</sup>In James Riley Estep, Karen Lynn Estep, and M. Roger White, *Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church: Cartography for Christian Pilgrims* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 171, White writes, “Particular importance has been placed on this directive since it is one of Jesus’ last commands and because it includes a specific preface regarding its authoritative nature.”

<sup>64</sup>R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 2002), 685, writes that it is “the virtually unanimous verdict of modern textual scholarship, that the authentic text of Mark available to us ends at 16:8.” See also William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 601-5. James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2002), 497, explains, “It is virtually certain that 16:9-20 is a later addition and not the original ending of the Gospel of Mark.”



demons (10:1). So there is a sense in which Jesus clearly possessed ἐξουσία prior to his atoning death and resurrection, but he seems to be announcing to his disciples in Matthew 28:18 that he has now, by virtue of his death and resurrection, received ἐξουσία in some new and different sense.<sup>65</sup> Peter, in 1 Peter 3:22, describes how Jesus, after his resurrection, “has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God,” which is referred to by theologians as Jesus’ “session.” Peter says that Jesus’ ascension and session occurred consequent to “angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected (ὑποτάσσω) to him” (1 Pet 3:22). Similarly, in Luke 10:17, Jesus’ disciples return from being sent ahead of Jesus (Luke 10:1) and report that the demons were subject (ὑποτάσσω) to them in Jesus’ name. In Matthew 28:18, this authority that the Father has given to him is “in heaven and on earth,” which is language that also speaks to the spiritual allegiance that Jesus now commands and will someday demand (Phil 2:10; Rev 5:13).<sup>66</sup> Therefore, in light of this ultimate spiritual authority now being granted to him by the Father, Jesus can commission his disciples with a new and full authority. This authority secured at the greatest cost and bestowed with the greatest glory stands behind the “therefore” in “Go therefore . . .” (Matt 28:19).

The inference is that Jesus’ disciples can go and themselves make disciples as a result of Jesus’ authority—they are enabled and empowered to go because of this new level of authority granted to Jesus. Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and soon-to-be ascension and session, have led to his glorification as the God-man who now wields unlimited divine power that triumphs over all demonic powers, and trumps all resistance from the World, the flesh, or the Devil in the pursuit and rescue of his elect. Jesus’ disciples can go make disciples in the confidence that they will succeed because Jesus has secured to himself all

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<sup>65</sup>R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 1108, writes, “Jesus himself, risen from the dead, is now revealed in all his glory as the vindicated and enthroned Son of Man, a status which he has hitherto spoken of only as a future expectation, but which has now become a reality.”

<sup>66</sup>Satan offered Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” in exchange for Jesus’ worship (Matt 4:8-10). After resisting that temptation, Jesus now receives even more authority than was originally offered him by Satan. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1112.

spiritual authority, and he will soon sit down at the right hand of the Father—from which place he will wield that authority on their behalf, because he in some sense not only sends them away from himself on mission, but also goes with them to empower and instruct (Matt 28:20). As the Father has sent Jesus into the world, so now Jesus sends them, but he does not send them alone. Rather, Jesus will send the Spirit in his name to both empower and instruct his disciples as they bear witness on his behalf (John 14:26; 15:26).

His disciples are to “make disciples” (μαθητεύω) of “all nations” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) (Matt 28:19; see also Matt 24:14; Luke 24:47; Rom 1:5). The concept of discipleship in broader evangelicalism is often used to refer to the process of aiding a fellow believer in their growth in sanctification, but here, as well as in Acts 14:21, the verb μαθητεύω means to be or become, or cause someone else to be, a pupil, “with the implication of being an adherent of the teacher.”<sup>67</sup> In Matthew 28 and Acts 14, the context shows that “discipleship” is primarily referring to gospel proclamation to unbelievers. The verb μαθητεύω only occurs here in Matthew 28:19 and three other places in the New Testament (Matt 13:52; 27:57; Acts 14:21).<sup>68</sup> Again, only this reference in Matthew 28:19 and the reference in Acts 14:21 speak directly to the activity of gospel proclamation with the goal of bringing one’s hearers to repentance and faith (Rom 10:14-15). Jesus’ parallel instructions to his disciples in Luke 24 round out what is implicit here in Matthew 28, where Jesus also tells them that “repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in [my] name to all nations. . . . You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:46-48). Similarly, the Acts 14:21 occurrence of μαθητεύω describes the disciples as having “preached the gospel (εὐαγγελίζω) to that city and. . . . made many disciples (μαθητεύω).”

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<sup>67</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 609.

<sup>68</sup>The far more frequently occurring noun form, μαθητής, means, similarly, “one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views, disciple, adherent.” Also, Jesus is frequently referred to in Matthew’s gospel as “teacher” (διδάσκαλος), a Greek word that corresponds to the Hebrew title “rabbi” (John 1:38; 3:2; Matt 8:19; 12:38; 19:16; 22:16, 24, 36). Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 609.

Obedying Jesus' command and commission to recruit all nations to become adherents of Jesus as their teacher requires nothing less than the verbal announcement of good news. This good news is that God himself has provided a way for those at enmity with him to be reconciled to himself, through repentance and faith in Jesus' substitutionary atoning work on the cross (2 Cor 5:18-19). D. A. Carson writes,

Because the gospel is news, good news (even if some will hear it as bad news), it is to be announced: that's what one does with news. The essentially heraldic element in preaching is bound up with the fact that the core message is not a code of ethics to be debated, still less a list of aphorisms to be admired and pondered, and certainly not a systematic theology to be outlined and schematized. Though it properly grounds ethics, aphorisms, and systematics, it is none of these three: it is *news*, good news, and therefore must be publically announced.<sup>69</sup>

Their task certainly does not require less than verbal proclamation of the gospel, but it also requires more. They must not merely proclaim for the purpose of making converts. They must also pastor for the purpose of making disciples.<sup>70</sup> This imperative to labor amongst new believers in order to move them beyond mere conversion to deep discipleship might seem obvious, but failure to heed this imperative, and the resulting consequences is an all too common problem in world missions today.

In Matthew 28, verses 19 and 20 show the manner in which Jesus' disciples are to themselves make disciples of unbelievers—by “baptizing” and “teaching” those who respond to the disciples' teaching with repentance and faith. In verses 19 and 20 the disciples are to baptize and teach “them” (αὐτοῖς)—referring back to “all nations” of whom they are to “make disciples” (v. 19a). Baptism and teaching are selected by Jesus

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<sup>69</sup>Carson, “What Is the Gospel?—Revisited,” 158.

<sup>70</sup>France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1113, observes, The commission is expressed not in terms of the means, to proclaim the good news, but of the end, to ‘make disciples.’ It is not enough that the nations hear the message; they must also respond with the same whole-hearted commitment which was required of those who became disciples of Jesus during his ministry (see, e.g., 8:19-22; 19:21-22, 27-29).

as activities of first order in the making of disciples out of unbelievers.<sup>71</sup>

Baptism—one of two sacraments explicitly commanded by Jesus along with communion—is significant for discipleship of a new believer in many ways. Baptism implicitly requires a host of highly beneficial activities to be undertaken by the faith community on behalf of the new believer that might otherwise be neglected or delayed. Ideally, preparation for baptism requires the elders or deacons or other mature believers in that local church to carefully and closely assess that new believer’s profession of faith to determine as best they are able that the profession of faith is in fact genuine.

In addition to assessment, spiritually responsible preparation for baptism requires some measure of “catechesis” or “teaching” (διδάσκοντες). The origin of the word catechesis itself comes from the Greek, meaning “oral instruction.” Catechisms—simple tools of theological instruction often organized in a question and answer format—have been used throughout the history of the church to help new believers become established in basic Christian doctrine. As Packer and Parrett point out, as early as the second through the fifth century, “Those who became Christians often moved into the faith from radically different backgrounds and worldviews. The churches rightly took such conversions very seriously and sought to ensure that these life-revolutions were processed carefully, prayerfully, and intentionally, with thorough understanding at each stage.”<sup>72</sup> This teaching is certainly not to be limited to baptismal catechesis, but is an

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<sup>71</sup>Baptism and teaching beautifully capture the way in which salvation is both event and process. Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 431, writes,

The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: “baptizing” them and “teaching” them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments. The first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.

<sup>72</sup>J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 22. They further observe, “For most contemporary evangelicals the entire idea of catechesis is largely an alien concept. . . . In recent decades, while the Catholic church has renewed its catechetical labors with vigor, most evangelicals have not likewise returned to their own catechetical roots.” *Ibid.*, 24.

open-ended, ongoing process of mutual instruction of believers by believers (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16).

Therefore, while Jesus may seem to the casual observer to be merely rattling off an assortment of Christian practices in which to engage while evangelizing the lost, the concepts he highlights are actually deeply interwoven and intentionally chosen. These converts are not to be treated lightly by the faith community, nor are they to arrive at their own conclusions about their spiritual status apart from the counsel and insight of the faith community. These converts must not be allowed to gain a highly-privatized and individualistic spiritual self-conception, but rather are to be known, assessed, and counseled in the context of community, and then presented to the community with full endorsement and celebratory ceremony in the act of baptism.

Furthermore, their baptism is to be robustly Trinitarian (Matt 28:19). Jesus' disciples must preach to their hearers a gospel of repentance and faith—justification by faith alone—but then their hearers must also be immediately introduced, as Fred Sanders puts it, “into a new relationship, or web of relationships to the triune God.”<sup>73</sup> Sanders argues that the gospel, if it is to be deeply understood, must be seen as deeply Trinitarian: “Inevitably, what we will find in the depths of the good news is the character of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. . . . We are who we are because of the triune God's work for our salvation.”<sup>74</sup> There is simply no way to communicate a robust gospel without describing the way in which the triune God works to accomplish the salvation of sinners from all angles—the Father sending the Son, the Son atoning for sin, and the Spirit applying that atoning work. Furthermore, there is simply no way to experience a robust communion with God without encountering him in his triunity. Kelly Kapic writes,

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<sup>73</sup>Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 186.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

“Human communion with God presupposes the eternal communion of the divine persons in perfect unity and eternal distinction. Unity and distinction are crucial themes. . . . for they tell us something about God and, consequently, something about how we are to approach him.”<sup>75</sup> Entering into meaningful relationship with the triune God that is revealed in Scripture begins with understanding precisely how intrinsically relational God is by virtue of his own triunity.

Jesus is comprehensive in commanding the eleven to teach these new believers to observe “all” that he has commanded them. As Packer and Parrett note, “Jesus was especially concerned with obedience. . . . In the ancient catechumenate this emphasis on obedience—on raising up people who were distinguished by the fact that they walked in the Way of Jesus—was very clear.”<sup>76</sup> The apologetic Jesus holds forth in John 13:35 is that the on-looking world will know his disciples are genuinely his by the love his disciples have for one another. And these commands which Jesus has “commanded” (ἐνετειλάμην) them to observe are not a burden, but a path leading to joy (1 John 5:2).

Lastly, it is important to note the manner in which Jesus’ disciples are to make disciples. According to Matthew 28:19, they are to “go (πορεύμαι). . . . and make disciples.” If they do not go, they cannot make disciples. In order to fulfill their commission, they must literally travel to geographical destinations other than their own in order to personally and verbally deliver the gospel message to “all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη).”<sup>77</sup> Jesus puts no limit on their commission.<sup>78</sup> The message must be delivered to

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<sup>75</sup>John Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 24.

<sup>76</sup>Packer and Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, 91-92.

<sup>77</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 853.

<sup>78</sup>Michael David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 17, writes,

In the 1960s, some began to consider the work of the Great Commission to be complete. A brief study of any global missions map showed that there was a church in every geopolitical entity called a country—or nation. Since Jesus commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations, the work

every nation, every people group, every “body of persons united by kinship, culture, and common traditions. . . .”<sup>79</sup> This fulfills Jesus’ earlier predictions that the gospel would not terminate with “the lost sheep of Israel” (Matt 10:6), but would eventually also be “proclaimed throughout the whole world” (24:14; 26:13).<sup>80</sup>

### **Summary of Principles for Discipleship in Matthew 28**

In summary, in Scripture, discipleship is not a term applied only to sanctification of those already regenerated by the Spirit, but is also used in several places to refer to evangelism and conversion of the lost. Jesus’ followers are to gain confidence for the pursuit of this commission in the knowledge that all spiritual power and authority is now in the possession of their commissioner. Making disciples requires verbal proclamation of a gospel of repentance and faith in Jesus’ atoning death on the cross.

Furthermore, baptism has been wisely instituted by God, and enables careful assessment and instruction of potential new believers, in order to ensure they are not self-deceived, as well as ground them firmly in sound doctrine so they do not fall away (Matt 13:21). Also these new believers must be baptized into and instructed in the reality that communion with God in the gospel is of necessity communion with God in his triunity. These new believers must be taught the necessity of a transformed and obedient life if they are to self-identify as disciples of Jesus before a watching world. And, finally, this message must be personally proclaimed to every people group on the planet. There are

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must surely have been completed. Yet in Matthew 28:19, Jesus actually said, “Go therefore and make disciples of *panta ta ethne*,” not every geopolitical country. The word *ethne* means “ethnic group” or “people group.” Based on this, Ralph Winter spoke at the 1974 Lausanne Conference for World Evangelization and highlighted the Great Commission challenge of reaching not only the countries of the world, but more specifically the ethnolinguistic groups that populate it.

<sup>79</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 276.

<sup>80</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431, cautions, “God is not turning his back on Jewish people here. What has changed is that they can no longer be saved simply by trusting in God under the Mosaic covenant. All who wish to be in fellowship with God must now come to him through Jesus.” See also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1108.

several ways to make application from this passage to leadership development as a subset of discipleship.

### **Application for Leadership Development as a Subset of Discipleship**

**Making disciples.** First, biblical leaders, whatever else they self-consciously view as their duty, cannot abdicate robust disciple-making. To be a biblical leader is to serve as one commissioned to proclaim the gospel, baptize new believers, and train and instruct them towards fruitful growth. Biblical leaders have razor-sharp clarity on what Tim Keller has called “the tip of the spear of the gospel,” neither falling into legalism or antinomianism.<sup>81</sup>

**Waging spiritual warfare.** Second, biblical leaders are deeply aware of an unseen, spiritual realm that functions as a truer, deeper struggle than what can merely be seen with the human eye. Biblical leaders recognize that they must lead in sober-minded awareness of the spiritual battle engaged all around them (Eph 6:10–20), but they also must lead in humble confidence of Christ’s triumph over all evil spiritual powers (Col 2:15) and his indwelling, empowering presence that goes with them in all their endeavors.

**Practicing robust trinitarianism.** Third, biblical leaders are robustly Trinitarian. They consistently and boldly approach the Father, self-consciously clothed in the robes of the Son’s righteousness, and renew their assurance and hope of future reward by continually seeking fresh infillings of the Spirit’s power and presence as a down payment of that future glory (Eph 5:18).

**Diligently assessing spiritual fruit.** Fourth, biblical leaders make no assumptions about anyone’s spiritual state, but constantly and diligently assess the

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<sup>81</sup>Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 31.



spiritual state of those entrusted into their care (2 Cor 13:5).

**Cultivating true diversity.** Fifth, and finally, biblical leaders are devoid of all nationalism or racism, but rather endeavor in all they do to cultivate and create ethnic diversity—welcoming, pursuing, and ministering to all people, regardless of anyone’s social or cultural status, in the knowledge that as biblical leaders they have been commissioned to make disciples of all peoples everywhere, and in the confidence that someday they will stand before the throne of God amongst God’s people—made up of people from “every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. . . .” (Rev 7:9–10).

#### **Ephesians 4**

Ephesians 4:11–16 (one long sentence in the Greek) provides a window into God’s end goal for the church, which works out its corporate sanctification between the “already” of having been made “saints” (Eph 4:12), and the “not yet” of someday “attaining” full unity and full knowledge of God (Eph 4:13). It is an important passage to consider in any discussion of biblical leadership development because it deals directly with believers in self-consciously God-ordained roles of equipping and developing other believers for the purpose of spiritual growth and maturity.

Paul describes how Jesus has given spiritual gifts to his church (v. 8: “he gave gifts to men”), through the indwelling and empowering Holy Spirit (v. 7: “to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift”), and he goes on to say that failure to pursue corporate sanctification in this way is to ultimately grieve the Holy Spirit, who seals all Christians in view of their future glorification (v. 30).

Immediately after describing Jesus’ ascension and distribution of spiritual gifts to the church through giving the Holy Spirit (vv. 7–8), Paul proceeds to list three roles<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Benjamin L. Merkle, *Ephesians*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 127, writes, “Interestingly, the gifts given by Christ are not merely spiritual gifts but are the persons themselves given for the unity and maturity of the church.” See also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the*

that stand apart from the many other spiritual gifts listed elsewhere in the New Testament (Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 12:8–10; 28–30; 1 Pet 4:11), not so much for their preeminence in relationship to the other gifts, as for their role in galvanizing the other gifts. That these roles of apostle,<sup>83</sup> prophet, shepherd, and teacher (or shepherd-teacher)<sup>84</sup> that are listed in v. 11 serve to help activate the exercise of all the other spiritual gifts seems reasonable based on what Paul says these roles equip other Christians for. The “work of the ministry” (διακονία) in v. 12 can conceptually encompass many, if not all, of the spiritual gifts

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*Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 345.

<sup>83</sup>Continuationist scholars are divided over the issue of apostleship in a multitude of ways. First, how should one view apostleship? As both office and spiritual gift? As office rather than spiritual gift? Second, in light of that first question, how should one view the discontinuity or continuity of apostleship? For example, assuming apostleship has ceased as an office, has it then still continued as a gift? Third, is there more than one level of apostleship? If so, have some ceased while others have continued? Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 16, writes, “I hold . . . that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament are still valid for today, but that ‘apostle’ is an office, not a gift, and that office does not continue today.” Similarly, Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: Discovering How God Speaks and Heals Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 242, writes, “Many writers assume that apostleship is a spiritual gift. But that assumption has not been proven. . . . It is virtually impossible to define the “gift” of apostleship in the same way that the other gifts can be defined.” D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians, 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 90, warns, “Attempts to establish what apostleship means for Paul by simply appealing to the full semantic range of the word as it is found in his writings is deeply flawed at the methodological level.” See also Sam Storms, “Is Apostleship a Spiritual Gift?,” accessed January 2, 2018, <http://samstorms.com/all-articles/post/is-apostleship-a-spiritual-gift>; Sam Storms, “Are Apostles for Today?,” accessed January 2, 2018, <http://samstorms.com/all-articles/post/are-apostles-for-today>.

<sup>84</sup>In v. 11, an exegetical argument can be made for “shepherds and teachers” to be treated as a single category, thus rendering the list as “prophets, evangelists, and shepherd-teachers.” For “apostles” and “evangelists” the pattern is article, conjunction, noun. But for “shepherds” and “teachers,” the two nouns are introduced by the same article and conjunction pair as the previous two nouns, and are then simply linked with another, different, conjunction. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, 3:326, concurs. Thielman disagrees that this is grammatically significant enough to render them as one hyphenated role, pointing out that apostles and prophets are joined with a similar grammatical construction in 2:20. Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 275. Merkle, *Ephesians*, 128, concludes that, because both terms share an article and are joined with a *καί*, and because the two conceptual groups of shepherd/teacher and elder/overseer both are clearly required to teach, “Therefore, ‘pastors’ is a subset of ‘teachers’ because all pastors teach, but not all teachers are also pastors.”

listed in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Peter.<sup>85</sup> Other passages seem to support this broad conception of the “work of the ministry” (1 Cor 16:15; 2 Tim 4:11; Rev 2:19).

There is a logical progression of thought in Ephesians 4:12. Christ “gave” (ἔδωκεν) these three roles or gifts in order to “equip the saints” (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν). For what? For “the work of ministry.”<sup>86</sup> To what end? That Christians might be collectively strengthened spiritually—drawing on the metaphor of being figuratively “built up,” in the same way that a building would be increasingly strengthened as its construction moved towards completion.<sup>87</sup> This mutual spiritual strengthening is to be diligently worked out “until” (μέχρι) all Christians someday collectively “attain” or “reach” (καταντήσωμεν) full spiritual maturity (v. 13).<sup>88</sup> This maturity somehow involves the “fullness of Christ,” which is a key theme for Paul in Ephesians (Eph 1:10; 3:19).

There is an inherent interpersonal dynamic in these roles of apostle, prophet, shepherd, and teacher (or shepherd-teacher). If a teacher teaches an empty classroom, can it be said that any teaching has taken place? If a shepherd is strolling through a pasture without any sheep, can it be said that any shepherding has taken place? These functions imply someone exercising them and at least one other person benefiting from them as a recipient.

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<sup>85</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 230, renders διακονία as “productive service.”

<sup>86</sup>There is a great deal of controversy amongst scholars as to whether the three prepositional phrases in v. 12 are all referring to the subjects of v. 11, or build upon each other. Is εἰς ἔργον διακονίας coordinate with or subordinate to πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων? Is Paul saying the apostles, prophets, and shepherd-teachers (1) equip the saints, (2) do the work of the ministry themselves, and thus (3) build up the body, or is he saying they equip the *saints* to do the work of the ministry, and thus build up the body? To put it simply, as Thielman, *Ephesians*, 277-80, notes, the “prepositional phrases are not syntactically parallel . . . the object of πρὸς has an article whereas the objects of εἰς have no article.” See also Merkle, *Ephesians*, 129; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 349.

<sup>87</sup>Danker, Bauer, and Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 696.

<sup>88</sup>Thielman, *Ephesians*, 280, agrees that what is to happen until “we all attain” (v. 13) is the ongoing work of up-building.

This interpersonal aspect of these roles is striking to consider in light of Western Christianity’s cultural captivity to individualism, which has in turn all too often bled into a functionally individualistic theology of sanctification.<sup>89</sup> The broader culture may have a framework for the concept of a person pursuing spiritual growth, but a form of spiritual growth that cannot be pursued in isolation, but only in rich, interconnected, “built together” community—of the kind described in Ephesians 4—is culturally counterintuitive. Paul holds out the prospect of spiritual growth, but leaves no room for the possibility of anyone successfully growing alone.

But this collective sanctification is not only about increasing moral conformity to Christ or increasing trusting enjoyment of Christ. For Paul, there is also a preventative or protective function in this collective up-building (v. 14). In some sense, the opposite of spiritual manhood or maturity is a spiritual childishness that leaves Christians highly vulnerable to going astray or being led astray doctrinally (Acts 20:29–30). “Human cunning,” “craftiness,” and “deceitful schemes” indicate that Christians will not be left untroubled as they seek to build each other up (v. 14). A parallel could be drawn to the life of Nehemiah. For Nehemiah, rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem was difficult enough, but he and his faithful band had to build with weapons in hand in order to be ready at all times to fend off any hostile forces intent on disrupting their work of construction before it reached a level of structural strength that would allow Nehemiah and his band to much more easily defend themselves (Neh 4:7–9, 13–20).

Verse 14 pictures instability and vulnerability due to spiritual immaturity and deception. In verse 15 Paul contrasts this unstable, immature state with the building up that is the fruit of “speaking truth (ἀληθεῖω) in love.” Paul is saying that speaking truth

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<sup>89</sup>David F. Wells, *The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-Lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 53, writes, “This cultural spirituality . . . is hostile to Christian faith. Christian faith is about revealed truth, doctrine that is to be believed, moral norms that should be followed, and church life in which participation is expected. Our cultural spirituality wants none of this.”

in love grows Christians out of spiritual infancy into spiritual maturity.<sup>90</sup> This indicates that being carried about by every wind of doctrine has real moral implications, such that both truth and love will become increasingly scarce in the faith community that is not properly known, fed, led, and protected.<sup>91</sup> The faith community that is able to be carried about by every wind of doctrine is decidedly lacking in the kind of protective structural integrity that results from mutual up-building through the equipping for, and exercise of, all the spiritual gifts.

But Paul is not calling here for general truth-telling. The only other occurrence in the New Testament of this word ἀληθεύω is found in Galatians 4:16, where Paul uses it to refer to telling the truth of the gospel (Gal 2:5, 14).<sup>92</sup> What Paul probably has in mind here in Ephesians 4:15 is doctrinal and confessional truth-telling in the faith community. Merkle concludes, “This [verb, ἀληθεύοντες] could refer to honest speech in general but most likely relates to speaking or confessing the truth of the gospel.”<sup>93</sup> This kind of confessional truth-telling plays a part in spiritual warfare, and enables believers to resist demonic deception and attack of the kind that divides believers from each other and from Christ by seeking to lead believers away from confessing the gospel and away from the gospel-confessing community.

### **Application from Ephesians for Leadership Development**

For Paul, in Ephesians 4, there can be no consideration of maturity that is not spiritual maturity, and there can be no pursuit of spiritual maturity that is not collective

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<sup>90</sup>S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 344.

<sup>91</sup>Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 53, 111; Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader*, 102.

<sup>92</sup>Baugh, *Ephesians*, 344; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 352.

<sup>93</sup>See also Eph 1:13. Merkle, *Ephesians*, 132.

spiritual maturity. Further, there can be no pursuit of ethical honesty and integrity and ethical graciousness and love that is not grounded in the gospel confession of the only truly successful personification of grace and truth in the life, death, and resurrection of the man Christ Jesus. Furthermore, when the Christian is cut out of the community, he ultimately is deceived and stunted in his spiritual growth, and when an ethic is cut off from its life source, it ultimately withers and dies. There is no real Christian growth without a robust Christian community, and there is no truly transformative integrity and love without the truth and power of the gospel.

There is a widespread call in corporate America today for plans and processes to be put in place that will enable employee growth and promote human flourishing. But without a rich understanding of what it means to be truly human—a spiritual being made in the image of God, made for the glory of God, and made for the enjoyment of God—all plans and processes designed to promote human flourishing will fall woefully short. There is also a widespread call in the academy today for future leaders to be increasingly equipped to lead ethically and kindly, but without access to the truest truth and an accompanying effectual power to enable living in light of that truth, the most robust and comprehensive moral self-improvement projects in the world will find themselves ultimately hollowed out and ineffective.

Christians are not exempt from these dangers either, for Christians who construct plans and processes of leadership development that merely give lip-service to the irreducibly communal nature of sanctification, and merely give lip-service to the gospel's transformative truth and power, will find their leadership development doing little more than applying a spiritual veneer to the work of their secular counterparts. Rather, every aspect of Christian leadership development must be built on deep structures of communal sanctification and deep structures of gospel truth and transformation, and the implications of those deep structures must be constantly teased out and concretely applied to the everyday lives of those being developed.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS RELATED  
TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**Surveying the Literature—An Introduction**

Under every leadership development program lies a leadership development theory, whether every program’s designer is self-consciously aware of their theoretical framework or not. However, surveying the landscape of leadership development theory is a daunting task that could be considered a fool’s errand for at least five reasons.<sup>1</sup> First being the sheer tonnage of it. “It has been said that there is a new leadership book published every five minutes, which seems the case if one frequents airport bookstores.”<sup>2</sup>

Second being the fact that leadership, considered alone, has rarely *been* considered alone. “At best it’s been a subset of business management, organizational studies, or industrial psychology.”<sup>3</sup> This second reason compounds the first, because, even though leadership literature is relatively young, it is a rapidly spreading body of writing, constantly branching out and connecting with other disciplines.<sup>4</sup> Three primary

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<sup>1</sup>Nohria and Khurana write, “How does the scholar interested in pursuing research on leadership get started? It is a vast and sprawling field with no clear contours or boundaries, which has been pursued in fits and starts across different disciplines and intellectual traditions.” Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, “Advancing Leadership Theory and Practice,” in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, ed. Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Bernice M. Ledbetter, Robert Banks, and David C. Greenhalgh, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Engaging Culture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 3.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>4</sup>Joel M. Podolny, Rakesh Kurana, and Marya L. Besharov, “Revisiting the Meaning of Leadership,” in Nohria and Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*, 65, name another dynamic that has possibly mitigated against clarity and alignment in concept and definition: “Through the 1960s, leading organizational theorists regarded the concept of leadership to be worthy of serious

questions asked and answered in the literature are: Who is being led? In what context? And for what purpose? The answers to those three questions often change, depending on whether the context is higher education, the military, business, sociology, or psychology. And so leadership is endlessly redefined, reapplied, and re-jigged as the context dictates. This is not so much a moral ill as an unavoidable reality that puts the limitless proliferation of ideas about leadership, if not at the center, then always lurking at the edge of any attempt to make meaningful headway on the subject.

In an attempt to organize and categorize the “vast and sprawling field,” Connaughton et al. offer a long list of principles for leadership development theory, three of which are especially significant.<sup>5</sup> First, leadership is complex in that it must be considered multi-perspectively; the leader, the followers, and the context must all be considered. The terminology is also multi-perspectival, and can be viewed from the perspective of “roles or positions,” “outcomes,” or “styles and strategies.”<sup>6</sup> Second, leadership is intrinsically interpersonal. Leaders by definition must work with other people to accomplish common purposes. Third, leadership is “interactive and dynamic” in that leaders and followers interact in such a way that they provide value (e.g., “transactional” leadership) to each other—either tangible or intangible—as well effect change or “transformation” in each other.<sup>7</sup>

The third reason why surveying the landscape is a daunting task is more sordid. Leadership development is big business. Barbara Kellerman, a highly-decorated

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intellectual inquiry. . . . Yet, for at least the past thirty years, the concept of leadership has been subject to criticism and marginalization by the dominant organizational paradigms and perspectives.”

<sup>5</sup>Stacey L. Connaughton, Francis L. Lawrence, and Brent D. Ruben, “Leadership Development as a Systematic and Multidisciplinary Enterprise,” *Journal of Education for Business* 79, no. 1 (September 2003): 47-48.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



leadership thinker and lecturer at Harvard, writes,

I'm downright queasy about what I call the "leadership industry"—my catchall term for the now countless leadership centers, institutes, programs, courses, seminars, workshops, experiences, trainers, books, blogs, articles, websites, webinars, videos, conferences, consultants, and coaches claiming to teach people—usually for money—how to lead. . . . Being a leader has become a mantra. It is a presumed path to money and power; a medium for achievement, both individual and institutional; and a mechanism for creating change sometimes—though hardly always—for the common good.<sup>8</sup>

The proliferation of leadership development literature is potentially endless in part because it is fed by the inexhaustible energy sources of greed (the purveyors) and ambition (the consumers).<sup>9</sup>

The fourth reason follows closely on the heels of the third. Detached from any anchoring ethical considerations, leadership development theory tends to run adrift morally. Scholars on both sides of the evangelical and secular literature divide have taken up and followed this ethical thread and have largely arrived at the same broad conclusions. Two of note are James MacGregor Burns on the secular side, and Don Howell on the evangelical.<sup>10</sup> Burns is a Pulitzer Prize winning historian, whose seminal work *Leadership* maps out his aforementioned theory of "transformational leadership," and has been described as both having had a major impact on and continuing "to dominate the field" of leadership theory.<sup>11</sup> Howell for his part has written one of the

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<sup>8</sup>Barbara Kellerman, *The End of Leadership* (New York: Harper Business, 2012), xiiv.

<sup>9</sup>Nohria and Khurana, "Advancing Leadership Theory and Practice," 5, write, [L]eadership is an elusive construct, riddled with so much ambiguity that it is hard to even define let alone study systematically. . . . Yet, the demand for insights about leadership has only increased over time, and has largely been met by popular writers. . . . It is easy to enumerate the flaws of this genre of leadership literature. . . . [I]t lacks intellectual rigor. However, in the absence of a credible alternate body of leadership research that is conducted with greater rigor while still being relevant and useful to practice, academics should not complain. We have what we deserve.

<sup>10</sup>James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Harper Perennial Political Classics (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010); Don N. Howell, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).

<sup>11</sup>Barbara Kellerman, "Leadership—Warts and All," *Harvard Business Review*, January 1, 2004, accessed September 29, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2004/01/leadership-warts-and-all>.

better biblical-theological surveys of leadership in Scripture. In short they both argue that the character, motives, and agenda of the emerging leader matter far more than the leader's style, role, or setting.<sup>12</sup> Burns and Howell are thus arguing for ethics to be set at the center of leadership development theory—since all too often ethical considerations have been relegated to the periphery when leadership development theory is approached as a discipline within the social sciences.<sup>13</sup>

This debate about the essence of leadership, ethical or otherwise, leads to the fifth reason, which is simply that leadership is often energetically pointed out and praised precisely when it goes missing, and often completely overlooked and ignored when it is present and flourishing. Burns explains:

“[L]eadership. . . is far more pervasive, widespread—indeed, common—than we generally recognize; it is also much more bounded, limited, and uncommon. *Common*, because acts of leadership occur not simply in presidential mansions and parliamentary assemblies. . . . It is an affair of parents, teachers, and peers as well as of preachers and politicians. *Uncommon*, because many acts heralded or bemoaned as instances of leadership—acts of oratory, manipulation, sheer self-advancement, brute coercion—are not such. Much of what commonly passes as leadership—conspicuous position-taking without followers or follow-through, posturing on various public stages, manipulation without general purpose, authoritarianism—is no more leadership than the behavior of small boys marching in front of a parade, who continue to strut along Main Street after the procession has turned down a side street toward the fairgrounds.”<sup>14</sup>

Again, notice that Burns discounts any style, role or setting as an automatic guarantee that good leadership is happening, and instead points out the lack of character, bad motives, and selfish or misguided agenda of the leader so-called, thereby implicitly signaling that

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<sup>12</sup>Howell, *Servants of the Servant*, 1.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Neelly Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 302, write, Social science as public philosophy cannot be “value free.” It accepts the canons of critical, disciplined research, but it does not imagine that such research exists in a moral vacuum. To attempt to study the possibilities and limitations of society with utter neutrality, as though it existed on another planet, is to push the ethos of narrowly professional social science to the breaking point. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 33, similarly and pejoratively refers to “the sterilized, ‘value-free’ language of social science.”

<sup>14</sup>Burns, *Leadership*, 426-27.

the leader must first possess good moral character, good motives, and a good agenda before others can affirm their leadership as good in any sense. Simply put, coercion is not leadership; not every so-called leader is being willingly followed.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Unavoidably Moral Nature of Leadership**

Of course this call for moral leadership begs the question, “Whose morality?” There is no value-free answer to the question of what constitutes good character or good motives.<sup>16</sup> Charles Taylor has rightly observed that “the naturalist reduction which would exclude [moral] frameworks altogether from consideration cannot be carried through.”<sup>17</sup> Taylor defines moral frameworks as the

commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.<sup>18</sup>

What is leadership? For Taylor, however else leadership may be further defined, it certainly cannot be less than taking a stand on the basis of clearly defined and firmly held moral convictions. While the social sciences might theoretically accept a values-free approach, and thus offer the possibility of considering leadership from a values-free perspective, the painful real-world social consequences of morally-bankrupt leadership are undeniable.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Podolny, Kurana, and Besharov point out another reason why engaging the conversation around leadership development literature is so difficult. Not only does Burns’ point stand that leadership has all too often been seen when absent, and gone unseen when present, but further, some scholars question whether leaders make much of a difference at all. Leadership development is difficult enough when it is believed in, nonetheless when its very nature is called into question. Thus, Podolny, Kurana, and Besharov, “Revisiting the Meaning of Leadership,” 66, write, “[A criticism] is that little variance in organizational performance can be systematically attributed to differences among individuals, and to the extent that differences in performance outcomes cannot be ascribed to individual differences, then leadership by definition cannot matter.”

<sup>16</sup>Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, 302.

<sup>17</sup>Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 25-26.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>19</sup>Authors on both the political right and left point out the irreducibly moral nature of leadership. Christopher Hayes, *Twilight of the Elites: America after Meritocracy* (New York: Broadway

## **What Unique Contribution Can Christians Make?**

If leadership theory finds itself increasingly wandering without an ethical anchor, it should be expected that Scripture would speak to that ethical unmooring and offer a solution. But if Christian leadership theory looks too much like the world it will not have much to offer in the department of perspective and cure. The church is intended to function counter-culturally, but all too often the church has aimed for counter-cultural influence and merely landed on either irrelevance or resemblance. What would it look like for the church to increasingly fend off irrelevance on the one hand and resemblance on the other, and offer a robust moral framework to an ethically unmoored leadership landscape?

When Christians contribute to the leadership literature, it can be difficult to discern how a faithful Christian response might distinguish itself from the existing secular literature. Some view the task as simply “matching”—trying to match up themes in the existing literature with ostensibly similar themes in Scripture.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, what is neglected but most needed is for Christians to instead “accept with an agenda.” Christians

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Paperbacks, 2012), 23, writes, “While each specific institutional failure . . . was the product of a complex set of specific, sometimes contingent causes, the consistent theme that unites them all is elite malfeasance and elite corruption.”

<sup>20</sup>This broad pool of literature includes books written by Christian authors not explicitly grounded in exegesis of biblical texts. In other words, Christian authors have written many books on leadership that—while they contain a generous sprinkling of biblical references—hover over the text of Scripture far more than they actually derive their theory and application from Scripture. Thus, ironically, many Christian authors, unbeknownst to them, are actually offering common-grace insights into leadership while thinking they are deriving biblical principles for leadership. Of course, just because these common-grace insights are mislabeled as biblical insights does not make them inherently unhelpful, but it does mean those mislabeled insights are often guilty of falsely invoking biblical authority, and thus lending credence to the common cultural perception that the Bible can be twisted to support almost any point. Further, it could be argued that these insights often inhabit some hazy middle ground between explicitly textually-derived insights and true common-grace insights of non-Christian authors, since the principles a Christian author of this stripe might formulate are often still informed by their conscience, their broad theological framework, and their baptized imagination. While they may not be thinking as exegetically as they might assume, and while their hermeneutic might oftentimes be illegitimate, they are still often thinking “Christianly” in ways that their secular peers are unable to do. This can elevate their insights, even if unwittingly, slightly above the insights of their secular peers.

should recognize and appreciate observational riches as legitimate instances of common-grace wisdom, but, with Scripture as a lens, Christians should simultaneously examine, discern, and, yes, sometimes even debunk the bent “frameworks” or worldviews that are often dragged in after the astute observations. David Powlison, by analogy, describes a similar mandate for biblical counselors engaging with secular psychology’s invasion of the church:

Biblical counseling must reaffirm and finely tune its distinctive intellectual content. We must continue to think biblically, letting biblical categories lead our understanding. We must continue to reject secular categories from a self-consciously presuppositional standpoint.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, Christians often struggle to believe that Scripture provides them with “distinctive intellectual content” in the realm of leadership theory. But with a little orientation and equipping in how to spot when social scientists leave off research and begin constructing theological and moral frameworks, Christians will increasingly discover that much of the content of even the most garden-variety leadership literature is all about “God and the soul” in the words of Augustine.<sup>22</sup>

### **“Distinctive Intellectual Content”—A Way Forward**

What does it look like to “reject secular categories from a self-consciously presuppositional standpoint,” to use Powlison’s words?<sup>23</sup> The key to benefiting from the common grace wisdom of secular leadership literature, without at the same time being seduced by unbiblical frameworks or worldviews, lies in understanding how observational riches and worldview relate to each other. To understand that relationship to better accept with an agenda, it is helpful to draw an in-depth analogy from a long-standing jurisdictional

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<sup>21</sup>David Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010), 242.

<sup>22</sup>Augustine, *Soliloquies: Augustine’s Interior Dialogue*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Kim Paffenroth (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2008), 11.

<sup>23</sup>Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 242.

debate in the realm of psychology—a sister discipline within the social sciences. For the purposes of analogy, the three camps of secular psychology, Christian integrationist psychology,<sup>24</sup> and biblical counseling<sup>25</sup> will be particularly highlighted. Leadership theory straddles the humanities and the social sciences, and thus drawing an analogy from the history of another social-science jurisdictional conflict can provide illuminating parallels. Furthermore, psychology has made significant inroads into leadership theory, whether through the explicitly-named “psychodynamic approach” or the myriad of psychologists publishing across the landscape of leadership literature.<sup>26</sup> In order to draw an analogous parallel to the aforementioned three camps in the realm of psychology, might be helpful to name three roughly parallel worldviews in the realm of those writing and reading about leadership—secular leadership theory, Christian integrationist<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>*Integrationism* is a label that is either value-laden or neutral depending on how it is used and by whom. At the most neutral descriptive level, it was originally coined to describe the process of Christian psychologists understandably seeking to integrate their faith with their practice. Over time, it has come to represent a particular point of view among a myriad of other views in the conversation of how Scripture and psychology ought to be related to each other. Eric L. Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010).

<sup>25</sup>David Powlison, a leading proponent and practitioner in the biblical counseling movement, was asked by *Psychology Today*, “How does your technique or theory differ from mainstream psychotherapy?” His reply supplies an insightful definition of biblical counseling. “The Varieties of Religious Therapy: Biblical Counseling,” *Psychology Today*, accessed January 19, 2018, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-therapy/201110/the-varieties-religious-therapy-biblical-counseling>.

<sup>26</sup>Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2015), 295.

<sup>27</sup>It is important to note that, in drawing an analogy from the debate between biblical counselors and Christian integrationists about how Scripture’s sufficiency functions, and applying that analogy to two worldview tendencies in Christians writing and reading leadership literature (referred to here as Reformed and Christian integrationist), the intention is not to import a blanket accusation of syncretism back into Christian integrationist psychology. Rather, (often unintended) syncretism is simply an ever-present danger within the stream of Christian integrationist psychology, as is readily acknowledged in a quotation later in this chapter by one of that stream’s exemplars, Stanton Jones.

leadership theory, and what might be alternately described as Reformed,<sup>28</sup> presuppositional, or gospel-centered leadership theory.<sup>29</sup>

To be clear, Christian integrationist psychologists and biblical counselors are both committed to Scripture's authority, which is the chief thing that unites them in distinction from the secular camp. Differences between biblical counselors and integrationists turn on the precise nature of Scripture's "appropriate place of authority."<sup>30</sup> Secular psychology theories reject the authority of Scripture out of hand. In contrast, Powlison affirms that Christian integrationist psychologists and biblical counselors are broadly united in their acceptance of Scripture's authority:

The authority of Scripture is not the issue. We agree. Scripture is authoritative. Whether or not Scripture contains all necessary information and directly answers all

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<sup>28</sup>John M. Frame, "Introduction to the Reformed Faith," June 4, 2012, accessed January 31, 2018, <https://frame-poythress.org/introduction-to-the-reformed-faith/>, concisely and summarily defines it this way: "(1) [T]he Reformed faith is evangelical, (2) the Reformed faith is predestinarian, and (3) the Reformed faith teaches the comprehensive covenant Lordship of Jesus Christ."

<sup>29</sup>Offering these three labels for these three broad worldviews or hermeneutical tendencies is not meant to imply that any given author would necessarily self-refer with one of these labels, but rather to create three broad reference points for how any given leadership author might interpret Scripture and people. In what follows, case studies will be provided for each of these three broad worldviews or streams, which will supply concrete examples for these abstract labels. Also, choosing these three streams is not as arbitrary as it might seem at first blush. I write as a member of the Reformed stream, and, further, I write in service of a local church, Bridgeway, that is a visible part of the Reformed stream. Bridgeway is a member of Acts 29—an explicitly Reformed church planting network, and the lead pastor, Sam Storms, serves on the board of Desiring God, is a Gospel Coalition council member, and has recently served as president of the Evangelical Theological Society. The first two are explicitly Reformed, and while the third is not Reformed, it is a key locus of current theological debate and dialogue within evangelicalism, whether Reformed or Arminian. Therefore, the Reformed stream is the explicit audience of this writing, and the most immediate and intensive dialogue and debate partner to the Reformed stream within evangelicalism is what is being referred to here as the Christian integrationist stream. The kinds of dialogue and debate that have transpired between Christian integrationist psychologists and biblical counselors over the course of the last fifty years will increasingly transpire between Christian leadership thinkers who share similar biblical hermeneutics with Christian integrationist psychologists on the one hand, and those who share similar biblical hermeneutics with the biblical counseling movement on the other. These differing hermeneutical frameworks make it no coincidence that the biblical counseling movement has been largely founded and sustained by Reformed theologians and practitioners. Similarly, the "secular stream" is the simplest and broadest way in which to contrast the Reformed stream with non-Christian leadership thought. I have chosen these three streams because I am primarily addressing the Reformed stream in this writing, and thus I have selected the two most relevant debate and dialogue partners in and outside of the Church for comparison and contrast.

<sup>30</sup>David Powlison, "A Biblical Counseling Response to Integration," in Johnson, *Psychology & Christianity*, 143.

our questions is not the issue. We agree. Of course Scripture does not contain all information and answer all questions. That's why we open our eyes, ask questions, listen, think, read, write, converse and learn from experience. But *how* is Scripture authoritative? Or better, *how* is the Bible relevant and what is the *scope* of relevance?<sup>31</sup>

Powlison then goes on to describe how integrationists and biblical counselors answer those questions of Scripture's relevance and scope differently:

This is what I hear the integrationist view saying about the scope of Scripture's relevance to psychological matters. . . . In effect, the impact of Christianity is restricted to what we might call narrowly religious topics. Scripture is a resource that generally orients us (God's redemptive plan, the great doctrines of the faith), but doesn't give us detailed insight into how people work and how intentional conversations ought to proceed.<sup>32</sup>

In support of this claim, Powlison cites highlights well-known integrationist Stanton Jones' words of internal critique offered to integrationists, where Jones observes that all too often what passes under the label of Christian integrationist thought is "anemic theologically or biblically, and tends to be little more than a spiritualized rehashing of mainstream mental health thought."<sup>33</sup> Powlison agrees and presses the point further. If it is true that Christian integrationists are too often guilty of merely rehashing mainstream mental health thought, how might that lead Christian integrationists astray vis-à-vis Scripture? Powlison explains:

Describing a person accurately, explaining a person truly and changing a person into what a person is meant to be are three different things. The first is the forte of psychological science (up to a point as the descriptions do not go deep). The second is the fatal flaw in both research psychology and the personality theories: they cannot explain why people do what they do, because they exclude the truth a priori and elevate secondary factors to primary significance. . . . The third is the fatal flaw in the psychotherapies. For all their care and skill, they do not reorient strugglers to reality, and the deeper they probe into a person, the more misleading they become. The more a psychotherapy does orient to reality, the more it moves in the direction of biblical counseling. This is not to deny common-grace. . . . It is simply to recognize that the validity of any causal explanation, interventive strategy, dynamic of change,

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), 477.



definition of success or social structure for delivering care cannot be established by anchoring it in science.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, science cannot function as an ultimate authority or a highest court of appeal. The presuppositional worldview of any given scientist-practitioner always trumps and influences any particular social-science theory they might hold.

### **Reiterating the Logic of Choosing These Three Streams**

These same distinctions and differences between biblical counselors and Christian integrationist psychologists obtain in comparing and contrasting various kinds of leadership literature authored by Christians. There is a broader pool of Christian leadership literature (e.g., what is being referred to here for the purpose of analogy as “Christian integrationist” leadership literature) within which Reformed leadership literature is a contrasting subset—inasmuch as Scripture is not restricted to narrowly religious topics for the Reformed stream. Rather, for the Reformed stream, Scripture gives detailed insight into how people work, and therefore provides direction in how to proceed when developing leaders, as well as to what end they ought to be developed.

Pointing out these three broad streams in the leadership literature (i.e., secular, Christian integrationist, and Reformed) is highly contextual to this writing and is meant to serve Christians who desire to wade into the leadership literature and re-emerge with helpful tools to use in their local church ministry context as they seek to develop leaders both in and outside of the local church. Pointing out the streams is meant to serve local church leaders by making explicit what they are probably already doing implicitly—namely, attempting to discern what to reject, receive, or redeem in any and all leadership literature they might read.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Powlison, “A Biblical Counseling Response to Integration,” 144.

<sup>35</sup>Though Driscoll is a deservedly controversial figure, he is credited here for being largely responsible for popularizing and perhaps even coining the language and framework of “receive, reject, redeem.” Mark Driscoll, *A Call to Resurgence: Will Christianity Have a Funeral or a Future?* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2013), 231.

This “Christ and culture” task of discerning what to reject, receive, or redeem is more difficult than it may seem for a number of reasons. One of the chief reasons—which will be the focus of this chapter—is that it is difficult to glean from secular literature’s observational riches without unwittingly swallowing the accompanying worldviews. This is because the observations, if they are canny, tend to subtly and emotionally legitimize the ensuing conclusions about human nature, God, and the nature of reality. But of course observational data can be interpreted any number of ways. Proof positive of this ever-present danger is how many scholars writing on research methodology have codified the caution to researchers to not confuse correlation for causation.<sup>36</sup>

For example, someone might read a pop psychology book in hopes of understanding their struggle with anger, and when the book describes their own childhood deprivations back to them with a high degree of accuracy, it is easy for that reader to nod in assent when the author pivots to conclude that the reader indulges in destructive anger towards others ‘because’ of their childhood deprivations. This neat theory is unwoven when the reader befriends another person with an eerily similar story of childhood deprivation that has led that other person, in contrast, to diligently refrain from destructive anger precisely ‘because’ they saw first-hand in their childhood experience how destructive it could be. Powlison explains that highly-different responses to nearly-identical experiences of deprivation are possible because Scripture teaches that “experience does not ultimately compel the heart’s choices and habits. . . . The

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<sup>36</sup>Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 23, observe,

In our efforts to make sense of our world, we human beings are often eager to figure out what causes what. But in our eagerness to identify cause-and-effect relationships, we sometimes ‘see’ them when all we really have is two events that just happen to occur at the same time and place. Even when the two events are consistently observed together—in other words, when they are correlated—one of them does not necessarily cause the other. The ability for a researcher to distinguish between causation and correlation is a critical one.

consequences of personal history are infinitely malleable. History explains anything, everything. . . . and nothing.”<sup>37</sup>

### **A Metaphor for How the Three Streams Tend to Function**

Consider the frequently retold parable of the blind men and the elephant as an illustration of how observational riches and worldview are approached by these three broad camps (e.g., secular, Christian integrationist, and Reformed).<sup>38</sup> The parable is commonly used to illustrate the need for epistemic humility. Like the “blind men” we all only have partial access to religious truth. However, the point of the parable backfires because it concludes with a rajah leaning over his balcony to tell the blind men they are all merely touching different parts of an elephant. If all humanity is blind, who represents the sighted rajah? The reader is expected to retire in epistemic humility, but the narrator arrogantly assumes unique and trumping epistemic insight in claiming that no religion holds the whole truth. In contrast, the three Abrahamic monotheistic world religions—

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<sup>37</sup>David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 205.

<sup>38</sup>Greg Koukl, “The Trouble with the Elephant,” accessed September 29, 2017, <https://www.str.org/articles/the-trouble-with-the-elephant#.V7RkX0CDFHw>, summarizes it this way: In the children's book, *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, Lillian Quigley retells the ancient fable of six blind men who visit the palace of the Rajah and encounter an elephant for the first time. As each touches the animal with his hands, he announces his discoveries. The first blind man put out his hand and touched the side of the elephant. “How smooth! An elephant is like a wall.” The second blind man put out his hand and touched the trunk of the elephant. “How round! An elephant is like a snake.” The third blind man put out his hand and touched the tusk of the elephant. “How sharp! An elephant is like a spear.” The fourth blind man put out his hand and touched the leg of the elephant. “How tall! An elephant is like a tree.” The fifth blind man reached out his hand and touched the ear of the elephant. “How wide! An elephant is like a fan.” The sixth blind man put out his hand and touched the tail of the elephant. “How thin! An elephant is like a rope.” An argument ensued, each blind man thinking his own perception of the elephant was the correct one. The Rajah, awakened by the commotion, called out from the balcony. “The elephant is a big animal,” he said. “Each man touched only one part. You must put all the parts together to find out what an elephant is like.” Enlightened by the Rajah's wisdom, the blind men reached agreement. “Each one of us knows only a part. To find out the whole truth we must put all the parts together.”

three of the largest religions in the world—have laid the epistemic claim on the table that the elephant has spoken and thus revealed himself.<sup>39</sup>

### **Repurposing the Metaphor**

From a slightly different perspective, the parable can be repurposed to serve as a metaphor of how observational riches and worldview are typically approached by these three broad streams of secular, Christian integrationist, and Reformed leadership thought. There is a sense in which Christians are able to “see the elephant,” like the rajah, thanks to God’s self-revelation in Scripture. So what of the blind men? To extrapolate from the parable and take it in a slightly different direction, imagine that one of the blind men represents the secular stream. He has touched the leg of the elephant and pronounced it a tree, and he then begins to explore that “tree,” and discovers that it is covered with deeply-grooved bark (which are in fact the folds of skin at the elephant’s knee), and furthermore he finds that there is sap oozing out between the grooves in the bark (the elephant is in fact bleeding).<sup>40</sup> Now imagine how Christians, if they remain “on the balcony” like the rajah, will be put to shame by that blind man’s observational riches.

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<sup>39</sup>Trevin Wax, “3 Ways ‘The Blind Men and the Elephant’ Story Backfires,” accessed September 29, 2017, <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/trevinwax/2016/08/25/3-ways-the-blind-men-and-the-elephant-story-backfires/>.

<sup>40</sup>This portion of this reapplication of the parable is adapted directly from David Powlison, as heard in a lecture. I have been unable to locate a direct reference to it in any of his writing, but David Powlison, quoted in John MacArthur and Wayne A. Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling: A Basic Guide to the Principles and Practice of Counseling* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 365–66, captures the general gist of the idea well:

Secular disciplines may serve us well as they describe people; they may challenge us by how they seek to explain, guide, and change people; but they seriously mislead us when we take them at face value because they are secular. They explain people, define what people ought to be like, and try to solve people’s problems without considering God and man’s relationship to God. Secular disciplines have made a systematic commitment to being wrong. This is not to deny that secular people are often brilliant observers of other human beings. They are often ingenious critics and theoreticians. But they also distort what they see and mislead by what they teach and do, because from God’s point of view the wisdom of the world has fundamental folly written through it. They will not acknowledge that God has created human beings as God-related and God accountable creatures. The mind set of secularity is like a power saw with a set that deviates from the right angle. It may be a powerful saw, and it may cut a lot of wood, but every board comes out crooked.

They are blessed with sight and they know they are looking at an elephant, but they have failed to study the elephant closely and thus do not know that the elephant is bleeding. They lack the insight, or wisdom, that only comes from the diligent acquisition of observational riches.

Ledbetter, Banks, and Greenhalgh, authors of *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches*, agree and therefore highlight secular leadership author Mark Strom's emphasis on the necessity of wisdom for effective leadership.<sup>41</sup> They summarize Strom's description of wisdom as that which "views life as a whole. . . . and arises from attentive observation, which discerns patterns, links, analogies in behaviors, personalities, and character that lead to basic insights."<sup>42</sup> Coming down from the balcony in order to get a hand on the elephant is a metaphor of Strom's description of wisdom. Common-grace wisdom produces valuable insights through attentive observation.

Unfortunately, the blind man's interpretation of what he has discovered is still ultimately bent because of his presuppositional beliefs about what he is touching. In Powlison's words, every board comes out crooked. (In fact, his presuppositional worldview may be so unfalsifiable that if the "tree" suddenly gets up and moves around, instead of revising his opinion of what he is touching, he might feel forced to conclude that, contrary to what he previously thought, some trees are apparently able to uproot themselves.) Christians who tend towards biblicism might be tempted to conclude that, since they are armed with sight (a considerable asset, to be sure), there is really no need for them to leave the balcony.<sup>43</sup> Granted, as John Frame points out, all Christians who

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<sup>41</sup>Mark Strom, *Lead with Wisdom: How Wisdom Transforms Good Leaders into Great Leaders* (Melbourne, Australia: Wiley, 2014).

<sup>42</sup>Ledbetter, Banks, and Greenhalgh, *Reviewing Leadership*, 93.

<sup>43</sup>Frame carefully defines biblicism, listing at least four distinct senses in which the accusation is typically leveled. Here I am referring to the first of the four senses he lists, which he defines as a lack of "appreciation for the importance of extrabiblical truth in theology" or the denial of "the value of general or

assert the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* consequently open themselves to unwarranted and confused accusations of biblicism.<sup>44</sup> However, inasmuch as Christians despise the hard-won observational riches of secular researchers and practitioners or, worse, fail to ever unearth fresh observational riches themselves, they unwittingly shrink Scripture's dominion over all of life, and thus could be rightly accused of some measure of biblicism.

For example, reading a secular psychology book heavy on speculative theory as to what motivates people to engage in self-harm might be less helpful, but reading thoughtful observations about observed tendencies and behavioral patterns of cutters written by a psychologist who has personally counseled over 500 cutters might prove very helpful indeed. Christians on the balcony should allow themselves to be put to shame by the blind man's observational riches to such a degree that it galvanizes them to add experiential knowledge to their overarching insight by getting their own hands on the elephant as quickly and as frequently as possible, as well as humbly seeking out and learning from those practitioners, secular or otherwise, who have already had their hands on the elephant for some time.

Alternately, swallowing any accompanying worldview spun by a blind man about how trees sometimes get up and move around would also be a mistake. Christians may be tempted to let the blind man's observational riches trump or reimagine the truth of God's self-revelation through some kind of synthesis, but it is a mistake for Christians

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natural revelation." John M. Frame, "In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism: Reflections on 'Sola Scriptura' and History in Theological Method," *Westminster Theological Journal* 59, no. 2 (1997): 269.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. Frame's prediction in 1997—that those who hold to an authentic view of *sola Scriptura* will inevitably and wrongly be accused of Biblicism as a result—came true in a very visible way with the publication of Christian Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism Is Not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012). Frame, DeYoung, and others publicly rebutted Smith's accusation that those who hold to *sola Scriptura* are nothing more than biblicists by another name. John Frame, "Is Biblicism Impossible? A Review Article," accessed January 20, 2018, <http://journal.rts.edu/article/is-biblicism-impossible-a-review-article/>; Kevin DeYoung, "Those Tricksy Biblicists," *The Gospel Coalition*, accessed January 20, 2018, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/those-tricksy-biblicists/>.

to fail to see that when social scientists move from observation into interpretation, they are moving out of the realm of science and into the realm of theology. To neither despise the observational riches on the one hand, nor swallow the accompanying worldview on the other, is just one example of what it looks like for Christians to wade into the leadership literature and accept with an agenda.

Incidentally, this is partly why the statement that “all truth is God’s truth” can be misleading when quoted out of the context of the framing discussions in which perhaps its most famous proponent, Gaebelein, frequently asserted it.<sup>45</sup> Read on one level, the statement is airtight, but only because it is tautological and merely reaffirms the same concept in different words (e.g., “all bachelors are unmarried males” is an example of a tautology). Read on another level, the statement merely begs the question, “What exactly goes *in* the bucket labeled ‘all truth’ that then renders it automatically God’s truth?” Yes, a truth, once discovered to be true, will ultimately be found to have always belonged to God in the first place, as the origin and arbiter of all truth. But this simply begs the question of how one determines what is true in the first place.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, on one level, the social sciences cannot provide presuppositions; they can only provide observations that are not self-interpreting. Closely observing and carefully describing how people behave, while it might yield a wealth of observational riches, will bring a researcher no closer to determining how people *ought* to behave and *why*. A hundred empirical observations will never add up to one ethical truth. Secular social-scientists, robbed of spiritual sight and lacking ultimate knowledge of what they

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<sup>45</sup>Frank E Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God’s Truth: Problems of Integration in Christian Education* (Whittier, CA: Association of Christian Schools International, 1990), 23.

<sup>46</sup>Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God’s Truth*, 23, writes,  
It is one thing to take for ourselves the premise that all truth is God’s truth. It is another thing to build upon this premise an effective educational practice that shows the student the unity of truth and that brings alive in his heart and mind the grand concept of a Christ who “is the image of the invisible,” by whom “all things were created,” who “is before all things,” and by whom “all things consist,” or hold together.

are so closely inspecting, and further, prevented from gaining any fresh epistemic insight by their presuppositions (e.g., trees sometimes uproot themselves and move around), *should* be expected to display a measure of naiveté about moral evil—its pervasiveness, its power, and its singular ability to resist surface solutions.

### **Critiquing the Secular Stream—A Case Study of Barbara Kellerman**

A typical example of this unavoidable moral naiveté is a frequently read and cited *Harvard Business Review* article entitled “Leadership—Warts and All” in which Barbara Kellerman admirably prosecutes much of reigning leadership theory for assuming that effective leadership and morally good leadership are synonymous.<sup>47</sup> She critiques James MacGregor Burns and Warren Bennis, whether fairly or unfairly, for assuming that “to be a leader is, by definition, to be benevolent,” and she concludes that “the real problem is not so much that leaders have their dark side; rather it is that they—and everyone else—choose to pretend they don’t.”<sup>48</sup> Her observational riches throughout the article are spot on. She effectively and repeatedly identifies instances of moral evil in leadership in the culture at large.

At the conclusion of her article, Kellerman briefly turns to consider a cure, and offers this recommendation: “It is only when we recognize and manage our failings that we can achieve greatness.”<sup>49</sup> But is that not precisely the rub? If only it were that simple. While better than raw ignorance, in this case, naming the proverbial demon is *not* the same as gaining mastery over it. The element of blindness in all moral evil makes any self-examination project extremely problematic. Likewise, the element of slavery in all moral evil makes any self-improvement project equally problematic. If we could truly

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<sup>47</sup>Kellerman, “Leadership—Warts and All.”

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.



know ourselves and as a result move to save ourselves and others from ourselves, what need of a savior? Self-knowledge and self-salvation sound tantalizing, but Scripture warns that they ultimately lead to futility and despair.

In this particular case study example, Kellerman names real ethical dilemmas, but the solutions she offers do not go deep enough. When critiquing the secular stream, the discerning Christian reader must move beyond merely spitting out unbiblical chaff. The Christian reader must also proactively debunk competing and contradictory worldviews.

### **Critiquing the Secular Stream—A Case Study of Jim Grinnell**

Again, what does it look like to “reject secular categories from a self-consciously presuppositional standpoint”?<sup>50</sup> What does it look like to accept with an agenda? Consider a typical example from the *HBR Guide to Coaching Employees*, chosen less because of any distinguishing feature, but rather to emphasize that wandering out into the world of leadership development literature will very quickly turn up moral concerns and moral counsel. Jim Grinnell offers counsel on coaching high, mid, and low-level performers in a company—or, as he describes them, “stars,” “steadies,” and “strugglers.” Grinnell notes that high performers are “often insecure individuals in need of praise and nurturing,” and many of them “grew up in an environment where great was never good enough.”<sup>51</sup> Scripture is full of rich descriptions of, and diagnosis for, these dynamics of driven self-justification and anxious, obsessive attempts to shore up one’s self-image before the disapproving gaze of others.

Pride, fear of man, and voices of misleading counsel are operative in these tendencies that Grinnell cannily observes, but his interpretation and diagnosis skim the

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<sup>50</sup>Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 242.

<sup>51</sup>Jim Grinnell, “Coaching Your Stars, Steadies, and Strugglers,” in *HBR Guide to Coaching Employees* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014), 116.

surface and miss the mark. He notes that high performers can be “hard to take,” but that it is wise to avoid the temptation to deflate their egos. Instead he advises “You’ll get much more out of them—and less grief—if you allow them to savor their accomplishments.”<sup>52</sup> The solution here is one of pacification and pragmatic tolerance for the sake of high performance in order to ensure everything runs smoothly. In contrast, Scripture teaches that when pride is tolerated and fed, it is not pacified, but rather is set free to terrorize. Unchecked pride will only continue to demand more and more recognition, praise, and control and all the while feel less and less satisfied.<sup>53</sup>

In another place Grinnell warns that high performers will “demonstrate annoyance when their teammates don’t perform to their standards, or they’ll act with contempt when asked to assist coworkers.”<sup>54</sup> This is a genuinely helpful insight, and a wise manager who gleans from these observational riches will be better equipped to recognize these behaviors in their high performers and move swiftly to confront them when they surface. However, note Grinnell’s solution for when they surface. The manager should point out how their behavior is affecting “the team’s performance” because that is “something they’ll care about.”<sup>55</sup> Grinnell’s moral framework is one of unchanging inner desires that can only be channeled and managed instead of changed.

There is little in the way of hope or good news in this framework. The evil in the human heart that leads high performers to shame and despise their coworkers is backgrounded, and alleviating the symptom of open contempt is foregrounded. Grinnell commends pragmatically appealing to selfish values as a means of curbing and concealing contempt. The contempt remains, but Grinnell hopes the high performers will hide it

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<sup>52</sup>Grinnell, “Coaching Your Stars, Steadies, and Strugglers,” 118.

<sup>53</sup>Timothy Keller, *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness: The Path to True Christian Joy* (Chorley, England: 10Publishing, 2012), 22-23.

<sup>54</sup>Grinnell, “Coaching Your Stars, Steadies, and Strugglers,” 117.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 118.

better because their selfish motives have been presented with a sufficiently compelling and selfish reason to do so. In contrast, Scripture speaks insightfully to these decidedly moral and evil desires at war within everyone, that lead people to clash with each other when they do not get what they want (Jas 4:1–4). Further, Scripture casts a vision of personal renewal from the inside out, where people’s desires can actually change, as through repentance and trust in an external spiritual power, they learn to esteem others more highly than themselves, because they are increasingly living for, and loving, something greater than their selfish desires (Col 3:5–17; Phil 2:3).

### **Blind Spots in All Three Streams**

In contrast with the secular literature, the Christian leadership literature will often either display an unintended syncretistic naiveté on the one hand (more typical of the integrationist stream), or a deep insight into moral depravity and the significance of the gospel on the other that is undermined by keeping to the balcony and stopping short of putting the rivet in between big “T” Truth and the details of everyday life (more typical of the Reformed stream).<sup>56</sup> The integrationist stream tends to spoil the dish with a potpourri of incompatible worldviews, while the Reformed stream tends to stop tantalizingly short of answering “So what, now what?”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>David Powlison, *Speaking Truth in Love: Counsel in Community* (Winston-Salem, NC: Punch Press, 2005), 24, writes, “It must be simple and concrete—something riveted to real life. Theological generalities and intricacies don’t do the job.”

<sup>57</sup>Albert R. Beck, “All Truth Is God’s Truth: The Life and Ideas of Frank E. Gaebelein” (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2008), 101, writes, By presenting truth in all its dimensions as something under the purview of God, Gaebelein challenged what he saw as the paucity of evangelical thinking. In effect, Gaebelein was bringing attention to the scandalous state of evangelical scholarship nearly forty years before the publication of Mark Noll’s *Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. According to Gaebelein and other self-critics of evangelicalism (and there were others, even in the 1940s and 1950s), conservative Protestants had grown satisfied with theological platitudes and doctrinal shibboleths, substituting these for critical examination of other areas of knowledge, science, art, and intellectual life.

Neither moral naiveté, syncretism, or failure to put the rivet in are ultimately acceptable. Rather than pretending to an ideal position in which to stand, each stream must grow in self-awareness, which begins with humbly recognizing the deficiencies and blind spots of their respective stream, while leaning into and learning from the strengths of the other streams.<sup>58</sup> The secular stream, for their part, must deepen their understanding of the true nature of God and people. They must acknowledge that they lack an organizing framework, that they are embarrassingly naïve about moral evil, and that the biblical framework has much explanatory power to commend it.<sup>59</sup>

The Christian integrationist stream can be commended for their ready appreciation and use of common grace wisdom, but must deepen their understanding of the patchwork worldview cloak they are weaving when they diligently sift for the gold of observational riches only to swallow and become seduced by the explanatory power of accompanying elephant-sized secular worldviews.<sup>60</sup> Christian integrationists can be

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<sup>58</sup>Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 242, writes in the context of comparing and contrasting Christ and culture models:

It is especially easy to feel superior if you compare the strengths of your favorite model with the weaknesses of the others. . . . Because every church and Christian has history, a temperament, and a unique take on various theological issues, every church and Christian will be situated in some tradition and model. It is inescapable. The gospel should give us the humility both to appreciate other models and to acknowledge that we have a model of our own. *So enjoy the strengths of your position, admit the weaknesses, and borrow like crazy from the strengths of the others.* (emphasis added)

<sup>59</sup>As an example of this kind of self-awareness and humility in the secular stream, philosopher Luc Ferry, *A Brief History of Thought: A Philosophical Guide to Living* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), 4, expresses regret that he cannot bring himself to be convinced of the claims of Christianity, and concludes, “But for those who are not convinced, and who doubt the truth of these promises of immortality, the problem of death remains unresolved.” Elsewhere he writes, “I find the Christian proposition infinitely more tempting—except for the fact that I do not believe in it. But were it to be true I would certainly be a taker.” *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>60</sup>In a passage frequently cited by Christian integrationists, John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: In Two Volumes*, ed. John Thomas MacNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 273-74, writes,

Whenever we come upon these matters in secular writers, let that admirable light of truth shining in them teach us that the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God’s excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God.

tripped up most by the little word “because,” and as a result let a whole host of secular theology slip past the goalie. Empirical observations may be the stuff of social science, but human-behavioral explanations are often the stuff of theology. Table 1 summarizes the secular, Christian integrationist, and Reformed streams from the perspective of each stream’s strengths and weaknesses. The table also offers some ways in which each stream can borrow from the strengths of the other two streams.

Table 1. A summary of the three streams

	SECULAR	CHRISTIAN INTEGRATIONIST	REFORMED
STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diligent mining of observational riches</li> <li>• Desire to hold beliefs for rational rather than emotional or prejudicial reasons</li> <li>• Desire to construct an internally coherent philosophical framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation for, and mining of, common-grace observational riches</li> <li>• Strives to answer, “So what, now what?”</li> <li>• An acceptance of Scripture’s authority and a desire to integrate faith and reason</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust and coherent biblical worldview and an accurate understanding of Scripture’s appropriate place of authority</li> <li>• Deep insight into the true nature of both God and people</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong naiveté about moral evil and inability to explain why people do what they do</li> <li>• Lack of an organizing moral and philosophical framework</li> <li>• Low awareness of the unavoidable presence and influence of presuppositions in all human reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent and often unconscious syncretism of conflicting worldviews—a philosophical patchwork cloak</li> <li>• Unwitting swallowing of accompanying worldviews when gleaning from the secular stream’s observational riches</li> <li>• Anemic theologically or biblically—often little more than a spiritualized rehashing of secular leadership thought</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendency to stop short of answering, “So what, now what?”</li> <li>• Functional biblicism that tends to devalue common-grace observational riches</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to deepen understanding of the true nature of both God and people, especially God’s holiness and the moral depravity of mankind</li> <li>• Gain appreciation for explanatory power of biblical framework</li> <li>• Admit the universal and unavoidable presence and power of presuppositions in all human reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasingly reject secular categories from a self-consciously biblically-presuppositional standpoint and grow in the ability to accept secular observational insight with a trumping Scriptural agenda</li> <li>• Work to gain an accurate understanding of Scripture’s appropriate place of authority and thus construct a coherent biblical worldview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to increasingly put the rivet in between big “T” truth and the stuff of everyday life</li> <li>• Gain appreciation for, and increasingly mine insights from, common-grace observational riches</li> <li>• Reaffirm and finely tune Scripture’s distinctive intellectual content</li> </ul>

## **Critiquing the Christian Integrationist Stream—A Case Study of Gary Chapman**

Consider as an example David Powlison’s critique of Gary Chapman’s *The Five Love Languages*—a runaway best seller in the Christian integrationist vein that has spawned a whole host of accompanying books and seminars on the same theme.<sup>61</sup>

Powlison acknowledges up front that there is much to be commended in the broad principles of the book—people do express and experience love in many different ways, and Christians are commanded to live with their spouses “in an understanding way” (1 Pet 3:7). Chapman’s encouragements to take initiative to study one’s spouse as well as take initiative to pursue and love them well are commendable and constructive. However, Chapman quickly veers off course when he moves from observation to interpretation.

Why do children misbehave? Powlison gathers several of Chapman’s answers:

If the emotional need is not met, they may violate acceptable standards, expressing anger toward parents who did not meet their needs, and seeking love in inappropriate places. . . . Most misbehavior in children and teenagers can be traced to empty love tanks. . . . The growing number of adolescents who run away from home and clash with the law indicate that many parents who may have sincerely tried to express their love to their children have been speaking the wrong love language (pp. 163, 169, 175).<sup>62</sup>

Powlison then comments on Chapman’s explanations:

Notice again the sentimentality about both parties: you meant well, and your kids are simply running on empty. None of you have actually done anything that might cause a blow to your self-esteem or might necessitate Christ’s bloodshed on your behalf. Notice also the cruelty: your ignorance caused Johnny’s problem by draining his emotional tank. Parent, if you could only have filled his tank, and connected better to him. . . . Such a logic is bitter. But notice also that it is still extremely seductive, because of the same causal dynamic. Your ability to redeem the situation lies at hand. If Johnny does evil things because you failed to fill his tank, then the possibility of his restoration also lies in your power. Just start speaking his language. Of course, no one can guarantee the outcome, but we can come pretty close: “If all

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<sup>61</sup>Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, 225-38.

<sup>62</sup>Page references supplied are part of the quotation by Chapman. Confused readers unable to locate the three portions of Chapman’s book that Powlison cites should note that all three of these portions have been removed from later editions of Chapman’s book, often leaving the surrounding sentences nearly intact. *Ibid.*, 231.

goes well and their emotional needs are met, children develop into responsible adults” (p. 163). That is a psychologist’s dream, not a Christian’s hope.<sup>63</sup>

This is a prime example of the unintended syncretism that can quickly emerge as an author—in this case a pastor, counselor, and author with numerous theological degrees—seeks to reconcile classic secular need theory with a biblical theology of sanctification. It is hard to imagine Chapman sitting in his study thinking, “How can I communicate to my readers that it is up to them to save their kids, and that if their kids do not develop into responsible adults, they should blame themselves completely?” And, of course, that is not Powlison’s point. Rather, need theory can sound explanatory for our own life experiences in a compelling way. We often *do* experience our unmet desires as a significant form of suffering that we perceive as paralyzing and determinative. But Scripture presses on our intuitive understanding of ourselves, such that we are able to see that the situation *is* significant but not *determinative* for the quality of our response.<sup>64</sup>

Scripture steers the ship through the rocks by avoiding lies on either side—one, the lie that our suffering is irrelevant and insignificant for our current struggles, or, two, the lie that our suffering completely dictates our behavior in response to our current struggles. It is not insignificant for a woman’s response when her husband is cold and filled with contempt towards hers. On the contrary, Scripture has much to say to that woman suffering deprivation at the hands of her unrepentant husband. The good news is that the trajectory of her sanctification does not have bump up against the glass ceiling of her husband’s deprivation. She can flourish even in that desert place as she is watered right in the middle of a drought (Jer 17:8).

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<sup>63</sup>Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes*, 231-32. Powlison footnotes this paragraph, and qualifies his statement by saying, “Notice, I’m not saying that a parent should not ‘speak Johnny’s language’ as part of attempting to love him well. I’m questioning Chapman’s interpretation of what such intelligent love means and what it does.” Ibid., 266.

<sup>64</sup>These are concepts and phrases I have heard Powlison repeat frequently in various lectures. Analogous concepts in similar words can be found throughout his writing. Ibid., 206.

Third and finally, the Reformed stream must recognize within itself a tendency towards a functional biblicism, which can lead to a lack of appreciation for common-grace observational riches.<sup>65</sup> Ironically, of all people, those in the Reformed stream should be first and most eager to pan for the gold of observational riches, since they possess a sophisticated worldview filter. While the integrationists are often less equipped to filter out impurities, but are more inclined to sift, those in the Reformed stream tend to be less motivated to sift, but more equipped to filter out impurities. The Reformed stream could benefit far more than it currently does from common-grace wisdom, being most impervious of the three streams to any accompanying worldview smuggling.

By way of illustration, imagine two boys walking through the woods who happen upon a bee hive. The first boy is highly allergic to bees but loves honey, and therefore he may brave the risk of being stung in order to get some of the honey. The second boy has almost no allergic reaction to being stung, but does not believe there is honey in the hive. He is free to partake, but he is unmotivated. The first boy who is motivated but less free represents the integrationist stream, which tends to be more susceptible to worldview-swallowing. The second boy represents the Reformed stream, which tends to be far less susceptible to worldview-swallowing, but far more content to remain on the balcony, as it were, convinced there is no honey in the hive. Christians can gain great common-grace observational riches, but they must go forearmed with a robust and unsuggestible biblical lens with which to inspect those riches, accompanied by a firm belief that their efforts will yield a reward.

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<sup>65</sup>“Functional” biblicism because, while the Reformed stream has written eloquently and at length about general or natural revelation, the argument here is that sometimes the Reformed stream fails to move beyond mere notional assent to lived appreciation of what Frame, “In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism,” calls “the importance of extrabiblical truth in theology.”



## **Critiquing the Reformed Stream—A Case Study of Steve Viars and Rob Green**

An illustration of how a functional biblicism can intentionally or unintentionally devalue observational riches can be found in the ongoing internal dialogue within the biblical counseling movement. While he finds much to commend, biblical counselor and author Winston Smith also offers a few nuanced critiques of *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, which contains contributions from over forty authors across the spectrum of the biblical counseling movement.<sup>66</sup> His critiques fall into the three areas of “the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, the view of personal sin, and the view of formal training.” These critiques consistently align with previous critiques of the biblical counseling movement’s areas of needed growth—critiques made by some of the movement’s own exemplars.<sup>67</sup> These critiques are relevant to this writing because they are revelatory of the Reformed stream’s biblicistic tendencies in neglecting to mine for observational riches in the secular leadership literature.

Smith offers these three critiques specifically in response to the chapter contributed by Steve Viars and Rob Green, entitled “The Sufficiency of Scripture.” Viars and Green establish the doctrine of Scripture’s sufficiency without quibble from Smith, but as they move to apply the doctrine to issues of counseling, Smith pushes back in several ways. He notes that while Scripture does contain everything we are required to know in order to progress in sanctification, it does not then follow that Scripture tells us everything a counselor ought to know to counsel well. While Scripture orients us to life, and provides “framing authority,” Smith notes that “counseling calls for many kinds of knowledge within that framing authority” just as in parenting, preaching, worship, and

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<sup>66</sup>James MacDonald, Robert W. Kelleman, and Stephen Viars, eds., *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2013); Winston T. Smith, “Common Ground and Course Corrections: An Essay Review of Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 28, no. 1 (2014): 38-52.

<sup>67</sup>Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*; Heath Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

missions.<sup>68</sup> Smith points out that recognizing Scripture as the Christian’s “unique and supreme source of revelation does not mean that it is intended to operate alone.”<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, Scripture is not even the only *necessary* source of revelation. Citing Van Til, Smith points out that without general revelation, it is not even possible to understand special revelation. For example, we must first learn a language before we can ever read Scripture. Our experience of living in a fallen world, and wrestling with the moral evil in all our hearts lends relevance and poignancy to Scripture’s unfolding storyline of redemption. Smith then uses Calvin’s famous metaphor of Scripture as a lens that brings blurry vision into focus and allows Christians to clearly see and interpret the world around them—including their own life experiences. He notes,

This has broad implications. Biblical counseling must be careful that we do not denigrate the wide-ranging wisdom and life experience that are necessary for skilled biblical counseling. Putting it in the most practical terms possible, there is a meaningful difference between receiving counsel for depression from an eighteen-year-old who can read the Bible and a sixty-year-old biblical counselor who has been counseling for thirty years. The sixty-year-old has specialized in ministering to those with depression, and has personally struggled with loss and sorrow. Of course, the authors . . . would immediately agree. Yet, they suggest a tension between the Bible and what is learned through experience.<sup>70</sup>

To return to the metaphor of the boys and the beehive, this is a perfect example of two parties within the Reformed stream dialoguing about the relative merits of braving the hive, and whether or not there is any honey to be found there. It is no coincidence that Smith stands in the stream of Calvin and Van Til. For Van Til, the robust and completely sufficient framework, the clarifying and debunking interpretative lens that Scripture provides—when understood rightly—actually arms one for braving the beehive, by simultaneously rendering the brave explorer less susceptible to the stings (worldview-smuggling) and more appreciative of the honey (common-grace observational riches).

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<sup>68</sup>Smith, “Common Ground and Course Corrections,” 44.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 45.

Simply declaring that Scripture is sufficient is not enough. Smith points out that declaration will only descend to a truism on par with “All truth is God’s truth.” Rather the deep questions for which we must wrestle out thoughtful answers are, according to Smith, “How can we learn from extra biblical data using the Bible as our authoritative interpretive grid? How do we . . . bring our knowledge of ourselves, our observations about life, and our ‘case wisdom’ together with our knowledge of Scripture?”<sup>71</sup>

Counterintuitively for some, it can be argued that the Reformed stream’s grasp of, and confidence in, Scripture’s sufficiency should make them exemplars in the pursuit of putting their hands on the elephant. The Reformed stream can descend from the balcony and converge confidently on the elephant with a perfectly-calibrated prescription for their glasses, while other Christians may sometimes feel as though their glasses need a good cleaning, or as though their prescription is out of date. When one is confident that the Bible is about all the things that matter most, including what people are like, and that it speaks with sufficiency and clarity to those things, one tends to read the Bible with a deeper level of expectation and observational insight.

Furthermore, when one views that fully-sufficient Word not as the terminus of all looking, but as a lens by which all that is unclear can be brought into focus, one will examine the extra-biblical data through that lens of Scripture with the same eagerness and fervent expectation of a child who has just been given a high-powered microscope and who runs to gather a droplet of pond water in order to examine its formerly invisible wonders on a slide. When one has finally got the right equipment, it galvanizes eager and confident exploration and observation. Keller writes, “Herman Bavinck has noted that grace does not remove or replace but rather restores nature. Grace does not do away with

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<sup>71</sup>Smith, “Common Ground and Course Corrections,” 45.

thinking and speaking, art and science, theater and literature, business and economics; it remakes and restores what is amiss.”<sup>72</sup>

Thus, in considering the leadership literature, too many in the Reformed stream have been given a high-powered microscope, but have never moved beyond carefully reading the instructions and methodically assembling and disassembling, cleaning and polishing, and studying the microscope itself. Too many are experts on the microscope (special revelation), but have never looked through it at a drop of pond water (natural or general revelation), eager to discover new insights as the powerful lens lays bare what could not be discerned with the naked eye. There is much to be gleaned from both secular leadership literature and literature on leadership produced by Christian authors in non-Reformed streams. But, sadly, all too often those in the Reformed stream tend to keep to their lane, and stay on the balcony—only consuming books by their own authors, attending their own conferences, and dialoguing with and learning from churches in their own networks. Dusting the microscope off more often could do much to advance the cause of the gospel.

For example, what might members of the Reformed stream learn from business literature? Are there perhaps a significant number within the Reformed stream who are afraid to learn from business literature for fear of contamination? If so, might this fear stem from the belief that business is only motivated by the bottom line, and thus must inevitably run contrary to the principles that energize a biblically-faithful local church? Grant for the sake of argument that business literature is informed by different values than those driving a biblical church. Inasmuch as this belief is held without nuance, it is prone to construct caricatures in two directions at once.

The first caricature is stated above—that secular leadership literature is only concerned with the bottom line, and thus to be viewed with suspicion if viewed at all.

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<sup>72</sup>Keller, *Center Church*, 228.

However, that caricature does not hold up. Multiple developments in the business world reveal that there is, and has been for some time, an increasing disenchantment with the bottom line. Current leadership scholars point out that early scholars in the field of leadership theory were not studying leadership solely with a view to affecting the bottom line. Rather, “leadership was deemed important because of its capacity to infuse purpose and meaning into the lives of individuals,” as a response to the perception among scholars in multiple fields that modernity was responsible for an increasing loss of meaning.<sup>73</sup>

Ledbetter, Banks, and Greenhalgh write,

Leadership scholarship moved away from seeing meaning making as central to leadership in favor of a more functional approach, connecting leadership to economic or other measurable forms of performance. But this longing related to our work that we all have as humans has never gone away, nor has the pressing question of what is the *purpose* of leadership.<sup>74</sup>

One simply cannot answer the question of leadership’s purpose without doing theology. Authors, business leaders, social scientists, and psychologists are actively asking questions of meaning and purpose, and in that endeavor, they stand in a relationship of proximity to the church, even though it is granted that in that proximity they are still standing on the other side of a very high wall of worldview disagreement.

The second caricature is aimed inward—that the needs of the local church and the functions of biblically-faithful elders and deacons have little if nothing in common with the concerns articulated in leadership literature written to guide secular business endeavors. The second caricature follows closely on the heels of the first. What if the secular leadership literature is far more concerned with moral, ethical, and pastoral principles that one might assume? What if the secular leadership literature contains common-grace insights about human flourishing, interpersonal communication, coaching, leadership development, long-term planning, identifying priorities, organizational

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<sup>73</sup>Nohria and Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*, 11, 69.

<sup>74</sup>Ledbetter, Banks, and Greenhalgh, *Reviewing Leadership*, xix, emphasis original.

structures, management, finances, budgeting, hospitality, service, decision-making, and vision-casting that map on to the challenges, duties, and decisions facing biblically-faithful elders and deacons on a daily basis?<sup>75</sup>

### **Affirming and Challenging the Reformed Stream**

The modern Reformed stream is uniquely positioned for worldview filtering for a number of reasons. Perhaps the chief reason is the Reformed stream's robust grasp and application of Scripture's functional authority, which has led modern Reformed authors to diligently and uniquely mine Scripture, driven by the expectation that Scripture is precisely about God and the soul, and therefore offers deep insight into what people are like, what motivates them, and how they change.

For a number of reasons, over the course of the last several hundred years, Christians largely stopped writing practical theology. Particularly in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century it was difficult to find Christians writing robust biblical treatments on human motivation, marriage, parenting, addiction, depression, or sexuality. The objection might be raised that this scarcity was not unique to Christian literature, but was simply the condition of pre-modern man in general with the result that self-reflective works of this kind were universally scarce prior to advent of modern psychotherapy.<sup>76</sup> But one only has to consult the seventeenth century English Puritans to

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<sup>75</sup>John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012); Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010); Edgar H. Schein, *Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking instead of Telling* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2013); Danny Meyer, *Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business* (New York: Harper, 2008); James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Leadership Challenge, A Wiley Brand, 2017); Harvard Business Review Press, *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Making Smart Decisions* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013); Harvard Business Review Press, *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Teams* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2013); Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013); Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving in*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Penguin, 2011).

<sup>76</sup>This is not to say that the level of self-reflection in the modern age is unchanged from all that has gone before. Owen Barfield, *History in English Words* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1967), 170.

prove the chronological snobbery of this position.<sup>77</sup> To cite one of a myriad of English Puritan works, Thomas Brooks, in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, lists at least eight different sub-categories of depression alone.<sup>78</sup> This kind of sophisticated taxonomy of personal and psychological concerns was common in the writings of the Puritans.<sup>79</sup> Between the time of the Puritans and the advent of modern, secular psychology, it becomes more difficult to find Christian writing of similar psychological depth and nuance. It is little surprise how easily secular psychologists were able to step into that soul care vacuum, especially since influential thinkers like Sigmund Freud were deliberately seeking to replace pastors by functioning, in Freud's words, as "secular pastoral workers."<sup>80</sup> Far too many psychologists have dismissed the rich tradition of Christian pastoral soul care.<sup>81</sup> Happily, the biblical counseling movement, coupled with the rise of

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writes, "Self-consciousness, as we know it, seems to have first dawned faintly on Europe at about the time of the Reformation, and it was not till the seventeenth century that the new light really began to spread and brighten."

<sup>77</sup>Chronological snobbery—a term coined by Barfield, and popularized by C. S. Lewis—is defined by Barfield as the misguided idea that "humanity languished for countless generations in the most childish errors on all sorts of crucial subjects, until it was redeemed by some simple scientific dictum of the last century." *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>78</sup>Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*, Puritan Paperbacks (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968).

<sup>79</sup>Timothy Keller, "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9, no. 3 (1988): 13, writes,

The Puritans had sophisticated diagnostic casebooks containing scores and even hundreds of different personal problems and spiritual conditions. John Owen was representative when he taught that every pastor must understand all the various cases of depression, fear, discouragement, and conflict that are found in the souls of men. . . . Brooks discusses twelve types of temptation, eight varieties of discouragement, eight kinds of depression, and four classes of spiritual pride!

<sup>80</sup>Sigmund Freud, *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1999), 70, writes, A professional lay analyst will have no difficult in winning as much respect as is due to a secular pastoral worker. Indeed, the words "secular pastoral worker," might well serve as a general formula for describing the function which the analyst, whether he is a doctor or a layman, has to perform in his relation to the public.

Unsurprisingly, Freud conceives of religious belief as a kind of mental illness, writing, "The religions of mankind must be classed among the mass-delusions of this kind." Sigmund Freud, *The Essentials of Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey, Vintage Classics (London: Random House, 2008), 732.

<sup>81</sup>Jones and Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, 477-78, write, "Pastoral ministers were far

the “young, restless, and Reformed” movement within evangelicalism, has led to a rediscovery and resurgence of sophisticated practical theology that mines the best of what has gone before, but is neither derivative and biblicistic on the one hand, nor culturally captive on the other.<sup>82</sup>

One example would be the number of wise and helpful books on human motivation and desire that evangelical (and predominantly Reformed) Christians have produced in recent years. Modern Christian treatments of human motivation by authors like Larry Crabb have too often tended to uncritically repurpose raw secular need theory.<sup>83</sup> However, in recent years, Christians with a rigorous biblical grasp of the human heart, and self-consciously standing on the shoulders of historical Reformed works like Jonathan Edwards’s *Religious Affections* (perhaps the best biblical treatment ever produced on the psychology of the heart), have begun to produce fresh and significant practical theology addressing the complexities of human motivation in all its forms.<sup>84</sup>

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from ineffective and un insightful before the advent of Freud. The mental health professions often unwittingly believe and promulgate the fable that nothing significant occurred in the psychological care of persons before modern times.”

<sup>82</sup>Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*; Lambert, *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams*; Collin Hansen, *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist’s Journey with the New Calvinists* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

<sup>83</sup>Though Crabb’s writing has shifted significantly from his early emphasis on need theory, his early writing is still widely read. Other popular and widely-read examples of the pervasive influence of secular need theory are listed here as well. Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988); Willard F. Harley, *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage*, rev. and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2011); Robert S. McGee, *The Search for Significance*, rev. and expanded (Nashville: W Publishing, 2003); Stephen Arterburn, Fred Stoeker, and Mike Yorkey, *Every Man’s Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation: One Victory at a Time* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2000).

<sup>84</sup>John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2011); Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016); David Powlison, *Good and Angry: Redeeming Anger, Irritation, Complaining, and Bitterness* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016); Edward T. Welch, *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave: Finding Hope in the Power of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001); Edward T. Welch, *Blame It on the Brain? Distinguishing Chemical Imbalances, Brain Disorders, and Disobedience*, Resources for Changing Lives (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998); Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013); James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016); Paul David Tripp, *Parenting: The 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016); Winston T.



## **Why the Reformed Stream Is Uniquely Positioned to Benefit from Secular Leadership Literature**

This rich practical theology of human motivation, rediscovered in its historical form, and newly built upon by the modern Reformed stream, often allows the Reformed stream to engage with the secular leadership literature more capably than other Christian streams of thought. Leadership theory is so intimately connected with human motivation theory as to be nearly synonymous. As Connaughton, Lawrence, and Rubin point out, what is “common to all definitions [of leadership] is a recognition that leaders work with and through others.”<sup>85</sup> Therefore, as leaders work with and through others to achieve desired outcomes, questions of human motivation and behavioral change are unavoidably and constantly top of mind. Because secular psychology has tried from its inception to lay sole jurisdictional claim to all theories of human motivation and behavioral change, it is easy to see how psychology and the leadership theories quickly became and still remain intertwined.

The study of leadership has fought to retain intellectual legitimacy through anchoring in the social sciences, but it is just as difficult to reduce leadership theory to a science and technology of human flourishing, as it has been for psychiatry to sell itself as “a science and technology of human dysfunction and dysphoria.”<sup>86</sup> Human motivation and behavioral change are not the exclusive jurisdictional territory of the social scientist, and therefore neither is leadership theory. Theologians, pastors, and Christian thinkers are working to reclaim ground that was lost to social scientists in the twentieth century. However, when Christian integrationists intentionally or unintentionally reduce the number

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Smith, *Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change through Ordinary Moments* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2010); Curt Thompson, *The Soul of Shame: Retelling the Stories We Believe about Ourselves* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015); Justin S. Holcomb and Lindsey A. Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace: Hope and Healing for Victims of Sexual Assault* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); Justin S. Holcomb, *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence* (Chicago: Moody, 2014).

<sup>85</sup>Connaughton, Lawrence, and Ruben, “Leadership Development,” 47.

<sup>86</sup>Powlison, *The Biblical Counseling Movement*, 5.

of issues that Scripture authoritatively addresses, Scripture's authority is implicitly undermined, and leadership theory is reduced to secular social scientific inquiry only. If the Bible is not about leadership at all, then it has nothing to say in the leadership conversation. Authoritative or no, it is thus effectively shut out.

But as biblical counselors have been eloquently saying for years, the Bible is *all about* the dynamics of human motivation and behavioral change. Therefore, the Bible is all about leadership theory and practice, inasmuch as leadership theory and practice are intimately bound up with the dynamics of human motivation and behavioral change.

It is helpful to examine a brief case study of the kinds of observational riches that can be easily mined from secular leadership literature by any motivated and unafraid member of the Reformed stream. Unafraid in the sense of believing that a business book can provide insight without hijacking the reader and subtly shifting them towards viewing the local church more like a business than an outpost of the kingdom of God. Unafraid in the sense of believing that learning from secular leadership literature does not have to inevitably lead a reader down a path towards a theologically-unsophisticated, attractional, pragmatic model of doing church that is more concerned with nickels and noses than with sanctification and biblical fidelity.

### **Learning from the Secular Stream— A Case Study of Ram Charan's Writing**

Ram Charan, noted business author and advisor to Fortune 500 CEOs, explains that he wrote his book *Leaders at All Levels* because he believes the worldwide shortage of business leaders has reached the level of a crisis.<sup>87</sup> Charan writes, "At all levels, companies

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<sup>87</sup>Ram Charan, "About Ram Charan," accessed January 18, 2018, <http://www.ram-charan.com/about-ram/>. Jay A. Conger, "Leadership Development Interventions: Ensuring a Return on the Investment," in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*, ed. Nohria and Khurana, 709, writes, "A common lament among executives is that their organizations suffer from a shortage of leadership talent."

are short on the quantity and quality of leaders they need.”<sup>88</sup> In light of many companies’ failed attempts at leadership development, Charan offers a practical solution “based on decades of observation of hundreds of leaders in dozens of companies.”<sup>89</sup> This kind of long-term, comprehensive, observationally-rich wisdom is a prime example of getting a hand on the elephant. Briefly surveying *Leaders at All Levels* will provide a case study for how beneficial common-grace observational riches can be for local church pastors trying to accelerate their understanding of leadership development and solve their own succession crises.

For Charan, leadership development often fails for two primary reasons: leaders do not know how to spot real leadership potential, and, even when recognized, they do not know how to successfully develop that potential.<sup>90</sup> Charan warns that success begins when the entire organization internalizes a value and urgency for leadership development. Success also begins when every member of the organization accepts personal responsibility for leadership development and sees it as part of their job description, rather than ancillary to their job description.<sup>91</sup> However, the majority of the responsibility still falls on direct supervisors. In other words, development happens best in the context of management. Supervisors make the best coaches because they are engaged in the concrete world of those they supervise—they have a built-in front row seat for the strengths and weaknesses that are revealed under pressure as their direct reports wrestle with real-world problems.

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<sup>88</sup>Ram Charan, *Leaders at All Levels: Deepening Your Talent Pool to Solve the Succession Crisis* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 1.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 1. Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions,” 709, writes, “A broad range of initiatives has appeared over the last two decades to address this critical gap. Yet many of these initiatives appear to have failed.”

<sup>91</sup>Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions,” 709, agrees, noting, “When deployed in a comprehensive manner with a commitment to the long term, leadership development initiatives can and should play a critical role in deepening the bench of leadership talent of an organization.”

Therefore effective leadership development can be described as “apprenticeship” because it allows people to learn by doing in a supervised cycle of “practice, feedback, corrections, and more practice.”<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps the single most significant insight Charan offers—like most significant insights—is elegant in its simplicity. Leadership development begins with the answer to this simple question: “What would happen if we put *this* person in *that* role right now?” Then simply look for “ways to close the gap and thus minimize the risk, with assignments tailored to prepare the person.”<sup>93</sup> Development reduced down to its simplest form is the process of reverse-engineering from that gap, which requires nothing less than personal observation and individual coaching.<sup>94</sup> Too many local church leaders operate under a recruitment mindset, where holes in the proverbial dike trigger urgent manhunts for volunteers to plug those holes. As a result, local church leaders end up using people to get ministry done instead of using ministry to get people done.<sup>95</sup> Local church leaders who are committed to leadership development refuse to be controlled by the short-term urgencies of volunteer recruitment because they do not primarily want to manage ministries—they want to make disciples who make disciples. Leadership development trumps volunteer recruitment because making disciples trumps propping up programs.

When a local church leader, facing his own imminent leadership succession, is able to raise up healthy successors from within, that church benefits greatly.<sup>96</sup> However,

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<sup>92</sup>Charan, *Leaders at All Levels*, 2.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup>William M. Easum and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 35, write, “People use people to get tasks done, but God uses tasks to get people done.”

<sup>96</sup>John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, rev. and updated 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 260-61, writes, “There is often a natural progression to how leaders develop in the area of legacy, starting with the desire to achieve. Achievement comes when they do big things by themselves. Success comes when

Charan’s description of the succession failures of most large companies sound uncomfortably like the current state of most large churches. Charan observes that “many fail to recognize that developing other leaders is, or at least should be, a major part of every leader’s job. *They don’t start until it is far too late to properly develop their leaders’ capabilities* to take a complex organization into a future fraught with rapid and destabilizing change.”<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Vanderbloemen and Bird, in *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works*—perhaps the definitive book on pastoral succession—recommend building a robust leadership development pipeline as one of the chief strategies for healthy leadership succession, writing,

Intentionally build a leadership development pipeline by making relationship-based leadership development a regular part of your planning, programming, and budgeting. Develop a system in which many people at many levels are offered next steps in their own leadership development.<sup>98</sup>

If local church leaders cannot circle leadership development on their church calendar or in their church budget, then leadership development is still more aspiration than reality.

For Charan (using Colgate-Palmolive’s leadership development culture as an example), identifying potential leaders should be as broadly empowered as possible, as senior management clarifies what potential looks like, and empowers lower-level managers to nominate people on the basis of that clearly-communicated criteria.<sup>99</sup> All too

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they empower followers to do big things for them. Legacy comes when they put leaders in position to do great things without them.

<sup>97</sup>Charan, *Leaders at All Levels*, 10, emphasis added.

<sup>98</sup>William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird, *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 25. In Adelle M. Banks, “Book on Pastoral Succession: ‘All Pastors Are Interim Pastors,’” *Washington Post*, September 17, 2014, accessed January 19, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/book-on-pastoral-succession-all-pastors-are-interim-pastors/2014/09/17/064dbc5a-3e8f-11e4-a430-b82a3e67b762\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/book-on-pastoral-succession-all-pastors-are-interim-pastors/2014/09/17/064dbc5a-3e8f-11e4-a430-b82a3e67b762_story.html), Vanderbloemen is quoted as observing,

While no succession is identical, we have seen a clear and dominant pattern of churches waiting too long to have the ‘succession planning’ conversation. . . . All pastors are interim pastors. All churches will face a transition. Developing a plan sooner rather than later is the wise approach to an inevitable reality.

<sup>99</sup>Charan, *Leaders at All Levels*, 43.

often in the local church, senior leaders have not clarified what leadership potential looks like. Instead they continue to feel their way intuitively through identifying potential, and they leave that process implicit, rather than making it explicit and thus communicable to others.<sup>100</sup> This intuitive and implicit approach creates an assessment bottleneck, where identification of potential is not replicable by leaders lower down. The resultant bottleneck dictates that, for that local church, identification of leadership potential can only be as perceptive and broad as the personal capacity and intuitive insight of the senior leaders themselves.

### **Conclusion**

Clarity on the destination enables reverse-engineering. Firm belief—informed by Scripture—that character, motives, and agenda really do matter most when developing leaders will produce the kind of focused conviction necessary to construct leadership development pathways that produce biblically faithful and fruitful leaders. In addition to growing in the requisite character, skill, and conviction necessary to interpersonally develop leaders toward growth in biblical character, motives, and agenda, Reformed local church leaders can also mine observational riches from extra-biblical sources without fear of being contaminated by the values of the business world or the seeker-sensitive church movement.

The trends of biblicism, clericalism, and consumerism in the West have set the Western church back in practical theology and common-grace observational riches. Those within the church who discover and bring back to the fold observational riches from outside the church can be viewed with suspicion by the Reformed stream as being driven by pragmatic concerns. While that can sometimes be true, that suspicion and accompanying

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<sup>100</sup>Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions,” 710, writes, In the best case, initiatives can facilitate a common and widespread understanding of the organization’s vision and culture and clarify the leadership roles and responsibilities required to advance both. . . . [Leadership development programs] must be well designed in content and process, tightly aligned to the organization’s strategy, and supported by talent systems.

reluctance to learn from outsiders has only served to deepen the divide between those with their hand firmly on the elephant who can lose perspective on the overarching centrality of the gospel, and those on the balcony who rarely lose that overarching perspective but could benefit from increased observational insight.

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

#### **The First Goal—Improving the Conviction and Clarity of the Pastoral Team**

To echo the author of Ecclesiastes, of making many books on biblical leadership and leadership development there is no end (Eccl 12:12).<sup>1</sup> In one sense, this proliferation is commendable and helpful. These books lay out the character qualities necessary for faithful biblical leadership, and they seek to glean principles for developing leaders from the text—especially from Jesus’ relationship to his disciples. However, the particular research problem of seeking to instill conviction and create a culture conducive to focused and fast development of leadership development constructs can also be helped by concepts more typically discussed in secular books on organizational culture and how to lead change in large organizations.<sup>2</sup>

For example, Kotter describes the necessity of creating a shared sense of urgency and casting a clear and compelling vision as prerequisites for any lasting forward

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<sup>1</sup>Don N. Howell, *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003); Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2005); Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve: Timeless Principles for Leadership Development* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988); J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012); Bill Hull, *The Christian Leader: Rehabilitating Our Addiction to Secular Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016); Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2012); Carson Pue, *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, and Competency* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

<sup>2</sup>Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010); John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012).



progress in organizational change.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Schein describes the importance of understanding how an organization's culture can espouse one set of explicit values and yet still produce deviant artifacts that represent an entirely different set of implicit and actual values.<sup>4</sup> Without unearthing and confronting those implicit and actual values, little to no progress will be made. These theoretical claims have been substantiated in various case studies and research articles in the business world, but are less common in the context of the local church and accompanying pastoral ministry literature.<sup>5</sup>

Demonstrating a correlation between training by a subject-matter expert and improvement in the shared convictions and culture of a local church staff might encourage other local church leadership teams to invest in outside input and training. Too often church leaders are asking questions many others have already asked, but they persist in looking for answers in a vacuum. They tend to end up with answers no one else has spoken into or informed, and thus it is no surprise when their answers are unimaginative, unhelpful, or simplistic. Similarly, one or two leaders can catch a vision for needed change after themselves hearing or reading a subject-matter expert, but struggle to convey the message with the expertise or clarity required when objections are raised by fellow leaders. Demonstrating a positive effect on shared convictions and cultural beliefs might encourage others to not seek to carry the burden of vision-casting and equipping all by themselves in the misguided belief that doing so is somehow more noble, more authentic, or more unique.

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<sup>3</sup>Kotter, *Leading Change*, 37, 69.

<sup>4</sup>Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 23-27.

<sup>5</sup>Tiziana E. Casciaro et al., "Leading Change at Simmons (A)." Harvard Business School Case 406-046, November 2005, rev. May 2007, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://hbr.org/product/Leading-Change-at-Simmons/an/406046-PDF-ENG>; Boris Groysberg, Nitin Nohria, and Deborah Bell, "Barbara Norris: Leading Change in the General Surgery Unit," Harvard Business School Case 409-090, March 2009, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://hbr.org/product/Barbara-Norris--Leading-C/an/409090-PDF-ENG>.

The purpose of this goal was to increase the knowledge of the staff pastors of Bridgeway regarding the culture, conviction, and constructs needed to develop a functional leadership pipeline

### **Research Questions for the First Goal**

1. What impact, if any, would a leadership pipeline training administered to the pastoral team have on the pastoral team's level of *confidence* in, and *clarity* on, building a leadership development pipeline?
2. What impact, if any, would a leadership pipeline training administered to the pastoral team have on the level of *urgency* the pastoral team feels to build a leadership development pipeline?

### **Methodological Design for the First Goal**

This goal of increasing the knowledge of the staff pastors at Bridgeway was accomplished by holding an intensive and interactive two-day training with Kevin Peck, lead pastor at the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas. Prior to the training, Peck had recently co-authored a significant and much-needed book on leadership pipeline.<sup>6</sup> The success of the goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-Leadership Pipeline Training Assessment<sup>7</sup> to eight members of the pastoral team (out of a total of ten members, excluding myself, as well as another member who was out of the state at the time of training), which was designed to measure the change in concrete knowledge of the staff pastors in four significant areas on which Peck taught: (1) why developing and implementing a leadership pipeline is important (conviction), (2) how the presence, absence, or quality of a particular local church's leadership pipeline is deeply revelatory of that local church's implicit beliefs and values (culture), (3) how to create ministry-specific and church-wide pipelines that provide clear qualifications, training plans, and assessment tools (constructs), and, finally, (4) how to identify and remove clogs that stop

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<sup>6</sup>Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016).

<sup>7</sup>See appendix 1.

people's progress through the pipeline, as well as how to create and maintain good pressure in the pipeline to keep people moving steadily through. This goal could be considered successfully met if the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive, statistically-significant difference in the pre- and post-training scores on the survey.

The pre- and post-test instrument was developed through close reading of the primary text<sup>8</sup> produced by the subject-matter expert in order to ensure alignment between the content of the instrument and the content of the training. Questions were formulated from the text, and extensive quotes from the text were used in order to give context for and frame the questions.<sup>9</sup> As much as realistically possible, the pre- and post-test were both administered at roughly the same time of day, on the same day of the work week, to eliminate variances in concentration levels of the test-takers, or any adverse attitudes towards taking the test that might skew their responses based on mood.

The questions fell roughly into the three categories of leadership development convictions, culture, and constructs. The questions then invited the respondents to self-assess their own clarity, conviction, urgency, and confidence around those three themes.

### **Findings for the First Goal**

After scoring the pre- and post-test results and assigning values to the answers, the results of the paired (dependent samples) *t*-test were analyzed as a 1-tailed test, due to anticipating change in a positive direction after the training, which analysis revealed a statistically-significant difference ( $t_{(7)} = 4.23, p = .0019$ ) between the pre- and post-test scores of the eight members of the pastoral team who went through the two-day leadership development training with a subject-matter expert.

The pre-test mean score was 49.75, with a standard deviation of 5.17549. The post-test mean score was 56.875, with a standard deviation of 2.79987. Several pre- and

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<sup>8</sup>Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*.

<sup>9</sup>See appendix 1.

post-answers were impacted to a larger degree than the others. For example, question 17 first defined intensity with an excerpt from *Designed to Lead*, since intensity could mean many things, and then asked, “In light of this statement, now, today, what is your level of intensity for developing leaders at Bridgeway?” Six of the eight respondents indicated an increased level of intensity of some kind in their post-test responses. Three of those six indicated a “moderate” level of intensity on their pre-test, and then skipped over “high” to indicate a “very high” level of intensity for developing leaders on their post-test.

Similarly, question 10 asked (according to an excerpted description defining what that equipping might look like), “How probable is it that you will personally and intentionally equip members of Bridgeway for leadership outside the local church in the next 12 to 24 months?” Two of the eight respondents, who only selected “possibly” on their pre-tests, proceeded to skip over “probably” and select “definitely” on their post-tests.

While overall scores showed a marked trend towards improvement post-training, three respondents and four questions were affected in the opposite direction, indicating not merely static but *reduced* levels of clarity and motivation for leadership development on their post-tests. All respondents’ answers on all questions were either static or showed improvement between pre- and post-test, except for five answers distributed amongst these three respondents on four questions.

Three of the five regressive responses came from one of the three regressive respondents. For that person, the regressive responses centered around self-perceived confidence in building the necessary systems and structures, self-perceived probability that they will personally and intentionally equip people for leadership *outside* of Bridgeway in the next 12 to 24 months, and their level of intensity for building a leadership pipeline. Perhaps hearing from the subject-matter expert about all that is entailed in robust leadership development might have actually chastened their self-confidence and caused them to reexamine their ability as well as their life-margin in this space. Then again, or in addition, challenging life circumstances happening for that

particular respondent between the pre- and post-tests may have had an effect on their confidence in, energy level for, mood around, and motivation for leadership development.

The other two respondents interestingly gave their (very-mildly) regressive answers to the same question, which centered on asking for agreement with the statement that “. . . if leaders are not being made, the church has been unfaithful.” For this strongly-worded and provocative statement, these two respondents simply downgraded their level of agreement from “agree very strongly” to the next level down of “agree strongly.”

Four of the questions showed the greatest overall improvement in scores on average, and are listed as follows, with question 17 showing the greatest overall improvement in score of the four listed:

1. Question 4: Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement that leadership development is to “find the faithful who will be able. Not the able that might be faithful.”
2. Question 10: In light of this description, how probable is it that you will personally and intentionally equip members of Bridgeway for leadership outside the local church in the next 12 to 24 months?
3. Question 17: In light of this statement, now, today, what is your level of intensity for developing leaders at Bridgeway?
4. Question 21: Right now, today, for you personally, how clear is the *process* of leadership development in the local church?

To summarize: confidence, clarity, motivation, intensity, and conviction seemed to generally increase amongst the entire group after having participated in the training.

### **The First Goal—Future Research Needed**

One area of future research that would be worth exploring is the even-greater benefit that might be demonstrated if diverse learning styles were taken into account and teaching format and content adjusted accordingly (e.g., kinesthetic learners, visual learners, etc.). In contrast, it would be interesting to see if the benefits derived by deploying a clear subject-matter expert would be mitigated if the identical content were presented by someone not perceived by the audience as a subject-matter expert. The general tenor of the participants’ questions throughout the training were challenging, sweeping, and not

easily answered by anyone other than a subject-matter expert with extensive experience answering identical or similar questions. The instructor's facility and comfort in responding to these difficult questions seemed to have a strong positive effect on the participants' level of engagement. Additionally, it would be interesting to determine if the sequence of the administration of the post-test were brought into greater or lesser proximity with the training, whether the post-test scores would show reduced or increased confidence levels in the respondents as their emotions cooled and their recall of the training content diminished.

### **The Second Goal—Constructing a Curriculum**

The second goal was to develop a leadership development curriculum that aligned with the vision and values of Bridgeway's pastors and elders. The Men's LDC curriculum was built around the three broad components of learning, experience, and coaching. A team of lay elders began walking alongside the participants in one-on-one coaching relationships that supplemented monthly reading and writing assignments as well as whole-group gatherings for the purpose of instruction and fellowship.

The second goal was measured by an expert panel comprised of the four lay governing elder coaches recruited to serve as group instructors and individual coaches in the Men's Leadership Development Cohort (Men's LDC hereafter). This expert panel utilized the Leadership Development Cohort Curriculum Evaluation Rubric<sup>10</sup> to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum for the cohort. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

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<sup>10</sup>See appendix 2.

## **Methodological Design for the Second Goal**

Three crucial developmental components of the program design were: the relatively rigorous and controlled application and selection process, the training competencies—on the basis of which the training tools (e.g., readings) and self-assessment tools (e.g., self-evaluation forms, written reflections, discussion questions, etc.) were chosen, and the personal coaching. Charan et al. similarly state that, in order to build an effective leadership development pipeline, “organizations need to: identify leadership candidates early [analogous to the LDC recruitment and application process], provide them with growth assignments [analogous to the LDC training and assessment tools], give them useful feedback, and coach them [both directly parallel to the one-on-one coaching component at the core of the LDC].”<sup>11</sup>

At first glance, the fact that the Men’s LDC spans a nine-month period might seem natural or incidental, but it is important to note that adopting a format of this length is not necessarily instinctual nor has it always been common. For example, in the business world, Jay Conger notes that only thirty to forty years ago “leadership development. . . . consisted largely of workshops offered by specialized training organizations or in-house training departments.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, equipping was more about event than process, and more about information-transfer than interpersonal life-on-life transformation. In contrast, Conger observes that today the best current leadership development programs are built on the premise that “leadership development is a continuous, lifelong process rather than a single event or program,” and involve opportunities for participants to repeatedly receive feedback over time, as well as reflect on their current behavioral

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<sup>11</sup>Ram Charan, Stephen J. Drotter, and James L. Noel, *The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 11-12.

<sup>12</sup>Jay A. Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions: Ensuring a Return on the Investment,” in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: An HBS Centennial Colloquium on Advancing Leadership*, ed. Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2010), 710.

progress as measured against declared competencies.<sup>13</sup> Scholars increasingly agree that trying to develop leaders in a day or a week is largely ineffective; leadership development is far more effective when it is lengthy, relational, and reflective.<sup>14</sup> Program designers must do more than expose participants to subject matter. Rather, substantive change requires that they provide long-term reflection on the subject matter, coupled with coaching, and opportunities for repeated and deliberate practice.<sup>15</sup>

This squares well with a robust biblical theology of change, which has been insightfully summarized in the following way by Powlison: “First, sanctification is a direction you are heading. Second, repentance is a lifestyle that you are living.”<sup>16</sup> Pastors and theologians must recognize and prayerfully pursue dynamics of both event and process in their spiritual development of others. Leiderman similarly writes, “Personal transformation, as it plays out in leadership development efforts, is about supporting people to act in ways that are consistent with their deepest values.”<sup>17</sup> With a high level of common grace insight, Leiderman goes on to assert that her “working assumption is that people who become fully aware of their values will find it difficult to continue working

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<sup>13</sup>Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions,” 713.

<sup>14</sup>Stacey L. Connaughton, Francis L. Lawrence, and Brent D. Ruben, “Leadership Development as a Systematic and Multidisciplinary Enterprise,” *Journal of Education for Business* 79, no. 1 (September 2003): 46, write, “Leadership competencies are best developed over time through a program that fosters personalized integration of theory and practice and that conceives of leadership development as recursive and reflective process.” Donald J. Campbell, Gregory Dardis, and Kathleen M. Campbell, “Enhancing Incremental Influence: A Focused Approach to Leadership Development,” *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 10, no. 1 (February 2003): 38, note that leadership development “requires that individuals make time for on-going self-reflection.”

<sup>15</sup>Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions,” 717.

<sup>16</sup>David Powlison, *Making All Things New: Restoring Joy to the Sexually Broken* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 60. Powlison continues, “Often our practical view of sanctification, discipleship, and counseling posits a monochromatic answer and takes the short view.” *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>Sally Leiderman, “From the Inside Out: Evaluating Personal Transformation Leadership Efforts,” in *The Handbook of Leadership Development Evaluation*, ed. Kelly Hannum, Jennifer Martineau, and Claire Reinelt (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 199.



in ways that are not consistent with those values.” A powerful mechanism for personal change is activated when participants are steadily led over time to “act to align their behaviors with their values.”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in the biblical framework, God breaks in and permanently changes people in a moment, but God also urges those he has permanently changed to repeatedly remind themselves of their new identities in order that they might increasingly ‘act who they are.’ Effective, biblical leadership development programs will embrace both event and process, neither emphasizing one to the diminishment of the other, nor playing them off against each other.

Further, multiple studies suggest that leadership development programs that focus on the learning and development of participants as separate individuals benefit from being built “around a single well-delineated leadership model.”<sup>19</sup> Conger notes that developers who combine multiple models may confuse participants with differing frameworks as well as overwhelm participants with too many competencies or learning objectives. In contrast, a single, thoughtfully-chosen model “provides a clear focus. . . . tighter alignment of learning materials [and] assessment tools, and removes the probability of conflicting points of view.”<sup>20</sup>

The Men’s LDC curriculum benefited in this way from being implicitly built on a framework of the character and competency required for biblical eldership. Shepherd leadership of the kind practiced by local church leaders maps easily onto the character and competencies needed for biblically faithful leadership in one’s marriage, parenting, and work. Authors drawn from in developing the Men’s LDC training and assessment tools included Bob Thune, Donald Whitney, and Timothy Witmer. These authors write for local church pastoral contexts, and therefore their writing lent a strong

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<sup>18</sup>Leiderman, “From the Inside Out,” 199.

<sup>19</sup>Conger, “Leadership Development Interventions,” 715.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

internal coherence and consistency to the assigned readings and self-assessments. This encouraged deliberate practice of a focused set of competencies (e.g., applying the gospel to a diversity of interpersonal situations, taking initiative for the benefit of others, etc.), as well as repeated, long-term reflection on highly-focused subject matter over the course of months and years, rather than days or weeks.

Only nine competencies were chosen for the nine-month curriculum, allowing for each competency to be studied, reflected on, and applied for an entire month. The nine competencies chosen were (1) Leading Self: Gospel Centrality and Christian Hedonism, (2) Leading Self: Humility and Love, (3) Leading Self: Personal Discipleship and Personal Discipline, (4) Leading Self: Interpersonal Discipleship and Helping Skills, (5) Leading Others: Parenting, (6) Leading Others: Marriage, (7) Leading Self: Self-Awareness and Spiritual Gifts, (8) Leading Self: Work, and (9) Leading Others: Work.<sup>21</sup> Also, because several of the competencies strongly overlapped (e.g., seeking to grow in shepherding one's wife one month, and then turning to consider shepherding one's children the next), the few and focused themes were repeated and reinforced. Too few local churches consistently and concretely develop leaders, but even those that do develop leaders tend to equip their people for ministry in the church more than they equip their people for ministry where they live, work, and play. In deciding to devote several months of the curriculum to the intersection of faith and work, many other worthy ministerial competencies had to be set aside.

Building a curriculum from scratch can feel overwhelming. It helps to begin with the end in mind. Program designers should engineer from their desired developmental outcome. They should ask themselves what participants would look like if they were successfully developed? Then they can define that end goal as a list of competencies—patience, listening skills, ability to articulate the gospel, etc. There is an art to not

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<sup>21</sup>See appendix 4 for the training and assessment tools constructed around these nine competencies.

selecting either too many or too few competencies. Too few and the participants may end up underdeveloped due to the program developer aiming too low and not challenging the participants. Too many and the participants may not develop at all, as they stall out under an avalanche of abstract information about how they ought to grow, without enough time taken for illustrating, applying, and then deliberately practicing those competencies while receiving coaching and feedback.

After an appropriate number of competencies are chosen—while others are discarded for not being essential to the developmental end goal—program designers stand at a crossroads. Designers can either consider their work done after listing competencies and selecting reading materials to accompany each competency (a more typical academic approach), or they can go a step further and provide opportunities for self-assessment, reflection, and coaching feedback. In short, (1) choose a competency, (2) add a training tool (typically an article or book chapter), and then (3) add an assessment tool (typically a written response of some kind).<sup>22</sup> By requiring participants to not only take in information, but also reflect on it, apply it to their own life situations, and then articulate their thoughts in writing, they will grow far more than if they merely read something on one subject and then simply move on to reading something else on another subject. In addition, since the cohort is built on the structure of (1) knowledge, (2) experience, and (3) coaching, their self-reflection moves their learning from the realm of knowledge alone to also include experience. As an added benefit, the written responses they produce—when they are prayerfully studied by their coaches prior to one-on-one meetings—greatly enhance the quality of the coaching they receive.

In order to create the inaugural Men’s LDC curriculum, I had to perform a host of discrete tasks including, but not limited to: identifying the appropriate leadership competencies, creating a philosophy of development, reverse-engineering the

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<sup>22</sup>I owe both the concept of and language for this simple but elegant three-fold approach to program design to Kevin Peck, in a group coaching session, June 21, 2017, Oklahoma City, OK.

development gap by either locating or creating the appropriate training and assessment tools, building an accompanying two-semester calendar of events and requirements, identifying and recruiting the appropriate coaches, developing an application process, announcing the program, identifying promising candidates and personally encouraging them to apply, determining who to accept, and communicating final decisions to all applicants. And all of this just to commence a nine-month-long process of walking alongside nine men.

The point of listing these discrete tasks is not to make the development of the Men's LDC curriculum sound impressive, but rather to illustrate that just as a rocket cannot break the earth's orbit without burning an immense amount of costly fuel, so too effective leadership development programs cannot be created and launched without an investment of prayer, thought, time, and energy.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, if programs like the Men's LDC are only contemplated as 'one-offs,' it would be understandable if the cost appears to far outweigh the benefit. One solution for maintaining stamina and momentum while expending the massive amount of energy and focus necessary to create and launch such a program is to hold in one's mind the impact of facilitating the program not merely once, but over the course of five, or seven, or ten consecutive years.

Bridgeway averages approximately 750 weekly attenders. Equipping only nine men out of that vast pool of people hardly feels like a stimulus for change, but how about the impact forty-five men might have on the other 705 people? Or the impact ninety men might have on other 660? For maximum developmental impact, why deploy just once something that was this hard to launch? Wise program designers who catch themselves thinking "This is not worth the effort," should immediately remind themselves that they are just getting started, and, God willing, they will be living off the fruit of their current extraordinary labors for years to come. Once orbit is broken, and momentum is established,

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<sup>23</sup>Charan, Drotter, and Noel, *The Leadership Pipeline*, 11, similarly describe the process as "a commitment of not only time and money but also energy and emotion."

wise developers will set their face to capitalizing on their hard work, in order to continue leveraging it over the course of the next decade. In light of this, Leiderman writes,

Why do people choose to create personal transformation leadership efforts? Many designers of such efforts believe that these are among the most lasting ways to stimulate community change—particularly if a critical mass of leaders can be developed and if they can sustain their transformed behaviors over time.<sup>24</sup>

However, while the benefits might seem self-evident to the designers, they can be more difficult to prove to the stakeholders—local church leaders, financial managers, etc. It is difficult to quantify and evaluate the benefit of such programs for at least two reasons: (1) the difficulty of measuring the relationship between personal change and organizational change, and (2) the difficulty of measuring personal change itself.<sup>25</sup>

On one level, established methods of measuring change in quantitative academic research (e.g., two *t*-tests and a rubric) have been employed in this project because they are a requirement for academic research, but when the technical language and highly-regulated processes of research evaluation are unpacked, one quickly realizes much of what academic researchers do is actually quite intuitive. Any program designer can enlist the input and feedback of the program participants, and accordingly make improvements to future iterations of the program, as well as pass on to the relevant stakeholders any promising correlation between program participation and the participants' personal transformation.

### **Findings for the Second Goal**

The expert panel utilized the Leadership Development Cohort Curriculum Evaluation Rubric<sup>26</sup> to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum for the cohort. This goal was considered successfully

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<sup>24</sup>Leiderman, "From the Inside Out," 200.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 206.

<sup>26</sup>See appendix 2.

met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The rubric contained six questions with a Likert scale response for each, with a total possible score of 24 points. Ninety percent of the evaluation criteria being met is equal to a score of 22 or higher, such that at least four of the evaluative questions must receive a response of “Exemplary” (i.e., 4 out of 4 possible points), and the remaining two questions must receive at least a response of “Sufficient” (i.e., 3 out of 4 possible points). The mean rubric score of the four panelists was 23.5, with two panelists giving the curriculum a score indicating the curriculum had met 100 percent of the evaluation criteria (i.e., 24 out of a possible 24 points), and the remaining two panelist indicating the curriculum had met 91.67 percent of the criteria (i.e., 22 out of 24 possible points).

### **The Second Goal—Future Considerations**

The four expert panelists may have felt comfortable giving the curriculum a lower score if they were presented with the rubric earlier in the process. The compressed timeline of the doctoral program and the launch of the Men’s LDC did not leave much latitude for the construction phase. Also, the lack of pushback from the expert panel may have been due to the fact that they were shown the curriculum at each stage of its development, and, in one particular meeting prior to the launch of the Men’s LDC, they were asked to critique the curriculum’s competencies, training tools, and assessment tools, and offer feedback on anything that they felt was missing and should be added, or that was present and should be removed. I listened to their feedback, asked clarifying follow-up questions, and tried to revise the curriculum with their feedback in view. This may have served to elicit their buy-in more than if they were looking at the curriculum for the first time when evaluating it with the rubric.

### **The Third Goal—Launching a Leadership Development Cohort**

The third goal was to create and launch a Men’s LDC that utilized that curriculum to equip the men of Bridgeway for leadership both inside and outside of the local church. The cohort began in September of 2017 and concluded in May of 2018. The third goal was measured by administering the Leadership Development Cohort Progress Assessment—a pre and mid-training survey<sup>27</sup> to measure the LDC participants’ knowledge, confidence, and motivation to increasingly take initiative for the good of others in the spheres of home, work, and the local church, as well as possibly locate discernible fruit of a changed life that may have emerged in the process of participation.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, LDC coaches walked alongside cohort participants through assigned one-on-one coaching relationships, and assessed their leadership character, competency, and calling, all in the context of community.<sup>29</sup> The third goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically-significant difference in the pre- and mid-training survey scores.

#### **Methodological Design for the Third Goal**

**Format and logistics.** The cohort ran from September of 2017 through May of 2018. The intention was to only accept eight applicants, in order to ensure every voice would be heard in group interactions, as well as for the simple fact that four lay elder coaches had already been recruited, and any additional applicant accepted would require

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<sup>27</sup>See appendix 3.

<sup>28</sup>Since the Men’s LDC began in September 2017 and concluded in May 2018, the limitation of the doctoral program deadlines required administering a mid-training survey in January 2018, rather than a post-training survey in May 2018. However, since participants had just completed four solid months of focused reading, study, coaching, and mutual discipleship in community, that initial semester provided enough time for the possibility of statistically significant variation in the pre- and post-test scores to emerge. Furthermore, this allowed the results of the mid-training survey to be analyzed to determine whether any mid-stream adjustments to the program needed to be made in the second semester.

<sup>29</sup>Pue, *Mentoring Leaders*.

one of the coaches to accept an additional monthly one-on-one, as well as the mental load that comes with walking alongside an additional person with the goal of developing them. In reviewing the nineteen applicants, the coaches and I agreed that there were at least nine very strong applicants, if not quite a few more, and if the cohort could stretch to accommodate them, it might be worthwhile.

**The value of lay elder coaching.** When I suggested possibly taking one of the younger men and helping with coaching in order to save one of the coaches from having to take on an unplanned, third participant, there was strong pushback from at least one of the lay elder coaches.<sup>30</sup> The coach shared that one of the chief reasons he was passionate about the cohort was the way I had set it up so that lay leaders rather than paid staff were conducting the coaching. He felt this was one of the biggest strengths of the program since all four lay elder coaches had worked in the marketplace their entire adult lives and thus were in many ways better positioned to coach the participants for biblical faithfulness and flourishing in the marketplace. That was my intention in recruiting these particular elders to coach, so it was encouraging to see they shared the vision. Ultimately that particular coach was gracious enough to take on three coaching assignments, and nine applicants were accepted instead of eight.

**Calendar requirements.** The primary calendar requirement for both coaches and participants was availability on Thursday mornings. Three Thursday mornings each month, from September through May, were taken up with cohort activities. The third Thursday morning of each month the entire group gathered at the Bridgeway offices from 6:30am to 7:45am for breakfast and a time of teaching, discussion, and prayer. The first and second Thursday mornings were reserved for each coach to meet with the two or

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<sup>30</sup>Three of the four lay elder coaches were already grandparents, and the fourth had raised five daughters—several of whom were already in college. Selecting elders at this age and stage of life was an intentional part of the program design, as it allowed for a strong intergenerational dynamic to function in the coaching relationships.



three participants assigned to him for one-on-one coaching. Coaches and participants worked out specific meeting locations and times that mutually worked best for their respective morning commutes and work requirements.

**The value of a retreat component.** Lastly, an overnight retreat served as a high point of the first semester of the cohort.<sup>31</sup> Participants were instructed to thoughtfully prepare (in writing, if helpful) to share their life stories, using the themes of sanctification, suffering, and sin, or, good fruit, what is hard, and bad fruit.<sup>32</sup> At the conclusion of each story, each participant was prayed for by the rest of group for approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, and the prayer sessions were recorded and shared with the respective participants. The effectiveness of the retreat was confirmed not only by the overwhelmingly positive verbal feedback from both coaches and participants, but also through an unplanned contrast.

Only seven participants were able to share their stories at the overnight retreat. One was unable to share due to time constraints—the retreat only lasted twenty-four hours—and the other participant was unable to share due to being unable to attend the retreat at the last minute because a work flight was canceled due to inclement weather and stranded him out of state. Those remaining two participants shared their stories, one each, at the next two monthly cohort breakfasts, and it was fascinating to see how the time-constraints of a workday morning and the distractions of such a brief and tightly-controlled meeting time seemed to adversely affect the group’s ability to focus while listening to the stories, as well as their ability to linger in thoughtful, focused prayer for those who shared. The contrast in emotion, level of engagement, relational warmth, and

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<sup>31</sup>The idea and value of adding a retreat component was first suggested to me by Alan Spies in personal conversation. Alan Spies is Kennedy Chair and Clinical Professor of the Kennedy Pharmacy Innovation Center, College of Pharmacy, at the University of South Carolina.

<sup>32</sup>These categories are presented and taught by Ed Welch in his “Helping Relationships” course at the *Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation*. “Helping Relationships,” Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation, accessed January 31, 2018, <https://www.ccef.org/helping-relationships>.

even spiritual insight in sharing and prayer, was stark, and strongly reinforced the significance and value of making the sacrifice to plan for and invest in an overnight retreat.

**Philosophy of selection for applicants.** Some leadership development program designers may be tempted to avoid application processes, and instead simply select and invite known persons. While that is sometimes the best strategy for a number of reasons, there are benefits to open application recruitment processes that should not be categorically avoided out of fear of hurting applicants on the one hand or fear of being unable to make meaningful choices amongst a pool of applicants on the other.

After eliciting a list of recommendations from the pastors, elders, and community group leaders, those men who were recommended were encouraged to apply and told they had been specifically recommended as a strong applicant by a leader or leaders at Bridgeway. The opportunity was also given for anyone in the broader body to apply. After the application period closed, the coaches and I (hereafter referred to as the leadership team) began trying to come to a consensus on whom to accept, and it became quickly apparent that more directional clarity on the vision for the cohort was needed, not in order to unduly influence the coaches' decision making, but rather to help them work from a general framework and philosophy in their decision making, as well as engage in a dialogue on the basis of that shared framework. It is helpful to ask what criteria is going to be prioritized in a selection process. Leaving the selection criteria implicit, subjective, or simply unnamed can open the door for confirmation bias in favor of a particular applicant on the one hand, or prejudiced rejection of an applicant based on a previous interaction or hearsay on the other hand.

In reviewing the applications, the leadership team took particular note of stories of suffering and redemption, either in the distant past, recently, or both. Some of the men had walked through miscarriages and others had experienced significant bullying in school. But that alone was not enough to recommend them. The team looked for ways

in which, in their writing, it was clear they were able to make those stories available to others for the sake of the gospel. Mere naked confessionism would not automatically commend them, but if they were able to describe the way in which Christ had redeemed and was redeeming their suffering, it hinted at their ability to articulate that in a way that could minister to others, and thus served as a marker of leadership potential or “upside.” In short, evidence of Christ’s strength displayed in their weakness was compelling. The leadership team also took note of any signs of self-awareness and humility, and preference was given to men who displayed signs of a growing humble confidence—neither swaggering nor sniveling.<sup>33</sup>

Weight was also given to men with a particularly sharp hunger for being developed and, in a sense, “catalyzed” into greater levels of taking initiative for the benefit of others. From their written application responses, it was clear that some men had a particularly sharp hunger—almost a prophetic longing—for something like the cohort to come along. They knew they had been needing something like this, and they knew Bridgeway had been needing something like this. That perceptiveness and understanding of the how and why of leadership development was commendable in those who saw down the road and anticipated the need for something like the Men’s LDC as well as the method necessary for accomplishing it. Others were able to articulate a very compelling and concrete vision of how they would specifically like to take a greater level of initiative for the benefit of others in the near or immediate future. Yet again, some had both a sharp hunger for being developed as well as a concrete vision of what they would do with what they received in the process of development, and any man who had the intersection of both of those things was most compelling of all.

The team also took note of men that few or none of the pastors and elders knew, or at least did not know well. The combination of any of the attributes listed above

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<sup>33</sup>Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 65.

in any applicant, who was also relatively unknown or lesser known by the pastors and elders, was very compelling as a means of helping to keep Bridgeway from falling into a rut in regards to leadership development. Instead of leaning too heavily on too few for too long, Bridgeway's leaders have the opportunity going forward to create mechanisms like the Men's LDC as a means of discovering and developing men with whom Bridgeway's leaders do not already have a personal relationship. Developmental homogeneity is a common weakness in many local churches, and it can lead (often unintentionally) to the core of a church becoming increasingly ingrown. When leaders discover, develop, and highlight lesser-known but nevertheless potential-filled men, it goes a long way towards breaking up the club at the core of a church, as well as relieving the already-overworked core. It may also serve to reassure and encourage relative newcomers and outsiders that they will be able to eventually "break in" to a church's core.

It is admittedly very subjective, and more art than science, but the leadership team also tried to hit the sweet spot of discounting the low end and discounting the high end of the applicant pool. In other words, men who seemed to be several years removed, or maybe more, from exercising high levels of influence took a bit of a backseat in this particular applicant pool, this year, because of other, stronger applicants. It does not mean these men who seemed to be a bit farther behind do not deserve to be developed, and that Bridgeway's leadership should not offer them other avenues of development, but as the leadership team considered how to fill these eight or nine chairs, they had to acknowledge there were high-, mid-, and low-capacity applicants, at least in the near term.

To nuance this, the leadership team approached the "high end" a bit asymmetrically. In other words, the team tried to give lesser preference to leaders who were already operating at a high capacity within Bridgeway. "Asymmetrically" because, if in contrast, they were operating at a high capacity of leadership outside of Bridgeway, it inclined the team to accept them more. If they were already operating at a relatively high capacity of leadership within Bridgeway, that in itself was counted as a form of already-existing development. Those applicants, if already serving within Bridgeway, had

consequently attended trainings, been given books, received coaching, and probably had the phone numbers of multiple elders and pastors in their phone. In many ways those “already-serving” applicants had already been exposed to, or were currently receiving, some form of what this cohort promised to provide to its participants. Therefore, in order to spread the development around a bit, the leadership team chose to give preference to those who, for example, were not already receiving monthly one-on-one coaching from an elder by dint of leading a community group.

Further, this asymmetrical approach also comes from the reasoning that, conversely, just because someone is leading at a high level outside of a local church in no way guarantees they are receiving any development or coaching. Business organizations are notorious for neglecting development and coaching for their leaders (not all, but certainly many, if the *Harvard Business Review*'s many articles on this phenomenon of neglect are to be believed). Therefore, the cohort can provide something they are probably not getting, as well as providing a gospel-centered version of it, which they are almost certainly not getting. Lastly, and most significantly, for any applicant leading at a high level outside the local church, the potential for Great Commission fulfillment goes up—whether through indirectly influencing and increasing the well-being and flourishing of the large numbers of people under their leadership care, catalyzing opportunities for proclamation of the gospel message, or increasing their Christian excellence in their work as a means of adorning the gospel message. (For example, here are the vocations of just three of the applicants who were eventually accepted: serving in state government, running a real estate company, and traveling nationally to train school teachers.)

### **Findings for the Third Goal**

After scoring the pre- and post-test results and assigning values to the answers, the results of the paired (dependent samples) *t*-test were analyzed as a 1-tailed test, due to anticipating change in a positive direction, even after only four months of participation in the nine month long Men's LDC. The analysis revealed a statistically-significant

difference ( $t_{(8)} = 2.85, p = .0107$ ) between the pre- and post-test scores of the nine participants in the 2017–2018 Bridgeway Men’s LDC.

Participants scored themselves numerically, on a scale of one to five, on a long list of questions divided into three broad themes of character, competency, and calling. Grouping their scores and analyzing them as a percentage, the mean character score out of 100 percent possible on the pre-test was 62 percent. The post-test mean score increased to 76 percent, thus reflecting far and away the highest numerical improvement between pre- and post-test scores among the three themes. The pre-test mean for competence was 60 percent, with the post-test mean only increasing to 64 percent. Similarly, the pre-test mean for calling was 76 percent, with the post-test mean only increasing to 79 percent.

The theme of competence understandably posted the lowest pre- and post-test scores of the three themes, since that section dealt primarily with theological, pastoral, and missional competence, rather than vocational competence. There were several questions in the competence section for which participants consistently and predictably assigned themselves very low scores, such as “I have read a systematic theology book and/ or have taken a systematic theology class,” and “I have read through the entire Bible.”

### **The Third Goal—Future Considerations**

In the future, the pre- and post-test could provide a more accurate picture of change if the pre-test were administered prior to participants engaging in any aspect of the cohort, and if the post-test were administered at the conclusion of the nine-month process. This particular pre-test was not administered until participants had already gathered for the first time, and had already worked through the initial set of training and assessment tools, and the post-test had to be administered at the midpoint of the cohort due to time constraints of the doctoral program and the due date of the dissertation itself. It is fascinating to consider how much more change might be revealed with a future pre-test administered in August, prior to a future cohort launching in September, and the post-test not being administered until May or June of the following calendar year.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Most growing churches suffer from a shortage of leaders. From its inception, the hope at the heart of this project was that recruitment cultures can be changed into development cultures. As one wag observed, if it is really true that leaders are born, not made, then there are simply not enough of them, and more will just have to be made. If pastors come to believe that with God's help they can make more leaders, they will slowly shift from a poverty mindset where leaders are a finite resource that can only be conserved and rationed. If leaders can be made, then they can be multiplied. If leaders can be multiplied, then pastors can lift the lid off their self-perceived disciple-making ceiling.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The question of whether or not leadership development actually works runs right through the heart of Paul's mandate to equip the saints for the work of the ministry in Ephesians 4. Will the sheep be endlessly dependent on their shepherds, or can the shepherds reproduce, and actually make shepherds out of sheep? Can sheep only ever be cared for, or can they also be equipped to become fellow caretakers themselves? To be even more specific, did this project's goals work in any sense? Were potential leaders developed or merely recruited?

Watching the male and female cohort participants increasingly flourish and repeatedly link their flourishing to their participation in their respective cohorts was encouraging and confirming. Where *orthodoxy* (right doctrine), *orthopatheia* (right affections), and *orthopraxy* (right actions) might seem to be opposed to each other, it was heartening time and time again to hear the Women's SLC participants comment on how their reading had moved them to worship, or galvanized them to new levels of joyful

obedience.<sup>1</sup> To cite just one of many examples, one woman in particular was so powerfully affected by her reading of a hermeneutics textbook given as homework to the Women's SLC participants over the Christmas break that she promptly gathered and convinced nine other women to commit to read together with her, over the course of 2018, the M'Cheyne Bible reading plan in combination with D. A. Carson's daily devotional companion to the M'Cheyne plan!<sup>2</sup> Both male and female cohort participants so consistently embraced and profusely thanked me for the simple developmental opportunities being extended to them, that it almost put me in mind of a glass of water being accepted by a man wandering in the desert.

American Christians are increasingly hungry to be not merely tended but deployed. A consistent word that sprung up over the course of the Men's SLC prayer retreat was "activate." Several of the men felt that in many ways they had been riding the bench spiritually, all the while secretly longing to be put in the game. By means of being increasingly known through listening, confession, vulnerable sharing, pointed encouragement and exhortation, the confronting of shame, the affirmation of calling, and the laying on of hands and prayer, these men felt themselves to be newly spiritually activated and increasingly self-aware of their commission as spiritual ambassadors (2 Cor 5:19–20). By their own recounting, they returned to their families and their vocations with a fresh infilling of the Spirit's power and a renewed conviction to live as ambassadors.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

Again, the purpose of this project was to develop a leadership pipeline that would provide clear pathways to concretely and effectively lead attenders from first-time

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<sup>1</sup>J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 185.

<sup>2</sup>Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010); *ESV Daily Reading Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); D. A. Carson, *For the Love of God: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God's Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006).



visitors all the way to Great Commission character, competency, and calling. The themes or qualifications developed and listed in the Men's LDC curriculum attempted to spell out what Great Commission character, competency, and calling might look like when lived out at the office, in the home, or with neighbors and friends. Over time the participants were developed towards competency in those qualifications through a combination of knowledge, coaching, and experience.

Similarly, the Women's SLC listed the qualifications for shepherding and equipping other women in and through the local church, and the participants then grew together over time as a learning community. They read, reflected, shared, and prayed their way through systematic theology categories as well as shepherd leadership competencies. The purpose as it was applied in these concrete ways seems to have been timely and appropriately chosen for Bridgeway's unique contextual needs. However, the purpose must continually be proven as beneficial over time, because the true payoff of these initiatives does not lie in their initial creation and launch, but in their consistent and repeated implementation over years and decades to come.

### **The Logical Priority of the Project's Goals**

In hindsight it seems that it was right, good, and godly to first seek to align the clarity and conviction of the pastoral team on the nature of, and need for, leadership development. A *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated correlation between the leadership pipeline training and statistically significant change in the pastoral team's level of clarity and conviction about leadership development. Moving to operationalize the content of the training by building a curriculum and launching a leadership development cohort capitalized on the content of the training, but failed to capitalize on the momentum created by the training. In that sense the second and third goals were relatively localized and stopped short of holistic culture change.

## **Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Goals**

In order to change the culture of Bridgeway, shared views and behavior of the entire church would need to be affected. While the entire church was informed of the Men's LDC, and the entire male population was invited to apply, and while twelve women were personally invited to join the Women's SLC, the fruit of these two programs will be primarily in the leaders developed through them—both this year, and hopefully for years to come. However, these initiatives still did not accomplish cultural change. They set the stage for it, but cultural change—changing one or more shared beliefs across the entire church—would require the pastoral team going farther and creating an agreed-upon list of qualifications for leading self, leading others, and leading leaders.

Once these qualifications are clarified and communicated broadly, they will provide the entire body with a personalized path for development, and will provide the pastors with a clear outcome on the basis of which they can reverse-engineer a multitude of aligned but complimentary development programs. In fact, other members of the pastoral team, after the training by the subject-matter expert concluded, went on to continue to refine and implement several different development pipelines themselves in the areas of hospitality and theology of service, music and the arts, missions, and student ministry.

When cohort participants read the training tools and filled out the accompanying assessment tools, they repeatedly commented on how the tools helped them gain new levels of self-awareness and encouragement in the gospel, and frequently triggered conviction leading to repentance as well as new levels of obedience to Jesus. One participant wrote, "I have been so pleased with the ways this has manifested itself in my life already. It's like the readings from this course and my [discipleship group] and my wife have all combined at once to draw my attention to my pride (in a good but uncomfortable way). I have been seeing my own small actions recently in a way I've never seen them before."

Another participant wrote, in reference to a different assessment tool, “I went through this exercise with my wife and she was able to gently ‘remind’ me of some areas that I hadn’t selected on my own. I have many more marks on the ‘fearful pride’ side than I expected and have reflected on that for a few days now. I want to be as Keller suggests Paul was when writing to the Corinthians that basically I don’t care what you think, I don’t care what I think, I only care what the Lord thinks.”

One exercise, drawn from Bob Thune’s *Gospel Eldership*, entitled “Know Thyself,” invited the Men’s LDC participants to consider what insecurities might be holding them back from servant leadership. One question in particular asked, “What voices do you hear in your head? (Write them down; record the contours of your self-talk.)”<sup>3</sup> Participants’ self-talk centered around themes of being unqualified, disqualified, ill-equipped, or just plain scared. “You’re not good enough or qualified enough to lead. You struggle still, who are you to lead anyone?” “Just let someone else lead, you don’t really have to. It’s too hard anyway.” “Your ministry is no longer valid. You’re not leading your family as you should.”

All too often I have wrongly assumed potential leaders only need to be verbally drawn by promise of reward or driven by pointing to their duty. While Scripture does speak of delight (and duty, properly contextualized), heart motivation or doctrinal ignorance are not the only things holding potential leaders back. Potential leaders also often feel afraid, insecure, and ill-equipped. It is a commonly-misunderstood dynamic of leadership recruiting that when men feel incompetent, they will not budge an inch, no matter how eloquently a recruiter talks about theological reward and duty.<sup>4</sup> Potential leaders need to believe the gospel not only for their justification but also for their sanctification. In the

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<sup>3</sup>Bob Thune, *Gospel Eldership: Equipping a New Generation of Servant Leaders* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 40.

<sup>4</sup>This insight was shared by Kevin Peck in a personal conversation.

words of Richard Lovelace, these paralyzed men’s truest problem (illustrated on one level by the above comments) is that they are still basing their justification on their sanctification, instead of the other way around.<sup>5</sup> Yes, but this gospel inversion is not cured by verbal communication of propositional truths alone. Those truths must then be consistently practiced, concretely applied in community, and constantly covered in prayer—and all of this under the coaching and guidance of shepherd-leaders.

To illustrate this broader view of growth in the gospel, one participant commented, in response to having filled out the pre-test Leadership Development Cohort Progress Assessment, “I went through this assessment with my [men’s discipleship group] this week, which was amazing. I think I’m seeing myself rightly. It’s a tough assessment! I think the thing I need most is to be challenged to learn more and spend more time in the Bible, and then apply that practically to my life.”

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project**

Too often, leadership development programs are built around the transfer of information only, but the broad testimony of Scripture depicts transformation that, while it always involves the transfer of biblical truth, mainly takes place in the context of intentional relationships (1 Thess 2:8; 2 Tim 3:10–14). Paul Tripp has rightly observed that change is a community project.<sup>6</sup> The Men’s LDC was successful in large part

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<sup>5</sup>Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 101, writes,

Only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives. Many have so light an apprehension of God’s holiness and of the extent and guilt of their sin that consciously they see little need for justification, although below the surface of their lives they are deeply guilt-ridden and insecure. Many others have a theoretical commitment to this doctrine, but in their day-to-day existence they rely on their sanctification for justification . . . drawing their assurance of acceptance with God from their sincerity, their past experience of conversion, their recent religious performance or the relative infrequency of their conscious, willful disobedience.

<sup>6</sup>Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 83, writes,

For much of my Christian life and a portion of my ministry, I had no idea that my walk with God was a community project. I had no idea that the Christianity of the New Testament is distinctly

because it was built from the ground up on the basis of that conviction that change is a community project. That conviction was reflected in the commitment to consistent coaching, making time to retreat, the sharing of life stories, the laying on of hands and prayer, and the monthly gatherings focusing on interpersonal sharing over and above teaching.

The Men’s LDC lacked ethnic diversity, which was disappointing. All nineteen applicants were white. In contrast, an African American woman gifted in discipleship was invited to join the invitation-only Women’s Shepherd Leadership Cohort (Women’s SLC), which is noted here not in order to invite praise, but rather to point out that the assumed benefit of gaining diverse voices in any cohort setting was proved true. The other women repeatedly shared how grateful they were for her presence, perspective, and insight. For her part, the African American participant frequently commented on the various challenges inherent in seeking to “lean in” in a majority-white congregation, but she noted that participating in the cohort was helping in that regard. She explained that the relationships she was forming within the SLC—with the other women as well as with me—were encouraging and empowering her to lead and use her spiritual gifts to bless and serve others. She also commented on how encouraging it was to be able to share her perspective and be heard and affirmed in that vulnerability and risk.

The Men’s LDC participants were ethnically homogenous, but they were at least diverse in their vocations, which helped to create a stimulating and varied relational

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relational, from beginning to end. I understood none of the dangers inherent in attempting to live the Christian life on my own. I had no awareness of the blinding power of remaining sin. . . . I had no idea that I was living outside of God’s normal means of sightedness, encouragement, conviction, strength, and growth. I had no idea how much consumerism and how little true participation marked the body of Christ. I had no idea of the importance of the private ministry of the Word to the health of the believer. I had no idea. I have now come to understand that I need others in my life. I now know that I need to commit myself to living in intentionally intrusive, Christ-centered, grace-driven, redemptive community. I now know it’s my job to seek this community out, to invite people to interrupt my private conversation, and to say things to me that I couldn’t or wouldn’t say to myself. I have realized how much I need warning, encouragement, rebuke, correction, protection, grace, and love. I now see myself as connected to others, not because I have made the choice but because of the wise design of the one who is the head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 83.

experience for all present. In one exercise, participants were asked to describe any creative, providing, or redemptive aspects of their work. Participants described themselves in terms like these: “I help assist others in recovery after natural disasters,” “I help assist people with new employment opportunities to create a better lifestyle for themselves and their family,” “As one of the few believers at my work I can show the love of Jesus to those around me,” “I help identify ways to extract oil and gas from the earth in a way that is most energy/cost efficient and does the least amount of damage to the environment,” “Develop financial plans and budgets for my clients to help their businesses run more effectively,” and “Educate patients about their health, disease, and treatment.”<sup>7</sup>

### **What I Would Do Differently**

It would have been helpful to have clarified sooner the criteria for acceptance into the Men’s LDC. It also would have been helpful to set more of the calendar events in the curriculum up front as requirements for participation—especially the prayer retreat and the closing celebration.

It also would have been helpful to build more time into the training by the subject-matter expert for supervised group work that would be treated as binding, and could then be formally reviewed and ratified following the training. Utilizing the real-time coaching of the subject-matter expert could have enabled the pastoral team to build a working version of a shared, church-wide set of leadership competencies for leading self, leading others, and leading leaders. The subject-matter expert could have helped mediate any language confusion or philosophical disagreements that might have surfaced in the process of development.

Conversely, the positive findings from the training by the subject-matter expert could be generalized to other local church staff teams, especially those who are part of an

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<sup>7</sup>All statements of a similar kind are extracted from written responses to self-assessments administered between September 2017, and January 2018, as part of the Bridgeway Men’s LDC curriculum.

established church like Bridgeway (which was founded in 1994), with a lead pastor wary of fads or trends,<sup>8</sup> and a broader body that has lived through multiple, distinct administrations and ministry philosophies. Weariness and wariness of new language and new concepts create an additional barrier to overcome in casting vision, creating alignment, and moving towards execution with broad-based buy-in. If training from a subject-matter expert could help counteract some of the inertia produced by these various and not-uncommon factors, that knowledge could be helpful and potentially catalyzing for other local church staff teams.

### **Theological Reflections**

It is sobering to consider that equipping the saints has too often been separated from pastoring the saints. Properly-fed saints can become powerfully mobilized saints, but they can also become spiritually obese saints. Alternately, mobilizing malnourished saints will hurt them, and they will in turn hurt others. Running a marathon is an accomplishment, and completing a lengthy fast can be beneficial, but running a marathon after a lengthy fast is neither beneficial nor an accomplishment. The flock of God must be fed and mobilized. Neither spiritual starvation nor spiritual obesity, neither malnourished mobilization nor endless feeding are permissible. The flock must be both fed and called into their commission.

However, it is also heartening to reflect on the fact that God cares far more about the Great Commission than any particular pastor or saint ever could. God has not handed off the Great Commission and gone on vacation, but rather Jesus has gone away in order that he might leave the Comforter. The Holy Spirit is at work in and through Christians to accomplish the Great Commission. He uses means to accomplish his mission, but he is always present and active as he empowers believers to fulfill his mission.

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<sup>8</sup>Bridgeway's lead pastor has constantly served in full-time vocational ministry over a span of forty-four years, except for four years of teaching at Wheaton College, and four years of focused writing and itinerating.

Leadership development pathways ought to be trod with sandals removed, in awe and awareness that holy ground is being traversed. God is at work in the midst of his people, and he will bring to completion that which he has begun in and through them (Phil 1:6).

Therefore, because the Spirit is at work in and through believers to accomplish the Great Commission, program designers, cohort facilitators, and cohort participants must never forget that consecration matters far more than competency. If each developing leader will urgently and vigilantly “cleanse himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work” (2 Tim 2:21). If we will not be consecrated, we will be rendered incompetent, and we will consequently disqualify ourselves from honorable use. Keeping a close watch on our doctrine is not enough—we must also persist in keeping a close watch on ourselves (1 Tim 4:16). And we must consistently “practice these things,” and “immerse [ourselves] in them, so that all may see [our] progress” (1 Tim 4:15).

### **Personal Reflections**

Understanding why research matters and how it works will reap benefits for a lifetime. It does not invalidate intuition, but rather proves how beautifully intuition and research can work in concert to produce insight. The strain on my family was significant, but mercifully the accelerated pace of the program contained the damage. Lastly, even if I may not have achieved anything close to mastery of the subject matter, for anyone willing to learn, the Doctor of Educational Ministry program concretely demonstrates what is required to begin mastering a subject, and has given me a renewed commitment to lifelong research and learning for the sake of the mission of God in and through the church.

### **Conclusion**

Scripture holds forth character considerations as the primary factors for qualifying or disqualifying potential elders, and Scripture encourages those assessing a potential elder’s character to closely examine their relationships. How do they relate to



their spouse? To their children? How do they handle conflict? How do they handle money? Do they drink to excess? How are they viewed by “outsiders” in the broader community in which they live and work? “It is important to look at the *whole* life, not just the ministry life, according to Paul.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the chief qualification for all biblical servant leadership is godly character, and that character is displayed not just in a person’s conduct when they serve in their local church, but also in how they conduct themselves at their son’s baseball game, on social media, at the break room water cooler, and in traffic.

If pastors are to equip leaders for “inside” the church, the project must be approached at a slant. In other words, if pastors are able to equip men and women to lead well at work, at home, and in their neighborhoods, they will find that, in so doing, they have equipped them to lead in the local church. If pastors only equip men and women to lead in the local church, they may well find they have equipped men and women for neither the world nor the local church. For example, if pastors focus primarily on recruiting leaders to fill needed holes in the church’s ministry infrastructure, and confine their equipping to those they recruit as they go along, it will be difficult for the pastors to keep themselves functionally honest in that on-the-job equipping, and the best equipping intentions will always be in danger of being overridden by ministry urgencies.

Instead, equipping people to lead in every walk of life will ensure that equipping is robust and holistic—and not merely geared toward ministry task accomplishment. This will serve those being equipped for all of life and for the rest of their life, rather than merely enabling them to serve the urgent needs facing pastors. When pastors equip people for ministry-task accomplishment, often *both* local church *and* whole-life equipping are lost. But if pastors will commit to equip people to glorify God in all of life, they will get local-church equipping thrown in.

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<sup>9</sup>Stacy Rinehart, *Upside Down: The Paradox of Servant Leadership* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), 110.

## APPENDIX 1

### LEADERSHIP PIPELINE TRAINING ASSESSMENT

This assessment was used to evaluate whether participants in the Leadership Pipeline Training experienced a discernable and statistically-significant change in their knowledge, conviction, and confidence to create and implement ministry-specific as well as church-wide leadership pipelines. This pre and post training survey was used to measure the change in concrete knowledge in three significant areas: 1) why developing and implementing a leadership pipeline is important (conviction), 2) how the presence, absence, or quality of a particular local church's leadership pipeline is deeply revelatory of that local church's implicit beliefs and values (culture), and, lastly, 3) how to create ministry-specific and church-wide pipelines that provide clear qualifications, training plans, and assessment tools (constructs).

## LEADERSHIP PIPELINE TRAINING ASSESSMENT

### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assess the participant's current understanding of what a leadership pipeline is, how it functions, and why it is necessary in order to faithfully fulfill the mandate to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-15). This research is also designed to assess the participant's level of clarity and confidence as to their ability to construct and implement a ministry-specific leadership pipeline, as well as integrate their respective pipelines within a broader, church-wide pipeline.

This research is being conducted by J.J. Seid for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the training and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the training. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Please provide a 6-digit personal identification number. This number will be used to match up pre-training assessments with post-training assessments. Thus, you will be required to provide this number on the follow-up assessment. Please do not lose it.

Participant's Personal Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** *Please answer the following questions about yourself and your current ministry role at Bridgeway.*

1. What is your current age? \_\_\_\_\_ years
2. What is your current ministry leadership role?
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_ Elder
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor/Elder
  - 4) \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Director
  - 5) \_\_\_\_\_ Other
3. How long have you served in your current ministry leadership role? \_\_\_\_\_ years

**Directions:** *Please mark the best answer to each question below.*

4. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement that leadership development is to "find the faithful who will be able. Not the able that might be faithful."
  - 1) Strongly Disagree
  - 2) Disagree
  - 3) Undecided
  - 4) Agree
  - 5) Strongly Agree

5. Imagine you can only pick one of these three potential leaders to release and begin coaching as a community group leader at Bridgeway. Based on their strengths and weaknesses as listed below, which one should you pick?

- 1) Leader A
  1. High level of competency
  2. Less than high character
  3. High sense of calling
- 2) Leader B:
  1. Less than high competency
  2. High level of character
  3. High sense of calling
- 3) Leader C:
  1. High level of competency
  2. High level of character
  3. Less than high sense of calling

6. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with this statement: *Leadership development systems and strategies in the local church need to equip people to lead not just in the local church but also outside the local church.*

- 1) Strongly Disagree
- 2) Disagree
- 3) Undecided
- 4) Agree
- 5) Strongly Agree

7. Carefully consider the following totally fictitious case studies and indicate, in your opinion, which of the three fictitious churches depicted most closely resembles Bridgeway's current deficiencies in leadership development. (The churches being described here are in no way based on or intended to refer to any real churches in existence.)

- 1) Quitter Community Church (QCC)
- 2) Church of the Flywheel
- 3) Talk Louder Community Church

**Quitter Community Church (QCC):** At QCC, the congregation has long existed in an ambivalent truce in the war of developing leaders. Congregants come to Sunday service and small group every week to learn about being a better Christian. The word leader at this church means volunteer with the job of doing whatever everyone else doesn't remember or want to do. Members with leadership skills outside the walls of the church are not expected to bring those skills to bear in the church because, well, "church is church" and "work is work" and "the two worlds don't need to intersect." At QCC, the work of the church isn't a place for innovation, improvement, or creativity; it's a place for duty and faithfulness. Duties are merely broken down into a manageable number of tasks and assigned to volunteers. Then the piles of tasks get too big for "just the volunteers"; the church looks at the budget and hires a new staff member according to their bylaws.

**Church of the Flywheel:** At the Flywheel, people know how to build things. A staff member brags, “Our system for making leaders is nails. We spent the last four years studying the most advanced leadership systems the world has to offer. We’ve studied the Armed Forces, Fortune 500s, and even several agencies in the espionage world.” But alongside all their systems is one major problem. . . . no one cares. The plans are met with blank stares. The “pipelines” are empty. The slogans and nudges from the platform to “own your development” fall on deaf ears. Sure, a few months after each major overhaul and new emphasis the church always gets a new batch of Johnny-come-latelies to jump into the amazing system; but they always seem to flake out. The staff knows this is a problem and pontificates, “Our content and system is good; maybe we just have a congregation full of duds?” Yeah, that’s probably it.

**Talk Louder Community Church:** Talk Louder claims to be all about making leaders. “Every year we have two sermon series on developing the next generation of leaders and we give everyone in the congregation the next best leadership book. It’s a success every time! We have nearly 50 percent of our people who see themselves as having leadership potential, and most of them have signed up to volunteer. We have piles of people every year take a gifts profile, and most people look really promising.” Still, strangely enough, every time there is a staff opening the leaders at Talk Louder have to look outside the body. And the truth is that those piles of “gift tests” sit on a desk, untouched since they were completed. Also at Talk Louder, all the emphasis on “leadership” is focused on “making the church better.” Though not explicitly stated this way, the emphasis of the church is essentially: “Come to our church, get plugged in, and volunteer to help us do church even better.” Because of this, members at Talk Louder are no more likely to be effective leaders at home or in the marketplace than they were before joining the church. Thoughtful leaders on the team know this and struggle, “Every year we think we are taking big strides by creating more momentum for developing leaders, but something is holding us back from producing leaders.” Something is missing at Talk Louder, and it isn’t more rhetoric on leadership development.

8. As you read the excerpt below, how confident do you feel right now in your ability to help build systems and strategies that will increasingly lead Bridgeway away from the typical but detrimental approach to ministry that is described there?
- 1) High confidence
  - 2) Moderate confidence
  - 3) Low confidence
  - 4) No confidence

*Typically pastors or other staff persons are hired to minister to people. The number of children in the church increases, so the solution is another staff person. The number of sick people is on the rise; therefore, someone is hired to visit the hospitals. The number of counseling appointments increases, so another part-time staff member is added. The system makes sense, really. People come to church and generously give money. So as the church grows, there is more money that can be given to compensate ministers— so church members, if a church is not careful, can subtly be taught that they are paying people to do ministry. And pastors and staff can place on themselves a burden to earn their pay by performing ministry well.*

*While the typical approach to ministry makes sense, it is deeply detrimental. The spiritual growth of the people in the body is hampered. People who are gifted by God and called to serve Him are put on the bench as they watch the “professional*

*ministers” or the newest staff member make the ministry happen. They miss the joy of serving. And instead of fostering a serving posture among believers, the typical approach to ministry helps develop consumers and moochers rather than participants and contributors.*

*The typical approach to ministry also wrongly and implicitly teaches that church is “spiritual” and led by ministers only, which means the work of the regular folks must be second-class and “secular.” So not only are people not developed for ministry within the church, they are also subtly taught to not even consider their “secular jobs” as places of Kingdom leadership.*

9. Indicate your level of conviction (as opposed to merely assent) regarding the following imperative: *The Church of God must train all kinds of leaders. Not many men and women will lead in the Church, but scores will lead in other spheres. If we do not equip God’s people to lead according to God’s design inside and outside the Church, they will be left to lead according to the world’s design.* (How do you know if something is a conviction? If you can imagine life or ministry without it, it is *not* a conviction.)

- 1) High conviction
- 2) Moderate conviction
- 3) Low conviction
- 4) No conviction

10. Peck and Geiger write, *Men and women who have been given the opportunity to lead in business, government, and community services have the ability to advance the Kingdom through their leadership. The Church has the opportunity and the duty to develop the very best gospel-driven leaders in society. The Church of God alone can unlock the potential of biblically informed skills and bring secular ones under the lordship of Jesus. There is no doubt that universities and programs offer top-notch business skills and excellent leadership training, and church-trained leaders should not have less acumen. Instead, if our churches can step up to the task, Christ-following leaders will be counted among the greatest leaders in the public square.*

Here is the question: In light of this description, how probable is it that you will personally and intentionally equip members of Bridgeway for leadership outside the local church in the next 12 to 24 months?

- 1) Definitely
- 2) Probably
- 3) Possibly
- 4) Probably not
- 5) Definitely not

11. Peck and Geiger write, *Still, even in light of our depravity, since all humans are made in the image of God and likeness of God, we must ascribe dignity to all men and women. This is key for developing leaders. In the Kingdom of God there is no elite class or higher caste. Every human is capable of the highest nobility and the most profound power in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the local church develops leaders with an eye on everyone. In this sense, we can never predict through genetics or family origin who will be called to lead in God's Kingdom. For all born again in Christ have the birthright necessary to lead the Kingdom. Sadly, so often this belief is unrecognizable in the local church. Leadership teams are filled with those of great pedigree and education. A local church must not look at people through the same lens as the world.*

Here is the question: What degree of clarity do you have as to how a formal leadership pipeline helps a local church to develop leaders “with an eye on everyone” instead of merely focusing on developing those who seem to have the most potential?

- 1) High clarity
- 2) Moderate clarity
- 3) Low clarity
- 4) No clarity

12. Peck and Geiger write, *When ownership of God's vision and God's mission is the water our members swim in, there will be a great swell of emerging leaders desperate to be equipped for the task. Without ownership, our leadership development will be subjected to the futility of begging people to “step up” and minimizing the expectations to make sure it “isn't asking too much of people.” Could you imagine the Army worrying itself on the battlefield about telling soldiers the importance of the mission? Could you imagine how development would be effected if the Army worried its training efforts were “asking too much”? Ownership in the local church is the permission the body gives developers to push them to be the best leaders they can be in Christ.*

Here is the question: How much urgency do you personally feel to help the members of Bridgeway own the mission of God in this way?

- 1) High urgency
- 2) Moderate urgency
- 3) Low urgency
- 4) No urgency

13. Peck and Geiger write, *Do we believe that budgets and Sunday attendance is enough to measure progress in the mission of reaching all nations? We will (at best) get only what we aim for. If our local churches are ever to become the epicenter of leadership development, then they must fully embrace the mission and its massive scope. For the local church to fully accept responsibility for the mission of God to be completed, developing leaders will be a necessary ambition. For most churches, the problem of mission is not they have aimed too big, but that they have aimed way too small. Churches must measure leadership reproduction because if leaders are not being made, the church has been unfaithful. As the local church embraces the mission of making disciples, she will be unlocked for her fullest potential in multiplication. The local church must see leadership development as an expression of obedience to the Great Commission. Leaders cannot simply make more followers of Christ; they must be intent on replacing themselves as leaders. The multiplication of disciples and churches is significantly tied to the multiplication of leaders.*

Here is the question: Indicate your level of agreement with these strong statements, especially focusing on the underlined portion.

- 1) Agree Very Strongly
  - 2) Agree Strongly
  - 3) Agree
  - 4) Disagree
  - 5) Disagree Strongly
  - 6) Disagree Very Strongly
14. Peck and Geiger write, *Too many church leaders are betting the farm that church culture is a simple matter of “what we say” plus “what we do.” The strategy for changing culture, if this was the case, is then quite simple: If we don’t like what people are doing, then we simply need to say something different. . . . [But] culture is much more than what we say and do. Culture is formed by what we truly believe and value over a sustained period of time. If the stated beliefs of a church are at odds with the actual beliefs, the actual beliefs win. The actual yet unstated beliefs speak louder than the stated ones, if the two are at odds.*

Here is the question: In light of this description of Bridgeway’s culture of leadership development as what has been “truly believe[d] and value[d] over a sustained period of time,” in your opinion, how important has leadership development been to the leaders of Bridgeway to date?

- 1) Absolutely Essential
- 2) Very Important
- 3) Of Average Importance
- 4) Of Little Importance
- 5) Not Important at All



15. Which of these statements is most accurate?
- 1) Leadership development is distinct from discipleship
  - 2) Leadership development and discipleship are synonymous
  - 3) Leadership development is a subset of discipleship
  - 4) Discipleship is a subset of leadership development
16. Peck and Geiger write, *You can tell what is important to a church by looking at their systems. If a value is strongly embedded in the culture, a system is in place to ensure the value is lived out and not merely words on a vision document. If “it” is important, a system has been designed or implemented to ensure “it” happens, whatever “it” is. For example, if caring for guests is really in the culture, there is a system in place because if pursuing guests is a deeply held cultural value in the church, then the leaders would insist on a system to ensure guests are pursued. If engaging people in ministry is in the culture, there is a system in place to deploy people into ministry. If discipling new believers is really a value, there is a system in place. You can tell what is important to a church by looking at their systems. Conversely, you can tell what is not important to a church— no matter what the messages are— by looking at the lack of systems. What many leaders say is in the culture and believe is in the culture is not really in the culture. What many assume is happening in their churches is not. The lack of a system reveals the value is not really embedded. Without a system, all you have is wishful thinking.*

Here is the question: In light of this, statement, how important is leadership development at Bridgeway right now?

- 1) Absolutely Essential
  - 2) Very Important
  - 3) Of Average Importance
  - 4) Of Little Importance
  - 5) Not Important at All
17. Peck and Geiger write, *Developing and implementing a leadership pipeline is not as overwhelming as it sounds. It really takes two disciplines: intentionality and intensity. You must intentionally think about how your church or ministry will develop leaders, and you must continue down that path with great intensity, intensity expressed in persistence and not just being loud. Building a pipeline is not easy. If it were easy, churches would be excelling in developing leaders. But many are not. It takes a deep-seated conviction that will keep your intensity for development burning.*

Here is the question: In light of this statement, now, today, what is your level of intensity for developing leaders at Bridgeway?

- 1) Very High
- 2) High
- 3) Moderate
- 4) Low
- 5) Very Low

18. What is your current level of confidence in your ability to build and implement a leadership development pipeline?
- 1) Very High
  - 2) High
  - 3) Moderate
  - 4) Low
  - 5) Very Low
19. Right now, today, what level of priority do you personally think should be assigned to developing/implementing a church-wide leadership pipeline, as over against any other legitimate church-wide concerns that also need to be developed/implemented?
- 1) Highest Priority
  - 2) High Priority
  - 3) Moderate Priority
  - 4) Low Priority
  - 5) Very Low Priority
20. Right now, today, for you personally, how clear is the *purpose* of leadership development in the local church?
- 1) Extremely Clear
  - 2) Very Clear
  - 3) Moderately Clear
  - 4) Slightly Clear
  - 5) Not Clear at All
21. Right now, today, for you personally, how clear is the *process* of leadership development in the local church?
- 1) Extremely Clear
  - 2) Very Clear
  - 3) Moderately Clear
  - 4) Slightly Clear
  - 5) Not Clear at All

APPENDIX 2  
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COHORT  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

This rubric was used to evaluate the Leadership Development Cohort Curriculum.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COHORT  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Leadership Development Cohort Curriculum Evaluation					
1 = Insufficient   2 = Requires attention   3 = Sufficient   4 = Exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The curriculum is biblical and full of grace and truth in its content, methodology, and goals.					
The curriculum demonstrates good understanding of the dynamics of effective leadership development (e.g., biblical knowledge, concrete experience, and relational coaching).					
The curriculum is helpful in aiding the cohort leaders in developing the gospel character, motives, and agenda of cohort participants.					
The curriculum is properly aligned <i>with</i> and adequately develops participants <i>in</i> : the mission, vision, values, and theological distinctives of Bridgeway Church.					
The curriculum sets forth clear and understandable expectations of what is required for commitment to and participation in the cohort.					
The curriculum sets forth clear and understandable goals and outcomes for participants upon completion of the cohort.					

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX 3

#### MEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COHORT PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

The Leadership Development Cohort Progress Assessment was used to evaluate the Leadership Development Cohort's fruitfulness and effectiveness in aiding the sanctification of the participants, by assessing their growth in belief (*orthodoxy*/doctrine/head), desire (*orthopatheia*/affections/heart), and action (*orthopraxy*/obedience/hands). They were evaluated through these lenses of head, heart, and hands as it related to taking initiative for the benefit of others as husbands and fathers in the home, as faithful stewards and witnesses at work and in the world, and as vital and functional members of a local church body, effectively using their gifts for the up-building of other believers. Head, heart, and hands—at home, at work, and in the local church.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COHORT  
PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

**Leadership Self-Assessment<sup>1</sup>**

Any kind of development or growth always starts with an accurate “snapshot” of our current reality. This exercise is designed to help you self-assess your current strengths and weaknesses as a leader in the three areas of character, competence, and calling. First, take the assessment yourself. Then be prepared to discuss your findings with your group.

*Take note of your highest and lowest score in each section.*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 1: CHARACTER**

Rate yourself on a scale of 0– 5 for each statement or question below. A rating of 0 means “this doesn’t describe me at all”; a 5 means “this describes me perfectly.” As you do this, remember: Reality is your friend. You can’t grow as a leader if you’re not honest about where you are. So assess yourself honestly and humbly.

- 1) I practice consistent repentance and faith.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5
  
- 2) I am aware of my own characteristic sins and heart idols, and I am seeking gospel transformation in these areas.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5
  
- 3) I am aware of my “blind spots”— places of weakness in my character that I can only see with the help of others.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5
  
- 4) I have no hidden sins or protected areas of darkness in my life.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5
  
- 5) There are Christians who know the real truth about me and are helping me grow in Christlikeness.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5
  
- 6) I have a genuine and growing love for Jesus and for others.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5
  
- 7) People who know me well would describe me as patient, gracious, and self-controlled in conflict— not quarrelsome or short-tempered.  
 0    1    2    3    4    5

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<sup>1</sup>This assessment, including almost all of the questions as well as the design and format—with some minor changes and additions—has been adapted, with the author’s permission, from Bob Thune’s “Leadership Triangle Self-Assessment.” I commend Thune’s book to anyone seeking to build a pipeline for elder development. Bob Thune, *Gospel Eldership: Equipping a New Generation of Servant Leaders* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 49.

- 8) I have personal friendships with non-Christians, and I am living a missionary life among them—praying for them, practicing hospitality, inviting them into community, etc.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 9) My spouse respects and responds to my spiritual leadership.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 10) I would feel comfortable telling a younger Christian to “follow me as I follow Christ.”  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 11) If someone spent a day alone with me, they wouldn’t find anything surprising.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 12) If someone talked to my non-Christian friends or work associates, they would discover nothing that brings shame or dishonor on Christ or his church.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 13) If someone observed my marriage, they would see healthy patterns of communication, sexual intimacy, parenting, and headship/ submission.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 14) I am above reproach in my sexual life, including freedom from pornography and/or fantasy.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 15) I consistently practice basic spiritual disciplines (Bible reading, prayer, Sabbath, solitude, etc.).  
 0  1  2  3  4  5

TOTAL SCORE: CHARACTER (out of 75 possible) \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 2: COMPETENCE

Again, rate yourself on a scale of 0– 5 for each statement or question below. A rating of 0 means “this doesn’t describe me at all”; a 5 means “this describes me perfectly.” As you do this, remember: Reality is your friend. You can’t grow as a leader if you’re not honest about where you are. So assess yourself honestly and humbly.

### Biblical Competence

- 1) I feel “at home” in the Bible— I can find passages quickly; I know major themes; I feel a general sense of familiarity with my Bible.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 2) I have read through the entire Bible.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 3) I can conversationally talk through the storyline of redemptive history without resorting to notes or study materials.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5

- 4) I can place books of the Bible in their appropriate categories (minor prophets, historical books, wisdom literature, epistles, etc.).  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 5) I can competently study a passage inductively— observing it, interpreting it, and applying it to my life.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 6) I know (off the top of my head) where to take someone in the Bible to establish the major doctrines of the Christian faith (sinfulness of humanity, deity of Christ, salvation by grace, the Trinity, etc.).  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 7) I feel comfortable leading others in studying the Bible.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 8) I can quote important passages of Scripture from memory.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5

### **Theological Competence**

- 9) I am confident in my ability to clearly explain the gospel to someone.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 10) I have read a systematic theology book and/ or have taken a systematic theology class.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 11) I understand basic theological vocabulary— words like soteriology, Christology, and eschatology are not strange to me.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 12) I understand regeneration, justification, and sanctification, and could explain them to someone else.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 13) I can describe the basic contours of important theological debates (Catholic vs. Protestant views of salvation, complementarianism vs. egalitarianism, Calvinism vs. Arminianism, etc.).  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 14) I am able to confidently and humbly engage with a Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, or Muslim, and witness to them about Jesus from the Scriptures.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5

### **Practical Leadership Competence**

- 15) I feel confident to disciple someone.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 16) I feel confident to help others apply the gospel to their specific heart idols.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5



- 17) I am aware of my spiritual gifting and how I function best in God’s mission.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 18) I am able to confront sin lovingly and directly.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 19) People seem to respond to my leadership in small-group discussions.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 20) People seem to be helped by my counseling and encouragement.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 21) People often come to me for help in understanding and applying the Bible.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 22) I effectively train, empower, and delegate to others in order to develop their leadership skills.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5

TOTAL SCORE: COMPETENCE (out of 110 possible) \_\_\_\_\_

### **PART 3: CALLING<sup>2</sup>**

Once more, rate yourself on a scale of 0– 5 for each statement or question below. A rating of 0 means “this doesn’t describe me at all”; a 5 means “this describes me perfectly.” As you do this, remember: Reality is your friend. You can’t grow as a leader if you’re not honest about where you are. So assess yourself honestly and humbly.

- 1) I think about what I do in my job as a partnership with God. God does three amazing things in the world: he makes something out of nothing (creation); he stays in charge of everything he has made (providence); and he restores what’s broken (redemption). As I partner with God in my work, I am aware that I am also creating, providing, and redeeming.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 2) When circumstances at work are unfavorable, instead of being angry at myself out of a belief that my decisions should lead to a comfortable life, or being angry at God out of a belief that anyone who makes good decisions deserves a good life, I am able to remind myself that my punishment fell on Jesus and that God allows all the circumstances in my life so that I’ll be more conformed to his character.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 3) I resist the temptation to complain about not being respected or valued at work.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5

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<sup>2</sup>Some of the language in the questions in this section (especially questions 1, 2, and 6) is taken from Robert W. Alexander, *The Gospel-Centered Life at Work: Leader’s Guide* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2014).

- 4) It is more important to me to please God with my work rather than pleasing people.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 5) I am neither a sluggard in my work nor a slave to my work, but rather by God's grace I am able to perform my work faithfully, humbly, and joyfully.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 6) I don't give in to immoral, unethical, or unwise demands placed on me in my work because I don't succumb to any of the following pressures or temptations: 1) because it might affect my future if I don't; 2) excusing the behavior because it's the fault of the person who asked me to do it and God will forgive me anyway; 3) overlooking others' wrong behavior because I fear retaliation; 4) deciding it's not my problem because I'm not directly involved.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 7) People seem to be helped by my coaching and encouragement at work.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 8) I am an attentive and active listener who makes people feel heard, understood, and affirmed in conversation.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 9) I feel a sense of stewardship toward my city. I feel personally responsible before God for its welfare.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 10) I am familiar with the mission, vision, and values of our church.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 11) I feel "at home" in my church; I have a sense of ownership and personal concern for its overall health.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 12) I interact with a spirit of charity and partnership toward other biblical churches in my city, but I also feel a healthy sense of joy and excitement about what God is doing through my church.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 13) I have arrived at settled biblical convictions on some of the key theological issues of our time (divorce, homosexuality, authority of Scripture, etc.).  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 14) I feel a sense of stewardship toward my church. I feel personally responsible before God to use my gifts to strengthen this local church and move its mission forward.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5
- 15) I am faithfully involved in the life and ministry of my church. If I dropped off the grid, people and ministries would feel my absence.  
 0  1  2  3  4  5



APPENDIX 4  
MEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
COHORT CURRICULUM

This appendix lays out the curriculum used over the course of the two-semester Men's Leadership Development Cohort. The Leadership Development Cohort curriculum was built on a foundation of competencies. Each competency was paired with accompanying training tools, assessment tools, and focused coaching from the elders. Participants filled out and submitted assessments online prior to each monthly gathering. Those self-assessments were then distributed to the coaches to use in their one-on-one coaching meetings with each participant.

Table A.1. Men’s leadership development cohort curriculum fall 2017

DATE	LEADERSHIP THEME	TRAINING TOOLS	PAGES PER MONTH (WEEK)	ASSESSMENT TOOLS	DISCUSSION/TEACHING
Sep 21	Leading Self: Gospel-Centrality + Christian Hedonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gospel</i>, Greear (pp. 9–44)</li> <li>• “<u>All of Life is Repentance</u>,” Keller</li> <li>• “Christian Hedonism: Piper and Edwards on the Pursuit of Joy in God,” Storms, <i>For the Fame of God’s Name</i> (pp. 49–69)</li> <li>• “<u>Servant Leadership</u>,” <i>Gospel Eldership</i>, Thune</li> <li>• <u>Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture</u>, Murray (pp. 19–70)</li> </ul>	112 (28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Always come prepared to actively participate in a critical and personal discussion of the reading, especially as it concretely applies to your life. One of the main ways to prepare is to mark the text with pen, pencil, or highlighter as you read. There’s no wrong way to do it—you can star, scribble notes in the margin, or underline. Just so long as you mark as you read.</i></li> <li>• Complete online exercise accompanying “<u>Servant Leadership</u>,” entitled “<u>Know Thyself</u>.”</li> <li>• Complete online “<u>Reality Check Self-Assessment</u>,” as described in <i>Reset</i>. Discuss results with your coach and your spouse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation and introductions</li> <li>• Discussion of reading and exercises</li> </ul>
Oct 19	Leading Self: Humility + Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness</i>, Keller</li> <li>• “<u>Self-Glory</u>,” <i>Dangerous Calling</i>, Tripp (pp. 167–182)</li> <li>• “<u>Leadership</u>,” <i>ESV Men’s Devotional Study Bible</i>, Kraft</li> <li>• “A Deeper Understanding of Vocation,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 11–15)</li> </ul>	92 (23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete “<u>Identifying Pride</u>” exercise.</li> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “<u>A Deeper Understanding of Vocation</u>,” entitled “<u>Extraordinary Purposes in Ordinary Work</u>.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experiences of growing in humility and love</li> <li>• Discussion of reading and exercises</li> </ul>

Table A1 continued

<p>Nov 16</p>	<p>Leading Self: Personal Discipleship + Personal Discipline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Praying the Bible</i>, Whitney (pp. 11–89)</li> <li>• <i>What’s Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done</i>, Perman (pp. 35–60, 131–141)</li> </ul>	<p>117 (29)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the prayer exercise described on page 63 of <i>Praying the Bible</i> and write a few paragraphs about your experience <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• Write a few paragraphs <a href="#">here</a> describing what you were most instructed or convicted by in your reading of <i>What’s Best Next</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experiences of the personal spiritual disciplines</li> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal productivity habits as well as how they consistently discern what’s most important and then continually work to put it first.</li> </ul>
<p>Dec 21</p>	<p>Leading Self: Interpersonal Discipleship + Helping Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Discipleship Group Cheat Sheet</a></li> <li>• “Why Are There Commands in Scripture?,” <i>Gospel</i>, Greear (pp. 191–204)</li> <li>• <i>How Does Sanctification Work?</i>, Powlison (pp. 11–102)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Daily Grind,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 25–29)</li> <li>• “Our Flawed Methods,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 39–44)</li> </ul>	<p>125 (25)</p>	<hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the exercise (online) accompanying “The Daily Grind,” entitled “<a href="#">How Work Reveals Our Hearts</a>.”</li> <li>• Complete the exercise (online) accompanying “Our Flawed Methods,” entitled “<a href="#">Pretending and Performing at Work</a>.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experiences of interpersonal discipleship</li> <li>• Brief teaching on Ed Welch’s “<a href="#">Ten Ways to Help in Shorter Everyday Conversations</a>”</li> </ul>

Table A2. Men’s leadership development cohort curriculum spring 2018

Jan 18	Leading Others: Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Family Worship</i>, Whitney (pp. 11–67)</li> <li>• <i>The Shepherd Leader at Home</i>, Witmer (pp. 96–154)</li> <li>• “<u>Unless the Lord Builds the House</u>,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Parent</i>, Miller, Harrel, and Klumpenhouwer (pp. 10–14)</li> <li>• “<u>Living the Gospel in Front of Your Family</u>,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Parent</i>, Miller, Harrel, and Klumpenhouwer (pp. 20–24)</li> </ul>	137 (34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the exercise (online) accompanying “<u>Unless the Lord Builds the House</u>,” entitled “<u>Am I a Gospel-Centered Parent?</u>”</li> <li>• Complete the exercise (online) accompanying “<u>Living the Gospel in Front of Your Family</u>,” entitled “<u>What’s Your Family Code?</u>”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of reading and exercises</li> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experience of sanctification through the lens of parenting</li> </ul>
Feb 15	Leading Others: Marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Shepherd Leader at Home</i>, Witmer (pp. 17–94)</li> <li>• “Image-Bearers in God’s Economy,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 56–59)</li> </ul>	83 (21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit your responses here to the reflection questions found on pages 45–46 of Witmer.</li> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “Image-Bearers in God’s Economy,” entitled “<u>Ordinary Work, Extraordinary Opportunity</u>.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experience of sanctification through the lens of marriage</li> <li>• Brief teaching on reflective listening</li> </ul>
Mar 15	Leading Self: Self-Awareness + Spiritual Gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<u>Letting Your Gift Find You</u>,” <i>The Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Gifts</i>, Storms (pp. 199–203)</li> <li>• <i>Practicing the Power</i>, Storms (pp. 19–56)</li> <li>• “Discerning God’s Voice,” <i>The Beginner’s Guide to the Gift of Prophecy</i>, Deere (pp. 63–78)</li> <li>• “<u>New Testament Prophecy for Today</u>,” Tom Ball, <i>All-Church EQUIP</i> (audio recording)</li> </ul>	60 (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete <i>DiSC Work of Leaders</i> assessment</li> <li>• Write gospel-centered DiSC self-assessment paper (download instructions/template <a href="#">here</a>)</li> <li>• Submit your responses here to the three questions listed at the conclusion of “Letting Your Gift Find You.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of assessment results and papers, as well written responses to spiritual gifts questions</li> <li>• Coaches share real-life stories where applicable</li> </ul>

Table A2 continued

<p>Apr 19</p>	<p>Leading Self: Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What is the Right Way to Work for God?,” <i>Gospel</i>, Greear (pp. 205–220)</li> <li>• <i>Every Good Endeavor</i>, Keller (pp. 17–72)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Extreme Work: Striving and Sloth,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 68–72)</li> <li>• “The Freedom of Serving God in Our Work,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 81–85)</li> </ul>	<p>84 (17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “Extreme Work: Striving and Sloth,” entitled “<u>Life Integration Diagnostic</u>.”</li> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “The Freedom of Serving God in Our Work,” entitled “<u>From Work Expectations to Love Commands</u>.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of reading and exercises</li> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experience of sanctification through the lens of work and vocation</li> </ul>
<p>May 17</p>	<p>Leadings Others: Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Chapter Three: Leadership in the Image of God” and “Chapter Four: Leadership in the Kingdom of God,” <i>Designed to Lead</i>, Geiger and Peck (pp. 53–100)</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Two Aspects of Stewardship,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 94–98)</li> <li>• “Becoming Ambassadors,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 106–109)</li> <li>• “A New Outlook on Neighbors,” <i>The Gospel-Centered Life at Work</i>, Alexander (pp. 118–121)</li> </ul>	<p>83 (21)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “Two Aspects of Stewardship,” entitled “<u>My Agenda, God’s Agenda</u>.”</li> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “Becoming Ambassadors,” entitled “<u>People of Peace and Hospitality</u>.”</li> <li>• Complete the exercise accompanying “A New Outlook on Neighbors,” entitled “<u>A Lifestyle of Love</u>.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of reading and exercises</li> <li>• One or two coaches share their personal experiences of receiving and/or providing leadership equipping</li> </ul>



APPENDIX 5  
LAUNCHING THE WOMEN'S SHEPHERD  
LEADERSHIP COHORT

The Women's Shepherd Leadership Cohort was launched in collaboration with Laura Stearman, Director of Bridgeway Women. Stearman and I selected twelve women who either exhibited strong leadership potential or who were already leading at some level. The goal was to equip them to better make disciples and mentor other women within Bridgeway. In this way, the goal of this development cohort was much more narrow and pastoral in focus than the Men's Leadership Development Cohort. A written invitation was then extended to those twelve women, and it has been included here as an appendix because it was intended to clearly communicate the vision, focus, and format of the cohort to the women in order to help them make a final decision as to whether or not to commit. It also provides logistical details (e.g., regarding childcare, etc.) which may prompt and guide strategic thinking for others seeking to build and launch something similar.

## LAUNCHING THE WOMEN'S SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP COHORT

Greetings to you! If you're reading this, you've been personally invited into the inaugural *Women's Shepherd Leadership Cohort* by Laura Stearman, our *Director of Bridgeway Women*, and me. You'll find the syllabus attached below as a PDF. Here are a couple key facts to orient you and help you determine if you have 1) the desire, and 2) the margin to commit to this two-semester equipping opportunity. Don't hesitate to e-mail me with any further questions.

1. As you can see in the syllabus, we'll gather 30 times over the course of this fall and spring, running from September 20th through May 16th, with breaks for holidays, etc. We will meet in the conference room of the Bridgeway Offices on Wednesdays from 11:30am to 1:00pm.
2. Childcare will be provided for those of you who need it. Please communicate your childcare needs with us as soon as possible so we can notify Misty and her *Events Childcare* team and she can plan accordingly.
3. The format of our time will be primarily interactive and thoughtful discussion among you all. I will be serving more as facilitator than lecturer, though I will teach briefly from time to time, depending on the given week's reading.
4. The goal of the *Shepherd Leadership Cohort* is to equip you (without necessarily any guarantees for what this equipping will lead to for each of you in your future at Bridgeway) to mentor, make disciples, lead, instruct, equip, and teach other women. According to Scripture, if we are going to be equipped to "teach and admonish one another in all wisdom" (Col 3:16b), we first will have to devote ourselves to the increasingly neglected discipline of "letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly" (Col 3:16a). The additional readings will aim at concretely and practically equipping you for shepherding—pastoral care of other people—which requires, according to the Bible, wisdom in how to know, feed, lead, and protect them.

5. You can expect to read approximately 60 pages a week. All the dates are listed in the syllabus, as well as the topics or “shepherd leadership themes” you'll be reading on, in addition to your primary reading in Wayne Grudem’s *Bible Doctrine*.
6. I will be purchasing several other books for you which will form part of your additional readings as we go along, in addition to various articles for which I’ll provide you photocopies.
7. I would ask you to each purchase your own physical (not on Kindle, please) copy of Wayne Grudem’s *Bible Doctrine*, which is currently \$29.73 on Amazon (<http://amzn.to/2ggRyyh>). Please plan to do this in advance of our first meeting on Wednesday, September 20th, so you’ll have time to read in preparation for our first week’s discussion. Any additional readings due that week I will distribute to you in advance myself.

J.J. Seid

*Pastor of Community + Discipleship*

BRIDGEWAY

## APPENDIX 6

### WOMEN'S SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP COHORT CURRICULUM

In contrast with the Men's Leadership Development Cohort curriculum, the curriculum for the Women's Shepherd Leadership Cohort was far more heavily weighted on the "training tools" (i.e., reading), and contained no explicit "assessment tools" (e.g., written reflections, discussion questions, etc.). This was done deliberately since covering any systematic theology, even one as concise as Grudem's *Bible Doctrine*, is a massive time-commitment in and of itself. Since this cohort was built to equip the participants for high-level leadership and robust pastoral care of other women, laying a strong and coherent theological foundation was especially important. The participants were warned that the curriculum was of necessity "imbalanced" in this way, and were encouraged to make every effort through participation in the weekly class times, as well as pursuing each other outside of class as their respective levels of margin might allow, to themselves add components of reflection, self-assessment, and mutual coaching. As a group, the women rose admirably to that task, and compensated well for the curriculum's developmental limitations.

Table A3. Women’s shepherd leadership cohort curriculum fall 2017

WEEK	DATE	BIBLE DOCTRINE READING	PAGES	SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP THEME	SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP READING	PAGES	TOTAL
1	Sep 20	Preface 1: Introduction to Systematic Theology	18	Culture and Conviction: Gospel-Centrality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Part 1: Gospel Theology,” <i>Shaped by the Gospel</i>, Keller (pp. 27–74)</li> </ul>	48	66
2	Sep 27	2: The Authority and Inerrancy of the Bible	17	Culture and Conviction: Gospel-Centrality, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Part 2: Gospel Renewal,” <i>Shaped by the Gospel</i>, Keller (pp. 101–149)</li> </ul>	49	66
3	Oct 4	3: The Clarity, Necessity, and Sufficiency of the Bible	14	Culture and Conviction: Convergence of Word and Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Convergence</i>, Storms (pp. 97–141)</li> </ul>	45	59
4	Oct 11	4: The Character of God: “Incommunicable” Attributes	17	Culture and Conviction: Christian Hedonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Convergence</i>, Storms (pp. 143–165)</li> <li>“Christian Hedonism: Piper and Edwards on the Pursuit of Joy in God,” Storms, <i>For the Fame of God’s Name</i> (pp. 49–69)</li> </ul>	44	61
5	Oct 18	5: The “Communicable” Attributes of God	18	Culture and Conviction: Christian Hedonism, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Worship,” <i>Desiring God</i>, Piper (pp. 77–109)</li> <li><i>When I Don’t Desire God</i>, Piper (pp. 13–45)</li> </ul>	65	83
6	Oct 25	6: The Trinity	20	Culture and Conviction: The Mission of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The Supremacy of God in Missions through Worship,” <i>Let the Nations Be Glad, Third Ed.</i>, Piper (pp. 35–64)</li> <li>“Pastoral Self-Evaluation Questionnaire,” Keller and Powlison (5 pages)</li> </ul>	35	53
7	Nov 1	7: Creation	18	Character: Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness</i>, Keller</li> <li>“Self-Glory,” <i>Dangerous Calling</i>, Tripp (pp. 167–182)</li> </ul>	56	74
8	Nov 8	8: God’s Providence 9: Prayer	25	Character: Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Love is Indispensable,” <i>Leading With Love</i>, Strauch (pp. 1–38)</li> </ul>	38	63
9	Nov 15	10: Angels, Satan, and Demons	16	Character: Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Saying No,” <i>Addictions</i>, Welch (pp. 201–224)</li> <li>“Discipleship,” <i>Saturate</i>, Vandersteldt (pp. 83–119)</li> </ul>	61	77
—	Nov 22			Thanksgiving Break			

Table A3 continued

10	Nov 29	11: The Creation of Man 12: Man as Male and Female	21	Character: Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We Are Needy,” <i>Side By Side</i>, Welch (pp. 17–62)</li> <li>• “Not All Doctrines Are at the Same Level,” Taylor (1 page)</li> <li>• “Men and Women in Ministry,” Storms (24 pages)</li> </ul>	71	92
11	Dec 6	13: Sin	16	Skill and Doctrine: Biblical Friendship and Pastoral Care, Pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We Are Needed,” <i>Side By Side</i>, Welch (pp. 64–109)</li> <li>• Keith Adams will present on healing prayer</li> </ul>	46	62
12	Dec 13	14: The Person of Christ	19	Skill and Doctrine: Biblical Friendship and Pastoral Care, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We Are Needed,” <i>Side By Side</i>, Welch (pp. 112–160)</li> <li>• “Ten Ways to Help in Shorter, Everyday Conversations,” Welch (2 pages)</li> </ul>	51	70
13	Dec 20	15: The Atonement	12	Skill and Doctrine: Biblical Friendship and Pastoral Care, Pt. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Pastor as Counselor,” Powlison (37 pages)</li> <li>• “Pastoral Counseling,” Powlison (4 pages)</li> </ul>	41	53

Table A4. Women’s shepherd leadership cohort curriculum spring 2018

WEEK	DATE	BIBLE DOCTRINE READING	PAGES	SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP THEME	SHEPHERD LEADERSHIP READING	PAGES	TOTAL
1	Jan 17	16: Resurrection and Ascension	10	Skill and Doctrine: Sanctification, Pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible</i>, Plummer (pp. 17–190)</li> <li>• “Sinners Learning to Act the Miracle: Restoring Broken People and the Limits of Life in the Body,” Welch, <i>Acting the Miracle: God’s Work and Ours in the Mystery of Sanctification</i>, ed. by Piper and Mathis (pp. 65–88)</li> <li>• “How Do You Help a “Psychologized” Counselor?,” Powlison (pp. 2–6)</li> <li>• “Love Speaks Many Languages Fluently,” Powlison (pp. 2–10)</li> </ul>	213	223

Table A4 continued

2	Jan 24	17: Common Grace 18: Election	21	Skill and Doctrine: Sanctification, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Making All Things New: Restoring Joy to the Sexually Broken</i>, Powlison (pp. 11–117)</li> </ul>	107	128
3	Jan 31	19: The Gospel Call 20: Regeneration	12	Skill and Doctrine: Biblical Friendship and Pastoral Care, Pt. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Part 2: The Temptations We Face,” <i>The Imperfect Pastor</i>, Eswine (pp. 73–131)</li> </ul>	59	71
4	Feb 7	21: Conversion (Faith and Repentance)	9	Skill and Doctrine: Discernment and Biblical Worldview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies</i>, Stan and Jan Berenstain</li> <li>• “Theology and Secular Psychology, Lecture 6: A Biblical Approach to Secular Psychology,” Powlison (0:47) (MP3)</li> <li>• “Theology and Secular Psychology, Lecture 7: A Growing Biblical Wisdom, a Modus Operandi I,” Powlison (1:20) (MP3)</li> </ul>	–	2 hrs audio + 9 pgs
5	Feb 14	22: Justification and Adoption	11	Skill and Doctrine: Biblical Friendship and Pastoral Care, Pt. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Do Your Friendships Live Out the Gospel?,” <i>Holmes</i></li> <li>• “Lesson 5: Repentance,” <i>The Gospel Centered Life</i>, Thune and Walker</li> <li>• “Lesson 8: Elders Care for the Church,” <i>Gospel Eldership</i>, Thune</li> <li>• “Concluding Observations and Reflections,” <i>Shepherds after My Own Heart</i>, Laniak</li> </ul>	33	44
6	Feb 21	23: Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ)	10	Skill and Doctrine: Lifestyle of Repentance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “All of Life is Repentance,” Keller</li> <li>• “Session 7: Lifestyle Repentance,” <i>Sonship</i></li> <li>• “Think Globally, Act Locally,” Powlison</li> </ul>	13	23
7	Feb 28	24: The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian)	12	Skill and Doctrine: Connecting Scripture and Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Discipleship Group Cheat Sheet</i></li> <li>• <i>CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet</i>, Emllet (65–119)</li> </ul>	57	69
8	Mar 7	25: Death, the Intermediate State, and Glorification	12	Skill and Doctrine: Conflict Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Resolving Everyday Conflict</i>, Sande</li> <li>• Watch in class and discuss “The Experience of Shame,” Ed Welch (40:31)</li> </ul>	106	118
	Mar 14						
9	Mar 21	26: The Nature of the Church	13	Skill and Doctrine: Spiritual Warfare, Pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Spiritual Warfare</i>, Sam Storms (Lessons 1–7)</li> </ul>	48	61

Table A3 continued

10	Mar 28	27: Baptism	11	Skill and Doctrine: Spiritual Warfare, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Spiritual Warfare</i>, Sam Storms (Lessons 8–13)</li> <li>• Watch in class and discuss “Guilt and Shame With Jesus,” David Powlison (33:28)</li> </ul>	34	45
11	Apr 4	28: The Lord’s Supper	9	Skill and Doctrine: Sensitivity to the Spirit + Helping Others Discover and Use Their Spiritual Gifts, Pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Practicing the Power</i>, Storms (pp. 19–56)</li> <li>• <i>Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God</i>, Willard (pp. 17-54)</li> </ul>	76	85
12	Apr 11	29: Gifts of the Holy Spirit (I): General Questions	12	Skill and Doctrine: Sensitivity to the Spirit + Helping Others Discover and Use Their Spiritual Gifts, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Discerning God’s Voice,” <i>The Beginner’s Guide to the Gift of Prophecy</i>, Deere (pp. 63–78)</li> <li>• <i>Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God</i>, Willard (pp. 114-153, 217-281)</li> </ul>	121	133
13	Apr 18	30: Gifts of the Holy Spirit (II): Specific Gifts	17	Skill and Doctrine: Sensitivity to the Spirit + Helping Others Discover and Use Their Spiritual Gifts, Pt. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Letting Your Gift Find You,” <i>The Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Gifts</i>, Storms (pp. 199–203)</li> <li>• <i>The Beginner’s Guide to the Gift of Prophecy</i>, Deere (pp. 79–130)</li> <li>• Recommended but not required: “Are Miraculous Gifts for Today?,” <i>Tough Topics</i>, Storms (pp. 232–251)</li> <li>• “Seven Principles for the Understanding and Exercise of Spiritual Gifts,” Storms</li> </ul>	79	96
14	Apr 25	31: The Return of Christ: When and How?	11	Skill and Doctrine: Simplicity + Missional Living, Pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Outward Simplicity,” <i>Freedom of Simplicity</i>, Richard Foster (pp. 110–145)</li> <li>• <i>Missional Living Cheat Sheet</i></li> </ul>	92	103
15	May 2	32: The Millennium	15	Skill and Doctrine: Simplicity + Missional Living, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life</i>, Vandersteldt (pp. 169–228)</li> <li>• Watch in class and discuss “After Christ Everything About Shame Changes,” Ed Welch (37:34)</li> </ul>	60	75
16	May 9	33: The Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment	12	Skill and Doctrine: Leadership, Pt. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Unbusy Pastor,” Peterson, <i>Leadership Journal</i></li> <li>• “Pastoral Bullies,” Storms</li> <li>• “What I Wish I’d Known,” Storms</li> <li>• “Some Words of Counsel for Pastors,” Storms</li> </ul>	13	25
17	May 16	34: The New Heavens and New Earth	7	Skill and Doctrine: Leadership, Pt. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth,” Keller</li> <li>• Seid dissertation excerpts</li> </ul>	15	22



APPENDIX 7  
MEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
COHORT APPLICATION

This appendix lists the questions in the Men's Leadership Development Cohort Application, which applicants were directed to fill out and submit online. Any and all male Bridgeway attenders over the age of eighteen were invited to apply. The online Formstack form was constructed in such a way that subsequent questions would automatically appear or hide depending on prior answers—indicated here by the phrase “if applicable.”

MEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
COHORT APPLICATION

1. Marital status (Single/Married/Widowed/Divorced).
2. What is your spouse's name (if applicable)?
3. Do you have any children?
4. What are their names and ages (if applicable)?
5. Date of birth.
6. Wedding anniversary (if applicable).
7. Are you currently a part of any of the following group types (Community Group/Discipleship Group/Other form of gospel-centered community/None of the above currently)?
8. Please explain the other form of gospel-centered community you are in (if applicable).
9. What have you learned from the experience? What have you learned about yourself (if applicable)?
10. How long have you consistently attended Bridgeway?
11. Are you currently a covenant member of Bridgeway?
12. While covenant membership is not an entry requirement for participation in the cohort, if you were accepted into the cohort would you be willing to complete the covenant membership process at the first available opportunity (if applicable)?
13. Please explain (if the answer to the previous question was "No").
14. Are you currently serving or leading in any area at Bridgeway?
15. Please explain (if the answer to the previous question was "Yes").
16. Please list your church affiliations for the past five years, as well as your reason for leaving, if applicable.
17. As you read the statement above, how much are you able to agree with its description of the Christian life (Yes, enthusiastically/Yes, with some reservations/Not sure/No, not at this time)?

18. Please explain (if the answer to the previous questions was anything other than “Yes, enthusiastically”).
19. How would you describe your own physical, emotional, and spiritual health?
20. How would you describe the physical, emotional, and spiritual health of your marriage relationship (if applicable)?
21. What do you consider to be your personal strengths?
22. What do you consider to be your personal weaknesses?
23. Have you carefully read both the Preface and Statement of Faith (Yes/No)?
24. Is there anything within this statement with which you are in disagreement (No, there is nothing with which I disagree/Yes, I do have some disagreement)? (A particular area of disagreement will not necessarily disqualify you from participation in the Leadership Development Cohort, but as a cohort participant, you will be expected to not teach anything contrary to the above statement of faith.)
25. If “Yes, I do have some disagreement,” please explain.
26. What have been your primary Christian teachers or influences?
27. What is the gospel?
28. Please share your testimony.
29. Merely affirming that the Bible is inspired accomplishes very little. Asserting its authority isn’t much better. The inspiration and authority of the Bible are of value to us only so far as we change our beliefs to match its principles and alter our behavior to match its commands. The Bible is meant to govern our lives, and to fashion our choices, and to challenge our cherished traditions, and, ultimately, to make us look more like Jesus. The question is whether the Bible functions for you in this way. If so, how? If not, why not?
30. Briefly describe how the church makes disciples and how you hope to make disciples.
31. We believe that sex is a gift from God by which we declare to a spouse that we belong and are committed completely and exclusively to them. On that basis we believe that sex outside of marriage is wrong and that living with someone with whom you are romantically involved and yet to whom you are not married is also wrong. Can you give your assent to those beliefs (Yes/No)?
32. If “No,” please explain.

33. We believe that practicing a homosexual lifestyle is not an option for a Christian. Can you subscribe to this belief (Yes/No)?
34. If “No,” please explain.
35. We believe that the covenant made in marriage is permanent and that divorce is permissible only after desertion or a fundamental breaking of that covenant by one partner by means of adultery. Do you have convictions other than these (Yes/No)?
36. If “Yes,” please explain.
37. Are you willing to commit to consistently attending the cohort gatherings and coaching and peer one-on-ones, barring life and work situations beyond your control (Yes/I’d like to discuss this further before committing)?
38. Are you willing to commit, as best you are able, to complete the monthly reading and writing assignments (Yes/I’d like to discuss this further before committing)?

## APPENDIX 8

### MEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COHORT PROMOTION

This appendix contains the language used to announce the Men's LDC from the stage, as well as the language used in the accompanying bulletin insert and landing page on the church's website—to which the announcement and bulletin insert directed those interested in learning more about the LDC or applying.

## Vision

- It has been well said that “[t]he Church of God must train all kinds of leaders. Not many men and women will lead in the Church, but scores will lead in other spheres. If we do not equip God’s people to lead according to God’s design inside and outside the Church, they will be left to lead according to the world’s design...”<sup>1</sup> This is why the pastors and elders of Bridgeway have built and launched the Men’s Leadership Development Cohort.
- At its most basic, leadership looks like delighting in and modeling Jesus, multiplying disciples, and making others flourish in all of life. Therefore, the goal of the Leadership Development Cohort will be to equip men to increasingly lead self and lead others in the home, the workplace, and the world, as well as providing a glimpse into what it looks like to lead leaders.
- Leadership development takes the long view, but consequently does not quickly produce plugs for holes, and thus tends to look unattractive and is therefore often left untried. Development looks more like farming than manufacturing. It is slow and inefficient but ultimately fruitful work and it must not be neglected.
- Ministry leaders in the local church are often better at asking the saints to do the work of the ministry than they are at equipping them to do the work of the ministry. As a result, the pastors and elders of Bridgeway are committed to continually strive to bring Bridgeway to a place where the people of God are being strategically equipped more than being merely asked.
- Unfortunately, all too often leadership development programs are built around the transfer of information, but the broad testimony of Scripture depicts transformation that, while it always involves the transfer of truth, mainly takes place in the context of intentional relationships (1 Thess 2:8; 2 Tim 3:10-14). In the words of Paul Tripp, change is a community project. As a result, elder coaches will walk alongside the cohort participants through assigned one-on-one coaching relationships, and assess their leadership character, calling, and competency, all in the context of community.

## Format and Requirements

- The cohort will run from **September of 2017 through May of 2018**. Eight men will be accepted. *The primary requirement for participants is availability on Thursday mornings and the willingness to do some reading and writing each month.* Three Thursday mornings each month, from September through May, will be taken up with cohort activities. Four non-staff elders will serve as coaches for the cohort participants—each coach assigned and meeting once a month with two of the eight

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<sup>1</sup>Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 71.

participants for personal discipleship and mentoring for the duration of the cohort. (The monthly breakfast gatherings will run from 6:30am to 7:45am, and the monthly one-on-ones will theoretically be scheduled by each participant and their coach within that same time slot on a separate, single Thursday morning each month, but they will be given some flexibility to determine that themselves. In essence, anyone who doesn't have consistent availability on Thursday mornings from 6:30am to 7:45am will have a difficult time participating meaningfully in the cohort.)

- The third Thursday morning of each month the whole group will gather at Bridgeway from 6:30am–7:45am for breakfast and a time of teaching and discussion. See the schedule for, and content of, those breakfast gatherings [here](#). The first and second Thursday mornings of each month, each coach will meet for a one-on-one with each of the two participants assigned to them for the duration of the cohort. Additionally, one morning each month, each participant will meet with one other participant for a discipleship group, following the normal rhythms of a discipleship group (Scripture, sharing, spread of the gospel, supplication and Spirit).
- Each participant will be required to read approximately 20 to 30 pages a week, as well as complete brief written responses each month (see the cohort syllabus, subject to change, [here](#)).
- The cohort will launch in September with a one-night retreat running from Friday evening to Saturday evening, within a two-hour radius of the Oklahoma City metro area (the date will be determined after the cohort roster is finalized). The cohort will conclude in May with a celebration dinner for the cohort graduates and their wives.

### **Philosophy**

- Content will follow the generally accepted philosophy of leadership development—1) establishing competencies, and then 2) providing training tools, and 3) assessment tools for each of those competencies.
- Similarly, leaders tend to develop best when they are provided with: 1) knowledge, 2) experience, and 3) coaching. Hopefully the format of the cohort will take into account the transformative power of each of those components.

### **How to apply**

- Again, only eight men will be accepted for this initial cohort, and the deadline for applications is Sunday, August 20th, by midnight. Apply here today:  
[www.bridgewaychurch.com/cohort](http://www.bridgewaychurch.com/cohort).

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## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING AND EMPOWERING BIBLICAL LEADERS AT BRIDGEWAY CHURCH IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

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This project sought to develop a leadership development pipeline at Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to provide clear pathways for concretely and effectively leading attenders from first-time visitor all the way to Great Commission character, competency, and calling. Chapter 1 describes the ministry context of Bridgeway Church and establishes the project's goals. Chapter 2 provides a biblical and theological understanding of the appropriate character, motives, and agenda of biblical leadership, as well as the imperative need to develop and equip biblical leaders. Chapter 3 explores: (1) how extra-biblical development principles and practices can inform—through common-grace wisdom—the construction of a local church's leadership development pipeline, and (2) how a biblical theology of leadership development nuances, pushes back against, and even debunks certain aspects of secular leadership theory. Chapter 4 describes how the project was carried out, and chapter 5 evaluates the project's purpose, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. The goal of this project is to assist local church leaders in restoring leadership development to the local church and restoring the gospel to leadership development.

## VITA

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