

Copyright © 2022 Jared Michael Price

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary must request permission from the author to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation, or instruction.

The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Navy, Department of Defense, or the United States' Government.

MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION:
SPECIAL OPERATIONS PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING
GOD'S MISSION IN HIS CHURCH

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

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

by
Jared Michael Price
December 2022

APPROVAL SHEET

MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION:
SPECIAL OPERATIONS PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING
GOD'S MISSION IN HIS CHURCH

Jared Michael Price

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor: R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Second Reader: Matthew D. Haste

Defense Date: September 23, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
PREFACE	vii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Relevant Leadership Literature	6
Leadership Deficit on Executing a Multidirectional Mission	15
Thesis	16
Outline of Chapters	17
2. DEFINE THE MISSION: UNDERSTANDING A MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION	20
Definition of Multidirectional Mission	25
Definition of Disciple	39
Conclusion	51
3. TAKE COMMAND: LEADING A MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION	53
What Is Leadership?	56
Full Range Leadership	59
It Is Effective—But Is It Biblical?	71
Conclusion	78
4. PLAN BACKWARD: WORKING FROM END TO BEGINNING	80
Partial Planning	81
Analyzing the Problem	87

Chapter	Page
The Church and Mission Planning	94
Conclusion	106
5. KILL COMPLACENCY: FAITHFUL PURSUIT OF HIGH-CAPACITY AND HIGH-COMPETENCY	107
Faithful Pursuit of High-Capacity and High-Competency	114
Kill Complacency and Increase Capacity with Owning Failure	116
Kill Complacency and Increase Competency with Resilient Determination	121
Conclusion	127
6. LEAD THE FIGHT: THE CHURCH'S MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY	129
Five Special Operations Principles for Leading God's Multidirectional Mission	131
Conclusion: Lead the Fight	131
BIBLIOGRAPHY	140

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Levels of warfare example	28
2. Special forces planning guide	91

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
CONOP	Concept of Operation
DoD	Department of Defense
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FRL	Full Range Leadership
FSSF	First Special Service Force
GWOT	Global War on Terror
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
KSAB	Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, and Behaviors
MARSOC	Marine Special Operations Command
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
SEAL	Sea Air Land
SOCOM	Special Operations Command
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TEAMS	Truth Equipping Accountability Mission Supplication
UBL	Usama Bin Laden
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
VEO	Violent Extremist Organization

PREFACE

I am ever grateful to God for richly blessing me with the rare opportunity and an encouraging community to complete this thesis. Researching and writing on the concept of multidirectional mission intertwine three of my passions—the church, leadership, and military service. I pray that God uses this work to encourage and motivate pastors in their call to leadership. The culmination of this project is credited to dozens of kind, patient, gracious, and wise people investing in me and this research.

I want to thank my supervisor, R. Albert Mohler Jr., for sacrificing his highly demanded time to guide and mentor me with his comprehensive knowledge and astute organizational insight. His leadership example exemplifies all that I hope to communicate in this thesis. As well, I want to thank my mentor, Dan Dumas, who helped me navigate this work from its genesis. Dumas is a model leader who strives to glorify God in every pursuit with boldness, courage, and a fierce commitment to God’s Word.

I want to thank Beau Hughes, Chris Kouba, and Matthew Haste for their invaluable instruction and investment in me. Thank you to Betsy Fredrick for her vital wisdom and help with formatting and compilation. Additionally, I want to thank the men of my cohort who sacrificed days challenging, correcting, and urging the formation of this thesis: Austin Holmes, Brandon Kennedy, Chandler Vannoy, Chip Dean, Jeffrey Carlson, and Scott Urbanek. And a special thanks to my fellow cohort member and my pastor at Doxa Church in San Diego, California, Matt Thibault.

In genuine honesty, this project could not have succeeded without the voluntary participation of my brothers in the United States Navy and other branches of service, both active duty and retired. I am forever in the debt of those who have gone before me. This

thesis is built upon the invaluable lessons the Special Operations Forces community has taught me. I am honored and humbled to work alongside braver and better men than me.

Lastly, I want to thank my family. To my girls—Maggie, Audrey, Emma, and Ellie—thank you for your love and support and for sacrificing time to allow me to write this thesis. I want to thank my father and mother, Jeff and Patti Price, for their consistent modeling and instruction in the faith. Thanks to my siblings, Brandon, Heather, and Nathan Price, for always loving and teaching me, their baby brother. And finally, thanks to my wife, Janelle. She is simply incredible. She braved many months raising four children alone while I was gone on training exercises and deployments. And yet, she unfailingly encouraged me to pursue excellence in this endeavor. She is an undeserved gift from God and my best friend. Without her love and support, this project would never reach completion.

Jared Price

San Diego, California

December 2022

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Multidirectional mission is not an official term found in military Special Operations doctrine or Christian theology.¹ Yet, when properly understood, this concept rightly demonstrates a parallel missional foundation for both Special Operations units and the local church. This thesis defines a *multidirectional mission* as a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. Subsequent chapters will demonstrate how this definition is applicable to both Special Operations and the church.² This parallel provides church leaders with an opportunity to learn principles on how to lead a multidirectional mission from the Special Operations community.

Within the military's context, a multidirectional mission demands its executioners attain the competitive advantage. Leaders of such consequential and strategic missions cannot afford to fight fair. It is unnatural, absurd, and illogical to limit competitive advantage to provide equal opportunity to an enemy when gripped in a fatal fight. Since conception, military and Special Operations units continue to study, examine, and refine their people, equipment, and capabilities to exploit every possible advantage to eliminate the fighting power and will of the nation's adversaries. Leadership is one of these scrutinized and studied concepts. If there is a performance advantage found in leadership

¹ Trevin Wax, vice president of research and resource development at the North American Mission Board, wrote on multidirectional leadership in his book *The Multi-Directional Leader: Responding Wisely from Challenges on Every Side* (Austin, TX: The Gospel Coalition, 2021). His premise focuses on how Christian leaders need to position and prepare themselves to respond and combat multi-directional threats. Instead, *multidirectional mission* as argued in this thesis is that God's mission for his church is inherently multidirectional, which necessitates the need for Wax's multi-directional leaders. For further engagement with Wax's work see chap. 3 of this thesis.

² See chap. 2 of this thesis.

theory or practice, then the military, particularly Special Operations units, will test it, refine it, and exploit it to their advantage.

General Jim Mattis, former Secretary of Defense and avid student of leadership, states that “leadership means reaching the souls of your troops, instilling a sense of commitment and purpose in the face of challenges so severe that they cannot be put into words.”³ Military leaders are taught from indoctrination to lead with whatever competitive advantage necessary to win.⁴ During his time as Secretary of Defense, Mattis iterated his intention never to send close-combat forces into a fair fight.⁵ Since 1945, roughly 85 percent of all casualties came from close-combat infantry forces.⁶ The burden of leadership is to train, equip, and lead forces into the bleak reality of that statistic, but to do so while fiercely stacking the advantage in their favor.⁷ One of these advantages is leadership development. The Navy SEAL Ethos is the unattainable standard that every SEAL is expected to attain. One perfection demanding stanza states the following: “We expect to lead and be led. In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my teammates and accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations.”⁸ Leadership is a non-negotiable component to accomplishing a mission, and developing a leader’s capacity and competency increases the organization’s competitive advantage.

³ Jim Mattis and Bing West, *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* (New York: Random House, 2021), 13.

⁴ Robert Toguchi and Michael Krivdo, *The Competitive Advantage: Special Operations Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2019), v-vi.

⁵ James N. Mattis, “Remarks by Secretary Mattis on National Defense Strategy,” US Department of Defense, December 1, 2018, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/1702965/remarks-by-secretary-mattis-on-national-defense-strategy/>.

⁶ Mattis, “Remarks by Secretary Mattis.”

⁷ Mattis, “Remarks by Secretary Mattis.”

⁸ Naval Special Warfare Command, “Navy SEAL Ethos,” accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/SEAL-Ethos/>.

From military and Special Operations leaders to politicians and public square professionals, people want to be led. James McGregor Burns, the originator of the transformational leadership theory, wrote almost fifty years ago that “one of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership.”⁹ Globalization, exponential technology advances, and a rapidly expanding virtual society validate once again the call for effective and creative leadership. However, the twenty-first century has changed something. The historical hierarchal structures of leadership and management to appease short-term stakeholders are fading away.¹⁰ Bill George, professor of management practice at Harvard Business School, wrote an intriguing piece in the *Harvard Business Review* where he claims that twenty-first century “successful leaders will focus on sustaining superior performance by aligning people around mission and values and empowering leaders at all levels while concentrating on serving customers and collaborating throughout the organization.”¹¹ George identifies that the next generation wants a vision and purpose that unifies a community more than statistics and spreadsheets that benefit the top individuals. The twenty-first century provides leaders with what Burns identifies as a metamorphosis moment, where culture and society are ready for and demanding radical change.¹²

The leadership demands of an evolving world transcend the military, academy, politics, and public square into the pulpit of the American church. The competitive advantage is being lost on the front of church leadership. At the end of 2021, 38 percent

⁹ James Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 2.

¹⁰ Bill George, “The New 21st Century Leaders,” *Harvard Business Review*, April 30, 2010, <https://hbr.org/2010/04/the-new-21st-century-leaders-1.html?registration=success>.

¹¹ George, “The New 21st Century Leaders.”

¹² James Burns, *Transforming Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 2003), 23-24.

of Protestant pastors considered quitting full-time ministry.¹³ Pastors appear depleted. In 2017, Barna's *The State of Pastors* identified that one in three pastors were at risk of ministry burnout.¹⁴ Four years later, only one in three pastors considered their well-being as healthy.¹⁵ Seven out of ten of these pastors expressed worry about finding future leaders for the church.¹⁶ The complexity of the historical moment is further highlighted in how 85 percent of pastors believe their religious freedom in America is weakening.¹⁷ Adding pressure from the outside, only one in five people think that their community's pastors are influential.¹⁸ Navigating the church's multidirectional mission in the twenty-first century is proving to be a complex and exhausting leadership endeavor.

David Kinnaman, in his book *You Lost Me*, believes the American cultural moment needs the same clarity and leadership that Dietrich Bonhoeffer provided to the German church during the Nazi regime.¹⁹ Kinnaman argues from his research on young unchurched Americans that the next generation is in a crisis of confidence.²⁰ In his book with George Barna, *Churchless*, Kinnaman and Barna identify the dechurched as the fastest growing segment of surveyed people in America, with over 30 percent of adults

¹³ Barna Group conducted this study on 507 US Protestant pastors between October 12 to 28, 2021. Barna Group, "38% of U.S. Pastors Have Thoughts about Quitting Full-Time Ministry in the Past Year," November 16, 2021, <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being>.

¹⁴ Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 11.

¹⁵ Barna Group defines "healthy" as scoring "excellent" or "good" on all six of the well-being categories. "Unhealthy" is defined as scoring "excellent" or "good" on less than half of the well-being categories. Barna Group, *The State of Pastors*, 11.

¹⁶ Barna, *The State of Pastors*, 61.

¹⁷ Barna, *The State of Pastors*, 107.

¹⁸ Barna, *The State of Pastors*, 107.

¹⁹ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 13, Kindle.

²⁰ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 13-14.

falling into this category.²¹ They define dechurched as “those who have been Churched in the past but are currently on hiatus.”²² These people may have attended church at some point but find themselves in an ebb and flow of inconsistency.²³ Church leaders are facing a cultural moment where society at large and people in their communities are digitally saturated, self-orientated, and increasingly skeptical of organized religion and its benefits to society.²⁴

This is a new and yet, not-so-new fight. In military terms, the terrain and operating environment have changed, but the enemy is still the same. This is the same fight for people’s souls, a fight for a voice in society, a fight for religious freedom, and a fight for objective truth that the church has faced throughout the centuries. It is the fight to accomplish God’s mission for his church to make disciples of Jesus Christ. And yet, church leaders must acknowledge that the twenty-first century has changed the operating environment. Within this new context, are church leaders utilizing every possible competitive advantage to lead God’s mission? In his book *Lead*, Paul Tripp opens by asking a pointed question: “Could it be that many of our leaders don’t really want to be led, and many in our leadership community don’t value true biblical community?”²⁵ Perhaps the dechurched are due in part to failed leadership within the church. In the effort to either embrace convicted faith or expel secular professionalism, is it possible the American evangelical church has embraced a form of leadership complacency? Every military member hearing this knows that “complacency kills.” The twenty-first century spiritual battlefield provides church leaders a metamorphosis moment—a period where

²¹ George Barna and David Kinnaman, *Churchless: Understanding Today’s UnChurched and How to Connect with Them* (Austin, TX: Barna Group, 2014), 5. Kindle.

²² Barna and Kinnaman, *Churchless*, 5.

²³ Barna and Kinnaman, *Churchless*, 7.

²⁴ Barna and Kinnaman, *Churchless*, 22-30.

²⁵ Paul David Tripp, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 17.

people are wanting, demanding, and needing transforming leadership to shape the next generation.

But how does the church shape leaders to obtain a competitive advantage over the outside pressures choking the church's voice and influence and inhibiting it from accomplishing its mission? This thesis answers this question by presenting a biblically redefined concept of secular leadership coupled with Special Operations leadership principles for pastors to navigate God's multidirectional mission in the twenty-first century. It is the position of this thesis that church leaders can fight evolving threats with certain secular leadership theories adopted and proven successful by Special Operations units. The mission of Special Operations and the church are not as antithetical as they immediately appear but are similar in scope and principle. If adopted in theological faithfulness, these principles provide Christian leaders with a competitive advantage in executing God's mission for the church.

Relevant Leadership Literature

Leadership bookshelves are not suffering a deficit of authorship. Leadership studies range from the military to athletics, from non-profits to Fortune 100, from technology to politics, and from the pulpit to pew. The diversity in leadership literature is remarkably as broad as it is deep. Academic studies are competitive in quantity to self-help titles. Narrowing the leadership focus is necessary when discussing modern leadership theories and positive implications for pastoral and church leadership. These theories begin to demonstrate their potential relevancy by narrowing them into the specifics of organizational mission.

Special Operations Leadership

Special Operations Command (SOCOM) was established on April 16, 1987.²⁶

²⁶ United States Special Operations Command, "Special Operations Command: About Us," accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.socom.mil/about#>.

However, its origin began forty-five years earlier when the world was thrust into a global war demanding innovation, unconventional warfare, and sheer determination. To some extent, all components of SOCOM, which include Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), have their legacy tied to World War II. For example, the Army established the First Special Service Force (FSSF) on July 5, 1942, which was a US and Canadian combined force that infiltrated and conducted unconventional warfare direct action inside Nazi-occupied Norway.²⁷ Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) commandos find their legacy in the Scouts and Raiders, Naval Combat Demolition Units, and Under Water Demolition Teams. These early teams assisted most major amphibious landings in World War II to include Normandy and Omaha Beach.²⁸ Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) and Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) are relatively new additions to SOCOM, yet their legacy can equally be traced to World War II events and further into America's military history. JSOC is the culmination of all four other commands and roots its history in being silent warriors executing national level missions who value empowerment, professionalism, innovation, and commitment.²⁹

Written into the blood-stained proven identity of SOCOM is a commitment to pursue excellence. The following is SOCOM's current mission statement:

SOCOM develops and employs competent Special Operations Forces to conduct global Special Operations and activities as part of the Joint Force to support persistent, networked, and distributed Combatant Command operations and campaigns against state and non-state actors to protect and advance U.S. policies and objectives.³⁰

²⁷ United States Special Operations Command, "Special Forces History," accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.soc.mil/USASFC/SFhistory.html#:~:text=Special%20Forces%20History,warfare%20in%20Nazi%20occupied%20Norway.>

²⁸ Naval Special Warfare Command, "History," accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/History/>.

²⁹ United States Special Operations Command, "Joint Special Operations Command," accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.socom.mil/ussocom-enterprise/components/joint-special-operations-command.>

³⁰ United States Special Operations Command, "Special Operations Command: About Us."

This is a traditional military mission statement. To the untrained eye, these words appear to have vague and masked meanings, but for those who live in the community's crucible, each word has tremendous power, purpose, and meaning. This mission is critical to the practical function and diverse focus of the global 70,000-person SOCOM enterprise.

Special Operations leadership actions and principles have captivated the attention of a global audience. Articles, blogs, books, conferences, sports teams, corporations, and movie theatres tell stories and leadership lessons that brave warriors have learned from obtaining the advantage over their adversaries. Former Commanding Officer of SOCOM, Admiral William McRaven, captivated the digital world with his University of Texas commencement speech, where he challenged the graduating class of 2014 to the daunting task of changing the world.³¹ Former Task Unit Bruiser Commanding Officer, Jocko Willink wrote *New York Times* best-selling title *Extreme Ownership*, where he boldly and deliberately asserts, "There are no bad teams, only bad leaders."³² Operational Detachment Alpha 595's Commanding Officer, Captain Mitch Nelson, told his story that is recounted in *Horse Soldiers* and played on the screen by the famous actor Chris Hemsworth in the Hollywood film *12 Strong*, depicting a heroic account of the Army Special Forces immediate response to the Taliban in Afghanistan after the devastating attack on September 11, 2001. Adversity reveals the true measure of leadership, and special operators have tested, refined, and confirmed leadership lessons proven in blood that provide a competitive advantage over their adversaries.

Church Leadership

When discussing leadership in the Christian context, there is a necessary distinction between church leadership principles and correlating church government

³¹ William H. McRaven, "University of Texas at Austin 2014 Commencement Address—Admiral William H. McRaven," YouTube, May 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxBQLFLei70>.

³² Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win* (New York: Saint Martin's, 2017), 49.

structures. However, this distinction is not as clean as some may like. Church government belief and practice bleed into leadership principles associated with each specific type of government structure. Moreover, leadership principles tend to change as positional leadership authority within a church government change. For centuries, theologians have given their time and energy to study and discuss the church's leadership structure and practice.

In *Perspectives on Church Government*, passionate scholars argue for five historically held forms of evangelical Church government. Daniel Akin presents his position on single elder-led church government, which functions as its description suggests.³³ Robert Reymond argues for Presbyterian Church government, where there is leadership formality and positional hierarchy in both the local congregation and associated churches in the denomination.³⁴ James Leo Garrett articulates his case for the congregation-led church and argues that final authority rests with the local body of believers for decision making.³⁵ Paul Zahl takes an odd egalitarian approach in his definition and defense for the Episcopal polity, the church government style held by Episcopalians and Anglicans.³⁶ Lastly, James Emory White upholds the plural-elder-led congregation perspective distinct from the two other forms of congregationalism in that a plurality of elders is not optional but biblically required.³⁷ Each form of church

³³ Daniel Akin, "The Single-Elder Led Church: The Bible's Witness to a Congregational/Single-Elder-Led Polity," in *Perspectives on Church Government: 5 Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 25-26, Kindle.

³⁴ Robert L. Reymond, "The Presbytery-Led Church: Presbyterian Church Government," in Brand and Norman, *Perspectives on Church Government*, 88-90.

³⁵ James Leo Garrett Jr., "The Congregation-Led Church: Congregational Polity," in Brand and Norman, *Perspectives on Church Government*, 157-58.

³⁶ Paul F. M. Zahl, "The Bishop-Led Church: The Episcopal or Anglican Polity Affirmed, Weighed, and Defended," in Brand and Norman, *Perspectives on Church Government*, 209-12.

³⁷ James R. White, "The Plural-Elder-Led Church: Sufficient as Established—The Plurality of Elders a Christ's Ordained Means of Church Governance," in Brand and Norman, *Perspectives on Church Government*, 255-58.

government applies different levels of positional authority to the church's leadership offices, making universal principles for Christian leadership challenging to standardize.

Outside of government considerations, evangelical Christians continue to wrestle with the practicalities of church leadership and how or if secular theory should be incorporated. In his book *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*, John Piper outlines the historical necessities of biblically faithful pastoral leadership. He focuses on combating secular professionalism and identifies the precise standards for faithful church leadership that center on prayer, scripture, and preaching.³⁸ Piper flushes out these categories in greater detail throughout the book and encourages pastors to lead with biblical conviction and faithfulness rather than secular logic and tactics.³⁹ Professionalism is thus depicted and argued as incompatible within pastorate and church leadership.

Richard Albert Mohler Jr., in *The Conviction to Lead*, takes a moderate perspective on professionalism within Christian leadership. Mohler's goal is to reduce the dichotomy he perceives in Christian leaders between what he calls "believers" and "leaders."⁴⁰ The "believers" are driven by deep theological beliefs and passionate commitment to truth.⁴¹ Conversely, "leaders" are passionate about leadership practice and theory, and thrilled by experiences and opportunities to invoke motivation, vision, strategy, and execution.⁴² Mohler's intent is to turn "Believers into Leaders and Leaders into Believers."⁴³ *The Conviction to Lead* walks readers through twenty-five principles that Christians can adopt to synergize competent leadership with faith conviction.

³⁸ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville: B & H, 2013), 1-2.

³⁹ Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*, 3.

⁴⁰ Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany, 2012), 19-20.

⁴¹ Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 19.

⁴² Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 19.

⁴³ Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*, 20.

Secular Leadership Theory

Secular leadership studies exploded in the latter half of the twentieth century. Scholars and practitioners identified the separation between the characteristics and responsibilities of managers and leaders. From this dichotomy emerged the discussion between effective and ineffective leadership. Then in 1978, James MacGregor Burns introduced the categories of transactional and transformational leadership into the mix.⁴⁴ These two classifications have become an umbrella that covers most of modern leadership theory.

Burns's book *Leadership* lays the foundation for conceptualizing transactional and transformational leadership styles. Within his award-winning work, he annotates that the two most broad-reaching and proven effective forms of leadership are primarily either transactional or transforming.⁴⁵ True leaders, Burns argues, "address themselves to followers' wants, needs, and other motivations, as well as to their own, and thus they serve as an independent force in changing the makeup of the followers motive base through gratifying their motives."⁴⁶ In short, true leaders motivate and move people toward a mutually gratifying direction or goal.

Influential leaders will motivate and move their followers through either transaction or transformation. Transactional leaders "approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another."⁴⁷ These types of leaders tend to utilize rewards and punishments as motivating forces that appeal to the desires of their followers. While proven effective and sometimes required, this form of leadership is less effective than transformational.⁴⁸ Burns defines transformational leadership as those who study their

⁴⁴ Burns, *Leadership*, 3-4.

⁴⁵ Burns, *Leadership*, 3-4.

⁴⁶ Burns, *Leadership*, 20.

⁴⁷ Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

⁴⁸ Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

followers' motives, finding ways to satisfy their higher needs and engage their whole person toward a common direction.⁴⁹ By studying and evaluating historical personalities, Burns demonstrates the characteristics of each classification and argues for their validity.

Leadership ignited a frenzy of articles, books, and studies in the latter twentieth century. From these discussions emerged Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio's *Transformational Leadership*, published in 1998. Bass and Riggio's book is regarded as one of the best scholarly books on understanding and categorizing effective leadership. Their research displays evidence for the effectiveness of both transformational and transactional leadership styles and introduces a third concept: Full-Range Leadership.⁵⁰ Bass and Riggio define the Full Range Leadership (FRL) model as including "transformational leadership and its components as most effective, or optimal, level of leadership, with transactional leadership (based on rewards and disciplinary actions) as the "mid" level, and laissez-faire leadership anchoring the ineffective, or suboptimal, level."⁵¹ They demonstrate how leadership style and corresponding characteristics effect motivating and moving followers toward a specific direction.

The military has predominately embraced the idea of transformational leadership as its premier standard. However, as *Transformational Leadership* discusses, there are certain advantages to having a blended approach, especially in occupations with significant financial risk or life and death causality.⁵² In these particular cases, Bass and Riggio note the benefit of having multiple layers of leadership that match positional authority requirements with leadership style.⁵³ Bass and Riggio's findings collaborate

⁴⁹ Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

⁵⁰ Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006), 3.

⁵¹ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 17.

⁵² Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 17.

⁵³ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 17.

other research and steer the authors toward arguing for the superiority of the FRL model that corresponds to the unique demands of an individual organization's mission.

Pursuit of High-Capacity and High-Competency

A leader's pursuit of high-capacity and high-competency falls into the giant conceptual bucket of increasing personal performance. This identifies the discussion of nature or nurture regarding leadership. Burns argues that leaders are neither entirely born nor made.⁵⁴ Leadership is not as simple as natural ability or systematic formula. The giants of history who led everything from regional to global change cannot be engineered with a simple step-by-step process. However, a common thread weaves all renowned leaders together—*discipline*. Great leaders possess a sheer internal determination to increase their capacity and competency through unrelenting discipline.

General Jim Mattis, affectionately and fearfully nicknamed "Mad Dog Mattis" led over three million United States Department of Defense military members and civilian contractors to defend America and fight the Global War on Terror. Mattis, critical to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, is notorious for his menacing quote to his Marines in Iraq: "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everyone you meet."⁵⁵ In his personnel memoir, *Call Sign Chaos*, he describes the unique challenges and obstacles he faced in his forty-one-year career as a Marine Officer and two-year term as the Secretary of Defense. His success and mastery of his craft are due to extraordinary levels of personal discipline.⁵⁶ In characteristic Mad Dog form, he states plainly, "If you have not read hundreds of books, learning from others who went before you, you are functionally

⁵⁴ Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

⁵⁵ Thomas Ricks, "Fiasco," *Armed Forces Journal*, August 1, 2006, <http://armedforcesjournal.com/fiasco/>.

⁵⁶ Mattis and West, *Call Sign Chaos*, 237.

illiterate—you can't coach and you can't lead.”⁵⁷ From 4:00 a.m. mornings to month-long analytical warfare research, Mattis captured every opportunity to expand his capacity and competency to become the most lethal leadership force possible.

Burns expands upon *Leadership* in his follow up book, *Transforming Leaders*. He dives further into what transformational leadership looks like by examining George Washington, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Karl Heinrich Marx, Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, and many others. In trying to ascertain the leadership “x-factor,” Burns states that “every human change begins with someone having an intention, taking an initiative.”⁵⁸ To motivate and move people takes the initiative, and initiative requires discipline.⁵⁹ Burns highlights the peacetime frustrated Winston Churchill as a prime example of pre-disposed personal discipline preparing him for decisive leadership in the turmoil of impending war.⁶⁰ *Transforming Leadership* is a notable resource for examining the psychological and indirect connections in historical leaders of significant change.

Looking specifically at competency, Wesley Donahue, in his book *Building Leadership Competence*, argues for every leader's need to expose their vulnerabilities and methodologically improve their capabilities. He defines competency as “the measurable and observable knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors (KSABs) critical to successful job performance.”⁶¹ Donahue argues that leaders who intentionally identify their KSABs weaknesses, and create a plan to improve them, will over time increase their effectiveness

⁵⁷ Mattis and West, *Call Sign Chaos*, 237.

⁵⁸ Burns, *Transforming Leadership*, 17.

⁵⁹ Burns, *Transforming Leadership*, 17.

⁶⁰ Burns, *Transforming Leadership*, 24.

⁶¹ Wesley Donahue, *Building Leadership Competence: A Competency-Based Approach to Building Leadership Ability* (State College, PA: Centrestar Learning, 2018), 22.

and success.⁶² His reasoning is that leaders will be better skilled to execute their position, and those who follow them will have increased motivation due to their admiration of the leaders' skill. This relationship corresponds to the transformational leadership component of idealized influence.⁶³ Donahue is defining something intriguing but straightforward. Increasing competency affects not only the personal execution of responsibilities but also, and more significantly, the leader's ability to influence and motivate the execution of followers.

From the Christian perspective, Donald Whitney, Professor of Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written extensively on spiritual disciplines. In *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*, Whitney walks through the application of specific spiritual disciplines to provide refreshment and sustainment in difficulty and adversity. Leadership within the church is exhausting, and pastors historically have experienced burnout. Whitney notes that exhaustion reveals "a problem . . . when the inflow of spiritual renewal doesn't replenish the outflow of spiritual ministry."⁶⁴ His argument for spiritual discipline is universally applicable to Christians but particularly necessary for those tasked with the weight of spiritual leadership.

Leadership Deficit on Executing a Multidirectional Mission

While robust in quantity of content, current church leadership literature is experiencing a deficit of how to lead God's mission for his church through the emerging complications of the twenty-first century. Without challenge, some pastors and lay leaders will confuse complacency and disorganization as meeting the standard for faithful practice. Excellent books on Christian leadership exist that are challenging and practically helpful,

⁶² Donahue, *Building Leadership Competence*, 22.

⁶³ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

⁶⁴ Donald Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life: Spiritual Disciplines for the Overwhelmed* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003), 16.

such as *The Conviction to Lead*, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*, and *Lead*⁶⁵ to name only a few—however, the church needs a challenge for excellence that executes strategic theological conviction in the operational and tactical realm. There is a shortage of evangelical literature that scrutinizes secular theory and experience with theology to improve a church leaders’ effectiveness in executing God’s multidirectional mission for His church. By bridging the proven principles of Special Operations and secular leadership theory over to the church, pastors and lay leaders are provided with a new framework to think through and navigate the challenges they face today, tomorrow, and in the years to come.

Thesis

Never fight fair when fighting for life and death. Church leaders should embrace every possible faithful advantage to achieve God’s mission and defend against and defeat the enemy. Accomplishing the church’s consequential multidirectional mission in the twenty-first century demands biblically redefined Full Range Leadership (FRL) that faithfully pursues high-capacity and high-competency. This thesis will first define the term *multidirectional mission* in both secular and Christian contexts. Second, the thesis will biblically reframe transformational, transactional, and FRL for pastoral and lay leadership application. Third, the thesis will argue for the benefit of planning backwards when executing a multidirectional mission. Fourth, FRL will be shown to require a consistent faithful pursuit of high-capacity and high-competency. Fifth and finally, church leaders will be challenged to lead the fight to accomplish God’s mission for His church in the twenty-first century. The principles of define the mission, take command, plan backward, kill complacency, and lead the fight offer local congregations leadership principles for navigating the complexities in this new age.

⁶⁵ Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead*; Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*; Tripp, *Lead*.

Outline of Chapters

The following chapters will advance the argument of the thesis by further defining a multidirectional mission, analyzing leadership research, biblically redefining transformational and transactional leadership within the FRL structure, displaying leadership characteristics effect on performance, describing the faithful pursuit of high-capacity and high-competency, and providing a practical application for church leadership in the twenty-first century. This proposal seeks to function as a conceptual bridge that provides proven leadership principles in a practically usable format. To help illustrate these principles, each chapter will engage different aspects of Operation Anaconda, a combined joint task force operation in Afghanistan during March of 2002. This operation highlights the both the positive and negative outcomes of how a multidirectional mission is affected when these leadership principles are utilized or neglected. I recommend engaging the material sequentially rather than topically as each chapter builds off the research and material presented in the last.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, relevant literature, and outlines the content of each chapter. The main idea presented in this section is that the emerging spiritual threats of the twenty-first century demand that church leaders utilize every advantage to combat complacency, develop adaptability, and execute God's mission for his church faithfully. One of those advantages is learning from the proven success and lessons in failure from SOF entities on how to lead a multidirectional mission.

Chapter 2: Define the Mission— Understanding a Multidirectional Mission

Chapter 2 defines the term *multidirectional mission* and exemplifies it through looking into the exploits of Operation Anaconda. Utilizing military layers of warfare, this section demonstrates how a multidirectional mission requires leadership that decisively articulates objectives and can adapt to the operating environment with ever-changing

activities and efforts. This chapter presents SOF mission execution as a parallel for understanding and leading God's mission for the church in the twenty-first century. The first step in leading God's mission is to define it. This chapter closes with an in-depth look at the church's principal mission: to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3: Take Command—Leading a Multidirectional Mission

Chapter 3 engages historical and original research on the leadership styles proven effective in leading Special Operations' multidirectional mission. Bernard Bass, James Burns, and their colleagues utilize historic secular research to support FRL as most effective at moving and motivating followers toward a specific direction. Through literary research on multiple special operations personalities and units, I show the effectiveness of these leadership styles on small unit performance. The chapter concludes by providing a biblical cross-section to analyze and utilize transformational and transactional characteristics in FRL for pastors and church leaders.

Chapter 4: Plan Backward—Working from End to Beginning

Chapter 4 outlines the relationship between planning and leadership. Plan backwards means starting with the desired endpoint and developing the steps in corresponding order on how to get there. This chapter again looks at Operation Anaconda and compares leadership principles learned to what is described in the Scriptures. Additionally, this section will demonstrate how SOF, specifically Navy SEALs, utilize FRL to increase performance in planning. By consulting relevant theologians and pastors, this proposal will scrub Special Operations principles in planning to either validate or deter potential application into the church.

Chapter 5: Kill Complacency—Faithful Pursuit of High Capacity and High Competency

Chapter 5 identifies the need for leaders of multidirectional missions to faithfully pursue high capacity and high competency. This pursuit is an essential component to kill complacency and sustain mission focus and execution. Capacity is the ability to successfully shoulder multiple responsibilities within different contexts without compromise. Competency is the skill with which leaders execute the activities of their office. Complacency is a subtle arrogance that manifests itself in stagnation, laziness, and mediocrity. Complacency will be proven lethal through examination of biblical and military examples. This chapter will demonstrate how a multidirectional mission requires its leaders to expand and continually fight and battle complacency.

Chapter 6: Lead the Fight—The Church’s Multidirectional Mission in the Twenty-First Century

Chapter 6 concludes with a challenge for pastors and lay church leaders to lead the fight for faith through a biblically appropriate application of FRL. This challenge is a practical tool for identifying and assessing local church objectives and activities and efforts concerning God’s mission for his church. Additionally, there will be suggestions for increasing one’s capabilities in strategic planning, capacity, and competency. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an appeal for further research on how churches progress under leaders who adopt the principles outlined in this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

DEFINE THE MISSION: UNDERSTANDING A MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION

As of March 2, 2002, Operation Anaconda was the largest US led Coalition offensive operation against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The operation utilized a maneuver known as the hammer and anvil approach.¹ The hammer was a four-hundred-man Afghan vehicle ground element, led and trained by US Special Forces (SF). The Afghan and SF element's mission was to enter the terrorist occupied Shah-i-Knot valley and push the enemy out of local villages and valley floor into a surprise large-scale helicopter assault force—the anvil. However, things did not go according to plan. Not even the first minute. The fact that the US led Coalition achieved an unprecedented victory in the Shah-i-Knot valley is remarkable given the despondent beginnings of the first twenty-four hours of the operation. This success is due in no small part to the mission being clearly defined.

Eight days after the horrific attacks on September 11, 2001, President George Bush announced the United States's largest multidirectional mission since World War II. President Bush pronounced to the world,

The message to every country is, there will be a campaign against terrorist activity, a worldwide campaign. And there is an outpouring of support for such a campaign. Freedom-loving people understand that terrorism knows no borders, that terrorists will strike in order to bring fear, to try to change the behavior of countries that love liberty. And we will not let them do that.²

America demanded a response—and they were given one.

¹ Pete Blaber, *The Men, the Mission, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 249.

² US Department of State, “Global War on Terror: The First 100 Days,” accessed October 11, 2021, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm>.

Allied powers recognized the immediate urgency to form a coalition to defend their sovereign borders and actively deter unprecedented acts of violence by combating terrorists, Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs), and any nation that provides these heinous entities safe harbor.³ The United States, under the leadership of President Bush, announced the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) with the mission to counter terrorism. To achieve its mission, the United States and Coalition forces determined to lean heavily on Special Operations to fight an unconventional and ideologically committed enemy with superior technology integrated into irregular warfare tactics. In the mountains of Afghanistan, Operation Anaconda proved to be a catalyst vignette that cemented the value of a joint military and utilization of SOF to successfully achieve one of GWOT's first mission objectives.

Operation Anaconda's stage was set against the backdrop of a bone-chilling Christmas Eve in 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The Soviets' mission was to suppress the Islamic anti-communist Mujahideen and establish a pro-Moscow communist Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).⁴ The Soviets first deployed approximately 30,000 troops which easily dismantled the leader, Hafizullah Amin, and established a principle part of its mission, a communist DRA.⁵ While the forceful victory of establishing the communist government appeared a swift success, suppressing the United States and Islamic backed Mujahideen was another matter entirely. Multiple times, the Mujahideen fought off thousands of technologically advanced troops with drastically less numbers. By 1982, the Soviets maintained an occupying force of over 100,000 troops and dispelled over four million Afghan refugees to Pakistan and Iran but continued to fail

³ US Department of State, "Global War on Terror."

⁴ Lester Grau and Ali Jalali, "The Campaign for the Caves: The Battles for Zhawar in the Soviet-Afghan War," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 14, no. 3 (September 2001): 1.

⁵ Britannica, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," accessed October 7, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan>.

in removing the Mujahideen.⁶ Tripling their forces and combat fighting power proved powerless against the unpredictable, highly mobile, and fiercely committed Mujahideen. During the Second Battle of Zhawar, the Mujahideen's 700-800 less equipped fighters defeated a large-scale Soviet helicopter assault force backed with precision artillery and close air support. While the Mujahideen lost nearly 300 fighters, they destroyed 24 helicopters, 2 fighter jets, and captured 530 personnel from the 38th Commando Brigade, including nearly 80 officers.⁷ Three years later, on February 15, 1989, the last Soviet Union forces departed Afghanistan, ending their ten-year mission in a nearly complete failure.

In 2002, thirteen years later, it was the United States's turn to invade the war-torn country. While GWOT's mission was global counter terrorism, the principal objective was Usama Bin Laden (UBL). At the time, UBL was believed to be in hiding within Afghanistan's tumultuous borders. To root out UBL, Coalition forces focused on eliminating the fighting will of the enemy and their ability to maneuver. On March 2, 2002, just forty miles from the Soviets' bitter defeat at Zhawar, the United States and Coalition forces staged to execute Operation Anaconda in the Shah-i-Khot Valley, attempting to succeed where the Soviets failed. The Mujahideen, previously funded by the United States, had slowly transformed into the organized and brutally oppressive Taliban and al-Qaeda terrorist VEOs. The Shah-i-Khot Valley served as a rally point and stronghold for the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters.⁸ The mountains provided natural protection with the addition of a man-made cave network concealing infantry and supplies movements. The Taliban and al-Qaeda knew the Americans were going to attack—and they welcomed it.⁹

⁶ Britannica, "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," para. 4.

⁷ Grau and Jalali, "The Campaign for the Caves," 48.

⁸ Tommy Franks, *American Soldier: General Tommy Franks* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 376-77, Kindle.

⁹ Blaber, *The Men, the Mission, and Me*, 260.

General Tommy Franks, Commander of Central Command in 2002, and overall responsible for the operation, declared Operational Anaconda as “an unqualified and absolute success.”¹⁰ In 1986, the Soviets’ bitter helicopter assault failed despondently after forty-three days of unsuccessful attempts to remove the dug in Mujahedeen at Zhawar, suffering unknown number of fatalities and over five hundred captured.¹¹ Conversely, the United States achieved a decisive victory during Operation Anaconda in a third of the time and suffering only eight fatal casualties.¹² While staggeringly successful, the battle did not go according to plan. Subsequent chapters will show how Operation Anaconda exposed significant faults in the US military’s common intelligence picture, operational command structure, and contingency planning.¹³ However, the unqualified success of the operation, and its hallmark distinction from the Soviets, is due to the military’s ability to adapt its activities and efforts, specifically the US Air Force and SOF ground teams, to produce pivotal solutions by employing their unique capabilities to an ever-evolving complex situation.¹⁴ From all entities, skillful adaptation of core competencies resulted in a decisive victory. This would not have been possible without a clear understanding of mission.

In the face of an unprecedented time, the church must ensure its mission is clear. Objective truth and the Christian church, specifically American evangelicalism,¹⁵ are facing a similar complex unconventional attack as the United States did in 2001.

¹⁰ Blaber, *The Men, the Mission, and Me*, 381.

¹¹ Grau and Jalali, “The Campaign for the Caves,” 48.

¹² Franks, *American Solider*, 380.

¹³ Richard Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan. A Case Study of Adaptation in Battle* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2007), 1.

¹⁴ Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 378-80.

¹⁵ This thesis defines *American evangelicalism* broadly as primarily the form of Protestantism that started in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America, centralizing on a commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture, the gospel of Jesus Christ, personal conversion, and active evangelism.

David Kinnaman, a Christian researcher with the Barna Group, is convinced American culture is staged in a parallel historical moment to that faced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the German church under Nazi tyranny.¹⁶ Christian leaders are facing ministry threats and challenges from inside and outside the church, to include racial conflict, pop-culture hedonism, private professionalism, increasing government secularization into legislation, and the added complexity of an across-the-board digital saturation of American society.¹⁷ The second and third order effects of the gender identity movement and revolutionarily deterioration of the family are just beginning to be felt in American homes, along with the rapidly evolving left of classic liberalism agenda. According to Kinnaman’s research, today’s children are eight times more likely to come into this world without married parents than the Boomer generation.¹⁸ Churches are losing their young adults at alarming speeds, a people group that Kinnaman classifies separately as Nomads, Prodigals, and Exiles.¹⁹ He believes these wanderers are fed up with the church’s “yawn-worthy” directionless inability to answer their relevant and important questions.²⁰ Instead, these formerly or self-identifying Christians believe “that the Churches in which they were raised are not safe and hospitable places to express doubts.”²¹ In short, the American church is under a complex unconventional attack and is demanding a decisive response.

The natural temptation for church leaders is to respond with immediate action as many Americans begged for after 9/11. Create a program, start a sermon series, change the prayer teams focus, or plan an outreach strategy—*do something*. All of these appear

¹⁶ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 13, Kindle.

¹⁷ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 41.

¹⁸ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 46.

¹⁹ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 69.

²⁰ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 99.

²¹ Kinnaman and Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 11.

as plausible and tangible response options. However, activities and efforts detached from a precise understanding of mission and specific timely objectives will inevitably fail in achieving the actual desired effect. Without a clear conceptualization of mission, specific hierarchy of objectives, and adaptive employment of activities and efforts, American evangelicalism will continue to falter.

Twenty-first-century challenges to Christianity are best addressed by first refocusing on mission rather than ill-informed immediate action. This chapter will define and illustrate the concept of a *multidirectional mission*. Church leaders will be provided a new framework for conceptualizing and implementing God's multidirectional mission for His church. This chapter will also explore how the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of warfare supply succinct mission clarity at all levels of command. The mission's intent provides leadership both freedom and parameters to execute the mission through innovation in developing, articulating, and implementing relevant objectives. Transitioning from theory, the chapter will then turn to argue the American evangelical church is in a mission clarity crisis. The chapter will conclude with a call toward a common unifying understanding of mission found in discipleship. Combating the internal and external unconventional attacks in the twenty-first century will benefit from American evangelicalism having a clear unified understanding of this mission.

Definition of Multidirectional Mission

As mentioned in chapter 1, *multidirectional mission* is not an official term found in military doctrine or Christian theology. However, it is the position of this thesis that the following definition is beneficial in understanding the GWOT and SOF missions, and equally helpful for conceptualizing God's mission for his church. Moving forward, a *multidirectional mission* is defined as a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts.

Multidirectional missions will inevitably possess a *complex end state* that demands personnel, equipment, and resourcing to operate at high competency and high

capacity to achieve success. For example, the GWOT's goal is to combat terrorism both unilaterally and as a cohesive coalition across the globe.²² This goal requires extensive analytical consideration in determining who qualifies as a terrorist, what measure of threat warrants kinetic action, and how to execute that action within the sovereign borders of other nations with minimal to zero effect on civilian populous. The end state is also seemingly elusive as multi-national generations will continue to rise over time that produce terrorists who threaten liberty with acts of terror.

Due to the nature of the end state, mission objectives are continually *emerging*. The immediate objective of GWOT was to attack al-Qaeda's and the Taliban's grip on Afghanistan, disrupt revenue generation, and eliminate training facilities.²³ Yet, within this objective was the principal goal to capture or kill UBL.²⁴ These objectives are specific and necessary to enable surgical operations, such as Operation Anaconda, to dismantle and deter al-Qaeda's capabilities to attack the United States homeland again. However, as objectives are accomplished, new ones will develop and emerge as the next threat surfaces and requires a response.

As objectives emerge, they will demand a diverse *spectrum of alternating activities and efforts* to achieve success. Each new objective requires its own execution tactics. Certain objectives require non-kinetic responses, meaning mission success does not demand lethal or physical destructive consequences. An example of this is humanitarian assistance and educational systems built in effort to restore liberty to the Afghan people. However, in situations such as Operation Anaconda, other objectives dictate the full use of combat power to achieve every possible tactical advantage to ensure victory over the enemy. As specific objectives are identified, activities and efforts are tailored to increase the likelihood of success.

²² US Department of State, "Global War on Terror."

²³ US Department of State, "Global War on Terror."

²⁴ US Department of State, "Global War on Terror."

Executing a multidirectional mission is progressively more complicated when geographic territory expands. A commander in charge of a Forward Operating Base (FOB) will have considerably less difficulty navigating his mission than the theater commander in charge of military forces in multiple countries. It is at this point that the levels of warfare and chain of command provide a helpful structure for planning, executing, and evaluating multidirectional missions. The levels are strategic, operational, and tactical. Strategic missions are more complex than operational, and the same relationship is found between operational and tactical. Each level of warfare forms a hierarchical structure with commanders at different echelons to allow leaders to assess the success or failure of activities and efforts in accomplishing the mission's immediate objectives.²⁵ Consider this structure within the context of Operation Anaconda.

Multidirectional Mission: Operation Anaconda

Operation Anaconda is a tactical battle that resulted from a strategic mission. The signing of the Joint Resolution by President Bush on September 18, 2001 created a strong running current through commanders at all levels of warfare that resulted in the invasion of Afghanistan, the creation of Operation Anaconda, and tactical combat encounters in the Shah-i-Khot Valley.²⁶ Traditionally, mission objectives travel from strategic to tactical in the levels of warfare. Sometimes a fourth level, known as political, is added, but for the purposes of this effort, the traditional three are sufficient for building a framework. The logic in this structure is that policy informs strategy, strategy shapes operations, and operations authorize and direct tactical encounters. At each echelon, commanders develop their own mission that satisfies an objective of the higher-level

²⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Publication 3-05: Special Operations," July 16, 2014, http://edocs.nps.edu/2014/July/jp3_05.pdf, 10.

²⁶ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, "The 9/11 Commission Report," accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-911REPORT/pdf/GPO-911REPORT.pdf>, 330-34.

mission and directs their subordinates' activities and efforts to achieve a portion or the entirety of that objective. This framework helps commanders “visualize a logical arrangement and synchronization of operations, allocate resources, and assign tasks to the appropriate command.”²⁷ The common term for this logical arrangement is *operational nesting*.

Operation Anaconda's operational nesting fell under Operation Enduring Freedom, which was officially formalized in October of 2001. Operation Enduring Freedom's mission was to eliminate al-Qaeda's and the Taliban's control on Afghanistan. This operational mission was the chief objective in GWOT's strategical mission.²⁸ In March of 2002, Operation Anaconda had a specific geographically constrained mission: “Destroy or capture al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in mountain positions located in the Shahi-Khot Valley and Arma Mountains southeast of the city of Zurmat.”²⁹ This mission provided tactical subordinate commanders specific objectives within the valley to plan, synchronize, and execute their corresponding activities and efforts. In short, the mission was clear.

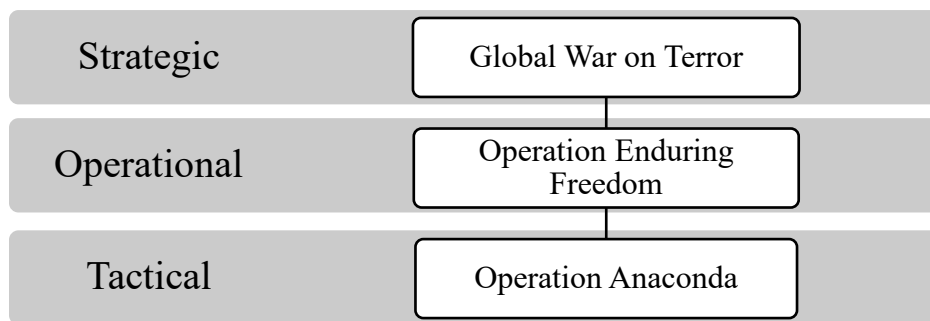


Figure 1. Levels of warfare example

²⁷ *Army Doctrine Publication 1-01, Doctrine Primer* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2019), 4-7.

²⁸ Nese F. DeBruyne and Anne Leland, “American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics,” Congressional Research Service, 2015, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1013824.pdf>.

²⁹ Kugler, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 1.

Initial planning for Operation Anaconda began with Joint Special Operations Task Force North (JSOTF-N) under the command of Colonel John Mulholland.³⁰ However, in February of 2002, responsibility of the operation was turned over to Major General Franklin Hagenbeck and the 10th Mountain Division, forming the essence of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Mountain.³¹ While General Hagenbeck assumed overall command of the operation, the air component retained authority to the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) Lieutenant General Michael Moseley. General Hagenbeck assumed responsibility to unite the commanders and delivered a cohesive plan for subordinate units to execute utilizing the hammer and anvil maneuver.

Intelligence estimated that Operation Anaconda would have three days of light fighting. Instead, the valley shook with the impact of precision guided munitions, was illuminated by flares and belt fed weapon's tracer rounds, and roared from the sounds of rotor blades and jet engines for seventeen days. The hammer, the four-hundred-man Afghan force, got spread out on the way to their objective, encountered an accidental fratricide incident, and was further disheartened by an air mission that failed to hit all the objectives along their route. Once the Afghan vehicle element encountered enemy mortar fire, they stalled and eventually began retreating. Now without the partner force's hammer, commanders determined to continue the mission of riding the valley of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters with just the helicopter assault force—it was all anvil. After an impressive Apache helicopter gun run, the first wave of the assault force landed. General Hagenbeck and his subordinate commanders quickly came to terms with the ferocity of the fighting force in the valley. The first helicopter assault force elements encountered heavy fire exiting the aircraft and were immediately pinned down, unable to maneuver or advance.

³⁰ David Lyle, *Operation Anaconda: Lessons Learned, or Lessons Observed?* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Command and General Staff College, 2009), 5.

³¹ Lyle, *Operation Anaconda*, 5.

Within twenty-four hours, commanders were ready to call off the entire operation and exfiltrate all remaining personnel.³² Then something remarkable happened.

Pete Blaber, the tactical commander for the Advanced Force Operations (AFO) teams under Task Force 11, got on the radio with General Hagenbeck and stated, “I believe that pulling out would be a huge mistake; the AFO teams are decimating the enemy and continue to hold almost all of the key terrain around the valley.”³³ Blaber understood the mission and took the initiative. Special Operations teams had infiltrated the enemy’s environment undetected, positioned themselves on dominate terrain, eliminated enemy fortified observation posts, and adapted to the situation by utilizing the spectrum of their training to direct precision airstrikes against enemy fighting positions.³⁴ Once the plan began to fail, Special Operations units adapted with the Air Force’s nearly two hundred aircraft to deliver precision violence that changed the momentum of the fight and ultimately accomplished the mission.

Blaber adaptatively utilized his reconnaissance force to gain the competitive advantage when the mission appeared to be lost. When he communicated his forces activities to General Hagenbeck, a remarkable thing happened—the General changed his mind.³⁵ He continued the assault. Blaber received the trust of his commander because he aligned his forces and their activities and efforts to accomplishing the mission’s end state rather than trying to execute a plan that clearly wasn’t working. The operation continued for sixteen more days until the last Taliban and al-Qaeda fighter was removed from the valley.

The concept of multidirectional mission and need for clarity is neatly seen in the layers of warfare, the operational nesting of Operation Anaconda, and the adaptation of

³² Blaber, *Men, Mission, and Me*, 268.

³³ Blaber, *Men, Mission, and Me*, 270.

³⁴ Blaber, *Men, Mission, and Me*, 270.

³⁵ Blaber, *Men, Mission, and Me*, 270.

Blaber to accomplish the mission. The complex end state of the GWOT identified the geographical location of Afghanistan as a top priority to counter global terrorism threats to coalition partners. Within Afghanistan, the greatest immediate danger was the al-Qaeda and Taliban build up in the Shah-i-Khot Valley and Arma Mountains. This threat was delegated to General Hagenbeck and other commanders with the specific objective of devising and executing a plan to remove those entities from the valley. Everything in the warfare levels is related to mission—because the mission determines the engagement plan. A clear mission enables a cohesive plan as well as the ability to adapt when the plan encounters resistance. This conceptual framework provides a helpful, and albeit convicting parallel when considering God’s multidirectional mission for his church within American evangelicalism’s current context.

Multidirectional Mission: The Church

The twenty-first century American evangelical church is experiencing a crisis of mission. Before the concept of multidirectional mission or levels of warfare can be useful, the church must first face the missional confusion of the time. Evangelicals need to answer this question: what is the mission of the church?

The current political and racial fracture in America, extenuated by the global pandemic, is revealing of how prevalent this divide is within the church. On October 24, 2021, Peter Wehner, in the Ideas section of *The Atlantic*, wrote an article detailing this split within evangelicalism. After interviewing dozens of pastors, investigating the conflict at McLean Bible Church over an elder nomination, and looking into the rifts within the Southern Baptist Convention, Wehner confidently concluded this increasing discord is due to political affiliation rather than doctrinal position.³⁶ Intriguingly, Wehner finds his scapegoat for this political estrangement in the colorful figure of former President Donald

³⁶ Peter Wehner, “The Evangelical Church Is Breaking Apart: Christians Must Reclaim Jesus from the Church,” *The Atlantic*, October 24, 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/10/evangelical-trump-christians-politics/620469/>.

Trump, and argues that the church is taking on the aggressive and divisive example of the former President rather than Christ.³⁷ Throughout the article, individual church member's political affiliation is trumped as the primary divisive problem within churches.³⁸ Wehner does not attempt to hide his bias. He is not conservative Christian's friend; however, even if Wehner's assessment is marginally true, and the American evangelical church is imaging the former President rather than its risen Savior, that outward acting manifestation is not merely political, but revealing of a deeply held doctrinal belief—a belief centering on the mission of the church. Just like the military levels of warfare, what a church believes about its mission will determine how it engages the world.

In *Kingdom Conspiracy*, Scot McKnight attempts to pull together the fractured theological positions of the “pleated pants” and “skinny jeans,” which are his two caricatures of the generational divide in beliefs about the church's mission. McKnight argues that the political rifts in churches spawn from a flaw in many Christian's understanding of God's mission for his kingdom.³⁹ He suggests that Christians seeking to make change through the political process are functionally believing in an “eschatology of politics,”⁴⁰ which he claims is like Constantinianism and on par with idolatry.⁴¹ McKnight perceives more in the term *kingdom* than may be biblically defensible, but he understands Scripture as indicating the church's primary mission is to make disciples.⁴² While McKnight might see the church's mission in tandem with a specific nuance of

³⁷ Wehner, “The Evangelical Church Is Breaking Apart,” para. 29.

³⁸ Wehner, “The Evangelical Church Is Breaking Apart,” paras. 12-31.

³⁹ Scot McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014), 5.

⁴⁰ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, 62.

⁴¹ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, 62.

⁴² McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy* 102.

kingdom, he acknowledges the church’s mission has distinct responsibilities for the corporate body and separate responsibilities for the individual member.⁴³

Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, in *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, hold to a different understanding of *kingdom* than McKnight, but find in Scripture a similar distinction between the congregation and individual for missional responsibility. They start with the following question, “What is the specific task or purpose that the Church *is sent into the world to accomplish?*”⁴⁴ The biblical answer they argue for is simple—make disciples.⁴⁵ Expanding further, DeYoung and Gilbert give this definition: “The mission of the Church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into Churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father.”⁴⁶ Arguing from Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 13:10; 14:9, Luke 24:44-49, and Acts 1:8, the authors state the church’s mission revolves around disciple making, proclamation, church planting, and church establishment rather than “kingdom building”—often pragmatically defined as humanitarian aid or justice work.⁴⁷ DeYoung and Gilbert contend that it is the local congregation’s mission to make the name of Jesus known among the nations so that by believing, they may have life in his name.⁴⁸

Mark Dever angles with a slightly wider aperture than DeYoung and Gilbert in his book *The Church*. Dever sees the mission of the church as “the worship of God, the

⁴³ McKnight, *Kingdom Conspiracy*, 99-123.

⁴⁴ Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 20, emphasis original.

⁴⁵ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 63.

⁴⁶ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church?*, 62.

⁴⁷ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 231.

⁴⁸ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 249.

edification of the Church, and the evangelization of the world.”⁴⁹ He articulates well that the primary vertical purpose of worshiping God demands the horizontal functions of evangelizing the lost and edifying the body.⁵⁰ Similar to McKnight, DeYoung, and Gilbert, Dever sees these horizontal functions as primarily found in disciple making.⁵¹ Interestingly distinct, while Dever does see Scripture as separating the responsibilities for the institutional church and individual members, he embraces some ambiguity that the institutional church not only may, but at times should, be involved in mercy and justice ministries. In one place Dever states, “Christian congregations have both the liberty and responsibility to take prudent initiatives in advocating mercy or justice in our community as opportunities arise, perhaps collectively in the name of the Church and certainly as individuals in the name of Christ.”⁵² He asserts the church’s main responsibility is gospel proclamation, for the non-Christian’s greatest need is the gospel of Jesus Christ.⁵³ However, his biblical understanding of the church’s mission appears to allow for pastoral discernment, as mercy or justice matters may demand the church’s institutional engagement.

Tim Keller argues for a theological and practical middle ground to the church’s mission in his book *Center Church*. Keller interacts with prominent scholars and historical church models regarding the church’s mission and its involvement in culture. Walking through different held positions, he contends for a balanced perspective that meets each model somewhere in the middle, and comments that Christians must do more than

⁴⁹ Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 69.

⁵⁰ Dever, *The Church*, 74.

⁵¹ Dever, *The Church*, 74-75.

⁵² Dever, *The Church*, 80.

⁵³ Dever, *The Church*, 82-83.

evangelism if they desire to influence western societies.⁵⁴ And yet, Keller critiques “missional Church” positions that abandon biblical proclamation in favor of mercy and justice activities.⁵⁵ In an interview with Trevin Wax on *Center Church*, Keller asserts, “I’m good with saying that the mission of the Church is basically to ‘make disciples’ . . . but I might differ with others on what those disciples look like.”⁵⁶ For Keller, truly disciplined people will be involved with more than just evangelism, but also in loving their neighbors and engaging in mercy and justice ministries.⁵⁷ Admittedly, Keller does embrace a similar dichotomy as McKnight, Dever, DeYoung, and Gilbert—namely that the church’s mission is partitioned between institution and individual member.⁵⁸ However, that dichotomy acknowledges the mandate of the institutional church to equip the individual member for missional living in the local community.⁵⁹

Within the diversity of these theologians and pastors is an agreed upon dichotomy within the mission of the church—individual and institution. This dichotomy can be synthesized into the following definition for the mission of the Church: to live as (individual) and to make disciples (institution) of Jesus Christ. Identifying individual and institutional responsibilities does not preclude the church from engaging culture, but rather implies the institution’s priority tasks are proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and discipleship.⁶⁰ Jesus gives the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20 and Luke 24:44-49 a clear

⁵⁴ Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 185-89.

⁵⁵ Keller, *Center Church*, 258-61.

⁵⁶ Trevin Wax and Tim Keller, “Gospel, Culture, and Mission: An Interview with Tim Keller,” The Gospel Coalition, October 10, 2012, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/gospel-culture-and-mission-an-interview-with-tim-keller/>.

⁵⁷ Wax and Keller, “Gospel, Culture, and Mission.”

⁵⁸ Wax and Keller, “Gospel, Culture, and Mission.”

⁵⁹ Keller, *Center Church*, 274.

⁶⁰ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 45.

mission that is only possible because it is based on his authority and ability to perform it. In Acts 1:8, the risen Messiah says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The mission involves Spirit-empowered geographical expansion within the specific context of being a witness to Christ’s truth that the nations might believe and have life in his name.⁶¹ Yet, within this mission of disciple making is the congruent call of individual disciple’s living in specific contextual societies. Thus, in some sense, a not-so-neat dichotomy exists within the church’s mission. Institutionally, the church’s mission is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ through faithfully proclaiming his Word with geographically expanding purpose. Individually, each disciple not only builds up and serves the church, but also goes and actively engages culture according to God’s Word. God’s mission for his church is multidirectional.

The Mission: Living as and Making Disciples

As review, a *multidirectional mission* is defined as a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. To identify a multidirectional mission a person can ask three overarching questions: (1) what is the end state?, (2) what objectives achieve the end state?, and (3) what things need to be done to accomplish the objectives? Mission development will be covered in further detail in subsequent chapters. For now, God’s mission for the church is considered multidirectional.

In this current age, God’s mission for his church has a complex end state: living as and making disciples.⁶² The process of living as and making disciples requires an act of God. Ephesians 2:1-10 explains how believers move from spiritual death into

⁶¹ DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*, 249.

⁶² This is not to be confused with the eternal state of the church, but rather an expression of what Christians should be striving after during this present time in history.

spiritual life by nothing other than the grace and goodness of God as a gift. Yet, within the profound mystery of God's sovereignty and human responsibility, Romans 10:14 is clear that without someone proclaiming God's Word, people will not believe. Romans 8:1 states there is no more condemnation for those in Christ, and yet, disciples walk in the sanctification process, wrestling with a fallen world, sinful impulses, and a propensity to wander from their savior's teaching. The point is the church never moves past the mission to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ. The process of making disciples will take all the church's energy, time, resources, and efforts. Even when the church has exhausted every intentional moment, the remaining work will still be immeasurable. Thus, the temptation to drift to another end state, such as justice and mercy focuses or political petitioning, is enticing because visible change may be seen in timely socio-economic or socio-political contexts. While individual disciples are called to witness and act in these contextual spaces for the common good of all people for the glory and praise of God, the end state of the church is not re-creation, it is to see God make people into a new creation. The institutional church must be hyper focused on the mission's end state of living as and making disciples of Jesus until Jesus comes back or the disciples go to him.

The complex end state of discipleship has emerging objectives based on the context of local congregations. Acts outlines how the beginning objectives were mainly geographical gospel proclamation as depicted in the preaching of Peter in Jerusalem, Philip in Samaria, and Paul on his missionary journeys. Even within his missionary journeys, Paul kept the specific objective of getting to Rome to preach the gospel at the forefront of his thinking (Acts 25:10-11; 26:30-32; Rom 1:11-13). However, as local churches formed, new objectives emerged. Paul's epistles to the various churches highlight discipleship concerns with pastoral leadership, preaching, infiltration of false teaching, pagan immorality, end times disagreements, food and dietary customs, and a reminder to live peaceably within the larger societal community (Rom 13:1; 1 Cor 1:10-17; 3:1-9; 8:1-3; Gal 1:6-7; Eph 6:5-9; Titus 3:1). Paul's epistles varied in content based upon the unique

context of each local congregation. As both Dever and Keller conclude, with admitted different nuance, the local church's objectives are mostly governed by discipleship focused principles.⁶³ For example, Keller holds that local congregations must equip disciples to counter-cultural idolatry with gospel truth.⁶⁴ Likewise, Dever appeals to nine guiding marks for the church that lead, train, and equip disciples, with the foremost being expositional preaching.⁶⁵ Dever and Keller are identifying local congregation objectives to achieve the end state of helping God's people live and make disciples in their contexts. For all local churches, as discipleship concerns arise, whether geographical, theological, or ecclesiological, congregations will identify objectives to achieve the mission of living as and making disciples in their context.

Each identified objective will require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts to achieve the end state of discipleship. This is evidenced by the diversity of giftings the Spirit pours out upon the church and the numerous ways and contexts in which those gifts are employed. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 lay out several lists of spiritual giftings, including prophesy, faith, teaching, hospitality, service, generosity, leadership, exhortation, and mercy. These gifts are to be used in activities and efforts to encourage and equip the church in achieving emerging objectives, thereby fulfilling its mission of living as and making disciples of Christ. While these efforts may look like many things, including foreign missions, church planting, or pastoring, they can also be biblical multimedia content, business as mission, youth outreach programs, service groups for the poor, intentional small groups, formal counseling, and many other ministries.

In this construct, God's mission for his church is multidirectional, having a complex end state, emerging objectives, and a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. The directional dichotomy between the responsibilities of the individual disciple and

⁶³ Keller, *Center Church*, 272-73; Dever, *The Church*, 83.

⁶⁴ Keller, *Center Church*, 272-73.

⁶⁵ Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 63-68.

institutional local church must be properly understood, communicated, aligned, and practiced by local church leaders if the American evangelical church is to increase its advantage in combating the emerging threats of the twenty-first century. However, before moving on to discuss potential leadership styles and principles for increasing the advantage to achieve mission success, it is necessary to further nuance the church's missional end state. Specifically, the church should clarify what is meant by the term *disciple*—because the mission determines the engagement plan.

Definition of Disciple

Imagine if the executing elements of Operation Anaconda had different definitions and understandings for Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters. Conceptualize the sheer multiunit destructive confusion and mayhem that would follow as element leaders attempted to engage enemy combatants only to have their subordinate units tell them that what they are targeting is not meeting their definition of the enemy. Think of a Joint Terminal Attack Controller trying to call for Close Air Support in an urgent fire mission only to hear over the radio that the pilot does not see any enemy matching the descriptions given to them within their vicinity. Ridding the valley of Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters is an impossible mission if there is no clear definition for Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters that is commonly understood to all operating units.

The twenty-first century fractures and challenges in American evangelicalism require local congregations to refocus on leading God's multidirectional mission. Though even if American evangelical churches can agree that God's mission for his church is to live as and make disciples, there still needs to be a clear understanding of what that disciple is and how discipleship is accomplished. In 1992, Michael Wilkins wrote *Following the Master*, and summarized the discipleship situation this way:

In the last twenty-plus years, a virtual flood of discipleship studies has swept over the Church, yet people may be more confused now than ever. The reason? No consensus reigns in understanding what Jesus was doing and in what we should be

doing in making disciples. What is a disciple of Jesus? What should we be like as disciples?⁶⁶

Wilkins identifies the five held models for discipleship: disciples are learners, disciples are committed believers, disciples are ministers, disciples are converts and discipleship comes later, and disciples are converts who are in process of discipleship.⁶⁷ Thirty years later, similar models continue to be perpetuated that are causing mission confusion and hindering American evangelicalism's competitive advantage in executing its mission.

Disciples Are Learners

The first model defines a disciple as those who puts themselves under a teacher for learning without specifically denoting anything explicitly Christian.⁶⁸ This perspective asserts the lexical definition of follower or learner is the extent of the term's meaning, citing the disciples who turned away from Jesus in John 6:66 and Judas as evidence for the definition's implication constraint.⁶⁹ New versions of this model tend to equate the term *discipleship* with *mentorship*.

Robby Gallaty wanders into and out of this model in his book *Growing Up*, but appears to mostly exit it in his later work *Rediscovering Discipleship*. In *Growing Up*, he equates disciple with the contextual parallel of mentee and discipler with mentor.⁷⁰ He states his position plainly: "The first and foremost way to make disciples is to become a disciple, and the only way to teach others effectively is to continue as a lifelong learner."⁷¹ Gallaty focuses on the lexical definition of *learner*, which allows him to contextualize the

⁶⁶ Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 25.

⁶⁷ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 25-34.

⁶⁸ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 26.

⁶⁹ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 26.

⁷⁰ Robby Gallaty and Randall Collins, *Growing Up: How to Be Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2013), introduction, sec. 6, para. 2, Kindle.

⁷¹ Gallaty and Collins, *Growing Up*, introduction, sec. 7, para. 6.

practice neatly into the modern uses of *mentor* and *mentee*.⁷² However, several years later, in *Rediscovering Discipleship*, he appears to remove the mentor and mentee language while maintaining a measure of its contextual pragmatism. Here, Gallaty asserts that the call to be a learner and follower of Christ is not merely to study theology, but to conform oneself to the person of Christ.⁷³ He defines *discipleship* as “intentionally equipping believers with the Word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ. When people become disciples, they learn what Jesus said and live out what Jesus did (Matt. 28:19-20).”⁷⁴ In this later position, Gallaty appears to drift between the second and fourth models.

Wilkins exposes this view as incomplete due to basic internal biblical evidence on the use of the term *disciple*. First, Scripture uses the term to denote more than learners but also adherents to a movement or prophet as with the disciples of John in Matthew 9:14. Second, Acts 11:26 uses *disciple* to simply designate all Christians in a geographical area.⁷⁵ These two observations clearly indicate more than a generic learner and requires more than the modern understandings of mentor and mentorship.

Disciples Are Committed Believers

In this view, disciples are committed believers who have chosen to follow Jesus as Lord rather than merely being saved.⁷⁶ Those who hold to this understanding affirm “not all people saved are disciples, but all disciples are saved.”⁷⁷ The natural implication is that there are at least two spiritual levels within the church: disciples and

⁷² Gallaty and Collins, *Growing Up*, chap. 2, sec. 2, para. 5.

⁷³ Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus’ Final Words Our First Work* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 79.

⁷⁴ Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship*, 155.

⁷⁵ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 27.

⁷⁶ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 27.

⁷⁷ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 27.

ordinary or mediocre Christians.⁷⁸ This view continues to find favor in contemporary American evangelical writing.

Randy Pope, founding pastor of Perimeter Church and author of *Insourcing*, argues along this model's understanding of discipleship. Pope recognizes the disparity of the lexical and contextual use of the term *disciple* in the Scriptures.⁷⁹ Therefore, he argues for the phrase "life on life missional discipleship" as best representing God's call to make disciples.⁸⁰ Within Pope's definition is a lack of clarity on when someone transitions into being a disciple. However, his end state goal is clear: "Mature, equipped disciples who invest in the maturing and equipping of other disciples."⁸¹ Pope and Perimeter Church execute this mission by encouraging members to make a one-year commitment in a Journey Group, where they walk through specific curriculum that includes their five foundations of Truth, Equipping, Accountability, Mission, and Supplication (TEAMS).⁸² While Pope never specifically declares a disciple to be a committed Christian, the pragmatic implication of his definition of *discipleship* and *discipleship programming* suggests alignment with this model.

While there are several difficulties in this view, the most prominent is misunderstanding Jesus's explicit discipleship messages.⁸³ Luke 14:25-33 is aimed not at a group of believers but a large crowd, and Jesus commands them to count the cost of discipleship prior to following him.⁸⁴ Again, in John 8:31, Jesus responds to those who

⁷⁸ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 28.

⁷⁹ Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship back to the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 107-9.

⁸⁰ Pope, *Insourcing*, 109.

⁸¹ Pope, *Insourcing*, 136.

⁸² Pope, *Insourcing*, 163.

⁸³ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 28.

⁸⁴ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 28.

claim to believe in him with the additional challenge of abiding in his Word as proof of true discipleship. Lastly, the implication of two classes—disciple and Christian—being present within the body of Christ is non-existent in Scripture.⁸⁵

Disciples Are Ministers

The perspective that disciples are ministers holds that disciples are called out from mere church attendance into ministry positions.⁸⁶ The textual interpretation of this view sees the crowds in the Gospels as believers and the disciples as the ministers or specialized group to serve the wider community.⁸⁷ This perspective is challenged often and appears significantly less prevalent within contemporary American evangelicalism, although there still exists a small minority of adherents.

Dennis McCallum and Jessica Lowery drift between the second and third models in *Organic Discipleship*. They argue, “One of the main goals of discipleship is to provide the body of Christ with leaders and role models who can teach others and lead Bible studies, ministry teams, or home groups.”⁸⁸ McCallum and Lowery see discipleship as creating leaders for the church. Discipleship for these authors solves the church attendee problem. Too many people just want to attend and not get involved. They assert that is why there is discipleship—to help people move to leadership, action, and service.⁸⁹ In their view, disciples are always authentic Christians, but not all Christians are disciples, nor will every Christian become a disciple.⁹⁰ Church leaders are thus persuaded in *Organic*

⁸⁵ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 28-29.

⁸⁶ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 29.

⁸⁷ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 29.

⁸⁸ Dennis McCallum and Jessica Lowery, *Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership* (Norfolk, VA: New Paradigm, 2006), chap. 2, sec. 3, para. 2, Kindle.

⁸⁹ McCallum and Lowery, *Organic Discipleship*, chap. 2, secs. 3-5.

⁹⁰ McCallum and Lowery, *Organic Discipleship*, chap. 3, sec. 4, para. 2.

Discipleship to maximize their leadership recruitment, training, and retainment by identifying and mentoring authentic Christians into disciples.

This view has the same problems as the second by creating separate spiritual classes within the church. Additionally, this view has the added difficulty of not clarifying the distinction between the twelve as disciples and the twelve as apostles.⁹¹

Disciples Are Converts; Discipleship Comes Later

The fourth view asserts that disciples are converts and discipleship comes later in a process of growth called “perfecting” or “discipleship.”⁹² A person becomes a disciple at the moment of their conversion and after this point they begin the lifelong road of growth in discipleship.⁹³ This view and the fifth are only separated by the nuance of the two-step process—becoming a disciple and subsequently later, discipleship. Within the five models Wilkins identified, the fourth and fifth are most prominent in contemporary American evangelical writings. However, identifying the specific nuance of adherents to each perspective is difficult within the highly similar use of the English language.

Jim Putman in *Real-Life Discipleship* argues for a variation of this fourth model. Putman sees all believers as being disciples of Jesus, but not all are engaged in the discipleship process—something he distinguishes with his discipleship wheel.⁹⁴ He defines a *disciple* as someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and committed to Jesus’s mission to save people from their sin.⁹⁵ However, Putman also sees the discipleship

⁹¹ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 30.

⁹² Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 30.

⁹³ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 30-31.

⁹⁴ Jim Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010), 20-21.

⁹⁵ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 32-33.

process as designed to produce church leaders from within local congregations.⁹⁶ He argues that people are willing and waiting for their pastors and church leaders to disciple them into leaders.⁹⁷ Since most churches lack methodology, Putman contends a majority of Christians are thus unequipped and waiting to begin discipleship.⁹⁸

Greg Ogden's *Discipleship Essentials*, which has sold over 300,000 copies, argues that a *disciple* is someone who responds in faith and obedience to Christ, while *discipling* is intentionally walking with others toward maturity in Christ.⁹⁹ In *Transforming Discipleship*, Ogden calls out the elephant in the room in many churches as the unstated assumption that a person can be a Christian without being a disciple.¹⁰⁰ However, when recalling his own discipleship, Ogden regretfully recalls years of wasted time where he was a converted believer but was not being disciplined—thereby acknowledging at least a practical discipleship timing gap. For Ogden, the goal of discipleship is to “grow Christians into self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰¹ While acknowledging a gap between conversion and the discipleship process, Ogden argues that churches should purposefully seek to avoid such breaks in the discipleship process if they are to maximize their effectiveness in discipling.¹⁰²

Wilkins identifies the use of the English terms *disciple*, *discipling*, and *discipleship*, as potentially problematic because they appear to argue for a separation in Jesus's commandment to make disciples and “baptizing” and “teaching” in Matthew 28:18-

⁹⁶ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 19.

⁹⁷ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 19.

⁹⁸ Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*, 22-23.

⁹⁹ Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2007), 17, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2016), 49.

¹⁰¹ Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 57.

¹⁰² Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 124-30.

20. The linguistic nuance might seem erratic, but it has significant connotations. A potential pitfall is a sincere convert can be comforted by their status as disciple without motivation or resolve toward discipleship. And yet pragmatically, it seems entirely odd to think it possible “to be a disciple without being on the road of discipleship.”¹⁰³

Disciples Are Converts in the Process of Discipleship

The fifth and final view stresses that disciples are converts who are in the process of discipleship from the beginning of their conversion.¹⁰⁴ Wilkins notes this perspective aligns with Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s idea of cheap grace in *The Cost of Discipleship*, and Dallas Willard’s non-optional discipleship in *Spirit of the Disciplines*.¹⁰⁵ Disciple are born-again Christians who now walk the rest of their life in submission to the discipleship teachings of Christ.¹⁰⁶ Recognizing the presence of differing subtleties, the fourth and fifth models appear to be the majority positions of the American evangelical church.

Kevin Vanhoozer is the Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His recent book *Hearers & Doers* is written as a guide to help pastors think about disciple making through Scripture and doctrine. He states plainly, “A disciple is one who does not simply face a new direction but begins to walk in it. A disciple is a convert in motion, on the way.”¹⁰⁷ A disciple is a hearer and doer of Scripture because they adore the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁸ Vanhoozer often uses the modifiers *genuine*

¹⁰³ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 31.

¹⁰⁵ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 31-32.

¹⁰⁶ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 32-33.

¹⁰⁷ Kevin Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers: A Pastor’s Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019), xxv.

¹⁰⁸ Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers*, 53.

or *true* when talking about the makeup of a disciple, implying that there are ingenuine or false disciples.¹⁰⁹ However, he does not fit neatly into this one specific model. He frequently states that all people, Christian or not, are disciples, it is just a matter of whom they are following¹¹⁰—a statement best aligned with the first model. Yet, he consistently affirms, “Christlikeness is the goal of discipleship. It is not only a way of walking but a state of being.”¹¹¹ Moreover, Vanhoozer sees disciple making as a pre- and post-conversion practice best enacted by people learning Christ through the Scriptures and doctrine.¹¹² In some sense, Vanhoozer sees every human as a disciple, and yet, only genuine truly-regenerate Christians pursuing their total identity and transformation in Christ through the Scriptures and doctrine as actual disciples. Unmistakably, there appears to be a confusion of definitions.

Mark Dever, in his book *Discipling*, also seems to align with Wilkin’s fifth model. Dever is wonderfully concise and clear when he writes, “To be a Christian means to be a disciple . . . there are no disciples of Jesus who are not following Jesus.”¹¹³ For Dever, the entire Christian life is lived as a disciple—start to finish.¹¹⁴ However, like Vanhoozer, Dever switches his terminology and argues that all of humanity is a disciple. He states plainly, “To be human is to be a disciple.”¹¹⁵ This definition dualism inevitably creates confusion. Early in his book, Dever discusses “the first stage of discipling can

¹⁰⁹ Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers*, xxvi, 49.

¹¹⁰ Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers*, 126, 174, 206.

¹¹¹ Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers*, 204.

¹¹² Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers*, 6, 14-15, 25, 44, 60, 86, 130, 134, 143, 206, 212.

¹¹³ Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 15.

¹¹⁴ Dever, *Discipling*, 16.

¹¹⁵ Dever, *Discipling*, 44.

involve establishing a friendship with a non-Christian.”¹¹⁶ The implication is that discipling has something to do with pre-conversion evangelism. However, when walking his readers through practical application, he states “You should evangelize your non-Christian friends, but it is pointless to disciple them as if they are Christians. . . . You want to disciple a Christian.”¹¹⁷ Clearly, there at least appears to be some confusion within Dever’s own terminology regarding definitions.

Outside of the linguistic nuance, Wilkins notes four problems with the fifth model.¹¹⁸ First, the model does not attempt to clarify Jesus’s specific purposes during different contextual times of teaching. Second, the model confuses conversion and commitment as it does not clarify what is meant in Luke 14:25-33 regarding counting the cost. Third, these models do not attempt to clarify what is meant for the twelve as disciples and the twelve as apostles. And fourth, these models do not consider a difference in terminology between the Gospels and Acts. This leads Wilkins to argue for wholistic definitions that incorporate the contextual teachings and settings with the difficulty in morphing terminology from the Gospels to Acts. Nailing down this understanding is critical because mission success depends largely on mission clarity.

Mission Clarity

The mission determines the engagement plan. As stated in Operation Anaconda, a clear mission enables executing units skillful timely adaptation to achieve success. This will be highlighted further in the following chapters. The American evangelical church will benefit significantly from a unified understanding of its multidirectional mission’s end state. Local congregations should seek to clarify and communicate what it means to live as and make disciples—which starts first with the definition of a disciple. Wilkins’s

¹¹⁶ Dever, *Discipling*, 37.

¹¹⁷ Dever, *Discipling*, 75.

¹¹⁸ Dever, *Discipling*, 75.

biblical theology on discipleship provides clear and defensible definitions for disciple, discipleship, and discipling that navigate the textual and conceptual problems and slight linguistic nuances found in the previous five models. The more local congregations can unite on the definition of their mission, the more quickly they can adapt and combat the evolving threats of the twenty-first century.

As Vanhoozer and Dever imply, the term *disciple* has two contextual definitions—secular and Christian. In the secular context, a disciple is a committed lifelong follower of a great master or movement. In the Christian context, a disciple is “one who has come to Jesus for eternal life, has claimed Jesus as Savior and God, and has embarked upon the life of following Jesus.”¹¹⁹ If one of these components is habitually missing, then the person is not a disciple. In calling people disciples, the church is not inviting a person into something new, but rather recognizing the new creation God has already made them to be. As with the fourth and fifth models, disciples are true converts to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and thus when Jesus is talking to disciples or speaking on what a disciple is, he is talking to every believer.¹²⁰ However, unlike these models, this definition acknowledges that there are distinctions in implications for the twelve as disciples and the twelve as apostles.¹²¹ Confusion arises in this secular and Christian definition dualism when church leaders fail to specify the context of the term they are using. Saying things like “every person is a disciple,” and later arguing “to be a Christian is to be a disciple,” is puzzling. Gallaty, Vanhoozer, and Dever all soundly express that a true disciple is a genuine Christian, and yet even they leave some confusion in their writings. If the theologically-trained reader has difficulty following the different definitions for disciple, discipleship, and discipling, then one can only assume this confusion is also true of

¹¹⁹ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 40.

¹²⁰ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 46.

¹²¹ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 44-45.

American congregants. Therefore, church leaders should communicate with precise clarity the definition of disciple.

Discipleship and discipling naturally build off the definition of disciple. Wilkins smartly defines both terms within the Christian context of disciple as follows: “*Discipleship* is the ongoing process of growth as a disciple. *Discipling* implies the responsibility of disciples helping one another to grow as a disciples.”¹²² In these definitions is the implication that discipleship and discipling are distinct from evangelism. As rightly understood after Jesus’s crucifixion and ascension, discipleship and discipling involve post-conversion practices. The church does not practice non-believer discipleship, as the natural man cannot conform himself to the image of Christ.¹²³ A person must first become a disciple through faith in Jesus Christ before beginning the lifelong process of discipleship.

Thus, if the church’s mission is to live as and make disciples who come to Jesus for eternal life, claim Jesus as Savior and God, and embark upon the life of following Jesus, then the institutional responsibility of local churches is to align their emerging objectives, activities, and efforts on discipling the church and evangelizing the lost. Dever identifies Ephesians 4:15-16 and Hebrews 10:24-25 as the disciple’s responsibility to engage in discipling others in the congregation toward growth in Christ.¹²⁴ He expounds on discipling as “deliberately doing spiritual good to someone so that he or she will be more like Christ.”¹²⁵ This includes at minimum loving, praying, bearing burdens, teaching, serving, confronting, rebuking, and baptizing. The church does not move past Jesus’s command to make disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. Church leaders should consider every

¹²² Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 41.

¹²³ Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 42.

¹²⁴ Dever, *The Church*, 74-75.

¹²⁵ Dever, *Discipling*, 13.

ministry of the local church as a conduit for accomplishing God’s principle mission of living as and making disciples.

Equally within the call to make disciples is the undeniable and explicit command to evangelize. Dever rightly states that being a disciple of Jesus does not begin with something a person does, but with what Christ did. Evangelism is proclaiming the gospel. As the gospel is proclaimed, God makes the unbeliever a disciple as the unbeliever hears the gospel, repents of sin, and accepts the grace of God in faith. The discipleship process begins when a person hears Jesus’s words in Mark 8:34—“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”—and obeys them.¹²⁶

Local congregations achieve mission clarity by articulating and aligning themselves to God’s principle multidirectional mission—to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ by discipling and evangelizing. Articulating the mission begins with defining disciple, discipling, and discipleship. As church leaders and congregations align themselves to God’s principle mission, all the ministries of the church will identify objectives and conduct activities and efforts in order to live as and make disciples for Jesus.¹²⁷

Conclusion

Operation Anaconda’s clear mission within the larger framework of the GWOT enabled Coalition forces and SOF operators to quickly adapt to rapidly evolving adverse circumstances and achieve a decisive victory. When a force unifies around mission it synchronizes efforts, displaces decision making to the lowest levels possible, and enables forces to adapt faster than the enemy can act. Everything flows from mission because mission determines the engagement plan. The following chapters will further explore the events of Operation Anaconda, how SOF executes multidirectional missions, leadership

¹²⁶ Dever, *Discipling*, 15.

¹²⁷ Chap. 6 of this work will provide practical implications for what this looks like within the local church.

principles and the lessons learned at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of warfare, all to serve as a framework for conceptualizing God's mission for the church.

God's mission for his church is multidirectional, having an end state, emerging objectives, and a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. The mission's end state is for disciples to exercise their responsibilities both individually and institutionally. The American evangelical church will significantly benefit from reprioritizing its energy on articulating and adopting a united concept of this mission. And this unity begins with the definition of a disciple. As local congregations unite around a common operating picture of discipleship, they will find they are better able to adapt and combat the growing threats of the twenty-first century. Subsequent chapters will further analyze what it means for church leaders to execute this mission and how to employ SOF principles to increase their advantage.

CHAPTER 3

TAKE COMMAND: LEADING A MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION

Command is frequently associated to position. Organizational charts put this position at the top of a team, department, or company. The person filling this spot possesses positional authority and power over subordinates according to the measure of their title and structure of the organization. As a result, those in command are tempted to lean on positional authority to move their people. This type of influence is fueled by a potent mixture of power and fear. And while these types of commanders can be significantly effective at accomplishing timely tasks, they are rarely successful in accomplishing a long-term mission. Those in command of multidirectional missions cannot base their leadership execution upon the power and fear associated with their title and position. Multidirectional mission commanders accomplish their purposes by foregoing positional power in favor of organizational ownership through transformation and transaction. To *take command* means looking past a seat at the table and embracing the burden of leading people.

Prior to the execution of Operation Anaconda, the commander of the Advanced Forces Operations unit, Pete Blaber, outlined his teams three tasks: “To confirm or deny the presence of the enemy; to check that the helicopter landing zones were clear for the 10th Mountain troops; and to destroy or capture the enemy.”¹ The Delta and SEAL operators were divided into three reconnaissance elements on vital terrain in the valley ahead of the helicopter assault force to develop the situation on the ground.² Despite the

¹ Pete Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander* (New York: Berkley, 2008), 247.

² Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me*, 234-35.

constant steady stare of national assets, “none of the satellites or spy planes that scoped the area had detected or revealed any enemy activity or weapons in the mountains around the Shahi Khot.”³ The three elements clandestinely arrived at their observation posts under the cover of night and reported a different situation—the mountains were crawling with Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters equipped with small arms, machine gun fighting positions, and rocket propelled grenades. The enemy was everywhere, and they were ready for a fight.⁴

Once positioned on dominant terrain, the three teams staged to accomplish their mission. The first shots of Operation Anaconda were fired at 4:00 a.m. by Michael Goodboe, a Navy SEAL with the nickname “Goody.”⁵ The still morning silence broke when an enemy combatant exited his tent early in the morning to relieve himself and unexpectedly made eye contact with the painted-face frogman—who was expecting the unexpected. Soon the valley rocked with air strikes, explosions, and automatic machine gun tracer fire. However, things did not go as planned. Shortly after first contact, the 400-person partner force began its disheartened retreat while the helicopter assault force was bogged down by suppressing enemy fire. Amid confusion and stagnation, the reconnaissance teams utilized their competency in core activities to adapt and accomplish their mission—they found a way to win. Having received a straightforward task and purpose, the reconnaissance teams adapted to their environment, took advantage of their relative superiority, and changed the fight’s momentum in the coalition’s favor. In conjunction with the Air Force’s nearly two hundred aircraft, the three elements utilized encrypted radios to direct thousands of aerial precision munitions in historic and remarkable use of Close Air Support. The tide of the battle was beginning to turn.

³ Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me*, 255.

⁴ Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me*, 253.

⁵ Goody and Blaber were to become lifelong friends. On November 24, 2020, Goody died from injuries he sustained operating as a contractor for the Central Intelligence Agency inside Mogadishu, Somalia. Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me*, 263.

In 2022, not many Americans will blink twice upon hearing that the first shots fired in Operation Anaconda came from a special operations Navy SEAL. Nevertheless, think for a moment. Why is a Navy sailor inland over 500 miles from the nearest large body of water, fighting the Taliban and al-Qaeda with a sniper rifle in the mountains of land-locked Afghanistan? The answer to that question begins with the remarkable and unpretentious leadership of Draper Lawrence Kauffman. He was a fearless and audacious man who *took command* of his element to accomplish a mission in such a remarkable manner that he is forever known as the Godfather of the SEAL Teams and the first frogman. Kauffman is a leader who chose not to lean on the power and fear associated with his position. Instead, he embodied the components of Full Range Leadership (FRL), which proved effective in accomplishing a multidirectional mission—components that were not formally articulated until Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio wrote them down almost fifty years later. Lest one thinks Kauffmann possessed natural physical talent, his remarkable story includes being denied by the United States Navy and England’s Royal Navy for sea service because he was physically disqualified—his eyesight was horrendous. A closer look into Kauffman, the adaptation during Operation Anaconda, and leadership style of the special operations community help illustrate the importance of FRL for the contemporary context.

This chapter contends that a consequential multidirectional mission demands FRL. The mission to live as and make disciples in the twenty-first century calls for FRL. This call originates from two assumptions. First, navigating a rapidly changing and challenging environment requires leaders to develop transformational cultures that overcome these trials through passionate organizational cohesion, adaptation, and innovation.⁶ Second, the mission’s significance demands that leaders communicate,

⁶ Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio used the Organizational Description Questionnaire (ODQ) to study several organizations’ leadership styles and performance traits. They note that military units and organizations that work in demanding environments perform best when they utilize a high contrast of both transformational and transactional leadership. Meaning that leadership and management practices are

enforce performance standards, and create dynamic organizational structures.⁷ This assertion is argued from the research of Bass and Riggio on FRL and the leadership observed and researched in the Navy SEAL community. This chapter will then investigate the biblical precedence for FRL in the Scriptures and will biblically redefine FRL as reflecting the leadership style of both God and those who lead His people. The chapter concludes by challenging pastors and church leaders to cultivate biblical FRL components to effectively lead God’s mission in the twenty-first century’s challenges and trials.

What Is Leadership?

Leadership is a humbling task. Often it means exerting all of oneself to persuade another to give all of their self for something bigger than either party. The Navy SEAL Ethos spells out the elite fighting force’s leadership demands this way:

*We expect to lead and be led. In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my teammates and accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations. I will never quit. I persevere and thrive on adversity. My Nation expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight.*⁸

In this context, leadership is not optional. When people understand the gravity of the mission and the consequences of failure, they want to be led by convicted, confident, and capable leaders. The Navy SEAL community was forged in the furnace of adversity. From the beginning, the Teams sought out the hardest and harshest environments to operate. SEALs want to be in the fight—and they want to fight together. This mission-focused mentality that demands a high standard of leadership finds a parallel need in the church.

consistently high in all the components of both leadership styles. This will be further developed later in the chapter. Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio, *Transformational Leadership* (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006), 104-11

⁷ Western Governors University, “Defining Transactional Leadership,” March 10, 2021, <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/transactional-leadership2103.html>.

⁸ Naval Special Warfare Command, “Seal Ethos,” accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/SEAL-Ethos/>.

The temptation for church leaders to capitulate on biblical truth is increasing amongst American evangelicals with raising political and sociological adversity. Challenges and trials are assaulting the church with alarming speed and precision. The mission to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ in America is under an unconventional assault and the consequences are eternal. As discussed in the previous chapter, having a clear understanding of God’s multidirectional mission enables church leaders to identify objectives and assign activities and efforts to counter the enemy’s assaults while continuing to advance the mission. At this point, the practicality of mission planning, preparation, and execution is naturally appealing. Like America demanding a response in the days and weeks after September 11, it is a natural reaction to jump into mission strategy, operational development, and tactical execution when challenges present themselves. However, this moment is an excellent time for a tactical pause and operational patience. Instead of immediate action, consider a look into the leadership demands of those endowed with the responsibility and burden of commanding a multidirectional mission. A natural and logical starting point is first answering the question, *what is leadership?*

The definition of *leadership* is often associated with those who lead. Admittedly, that is unhelpful. The *Merriam-Webster* definition of “leadership” is also somewhat disappointing, which gives the definition of “the capacity to lead.”⁹ Ken Blanchard leaves the reader wanting more when he writes, “Leadership is a process of influence.”¹⁰ John Maxwell pragmatically writes, “Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.”¹¹ Fortunately, Westminster Seminary President Peter A. Lillback provides a helpful starting

⁹ Merriam-Webster, “leadership,” accessed April 18, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leadership>.

¹⁰ Ken Blanchard, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 4.

¹¹ Kevin Kruse, “What Is Leadership?,” *Forbes*, August 9, 2013, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/?sh=5e2d493c5b90>.

place in his definition of leadership, stating that it means unifying, organizing, equipping, and directing people to achieve desired results.¹² Lillback quotes J. I. Packer, who writes,

A leader is a person who can persuade others to embrace and pursue his or her own purpose; as (I think) Harry Truman once expressed it, the leader's business is to get other people to do what they do not want to do and to make them like doing it. One is only a leader if one is actually followed, just as one is only a teacher if others actually learn from one; so to be a leader one has to be able to motivate others.¹³

Leadership is moving people to accomplish a mission. But this does not happen dispassionately. Leaders operate with both conviction and strategy. As Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President, R. Albert Mohler Jr. states in *The Conviction to Lead*, “leadership is all about putting the right beliefs into action, and knowing, on the basis of convictions, what those right beliefs and actions are.”¹⁴ In military doctrine, the Army agrees with Mohler, Lillback, Packer, and Truman in its definition. The Army Leadership and the Progression states, “A leader's primary purpose is to accomplish the mission. Leadership builds and guides the effective organizations necessary to do so.”¹⁵ Yes, leadership is influencing and motivating people; and yet, leadership cannot be separated from moving people to do something—to accomplish a specific task in a certain manner.

In *The Multi-Directional Leader*, Trevin Wax argues for a more effective form of church leadership to combat the emerging threats of the twenty-first century. Wax argues that the Multi-Directional leader exercises “dexterity and discipline—a faithful versatility that challenges erroneous positions no matter where they come from, and promotes a full-orbed vision of ministry that defends the truth and protects the flock.”¹⁶

¹² Peter Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles: Leadership for Those Who Already Know Their Incompetence* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 15.

¹³ J. I. Packer, quoted in Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 15.

¹⁴ Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2012), 26.

¹⁵ *Army Doctrine Publication 1-01, Doctrine Primer* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2019), sec. 7-1.

¹⁶ Trevin Wax, *The Multi-Directional Leader: Responding Wisely to Challenges from Every Side* (Austin, TX: Gospel Coalition, 2021), 12.

This leadership style is necessary for carrying out the pastoral burdens of the care of souls, commitment to Scripture, and concern for the culture.¹⁷ Wax covers scriptural and historical support for this leadership form's effectiveness and argues that the implications are vital in the modern arena. However, he has missed something substantial. He missed his best-supporting argument for his position. God's mission for the church is *multidirectional*, hence why the church needs *multi-directional leaders*. However, even at this point, the style and benefits of what Wax intends to communicate regarding *multi-directional leadership* finds a better definition within the FRL concept.¹⁸

Full Range Leadership

FRL is proven to be a highly effective form of leadership in a wide array of organizations. Bass and Riggio present FRL as the combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles in *Transformational Leadership*. They credit the late historian and Williams College professor James McGregor Burns with the careful articulation and distinction of transformational and transactional leadership theories.¹⁹ In 1978, Burns opened his seminal book *Leadership* with the following: "One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership. . . . The crisis of leadership today is the mediocrity or irresponsibility of so

¹⁷ Wax, *The Multi-Directional Leader*, 14.

¹⁸ Wax makes this opening argument: "To be multi-directional is to lead with dexterity and discipline—a faithful versatility that challenges erroneous positions no matter where they come from, and promotes a full-orbed vision of ministry that defends the truth and protects the flock." Wax, *The Multi-Directional Leader*, 12. The dexterity and discipline Wax argues for appear to align with the components of transformational and transactional leadership styles (12). Because Wax is communicating only in the context of church leadership, multi-directional leadership seems to be its own concept (14). However, in principle, Wax's claim aligns with the fundamentals observed in FRL. The argument for versatility is similar to adaptability, a trait observed among transformational leaders (14, 18, 29, and 51). Transformational and transactional leaders also display a high capacity for personal discipline, a mark critical to what Wax argues for in a multi-directional leader (56). In summary, the foundation of what Wax wants for church leaders is already defined and supported by significant research in FRL, and by studying FRL, church leaders can learn to grow their competency and capacity in leading God's mission for His church.

¹⁹ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 16.

many of the men and women in power.”²⁰ This craving for compelling, creative, and moral leadership is again raging in the twenty-first century.²¹

While Burns focuses on transforming and transactional leadership, Bass and Riggio add Laissez Faire into the FRL theory. However, Bass and Riggio concede that the laissez faire style is suboptimal and the least effective of the three styles.²² For this reason, the definition of FRL from this point on will only refer to transformational and transactional leadership. The following sections will discuss why this leadership dichotomy in FRL best positions leaders for success in executing multidirectional missions.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Both transformational and transactional styles are highly effective forms of leadership. In the last several decades, transactional leadership has received a bad reputation. The first time I heard about transactional leadership, it was treated like a dirty word and often associated with micromanagement—slang for “my boss doesn’t trust me.” Everyone wanted to be transformational. While studies have concluded that transformational leadership is a more effective long-term leadership style, some researchers point out the practical effectiveness of transactional leadership.²³ Western Governor University posted in a leadership article that “transactional leaders work well in environments that thrive on structure and organization.”²⁴ As such, transactional leaders are exceptionally influential in organizations that deal with safety or high risk.²⁵

²⁰ James Burns, *Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 1.

²¹ Burns argues that leadership assumes a moral component, as seen in his discussion on Hitler. Burns, *Leadership*, vii-viii.

²² Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 17.

²³ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 8.

²⁴ Western Governors University, “Defining Transactional Leadership.”

²⁵ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 8.

Predictably, FRL finds a welcoming home in the military ranks, especially in the Special Operations Forces (SOF) community. FRL combines the components of these effective styles to cultivate leaders who thrive in perpetually changing and challenging environments.

Consider first transformational leadership. As mentioned, this is regarded as the more potent and effective leadership style.²⁶ Bass and Riggio define transformational leaders as “those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity.”²⁷ They, as well as other leadership scholars, identify four components of transformational leaders.²⁸

Idealized influence. In idealized influence, the leader serves as a role model for followers.²⁹ This is the lead by example leader. They are the first in and last out. A fitting example is Mel Gibson’s portrayal of Colonel Hal Moore in the movie *We Were Soldiers*: “When we go into battle, I will be the first to set foot on the field, and I will be the last to step off. And I will leave no one behind. Dead or alive, we will all come home together.”³⁰ The leader’s gallant example propels followers into action. Leaders with high idealized influence are admired and respected by their followers because their words and actions align. Most often, followers describe these leaders as those who do the right thing,

²⁶ Burns attributes the most effective form of leadership to the term “transforming” leadership. Bass uses the term “transformational” leadership, arguing it is the most effective or optimal leadership level. Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 17. Burns defines the transforming leader as one who “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (4). Transforming leaders will naturally stimulate their followers to become leaders.

²⁷ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 3.

²⁸ Bass and Riggio credit Howell and Avolio (1993), Bycio, Hackett, and Allen (1995), and Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1997) with providing critical research and studies that support the four components of transformational leadership. Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

²⁹ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

³⁰ Randall Wallace, *We Were Soldiers*, Paramount Pictures, 2002.

even when it is polarizing, demonstrating remarkable discipline and moral conduct.³¹

Leaders with idealized influence take responsibility and own their mistakes and that of the organization.

Inspirational motivation. The second component is inspirational motivation, where the leader provides “meaning and challenge to their followers’ work.”³² The day before the 2003 Iraq invasion, General Mattis displayed inspirational motivation in his all-hands message: “For the mission’s sake, our country’s sake, and the sake of the men who carried the Division’s colors in past battles—who fought for life and never lost their nerve—carry out your mission and keep your honor clean. Demonstrate to the world there is “No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy” than a U.S. Marine.”³³ Mattis ties the mission’s battle in front of his men to the profound legacy behind them and the world watching them. Transformational leaders provide an articulate vision with realistic expectations on how their followers will execute the mission. This type of leader influences others by genuinely believing that the team, group, or organization can accomplish the mission before them—and that they must. Most importantly, transformational leaders present “the why” to their followers. In the same letter, Mattis opens with “for decades, Saddam Hussein has tortured, imprisoned, raped, and murdered the Iraqi people . . . the time has come to end his reign of terror. On your young shoulders rest the hopes of mankind.”³⁴ Under inspirational leaders, followers know what they are to do and why they should do it.

Intellectual stimulation. For this third component, the leader stimulates his or her followers’ to be “innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing

³¹ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

³² Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

³³ Jim Mattis and Bing West, *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* (New York: Random House, 2021), 93.

³⁴ Mattis, *Call Sign Chaos*, 93.

problems, and approaching old situations in new ways.”³⁵ Transformational leaders engage their followers’ minds and encourage creative problem-solving. They prepare their followers with expectations to empower them to make decisions and lead. Former Task Unit Bruiser Commander, Jocko Willink, states that a decentralized command is the only effective way to lead units in rapidly changing and challenging environments.³⁶ Intellectual stimulation is a combination of providing a robust amount of training and equal or more amount of trust. Decentralized command means a commander presents his or her intent and trusts subordinates to execute that intent according to their prerogative. This trust is not handed out but earned over time. Mission success means ensuring the entire team understands their responsibilities, with the right people in the right seats. Intellectually stimulating leaders take the initiative to learn and study their people before jumping to conclusions about their performance, motivation, or capabilities. They critique in private and praise in public. Under these leaders, followers have the freedom and trust to push their decision, idea, project, or innovation to the point of success or failure so long as it focuses on furthering the mission and executing the commander’s intent.

Individualized consideration. The fourth and final component of transformational leadership, individualized consideration, is where the leader genuinely seeks followers’ success and personal achievement.³⁷ Captain B. Michael Abrashoff took command of the fleet’s worst performing ship and turned it into the best in two years—the *USS Benfold*. Reflecting on this success, he writes, “The key to being a successful skipper is to see the ship through the eyes of the crew. Only then can you find out what’s

³⁵ Mattis, *Call Sign Chaos*, 7.

³⁶ Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win* (New York: Saint Martin’s, 2017), 169-71.

³⁷ Willink and Babin, *Extreme Ownership*, 169-71.

really wrong and, in so doing, help the sailors empower themselves to fix it.”³⁸

Transformational leaders consider the perspective and ambitions of their followers. Leaders commonly practice this component by walking their organizational space, meeting with individuals, and asking questions to know their people. Once known, transformational leaders will purpose, plan, and empower their people to achieve their individual desires in order to better the entire organization.

Transactional leadership is frequently thought of as the opposite of transformational leadership. Transactional leaders motivate followers through rewards or reprimands according to their performance measures.³⁹ It is associated with strong organization, structure, and discipline. There are two commonly observed components of transactional leadership.

Contingent reward. The first component of transactional leadership is contingent reward, in which the leader assigns a reward for standard and above standard performance or reprimands for below standard.⁴⁰ Transactional leaders utilize contingent rewards organizationally to motivate and move followers to action. Contingent rewards can be an organizational practice or structure that assigns tangible rewards such as an award, promotion, or bonus for meeting performance measures. However, these rewards can also be positional or psychological and can significantly impact follower motivation if complemented with transformational leadership components.⁴¹ Within contingent reward is the potential for a conditional reprimand if performance falls below standard. Consider the transactional nature of the Navy’s Basic Underwater Demolition / SEAL (BUD/S) training school. BUD/S is arguably the most brutal and challenging military selection

³⁸ D. Michael Abrashoff, *It’s Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy* (New York: Hachette, 2002), 13.

³⁹ Abrashoff, *It’s Your Ship*, 8.

⁴⁰ Abrashoff, *It’s Your Ship*, 8.

⁴¹ Abrashoff, *It’s Your Ship*, 8.

school in the world. The program tests each candidate’s mental and physical toughness over seven months and one long week—Hell Week. While BUD/S does transform white shirt first phase students into the beginnings of Navy SEAL commandos, it does so primarily through a transactional structure—contingent reward or reprimand for performance. The only way to become a SEAL is to perform daily to the progressively harder and harder standards of BUD/S. As one clever recruiting article puts it, “BUD/S is a challenge, but if you meet it head-on with determination not to fail or quit, it will be the most rewarding time of your life.”⁴² Contingent reward sets performance standards and outlines what reward is given when the standards are met or exceeded. This simple exchange of performance for reward is fundamental to transactional leadership.

Management by exception. The second component of transactional leadership is management by exception, which can be found either as an active or passive component.⁴³ For FRL purposes, I will focus on the active component.⁴⁴ In active management by exception, leaders observe, assess, and enforce the standards and structures of the organization to achieve optimal performance in furthering the mission. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Mattis was convinced that to successfully accomplish his mission, he needed all his divisions to execute with high operational tempo—all in, all the time.⁴⁵ Within striking distance of Baghdad and facing two whole Iraqi Royal Guard opposition divisions, Mattis assessed his 1st Division was letting up. Mattis ordered the commander on a helicopter and met him in his tent. When asked why he was letting up,

⁴² Stew Smith, “All You Want to Know about BUD/S Training,” Military.com, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.military.com/military-fitness/navy-special-operations/buds-warning-order#:~:text=This%20warning%20order%20is%20a,Underwater%20Demolition%2FSEAL%2C%20training.>

⁴³ Smith, “BUD/S Training.”

⁴⁴ Passive managers only address performance shortfalls once they appear and cause issues within the organization. The passive manager motto, is “If it isn’t broke, don’t fix it.” Passive management by exception is widely regarded as unhelpful if not hurtful to organizational performance, navigating challenging environments, and overall follower satisfaction.

⁴⁵ Mattis, *Call Sign Chaos*, 104.

the commander expressed reluctance to lose more of his men by pushing at such a hard pace. Mattis relieved the commander on the spot, noting that the commander was an excellent and disciplined officer but unable to execute his intent when he needed him the most.⁴⁶ Active managers investigate their people's performance and look for defects to correct, suboptimal performance to improve, or inefficiencies to overcome. At times, this means surgical decisions for the betterment of the entire organization. Overall, this component centers on culture, processes, and production—how the organization accomplishes its mission.

Bass and Riggio argue that transformational and transactional augmentation propel an organization into better performance, higher mission effectiveness, and overall professional satisfaction among personnel.⁴⁷ As more organizational researchers are identifying, there are reasonable correlations between leadership roles, organizational performance, and personnel's job satisfaction.⁴⁸ Organizations with transformational leaders have more satisfied followers than those without.⁴⁹ As such, followers are more committed to their respective roles, leading to higher performance levels.⁵⁰ The natural question is, *what about organizations that have to execute consequential high-risk multidirectional missions?* Is FRL just as effective in these organizations? A closer look into the history and progression of Navy SEAL Teams suggests it is highly effective.

⁴⁶ Mattis, *Call Sign Chaos*, 105.

⁴⁷ Mattis, *Call Sign Chaos*, 16.

⁴⁸ Angelo Kinicki and Mel Fugate note a modest correlation between observed job satisfaction and organizational performance. Both researchers acknowledge that many personal factors make drawing specific conclusions difficult. However, by and large, professionally satisfied employees perform better for the organization. Additionally, employees under transformational leaders tend to have higher job satisfaction than employees led by transactional leaders. Angelo Kinicki and Mel Fugate, *Organizational Behavior: A Practical, Problem-Solving Approach* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2018), 92-102.

⁴⁹ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 41.

⁵⁰ Bass and Riggio mention several studies in chaps. 3-4 of *Transformational Leadership*. The overall conclusion from private corporations, businesses, and other studied organizations is that FRL is observably effective at achieving the organization's objectives. For further detail into these studies, see Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 19-56.

FRL in the Navy SEAL Teams

Naval Special Warfare starts with a leader who acutely demonstrates FRL—Draper Lawrence Kauffman. In 1933, the soon-to-be Godfather of the SEAL Teams and first-ever frogman graduated from the US Naval Academy with zero desire to do anything special on land.⁵¹ Instead, Kauffman planned to follow in his father’s footsteps and command a USS destroyer. Nevertheless, upon graduation, he was handed his diploma and a physical disqualification from the Navy—all in one moment, his naval aspirations were crushed. After six years of employment and one overseas stint in Europe, Kauffman was compelled to serve. He chose to volunteer in the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps, where he had to pay a small fortune just to take orders from the French. On the European frontier as an ambulance driver, he observed only one unit that seemed worth anything, the *Corps Franc*. This entire volunteer group was as fierce as it was exclusive. They fought with indefatigable determination. If one man got hit, the rest would risk their lives to bring him back. A transformational lesson that Kauffman would never forget—and one that led to his capture after he chose to drive eight French wounded to a hospital on the precipice of steadily advancing German infantry.

After eight weeks as a prisoner of war, Kauffman was released with a passport stamped by the Germans as “Not Valid for Travel to England.” Naturally, he refused their order. He smuggled himself in and out of various cargo ships, arriving eventually in England. By September of 1940, he began serving as a Lieutenant in Her Majesty’s Royal Navy.⁵² The only catch was that Kauffman could not serve at sea. He was not cleared for sea duty due to his poor eyesight. Ironically, the American, now British Naval Officer, decided to volunteer for one of the most dangerous jobs on land—unexploded ordinance removal. Bomb after bomb, Kauffman started to become something of a novelty. On one

⁵¹ Benjamin Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls: The Rise of the Navy SEALs* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2021), 103-4. The historical record of Kauffman recounted in this section is largely credited to the research of Milligan.

⁵² Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 108.

occasion, he was blown up while attempting to defuse a bomb that was thought to be a dud. When he came too, all he was concerned about was the status of his defusal tools. Kauffman even caught the attention of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who visited the mine disposal group to meet the young, influential, inspirational American.⁵³ However, near the end of 1941, Kauffman received orders to come home.

Cornered by Rear Admiral William Blandy, a good friend of his father, Kauffman was “invited” back into the US Navy. After defusing unexploded Japanese ordnance at Pearl Harbor, Kauffman received orders to create something entirely new—a Navy underwater demolition course. Over the next year, he sought to replicate the exclusive and determined spirit of the Corps Franc. When his first class of nineteen officers and eighty-three enlisted students arrived, he broke them up into six-man boat crews with one officer and five enlisted—just like the patrol teams of the Corps Franc. To build unit cohesion, he encouraged boat crews to create names for their teams like Heideman’s Hurricanes and Baird’s Battling Blasters.⁵⁴ He put them through it all. The cold, the heat, sleepless nights, low crawling with live gunfire overhead, and plenty of TNT exploding all over the place. Every chance he could, he instilled a sense of exclusivity and ownership that bred a community of tribal pride. Nothing solidified this as much as his one long week of misery—Hell Week. Kauffman asked the Officer of the Army Scout and Raiders to condense his eight-week conditioning course into just one week. The result was five and a half days of sleepless torture, chaffed bodies, and unrelenting agony.

Fellow officer Jimmy Warnock remembered August 1943, when Kauffman decided to volunteer to go through his own program as a student.⁵⁵ He could not even pass the eye exam. Still, no one was going to disqualify the skipper on account of poor eyesight. Kauffman was not an athlete. He was tall and gangly and not highly coordinated.

⁵³ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 110.

⁵⁴ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 114.

⁵⁵ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 116.

But he never quit. After seeing him nearly drown in completing a long ocean swim, fellow sailor, Frank Kaine, remarked, “Hell, if he can take, we can too.”⁵⁶ When his Commanding Officer heard that Kauffman’s attrition rate for the demolition school was over 40 percent, he brought him into his office and said, “I don’t think you have any idea what you are putting these men through Draper!” Chaffed and swollen, Kauffman responded with, “I do. . . . It was Hell.”⁵⁷ From the beginning, Kauffman’s leadership won him the admiration and respect of his men. He was a transformational leader who understood the necessity of a transactional organizational standard because he had seen with his eyes the bleak and demanding environment where his men were soon to go.

Kauffman’s men became known as Naval Combat Demolition Units, or NCDUs. These brave men blew apart underwater mines, steel blockade structures, and anything in the way of the allied advances during Operation Overlord. On nearly every beachhead, the first ones were Kauffman’s bold and fearless NCDUs, blowing a path for the Army to follow. But Kauffman would not be returning to the European theater. Instead, he was sent to the Pacific to lead Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner’s vision for Underwater Demolition Teams (UDTs). Some of Kauffman’s trained NCDUs were among the first UDTs, whose mission was still beginning to take shape. Initially, their role was to conduct reconnaissance on beachheads before the amphibious assault force. Armed with swim trunks, fins, a dive mask, and a knife, UDTs would swim during the day, night, under enemy fire, or harassment by sharks to identify underwater obstacles and potential hazards on the beach for the landing force.⁵⁸

One bright morning on June 14, 1944, Kauffman and his UDTs went in to scout the enemy fortified beaches of western Saipan to discover where the walls were the thinnest. At the time, Kauffman led UDT 5. The small boats maneuvered their swimmers

⁵⁶ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 116.

⁵⁷ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 116.

⁵⁸ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 154.

within five hundred yards of the beach while taking on Japanese mortar fire. They dropped them off to swim in. Using plexiglass and grease pens, the swimmers noted the beach slope, obstacles underwater, and any hazards near shore.

In some cases, Kauffman's UDTs would swim just twenty yards from shore. After picking up the swim pairs and returning to a larger vessel, Kauffman assessed the damage. UDT 5 had one killed in action and several wounded, but a swim pair of two were completely missing. Undeterred by the fully awake and infuriated Japanese mortar teams, Kauffman immediately grabbed three swimmers, climbed into a landing craft, and jetted toward the reef.⁵⁹ Since France in 1940, he learned to leave no one behind. This inspirational and influential tradition continues to this day in the SEAL teams—and one that Britt Slabinski courageously attempted to continue March 3, 2002, in the mountains of the Shah-i-Knot valley during Operation Anaconda. However, that story is for the next chapter.

The Godfather laid a foundation of transformational and transactional leadership that eventually formed Navy commandos capable of operating in any environment—the SEAL Teams. Kauffman's NCDUs combined with UDTs and eventually gave birth to Sea, Air, and Land Teams, who distinguished themselves with remarkable effectiveness in Vietnam. There they were known as the men with green faces. During this war, the SEALs' effectiveness as an amphibious force stretched well past beaches and waterways. SEALs confirmed over 600 Vietcong killed, some 300 suspected killed, and an undisclosed amount captured—the SEALs lost 46.⁶⁰ Remarkably, the President acknowledged three members of the small SEAL Teams with the Medal of Honor for extraordinary bravery and devotion to duty. After Vietnam, SEALs conducted operations in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, and Somalia. Moreover, when the nation felt the reverberations of the

⁵⁹ Milligan, *By Water Beneath the Walls*, 162.

⁶⁰ The Navy SEAL Museum, "Vietnam—The Men with Green Faces," accessed May 14, 2022, <https://www.navysealmuseum.org/naval-special-warfare/men-green-faces#:~:text=Between%201965%20and%201972%20there,Norris%2C%20and%20EM2%20Mike%20Thornton.>

Twin Towers fall, SEALs were ready to answer the call in Afghanistan, Iraq, and any nation that gave safe harbor to terrorists. Goody's opening shot of Operation Anaconda inside land locked Afghanistan is credit to a long tradition of Full Range Leaders who adapted and innovated to accomplish the mission.

It Is Effective—But Is It Biblical?

Effective leadership in the professional and SOF worlds does not necessarily make it effective in the church. Sometimes what is helpful in the world can be disastrous in the church. However, in the case of FRL, its observed effectiveness in executing a multidirectional mission is because it reflects God's leadership. Ken Blanchard, a behavior scientist, discovered after coming to Christ that everything he researched as a secular academic concerning effective leadership—mostly the components of transformational leadership—is found perfectly in Jesus.⁶¹ What researchers like Blanchard, Bass, and Riggio have identified about effective leadership are found descriptively throughout the Scriptures. God is described as both transformational and transactional in his leadership style. Moreover, the people He chooses as leaders to execute His multidirectional mission image His leadership by utilizing both styles. While the idea of FRL might have been articulated in the twentieth century, its precedent is found in the Creator.

When redefined biblically, FRL is a highly faithful and effective means for leading God's mission. Scripture describes God and His chosen leaders using transformational and transactional leadership components. Thus, biblical FRL can be redefined as, leading people to encounter and be transformed by God and join in executing His mission through transformational and transactional components.

⁶¹ Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), xii.

God's Demonstration of FRL

God uses transformational and transactional leadership components to lead his people to encounter him and execute his multidirectional mission. These leadership components are evident from Genesis to Revelation. Consider the following snapshots of how God employs each component.

Idealized influence. God transforms his people through idealized influence as he models perfect morality. In creation, he forms humanity after his image (Gen 1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). He communicated certain attributes that His people—however imperfectly—reflect back to Him for His glory. After the fall, He models for Adam and Eve the first act of grace: His unmerited divine favor by sparing their lives, giving the protoevangelium, and covering their nakedness with the first sacrifice (Gen 3:15-22). God is the perfect promise keeper (Gen 12:1-13; 15:6; Josh 21:43-45). Most significantly, He promised to send the Messiah, King Jesus. Like the Father, Jesus models truth, wisdom, faith, strength, power, purity, love, and grace (John 1:1-18). Jesus, fully God and fully man, becomes the substitutionary sacrifice because he was found blameless—perfectly obedient to His Father's law (Luke 1:35; John 8:29; 19:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5). The fierce goodness of God transforms people who encounter their creator into something new.⁶²

Inspirational motivation. God transforms His people through inspirational motivation. God is the *why* to humanity's existence. The first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism is, "What is the chief end of man?," with the response, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."⁶³ When the prophet Isaiah encounters God,

⁶² Abram the moon worshiper to Abraham the believer; Moses the terrified into Moses the bold; David the shepherd into David the King; and Paul the persecutor to Paul the missionary. As people encounter God, He changes their identity.

⁶³ The Westminster Shorter Catechism cites 1 Cor 10:31; Rom 11:36; and Ps 72:25-28. "The Westminster Shorter Catechism," accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.westminsterconfession.org/resources/confessional-standards/the-westminster-shorter-catechism/>.

he immediately says, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips” (Isa 6:1) He is terrified at the almighty’s purity, power, and presence. Nevertheless, after his sins are atoned for, he responds to God’s question of “who will go?” with, “Here I am! Send me” (Isa 6:8). His atonement and encounter with God transformed him to find his purpose in executing God’s mission. God leads His people to their *why*, producing an unnatural deep found joy in executing His multidirectional mission. Jesus gives Nicodemus the *why* when he tells him of God’s love for the world in John 3:16. Using the context of Moses and the disobedience of Israel, he reminds Nicodemus that God’s love is full of grace that forgives sins, rescues the perishing, removes condemnation, and brings about a transformational rebirth into the kingdom of God. God patiently inspires his creation to encounter and be transformed by Him and to embrace His mission in reconciling the world back to Himself.

Intellectual stimulation. God transforms His people through intellectual stimulation. While God communicates to humanity the ability to possess knowledge, only God is omniscient (1 Kgs 8:39; 1 Chr 28:9; Pss 44:21; 139:1-4; 147:5; Isa 40:28). And yet, God is patient with our imperfections. Isaiah 30:18 records the prophet’s word from the Lord: “The Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are those who wait for him.” God patiently waits amid His people’s foolishness, reminding them of his promises and faithfulness. During His public ministry, Jesus astonishes the Jewish crowds as He authoritatively questions the religious leader’s assumptions and interpretations of the Law.⁶⁴ Throughout His time with the disciples, Jesus intentionally and patiently instructed them with pointed questions that expanded their understanding of God’s truth.⁶⁵ Once

⁶⁴ Matt 3:7; 7:28-29; 9:11-14; 23:13-15, 23-25; 28:18-20; Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37; 7:28-30.

⁶⁵ Matt 13:1-23; 16:13-20; Luke 10:25-37; 22:27; John 3:10; 6:61-66; 13:1-12; 21:15-19.

regenerated, the Holy Spirit leads disciples by transforming their minds, teaching them everything necessary for truth and Godliness to execute God's mission.⁶⁶

Individualized consideration. God transforms His people through individualized consideration. No other leader considers the needs of their followers like God does. In his sovereign care, God has uniquely and purposely formed every person (Deut 32:6; Job 10:11; Ps 139:13). He individually called Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, each of the disciples, Paul, and all of His people by name. Isaiah 43:1 says, "he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.'" Jesus says in John 10:3 that "the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by *name* and leads them out." This transformative leadership is neither accidental nor flippant but thoughtfully planned. God's sovereign call is a deliberate decision made before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-5). Once transformed into a new creation, God's individual calling considers, equips, and encourages His people to utilize their unique gifting in executing His mission (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 1:26-29; 12:1-31; Phil 2:13; Eph 2:10; 4:11).

Contingent reward. God transacts with contingent reward to lead His people to Himself and transform them to execute His mission. There is little to no contest concerning God's leadership of humanity by repeatedly promising blessings to the obedient.⁶⁷ Joshua was told to meditate on the Law and "be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and you will have good success." Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" In Matthew 13:44, Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and

⁶⁶ Matt 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12; John 14:17, 26; Rom 12:1-2; 1 John 2:27.

⁶⁷ Lev 18:5; 26:3-10; Deut 6:24; 28:1-2; 30:2-10; Josh 1:8; 1 Sam 15:22; Pss 1:1-6; 119:9, 44, 59-60, 105; Prov 13:13; 16:7; Isa 1:19; 48:18; Ezek 18:21; Matt 5:1-12; Luke 11:28; John 14:21-24; 15:10-14; Rom 6:16-17; 12:1; 13:3; Eph 6:1-3; Jas 1:25; 4:4; 1 John 3:22-24; 5:3; Rev 1:3.

buys that field.” Jesus models that reward from obedience is worth the pain. The night before his crucifixion, Jesus chose to drink the Father’s cup and accomplish His will (Matt 26:36-46). Consistently, God leads His people by reminding them of His love, kindness, and blessing in obedience. However, equally, God leads His people to encounter Himself through the penalties of disobedience.

Management by exception. God transacts with management by exception. God leads His people with clear performance standards, best exemplified in the Law. As Paul argues in Galatians 3:23-25, the Law functions as a guardian that highlights sinful inefficient performance, which exemplifies one’s need for Christ. The opposing views of management by exception are either domineering micromanagement (active) or impersonal punisher (passive), but God is neither negative form. He is not absent until His people perform poorly. Nor is He hovering over His people to keep them in line. God actively uses His perfect standard to highlight sin to draw his people to Himself, so He can transform them by the grace found in Jesus Christ. This is why God’s wrath is manifested as giving people over to their sinful desires (Rom 1:18-32). God leads His people with an uncompromising perfect standard. A standard that, when rightly understood, drives a person to the cross to be transformed by Jesus (Gal 2:20).

Transformational and transactional leadership components are practical because they image how God leads His people. To an imperfect degree, God’s chosen leaders utilize these same components to navigate their contexts and lead His mission.

God’s Chosen Leaders and FRL

As a review, biblical FRL can be expressed as, leading people to encounter and be transformed by God and join in executing His mission through transformational and transactional components. God’s chosen leaders imperfectly image His leadership throughout the Scriptures. Consider three of these leaders—Moses, Nehemiah, and Peter.

The Bible describes Moses as leading Israel with FRL components. Moses's task was to lead Israel out of captivity, institute God's covenant, and bring them to the promised land to function as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 3:7-10; 19:3-6). In Egypt, Moses's idealized influence and inspirational motivation wax and wane in Israel's perception of his boldness in confronting Pharaoh and the retaliatory harshness of Pharaoh's hardening heart. Although somewhat impractical, Moses displays exceptional individual consideration by sacrificing his time to hear and settle people's disputes from morning to night.⁶⁸ His intellectual stimulation continually centers on humble mediation to God on behalf of the people—where he sometimes even offers his life to retain God's blessing and presence with Israel (Exod 20:18-21; 32:30-34; 33:7-23; Num 16). While seeking their transformation, Moses transacts with contingent reward and management by exception through enforcing the structure and specifications of God's law, even when doing so results in the removal or destruction of fellow Israelites (Num 16; Lev 10:1-7). Moses leads with FRL imperfectly and yet with sincere humility.⁶⁹ Biblical Full Range Leaders recognize their imperfection and the grace of their position as the responsibility to lead people to encounter God, be transformed by Him, and execute His mission.

Nehemiah is another imperfect biblical FRL who leads God's people in rebuilding Jerusalem. Nehemiah's mission began with repentance and a prayer for God to restore the people according to His covenant promise should they return to Him. Nehemiah's leadership begins with encountering God in prayer—repenting of his own sin and that of Israel (Neh 1:4-11). Upon inspecting the wall of Jerusalem, Nehemiah demonstrates exceptional idealized influence and inspirational motivation in his public

⁶⁸ Exod 18:13-27 describes Moses's humility to listen to his father-in-law's advice and delegate leaders amongst the people to hear and judge their disputes.

⁶⁹ Moses demonstrates his imperfection in Num 20:9-12, where he strikes the rock instead of speaking to it as the Lord commanded. However, Num 12:3 records his humility when it credits Moses with being "very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth." Biblical FRL is walking in the humility of imperfection while exerting maximal effort to image God's perfect transformative and transacting leadership.

declaration that God was with the people in rebuilding the wall. Like King Leonidas before his 300 men at the Hot Gates of Thermopylae, Nehemiah engages alongside them in the work of building the wall (2:17-3:32). When opposition threatens the mission's success, Nehemiah inspires and persuades the men to strap on their swords and fight the marauders (4:1-14). His individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation are apparent in his acts of generosity, time spent with men in his home, and intense credit to God's hand for all their success (5:9-11, 14-19; 6:10-19). While Nehemiah leads Israel to encounter the promise-keeping God who transforms them to accomplish the mission, he simultaneously enforces God's standard.

Nehemiah utilizes transactional leadership to provide Israel structure, organization, and placement. The contingent reward Nehemiah presented to Israel for their obedience was a rebuilt Jerusalem and the favor of God (2:17-20; 3:15; 5:9-11). He was also a persistent and focused transactional leader undaunted by confrontation. When Nehemiah spots injustice or disobedience to God's law, he does not hesitate, regardless of the person's position, to confront them on their error (5:6-13; 6:10-14; 13:10-22). Organizational selection is also a key component of Nehemiah's leadership. He ensures that the right people are in the right seats of responsibility and that the wrong people are removed (7:1-2; 11:1-33). Nehemiah led believing that God was "ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love" (9:17b).

The apostle Peter uses FRL to imperfectly lead God's mission to live as and make disciples of Jesus. Peter's mission is, in principle, God's mission for the church—to make disciples of all nations by being Jesus's witnesses in Jerusalem and in all of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:16-20). Peter achieves idealized influence on Pentecost when he boldly proclaims the gospel publicly (Acts 2:14-41). As Lillback highlights, Peter recognizes that "a godly leader is someone that people want to follow as the leader glorifies God by his or her gifts of persuasion."⁷⁰ Peter shows

⁷⁰ Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 85.

individualized consideration in following God's leading to visit Cornelius and offer the gospel invitation to a Gentile (Acts 10:1-48).⁷¹ He demonstrates intellectual stimulation by challenging the early church's assumptions about gentiles, theology of suffering, and the dangers of false prophets (Acts 11:1-18; 1 Pet 3:8-22; 4:12-19; 2 Pet 2:1-22). Moreover, his inspirational motivation is unmistakable in his imprisonments, beatings, and eventual death for the gospel (Acts 12:1-19). Regardless of his growing prominent position in the church, Peter modeled the leadership of Christ and used his persuasion to lead people to encounter and be transformed by God.

Peter also communicated and enacted transactional leadership for the early church. Peter did not hesitate to state that obeying God brought blessings (Acts 2:37-41; 3:11-26; 2 Pet 1:3-11; 3:9). Though a unique situation, he was unafraid to declare God's punishment for disobedience, as illustrated in Acts 5:1-11 with Ananias and Sapphira. Peter's management by exception also included imaging God's grace and wisdom when working with people (1 Pet 3:8-9). He chose skillful and talented people to work alongside him in ministry.⁷² Peter could have used his position and prowess for personal gain, but instead he passionately and actively pursued the glory of God through diligent oversight of God's people.⁷³

Conclusion: Take Command

The Full Range Leader takes command by influencing followers through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, contingent reward, and management by exception to accomplish the mission. For American evangelicals, the fight to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ is only growing in intensity and consequence.

⁷¹ Admittedly, he illustrates this imperfectly as Paul later rebukes him for overvaluing the perceptions of the Jews, causing him to withdraw from associating with Gentiles (Gal 2:11).

⁷² Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 215.

⁷³ Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 225. See also 1 Pet 1:7-8; 4:19; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:17.

Biblically redefined FRL uses transformational and transactional leadership components to lead God's multidirectional mission. The secular and SOF studies show that FRL is highly effective for navigating complex emerging objectives where leaders face timely consequential decisions that demand conviction and precision. Yet, the fact that FRL is effective should not surprise Christians. For FRL is imaging God's leadership of humanity and how His chosen leaders led His people. Pastors and church leaders can learn from the principles found in FRL components to cultivate their leadership capacity and competency in executing God's mission. In so doing, they will best prepare themselves and their congregations against the challenges and trials of the twenty-first century. The next chapter will explore how SOF Full Range Leaders utilize these components to plan backward when seeking to execute a multidirectional mission.

CHAPTER 4

PLAN BACKWARD: WORKING FROM END TO BEGINNING

Venus and Serena Williams, two of the world’s most elite female tennis players, were repeatedly told by their father, Richard, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail” (a quote Richard likely borrowed from Benjamin Franklin).¹ Planning is a natural and necessary part of accomplishing a mission. Planning allows leaders to equip and prepare their people for focused execution. Planning backward utilizes a repeatable process to develop, critique, and approve effective plans by first starting with the desired outcome. This process asks three questions: what does an organization want, why do they want it, and what will it take to get it? Planning backward is a deliberate, calculated process where leaders start with the end state and work back to identify the key tasks necessary to achieve success as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) leaders utilize backward planning as a tool to achieve a mission’s end state. Joint Publication 5-0 states, “A military end state describes conditions that define mission success.”² Articulating an end state and creating a plan to achieve it can be time-consuming. Albert Einstein purportedly said that if he had one hour to solve a problem, he would spend fifty-five minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes about the solution.³ Planning is the leader’s process to analyze the problem.

¹ Jason Zenger, “7 Life Lessons from the Movie: King Richard,” May 11, 2022, <https://www.makingchips.com/read/7-life-lessons-from-the-movie-king-richard>.

² Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Planning,” December 1, 2020, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp5_0.pdf, I-19.

³ Nell Derick Debevoise, “The Third Critical Step In Problem Solving that Einstein Missed,” *Forbes*, January 26, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nelldebevoise/2021/01/26/the-third-critical-step-in-problem-solving-that-einstein-missed/?sh=ab9a41938079>.

Planning backward offers leaders a repeatable, effective, and efficient method to make plans that achieve a mission’s end state while safeguarding against catastrophe.

Partial Planning

The leaders of Operation Anaconda attempted to plan backward but failed to fully analyze the problem. The military is a machine. Like all machines, it has mechanical processes. According to doctrine, US forces follow the overall *Operations Process* of plan, prepare, and execute. The commander is at the center of these three phases and is responsible for the operation. Commanders utilize the operations process to “drive the conceptual and detailed planning necessary to understand their operational environment; visualize and describe the operation’s end state and operational approach, make and articulate decisions, and direct, lead, and assess operations.”⁴ The goal is to make timely and effective decisions that outpace the enemy with decisive unified action—which starts with unity of command. When friction and the fog of war set in, the operations process enables commanders to adapt to dynamic environments thoughtfully.

The Army manual states that “planning is the art and science of understanding a situation, envisioning a desired future, and laying out effective ways of bringing that future about.”⁵ Time is one of the most influential factors in planning. In World War II, General George S. Patton’s motto was “a good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week.”⁶ In the context of Operation Anaconda, Task Force Mountain’s leadership took a Patton-style approach and did not wait for a perfect plan.

After action reviews of Operation Anaconda exposed that planning suffered a lack of command coordination between ground and air elements, contingency development, rehearsals, and arguably most important, underestimating the enemy

⁴ Normal M. Wade, *The Battle Staff: Plan, Prepare, Execute & Assess Military Operations* (Lakeland, FL: Lightning, 2020), 1-1.

⁵ Wade, *The Battle Staff*, 1.

⁶ Wade, *The Battle Staff*, 1.

situation. The start of planning began with intelligence reports indicating that months before the operation that the valley was growing with Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, along with some of the royal guard, sparking an initial short-lived rumor that Usama Bin Ladin might be hiding in the valley. Initially, SOF was responsible for devising the plan. SOF planners formulated a strategy to utilize surgical air strikes and small teams to tighten around the valley and squeeze the offenders out into waiting coalition forces—like a massive anaconda snake crushing its prey before devouring it. However, the enemy estimates ranged from 163 to well over 1,000.⁷ Given the scale of geography and potential enemy size, the mission shifted from SOF to conventional leadership. Major General Franklin Hagenbeck was assigned to command the operation but was not given authority over the air components and the SOF Task Force 11. From the beginning, unity of command was missing.

After less than two weeks of planning, General Tommy Franks approved the mission on February 26, 2002.⁸ In a virtual meeting, Task Force Mountain briefed Franks that the expected enemy force was between 200-300 demoralized Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters attempting to flee to Pakistan. Hagenbeck's division assessed that these fighters would put up initial resistance and then try to escape out of the valley or surrender to advancing coalition forces.⁹ While the operation requested daily twenty-four-hour air support coverage, the ground elements did not expect close air support to be regularly required. Task Force Mountain expected the conflict to last three to seven days. After approving the plan, Franks took comments from other commanders. Air Force commander General Moseley stated that essential data still needed to be coordinated, including rules of Engagement, preplanned targets, airlift sustainment requirements, and communications

⁷ Headquarters United States Air Force, "Operation Anaconda: An Airpower Perspective," February 7, 2005, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA495248.pdf>, 24.

⁸ Headquarters United States Air Force, "Operation Anaconda," 55.

⁹ Richard Kruger, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Adaptation in Battle* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2007), 12.

equipment of ground forces.¹⁰ After these comments, Franks, having already approved the mission, haplessly said, “We have some due-outs.”¹¹ Task Force Mountain scrambled to provide air components with the requested information and thankfully received two additional days courtesy of weather delays. During this delay, Task Force Mountain leadership obtained new intelligence from the SOF reconnaissance elements that had infiltrated inside the enemy occupied valley. Blaber recalls that his teams provided clear pictures and reports that the approved plan to land on the valley floor would likely turn out disastrous due to well-defended and equipped enemy fighting positions.¹² However, the Chief of Staff Colonel at Task Force Mountain said it was too late in the planning process; the mission would happen regardless of the new intelligence.¹³

Commanders of Operation Anaconda quickly felt the reality of underestimating the enemy’s composition and the lack of prior coordination with the air components. In the operation’s first hours, two fratricide incidents occurred where aircraft inadvertently bombed friendly US forces. The failure of operational clarity seized up the air components and stalled timely close air support for the rest of that day. The only thing that appeared to be working was deliberate precision air strikes directed by tactical air controllers on the ground. With a large ground force in the valley unable to maneuver and a partner force of Afghans in retreat under mortar fire, all units were requesting air support. However, the planning process had not considered a contingency to utilize air assets heavily. This oversight resulted in requests for bombs on targets from forces under fire taking hours to action—and in some cases, on the first day, the bombs never came.¹⁴

¹⁰ Headquarters United States Air Force, “Operation Anaconda,” 55.

¹¹ Headquarters United States Air Force, “Operation Anaconda,” 55.

¹² Pete Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander* (New York: Berkley, 2008), 259.

¹³ Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me*, 259.

¹⁴ Kruger, *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan*, 15-17.

The operation required timely decisive adaptation if it was going to succeed. A growing consensus began to emerge among commanders to pivot from a primarily ground assault force to an all-out aerial bombardment of the valley. At last, something started to work. Moreover, as soon as something starts working, people will always want more of it. Reports from Special Forces, SEALs, and coalition controllers started streaming in of enemy positions neutralized and significant enemy killed in action from air strikes. As the air component scrambled to organize and direct the most extensive bombardment on one of the smallest kill boxes in history, commanders pushed for more SOF teams to direct the strikes.

On the second day of the assault, Blaber says he received an order from the Task Force 11 Commander (operating outside the authority of Task Force Mountain) to get two newly arrived SEAL elements, code-named MAKO 30 and MAKO 21, into the fight.¹⁵ One of the assigned locations was Takur Ghar, a dominant mountain top terrain position with an excellent field of view into the enemy-occupied valley. According to Blaber, neither he nor Britt Slabinski, Navy SEAL and MAKO 30's Senior Enlisted Leader, were supportive of the idea. The SOF elements already positioned in the valley were effective in battering the enemy. Additionally, MAKO 30 and 21 were not confident they could make their assigned locations before the sun came up. Nevertheless, after receiving command pressure, they decided to go. Little did Slabinski realize that he and his element would soon be imitating his Godfather—WWII Draper Kauffman—and his daring rescue of a missing swim pair. Only Slabinski and his team would not be swimming in the warm Pacific, but instead trudging their way through knee-deep snow under constant enemy fire in a rescue attempt to save fellow teammate Neil Roberts.

¹⁵ Blaber, *Mission, Men, and Me*, 275.

After failing to get the mission delayed a day, Slabinski had to make a timely tactical decision.¹⁶ He could insert his element into his preplanned location, four kilometers offset and considerable elevation away from their final observation post or go straight up and land on the mountaintop. The original plan made the most tactical sense. However, if they were forced to go that day, they risked moving in daylight and being fully exposed to the possible enemy occupying dominant terrain. The other option was to change the plan and insert directly on top of the mountain. This option would alert the enemy to their position, but the speed of going straight to the top could provide a tactical advantage in securing the dominant terrain quickly. In Slabinski's case, there was not a good option. He was trying to pick the least bad option. Slabinski decided to go straight to the top and mitigate the risk by having an AC-130 (the Air Force's four-engine propelled flying tank) scan the mountain peak for enemy activity. But while enroute, the AC-130 gunship was pulled off the ridge to assist with other troops in contact.¹⁷ Before leaving, the flying tank reported the landing zone was clear of enemy activity. They were wrong. Perhaps they were looking at a different cliff, or the enemy sat tight till they heard the raucous plane pull off station. Either way, the peak was occupied by 15-25 entrenched and heavily armed Chechen al-Qaeda fighters. Against his judgment, Slabiniski chose to continue without the gunship. The Chinook came to a flare, hovering before landing to unload the reconnaissance element. As the team stood to exit the helicopter, one of the SEALs shouted, "RPG!"¹⁸

The Task Force 160th pilot had already seen the rocket-propelled grenade, but it was too late. Within an instant, a second RPG hit the helicopter. The Chinook rocked and immediately lost electrical power to the weapon's systems. They were defenseless. As

¹⁶ Malcolm MacPherson, *Roberts Ridge: A Story of Courage and Sacrifice on Takur Ghar Mountain, Afghanistan* (New York: Random House, 2005), 15.

¹⁷ MacPherson, *Roberts Ridge*, 17.

¹⁸ MacPherson, *Roberts Ridge*, 23.

the team attempted to run out, two more RPGs hit the battered CH-47 knocking everyone to the ground and spraying hydraulic fluid over the floor and ramp. The pilot pulled hard on the power to try and get them out and save their lives, but with hydraulic fluid now flowing and the rapid jerk of the helicopter lifting off, the untethered Neil Roberts began falling backward out of the aircraft. A crew chief attempted to grab him but could not stop the SEAL's fall, who now weighed over 300 pounds with all his gear and M249 machine gun. Roberts fell about ten feet straight onto his back in the snow. He was alone.¹⁹

Slabinski, John Chapman, and the rest of MAKO 30 did not have to deliberate about what to do next. Malcolm MacPherson notes, "Returning for a lost brother required no thought, no decision. It was ingrained reaction, not an idea."²⁰ Their first attempt failed, but they quickly secured another helicopter to return to the peak as soon as possible.

Slabinski and his team landed under constant enemy fire in their second attempt.

Courageously, they fought uphill, at times in waist-deep snow, to locate Roberts. John Chapman, MAKO 30's Combat Controller responsible for coordinating the air strikes and close air support, heroically charged and cleared a bunker of several combatants and began engaging another occupied bunker twenty meters away. Then things began to spiral. After several exchanges of fire, Slabinski looked over to see Chapman down and not moving. He was shot. While trying to maneuver to eliminate the enemy fighting position, a grenade exploded near the element and wounded one of the SEALs in MAKO 30. Slabinski, who had now lost Chapman and Roberts, assessed the rapidly deteriorating situation, and decided to get his teammates off the peak.

That night, the decision to infiltrate the teams dreadfully resulted in losing two CH-47's and seven American lives. Later that night, a CH-47 carrying an Army Ranger Quick Reaction Force from Task Force 11 arrived at the same overrun landing zone as MAKO 30. Communication broke down, and they dreadfully landed at the same spot

¹⁹ MacPherson, *Roberts Ridge*, 29.

²⁰ MacPherson, *Roberts Ridge*, 40.

where two other CH-47's had taken RPGs and machine-gun fire. They bravely engaged the enemy for several hours and eventually took control of the mountain, locating both Neil Roberts and John Chapman's remains. While two Medals of Honor were awarded, seven Americans were killed and twelve wounded. Among those who boldly gave their lives on Takur Ghar were Navy SEAL Neil Roberts, Combat Controller Team John Chapman, Pararescuemen Jason Cunningham, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment Philip "Spytech" Svitak, and Army Rangers Matthew Commons, Bradley Crose, and Marc Anderson.²¹

Full Range Leaders spend diligent time in planning because multidirectional missions are consequential. Poor planning can destroy lives. Planning is the necessary process leaders must diligently and dutifully undergo to fully analyze the problem they are trying to solve. While no plan survives first contact with the enemy, proper analysis enables timely decisive adaptation to slice through contingencies and accomplish the mission.

Analyzing the Problem

William McRaven, retired Navy SEAL and former commanding officer for Special Operations Command, identifies six SOF principles for gaining relative superiority over an enemy. The idea of relative superiority is the moment when a smaller attacking force gains a competitive advantage over a better or well-defended enemy.²² McRaven argues that these principles are fundamental for SOF missions and essential for achieving mission success.

The six principles infuse into the operations process. In the planning phase, SOF teams seek to achieve simplicity. Simple plans limit the number of objectives, incorporate

²¹ MacPherson, *Roberts Ridge*, 305-6.

²² William McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Random House, 1996), 8.

accurate intelligence, and utilize thoughtful innovation.²³ During preparation, the principles of security and repetition prove vital to success. Security ensures the operation is kept secret from the enemy. Repetition means multiple full-dress rehearsals of an operation to ensure everyone knows their job and how the force will respond to contingencies.²⁴ Lastly, during execution, SOF elements need surprise, speed, and purpose to effectively accomplish the mission.²⁵ Speed and surprise are straightforward; get to the objective as fast as possible without being detected. The purpose is crucial to guiding forces to accomplish the mission when the unexpected occurs and the fog of war rolls in. All these principles are necessary for SOF elements. However, for immediate consideration, the remainder of this section will focus on the first principle that the others follow—simplicity in planning.

Planning: Simplicity Starts with Planning Backwards

By nature of SOF's multidirectional mission, units must be capable of sophisticated mission planning and course of action development for a spectrum of activities and efforts. According to Joint Publication 3-05, there are twelve core activities for SOF units: direct action, special reconnaissance, countering weapons of mass destruction, counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, security force assistance, hostage rescue and recovery, counterinsurgency, foreign humanitarian assistance, military information support operations, and civil affairs.²⁶ Within its multidirectional mission, SOF units undergo constant training, development, and evaluation to maintain proficiency in planning for these activities. However, not all

²³ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies*, 11.

²⁴ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies*, 13.

²⁵ McRaven, *Spec Ops Case Studies*, 11.

²⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Joint Publication 3-05: Special Operations," July 16, 2014, http://edocs.nps.edu/2014/July/jp3_05.pdf, 30.

individual SOF units are equally capable or even trained to plan and execute all actions organically within one element. Instead, commanders seek joint mission planning environments where subject matter experts in particular core activities are incorporated to best position the force for success. Regardless of the core activity, whether a dynamic hostage rescue or the training program for a foreign national military force, all units have a common goal in mission planning: simplicity.

Making complex things simple is a mixture of science and art. While simplification processes are helpful, a measure of artfulness is needed to solve and articulate complex problems. Much like the concept of irreducible complexity, certain intricate things stay complicated no matter how hard a person works to simplify them. However, it is leadership's responsibility to reduce a particular operation's complexity to its simplest possible form to increase the likelihood of success. SOF units follow, to varying measures, the Army's doctrine for mission planning.²⁷ When SOF leaders develop a Concept of Operation, known in the Military by the acronym CONOP, they *plan backward from receiving the mission*. The first step toward simplicity is understanding the mission to identify critical objectives and how those objectives are nested within the larger operational framework. This process is known as *Operational Nesting*.

As represented in the introduction, operational nesting provides commanders at all levels clarity on the *task and purpose* behind an operation. This step asks three simple questions: what do we want, why do we want it, and what will it take to get it? The "what do we want?" is the end state of an operation. It identifies objectives that require specific activities and efforts to achieve success. The "why do we want it?" aligns the task to the overall purpose for operations in a region or borderless initiative. For example, Operation Anaconda wanted to eliminate the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters in the Shah-i-Knot valley. This task connects to the larger objective of Operation Enduring Freedom to eradicate the

²⁷ Department of the Army, "Special Forces Detachment Mission Planning Guide: GTA 31-01-003," January 2020, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/gta31_01_003.pdf, 8.

Taliban and al-Qaeda's control of Afghanistan. And Operation Enduring Freedom was further nested under the purpose of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) to defend America and her allies from all terrorist threats. The last question, "what will it take to get it?" helps identify the activities and efforts necessary to complete the objectives.

Through operational nesting, leaders ensure that activities and efforts meet the intent of their superior commanders, furthering the overarching mission for a region or initiative. As mentioned, McRaven notes that objectives for specific missions need to be clear and limited in number to increase simplicity. Once the mission's task and purpose are defined, SOF leaders will begin to develop courses of action.

Figure 2 illustrates the standard planning procedures of Operational Detachment Alpha Teams, also known as ODAs or A-Teams, from Army Special Forces. All SOF units adapt their planning procedures from Army doctrine to varying degrees. The ODA will typically go into isolation for 96 hours to develop, analyze, compare, and rehearse courses of action and prepare for mission execution. The course of action development goal is to create multiple solutions to fulfill a mission's specific task and purpose. Usually, the rule of three applies. Leaders will develop at minimum of three options to accomplish the assigned task and purpose. Planners gather all the intelligence they can regarding the specific situation and develop action plans using the capabilities and platforms viable and accessible to accomplish the mission. Each plan is evaluated on if it is *feasible, acceptable, suitable, distinguishable, and complete*.

Planning backward helps develop innovative courses of action to achieve the desired end state with the resources at an organization's disposal. Consider different courses of action for Operation Anaconda. The end state was to rid the Shah-i-Knot valley of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. Removing the terrorists could be accomplished in several different ways. They could organically push them out, try to use locals to kick them out, bait them out, or trap and eliminate them systematically. Task Force Mountain could have prosecuted the valley only using US military forces consisting of conventional

armored vehicles that move online through the valley, offering the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters a natural way of escape toward Pakistan. Another conventional option might have been to set a net around Shah-i-Kot valley, cutting off supply lines and mechanisms for communication, forcing the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters to maneuver into a non-advantageous tactical position. Furthermore, leadership could have planned the entire operation only utilizing a large-scale air assault guided by ground-based reconnaissance units to eliminate most of the enemy before launching a ground assault force. Multiple courses of action are necessary to invigorate innovative ways to decrease risk while increasing the tactical advantage. The simpler the plan, the better the odds of success.²⁸

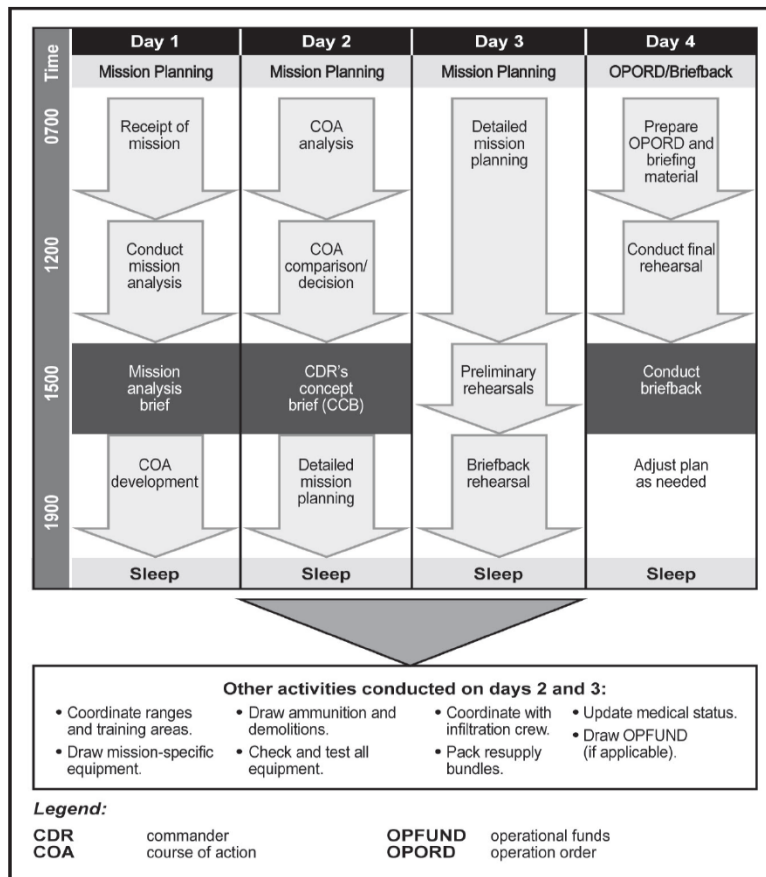


Figure 2. Special forces planning guide

²⁸ Figure taken from Department of the Army, "Detachment Mission Planning Guide: GTA 31-01-003," 8.

Once a course of action is approved, the executing element will create a detailed Concept of Operation (CONOP). Simplicity in the CONOP starts with a single sentence mission statement that covers the who, what, where, when, and why. The practice of writing the entire operation into a single sentence is a force-functioning method to achieve simplicity. The plan is not simple enough if it cannot be explained in a single sentence. The CONOP will also include a list of key tasks and operational phases to achieve those tasks. In each stage of the operation, the concept will cover the task and purpose of each executing element, starting with preparation and ending with return to base and post-operation expectations. While concepts have intricate details, the plan should be so unmistakable that every operator knows what they are doing at each phase. This knowledge is cemented into every team member as they brief their role and physically rehearse the operation.

Relevant critical components of a CONOP to this discussion are go and no-go criteria, abort criteria, minimum force, communication and control, and possible contingencies.²⁹ Go and no-go, as well as abort criteria are the specific conditions that determine if a mission moves forward. Go and no-go is the criteria needed to leave the base and start the mission. Abort criteria define the parameters for ceasing the mission. These conditions must be carefully thought through before entering the friction and chaos of execution. Minimum force ties into the previous two by identifying the minimum personnel and assets needed to accomplish the mission. Minimum force does not only consider number, but also specific qualifications or capabilities of the personnel and assets listed. If an element falls below minimum force, then it meets no go or abort criteria. Communication and control specify the primary, alternate, contingency, and emergent ways each element will communicate with each other, commonly referred to as PACE plan. The number one problem that disrupts operations is communication. Communicating is simplified by a logical PACE plan and identifying commanders' critical information

²⁹ Department of the Army, "Special Forces Detachment," 9, 23-84.

requests or CCIRs. The commander and their team develop this list of information requests before the operation to ensure that pertinent information is passed and disseminated over the communication channels to inform timely decision-making. Lastly, SOF planners will analyze possible contingencies and preplan responses to address them. Contingencies can range from loss of communication to the recovery of a downed helicopter. SOF elements will ensure that they not only identify and plan responses to contingencies but will physically rehearse responses when feasible. Rehearsing contingencies decreases confusion during execution, enables timely adaptation, and increases the probability of mission success.

The hard fact is that Operation Anaconda was planned on faulty intelligence. Creating a simple plan through planning backward is only effective when the information is good. If commanders stopped to consider that they were acting on old, outdated information, then the entire operation would have shifted to the right by several days to create a new plan. Without the skillful adaptation of SOF elements and the air force, it is uncertain if the operation would have ended in success or another historic failure like the Russians during the Second Battle of Zhawar.

Concerning the events on Takur Ghar, it is vital to recognize that Slabinski and his team did not have 96 hours of mission planning isolation to develop courses of action, receive approval, create a CONOP, brief an Operation Order, and then rehearse it. They had less than 24 hours to plan and execute their mission. Individual situations dictate timing constraints. This is why the following chapter's principle to *kill complacency* is so necessary for leaders. But for now, consider how planning backward might have changed the events on Takur Ghar. The answer to the three mission planning questions are as follows. The "what" was to direct precision munitions to eliminate Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters. The "why" was because SOF reconnaissance teams coordinating with the Air Force were the only thing working to accomplish the mission. And the "what will it take" was securing the dominant terrain with a SOF reconnaissance element to identify enemy

fighting positions in the valley. This task and purpose would likely not have succeeded if the reconnaissance element failed to arrive and secure the terrain to visually identify the enemy. These factors place significant importance on the element's insertion and maneuver method. Consider how the insertion decision might have gone differently if planned backward.

Task Force 11 could have utilized go/no go criteria to achieve mission success and decrease the risk of catastrophe. Slabinski was only comfortable inserting to the top of Takur Ghar on the CH-47s if he had an AC-130 gunship looking at the peak to clear their landing zone. If this AC-130 were part of the preplanned minimum force during the insertion phase, then it would have triggered an unambiguous immediate abort decision when the AC-130 checked off to support troops in contact. Based on the CONOP, Slabinski, as team leader, could have rightfully terminated the mission. Indeed, all that goes into a CONOP does not appear simple or easy. However, each step has lessons learned in blood and deemed necessary to achieve success while warding off catastrophe. Planning backwards helps leaders make thorough, detailed plans that are as simple as possible—but no simpler.

The Church and Mission Planning

I have presented a multidirectional mission as a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. The church's temporary end state on earth, until Christ comes back or we go to be with him, is to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ. The Church's emerging objectives and alternating activities and efforts are identified within the context of specific congregations. Given the nature of the twenty-first century operating environment and observations on leadership performance, biblical Full Range Leaders are best suited to make these determinations and plans within the church. Within this construct, it is the burden of pastors and church leaders to identify objectives and determine what activities and efforts need to be taken to accomplish those objectives. Practically speaking, church leaders are

called to create plans for their specific contexts that accomplish God's multidirectional mission.

First, to consider is what I am not saying. I am not suggesting that the church should rigidly follow the operations process and create plans like SOF units. Planning differs from the implicit distinctions in the two organizations' multidirectional missions. Where SOF units are routinely hard-pressed for time, the church can afford patience. Where the church rightfully studies and implements biblical ecclesiology, SOF units are constrained by the legal influence of the US Government. While I argued at length that SOF and the church share a mutual definition of multidirectional mission, the nature of that mission makes certain practices non-transferable.

Nevertheless, it is important for church leaders to verbally recognize that they carry a burden to create effective and efficient plans to accomplish God's mission in their context. Pastors and church leaders need to feel this. They are obligated to more exceptional care and exertion than the most sensitive and strategic special operation. In each mission, SOF units are tasked with considerable life consequences. However, the church is entrusted with a far graver and weighty task. A SOF unit might be responsible for rescuing an American hostage held in the grips of violent extremist terrorists; but the church is responsible for proclaiming the message of freedom for all captives—and this message is the only one that can even set the hostage rescuer free. By learning from the SOF community's diligence in planning, church leaders have another tool to utilize backward planning for their specific contexts to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

At this point, several natural questions arise: Is there a precedent in Scripture for this type of emphasis on planning? Does Scripture provide any insight into the relationship between leadership and planning? Should pastors and church leaders create short and long-term strategies for their specific contexts? The answer to these questions is undoubtedly yes. The following section argues that Scripture implicitly and explicitly

directs leaders to create plans. In addition, Scripture and contemporary evangelical pastors and theologians support a clear correlation between leadership and planning.

Church Leaders and Planning

Scripture indisputably confirms that God makes plans. God's covenant promises are evidence enough of God choosing to make plans with his people. In Genesis 12-17, God calls Abram, renaming him Abraham, and establishes a covenant conditioned upon God's plan to make Abraham into a great nation with a great land, to be a great blessing. God's plan involved fulfillment well beyond Abraham's life—a truly long-term strategy. In 2 Samuel 7, God makes His covenant with David, promising him that his kingdom will last forever. And that promised Davidic King came through David's genealogy, born in a stable and wrapped in swaddling clothes hundreds of years later. In Ephesians 1:3-5, Paul says that God's plan included people chosen to believe in Jesus before the foundation of the world. Inexplicably, God makes plans, and his plans never fail. When Jeremiah brought God's Word to a suffering Israel, God spoke through him, saying, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer 29:11). Planning is a prudent practice taught by the perfect planner.

The Psalms and Proverbs encourage God's people to plan faithfully. Proverbs 16:1-4 beautifully presents the balance between the duty of diligent planning and the submission of those plans to the sovereignty of God. Verses 2-3 highlight this tension: "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. Commit your work to the Lord and your plans will be established." The biblical planner commits all their desired hopes and ambitions to the fulfillment of God's mission. As a diligent commander under orders, the biblical planner seeks to execute the intent of their superior supernatural commander.³⁰ Proverbs 21:5 says, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to

³⁰ Paul articulates this missional mindset further in Col 1:28-29: "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me."

abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.” Psalm 37:5 reads, “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.” And Psalm 20:4 says, “May he grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all your plans!” Evangelical pastors and theologians agree that faithful biblical leadership mirrors God by making sensible plans to accomplish His mission for the church.

Rick Warren, the best-selling author of *Purpose Driven Life*, is a simple but purposeful planner. He uses Nehemiah as an example of a godly leader who planned well. He asserts, “Few things happen spontaneously . . . almost everything in life needs a plan. Good leaders are planners.”³¹ Warren defends the demand for church leaders to engage in planning because God does it, God commands it, and planning is a form of stewardship.³² Warren points to Nehemiah for supporting his six principles for planning; (1) think it through, (2) prepare for opportunities, (3) establish a goal, (4) set a deadline, (5) anticipate the problems, and (6) count the cost.³³ Nehemiah demonstrates a faithful example of godly dependence coupled with diligent sensible planning.

In *Center Church*, Tim Keller argues for a balanced perspective on church planning, describing the church as an institution and a movement. For Keller, a church can meet all the doctrinal and structural components of a biblical institution and still lack effectiveness in propagating the faith because it failed at movement. He titles this blend of organism and organization “organized organisms.”³⁴ Keller quickly points out that the church executes its mission differently than a business. The church does not grow through selling a full-bodied product or cleverly marketed service, but through the power of the

³¹ Rick Warren, “How Ministry Leaders Plan (Part One),” *Biblical Leadership*, August 31, 2020, <https://www.biblicalleadership.com/blogs/how-ministry-leaders-plan-part-one/>. However, it is worth recalling from the study on SEAL Team A’s 2nd Platoon’s Chief that good planners are not always good leaders.

³² Warren, “How Ministry Leaders Plan (Part One).”

³³ Warren, “How Ministry Leaders Plan (Part One).”

³⁴ Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel Ministry in your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 344.

Spirit and the living Word of God.³⁵ However, Keller notes that Scripture prescribes organization. There are elders, deacons, authority structures, distinct principles for contextual gospel communities—and planning. Keller encourages church leaders to plan according to the “organized organism” of the church. Faithful planning includes structural components of a mission statement, objectives, and processes to achieve logical and orderly objectives. But the organization cannot be detached from the organism.³⁶ The institutional church exists to become a movement that enters and transforms its cultural context. Organizational mission demands that the organism moves.

John MacArthur attempts to approach church planning from solely a biblical perspective in *The Master’s Plan for the Church*. He opens with, “Contemporary church leaders fancy themselves businessmen, media figures, entertainers, psychologists, philosophers, or lawyers. Yet those notions sharply contrast with the symbolism Scripture employs to depict spiritual leaders.”³⁷ Leadership is sacrificial service, not self-service. When he arrived at Grace Community Church, MacArthur claimed his goal or end state was to keep the people already there from leaving.³⁸ However, God began numerically growing Grace Community at a remarkable speed. When people asked, MacArthur credited this growth to God’s grace working through an intentional plan to build the church’s foundation and structure on sound doctrines.³⁹ The plan for Grace Community was, and still is, to be a Bible preaching and practicing church in every component of organizational life. This plan includes identifying goals and objectives. MacArthur writes, “A church must have functional goals and objectives, or it will have no direction.”⁴⁰ He

³⁵ Keller, *Center Church*, 344.

³⁶ Keller, *Center Church*, 344.

³⁷ John MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 15.

³⁸ MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church*, 21.

³⁹ MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church*, 25.

⁴⁰ MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church*, 105.

asserts that the church's fundamental goals are evangelism and discipleship and contends that more specific goals include family care, biblical counseling, educating children, and other such responsibilities. Each goal needs functional objectives that have practical, realistic steps to accomplish them.⁴¹ While certainly distinct from Keller's organized organism, MacArthur appears to agree that godly leaders make biblical organizational plans to accomplish God's goals in the community.

Leading God's mission for his church requires mission planning. While differing in practice and purpose, Warren, Keller, and MacArthur represent a small diverse pool of American evangelical pastors who confirm church leaders bear the burden of planning. Each of these men has provided frameworks for considering how to conduct biblical mission planning for the church. Another framework for consideration is to increase mission effectiveness and efficiency through backward planning.

The Church's Mission: Planning Backwards

What follows is a framework that utilizes the FRL and SOF principles discussed as an option to help church leaders think through mission planning pragmatically. The method is an adaptation of SOF's operations process. This method is for church leaders of new and old congregations. However, I will use current and future hypothetical examples from Doxa Church in San Diego, California, a church plant still in its infancy with ten core team members.

Receive the mission. The first step for Doxa Church is to receive the mission. The American evangelical church exists on a linear timeline in God's missional campaign plan. Therefore, the first step in planning is for Doxa Church's leaders to receive, reflect, and realize God's mission for the church. As argued in chapter 2, the current overarching mission of the church is to live as and make disciples of Jesus. The multidirectional

⁴¹ MacArthur, *The Master's Plan for the Church*, 106.

mission's complex end state is discipleship. For Doxa, this is expressed in the mission statement, "We exist to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment."⁴² This complex end state comes with emerging objectives specific to Doxa within its context in San Diego, California. The near-term mission of the plant is to launch Doxa Church by becoming self-sustaining. From this, Doxa will identify emerging objectives tied to discipleship, with each activity and effort of the church linked to specific objectives. Every time the church recognizes a new near-term goal to accomplish its overall mission, it will repeat this process. The first step in the adapted operations process is to conduct mission analysis.

Conduct mission analysis. Doxa Church starts mission analysis by gathering three types of intelligence. The first is non-negotiable. Doxa gathers *biblical intelligence* on the function of the church in the context of the objective. This first step engages in biblical and historical theology to determine a faithful ecclesiology that outlines the organizational structure of the church. For pastor Mark Dever and Capitol Hill Baptist Church, this translates to nine marks of a healthy church. Essential to Dever's ecclesiology are expositional preaching, biblical theology, and a biblical understanding of the Good News.⁴³ Important marks are a biblical understanding of conversion, evangelism, membership, church discipline, discipleship and growth, and church leadership.⁴⁴ For MacArthur and Grace Community Church, the skeletal structure is a high view of God, absolute authority of Scripture, sound doctrine, personal holiness, and spiritual authority.⁴⁵ At Doxa Church, pastor Matt Thibault, under the guidance of Christ Church and Vintage Mission, is committed to unapologetic preaching, unashamed worship, unceasing prayer,

⁴² Doxa Church San Diego, accessed July 10, 2022, www.doxasd.org.

⁴³ Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 61-79.

⁴⁴ Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church*, 83-119.

⁴⁵ MacArthur, *The Master's Plan for the Church*, 21-30.

and unafraid witness. For all these pastors, each small phrase represents numerous hours spent studying the Word, praying, and discussing with other pastors and theologians. A church's ecclesiology is vital to the success of the mission. Before a church engages in any new activity, program, or event, the leadership must ask, "how does this accomplish the mission and align with our organization?" As demonstrated with Operation Anaconda, a mission planned on faulty intelligence is heading for catastrophe.

The second type of information needed is *contextual intelligence*. Doxa Church gathers information about its context in San Diego, California. Collecting this information involves researching population size, demographics, ethnic neighborhoods, college campuses, economic affluence, commercial industry, technology centers, housing developments, traffic patterns, homeless numbers, at-risk youth centers, and military installations and housing locations. All this information is used with other intelligence to inform course of action development. Simply consider population and housing developments. In July of 2021, the population of San Diego County was 1,381,611, with notably over 240,000 being veterans.⁴⁶ According to Pew Research Center, the major religion is Christianity, at 68 percent of the population, of which 32 percent are Catholic, 16 percent are mainline Protestant, and 14 percent are evangelical Protestant. San Diego is running out of room for its rapidly growing city. The natural place of expansion is into the historical Catholic east county of Chula Vista. Tammy Murga from *The San Diego Union-Tribune* states that Chula Vista expects to increase its population by 40 percent before 2050.⁴⁷ The city is building 11,000 new housing units in the next seven years to accommodate the expected 100,000 new residents. While Chula Vista appears to be a

⁴⁶ United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: San Diego, California," accessed July 11, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sandiegocitycalifornia/PST045221>.

⁴⁷ Tammy Murga, "Chula Vista Looks at Developing East and West Areas to Meet State-Mandated Housing Quota," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 18, 2021, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/south-county/chula-vista/story/2021-07-18/chula-vista-looks-at-developing-east-and-west-areas-to-meet-state-mandate#:~:text=Chula%20Vista-.Chula%20Vista%20looks%20at%20developing%20east%20and%20west%20areas%20to.more%20than%2011%2C000%20housing%20units>.

strategic location within the port and military city of San Diego to plant Doxa, a third intelligence is still relevant to mission analysis.

The third is *congregational intelligence*. Thibault and the leaders of Doxa Church need to know their congregation and others in the city. Transformational leaders intentionally seek to know their people's gifts, passions, struggles, and plans to motivate and move them to accomplish a joint mission. Transactional leaders organize personnel with certain skills to perform specific tasks to achieve the most effective and efficient result. For Thibault, this requires his engagement with the core team as a dedicated shepherd and a diligent supervisor to prepare the people's heads, hearts, and hands for ministry work. Additionally, the leaders of Doxa need to gather information about other churches in San Diego. Collecting this information produces a unity of command. As all Bible-believing churches are under the authority of Jesus Christ, they should cooperate to accomplish the mission in their respective contexts. When congregations do not work together, they risk fratricide, like in the first few hours of Operation Anaconda, where the Air Force accidentally bombed US SOF positions. Ecumenical coordination is challenging due to different theology and practice but if the church is to accomplish the mission, it must make every effort to achieve unity of effort with other local churches when doctrinally and pragmatically allowable. Thibault is performing this initial intelligence gathering by meeting with local pastors, Campus Crusade for Christ and Navigator workers, and Christian Bible College professors. He seeks out these opportunities to partner with evangelical believers to accomplish God's mission in San Diego. At this stage in the plant, this looks like interpersonal coordination and future ministry support.

Doxa Church can continue mission analysis from the intelligence gathered by *identifying emerging objectives*. These specific objectives further the near-term mission and align with the universal mission of living as and making disciples. Each objective should be formed within the organizational structure of Doxa's ecclesiology. For Doxa to achieve its near-term goal, an initial objective might *be sixty committed core team members by*

January 2023. A purpose like this is to reach a critical mass capable of pragmatically sustaining the ministry and effectively reaching the community. Church objectives should consider the potential benefit of following the military and business world's use of the SMART acronym. The objective is *specific* to core team members, *measurable* by the number sixty, *attainable* by the grace of God, *relevant* to becoming self-sustaining, which aligns with living as and making disciples, and *time-bound* to January 2023. By identifying this emerging objective, Doxa can begin developing simple courses of action to accomplish the objective.

Develop simple courses of action. Developing simple courses of action should happen in a finite amount of time. Brainstorming to infinity can create analysis paralysis and breed what SOF operators call “the good idea fairy,” which inevitably corrupts planning. Churches with multiple objectives may require various courses of action to achieve all the stated objectives. The larger the congregation, the greater the likelihood of numerous objectives. At this point, it is essential to remember the principle of simplicity. No matter how many objectives or how complex, the course of action to accomplish them should be simple. For this example, the following will illustrate three possible courses of action to achieve the objective of *sixty core team members by January 2023.*

Course of action 1: Thibault equips the current ten core team members through weekly meetings to intentionally and prayerfully pursue five people each to join Doxa.

Course of action 2: Current core team members invite one new person monthly to a vision meeting where Thibault invites them to join Doxa.

Course of action 3: Current core team members invite other believers to intentionally engage Chula Vista one day each week, praying God would call more core team members from joint acts of service and evangelism.

Course of action development is a healthy practice to produce multiple options to achieve the same result. The temptation will be to incorporate a hybrid of all options. As much as possible, church leaders should hone their focus according to the mission

analysis they conducted and select the best option. This can sometimes mean creating a fourth, fifth, or sixth option that best meets the intent of the objective with the resources available. For example, Thibault is new to San Diego and wants to dive further into discipleship relationships with current core team members. Therefore, he might create a fourth option to equip the ten core team members with a weekly curriculum to train them in pursuing five people each to join Doxa while conducting monthly open invite vision meetings. Once a course is charted, the church leader can develop the specific concept of operation.

Develop specific concept of operation. The Concept of Operation describes how a church will accomplish the objective. This description can be short and to the point or extraordinarily lengthy and detailed. In either case, it needs to be simple.

The Concept of Operation begins with a mission statement that clearly articulates the operations who, what, when, where, and why. This objective might read as follows: *By January 2023, Doxa Church recruits sixty covenant core team members by engaging in individual daily prayer, weekly equipping of core team members, and hosting monthly open invite vision meetings.* This statement ensures everyone knows the plan. From here, the Concept of Operation will likely include a list of key tasks, personnel roles and responsibilities, different phases that occur over the next six months, minimum personnel needed in each phase, abort criteria, address contingencies to preplanned processes, necessary equipment, necessary training on equipment, and set out communication principles. Full Range Leaders of multidirectional missions plan diligently while continually striving for simplicity.

The Concept of Operation should clearly articulate how the operation is nested within the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. These levels can vary by church size and scope. For a multicampus church of 10,000, a strategic objective might be to plant ten churches in ten different least churched cities in America over ten years. For Doxa, a strategic objective might be to obtain a church building by 2025 in central Chula Vista.

With this contextual variation in mind, the objective of *sixty core team members by January 2023* fits neatly into the operational level for Doxa. As such, Doxa leadership needs to convey to core team members how this objective supports the overall mission and what tactical key tasks are necessary to accomplish it. A tactical key task functions like a new objective.

An example might be to assign and train a core team member to set up and tear down required equipment for vision meetings. For each key task, the designated person repeats the mission planning process at the tactical level. Having a reproducible model means that the person who volunteered to set up and tear down will conduct their own mission analysis, course of action development, Concept of Operation creation, receive approval from church leadership, and then equip and rehearse with their team for weekly execution. The lower the level, the less amount of time this process takes. However, having all members conduct the operations process is a force-functioning method to train followers that all activities and efforts of the church align to the overall mission—living as and making disciples.

Equip and rehearse concept of operation. Once the detailed Concept of Operation is complete to a satisfactory level, the church needs to equip for and rehearse the plan. Equipping means physical equipment and training on that equipment. For Doxa, this might look like rehearsing the core team’s presentation of the covenant commitment and how they will communicate that to other believers they invite to join the church plant. On the equipment side, this might look like acquiring, training, and rehearsing the setup and tear down of all gear used during the vision meetings. Each person and their assigned backup should know what to do during each phase of the plan, what others are doing, and why they are doing it. Contingences will also need to be discussed and, if possible, rehearsed. Equipping and rehearsing means touching, walking, and talking through all responsibilities and potential actions so that everyone shares a common understanding of the operation—and why they are doing it. Full Range Leaders always tie tasks to a why.

By the time people enter the equip and rehearse stage of an operation, they should all be able to communicate why they are doing what they are doing clearly.

After these steps, only one thing is left—execute.

Conclusion

Planning backward is a tool for Full Range Leaders of multidirectional missions to effectively and efficiently accomplish objectives that further the overall mission. Starting with the end state and working backward helps generate creative courses of action that stimulate innovation and enable timely adaptation, increasing the probability of mission success. FRL embraces mission planning as a necessary burden of leadership, realizing that good leaders are good planners. Yet, planning produces only a theoretical path. The leader guides the followers on that path with passionate, aggressive, and confident execution. Before launching into what it looks like to lead this fight in the twenty-first century, church leaders should embrace another core principle of SOF operators and kill complacency.

CHAPTER 5

KILL COMPLACENCY: FAITHFUL PURSUIT OF HIGH-CAPACITY AND HIGH-COMPETENCY

Leading a multidirectional mission requires acknowledging that the greatest threats to mission success often come from within. Complacency is defined as “self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.”¹ Complacency justifies doing something wrong because of a previous right. This is a mental state. Typically associated with cutting corners, complacency develops an unhealthy acceptance of suboptimal performance, high risk, and poor decision-making, often leading to catastrophic failures. Complacency turns its head and ignores substandard performance and morally questionable decisions. Complacency begins with familiarization, grows with mindless repetition, hides in the shadow of success, and convinces individuals and organizations that nothing is wrong. The odd paradox with complacency is that it forms in leaders with high capacity and high competency. Successful leaders who become satisfied in their efforts close the front door to progress while subconsciously opening the back door to complacency. When leaders fail to pursue increasing their capacity and competency, complacency attacks—it identifies a vulnerability and exploits the opportunity for mission sabotage. Like a silent assassin, complacency lures successful, talented leaders with a multidimensional display of their success that acts as a veil covering deficiencies and concealing peril.

The tragedy of Takur Ghar and the initially failed execution of Operation Anaconda is partially due to complacency. General Moseley told General Franks that

¹ Merriam-Webster, “Complacency,” accessed May 15, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/complacency>.

significant coordination between the ground element and air components was lacking, yet Franks approved the mission. Task Force Mountain had new intelligence that exposed previous assumptions about the enemy activity as false, but they chose to continue with the operation. Slabinski knew the risks of landing directly on the mountain top, yet when his air support checked off station to support troops in contact, he chose to continue with the reconnaissance elements insertion. I make these statements with an important set of acknowledgements. Leaders facing consequential time critical decisions will not get every decision right. Leaders are often called to act with imperfect knowledge and preparation. One should be slow to question the heroic bravery and determined courage of those who fight in the service and defense of others. All military members risked immediate mortality by entering that valley. Slabinski, John Chapman, and the rest of MAKO 30 chose to land under enemy fire, face an overwhelming force, and fight uphill through deep snow, to locate and save their brother Neil Roberts. Without question, their undeterred timely decision is a lasting representation of heroism. Tragically, their actions failed, and the situation worsened. In their rescue attempt, MAKO 30 left a member of their element on the ridge with the body of Neil Roberts—John Chapman; and he was still alive.

Investigative journalist Matthew Cole, the author of *Code over Country*, argues that the SEALs have a culture problem that started revealing itself after Roberts Ridge—citing the Medal of Honor awarded to Slabinski as a disgrace.² Cole expounds upon later reviewed and enhanced drone footage that showed Chapman, whom Slabinski thought dead, continuing to fight alone for nearly an hour. Additionally, an Air Force combat controller at a nearby forward operating base heard Chapman calling on an emergency frequency using his unique callsign. The video suggests that when the Quick Reaction Force of Army Rangers aboard a CH-47 Chinook was on final approach, Chapman exposed himself to enemy fire to cover their insertion and was fatally wounded.

² Matthew Cole, *Code over Country: The Tragedy and Corruption of SEAL TEAM SIX* (New York: Bold Type, 2022), 4.

Cole argues that something changed in the SEALs after Roberts Ridge. For those there, living the events of Takur Ghar, seeing Robert's half-decapitated body, and the thought of potentially having left a team member alive to face the enemy alone, produced a grim motivation to begin perfecting their matchless craftsmanship—killing. As one unidentified SEAL told Cole, “You ask me to go living with the pigs, but I can't go live with the pigs and then not get a little dirty.”³ After Operation Anaconda, SEALs conducted night after night operations that refined their skills and produced a reputation for surgical killing that became legendary.

In an interview with Andy Walworth, Cole accuses SEALs of lawlessness and corruption. Cole, having never served in Special Operations Forces (SOF), let alone the military, says that the SEAL Teams have a massive breakdown in “good order and discipline.”⁴ Cole's history at *The Intercept* is crawling with articles condemning SEALs, special operations, Central Intelligence Agency, and other government and paramilitary organizations.⁵ It appears he found an engaging topic that attracts readers. In the interview, Cole asserts that because the entity operates on a razor's edge, leadership must be vigilant to enforce legality and good conduct.⁶ The biggest problem Cole sees in the SEALs is that they do not own their mistakes and accept that they did something wrong. Indisputably, he condemns the men who for the past twenty years have fought, bled, and died to protect him, all Americans, and our allies from acts of terror—that reality deserves a moment of somber reflection.

³ Cole, *Code over Country*, 9.

⁴ Andy Walworth, “Controversy with SEAL Team SIX with Matthew Cole,” RealClear Politics, March 17, 2022, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2022/03/17/controversy_at_seal_team_six_with_matthew_cole.html.

⁵ The Intercept, “Matthew Cole,” accessed May 15, 2022, <https://theintercept.com/staff/matthewcole/>.

⁶ The Intercept, “Matthew Cole,” 10:20-10:35.

A complacent organization would justify dismissing all of Cole’s arguments based on his evident political bias, aggressive professional aspirations, naive and unproven moral self-superiority, as well as the organization’s own intrepid and audacious history of success. Nevertheless, killing complacency begins with facing failure, regardless of who identifies it.

In the twenty-first century, night-owning SEALs continue to find their way into unfavorable light. In one of Cole’s seething articles, he writes,

After two decades of war with little accountability, the SEALs’ ship has run aground. War crimes, drug use, sexual assault on deployment, and homicide are just some of the charges against active-duty SEALs in recent years. In a span of two years, two SEAL[s] . . . killed a Green Beret while deployed to Mali; a group of SEALs turned in their platoon chief, Eddie Gallagher, accusing him of an array of war crimes, including the stabbing death of an unarmed, injured Islamic State fighter; rampant drug use was discovered in an East Coast SEAL unit; and an entire SEAL platoon was sent home from a deployment to Iraq after military leaders learned that they’d been drinking excessively and one of operators was accused of sexual assault.

These are all true accusations. Whether all the events occurred as accused is questionable. Regardless of unit performance and achievement, murder, sexual assault, and illegal actions are immoral and inexcusable. Lurking behind the ferocious operational success of the SEAL Teams was complacency. Without question, SEAL Teams possess high capacity and high competency, but these qualities can corrupt and destroy an organization from within if complacency takes hold. Faithful pursuit of high capacity and high competency helps leaders continue to combat complacency. Unfortunately, this issue is not unique to the SEAL Teams but is also present in the church.

On October 14, 2014, Mark Driscoll resigned from Mars Hill—the fastest growing church in America. Sarah Pulliam Bailey from *The Washington Post* describes Driscoll as a “larger-than-life megachurch pastor who has been accused of plagiarism, bullying and an unhealthy ego that alienated his most devoted followers.”⁷ I still remember attending Mars Hill as a college student and hearing Driscoll yell at men for being cowards

⁷ Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “Mark Driscoll Resigns from Mars Hill,” *The Washington Post*, October 15, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/breaking-mark-driscoll-resigns-from-mars-hill-church/2014/10/15/8a9a1016-54a7-11e4-b86d-184ac281388d_story.html.

who run away from problems. In the act of remarkable hypocrisy, Driscoll ran. *Christianity Today* recently reposted the Board of Elders’ original statement given to the Board of Overseers of Mars Hill on October 13, 2014, that called for publicly rebuking Driscoll, removing him from eldership and leadership, and establishing a restoration plan.⁸ In the statement, the Board of Elders found that Driscoll was guilty of habitual harsh speech, arrogance, and domineering—qualities they judged disqualified him from leadership. On January 1, less than three months later, Mars Hill closed the doors on all its campuses—leaving 15,000 congregants stunned. The former elders claim Driscoll, now pastor of Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, has yet to repent.⁹

Ravi Zacharias International Ministries released a report on February 9, 2021, that reverberated throughout the evangelical church worldwide. The late great evangelist and world-famous apologist was guilty of decades of sexual abuse and misconduct.¹⁰ The heartbreaking report discloses constant interaction with massage therapists, sometimes having them come to his room late at night, meeting them in hotel lobbies, and regularly having different women travel with him. When confronted by a staff member, Zacharias “grew angry and barely spoke to the staff member for a long period of time.”¹¹ Shockingly, one of the witnesses reported that Zacharias raped her multiple times over a period of years, using religious language during each encounter.¹² Lori Anne Thompson reports that

⁸ Kate Shellnut, “Former Mars Hill Elders: Mark Driscoll Is Still ‘Unrepentant’ and Unfit to Pastor,” *Christianity Today*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/july/mars-hill-elders-letter-mark-driscoll-pastor-resign-trinity.html>.

⁹ Shellnut, “Former Mars Hill Elders.”

¹⁰ Daniel Sillman and Kate Shellnut, “Ravi Zacharias Hid Hundreds of Pictures of Women, Abuse During Messages, and a Rape Allegation,” *Christianity Today*, February 11, 2021, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/february/ravi-zacharias-rzim-investigation-sexual-abuse-sexting-rape.html>.

¹¹ Lynsey Barron and William Eiselstein, “Report of Independent Investigation into Sexual Misconduct of Ravi Zacharias,” Courthouse News, February 9, 2021, <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/zacharias-report.pdf>, 6.

¹² Barron and Eiselstein, “Report of independent Investigation,” 4-5.

Zacharias used religious manipulation and controlling influence to get her to send him nude pictures.¹³ Zacharias’s multiple phones continued to show significant evidence of numerous sexual relationships.¹⁴ A man who spoke to hundreds of thousands, taught God’s Word with passion and conviction for over thirty-five years, and boldly defended the Christian faith lived in hidden sin for decades. His apparent personal self-satisfaction blinded him to his own habitual hypocrisy and destroyed the reputation of the ministry.

On Sunday, May 22, 2022, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) announced a third-party investigation report detailing the decades’ concealment of sexual abuse allegations within the organization. *The New York Times* article by Ruth Graham and Elizabeth Dias offers this scathing subtitle, “Executives of the nation’s largest Protestant denomination ignored victims, resisted reforms and were concerned with avoiding ‘potential liability,’ the third-party investigation says.”¹⁵ The investigation was conducted by Guidepost Solutions LLC and provides over 300 pages detailing years of haunting leadership decisions and sexual abuse allegations within Southern Baptist churches. In the executive summary, they reveal the essence of their findings: “Survivors and others who reported abuse were ignored, disbelieved, or met with the constant refrain that the SBC could take no action due to its polity regarding church autonomy—even if it meant that convicted molesters continued in ministry with no notice or warning to their current church or congregation.”¹⁶ The report is painful to read. How did the leaders of over fourteen

¹³ Barron and Eiselstein, “Report of Independent Investigation,” 7.

¹⁴ Barron and Eiselstein, “Report of Independent Investigation,” 8.

¹⁵ Ruth Graham and Elizabeth Dias, “Southern Baptist Leaders Mishandled Sex Abuse Crisis; Report Alleges,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/22/us/southern-baptist-sex-abuse.html>.

¹⁶ Guidepost Solutions, “The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee’s Response to Sexual Abuse Allegations and an Audit of the Procedures and Actions of the Credentials Committee,” May 15 2022, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6108172d83d55d3c9db4dd67/t/628a9326312a4216a3c0679d/1653248810253/Guidepost+Solutions+Independent+Investigation+Report.pdf>.

million proclaimed Christ followers, who have accomplished remarkable feats, fail so dreadfully?

The twenty-first century's external assault on truth and internal moral failure of church leadership created a new trend among evangelicals—deconstruction. In his *Desiring God* article, Jon Bloom traces the genesis of deconstruction to Jaques Derrida, a French postmodern philosopher.¹⁷ Bloom quotes Kevin Vanhoozer from *Is There a Meaning in this Text?*, who perceptively declares, “The motive behind Derrida’s strategy of undoing [deconstruction] stems from his alarm over illegitimate appeals to authority and exercises of power.”¹⁸ Translating this into the modern Christian context equals a questioning mindset of commonly held beliefs and, at times, refusing to recognize or submit to authority.¹⁹ The rise of deconstruction is partially attributable to church leadership that allowed complacency to birth moral failure that eroded congregations’ trust.

Both special operations and the American evangelical church have witnessed high capacity and high competency multidirectional mission leaders fall into moral compromise. Perhaps this might make some think that multidirectional mission leadership should stop pursuing an increase in professional competency and capacity—that, in some way, these leaders’ success resulted in their eventual fall or corruption. Instead, this chapter argues that the culprit is not the pursuit of competency or capacity but rather a silent sinful embrace of complacency that ignores the warning signs of a misaligned identity and mission.

¹⁷ Jon Bloom, “What Does ‘Deconstruction’ Even Mean?,” *Desiring God*, February 15, 2022, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-does-deconstruction-even-mean>.

¹⁸ Bloom, “What Does ‘Deconstruction’ Even Mean?,” sec. 2, para. 2.

¹⁹ Bloom, “What Does ‘Deconstruction’ Even Mean?,” sec. 2, para. 5.

Faithful Pursuit of High-Capacity and High-Competency

William S. Burroughs is credited with saying, “When you stop growing, you start dying.”²⁰ Like Newton’s first law of motion, an object in motion will continue in motion until acted on by an unbalanced force. The unbalanced force threatening a leader’s continuing motion to accomplish a mission is complacency. Fighting against complacency’s decaying effects requires a mindset bent upon a faithful pursuit of growth. The term *faithful* is a critical descriptor. Leaders can unfaithfully seek to increase their capacity and competency to feed their egotism and sinful pride. Unfaithful pursuit of capacity and competency is detached from sacrifice, service, and mission. In the Christian context, attempting to increase capacity and competency without submission to and reliance on the Lordship of Jesus Christ is unfaithful and detrimental to accomplishing God’s mission (1 Pet 5:6).

Conversely, faithful pursuit of high capacity and high competency is coupled with God’s multidirectional mission and His power to accomplish it. Paul represents this well in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10:

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul understood that faithful pursuit of capacity and competency is aligned with God’s mission and power. Counterintuitively, Peter Lillback suggests that a leader’s faithful pursuit of competency begins with acknowledging their incompetence.²¹ Leaders can only faithfully grow in competency when they embrace the grace of Christ and receive power from the Holy Spirit to overcome their inadequacies.²² The same principle applies

²⁰ Will Self, “William Burroughs-the original Junkie,” *The Guardian*, February 1, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/feb/01/william-burroughs-junky-will-self>.

²¹ Peter Lillback, *Saint Peter’s Principles: Leadership for Those Who Already Know Their Incompetence* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 9-10.

²² Lillback, *Saint Peter’s Principles*, 10-14.

to capacity. The faithful pursuit of high capacity and high competency is a functional reliance upon the power of God to transform the leader into His vessel to accomplish His mission.

Within this context, leadership capacity and competency identify measures of *potential effectiveness* in accomplishing God’s multidirectional mission. The dictionary definition of *capacity* describes an individual’s mental or physical ability and the facility or power to produce, perform, and deploy.²³ Competency describes a person who possesses sufficient knowledge or skill in a particular discipline.²⁴ Together, leaders utilize capacity and competency to influence others to achieve objectives that further the mission skillfully.

Complacency enters the leader’s mind when they stop faithfully seeking to increase their capacity and competency. Learning stops, and arrogance starts. Teachability decreases, and pride increases. Morality loosens, and self-satisfaction tightens. Complacency begins in the mind but is externally seen in words and actions. R. Albert Mohler Jr. argues that leaders are thinkers and readers who require constant maintenance and development of their cognitive skills.²⁵ Regarding thinking, he writes, “Our actions may never reach the heights of our thinking, but you can be certain that the quality of your actions will never exceed the quality of your thinking.”²⁶ Complacency is a mindset that needs to die. Leaders kill complacency by faithfully increasing their cognitive and physical capacity and competency as they align to accomplish God’s mission for His church.

Admittedly, there are multiple compelling principles for increasing leadership capacity and competency. In *The Conviction to Lead*, Mohler gives 25 principles for

²³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “Capacity,” accessed July 30, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capacity>.

²⁴ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “Competency,” accessed August 4, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/competency>.

²⁵ Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany, 2012), 59, 99.

²⁶ Mohler, *Conviction to Lead*, 59.

leadership that matters.²⁷ James L. Garlow, in his book *Tested by Time*, argues for 21 irrefutable laws of leadership. In *Saint Peter's Principles*, Lillback mentions 128 leadership principles from the example found in Peter. While not always discussing capacity and competency directly, all three authors, to varying degrees, discuss measures to increase a leader's potential effectiveness. At the risk of underachieving, I offer only two principles, one to increase capacity and the other to increase competency—together, they combat the destructive consequences of complacency. These two principles are ingrained in the heartbeat of every special operations community. The two principles are simple: owning failure and resilient determination.

Kill Complacency and Increase Capacity with Owning Failure

A faithful pursuit of high capacity begins with extreme ownership of failure. Jocko Willink, former Commander of Task Unit Bruiser in Iraq in 2006, continued the proud tradition he was bound to uphold—and the FRL foundation laid by his godfather in the teams, Draper Kauffman. Willink opens his book (published seven years before Cole's *Code Before Country*) with a refreshing example of humility by exposing a combat failure. He recalls his Platoon's fratricide incident in Ar Ramadi, 2006, where in the morning hours his sniper element mistakenly shot an Iraqi soldier—an incident known as a blue on blue.²⁸ The Iraqi partner force was not supposed to operate in that area without deconflicting with the SEAL sniper element. Additionally, the area was occupied by enemy insurgents, and the snipers were on high alert. There were undoubtedly plausible excuses for the incident. During the investigation, the Commanding Officer and staff needed to understand who was to blame. Willink gave them what they were looking for—he took full ownership of the failure. At the investigation briefing he said, “There is only one

²⁷ Mohler, *Conviction to Lead*, 59.

²⁸ Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win* (New York: Saint Martin's, 2017), 17-31.

person to blame for this: me. I am the commander. I am responsible for the entire operation. As the senior man, I am responsible for every action that takes place on the battlefield. There is no one to blame but me.”²⁹ Willink was not relieved from duty. Most likely, he was not removed because he demonstrated he was still in command of the mission by owning his mistake, learning from it, and being ready to continue executing his responsibilities. Not only was Willink not relieved, but he went on to lead the most highly decorated special operations unit of the Iraq War.

Willink argues that a true leader—someone capable of motivating and moving people to accomplish a mission—possesses extreme ownership. Willink contends that this is “the fundamental core of what constitutes an effective leader in the SEAL Teams or any leadership endeavor. . . . The leader must acknowledge mistakes and admit failures, take ownership of them, and develop a plan to win.”³⁰ In Willink’s perspective, there are no bad teams, only bad leaders.³¹ He points to the leader’s responsibility to inspire, influence, address individuals, stimulate the intellect, define responsibilities, and uphold performance standards. Without ever mentioning the term, Willink, however imperfectly, models FRL while serving in Task Unit Bruiser. Leaders of consequential multidirectional missions kill complacency by owning and adapting from failure.

Jason B. A. Van Camp, a former Delta Force Major, writes, “Commanding requires a willingness to try, fail, try again, fail, and try again and again . . . failure is fertilizer, and fertilizer is what you need to grow to your full potential.”³² Owning, understanding, and adapting from failure enables leaders to continue performing and striving after high capacity while simultaneously fighting off complacency. If an

²⁹ Willink and Babin, *Extreme Ownership*, 27.

³⁰ Willink and Babin, *Extreme Ownership*, 29-30.

³¹ Willink and Babin, *Extreme Ownership*, 49.

³² Jason Van Camp and Andy Symonds, *Deliberate Discomfort: How U.S. Special Operations Forces Overcome Fear and Dare to Win by Getting Comfortable Being Uncomfortable* (Washington, DC: Ballast, 2020), 46.

organization is not free to fail, evaluate failure, and make calculated changes informed by failure, then it will cease to grow. Hiding failure is like withholding water from crops: it cultivates death. In the Christian worldview, only after a person recognizes and admits their failure to achieve God’s moral standard can they become a new creation in Jesus Christ. God’s Word describes this relationship between complacency and capacity in David’s sin with Bathsheba.

The opening words of 2 Samuel 11 foreshadow David’s moral failure by highlighting his growing complacency: “In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem” (v. 1). David became complacent—he stayed in Jerusalem; he took himself out of the fight. Jon Bloom writes an article titled “Beware the Peril that Lurks in Success” from the opening words of 2 Samuel 11. He starts by saying, “We are never more vulnerable to sin than when we are successful, admired by others, and prosperous.”³³ David lusts after Bathsheba and takes her. While there is some ambiguity, the text appears to suggest that David sexually assaults Bathsheba in what might appropriately be called rape.³⁴ She then discloses that while her husband has been away fighting, she is now pregnant with David’s child. At this moment, David could have severed the compounding consequences of his sin. He could have repented before the Lord, Bathsheba, Uriah, and all of Israel. He could have owned his failure, accepted the consequences, and immediately began to walk the path of repentance and restoration, rebuilding his capacity to lead by owning his failure. He could have increased his capacity by killing his complacency. However, the same foolishness that enticed him to avoid the fight encouraged him to cover his sin. He reasoned he could bring Uriah home and create some ambiguity regarding the pregnancy. But when bringing

³³ Jon Bloom, “Beware the Peril that Lurks in Success,” *Desiring God*, September 28, 2012, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/beware-the-peril-that-lurks-in-success>.

³⁴ John Piper, “Did Bathsheba Sin with David?,” *Desiring God*, January 24, 2022, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/did-bathsheba-sin-with-david>.

Uriah home did not solve his dilemma, his complacency tricked him into justifying killing Uriah in combat by ordering him where the fighting was the fiercest. Then, after murdering her husband, David marries Bathsheba—and still does not own his failure.

Ownership eventually comes when God sends the prophet Nathan to confront David. He cries out to God, “Have mercy on me O God. . . . Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit” (Ps 51:1-2, 10-12). Although God takes David and Bathsheba’s son, causing exceptional grief, He answers David’s prayer and forgives him in a remarkable depiction of grace (2 Sam 12:13). By finally owning his sin and demonstrating humility by accepting Nathan’s rebuke, David’s life is graciously spared by God. Nevertheless, David’s drawn-out complacency that led to his disobedience is a future loss in capacity—a measure of his potential leadership effectiveness is forfeited. In 2 Samuel 12:7-11, Nathan declares God’s judgment on David:

Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.’”

David’s capacity faltered. His willful desire to sin and cover it up surrendered “much more” that God would have added to him (2 Sam 12:8). Additionally, his sin brought a sword against his kingdom for the remainder of his life. Where David’s complacency is an example of lost capacity, Peter’s ownership and humility exemplify how killing complacency can increase capacity.

After vowing to die alongside Jesus, Peter denies his savior three times (Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38; 18:15-27). Peter could have continued down the complacent road, denying his sin like David. He could have attempted to justify his actions but instead chose ownership and humility. In an exchange with the risen Christ, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. With his heart grieving at the numerical confrontation matching his recent denial, he responds with, “Lord you know everything; you know that I love you” (John 21:17). Andreas J. Köstenberger comments, “Rather than pointing to actions of his own that prove his loyalty, [Peter] defers to Jesus’ knowledge of him. . . . [He] has realized the hollowness of affirming his own loyalty in a way that relies more on his own power of will than on Jesus’ enablement.”³⁵ D. A. Carson highlights that Jesus’s questioning of Peter functions as both forgiveness of sin and public reinstatement as a disciple.³⁶ In each confession, Jesus reinstates and commissions Peter to leadership, increasing his capacity and preparing him for a central role in establishing the church.³⁷

The twenty-first century church leader kills complacency by owning failure. This ownership is necessary both individually and institutionally. As a disciple of Jesus, every church leader must readily and regularly confess failure and sin. First John 1:9-10 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” In confessing individual failure, church leaders demonstrate a faithful pursuit of high capacity by exposing their inadequacies and coming to God for transformation and empowerment. Oddly, God chooses to use leaders for mission success as they confess their failure. Institutionally, church leaders need to own the organization’s failures and cultivate an environment free to expose, analyze, and adapt from failure. If the

³⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 598.

³⁶ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 676.

³⁷ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 676-77.

local institutional church cannot corporately expose and process failure, then it will fail to evangelize its community. The local church cannot effectively communicate the need for God’s grace while functionally denying it.

Kill Complacency and Increase Competency with Resilient Determination

The U.S. Army Leadership Field Manual states the Army’s desired characteristics in a leader. One of these characteristics is competency.³⁸ The field manual argues that “a leader must have a certain level of knowledge to be competent.”³⁹ Knowledge is broken down into four skill sets: interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, technical skills, and tactical skills.⁴⁰ Each skill set is critical to moving people to accomplish a mission. SOF spend significant time, energy, and money on the screening and selection of their people to ensure they can withstand the rigors of what will be demanded of them while maintaining competency in multiple skill sets. What SOF are looking for in candidates is not necessarily raw talent, physical prowess, or mental genius—they are searching for a certain kind of mental toughness, which I call *resilient determination*.

I define resilient determination as an insistent cognitive decision that empowers physical exertion. Resilient determination is like a combustion engine fueled by an individual’s perception of the mission’s necessity and urgency. Resilient determination combats complacency by accelerating sacrifice, discipline, and exertion to train, plan and execute a mission.

Medal of Honor recipients Thomas Norris and Michael Thornton demonstrate resilient determination and built upon the proud tradition every SEAL operator strives to

³⁸ *The U.S. Army Leadership Field Manual: Battle-Tested Wisdom for Leaders in Any Organization* (New York: US Army, 2004), 7-8.

³⁹ McGraw-Hill, *The U.S. Army Leadership Field Manual*, 8.

⁴⁰ McGraw-Hill, *The U.S. Army Leadership Field Manual*, 8.

uphold. Katie Lange with DoD News recounts Thomas Roland Norris’s daring and determined heroic rescue of two downed American pilots in the jungles of Vietnam.⁴¹ Lt. Col. Icaal “Gene” Hambleton was behind enemy lines after his EB-66 was shot down. The Air Force attempted six days of recovery operations that disastrously led to more than a dozen killed, six aircraft rendered inoperable, two Americans taken prisoner, and another pilot, 1st Lt. Mark Clark, stranded along with Hambleton in enemy territory.⁴² The Air Force concluded the last available option for a rescue was a ground team and turned to the only SOF operator in that region who had worked with the Vietnamese, a two-time Atlantic Coast Conference wrestling champion from the University of Maryland—Thomas Norris.⁴³ Utilizing a team of five Vietnamese SEALs, Norris infiltrated enemy lines at night and maneuvered past heavily occupied encampments. He and his team eventually located Clark and brought him back to their base, barely getting him and several others evacuated in an airlift after their base was severely attacked.⁴⁴ Norris lost two Vietnamese in the base attack; however, he and the three remaining Vietnamese passed on the evacuation and chose to stay in the smoldering base to complete the mission and rescue Hambleton.

After several days of failed rescue attempts, Hambleton’s condition worsened, leaving Norris little time and few options. The significance and urgency of the mission fueled Norris to innovate and press on. Norris and one Vietnamese SEAL thought of something wild. They created a ruse to dress up as fishermen in a small canoe called a sampan and float right past fortified enemy positions to rescue Hambleton, who had made

⁴¹ Katie Lange, “Medal of Honor Monday: Lt. Thomas R. Norris,” US Department of Defense, April 11, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2991163/medal-of-honor-monday-navy-lt-thomas-r-norris/#:~:text=retired%20Navy%20Lt.-,Thomas%20R.,pilots%20in%20Vietnam%20in%201972>.

⁴² Lange, “Medal of Honor Monday,” paras. 7-8.

⁴³ Lange, “Medal of Honor Monday,” paras. 1-5.

⁴⁴ Lange, “Medal of Honor Monday,” para. 16.

his way to the river's waterline. Unbelievably, it worked. They linked up with Hambleton using his emergency radio and stowed him in the bottom of the canoe, covering him with life vests, bamboo, and vegetation.⁴⁵ On their way back, they were spotted. In their attempt to escape, an enemy machine gun bunker opened fire on their position. But Norris never gave up. He got his team to cover, called in an airstrike, and used the smoke screen from the bombs to escape and return to base.⁴⁶ Norris's resilient determination capitalized on his diverse training and ingenuity to achieve mission success.

During the same deployment to Vietnam in 1972, Norris took his turn being rescued by the extraordinary resolve of Michael Thornton. On October 15, 1973, Petty Officer Michael Edwin Thornton was presented the Medal of Honor by President Richard M. Nixon for his courageous action while saving the life of his superior Officer—Thomas Norris. Norris and Thornton were US Navy advisors on an intelligence gathering and prison capture operation with three Vietnamese.⁴⁷ However, when they missed their pre-planned landing area, they were discovered and engaged by upwards of fifty North Vietnamese.⁴⁸ The small reconnaissance team called in Naval ship guns to their position and began preparing to extract out to sea. However, after reconsolidating with his force, Thornton realized his Officer, Thomas Norris, was missing.⁴⁹ Thornton disregarded his own safety and fought his way back to his teammate who had fallen from enemy fire. Thornton quickly eliminated two enemy combatants approaching Norris's position and ran over to examine his motionless teammate. Norris had taken a shot to the head. Undeterred, Thornton drug Norris to the water's edge while under constant effective enemy fire. While

⁴⁵ Lange, "Medal of Honor Monday," paras. 19-22.

⁴⁶ Lange, "Medal of Honor Monday," paras. 22-24.

⁴⁷ Michael Edwin Thornton, "Medal of Honor, Vietnam, U.S. Navy," accessed August 6, 2022, <https://www.cmohs.org/recipients/michael-e-thornton>.

⁴⁸ Thornton, "Medal of Honor, Vietnam, U.S. Navy."

⁴⁹ Thornton, "Medal of Honor, Vietnam, U.S. Navy."

still receiving enemy fire, he inflated Norris's lifejacket and towed him out to open water for two hours until a support craft eventually recovered them. Shockingly, Norris was still alive and fully recovered after significant medical care.

Norris and Thornton both demonstrated remarkable bravery by disregarding their own safety to save the life of another. These acts of bravery are rooted in their resilient determination to pursue extraordinary competency levels in their core skillsets. Norris cultivated exceptional interpersonal skills to train, trust, and operate alongside an indigenous force to provide him with a competitive advantage in executing a personnel recovery operation. The conceptual skill to create an innovative solution to pose as a Vietnamese fisherman in a small canoe was honed over years of study in mission planning and diverse exposure to past operations. Thornton's physical discipline and tactical acumen enabled his combat superiority to eliminate enemy threats, rescue Norris, and tow his unconscious body miles out to sea. These momentary acts of heroism are vignettes that display years of resilient determination to pursue excellence.

The Navy SEAL ethos exhibits the community's continued daunting demand for resilient determination:

We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The lives of my teammates and the success of our mission depend on me – my technical skill, tactical proficiency, and attention to detail. My training is never complete. We train for war and fight to win. I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required yet guided by the principles that I serve to defend.⁵⁰

The nature of warfare demands resilient determination to pursue high competency. Like other SOF units, SEALs are constantly training and testing the limits of their capabilities to improve proficiency in their core activities. While not always a daily reality, the legacy phrase "no easy day" does possess a significant measure of merit. SEALs expect excellence and strive after perfection from the first day of training throughout their entire careers.

⁵⁰ Naval Special Warfare Command, "Navy SEAL Ethos," accessed August 5, 2022. <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/SEAL-Ethos/>.

Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training selects candidates with resilient determination by exposing them to thirty weeks of significant pain and discomfort. Everywhere a candidate goes, a bell follows them. All the pain, hurt, sleepless nights, hypothermia, and extreme fatigue can end by simply ringing the bell—all they need to do is quit. Most people think that making it through SEAL training is about being physically strong. However, the real reason most candidates fail to complete BUD/S is that they choose to quit. Few are removed because of performance or medical injuries. Most candidates fail because they lack resilient determination. Those who survive training do so because they make a resolute cognitive decision that supersedes their physical desire for relief, rest, and comfort. This mental toughness is critical for Full Range Leaders of multidirectional missions.

Resilient determination naturally causes inspirational motivation as a leader aggressively pursues competency in all core components of FRL. Communicating a compelling vision and organizational expectations with articulate charisma may move some people to action; however, radical transformative movement is propelled when a person exemplifies the vision and discards personal comfort for the sake of the mission. When followers see their leader alongside them, exerting energy and embracing discomfort, it creates a contagious irrational bond.⁵¹ Followers sacrifice and surrender things previously held as treasures to join the movement.⁵² Intriguingly, even though they are forfeiting certain pleasures and comforts, followers of inspirational leaders possess high levels of satisfaction in their actions.⁵³

If resilient determination is fueled by mission necessity and urgency, then leaders of God's mission should demonstrate a pursuit of competency with a resilient

⁵¹ Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006), 39.

⁵² Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 39-40.

⁵³ Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 41-43.

determination that matches and exceeds what is found in the world. God's mission for the church to live as and make disciples of Jesus Christ has immediate and eternal consequences. This mission should overload a Christian's motivational capacity to pursue excellence. Nevertheless, the follower of Jesus Christ will display resilient determination in activities that will not always impress the world. In specific settings, a believer's resilient determination and competency to execute God's mission may earn them the hatred of the people they are attempting to help.

Paul demonstrates this as he withstood significant persecution in executing God's mission. Paul writes,

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (2 Cor 11:24-27)

The mission's urgency and necessity fuels Paul's resilient determination. Even after being beaten, shipwrecked, and adrift at sea, he is ready for the next gospel operation. And yet, Paul is keenly aware of the danger of complacency. Paul writes, "But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:27). Complacency is always lurking, waiting for an opportunity to strike. That is why Paul describes himself like an Olympic athlete training to win a prize (1 Cor 9:24-27). Every day requires immense focus and concentration to train, prepare, and compete. Competency requires discipline, sacrifice, and physical and mental exertion.

Lillback hits this idea of resilient determination as he dissects 1 Peter 1:7-9 and 4:10. He acknowledges the danger of complacency manifested in the "good-enough syndrome [where] we simply cease striving to improve, to grow better, because what we are already doing gets us by. We do not want to invest the energy to move ourselves to a new level of excellence."⁵⁴ The "good-enough syndrome" is like a loud ringing alarm

⁵⁴ Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 55.

signaling that the back door is open to complacency. Lillback summarizes Peter's word by concluding, "A vital faith leads to a vital life that brings our best to the Lord in all we seek to do."⁵⁵ As church leaders set their minds on the joy of their salvation, a resilient determination emerges to work heartily for the Lord.⁵⁶

The twenty-first century has witnessed remarkable failure in resilient determination. Church leaders embraced complacency that produced catastrophe. Ravi Zacharias, Mark Driscoll, and the SBC report are only a few of many stories giving validity to the deconstruction movement. If American churches had a bell that members could ring to quit the challenges and trials God has endowed upon them for His glory, I fear the vast majority would run to ring it. The following chapter will challenge church leaders toward reviving resilient determination in carrying out God's mission. In the current environment, now more than ever, American church leaders need to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:14).

Conclusion

As the president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Albert Mohler dutifully addressed the heartbreaking SBC investigation report straight on. He begins his opinion article in *The Wall Street Journal* by quoting Isaiah's words, "Woe is me, for I am undone."⁵⁷ Mohler admits and laments the unambiguous findings of the report. While universally regrettable, he further exposes two theological deficiencies that enabled this leadership failure. A deficient doctrine of sin and moralism mistaken for morality.⁵⁸ He ends with the following, "Moving forward is only possible if the SBC members face this issue honestly, receive this report soberly, express genuine remorse and demonstrate

⁵⁵ Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 57.

⁵⁶ Lillback, *Saint Peter's Principles*, 57. See also Col 3:23-24.

⁵⁷ Albert Mohler, "Southern Baptists' Moment of Reckoning: Houses of Worship," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 27 2022, sec. A13.

⁵⁸ Mohler, "Southern Baptists' Moment of Reckoning," sec. A13.

genuine repentance.”⁵⁹ Mohler adeptly demonstrates how to kill complacency: own failure and change practice with resilient determination.

The faithful pursuit of high capacity and high competency increases mission success while combating the catastrophic effects of complacency. When church leaders can define the mission, take command, plan backward, and kill complacency, they are ready to *lead the fight*.

⁵⁹ Mohler, “Southern Baptists’ Moment of Reckoning,” sec. A13.

CHAPTER 6

LEAD THE FIGHT: THE CHURCH'S MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Pastors and church leaders are called to lead the fight. This fight is for truth, souls, morality, righteousness, the unseen, the oppressed, and the glory of God. This fight is against the physical and spiritual forces of darkness seeking to overthrow and destroy God by subverting His mission. Pastors are called to demonstrate a resolute boldness and courage sourced in the inerrant Word of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Pastors and church leaders fight in the pulpit, fight in the coffee shop, fight in the office, fight in the home, fight in the gym, fight in the homeless shelter, fight in the academy, fight in the city, and fight in the country; church leaders are never out of the fight. When assaults come from inside and outside the church, pastors are called to stand firm in the faith and lead the fight.

In Basic Underwater Demolition SEAL (BUD/S) training, a bell follows candidates everywhere they go. With every loud reverberation, the entire class is reminded that all they have to do to end the pain, dread, and misery is ring the bell—just quit. Right now, some church leaders want to ring out and quit—they want out of the fight. Recall Barna Group's research on *The State of Pastors* presented in the introduction. Near the turn of 2021, 38 percent of Protestant pastors thought about quitting the ministry.¹ In 2017, one in three pastors felt close to burnout.² Adversity looms inside and outside the

¹ Barna Group conducted this study on 507 US Protestant pastors between October 12 to 28, 2021. Barna Group, "38% of U.S. Pastors Have Thoughts about Quitting Full-Time Ministry in the Past Year," accessed February 26, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being>.

² Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity* (Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017), 11.

church. Last year, 85 percent of pastors believed their religious freedom in America was weakening.³ On the outside looking in, only one in five people think that the pastors in their community are influential—meaning pastors are not perceived as leaders within their communities.⁴ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins warn that the American church is facing a Nazi Germany moment that demands the same determination and resiliency as Dietrich Bonhoeffer.⁵ Similarly, Albert Mohler argues that facing the coming storm demands courage and conviction like that of Churchill at the peak of Hitler’s aggression.⁶ Mohler writes,

Christians must not retreat nor find our salvation in a false hope. We must, with every fiber of our God-given strength, with full dependance upon the power of the Holy Spirit, with every ounce of conviction we can muster through prayer, with unwavering courage, protest this secular moment. . . . We must protest every false gospel and every erroneous worldview that diminishes human flourishing. We must continue to hold fast to the core theological convictions of the Christian faith and to the primacy and authority of Scripture. We must not fail in seeing Scripture rightly proclaimed, the church built up, and the message of the gospel stretched to every corner of the earth.⁷

Retreat is not an option. The church is surrounded. The fight is on all sides. Leaders must face the fight or the fight will come to them. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” The enemy is executing a strategic sabotage campaign to undermine the authority of God by tempting Christian leaders to capitulate on biblical truth, cease striving for excellence, and embrace sinful practices that thwart the mission. The red flare warning imminent attack is already falling from the sky. In his

³ Barna Group, *The State of Pastors*, 11.

⁴ Barna Group, *The State of Pastors*, 107.

⁵ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 13, Kindle.

⁶ R. Albert Mohler Jr., *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church* (Nashville: Nelson, 2020), xvi.

⁷ Mohler, *The Gathering Storm*, 14-15.

sovereignty, God has endowed church leaders with the burden of His consequential multidirectional mission.

Five Special Operations Principles for Leading God’s Multidirectional Mission

The church and Special Operations Forces (SOF) both possess multidirectional missions. In the introduction, I defined a multidirectional mission as a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. SOF leaders tend to naturally gravitate toward utilizing the core components of FRL to execute their multidirectional mission. Within this leadership construct are five special operations principles that these elite communities use to achieve mission success in war. As illustrated with Operation Anaconda and the tragedy on Takur Ghar, multidirectional missions require adaptive, innovative, time-sensitive, complex, and consequential decision-making. When biblically aligned, church leaders can utilize these same tools as a framework to effectively navigate the fight facing the Church in the twenty-first century. The consequential battle before the church demands that pastors and church leaders define the mission, take command, plan backward, kill complacency, and lead the fight.

Define the Mission

The SEAL Ethos states, “We expect to lead and be led. In the absence of orders I will take charge, lead my teammates and accomplish the mission. I lead by example in all situations.”⁸

Lead the fight by defining the mission. The fight for souls in the twenty-first century begins with unifying God’s people around His mission. Leaders must articulate a mission to motivate and move followers to action. This thesis argues that God’s mission for His church is multidirectional. The church’s mission centers on discipling, but is bifurcated between the individual and the institution—living as and making disciples.

⁸ Naval Special Warfare Command, “Navy SEAL Ethos,” accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/SEAL-Ethos/>.

Institutionally, the church's mission is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ through faithfully proclaiming his Word with a geographically expanding purpose.

Individually, each disciple not only builds up and serves the church but also glorifies God by actively engaging, serving, and shaping culture.

Pastors must ask, if God's present strategic mission is to glorify Him by living as and making disciples of Jesus Christ, then how is their local church aligning to His mission? What are the local church's emerging objectives? What are the near and far-term objectives directing the church's daily and weekly activities and efforts to achieve God's overall mission? Are the ministries in the church aligned to a specific objective furthering the overall mission? Can ministry team leaders articulate the church's mission? How do ministry team leader's actions align with and achieve the mission? Leading a multidirectional mission means articulating, communicating, and solidifying the "why" for the congregation within the mission context. Knowing *the why* fuels mission execution.

Leaders define the mission. God has chosen pastors and church leaders to lead His mission in specific contexts. Church leaders are to spend diligent time in prayer, pouring over the Scriptures, and conversing with the congregation to ensure that the local church is aligned with its mission in every pursuit. After this, church leaders lead with extreme humility and passion and take command.

Take Command

The SEAL Ethos states, "I persevere and thrive on adversity. My Nation expects me to be physically harder and mentally stronger than my enemies. If knocked down, I will get back up, every time. I will draw on every remaining ounce of strength to protect my teammates and to accomplish our mission. I am never out of the fight."⁹

Lead the fight by taking command. Pastors and church leaders are called to lead on the battlefield with a commanding presence that moves God's people to action.

⁹ Naval Special Warfare Command, "Navy Seal Ethos."

This leadership is not sourced in positional power or compulsion, but in transformative influence. The time when the title “pastor” or “elder” inspired trust and brought comfort is fading fast. The twenty-first century challenges require church leaders to act with exceptional tact and agility. Leaders must move people to action while being able to innovate, adapt, and counter emerging threats inside and outside the church. Biblically redefined FRL helps leaders to effectively take command.

Biblical FRL. FRL as represented in this thesis is the combination of both transformational and transactional. As previously mentioned, if leaders are going to navigate a rapidly changing and challenging environment, they must create transformational cultures that defeat challenges and obstacles through passionate organizational cohesion, adaptation, and innovation. And yet, the mission’s consequence mandates that leaders communicate, impose execution standards, and develop agile organizational structures. As shown in the research on SEAL Teams, Full Range Leaders can excel in executing a spectrum of activities to accomplish multidirectional missions.

I defined biblical FRL as leading people to encounter and be transformed by God and join in executing His mission through transformational and transactional components. Leading in the church requires a desperate reliance upon God’s power to succeed. God builds his church—His leaders are called to move His people back to Him. Biblical FRL utilizes the components of transformational and transactional leadership to motivate and move people to the throne of grace. Second Corinthians 3:18 says, “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” Church leaders can increase their effectiveness in moving people toward God through humbly pursuing excellence in the six FRL components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, and management by exception.

Six leadership components. Church leaders should honestly assess their performance in the six components of FRL. Multidirectional mission leaders need tough skin. Church leaders can welcome evaluation, critique, and assessment from faithful brothers and sisters who love them and want them to take command of God’s mission. Once these gaps or areas of improvement are identified, leaders need to create plans for institutional and individual improvement in competency and capacity. Full Range Leaders define the mission, take command, and plan backward.

Plan Backward

The SEAL Ethos states, “We demand discipline. We expect innovation. The lives of my teammates and the success of our mission depend on me – my technical skill, tactical proficiency, and attention to detail. My training is never complete. We train for war and fight to win.”¹⁰

Pastors lead the fight by planning backward. Church leaders cannot afford mediocre, undisciplined, and disordered planning. The successful execution of God’s mission requires leaders to prayerfully and diligently plan. This type of planning begins by asking three questions: what does the church want?, why does it want it?, and what will it take to get it? In chapter 4, backward planning was presented as a deliberate, calculated process where leaders start with the end state and work back to identify the key tasks necessary to achieve success as effectively and efficiently as possible. It was shown that Full Range Leaders excel in mission planning performance. FRL utilizes simplicity to achieve success in planning. Overcomplicated multidimensional plans with various moving parts increase the risk of mission failure. Multidirectional mission leaders make simple plans for institutions and individuals by receiving the mission, conducting analysis, developing courses of action, creating a concept of operation, equipping the force, and rehearsing the action.

¹⁰ Naval Special Warfare Command, “Navy Seal Ethos.”

Receive the mission. Everything starts with a mission. Planning backward begins with the desired result or end state and reverse engineers back to the first step. Church leaders utilize backward planning by first asking: how will this ministry advance the Church's overall strategic mission of glorifying God by living as and making disciples of Jesus Christ? If the answer to this question is that the ministry does not advance the church's mission, then kill the ministry immediately. The battle the church faces cannot afford distraction. Simple plans should clearly articulate how a ministry is operationally nested within the overall activities and efforts of the congregation.

Conduct mission analysis. Mission analysis involves gathering biblical, contextual, and congregational intelligence and identifying emerging objectives. First, biblical intelligence is the most critical. This is what legitimizes the ministry's connection to the mission. Church leaders should analyze every ministry carefully and thoughtfully—is this activity biblically defensible? The second is contextual intelligence. This asks the question, does the environment permit the ministry? Context determines the feasibility and informs potential effectiveness. Lastly, congregational intelligence canvases the church's giftings, convictions, and accessibility to determine if a ministry is practically viable. Mission analysis utilizes this information to identify near and far objectives to begin developing courses of action.

Develop simple courses of action. A course of action describes an execution option for accomplishing a mission objective. Having multiple courses of action is a force-functioning method to produce innovation. Never accept one way to achieve an objective. That is a recipe for failure. Church leaders should routinely evaluate ministries and look for more efficient and effective means to align them to their overall mission and adapt them to the ever-changing environment. A practical way to do this is to plan a date where ministry leaders gather for a course of action development. Divide members into teams where they must create new courses of action for ministries in which they do not currently

serve. This team should present a minimum of three different courses of action for each ministry they are assigned to the group. End with the actual ministry leaders providing feedback on each new course of action and why they think they should keep or change the ministry's practice. This exercise is helpful for three reasons. First, it is a unifying cross-training experience where leaders from other ministries have the opportunity to think critically about other activities in the church. Second, ministries are analyzed from fresh perspectives that could fuel ministry biblical alignment and context modernization. Third, the exercise provides a natural leadership development opportunity to help church members in their public speaking and biblical reasoning about ministry. Once a course of action is selected, a detailed concept of operation is created

Develop specific CONOP. The Concept of Operation, or CONOP, describes how a church will accomplish the objective. CONOPs begin with the previously created single sentence mission statement that communicates the who, what, where, when, and why. In chapter 4, I gave the following example of a possible mission statement from Doxa Church: By January 2023, Doxa Church recruits sixty covenant core team members by engaging in individual daily prayer, weekly equipping of core team members, and hosting monthly open invite vision meetings. From this statement emerges a basic operation concept that explains the ministry's operational nesting and outlines who will execute it, what activities need to be performed, the skills required to complete them, abort criteria, minimum force, specific equipment, actions during contingencies, and the command and control structure. The concept of operation requires significant attention to detail. Identifying the necessary components in a concept of operation requires that church leaders plan backward from the desired end state.

Equip and rehearse the CONOP. The last step in backward planning is two parts: equipping and rehearsing. Equipping and rehearsing walk hand in hand. When rehearsing an operation, leaders identify new equipment that enhances the ministry's

function. Nevertheless, an operation cannot undergo proper rehearsals without the necessary equipment. Full Range Leaders seek every competitive advantage possible in accomplishing the mission. Rehearsals allow ministry leaders and members to demonstrate their competency with their equipment, technical skill, and understanding of the mission. If a team forgoes rehearsals, they are showing complacency.

Kill Complacency

The SEAL Ethos states, “I stand ready to bring the full spectrum of combat power to bear in order to achieve my mission and the goals established by my country. The execution of my duties will be swift and violent when required yet guided by the principles that I serve to defend.”¹¹

Lead the fight by killing complacency. Chapter 5 defines complacency as “self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.”¹² Lillback conveys complacency as the good-enough syndrome, where “we simply cease striving to improve, to grow better because what we are already doing gets us by. We do not want to invest the energy to move ourselves to a new level of excellence.”¹³ Complacency kept King David at home, peering onto another man’s rooftop when he should have been in the fight. Pastors can fight faithfully for years and develop a strong reputation that is ruined from a single complacent moment. Full Range Leaders kill complacency by faithfully pursuing high capacity and competency through owning failure and resilient determination.

Owning failure. Increasing leadership capacity requires church leaders own failure. First John 1:9-10 reads, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive

¹¹ Naval Special Warfare Command, “Navy Seal Ethos.”

¹² Merriam-Webster, “Complacency,” accessed May 15, 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/complacency>.

¹³ Peter Lillback, *Saint Peter’s Principles: Leadership for Those Who Already Know Their Incompetence* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019), 55.

us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Strangely, mission success can only come from the admission of failure. The twenty-first century is not blind to the church’s moral failure. The fastest and most effective means Christians have to counter the fracture splitting American evangelicalism is to own failure, learn from it, and make changes. When leaders make a private and public practice of owning failure, they increase their leadership capacity. Humility is contagious. When leaders demonstrate humility, it transforms the entire organization. Leaders of God’s mission must consistently own individual and institutional failures, seeking God’s grace and empowerment with resilient determination to change.

Resilient determination. Increasing leadership competency requires church leaders to develop resilient determination. In chapter 5, I defined resilient determination as an insistent cognitive decision that empowers physical exertion. Resilient determination is a chosen mental toughness that fuels physical exertion by overruling one desire with another. The desire for relief is overruled by the desire to complete the task. The desire for comfort is overruled by the desire to win. The desire for public recognition is overruled by God’s declaration. Resilient determination is critical to the Full Range Leader. It propels inspirational motivation, fueling followers to like-minded action. The mission’s necessity and urgency energize pastors’ resilient determination to study the Scriptures, improve communication competency, enhance the organizational structure, and continually disciple of future leaders. Church leaders must enter the fight with a resilient determination that pushes past momentary pain for a lifetime of glory with Christ. Full Range Leaders define the mission, take command, plan backward, kill complacency, and lead the fight.

Conclusion: Lead the Fight

God has sovereignly appointed pastors and church leaders to lead the fight. I have argued that accomplishing the church’s consequential multidirectional mission in the twenty-first century demands biblically redefined Full Range Leadership that faithfully

pursues high capacity and high competency. A multidirectional mission is a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. Biblically aligned Full Range Leaders can effectively navigate this complexity in the twenty-first century when they faithfully define the mission, take command, plan backward, kill complacency, and lead the fight.

In a breach of academic protocol, I want to conclude by addressing pastors and church leaders directly. This thesis is meant to be a challenge, encouragement, and tool to fuel a passion in your soul that seeks to glorify God with every waking moment of your life. I pray you are encouraged to lead God's multidirectional mission for His church, and that you consider the potential helpfulness of this biblically aligned framework. God has exceptionally entrusted you with leading His mission and shepherding His people. You carry a heavy burden. But it is a burden God has uniquely made you and called you to shoulder. While we fail often—God will not fail. He will complete the work He started. Do not quit. Stand firm in the faith. Run toward the fire. Lead the fight.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrashoff, D. Michael. *It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy*. New York: Hachette Book, 2002.
- Akin, Daniel. "The Single-Elder-Led Church: The Bible's Witness to a Congregational/Single-Elder-Led Polity." In *Perspectives on Church Government: 5 Views*, edited by Chad Own Brand and R. Stanton Norman, 25-86. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004.
- Army Doctrine Publication 1-01, Doctrine Primer*. Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 31 July 2019.
- Bailey, Sarah Pulliam. "Mark Driscoll Resigns from Mars Hill." *The Washington Post*, October 15, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/breaking-mark-driscoll-resigns-from-mars-hill-church/2014/10/15/8a9a1016-54a7-11e4-b86d-184ac281388d_story.html.
- Barna Group. *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity*. Ventura, CA: Barna Group, 2017.
- _____. "38% of U.S. Pastors Have Thoughts about Quitting Full-Time Ministry in the Past Year." November 16, 2021. <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being>.
- Barna, George, and David Kinnaman. *Churchless: Understanding Today's UnChurched and How to Connect with Them*. Austin, TX: Barna Group, 2014. Kindle.
- Barron, Lynsey, and William Eiselstein. "Report of Independent Investigation into Sexual Misconduct of Ravi Zacharias." Courthouse News, February 9, 2021. <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/zacharias-report.pdf>.
- Bass, Bernard, and Ronald Riggio. *Transformational Leadership*. 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006.
- Blaber, Pete. *Men, Mission, and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander*. New York: Penguin, 2008. Kindle.
- Blanchard, Ken, and Phil Hodges. *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005.
- Bloom, Jon. "Beware the Peril That Lurks in Success." *Desiring God*, September 28, 2012. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/beware-the-peril-that-lurks-in-success>.
- _____. "What Does 'Deconstruction' Even Mean?" *Desiring God*, February 15, 2022. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-does-deconstruction-even-mean>.

- Britannica. "Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan." Accessed October 7, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Soviet-invasion-of-Afghanistan>.
- Burns, James. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.
- _____. *Transforming Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row, 2003.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel according to John*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity, 1991.
- Cole, Matthew. *Code over Country: The Tragedy and Corruption of SEAL TEAM SIX*. New York: Bold Type, 2022.
- Congressional Medal of Honor Society. "Stories of Sacrifice: Michael Edwin Thornton." Accessed August 6, 2022. <https://www.cmoHS.org/recipients/michael-e-thornton>.
- Debevoise, Nell, Derick. "The Third Critical Step In Problem Solving that Einstein Missed." Forbes, January 26, 2021. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nelldebevoise/2021/01/26/the-third-critical-step-in-problem-solving-that-einstein-missed/?sh=ab9a41938079>.
- DeBruyne, Nese F., and Anne Leland. "American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics." Congressional Research Service, 2015. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1013824.pdf>.
- Department of the Army. "Special Forces Detachment Mission Planning Guide: GTA 31-01-003." January 2020. https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/gta31_01_003.pdf.
- Dever, Mark. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*. Nashville: B & H, 2012.
- _____. *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.
- _____. *What Is a Healthy Church?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.
- DeYoung, Kevin, and Greg Gilbert. *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.
- Donahue, Wesley. *Building Leadership Competence: A Competency-Based Approach to Building Leadership Ability*. State College, PA: Centrestar Learning, 2018. Kindle.
- Franks, Tommy. *American Solider: General Tommy Franks*. New York: Harper Collins, 2004. Kindle.
- Gallaty, Robby. *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus' Final Words Our First Work*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.
- Gallaty, Robby, and Randall Collins. *Growing Up: How to Be Disciples Who Make Disciples*. Bloomington, IN: Cross Books, 2013. Kindle.
- Garrett, James. "The Congregation-Led Church: Congregational Polity." In *Perspectives on Church Government: 5 Views*, edited by Chad Own Brand and R. Stanton Norman, 157-208. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004.
- George, Bill. "The New 21st Century Leaders." *Harvard Business Review*, April 30, 2010. <https://hbr.org/2010/04/the-new-21st-century-leaders-1.html?registration=success>.

- Graham, Ruth, and Elizabeth Dias. "Southern Baptist Leaders Mishandled Sex Abuse Crisis; Report Alleges." *The New York Times*, May 22, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/22/us/southern-baptist-sex-abuse.html>.
- Grau, Lester, and Ali Jalali. "The Campaign for the Caves: The Battles for Zhawar in the Soviet-Afghan War." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 14, no. 3 (September 2001): 69-92.
- Guidepost Solutions. "The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's Response to Sexual Abuse Allegations and an Audit of the Procedures and Actions of the Credentials Committee." May 15, 2022. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6108172d83d55d3c9db4dd67/t/628a9326312a4216a3c0679d/1653248810253/Guidepost+Solutions+Independent+Investigation+Report.pdf>.
- Headquarters United States Air Force. "Operation Anaconda: An Airpower Perspective." February 7, 2005. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA495248.pdf>.
- The Intercept. "Matthew Cole." Accessed May 15, 2022. <https://theintercept.com/staff/matthewcole/>.
- Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Joint Publication 3-05: Special Operations." July 16, 2014. http://edocs.nps.edu/2014/July/jp3_05.pdf.
- _____. "Joint Publication 5-0: Joint Planning." December 1, 2020. https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp5_0.pdf.
- Kaiser, Robert, B. "The Best Leaders Are Versatile Ones." *Harvard Business Review*, March 2, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/the-best-leaders-are-versatile-ones>.
- Keller, Tim. *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel Ministry in Your City*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Kinicki, Angelo, and Mel Fugate. *Organizational Behavior: A Practical, Problem-Solving Approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2018.
- Kinnaman, David, and Aly Hawkins. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Rethinking Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. Kindle.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. *John*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- Kruse, Kevin. "What Is Leadership?" *Forbes*, August 9, 2013. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/?sh=5e2d493c5b90>.
- Kugler, Richard. *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan. A Case Study of Adaptation in Battle*. Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2007.
- Lange, Katie. "Medal of Honor Monday: Lt. Thomas R. Norris." US Department of Defense, April 11, 2022. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/story/Article/2991163/medal-of-honor-monday-navy-lt-thomas-r-norris/#:~:text=retired%20Navy%20Lt.,Thomas%20R.,pilots%20in%20Vietnam%20in%201972>.
- Lillback, Peter, *Saint Peter's Principles: Leadership for Those Who Already Know Their Incompetence*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2019.

- Lyle, David. *Operation Anaconda: Lessons Learned, or Lessons Observed?* Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Command and General Staff College, 2009.
- MacArthur, John. *The Master's Plan for the Church*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.
- MacPherson, Malcolm. *Roberts Ridge: A Story of Courage and Sacrifice on Takur Ghar Mountain, Afghanistan*. New York: Random House, 2005.
- Mattis, James N. "Remarks by Secretary Mattis on National Defense Strategy." US Department of Defense, December 1, 2018. <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/1702965/remarks-by-secretary-mattis-on-national-defense-strategy/>.
- Mattis, Jim, and Bing West. *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead*. New York: Random House, 2021.
- McCallum, Dennis, and Jessica Lowery. *Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership*. Norfolk, VA: New Paradigm, 2006. Kindle.
- McKnight, Scott. *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2014.
- McRaven, William H. *Spec Ops Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice*. New York: Random House, 1996.
- _____. "University of Texas at Austin 2014 Commencement Address—Admiral William H. McRaven." YouTube, May 19, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxBQLFLei70>.
- Milligan, Benjamin. *By Water Beneath the Walls: The Rise of the Navy SEALs*. New York: Penguin, 2021.
- Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2012.
- _____. *The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church*. Nashville: Nelson, 2020.
- _____. "Southern Baptists' Moment of Reckoning: Houses of Worship." *The Wall Street Journal*, May 27, 2022, A13.
- National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. "The 9/11 Commission Report." Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-911REPORT/pdf/GPO-911REPORT.pdf>.
- Naval Special Warfare Command. "History." Accessed May 15, 2021. <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/History/>.
- _____. "Navy SEAL Ethos." Accessed May 15, 2021. <https://www.nsw.navy.mil/NSW/SEAL-Ethos/>.

- The Navy SEAL Museum. "Vietnam—The Men with Green Faces." Accessed May 14, 2022. <https://www.navysealmuseum.org/about-navy-seals/seal-history-the-naval-special-warfare-storyseal-history-the-naval-special-warfare-story/men-green-faces#:~:text=Between%201965%20and%201972%20there,Norris%2C%20and%20EM2%20Mike%20Thornton.>
- North Coast Church. "Ministries." Accessed January 2, 2022. <https://www.northcoastchurch.com/connect/>.
- Ogden, Greg. *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007.
- _____. *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016.
- Olson, David. *The American Church in Crisis: Groundbreaking Research Based on a National Database of over 200,000 Churches*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- Piper, John. *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry*. Nashville: B & H, 2013.
- _____. "Did Bathsheba Sin with David?" *Desiring God*, January 24, 2022. <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/did-bathsheba-sin-with-david.>
- Pope, Randy. *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Putman, Jim. *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010.
- Reymond, Robert. "The Presbytery-Led Church: Presbytery Church Government." In *Perspectives on Church Government: 5 Views*, edited by Chad Own Brand and R. Stanton Norman, 87-156. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004.
- Ricks, Thomas. "Fiasco." *Armed Forces Journal*, August 1, 2006. <http://armedforcesjournal.com/fiasco/>.
- Self, Will. "William Burroughs-the original Junkie." *The Guardian*, February 1, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/feb/01/william-burroughs-junky-will-self.>
- Shellnut, Kate. "Former Mars Hill Pastors: Mark Driscoll Is Still 'Unrepentant' and Unfit to Pastor." *Christianity Today*, July 16, 2021. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/july/mars-hill-elders-letter-mark-driscoll-pastor-resign-trinity.html.>
- Silliman, Daniel, and Kate Shellnut. "Ravi Zacharias Hid Hundreds of Pictures of Women, Abuse During Messages, and a Rape Allegation." *Christianity Today*, February 11, 2021. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/february/ravi-zacharias-rzim-investigation-sexual-abuse-sexting-rape.html.>
- Smith, Stew. "All You Want to Know about BUD/S Training." *Military.com*. Accessed April 30, 2022. <https://www.military.com/military-fitness/navy-special-operations/buds-warning-order#:~:text=This%20warning%20order%20is%20a,Underwater%20Demolition%2FSEAL%2C%20training.>

- Toguchi, Robert, and Michael Krivdo. *The Competitive Advantage: Special Operations Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2019.
- Tripp, Paul D. *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.
- “The United States Army in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom.” October 2001. https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-83/cmhPub_70-83.pdf.
- United States Census Bureau. “QuickFacts: San Diego, California.” Accessed July 11, 2022. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sandiegocitycalifornia/PST045221>.
- United States Special Operations Command. “Joint Special Operations Command.” Accessed May 15, 2021, <https://www.socom.mil/ussocom-enterprise/components/joint-special-operations-command>.
- _____. “Special Forces History.” Accessed May 15, 2021. <https://www.soc.mil/USASFC/SFhistory.html#:~:text=Special%20Forces%20History,warfare%20in%20Nazi%20Doccupied%20Norway>.
- _____. “Special Operations Command: About Us.” Accessed May 15, 2021. <https://www.socom.mil/about#>.
- The US Army Leadership Field Manual: Battle-Tested Wisdom for Leaders in Any Organization*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.
- US Department of State. “Global War on Terror: The First 100 Days.” Accessed October 11, 2021. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/6947.htm>.
- Van Camp, Jason, and Andy Symonds. *Deliberate Discomfort: How U.S. Special Operations Forces Overcome Fear and Dare to Win by Getting Comfortable Being Uncomfortable*. Washington, DC: Ballast, 2020.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin. *Hearers & Doers: A Pastor’s Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019.
- Wade, Normal M. *The Battle Staff: Plan, Prepare, Execute & Assess Military Operations*. Lakeland, FL: Lightning, 2020.
- Walworth, Andy. “Controversy with SEAL Team SIX with Matthew Cole.” RealClear Politics, March 17, 2022. <https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2022/03/17/controversy-at-seal-team-six-with-matthew-cole.html>.
- Warren, Rick. “How Ministry Leaders Plan (Part One).” Biblical Leadership, August 31, 2020. <https://www.biblicalleadership.com/blogs/how-ministry-leaders-plan-part-one/>.
- Wax, Trevin. “Gospel, Culture, and Mission: An Interview with Tim Keller.” The Gospel Coalition, October 10, 2012. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/gospel-culture-and-mission-an-interview-with-tim-keller/>.
- _____. *The Multi-Directional Leader: Responding Wisely to Challenges from Every Side*. Austin, TX: Gospel Coalition, 2021. Kindle.

- Wehner, Peter. "The Evangelical Church Is Breaking Apart: Christians Must Reclaim Jesus from the Church." *The Atlantic*, October 24, 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/10/evangelical-trump-christians-politics/620469/>.
- Western Governors University. "Defining Transactional Leadership." March 10, 2021. <https://www.wgu.edu/blog/transactional-leadership2103.html>.
- "The Westminster Shorter Catechism." Accessed April 12, 2022. <https://www.westminsterconfession.org/resources/confessional-standards/the-westminster-shorter-catechism/>.
- White, James. "The Plural-Elder-Led Church: Sufficient as Established—The Plurality of Elders as Christ's Ordained Means of Church Governance." In *Perspectives on Church Government: 5 Views*, edited by Chad Own Brand and R. Stanton Norman, 255-96. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004.
- Whitney, Donald. *Simplify Your Spiritual Life: Spiritual Disciplines for the Overwhelmed*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003.
- Wilkins, Michael J. *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Willink, Jocko, and Leif Babin. *Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win*. New York: Saint Martin's Press, 2017.
- Zahl, Paul F. M. "The Bishop-Led Church: The Episcopal or Anglican Polity Affirmed, Weighed, and Defended." In *Perspectives on Church Government: 5 Views*, edited by Chad Own Brand and R. Stanton Norman, 209-54. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004.
- Zenger, Jason. "7 Life Lessons from the Movie: King Richard." May 11, 2022. <https://www.makingchips.com/read/7-life-lessons-from-the-movie-king-richard>.

ABSTRACT

MULTIDIRECTIONAL MISSION: SPECIAL OPERATIONS PRINCIPLES FOR LEADING GOD'S MISSION IN HIS CHURCH

Jared Michael Price, DEdMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr.

The church and Special Operations Forces have multidirectional missions. A multidirectional mission is a complex end state with emerging objectives that require a spectrum of alternating activities and efforts. With the surmounting challenges facing American evangelicals, church leaders should consider utilizing biblically redefined Full Range Leadership (FRL) that faithfully pursues high-capacity and high-competency to accomplish God's mission. This argument is supported with a combination of past studies in secular leadership theory, leadership in the Special Operations Forces, and a leadership case study of the success and failure during Operation Anaconda. These findings are filtered through in depth biblical analysis of leadership principles that provides pastors and church leaders with a new framework to consider when leading God's mission for His church. This framework includes five principles of Full Range Leaders derived from special operations: define the mission, take command, plan backward, kill complacency, and lead the fight.

VITA

Jared Michael Price

EDUCATION

BA, Moody Bible Institute, 2012

MA, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015

Graduate Certificate, Liberty University, 2019

Graduate Certificate, Wharton Business School, 2022

PUBLICATIONS

SOLD: Marks of a True Disciple. Self-published, 2019.

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Youth and Young Adults Pastor, Cornerstone Bible Church, Westfield,
Indiana, 2012-2015