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ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS  
WHO FLOURISH AT PLEASANT VALLEY COMMUNITY  
CHURCH IN OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

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

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Doctor of Ministry

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Andrew Logan Norris  
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**APPROVAL SHEET**

ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS  
WHO FLOURISH AT PLEASANT VALLEY COMMUNITY  
CHURCH IN OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

Andrew Logan Norris

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor: James H. Edwards III

Second Reader: Matthew D. Haste

Defense Date: April 10, 2025

To my wife, Taryn, and to our son, Link. My highest calling in leadership will always be to you, and it is an immeasurable joy to journey alongside you for the glory of God.

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## PREFACE

God has continually shown his goodness and faithfulness to me, and this journey has been one of his greatest kindnesses of my life. He used it to mold me, stretch me, and grow me into a better leader, pastor, husband, and father. My prayer is that this project would enable greater investment in kingdom advancement so that more Christians would be disciplined and deployed for the glory of God.

There are many people to thank who have been instrumental in this process. I am indebted to my fellow pastors and the members of Pleasant Valley Community Church, who not only supported and prayed for me but have given me a wonderful place to discern my calling. Pleasant Valley has been an incredible family with which to grow up in ministry, and shepherding God's people there has been a rich blessing. I want to thank Dr. Jamus Edwards, in particular, for not only being my pastor for the last thirteen years but also for supervising me through this process. I would not be who I am today without his leadership, and I look forward to seeing how God continues to use us in the years to come. I am also thankful for the unwavering support of my friends and family. My late grandfather nagged me every Christmas about pursuing doctoral studies, and his encouragement kept it on my radar when it seemed impractical. I am grateful to my parents for encouraging and supporting me throughout my life and for all the long conversations with my dad that have helped along the way. Above all, I want to thank my wife, Taryn, who has been my partner and biggest fan in every season. Her love and friendship have been my greatest earthly joy in this life.

Andy Norris

Owensboro, Kentucky

May 2025

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Pleasant Valley Community Church exists to know God and make God known by living out its vision statement, which is to saturate Owensboro, Kentucky, and engage the nations with the glory and knowledge of the Lord. This vision for kingdom advancement guides every aspect of the ministry of the church, and it is a vision that the pastors and staff of the church alone cannot accomplish. To remain faithful to the call to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18–20), Pleasant Valley Community Church must invest in equipping the saints (Eph 4:11–12) so that its capacity for ministry can be multiplied through developing new leaders. This vision compels Pleasant Valley Community Church to seek to develop leaders who flourish in their calling as they seek to engage in God’s work advancing his kingdom to the ends of the earth.

#### **Context**

Pleasant Valley Community Church (PVCC) was planted in Owensboro, Kentucky, in December 2006. Beginning with just twenty founding members, the church began praying from the outset that God would send leaders who would guide their church to reach people and grow. Those prayers were answered as the church has experienced rapid growth over the last seventeen years and currently consists of around 1,000 regular attendees and 550 covenant members, with many pastors and staff who lead the congregation. After the exponential growth of its early days, PVCC has plateaued over the last six or seven years, primarily due to severe limitations related to the physical space in the facility. From the end of 2020 into 2021, there was a nearly complete turnover in leadership, as almost all staff pastors and many lower-level staff left the church. This

ushered in a new season in the life of PVCC, where the leadership culture was being reset for the future. At the end of 2022, the church began its first capital campaign in history, raising the funds necessary for a significant building expansion to remove the largest barrier to future growth while simultaneously clarifying the vision for the next season of ministry at PVCC.

The relatively young age of PVCC and the large number of people who are newer to the church are particular strengths that give flexibility to the culture. People expect change and are willing to try new things to accomplish the mission of the church, especially with the recent leadership turnover and the building project. There are currently more volunteers serving than at any point in the church's history, many of whom are fully aligned with and engaged in the work of ministry and have much untapped leadership potential. Another strength is a high "permission culture," where people are quickly given permission and encouraged to minister and pursue opportunities to exercise their gifts without the need to slow down to obtain approval from church leadership. The church is blessed with a dedicated and resourceful staff that works hard to accomplish an extraordinary amount with limited resources. The church has much socio-economic diversity, and a large percentage of the congregation is newer to Christianity and eager for development.

The main weaknesses of PVCC are related to facility space and leadership development. The church grew by an average of one hundred people each year for the first eight years but has since plateaued due to the lack of facility space. Excitement and engagement among the congregation stagnated along with the growth, but the construction of a new church building has re-energized PVCC members with a renewed sense of mission and a desire to engage in the work of ministry. As the facilities barrier is removed, the lack of leadership development will become the remaining significant barrier to ministry effectiveness. Across the church, there is currently no clear pathway for developing and equipping people to lead beyond lower levels of volunteer recruitment.

As a consequence of this lack of a leadership development process, one of the greatest weaknesses of the church is a lack of leaders within the membership. While there is a surplus of volunteers, many of whom are newer to Christianity, they are primarily led directly by the paid church staff. Trained leaders who are not serving on staff are scarce. This has resulted in a heavy burden on the church staff, and there is currently no intentional structure or process to develop and place non-staff leadership over significant areas of ministry to relieve that pressure. A few deacons serve in leadership, but there is little structure; none have been ordained since 2016, and the ones that have been ordained are largely inactive. A final weakness relevant to this project is related to the high “permission culture.” While people are quickly given permission to do what they feel led to do without organizational red tape stifling them, there is little guidance, direction, or real empowerment for them to succeed, and no structured development process to equip them for success in the ministry areas to which they feel called. As a result, many people who attempt to lead new initiatives quickly burn out and quit, which further impedes the creation of a healthy leadership culture.

The pastors and staff of the church strongly desire to grow in developing leaders to overcome many of these weaknesses. In the coming years, many new leaders who have been equipped to carry PVCC into the next season of ministry will be needed.

### **Rationale**

Creating and implementing a leadership development process at Pleasant Valley Community Church was critical for the continued health and growth of the church. The vision statement of the church is “to saturate Owensboro and engage the nations with the glory and knowledge of God,”<sup>1</sup> but this vision can only be achieved by developing more leaders to join the work. Second Timothy 2:2 gives the model: “And

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<sup>1</sup> “Missions,” Pleasant Valley Community Church, accessed January 2, 2024, <https://pleasantvalley.cc/missions>.

what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”<sup>2</sup> Developing these “faithful men” to go and teach others is key to the gospel going forth, and a structured process to develop leaders focused on multiplying more leaders is essential. Likewise, Jesus primarily invested in his disciples, who he developed and equipped for the work of ministry, who then went and made more disciples<sup>3</sup> and started a worldwide movement. PVCC must follow this example and create a process to develop and equip leaders for the work of ministry if it hopes to reach its city and the nations with the gospel effectively.

The church has been blessed with tremendous ministry effectiveness over the years, but it has come at a cost. Many pastors, staff, and leaders have experienced burnout, and several are no longer in ministry. Many factors contributed to this, but the lack of leadership development and support has been a factor in this unhealth. With more support from lay leaders developed through an intentional and structured process, the pastors and staff will be able to multiply their ministry effectiveness in a healthier manner that leads to greater longevity.

This project is especially timely because the church is undergoing a massive building expansion, which will remove the primary barrier hindering its growth. When the new building is completed, there is an expectation that the work of ministry will drastically increase, and the church will experience rapid growth. However, without more leaders who have been raised up and equipped for that work of ministry, such efforts are unlikely to bear healthy fruit. By investing in developing a team of leaders who will be ready to expand the capacity for ministry effectiveness, PVCC will be poised to capitalize on the generational opportunity presented by opening a new church building and leverage it to reach its city with the gospel. Creating a leadership development process will

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<sup>2</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> The relationship between disciple-making and leadership development will be further explored in chap. 2.

position PVCC to effectively equip the saints for the work of ministry and exponentially expand its capacity for kingdom expansion for years to come.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to establish a process for developing leaders who flourish at Pleasant Valley Community Church in Owensboro, Kentucky.

### **Goals**

Five goals guided the project. The first three goals were related to the development of new leaders. The fourth goal was related to the deployment of these new leaders into positions where they can effectively lead. The final goal ensured that this process would become integrated into the overall framework of PVCC so that every ministry could benefit.

1. The first goal was to assess the perception of Christian leadership principles and confidence to lead among current and prospective leaders at Pleasant Valley Community Church.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-session curriculum to equip leadership candidates by teaching foundational leadership principles.
3. The third goal was to equip pastor-selected leadership candidates with the core competencies to lead effectively in the church.
4. The fourth goal was to increase the number of church members serving in leadership positions.
5. The fifth goal was to develop a ministry plan to incorporate this leadership development process into the ongoing operations of Pleasant Valley Community Church.

A research methodology was created to measure the successful completion of these five goals.<sup>4</sup> The following section describes the specifics of this methodology.

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<sup>4</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

## Research Methodology

Achieving the five goals marks the successful completion of this project. The first goal was to assess the perception of Christian leadership principles and confidence to lead among current and prospective leaders at Pleasant Valley Community Church. This goal was measured by administering a Leadership Assessment Survey (LAS) to current ministry leaders and future leadership candidates.<sup>5</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when thirty leaders and candidates completed the survey, which was analyzed to gain a clearer understanding of current leadership competencies among PVCC leaders and potential leaders.

The second goal was to develop a six-session curriculum to equip leadership candidates by teaching foundational leadership principles.<sup>6</sup> The curriculum included healthy leadership principles derived from the Bible and contemporary literature, as well as the values and standards unique to PVCC's leadership culture.<sup>7</sup> This goal was measured by an expert panel of Christian leaders, who utilized a rubric to evaluate the curriculum's biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability.<sup>8</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when at least 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was revised until it met the standard.

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<sup>5</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>6</sup> A six-session structure was chosen to provide space for an overview of Christian leadership, foundational leadership principles related to individual/team/organizational health, and the exploration of PVCC's leadership culture. Though the curriculum is outside the scope of this project, additional sessions of individual or small-group training followed as a part of the Ministry Plan that focused on specific skills associated with the particular role that each leader will fill.

<sup>7</sup> The leadership culture of Pleasant Valley is best summarized by its eight leadership values: Rest to Run, Bleed for the Bride, Honor Up Down and All Around, Celebrate Loud and Often, Grow Your Gift, Reject Good for Great, Fight for Unity, and Press On. "Staff Culture," Pleasant Valley Community Church, accessed March 7, 2024, <https://pleasantvalley.cc/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/mission-vision-values-staff-culture.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> See appendix 1.



The third goal was to equip leaders and pastor-selected leadership candidates with the core competencies to lead effectively in the church. This goal was measured by re-administering the LAS within one week after participants completed the course, and was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples showed a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores. Additionally, this goal was measured by interviewing five participants who demonstrated an increase in knowledge between their pre- and post-survey scores to understand better the factors that led to the change.

The fourth goal was to increase the number of church members serving in leadership positions. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-analysis of trends in volunteer leadership. The number of active leaders serving before this project's implementation was the base number against which any changes were compared. This goal was considered successfully met when the number of volunteers serving in church leadership positions increased by a minimum of 15 percent.<sup>9</sup>

The fifth goal was to develop a Ministry Plan to incorporate this leadership development process into the ongoing operations of Pleasant Valley Community Church. The PVCC pastors measured this goal using a rubric to evaluate the plan's functionality, communication processes, training elements, and ability to be integrated into each ministry of PVCC.<sup>10</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.

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<sup>9</sup> A 15 percent increase was chosen for this goal because, though theoretically attainable, it necessitated that the majority of class participants followed through in placement into leadership positions within the church rather than simply participating in the training.

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

## Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms are used in the ministry project:

*Burnout.* The theme of burnout is interacted with throughout this project. Paul David Tripp describes burnout as a symptom of a “heart out of balance”<sup>11</sup> often accompanied by discouragement and depression. In this project, burnout is deeper than simple frustration with circumstances or difficulty in ministry, but is the antithesis of flourishing often borne out of leadership unhealth.

*Leaders.* For this project, “leaders” are male and female volunteers who are given a formal position of oversight over others. They are small group leaders, future deacon/elder candidates, ministry team leaders, etc. The project primarily focused on training and equipping new leaders, although existing leaders were encouraged to participate.

*Flourishing.* Theologian Jonathan Pennington states, “At the very core of the Bible’s message is the idea of true happiness and flourishing. ‘Shalom’ is how the Old Testament describes it. ‘Flourishing’ . . . is how the New Testament talks. It’s all wrapped up together, no matter which words or metaphors we use. The Bible is all about true happiness.”<sup>12</sup> For the purpose of this project, flourishing is defined as happiness, wholeness, and a deep sense of meaning as a person lives in alignment with God’s design.

*Leadership.* Gary Bredfeldt writes, “Leadership has most often been defined in a single word—influence. That is to say, leaders are those individuals who, through their personality, position, or power, shape the outlook and future of others.”<sup>13</sup>

*Leadership development.* For this project, leadership development refers to the

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<sup>11</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 97.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Pennington, *Jesus the Great Philosopher: Rediscovering the Wisdom Needed for the Good Life* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020), 206.

<sup>13</sup> Gary J. Bredfeldt, *Great Leader Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 19.

process by which a person receives training about leadership principles and PVCC's leadership culture to lead in the church effectively.

*Pleasant Valley leadership culture.* The Pleasant Valley leadership culture is the unique set of behaviors and attitudes that the PVCC pastors hope its leaders exhibit. These are best summarized by its mission and vision, as well as its leadership values.<sup>14</sup>

Two limitations applied to this project. The first limitation was that leaders must complete the leadership development class in early 2025, as the new leaders need to be trained and ready to be deployed as PVCC's new church building opens to the public. To mitigate this limitation, the course was offered in February and March of 2025. The second limitation was the limited availability of leaders and leadership candidates to participate in the class. To mitigate this limitation, the class was offered during one of the Sunday morning services so that participants could attend while they were already on campus for Sunday worship. This limitation was further mitigated by recording each session so participants could review the content of any missed sessions. Participants had to attend 83 percent of classes in person or via video to be considered as having completed the course.

Two delimitations were placed on this project. First, it was limited to six weeks of training. The training continued for additional weeks as participants moved on to role-specific training with various pastors and staff who would provide ongoing coaching as they gained experience leading. While the full leadership development process continued over time, this project only pertained to the first six weeks of foundational leadership training. The second delimitation was that this leadership development class was limited to pastor-selected leadership candidates who were not currently leading or were already current leaders at PVCC.

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<sup>14</sup> "Staff Culture," Pleasant Valley Community Church.

## **Conclusion**

God has called believers to invest in developing others who are equipped to lead well for God's glory. The following chapters will explore the underlying principles that guide healthy leadership development. Chapter 2 will explore the biblical and theological foundations of leadership development, chapter 3 will explore the theoretical and practical issues related to developing leaders who flourish, chapter 4 will describe the implemented project, and chapter 5 will evaluate the completed project.

## CHAPTER 2

### A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will explore several examples of leadership development in the Old and New Testaments to gain insights relevant to creating a process for developing flourishing leaders at PVCC. While the passages examined are not necessarily prescriptive for how leadership development must be done, the common patterns and themes that are consistent throughout Scripture reveal many principles that were instrumental in establishing a process for healthy leadership development at PVCC. In the Old Testament, the succession of the leadership of Israel from Moses to Joshua demonstrates the necessity for leadership development, God's divine hand in appointing leaders, and the role of mentoring in preparing future leaders. The prophetic succession of Elisha to replace Elijah showed the role leadership development can play in combating burnout, the need to select individuals eager to learn and lead for development, and the role of deep relationships in developing leaders as God confirms their calling. In the New Testament, a pattern for development began to emerge that was particularly helpful in the establishment of a leadership development process. When examining Jesus's development of his disciples, his leadership development followed the pattern of calling, training, releasing, coaching, and multiplying as he raised up leaders who were focused on gospel ministry. Finally, the Holy Spirit is intimately involved in the development process, calling future leaders, illuminating truth, empowering leaders for the work of ministry, sanctifying leaders, and multiplying future leaders.

## **Moses and Joshua: Successful Succession**

As Moses neared the end of his life, the Lord provided for the succession of leadership over his people as they prepared to enter the Promised Land in Numbers 27. This passage provides several helpful insights about the nature of leadership development that were relevant to the project.

### **The Necessity of Leadership Continuity**

Moses was one of the greatest leaders in all of Scripture, and at the end of his life, he emphasized the necessity of continuity in leadership. Moses had led God's people out of slavery in Egypt, brought them the Law, and led them through the wilderness as the rebellious generation died out while they waited to enter the Promised Land. In Numbers 27:12–14, God instructs Moses to go up on a mountain and survey the Promised Land, and after he has seen the land his people will inherit, he will die as a consequence of his sin at the waters in the Desert of Zin. Moses's leadership, while exemplary in many ways, was flawed. Ronald B. Allen notes, "His sin at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh (20:1–13) was always before him. Aaron had already died; Moses was soon to die. He would be allowed a glimpse of the land from a distant mountain, but not even he would be allowed a footfall in the land itself."<sup>1</sup> Even the greatest leaders in history are marked by sin, and as a result, all leadership is temporary. No leader will lead forever, whether due to failure, disqualifying sin, or eventual death. Moses is faced with this reality, and when God declares that his life will soon come to an end, Moses demonstrates the necessity of investing in continuity through future leaders by turning his attention to succession.

Moses responds to God's declaration that his leadership will soon end by praying for a successor to lead his people well, specifically so that they would not be as "sheep with no shepherd" (Num 27:17). R. Dennis Cole explains Moses's use of pastoral imagery: "Without such direction the often recalcitrant Israel might spend another forty

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald B. Allen, *Numbers*, in *The Expositor's Commentary*, vol. 2, *Numbers–Ruth*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 373.

years aimlessly wandering in a wilderness of spiritual darkness, ‘like sheep without a shepherd.’”<sup>2</sup> Moses recognizes that God’s people need a leader, and that the quality of that leadership will directly affect their spiritual faithfulness. As evidenced in the Golden Calf incident (Exod 32), when godly leadership is absent, the people, like sheep, are prone to wander into danger. Therefore, as Moses’s time on earth draws to a close, he prays that a new leader would be raised up to guide God’s people into faithfulness in the Promised Land. Leaders must lead with a mindfulness that their leadership will one day change or end, and the flourishing of those they lead is best accomplished through healthy continuity.

### **Leaders Are Ultimately Raised Up by God**

Moses requested that the Lord would provide a man to lead God’s people, and in his request uses a unique phrase: “The Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num 27:16). Allen explains, “This expressive title of Yahweh speaks of his ultimate sovereignty over all peoples.”<sup>3</sup> Moses appeals to God’s sovereignty as he asks for a successor. It is noteworthy that Moses does not directly appoint a leader himself. Joshua would seem to be the natural choice,<sup>4</sup> but Moses does not choose him. The successor does not come from any sort of hereditary dynasty (as is later the case with the kings) or through a democratic process. As Moses is faced with the end of his leadership, he asks for the Lord’s sovereign provision for the future of his people. Paul later expands on this theme: “For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Rom 13:1). Leadership ultimately comes from God alone. He is sovereign over all things, and Moses rightly goes to the Lord as the ultimate provider for his people. This principle is crucial when considering a leadership development process. Though investing in others is

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<sup>2</sup> R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, New American Commentary, vol. 3b (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 468.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, *Numbers*, 374.

<sup>4</sup> An exploration of Joshua’s qualification to lead through Moses’s development follows in the next section.

important, as will be demonstrated in the next section, humility before the Lord is necessary as leaders seek to develop future leaders. One must seek God's provision and direction when seeking a leader.<sup>5</sup> As with Moses and Joshua, the choice may seem clear, but much prayer is necessary to discern God's will in the selection process.

### **Leaders Must Invest in Others in Anticipation of God's Provision**

Though God ultimately raises leaders, current leaders must invest in developing others in anticipation of God's future provision. In Numbers 27, God appoints Joshua to lead. Gordon J. Wenham observes, "He was ideally suited to the job, having been for many years Moses' assistant (11:20; Exod. 17:9ff; 24:13; 32:17) and one of the spies who had actually visited Canaan (13:8; 14:6)."<sup>6</sup> By examining Joshua's years of preparation, one can see how his service to Moses prepared him for future leadership.

In Exodus 17:8–16, the Amalekites fight against the people of Israel. Moses chooses Joshua to lead the army in battle while Moses stands on a hill and raises up his staff. According to Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "both elements are to be operating: (1) the sword in Joshua's hand and (2) the staff (symbol of divine intervention) in Moses' hand. Once again, divine sovereignty and human responsibility are linked in carrying out God's will."<sup>7</sup> After Israel wins the battle, the Lord tells Moses to "write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" (Exod 17:14). In this early stage of Joshua's leadership development, the Lord instructs Moses to remind Joshua of the lessons learned through the trials they face as he prepares Joshua for future leadership. Though leadership would require great effort

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<sup>5</sup> Failure to do so, as seen in Num 14:4 when Israel declared that they would appoint their own leader and return to Egypt, was a rejection of God's rule, and if not for the intercession of Moses would have led to their destruction.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 217.

<sup>7</sup> Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Exodus*, in *The Expositor's Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis-Leviticus*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 465.



and responsibility, the Lord ultimately brings the victory. Moses wrote down and reminded Joshua of this truth, and this instruction was instrumental in his development as the future leader of Israel. Likewise, contemporary leaders must give those they are investing opportunities to lead and use the lessons learned as opportunities for ongoing instruction through their development process.

In Exodus 24:13, as Moses ascends the mountain to meet with the Lord, Joshua accompanies him as his aide. Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck observe, “Moses brought Joshua up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God (Exod. 24:13). Joshua observed Moses’ righteous indignation when Moses smashed the two tablets (Exod. 32:17–19), and Joshua sensed the sweet communion Moses shared with the Lord as Joshua guarded the Tent of Meeting (Exod. 33:11).”<sup>8</sup> Moses brought Joshua along for many of the most crucial moments in his leadership and, in so doing, prepared him for future leadership when the Lord elevated him to the office. Observation is one of the greatest tools leaders can use to develop others. By bringing future leaders along with them and allowing them to observe leadership challenges, successes, and failures, a leader’s followers gain valuable insight into how to lead. This sort of mentoring is a crucial part of any leadership development process.

When the Lord told Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor in Numbers 27, he gave specific instructions about how the transition was to take place: “He took Joshua and made him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation, and he laid his hands on him and commissioned him as the Lord directed through Moses” (vv. 22–23). This public ceremony made the succession plan clear to all of Israel and showed the Lord’s blessing on Joshua as the new leader of God’s people. It was key that the people saw Joshua as their new leader and that they understood that his development process was now complete and affirmed by both Moses and God himself. Wenham observes, “Thus

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 18.

the ceremony recorded here inaugurates a co-regency, when Moses and Joshua were joint leaders of the people, a transition period that was terminated by the death of Moses on Mount Nebo, recorded in Deuteronomy 34.”<sup>9</sup> Joshua was publicly declared the new leader, but Moses was still temporarily in the picture, receiving instruction from the Lord and making final preparations for God’s people to enter the Promised Land under Joshua until his leadership formally ended in the finality of his death. Likewise, as a new leader completes development and prepares to assume responsibilities, it is often helpful for the predecessor to aid in that transition temporarily. However, that transition period must come to a definite end, and the leader must fully step aside to allow the new leader to truly lead and for the people to fully recognize the legitimacy of the succession.<sup>10</sup>

### **Failing to Develop Leaders Leaves Followers as “Sheep with No Shepherd”**

As Joshua’s leadership ends, Israel is left in a very different place than at the end of Moses’s life. “After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the Lord, ‘Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?’” (Judg 1:1). Where Moses had intentionally invested in Joshua and prepared him for a seamless succession, Judges begins with much uncertainty. Geiger and Peck write, “There is no record of Joshua investing in anyone. We don’t see him intentionally developing leaders. . . . There was no clear leader out in front.”<sup>11</sup> The death of Joshua marked a turning point in the leadership of Israel. The book of Judges repeats a cycle of poor leadership and God’s people turning to wickedness. The Lord would raise up Judges to deliver his people, but most of these leaders were deeply flawed and could hardly be considered models for

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<sup>9</sup> Wenham, *Numbers*, 218.

<sup>10</sup> Many healthy contemporary church leadership successions illustrate this point, such as the succession of Josh Howerton for Steve Stroepe at Lake Point Church in Texas, or Chris Parrish for Hershael York at Buck Run Baptist Church in Kentucky.

<sup>11</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 19.

Godly leadership. The cycle of wickedness would inevitably continue. Before Moses's death, he prayed that the Lord would give them a leader, one that he had providentially been preparing for years so that God's people would not be "as sheep with no shepherd" (Num 27:17). Moses had the foresight to develop future leaders, in particular Joshua, and Israel thrived under Joshua's rule. Joshua, in contrast, failed to follow the example of Moses. Consequently, the very thing Moses had prayed against came to pass as Israel entered a cycle of unfaithfulness. This illustrates the fact that leadership development is crucial. Without intentional investment in others, a leader's success will be fleeting, and their followers will be left "as sheep with no shepherd."

### **Elijah and Elisha: From Despair to Development**

The succession of prophetic leadership from Elijah to Elisha is another example of a leader being developed for future service. By exploring Elisha's call in 1 Kings 19 and his ascension to replace Elijah in 2 Kings 2, a number of helpful insights are gained that are relevant to a leadership development process.

#### **Leadership Development as a Remedy for Burnout**

In 1 Kings 19, Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, is in the aftermath of his dramatic conflict with the prophets of Baal. In what should be a triumphant moment, Elijah is found fearful because of Jezebel's declaration that she will destroy him. Elijah flees to Beersheba, leaves his servant there, and then journeys a day farther into the wilderness, where he asks God to allow him to die. Utterly hopeless, exhausted, and seemingly depressed, Elijah enters a dark season of his ministry, a season that, in a modern language, one might call burnout.

Many factors may have led to Elijah's burnout, as he states in his response to the Lord in the cave at Mt. Horeb. "He said, 'I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek

my life, to take it away” (1 Kgs 19:10). Elijah feels alone in his ministry and is discouraged by Israel’s faithlessness. Jezebel’s threat has exposed his fear that despite his recent victory over the prophets of Baal, all of his work will be undone in the face of the seeming end of his leadership. Paul R. House comments, “Implied in this response is Elijah’s doubts that the Lord can save him or turn the nation back to the covenant.”<sup>12</sup> The root of Elijah’s burnout is the fear that at the end of his ministry all his work will have been for nothing.

The Lord answers Elijah’s honesty by calling him in verses 15–18 to anoint new kings over Syria and Israel and to anoint Elisha as the next one who would take the mantle of prophet. In verse 18, he tells Elijah that there will be 7,000 faithful people in Israel who will not abandon the Lord and bow the knee to Baal. Steve Cuss explains, “The good news of God is better than the bad news of doom and isolation that Elijah was seeing. . . . God was reframing reality for Elijah. All of Israel had not rejected God but quite the opposite.”<sup>13</sup> The Lord’s answer to Elijah’s burnout was to remind him that he was not alone and to give him a new assignment—anointing the next generation of leaders who would continue Elijah’s mission into the future. When Elijah felt crushed by the loneliness of the burden of leadership and the fear that his mission was at its end, God gave him new leaders, particularly Elisha, to raise up for the work of ministry.

Burnout in leadership is common. A 2022 study from Microsoft of over 20,000 managers in 11 countries reported that 53 percent self-identify as experiencing burnout.<sup>14</sup> The reasons for this are likely numerous and complex, but in the ancient example of Elijah, his case was rooted in isolation and an inability to see a vision of his mission continuing

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<sup>12</sup> Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, New American Commentary, vol. 8 (Nashville: B & H, 1995), 224.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Cuss, *Managing Leadership Anxiety: Yours and Theirs* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 138.

<sup>14</sup> “Hybrid Work Is Just Work. Are We Doing It Wrong?,” Microsoft, September 22, 2022, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work-is-just-work>.

past the end of his leadership. Through accepting God's call to develop future leaders, most importantly Elisha, who would be his direct successor, Elijah left Mount Horeb with a new mission. He ended his career with a renewed vision and purpose to fulfill God's call on his life by investing in the next generation. Such a vision is crucial to a leadership development process and will bear great fruit not only for the future leader being developed but also for the leader doing the developing.

### **Leadership Candidates Must Be Eager to Lead**

In 1 Kings 19:19–21, Elijah obeys the Lord's command and anoints Elisha as the future prophet to replace him. Elijah finds Elisha plowing a field with twelve yoke of oxen, an indicator that Elijah came from a family of great wealth.<sup>15</sup> When Elijah throws his cloak over him as a sign of the mantle of prophetic leadership passing to him,<sup>16</sup> Elisha says farewell to his family and then burns the oxen and yokes. August Konkell observes, "Elisha's sacrifice is a thank offering for his call, in which neighbors are naturally invited to join. The burning of the yoke of the oxen signifies a complete break with the past."<sup>17</sup>

In this passage, Elisha demonstrates his eagerness to follow Elijah and accept this call to leadership. Some may read too much into Elisha's request to kiss his father and mother and compare this request to the same hesitation displayed by the man who asked Jesus to first bury his father before following him in Luke 9:59. However, Elijah's response does not indicate that this was the case, as he grants his request. Furthermore, the sacrifice of the oxen as a thank offering shows that Elisha is grateful for the Lord's call on his life. When he burns the yokes to signify a complete separation from his old life, he further reinforces this eagerness for his new assignment, foreshadowing the words of Jesus in

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<sup>15</sup> Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 9 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993), 186.

<sup>16</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 225.

<sup>17</sup> August Konkell, *1 & 2 Kings*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 304.

Luke 9:62 when he says, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” Elisha’s time tending his family’s fields is over, and he would then become Elijah’s assistant as he prepared to take on the mantle of prophetic leadership fully.

A final indicator of Elisha’s eagerness to accept God’s call is in 2 Kings 2:9 when he asks Elijah for a “double portion of your spirit.” Konkel explains that this is “an expression used elsewhere to refer to the right of inheritance of the firstborn as double that of the others (Deut. 21:17). Elisha is not requesting twice the prophetic spirit of Elijah, but rather the right to the office of Elijah, double the portion of other heirs of the prophetic office.”<sup>18</sup> Elisha’s final request from his mentor was that he be given the office of prophet, making certain his eagerness to assume the mantle of leadership he had been given.

When establishing a leadership development process, the story of Elisha clearly demonstrates that a leadership candidate should be eager to assume the role. As is echoed in 1 Timothy 3 and 1 Peter 5:2 when examining the qualifications for elders, leaders should aspire to the office and have a willing and eager desire for the work. Leadership candidates must not serve out of guilt or obligation but should be people who want to serve, a consideration that must be taken into account when evaluating prospective leaders.

### **Leadership Development Should Be Marked by Relational Intimacy**

A noteworthy aspect of the story of Elijah and Elisha was the relational intimacy displayed in their mentoring relationship. In 1 Kings 19, Elisha went after Elijah and assisted him, and Elisha in 2 Kings 2 is still at Elijah’s side. The reader can assume that Elisha has been with Elijah during the time between these two passages, assisting Elijah and learning from him in preparation for his impending prophetic ministry. This time

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<sup>18</sup> Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings*, 380.

together must have produced a relational intimacy, evidenced by his refusal to leave Elijah in 2 Kings 2:2. The language Elisha uses here demonstrates the depth of their bond: “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you” (2 Kgs 2:2). As they journey onward toward the place where Elijah would be taken up to heaven, twice more he asks Elisha to stay, and he refuses. Donald J. Wiseman connects this pattern to the New Testament, noting that “Peter’s eagerness as Christ’s disciple (Mark 14:29) and Christ’s threefold order to his disciple may echo this theme (Matt. 26:38–45).”<sup>19</sup> The principle is clear—the bond developed through Elisha’s time learning under Elijah was such that nothing would deter him from being near his master when his time on earth came to an end.

A second evidence of the relational intimacy between Elijah and Elisha is how Elisha responds to the groups of prophets in the cities through which they traveled. “And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, ‘Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?’ And he said, ‘Yes, I know it; keep quiet’” (2 Kgs 2:3). This happens again at Jericho (v. 5), and as House comments, “Elisha’s refusal to speak of the matter apparently shows his sorrow at the prospect of losing Elijah.”<sup>20</sup> Where some may be excited by the prospect of a leadership vacuum and the opportunity to advance to a higher office, Elisha was deeply grieved by Elijah’s coming departure.

A principle in these texts relevant to a leadership development process is that development naturally breeds intimacy. A deep bond is formed between mentor and mentee as one follows another and learns from them. A leadership development process should include this kind of relationship in which a follower learns from another, but it must not be limited merely to knowledge transmission or the development of competence

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<sup>19</sup> Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, 207.

<sup>20</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 257.

in specific skills for the task. Real relationships marked by intimacy and trust must be at the heart of leadership development, a pattern that continued into the New Testament.

### **God Ultimately Confirms a Leader's Calling**

Finally, as seen earlier in the example of Moses and Joshua, God ultimately confirms a leader's calling. God declared that Elisha would be the chosen successor in 1 Kings 19:16, and his sovereignty over the leadership succession was reiterated in 2 Kings 2:9–10. Elisha requested the “double-portion” of Elijah's spirit, previously established to refer to his position as the “firstborn” and inheritor of Elijah's prophetic office, and Elijah's response is noteworthy: “And he said, ‘You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so’” (2 Kgs 2:10). Wiseman explains, “The ‘hard thing’ for Elijah was that since God alone can make the gift of his Spirit to anyone (cf. John 3:34; 1 John 3:24; 4:13) it was impossible for him to meet this request.”<sup>21</sup> Elijah alone did not have the power to confirm Elisha's calling. The Lord's confirmation would establish Elisha's leadership. Elijah tells Elisha that his ability to see his ascension would be confirmation of his fitness to lead (2 Kgs 2:10), something only the Lord could enable. The fact that Elisha could see chariots of fire and horses as Elijah rose to heaven (v. 11) confirmed that he would indeed assume the mantle of leadership after Elijah.

God had confirmed Elisha's leadership to him, and in the remainder of 2 Kings 2 he confirmed it to those Elisha would be leading. In 2 Kings 2:13–15, Elisha takes the cloak of Elijah and repeats one of his miracles by striking the water and walking through on dry land. House explains the significance of this act: “The prophets who witness the whole scene understand that Elijah's spirit, the spirit of zeal and power, now rests on

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<sup>21</sup> Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, 208.



Elisha.”<sup>22</sup> This was a public demonstration that the Lord was continuing Elijah’s prophetic leadership through Elisha. Though God had confirmed this leadership succession to both Elijah and Elisha, the people of Israel could now see through this and the subsequent miracles in chapter 2 that Elisha truly was called to lead in this prophetic office.

God’s confirmation of a leader’s calling is particularly relevant to establishing a leadership development process. Though direct revelation and miraculous confirmation are less common today, the biblical truth that God sovereignly establishes all authority (Rom 13:1) extends to all areas of leadership. Like Elijah and Moses before him, when selecting and installing prospective leaders, one must diligently and prayerfully seek the Lord’s will throughout the process.

### **The Leadership Development of Jesus**

Moving into the New Testament, many lessons were learned from the way Jesus invested in his followers and discipled them to be future leaders. These insights were invaluable when considering a leadership development process at PVCC. By examining several passages, it was determined that the general shape of Jesus’s development followed the pattern of calling, training, releasing, coaching, and multiplying.

#### **Jesus Called His Disciples**

In Luke 5, Jesus calls his first disciples. Jesus had been teaching and performing miracles in Capernaum, and as the crowds grew, he asked Simon to take him out in his boat into the Sea of Galilee so he could continue to teach the growing crowds on shore. Jesus told Simon to put his nets into deep water, and to his surprise, they brought in a huge number of fish. This miracle deeply affected Simon, whose mother-in-law Jesus had previously healed, and he fell at Jesus’s feet, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). In verse 10, Jesus responds, “Do not be afraid; from now on

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<sup>22</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 260.

you will be catching men.” After this moment, Simon (who would later be called Peter) and the other fishermen left everything to follow Jesus. Nicholas Perrin comments, “Simon Peter is undone by his own sense of unworthiness and begs (Jesus) to depart. Not budging an inch, Jesus instead calls the ‘sinful man’ to catch other sinful people like Simon Peter himself. It is this glorious task that prompts the disciples to leave everything in order to follow Jesus.”<sup>23</sup> Jesus gave his prospective followers a glimpse of his divinity and called them to follow him in his mission. Like Elisha before them, their call consisted of a clean break from their former lives and a full surrender to the mission to which they were being called. Likewise, leadership candidates at PVCC must be followers of Jesus who have a similar devotion to the mission of Christ. They must be centered on the gospel, seeking to forsake all else for the call to be “fishers of men.”

In Luke 6, Jesus chooses the twelve apostles, who would become leaders within the larger group of disciples and, later, the church. Of particular note is verse 12, where before he calls them, he goes up to a mountain and spends all night in prayer. James R. Edwards notes, “In Luke, Jesus prays before or during the most significant events of His life, and especially at decisive junctures in the unfolding of the plan of salvation.”<sup>24</sup> If Jesus, who is God incarnate, spent great time in prayer seeking the will of the Father when selecting men to lead, then it is clear that prayer must be an integral part of a leadership development process at PVCC. Before selecting candidates to participate in such a process, church leaders must devote extended time to prayerfully discerning God’s will for who he would have to lead.

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<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Perrin, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2022), 97.

<sup>24</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2015), 185.

## Jesus Trained His Disciples

After calling his disciples, Jesus began to train them. The method Jesus used to train his followers was one of presence. He called men to follow him, and as they followed, they learned about the kingdom of God and the ministry Jesus would one day entrust to them. Robert Coleman explains, “There were certainly many things which these men did not understand—things which they themselves freely acknowledged as they walked with him; but all these problems could be dealt with as they followed Jesus. In his presence they could learn all that they needed to know.”<sup>25</sup> This training process consisted of three main components: modeling, teaching, and illustrating. One example of this model is found in the Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6.

In Luke 6:17–19, Jesus brings his newly named apostles down to a level place with the larger group of his disciples and the crowds from all over who came to see him. In this scene, Jesus modeled his ministry for the watching disciples, casting out demons and healing those who were ill as he prepared to teach the multitudes. Throughout much of his ministry, Jesus modeled the power of the kingdom of heaven for his watching disciples, who would later be sent out to do likewise. Coleman observes, “Evangelism was lived before them in spirit and in technique. Watching him, they learned what it was all about. He led them to recognize the need inherent in all classes of people, and the best methods of approaching them.”<sup>26</sup> Due to the nature of the classroom format, the modeling aspect of Jesus’s training process was difficult to replicate in the context of this project. In the candidate selection process, particular attention was given to finding individuals who had previously been given the opportunity to observe church leaders and experience a leader modeling the leadership culture of PVCC. Additionally, during the class, case studies were presented that recounted how leaders handled different situations to simulate this sort of modeling.

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 35.

<sup>26</sup> Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 66.

After modeling ministry to his disciples, in Luke 6:20, Jesus began teaching them. The first section of his teaching focused on a series of propositional truths about true flourishing in the kingdom of God that have come to be called the Beatitudes. These counter-cultural values instructed his disciples in and encouraged them for the work ahead and were followed by a series of commands for how his disciples were to interact with the people they were trying to reach. It is clear from the ministry of Jesus throughout the Gospels that the training of his disciples included much teaching and instruction in addition to modeling what ministry was to look like. A leadership development process at PVCC will naturally include a teaching component on which this project primarily focused. By teaching prospective leaders about the nature of flourishing leadership at PVCC, they can learn valuable truths that will serve them well as they seek to serve Jesus faithfully.

A third component of Jesus's training is found beginning in Luke 6:39: "He also told them a parable: 'Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.'" (Luke 6:39–40). This principle is key to leadership development, as it shows the importance of a leader teaching and modeling what they hope to reproduce in others. The method Jesus used to impart this wisdom is noteworthy. He modeled ministry to his followers, taught them about ministry and the kingdom of God, and illustrated these teachings through parables. A complete study of the parables of Jesus was beyond the scope of this project, but throughout the Gospels, Jesus taught not just through articulating propositional truths and commands but also through the power of story. Leon Morris explains, "Parables both reveal and conceal truth: they reveal it to the genuine seeker who will take the trouble to dig beneath the surface and discover the meaning, but they conceal it from him who is content to simply listen to the story."<sup>27</sup> In many cases,

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<sup>27</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 3 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008), 171.

the parables of Jesus engage not just the minds of his followers but their hearts. As Luke 8:10 states, parables may confuse those who are not in Christ. However, to those who have received the Holy Spirit and have “ears to hear,” such stories can bring an added level of richness and understanding to the teaching. When developing a curriculum for the training of leaders at PVCC, incorporating rich stories and illustrations to capture the hearts and imaginations of the selected Spirit-filled participants was of utmost importance.

### **Jesus Released His Followers**

The third aspect of Jesus’s leadership development process was releasing. After calling and training his disciples, he sent the twelve on their first assignment in Luke 9. He gave them “power and authority over all the demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9:1–2). Perrin explains, “The concepts of power and authority are related but distinct. Whereas the former typically carries the sense of ability or capacity, the latter pertains to office or station. In granting the Twelve both power and authority, then, Jesus conveys both special abilities and special rights.”<sup>28</sup> Jesus gave away power and authority, empowering his followers to apply what they had learned as they took on real ministry assignments. The principle applied in a contemporary leadership development process looks different than it did for Jesus. We cannot grant spiritual power in our strength. Still, we must pray for the Spirit’s power to operate in followers’ lives as we grant them real responsibility and authority in the leadership capacity to which they have been called.

This principle of releasing his followers to engage in meaningful ministry was not limited to sending the twelve. Jesus later repeats this act in sending the seventy-two in Luke 10. Likewise, Paul replicates this model throughout much of his ministry, as in Philippians 2:19–23, where he writes to the Philippians that he hopes to send Timothy, his

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<sup>28</sup> Perrin, *Luke*, 169.

disciple, to them. Timothy has followed Paul and proven himself as he has served with and learned from the ministry of Paul, and Paul then plans to release him to engage in the work himself. Paul utilizes Jesus's method in the church, which is deeply relevant to establishing a leadership development process at PVCC. As future leaders are called and trained, they must then be released with real authority and power to engage in the work of ministry.

### **Jesus Provided Coaching for His Followers**

When Jesus released his followers to engage in the work of ministry, he did not leave them without guidance. He gave clear and specific direction as they went (Luke 9:3–5; 10:2–26). Surely, the clarity with which Jesus directed his disciples in their task increased their confidence in the work at hand. Jesus's direction was not limited to his disciples' sending but extended through their ministry experience. When the twelve (Luke 9:10) and the seventy-two (Luke 10:17) returned, they reported on their assignments to Jesus, who gave them feedback and teaching. When the seventy-two returned, they rejoiced at their ministry success, but Jesus corrected them. Morris explains, "But Jesus goes on to teach that they must get their priorities right. Their real ground for rejoicing is not their victory over *the spirits*. . . . Much more important is that their names are written (perfect tense pointing to what is permanent) *in heaven*. . . . Jesus turns their attention to realities that will last."<sup>29</sup> Jesus did not merely celebrate with them in their temporary success but used it as a teaching opportunity to provide correction and coaching while pointing them to the greater realities that must guide their ministry in the future. Jesus employs a similar method throughout his ministry, such as in Matthew 17:19–20, when the disciples ask him why they were unable to cast out a demon, using ministry successes and failures as valuable coaching opportunities for his disciples.

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<sup>29</sup> Morris, *Luke*, 204.

Ongoing coaching was an aspect of the leadership development process at PVCC that was vitally important but difficult to implement fully into the scope of the project. While the project focused primarily on the training aspect of leadership development, a vision and mechanism for continual coaching was presented to participants that would continue beyond the implementation of the leadership training class, which is detailed in a later chapter. As Jesus modeled throughout his ministry, and later Paul continued through writing the Epistles to give coaching and guidance to his followers as they ministered throughout the ancient world, each new leader at PVCC will receive ongoing feedback, coaching, and support from church leadership. By providing continual training, leaders will continue to develop and grow into more effective and capable leaders who flourish as they progress in their leadership journeys.

### **Jesus Charged His Followers to Multiply**

A final aspect of the model Jesus utilized to develop his followers for the work of leadership is found as he sent the seventy-two: “And he said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’” (Luke 10:2). Jesus’s followers were called not just to engage in the work of ministry, but to have their minds set on leadership multiplication. Morris comments, “Prayer for more workers for God is a duty resting on those who labour for him.”<sup>30</sup> This principle is echoed throughout Jesus’s ministry, most notably in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20. Jesus called his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that Jesus had commanded them. While this passage is most often viewed through the lens of evangelism, in the context of Jesus’s previous commands to pray for more laborers for the work, it also has implications for developing more leaders to engage in ministry. For the disciples to make disciples of all nations and a global movement to begin, the work had to expand beyond the immediate

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<sup>30</sup> Morris, *Luke*, 200.

followers of Jesus. More leaders would be necessary to reach the nations; therefore, they would need to invest in developing more laborers who would, in turn, invest in future generations for gospel ministry.

Paul applied this principle of multiplication well throughout his ministry in the early church. Ken Cochrum summarizes, “Paul invested in people as his primary strategy. He aggressively entrusted others with the mission. . . . He trained and released other leaders by sending them out (Acts 14:21–24; Titus 1:5). He prayerfully, intentionally, and strategically risked the future of the church by empowering others.”<sup>31</sup> Paul multiplied his leadership capacity by developing others in the same manner as Jesus. In the example of Timothy in Philippians 2:19–24, Timothy had been called and served alongside Paul, training under him throughout Paul’s ministry. Paul eventually released Timothy, sending him on several assignments to places like Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:2) to begin gaining experience leading. He provided coaching to him through writing letters such as 1 and 2 Timothy to guide him in the work. Finally, in 2 Timothy 2:2, he gave this same vision for multiplication to Timothy, charging him to entrust that which he had learned from Paul “to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). Paul reproduced the model of Jesus, culminating in a multi-generational vision for multiplication that would lead to an advance of the gospel that would change the world forever.

Integrating this vision for multiplication into PVCC’s leadership development process was crucial. While fully implementing multi-generational development was beyond the scope of a six-week course, this concept was deeply integrated into the curriculum so that future leaders understood that multiplication was an integral part of the leadership culture desired at PVCC.

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<sup>31</sup> Ken Cochrum, *Close: Leading Well across Distance and Cultures* (self-published, CreateSpace, 2013), 29.



## **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Leadership Development**

A final biblical and theological consideration when implementing a leadership development process at PVCC was the role of the Holy Spirit in leadership development. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit is intimately involved in the calling of future leaders, illuminates truth as leaders receive training, empowers leaders for the work of ministry as they are released, sanctifies leaders as they receive coaching, and is the one who ultimately multiplies leaders.

### **The Holy Spirit Calls Leaders**

The first way the Holy Spirit is involved in leadership development is through the calling of believers. As the previous examples mentioned in this chapter show, God has always been the sovereign agent behind a leader's calling. Whether by the Father's decree in the examples of Joshua and Elisha or through the words of Jesus in the Gospels, God ultimately raises up and calls leaders. In the church age, the Holy Spirit continues this pattern as he calls people to the work of ministry in passages like Ephesians 1:18, Acts 13:2–5, Acts 20:28, and others. A leadership development process at PVCC must operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, prayerfully following his guidance as leaders seek to discern and confirm his calling on those chosen for future leadership within the church.

### **The Holy Spirit Illuminates Truth as Leaders Are Trained**

In Ephesians 1:17–18, Paul prays that the Father would give the believers in Ephesus “the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him” and that the “eyes of their hearts” would be enlightened. Constantine Campbell explains Paul's use of this imagery: “This is a wonderful metaphorical expression that pictures illumination at the core of one's being. Illumination is not a matter for the mind alone, but for the whole person. . . . To be illuminated in the heart means no less than the whole inner person is ‘lit

up’ by revealed knowledge.”<sup>32</sup> The Holy Spirit is the one who brings this illumination, allowing believers to have their eyes opened to truth and to experience sanctification as they grow deeper in knowledge of and affection toward the Lord. When implementing a leadership development process at PVCC, it was vital to remember the work of the Holy Spirit in opening future leaders’ eyes to receive the training that was imparted and to empower them to apply the lessons learned to their lives. Such an awareness of the Spirit’s role was important both in the prayerful preparation of the material and in the presentation of the curriculum, as future leaders were encouraged to ask the Spirit for ears to hear throughout the training process.

### **The Holy Spirit Empowers Leaders for the Work of Ministry**

No leadership development process would be complete without an understanding of the Spirit’s role in gifting and empowering leaders for the work of ministry. First Corinthians 12 gives a list of such gifts. Mark Taylor comments, “The sixfold repetition of the word ‘same,’ along with the emphasis on diversity, indicates Paul’s main emphasis in 12:4–11. Not all have the same gift or the same assignment in the body of Christ, yet all gifts, ministries, and empowerments derive from the same Spirit/Lord/God (12:4–6).”<sup>33</sup> This insight was particularly relevant, as the participants in the leadership development process possessed various gifts and callings and would go on to serve in diverse leadership roles. By rooting all this diversity in the Holy Spirit as the giver of these gifts, humility, unity, and the common good<sup>34</sup> became recurring themes

<sup>32</sup> Constantine Campbell, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2023), 71–72.

<sup>33</sup> Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, New American Commentary, vol. 28 (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 286.

<sup>34</sup> Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (1987; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014), 654.

throughout the leadership development process as leaders sought to operate together through the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish his mission.

### **The Holy Spirit Sanctifies Leaders as They Receive Coaching**

Ongoing coaching was a component of the leadership development process that would continue past the completion of the training course, and the Holy Spirit was also actively engaged in this process. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with his followers as the Helper (John 14:16; 14:26) who would guide them into truth. Paul builds on this in 2 Corinthians 3:18, explaining the Spirit's role in sanctification as believers are transformed into the image of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul Barnett comments on this process: "We all' in whom the image of God is defaced are able through the gospel to 'see' that image in its perfection, in the face of Jesus Christ. And we are enabled not only to see that image but to be progressively transformed into it by the sovereign Spirit."<sup>35</sup> When developing leaders, ongoing coaching was a crucial part of the process created for PVCC to help leaders identify areas in which they could be further conformed into the image of Jesus. Still, it was important to remember that the power to apply the lessons learned and truly grow in leadership came from the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit operating in the lives of future leaders. This concept was revisited throughout the leadership development process, and future leaders were reminded that the Spirit's power was essential to their growth as leaders at PVCC.

### **The Holy Spirit Directs and Multiplies Leadership**

These truths about the role of the Holy Spirit's work in calling and developing leaders culminated in the vision given to participants for leadership multiplication. As developing leaders were charged to invest in future leaders themselves, the Spirit's work

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 209.

in that process was paramount. Ultimately, the Spirit was the one who would call those who the leaders would lead, and his leadership would direct how leaders invested in others, just as the Spirit directed Paul's journeys in Acts 16. Paul modeled this reliance on the Spirit's direction well. Cochrum summarizes that "Paul constantly affirmed and modeled the fundamentals of pursuing unbroken fellowship and abiding intimacy with God. These practices included devotion (2 Corinthians 11:3), intercessory prayer (Ephesians 1:15–23), and walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)."<sup>36</sup> When seeking to discern where and in whom to invest their leadership, participants were encouraged to spend much time in prayer, asking the Lord to direct their paths as they sought to discern how the Spirit would call them to serve. Gordon Fee argues that such life in the Spirit is characterized by empowerment, spiritual fruit, living in the will of the Spirit, and ultimately, "the final realization of the 'hope of righteousness'—eternal life."<sup>37</sup>

### **Conclusion**

By examining patterns of leadership development in both the Old and New Testaments, several insights were gained that were instrumental in creating a leadership development process for PVCC. Moses and Joshua demonstrated the importance of investing in leadership development to ensure continuity in the direction of God's people so that they are not left "as sheep with no shepherd" when a leader's influence comes to an end. Elijah and Elisha modeled the benefit of leadership development not just to the one being developed but to the leader as they developed intimate relationships while gaining a greater vision and purpose for gospel ministry. A common theme was identified that showed the importance of intentionally investing in future leaders who are eager to lead while ultimately trusting the Lord to raise up and empower healthy leadership.

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<sup>36</sup> Cochrum, *Close*, 28.

<sup>37</sup> Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 467.

Jesus provided a leadership development model that was foundational to the process implemented at PVCC. By calling his apostles, he demonstrated God's role in raising up leaders, teaching leaders the importance of prayerfully discerning the Lord's will through the Spirit's leading in who they would select to undergo a development process. Jesus trained his disciples, teaching them, modeling ministry, and engaging their imaginations through stories while promising to send the Holy Spirit, who would guide them into all truth. After training, Jesus released these new leaders into ministry assignments where they could practice their training. This releasing was followed by coaching, where he provided encouragement, explanation, and correction when needed so they could further develop in their calling, a process that today results in sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit. Finally, Jesus called his followers to multiply, entrusting the things they had learned to others so the process could repeat and their gospel ministry could expand exponentially. This pattern of calling, training, releasing, coaching, and multiplying was the model chosen for the leadership development process at PVCC as they sought to invest in developing leaders for gospel ministry.

CHAPTER 3  
HEALTHY LEADERSHIP: LEADERS WHO PROMOTE  
FLOURISHING IN THEMSELVES, THEIR  
RELATIONSHIPS, AND THOSE  
THEY SERVE

This chapter will explore contemporary literature, research, and leadership practices to determine the characteristics and qualities that a process for leadership development at PVCC should seek to produce in participants. A particular emphasis is placed on healthy leadership that promotes flourishing. Theologian Jonathan Pennington states, “At the very core of the Bible’s message is the idea of true happiness and flourishing. ‘Shalom’ is how the Old Testament describes it. ‘Flourishing’ . . . is how the New Testament talks. It’s all wrapped up together, no matter which words or metaphors we use. The Bible is all about true happiness.”<sup>1</sup> Flourishing is the state of wholeness, joy, and deep meaning as one lives in alignment with God’s designs. While flourishing does not always entail temporal happiness by the world’s standards of ease and earthly prosperity, Pennington goes on to describe it as a deeper joy and hope in the Lord by pursuing happiness through the things of God<sup>2</sup>. If the idea of flourishing and happiness is central to the Bible’s message,<sup>3</sup> then the development of healthy, thriving leaders who flourish in their callings is paramount to this project. This chapter traces that theme through three domains of leadership: developing leaders who flourish personally, developing

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Pennington, *Jesus the Great Philosopher: Rediscovering the Wisdom Needed for the Good Life* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020), 206.

<sup>2</sup> Pennington, *Jesus the Great Philosopher*. 207.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of human flourishing is seen in texts like Gen 1:27–28, Ps 1:1–3, Jer 29:7, John 10:10, Matt 5:3–12, and Rev 22:1–2. Throughout the Bible, God promises his people blessing and the richness of a flourishing life.

leaders who promote flourishing in their relationships, and developing leaders who promote flourishing in the teams they lead. By exploring the competencies that promote flourishing in these three arenas, many key insights can be gained that are crucial to establishing a leadership development process at PVCC.

### **Developing Leaders Who Flourish**

Healthy leadership begins with healthy leaders. Many authors argue that leadership is more about *being* than *doing*—the leader’s presence with and care for their teams is of utmost importance. A healthy leader has more to offer to their team, whereas a leader who operates out of unhealth is at a great disadvantage in their capacity to lead. Leadership scholar Justin Irving states, “To serve others effectively, leaders must first take care of themselves. Unless you maintain your own spiritual, physical, and emotional health, you will be unable to serve others effectively.”<sup>4</sup> He continues this idea in another of his books, arguing, “Healthy leaders who engage their own leadership in a faithful and effective manner have an outsized influence on the health and thriving of organizations and the people within these organizations.”<sup>5</sup> As leaders embrace personal health, that flourishing flows into the people and teams with which they interact and creates healthy contexts where individuals can thrive. This section seeks to explore the role of character, spiritual health, emotional health, and physical health in the personal flourishing of leaders.

### **Character and Flourishing Leaders**

When considering the attributes of a healthy leader, character is of utmost importance, especially for Christian leaders.<sup>6</sup> Leaders who pay more attention to their

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<sup>4</sup> Justin Irving and Mark Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 37.

<sup>5</sup> Justin A. Irving, *Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023), 36.

<sup>6</sup> This is demonstrated, for example, by the qualifications for pastors found in Titus and 1 Timothy, most of which focus primarily on issues of character.

gifting or effectiveness than their character are in a dangerous position, as a failure of character can cause a leader to lose credibility among those who follow them. Albert Mohler states, “Every single day, the faithful leader must be aware that credibility is the essence of leadership, and that it can be both earned and lost.”<sup>7</sup> Many leaders have not only compromised their ability to lead well but have lost their entire ministries or positions because a lack of character led to such a crisis of credibility. For leaders to flourish, they must invest deeply in their character. As J. Oswald Sanders puts it, “Before we can conquer the world, we must first conquer the self.”<sup>8</sup>

Christian leaders must make character development a high priority if they are going to persevere in leadership long-term. Historically, this development has happened through specific spiritual practices or disciplines, like Bible reading, fasting, and prayer. Through engaging in these ancient practices modeled by Jesus, God cultivates a leader’s character and conforms them into the image of his Son. Donald S. Whitney articulates, “The Spiritual Disciplines then are also like channels of God’s transforming grace. As we place ourselves in them to seek communion with Christ, His grace flows to us and we are changed. That’s why the Disciplines must become a priority for us if we will be Godly.”<sup>9</sup>

James Wilhoit clarifies that God’s grace and human effort in cultivating character are not at odds, explaining that “sanctifying grace and virtue development are fully compatible, for all true spiritual formation is saturated by grace and human agency.”<sup>10</sup> The Holy Spirit ultimately sanctifies believers (1 Pet 1:2) and is the agent by which leaders grow in character. Spiritual disciplines are the means by which one

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<sup>7</sup> Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters* (Bloomington, IN: Bethany House, 2012), 89.

<sup>8</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*, upd. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 61.

<sup>9</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991), 19.

<sup>10</sup> James Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*, upd. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022), 128.



receives that work of grace. Leaders who flourish must “work out (their) salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12), paying careful attention to their character as the Spirit sanctifies them by grace.

### **Spiritual Health and Flourishing**

Building upon the importance of a leader’s character, perhaps the most foundational component of cultivating such character is the overall spiritual health of the leader. Where character can often be observed outwardly, it should flow from a spiritual vitality rooted in deep communion with the Lord. Leaders who neglect their relationship with God severely inhibit their leadership potential. Daniel Montgomery argues, “We can’t think or talk our way into better leading. We must walk with Jesus. We practice our way into better leadership. . . . Be fully awake to God’s presence and give your transformed presence to others.”<sup>11</sup> To lead people well, a leader must prioritize their spiritual health through spending time with and abiding in Jesus, as he is the true source of spiritual leaders’ fruit and their power for ministry (John 15:4–9).

The importance of spiritual health is not limited to church leadership but is deeply relevant to leaders in the marketplace as well. Whether a leader operates in a local church or the business world, connection with the Lord is important to one’s ability to flourish in those spaces. Paul Miller speaks to the importance of this connection: “What do I lose when I have a praying life? Control. Independence. What do I gain? Friendship with God. A quiet heart. The living work of God in the hearts of those I love. . . . Essentially, I lose my kingdom and get His.”<sup>12</sup> The peace and awareness of dependence on the Lord that comes from this spiritual connection leads to spiritual health, increasing a leader’s effectiveness. This conclusion is supported by contemporary research. In a study

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel Montgomery, *Leadership Mosaic: 5 Leadership Principles for Ministry and Everyday Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 198–99.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Miller, *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009), 125–26.

of the relationship between employees' personal spirituality and workplace performance, a positive connection was found between spirituality and a worker's ability to cope, respond, and perform within the workplace.<sup>13</sup> For leaders to truly flourish in the areas in which they serve, they must be careful to invest in maintaining spiritual health and intimacy with the Lord.

### **Emotional Health and Flourishing**

Another component of healthy leadership is the leader's emotional health. Justin Irving and Mark Strauss state, "Leaders need to be aware of their emotions and be able to utilize and regulate emotion in productive ways."<sup>14</sup> Failure to do so leads to difficulty in the leader's life and among the teams they lead. The Microsoft survey mentioned in chapter 2 found that the majority of managers are currently experiencing some form of burnout,<sup>15</sup> a component of which Steve Cuss attributes to emotional health. Cuss argues, "Burnout has less to do with workload and more to do with internal and external leadership anxiety."<sup>16</sup> Pastor and author Peter Scazzero speaks of the lack of awareness of a leader's "shadow" as a primary source of leadership unhealth. He defines this shadow as "the accumulation of untamed emotions, less-than-pure motives and thoughts that, while largely unconscious, strongly influence and shape your behaviors."<sup>17</sup> Scazzero and Cuss both argue that a vital step on the journey toward emotional health is growing in self-awareness of the leader's inner life so that the leader can manage these emotions and lead others more effectively. Cuss explains, "Self-awareness isn't self-

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<sup>13</sup> April Raye Sanders, "Employee Job Performance: A Phenomenological Study of The Impact of Personal Spirituality on Job Performance" (PhD diss., Capella University, 2019), 104–6.

<sup>14</sup> Irving and Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective*, 44–45.

<sup>15</sup> "Hybrid Work Is Just Work. Are We Doing It Wrong?," Microsoft.

<sup>16</sup> Steve Cuss, *Managing Leadership Anxiety: Yours and Theirs* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2019), 6.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 55.

absorption or self-centeredness, the fruit of true self-awareness is being more present to others.”<sup>18</sup>

Becoming more aware of one’s own emotions and working toward health can dramatically affect the flourishing of the teams a person leads, a phenomenon that has been observed in contemporary research. In a study of the emotional well-being and self-efficacy of 240 public school principals, a significant correlation was found between emotional well-being and the leader’s ability to lead well.<sup>19</sup> Leaders must prioritize emotional self-awareness and cultivate healthy inner lives to promote flourishing in the contexts in which they lead.

### **Physical Health and Flourishing**

An often-overlooked component of healthy leadership is the importance of physical health to the flourishing of the leader. There are many examples of leaders who neglected their physical health to the detriment of their calling. Yet, physical fitness is a topic that is largely considered taboo in the current cultural moment. As embodied creatures, humans are created body and spirit, and the physical aspect of a leader’s health must not be neglected.<sup>20</sup> Writing of Jonathan Edwards’s understanding of the relationship between physical health and performance, John Piper notes, “He maintained the rigor of his study schedule only with strict attention to diet and exercise. Everything was calculated to optimize his efficiency and power in study.”<sup>21</sup> Contemporary science

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<sup>18</sup> Cuss, *Managing Leadership Anxiety*, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Steve Beherendt, “Be Well to Lead Well: A Quantitative Study of Well-Being and Leadership Self-Efficacy of School Principals” (PhD diss., Tiffin University, 2024), 179–82.

<sup>20</sup> Gregg Allison summarizes the relevance of a robust theology of human embodiment: “A theology of human embodiment will help us live as whole people in a fractured world. We’ll be more connected with God and his design for us. . . . We’ll be more integrated and sound—not divided— people for ourselves and for others.” Gregg Allison, *Embodied: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 16. The entire book is a helpful resource to understand this theological perspective better.

<sup>21</sup> John Piper, *God’s Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998), 56.

supports Edwards’s practice regarding his physical health. A 2016 study showed that engaging in physical activity one hour before memory retrieval resulted in greater memory performance.<sup>22</sup> A recent leadership study found that leaders who engaged in health-promoting leadership behaviors that included physical health created contexts where employee well-being was measurably higher, which resulted in higher job performance.<sup>23</sup> Leaders operate at their best when their physical health is well cared for, as the body is strongly connected to mental and emotional performance.

The relationship between physical health and the ability to lead well is not just a pragmatic consideration, but a spiritual issue. Paul David Tripp writes, “Bringing our body under subjection doesn’t begin with diet and exercise, but with searching for and confessing idols of the heart that interfere with the discipline to which we have been called and which grace makes possible.”<sup>24</sup> Christian leaders must first address the deeper issues of the heart that often undergird poor health. By wrestling with and finding victory over these idols, the Holy Spirit can empower greater obedience in the stewardship of the leader’s body and produce increased effectiveness in their ministry.

### **Balance and Flourishing: Cultivating Healthy Relationships**

When establishing a process for developing healthy leaders at PVCC, another important component of leader health is the pursuit of a work-life balance and healthy relationships outside the workplace. Leaders can work diligently to pursue personal and professional growth, but leaders cannot be faithful in their calling without proper balance and focus on health in their homes and friendships. Richard Stearns describes such

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew B. Pontifex et al., “The Association between Physical Activity during the Day and Long-Term Memory Stability,” *Scientific Reports* 6 (December 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1038/srep38148>.

<sup>23</sup> Chelsea D. Coombes, “Health-Promoting Leadership and Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Well-Being” (MA thesis, Adler University, 2023), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Paul David Tripp, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 81.

unbalanced leaders: “Workaholics make a deal with the devil: they exchange short-term gains in their work for long-term tragedies in their lives.”<sup>25</sup> While the previously explored aspects of a leader’s personal life are foundational to leader health, that health must then flow from the leader’s inner life outward into their relationships with others. This section will argue that before leaders can lead teams effectively, they must first promote health and flourishing in the primary relationships with which God has entrusted them. Healthy leaders must pursue flourishing in their marriages, parenting, relationships as singles, and friendships. Leaders can achieve a work-life balance that promotes flourishing in both spheres by investing in healthy homes and healthy relationships outside the workplace.

### **Healthy Marriages as a Fuel for Flourishing**

For married Christian leaders, a healthy marriage is not just one component of flourishing in leadership but should be the highest priority in their human relationships. No relationship has greater power to affirm or undermine a leader’s calling. Hershael York writes, “Outside of the authority of the Word of God itself, the single most significant source of credibility and authority that I have is my marriage.”<sup>26</sup> The way leaders love their spouses is a powerful testimony to the quality of their leadership. A healthy, vibrant marriage where the spouse thrives speaks volumes about a leader’s ability to invest in and care for others. Conversely, a stagnant, failing marriage can raise significant questions about a leader’s fitness to lead.

More than the message the marriage sends about the leader’s competence, marriage is meant to be a picture of Christ’s love for his church. In Ephesians 5, Paul gives instructions for how Christians are to love and serve one another in marriage and speaks

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<sup>25</sup> Richard E. Stearns, *Lead Like It Matters to God: Values-Driven Leadership in a Success-Driven World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2021), 172.

<sup>26</sup> Hershael W. York, *Pastor Well: A Guide to Faithfulness in Pastoral Ministry* (Louisville: Southern Seminary, 2024), 114.

of the “mystery” of it. Tim Keller and Kathy Keller interpret this mystery to be about the gospel as both the “power and the pattern”<sup>27</sup> for marriage: “This is the secret—that the gospel of Jesus and marriage explain one another. That when God invented marriage, he already had the saving work of Jesus in mind.”<sup>28</sup> Marriage is to be a picture of the way Christ loves the church—both for a watching world as a display of the hope of the gospel and for the couple as they experience the love of Jesus through their spouse. If married Christians seek to lead others, their marriages must be of utmost priority, as those they lead will see the health or unhealth of their marriage and the testimony it bears about the love of Jesus. Christian leaders must not deny the very gospel they preach with their mouths through the picture they model in their marriages.

Finally, healthy marriages promote flourishing leadership because they are an important means by which leaders grow. Keller and Keller write, “To be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.”<sup>29</sup> This marital love is a powerful tool in a believer’s conformity to the image of Christ and is the agent by which spouses push one another toward the Lord. A healthy marriage is a means of sanctification and an ongoing source of strength in leadership. Scazzero argues of passionate, marital love in the context of marriage: “We then lead out of the overflow of this love.”<sup>30</sup> As spouses give and receive love in the marriage relationship, that love spills over into their other relationships, giving them the power to minister to and lead teams and organizations well. By focusing first on loving their spouse well, leaders invest in healthy marriages that bear tremendous fruit in

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<sup>27</sup> Timothy Keller and Kathy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 45.

<sup>28</sup> Keller and Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, 43.

<sup>29</sup> Keller and Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, 101.

<sup>30</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 92.

their sanctification and development in leadership and their strength to lead healthy teams out of the overflow of this love.

### **Children and Flourishing Leaders**

Leaders must not only pursue health in their marriages but must also embrace health in their role as parents. Andreas Köstenberger and David Jones argue that throughout the Pastoral Epistles, “There is a close link between the family and the church, which is God’s ‘household’ (1 Tim. 3:15), so that only those who are good husbands and fathers and who give adequate attention to managing their own homes are qualified to provide leadership for the church.”<sup>31</sup> The next section will explore how this relates to leaders who are single, but Scripture is clear that for leaders who have children, leadership in the home is directly connected to their ability to lead others. A full exploration of Christian parenting principles and practices is beyond the scope of this project,<sup>32</sup> but for Christians who aspire to lead, careful attention must be paid to how they manage their households. Christian leaders must seek to promote health and flourishing in their parenting and, in so doing, affirm their qualification for leadership outside the home.

The health of leaders’ parenting is an evaluative lens for determining their qualification for leadership and a means by which leaders develop and are sanctified into more godly leaders. Herman Bavinck explains, “For children are the glory of marriage, the treasure of parents, the wealth of family life. They develop within their parents an entire cluster of virtues, such as paternal love and maternal affection, devotion and self-denial, care for the future, involvement in society, the art of nurturing.”<sup>33</sup> As parents raise

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<sup>31</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger and David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 273.

<sup>32</sup> For further study, see the full text of Köstenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, as well as Herman Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, 97.

children, the Lord often uses that process not only to train and develop the child but also to transform the parent. Bavinck continues, “The family transforms ambition into service, miserliness into munificence, the weak into strong, cowards into heroes, coarse fathers into mild lambs, tenderhearted mothers into ferocious lionesses.”<sup>34</sup> As parents raise children, the skills they develop through that process are of tremendous value when considering how they might be used as they lead others in their teams, organizations, and churches.

### **Flourishing Leaders and the Gift of Singleness**

When considering the theme of healthy leadership and balance in the home, one must be careful not to overlook the important role that people who are single play in kingdom leadership. In 1 Corinthians 7:7, Paul speaks of his singleness as a gift. Keller and Keller explain, “The ‘giftedness’ of being single for Paul lay in the freedom it gave him to concentrate on ministry in ways that a married man could not.”<sup>35</sup> The Kellers argue that the gift of singleness is not a supernatural gift given to a select few but is the way all who are single can embrace that season for God’s glory. Leaders who are single have the gift of tremendous opportunity for ministry and impact. They often have more time and flexibility than those with families and can uniquely minister to others because of their opportunity to pursue deep relationships with others who are not family. Köstenberger and Jones argue for the equality of Christian leaders who are single with those who are married, stating that singleness “holds significant advantages for ministry but is neither intrinsically superior nor inferior to the institution of marriage. While Paul assumes that church officers, as a rule, will be married and considers marriage and the family to be a training and proving ground for prospective church leaders, this should not be construed

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<sup>34</sup> Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, 97.

<sup>35</sup> Keller and Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, 238.



as a requirement.”<sup>36</sup> There is an important place in Christian leadership for people who are single and those who are married, and neither should be seen as higher than the other.

Single leaders display the gospel to the world in a unique way. Scazzero articulates, “As a single leader, you bear witness to the sufficiency and fullness of Jesus through your celibacy. . . . Your whole person belongs to him . . . your singleness stands as a countercultural and prophetic sign of the kingdom of God—to the church and to the world.”<sup>37</sup> Scazzero goes on to challenge single leaders to pursue health in their singleness by devoting themselves to excellent self-care, investing in community and deep relationships with trusted companions, and practicing hospitality regularly.<sup>38</sup> Through these practices, single leaders can embrace health and flourishing in their personal lives, giving vitality to their leadership. Leaders who have been gifted with singleness should be seen as a gift to the teams, organizations, and churches they serve, fully included and valued for their unique contributions. A leadership development process at PVCC must not overlook singles but help them pursue flourishing in their singleness.

### **Friendship and Flourishing**

Another key component of flourishing is the depth of leaders’ friendships with others. In a recent study on the state of friendship in the United States by the American Friendship Project, 75 percent of participants reported that they were satisfied with their quantity of friends. Yet over 40 percent reported that they longed for closer relationships with them.<sup>39</sup> The rise of social media has enabled casual connections with others on an unprecedented level, yet Americans report a desire for increased closeness with others. The benefits of close friendships are well-supported by the social sciences. A 2020 study

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<sup>36</sup> Köstenberger and Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 182–83.

<sup>37</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 110.

<sup>38</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 107–9.

<sup>39</sup> Natalie Pennington, Jeffrey A. Hall, and Amanda J. Holmstrom, “The American Friendship Project: A Report on the Status and Health of Friendship in America,” *PLOS ONE* 19, no. 7 (July 2024): 2.

demonstrated a correlation between having close friends with whom people can confide and lower rates of depression.<sup>40</sup> A 2010 study found that there was a 50 percent increase in the likelihood of survival among those who had close relationships when looking at all causes of mortality.<sup>41</sup> Scientific observation confirms the ancient biblical truth—it is not good for man to be alone.

Leaders who flourish in ministry must embrace relational communities rooted in intimacy with others. To this point, Brad House argues, “There is no biblical support for personal, autonomous Christianity. If we want to truly make disciples that advance the gospel, we must not only see the importance of community, we must understand it to be essential to the church.”<sup>42</sup> In a world longing for deeper friendships, leaders must be at the forefront of developing these close relationships, not only for their own good and that of others but for God’s glory. Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop explain, “Our affection for each other is derivative. It derives from our worship of God—a God who saved us from a million different ‘communities’ of this world to become his family. . . . God and his glory in the church are the point.”<sup>43</sup> For leaders to flourish in their calling, God-centered relationships with close friends bound together by the blood of Christ must be an integral component of their leadership. Such friendships help maintain the leader’s health and display God’s glory in a culture longing for closeness.

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<sup>40</sup> Karmel W. Choi et al., “An Exposure-Wide and Mendelian Randomization Approach to Identifying Modifiable Factors for the Prevention of Depression,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 177, no. 10 (October 2020): 944–54.

<sup>41</sup> Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy B. Smith, and J. Bradley Layton, “Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-Analytic Review” *PLOS Medicine* 7, no. 7 (July 2010): 1.

<sup>42</sup> Brad House, *Community: Taking Your Small Group Off Life Support* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 47.

<sup>43</sup> Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop, *The Compelling Community: Where God’s Power Makes a Church Attractive* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 30.

## **The Idolatry of Imbalance**

This section explored several relational components of a Christian leader's life that are key to maintaining balance: marriage, parenting, singleness, and friendships. Why do so many leaders struggle with this work/life balance? Paul David Tripp contends that the root of this imbalance is an imbalanced heart born out of the idolatry of pursuing success. He explains, "In the fear of not getting things we think we need, we work longer, try harder, control more, delegate less, and take more credit. Good godly habits get left behind in our ministry drivenness. Necessary relationships are not properly maintained. Private worship becomes perfunctory, if not abandoned altogether."<sup>44</sup> The inner health outlined in the first section of this chapter is often sacrificed on the altar of "ministry," and this brings imbalance and dysfunction to a leader's relationships and eventually their public leadership. As leaders are raised up at PVCC, this sort of imbalanced idolatry must be avoided at all costs. A development process should emphasize the need for a leader's deep dependence on and communion with the Lord, and from that spiritual vitality, balance and flourishing flow into their personal lives, relationships, and the teams and organizations they lead.

### **Leading Teams That Flourish: Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership Paradigms**

As Christian leaders begin to flourish in their inner lives and relationships, that flourishing should then extend to the teams they lead. Irving argues, "Christian leaders have an expanded level of responsibility and an expanded opportunity to influence and add value to the organizations they lead. It is important to steward this opportunity in a manner that contributes to the health and flourishing of those with whom these leaders work and serve."<sup>45</sup> People whom Christian leaders serve should experience a unique context of health and the opportunity to thrive in a way that is rare in today's world. Stearns

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<sup>44</sup> Tripp, *Lead*, 90.

<sup>45</sup> Irving, *Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations*, 26.

describes such contexts: “Good and godly leadership contributes to human flourishing when it creates cultures and environments that are fair, just, and caring.”<sup>46</sup> Christian leaders in these contexts often exhibit traits of particular leadership paradigms, the study of which can be helpful in seeking to develop future leaders who embody such traits. A 2022 study showed that Christian leaders tend to embody attributes of the Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership paradigms more strongly than non-Christians.<sup>47</sup> This section will examine the Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership paradigms and their underlying principles relevant to creating a leadership development process at PVCC.

### **Servant Leadership: A Paradigm for Flourishing**

Servant Leadership is a model that has gained significant influence in recent decades. When defining Servant Leadership, Larry Spears and Michele Lawrence summarize, “Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making.”<sup>48</sup> Servant Leadership is a follower-focused model rather than relying on positional authority. Robert Greenleaf, who is considered the father of Servant Leadership, writes, “The servant-leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”<sup>49</sup> Servant leaders focus on serving the people and organizations they lead, and in theory, service creates contexts that promote greater flourishing. Contemporary research supports the effectiveness of Servant Leadership, such as a 2017 study in a large healthcare organization that found job

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<sup>46</sup> Stearns, *Lead Like It Matters to God*, 18.

<sup>47</sup> Daniel E. Gifford, “Discipleship and Leadership: The Correlation between Discipleship and Servant, Transformational, and Shared Leadership in the Marketplace” (EdD diss., Liberty University, 2022), 177–78.

<sup>48</sup> Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, *Practicing Servant Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 12.

<sup>49</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1977), 27.

satisfaction, organizational commitment, person-organization fit, and perception of leadership effectiveness measurably higher when Servant Leadership was present.<sup>50</sup>

Servant Leadership has great relevance to the Christian leader, as it has been argued that Jesus is the prototypical servant leader. Statements like “the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve” (Matt 20:28) are very much in alignment with the Servant Leadership paradigm, and the example of Jesus’s leadership was that of the suffering servant. Christian leaders who seek first to serve the people they are stewarding operate in many of the tenets of Servant Leadership, several of which will be explored in this section.

### *Listening and Empathy*

Two foundational tenets of Servant Leadership are listening and empathy. About listening, Greenleaf writes, “Only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first. When one is a leader, this disposition causes one to be seen as servant first.”<sup>51</sup> When people listen well to others, they better understand their problems and can offer better solutions. In so doing, they gain greater credibility by validating the person they are leading. Greenleaf asserts that listening is a discipline that must be cultivated in the servant leader. Empathy is a related attribute of the servant leader, which Greenleaf defines as “the imaginative projection of one’s own consciousness into another being.”<sup>52</sup> By seeking to understand those whom a leader leads and accepting their unique gifts and dispositions, a servant leader can believe the best in others while at the same time fairly evaluating their performance. This leads to a greater degree of trust among followers, which promotes a healthier leadership relationship.

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<sup>50</sup> Justin A. Irving, and Julie Berndt, “Leader Purposefulness within Servant Leadership: Examining the Effect of Servant Leadership, Leader Follower-Focus, Leader Goal-Orientedness, and Leader Purposefulness in a Large U.S. Healthcare Organization,” *Administrative Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2017): 14.

<sup>51</sup> Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 31.

<sup>52</sup> Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 33.

## *Healing*

Another important aspect of Servant Leadership is healing. Spears explains, “Learning how to help heal difficult situations is a powerful force for transforming organizations. Servant-leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to help make whole those people and institutions with whom they come in contact.”<sup>53</sup> The Christian view of a fallen world understands that there is much brokenness that leaders can help restore. Whether in their communities or in the organizations and people they serve, servant leaders must be about the work of bringing healing and restoring wholeness to others. However, Greenleaf argues that servant leaders must first seek healing for their own brokenness: “There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.”<sup>54</sup> Servant leaders should be transparent about their shortcomings and search for healing, increasing intimacy and trust between those they serve. Servant leaders seek to bring about healing in others and, in so doing, experience their healing as they journey together.

## *Persuasion*

As servant leaders seek to influence others on their teams, persuasion is a powerful tool. Spears and Lawrence emphasize that leaders must utilize “persuasion rather than positional authority in making organizational decisions. Servant-leaders seek to convince others, rather than coercing compliance.”<sup>55</sup> Leaders who truly serve those they lead will view them as partners rather than subordinates and seek to build consensus around decisions through persuasion. Servant leaders include others in the decision-making process and seek their input, using persuasion to influence them toward a particular

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<sup>53</sup> Spears and Lawrence, *Practicing Servant Leadership*, 72.

<sup>54</sup> Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 50.

<sup>55</sup> Spears and Lawrence, *Practicing Servant Leadership*, 72.

vision or direction. This approach validates the agency and perspectives of followers and promotes greater trust and ownership of decisions. Irving and Strauss apply this concept to the contemporary moment, observing, “Leadership in our emerging environment is not just about vision, it is about *shared* vision. . . . In healthy organizations, vision is owned by both leaders and followers.”<sup>56</sup> As followers are included in the decision-making process, they feel greater ownership and, therefore, are more supportive of the decisions made. Servant leaders must seek to persuade followers in areas of disagreement rather than relying on more authoritarian methods to reach compliance, which brings greater harmony and health to the leadership environment.

### *Commitment to the Growth of People*

As leaders serve their teams, the people they lead should experience growth due to a leader’s influence. Spears and Lawrence explain, “Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. Accordingly, servant-leaders are deeply committed to the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of everyone within an organization.”<sup>57</sup> This should resonate with Christians, as the doctrine of the *imago Dei*<sup>58</sup> echoes the commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every person made in the image of God beyond their productivity. Christian leaders must not see followers simply in terms of their performance or what can be gained from them but as image-bearers to be respected, invested in, and developed personally and professionally. A servant leader should be committed to the development of those they serve, seeking to help them grow in their particular role and as a whole person.

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<sup>56</sup> Irving and Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective*, 65.

<sup>57</sup> Spears and Lawrence, *Practicing Servant Leadership*, 73.

<sup>58</sup> Wayne Grudem articulates the relevance of this doctrine in a fallen world by stating, “Every single human being, no matter how much the image of God is marred by sin, or illness, or weakness, or age, or any other disability, still has the *status* of being in God’s image and therefore must be treated with the dignity and respect that is due to God’s image-bearer.” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 450.

The people a servant leader cares for should look more like Jesus because of the leadership under which they sit. This commitment to growth promotes flourishing in the follower's life and, in turn, brings greater health to the team as a whole.

### *Building Community*

The final aspect of Servant Leadership explored in the project is building community. Greenleaf defines community as “a face-to-face group in which the liability of each for the other and all for one is unlimited, or as close to it as it is possible to get. Trust and respect are highest in this circumstance, and an accepted ethic that gives strength to all is reinforced.”<sup>59</sup> Leaders should embody this connectedness between team members and the desire for mutual well-being. Servant leaders should love their teams richly and spend time with them, strengthening friendships and creating a vibrant community that is deeper than the work at hand. Christian leadership should exemplify community-building exceptionally well, as the bond between fellow believers necessarily brings a community that transcends typical societal divisions and invites others from diverse backgrounds to be a part of it in a way that brings God glory.

### **Transformational Leadership: Developing Teams Who Flourish**

A second contemporary leadership model that is particularly relevant to Christian leaders who seek to lead teams that flourish is Transformational Leadership. Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio define transformational leaders as those who “help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers’ needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization.”<sup>60</sup> It has been argued that the leadership of

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<sup>59</sup> Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 52.

<sup>60</sup> Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership* (East Sussex, England: Psychology, 2006), 3.



Jesus demonstrated the four components of Transformational Leadership,<sup>61</sup> making it a model worthy of study in an exploration of contemporary practices useful in healthy Christian leadership. In this section, the four components of Transformational Leadership will be explored to glean principles relevant to a leadership development process at PVCC.

### *Idealized Influence*

The first component of Transformational Leadership is idealized influence. Bass and Riggio describe a leader modeling this when they “behave in ways that allow them to serve as role models for their followers.”<sup>62</sup> When leaders lead by example, followers receive more than directives to be accomplished—they see a model to be emulated. This method of leadership bears particularly beneficial fruit in the lives of followers as they learn through observation and experience how to lead and are transformed into leaders in their own right. As leaders seek to develop future leaders, they must be careful to embody the behaviors they hope to see produced in those they lead. Irving and Strauss argue that this is beneficial to both individuals and their teams because the leadership skills that are cultivated in followers through modeling what matters help followers develop both personally and professionally to maximize their potential, strengthening the entire organization.<sup>63</sup>

### *Inspirational Motivation*

The second component of Transformational Leadership is inspirational motivation. According to Bass and Riggio, this is employed when leaders “behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their

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<sup>61</sup> Karl A. Michel, “An Examination of Leadership Principles in Matthew 23: Jesus’ Authentic Transformational Leadership Approach Compared to the Pharisees’ Pseudo-Transformational Leadership Approach” (PhD diss., Regent University, 2014), 95–98.

<sup>62</sup> Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

<sup>63</sup> Irving and Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective*, 27–28.

followers' work.”<sup>64</sup> Helping followers connect their work to the bigger picture of what the organization is doing gives meaning to even the most mundane tasks, increasing motivation and optimism around the work. Leaders should always be explaining the “why” behind the work, inspiring teams by reminding them that what they do matters. Bass and Riggio argue that this wider vision should be shared among followers,<sup>65</sup> creating a culture of collaboration that gives followers a greater sense of ownership. Irving and Strauss observe, “Vision birthed in isolation dies in isolation.”<sup>66</sup> By inviting followers into bigger-picture discussions and creating ownership around broader organizational goals through valuing their input, leaders can inspire and motivate followers to approach tasks with a renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm that benefits the entire team.

### *Intellectual Stimulation*

The third component of Transformational Leadership is intellectual stimulation, where leaders “stimulate their followers’ efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways.”<sup>67</sup> Promoting this sort of creativity is vital to thriving organizations. Montgomery warns, “Without creativity, Christian leaders become copycats who follow like drones after the latest ministry trend.”<sup>68</sup> Team members with leadership potential often find greater purpose and satisfaction through the invitation to solve problems and think creatively. This culture of innovation brings energy and vitality to teams as followers are inspired to think outside the box and work toward novel solutions, a process that produces growth and development in team members.

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<sup>64</sup> Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

<sup>65</sup> Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 6.

<sup>66</sup> Irving and Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective*, 69.

<sup>67</sup> Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 7.

<sup>68</sup> Montgomery, *Leadership Mosaic*, 86.

### *Individualized Consideration*

The final component of the Transformational Leadership paradigm is individualized consideration. Bass and Riggio explain, “Transformational leaders pay special attention to each individual follower’s needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor.”<sup>69</sup> Leaders should know their followers well and provide individualized direction and growth opportunities. By helping team members see their development pathway and unique gifts and callings, a leader can help those they serve grow into their full potential.

An important aspect of individualized consideration is delegation, where followers are given specific tasks or assignments geared toward their growth as leaders. As leaders delegate, they should provide feedback about performance and coach them along the way. This is an invaluable part of the process through which followers can grow into greater leaders and, therefore, increase the overall capacity and performance of the team. As college football coach and pastor Jay Mills observes, “We mentor others to multiply ourselves, so that our ministry might grow exponentially. However, if those we disciple are always relying on us and never learn to function for themselves, then our ministry will come to an end when we do.”<sup>70</sup> Leaders should provide coaching and support for followers as they perform delegated tasks, and greater freedom and ownership should be given as followers progress through their development journey. Leaders must be careful not to micromanage followers as they mature so they do not become dependent and can be given the necessary space to develop. This is all done with the goal of multiplication in mind, as an abundance of healthy leaders will strengthen the entire team and provide continuity when the current leadership’s service inevitably ends.

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<sup>69</sup> Bass and Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> Jay Mills, *Game On! A Coach’s Game Plan for Discipleship* (Utica, KY: Marked Journey, 2021), 205.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explored contemporary literature, research, and leadership practices to gain insights relevant to creating a leadership development process at PVCC. By examining the themes of healthy leadership and flourishing in a leader's personal life, relationships, and teams, much wisdom was discerned that shaped the concept of the ideal leader this project sought to produce. Leaders must embrace character development, spiritual health, emotional health, and physical health as they seek to flourish in their inner lives. They must seek balance in their marriage or singleness, parenting, and friendships to avoid the idolatry of imbalance. Finally, they must seek the flourishing of their teams by embodying aspects of the Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership paradigms. These insights were particularly helpful in creating the curriculum for developing healthy leaders.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this project was to establish a process for developing leaders who flourish at Pleasant Valley Community Church in Owensboro, Kentucky. In this chapter, the methodology used to develop and implement the process is explained to provide the necessary details to evaluate and reproduce this process in the future. My hope is that this project will bear great fruit in the church in the coming years and that this leadership development process will be used in the development of leaders on an ongoing basis.

The goals of this project were to (1) assess the perception of Christian leadership principles and confidence to lead among current and prospective leaders, (2) develop a six-session curriculum to equip leadership candidates by teaching foundational leadership principles, (3) equip pastor-selected leadership candidates with the core competencies to lead effectively in the church, (4) increase the number of church members serving in leadership positions, and (5) develop a ministry plan to incorporate this leadership development process into the ongoing operations of PVCC. After the completion of the project, participants were surveyed to determine the specific areas in which they were interested in leading, and the church pastors and staff selected candidates from the pool to invite into further role-specific training and development as they began leading in their specific capacities.

#### **Preparation Period: Weeks 1–26**

Preparation for implementing the project was spread over six months. Beginning with a two-day pastors' retreat in August of 2024, the rationale and urgency of a structure

for leadership development were presented, and specific feedback and insights were shared. This input from the pastoral team helped develop the curriculum, select candidates, and create a Ministry Plan that would allow this project to begin a larger process to develop and install leaders at all levels of ministry at PVCC.

### **Curriculum Development Process**

At the pastors' retreat, the first major discussion centered around developing a leadership pipeline that would provide a framework for defining the different levels of leadership that should be present in the church. This discussion expanded to articulate the core competencies that leaders at each level should possess, which would be the focus of development processes at each level.<sup>1</sup> The implementation phase of this project focused on conducting a baseline training to develop core competencies that should exist at all levels of leadership. The Ministry Plan was later developed to build on this and explain how further training would supplement additional skills required of leaders as they advance through the leadership pipeline. The foundational competencies that leaders at even the lowest levels should possess would be the core of this project's developed and implemented curriculum.

With approval and feedback from the PVCC pastors, between October 2024 and January 2025, a curriculum was developed for the implementation phase of this project, which centered around a six-week class called "Leadership 101." The class would focus on the foundations of Christian leadership that promote flourishing and would use the previously established Leadership Values of the church<sup>2</sup> as a framework to explore themes such as personal health, team dynamics, healthy culture, conflict resolution,

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<sup>1</sup> The competencies discussed are included in the Ministry Plan in appendix 4.

<sup>2</sup> Rest to Run, Bleed for the Bride, Honor Up Down and All Around, Celebrate Loud and Often, Grow Your Gift, Reject Good for Great, Fight for Unity, and Press On. "Staff Culture," Pleasant Valley Community Church, accessed March 7, 2024, <https://pleasantvalley.cc/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/mission-vision-values-staff-culture.pdf>.

missional urgency, and church polity, which are described in more detail later in this chapter. An initial curriculum plan was submitted to an expert panel on January 14, 2025. This panel consisted of one PVCC staff pastor, one PVCC lay-pastor, a pastor of an outside church, a Christian business leader, and a department head of a local college. A rubric was provided for them to evaluate the curriculum,<sup>3</sup> and the curriculum was required to pass evaluation with a minimum of 90 percent of criteria receiving a rating of “sufficient” or higher.

After the initial round of evaluation, all but one expert panel member gave all measures of the curriculum’s effectiveness a “sufficient” rating or higher. One panel member gave substantial critique, expressing a desire for improvement in the wording of the objectives to be more specific and diverse, and a desire for more variety in instructional methods to serve different learning styles. After revisions to the curriculum, it received “sufficient” or “exemplary” ratings in all areas evaluated. The final curriculum plan can be found in appendix 5.

### **Candidate Selection Process**

In January 2025, the PVCC pastors and staff were presented with the vision and clarified plan for the Leadership Development Process and asked to provide a list of all current leaders, as well as potential candidates, for the pastors to consider inviting to participate in the training. A pre-implementation analysis of trends in volunteer leadership was conducted, and 101 leaders already serving in positions of influence were identified. This number would serve as the baseline against which to compare a post-implementation analysis to measure the project’s effectiveness. These 101 existing leaders were invited to the training, as well as 120 potential leaders that the PVCC pastors determined to have the character and competence to become leaders. Of the group invited, 95 registered to attend the training, a response rate of roughly 43 percent.

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 1.

## Lesson Preparation

After the curriculum plan had been developed, evaluated, and refined, there was still much work needed to prepare each lesson in detail. Strategies to engage various learning styles were incorporated, including lecture, case studies, group discussion, role play, and self-reflection. Each lesson was designed to engage students in multiple ways, including personal reflections and examples from the life of PVCC. Space was built into each lesson for students to share stories from their own leadership experiences that were relevant to the discussion so that they could learn from each other.

Several resources proved beneficial when developing each lesson, such as Justin A. Irving and Mark Strauss's *Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders* and Irving's *Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish*.<sup>4</sup> These books provide a solid biblical and theological framework for Christian leadership, which proved essential to the class. By examining contemporary leadership models through a theological lens, Irving delivers great insights about Christian leadership that promotes flourishing. He makes the case for an "empowering" leadership model that aligns perfectly with the leadership culture PVCC seeks to promote.

*The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* by Pete Scazzero, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* by Paul David Tripp, and *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life* by Donald Whitney<sup>5</sup> were valuable resources that contributed to the discussion of leadership health. These three books were full of examples and biblical

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<sup>4</sup> Justin A. Irving and Mark L. Strauss, *Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019); Justin A. Irving, *Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015); Paul David Tripp, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020); Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991).



wisdom that helped enrich each lesson and provide the class with a model for healthy leadership.

Additional resources that aided in preparing each lesson were *Transformational Leadership* by Bernard Bass and Ronald Riggio, *Servant Leadership* by Robert Greenleaf, and *The Advantage* by Patrick Lencioni.<sup>6</sup> These books brought contributions from the business world, providing examples of how the truths found in Scripture translate to the secular world in a way that resonated deeply with many participants who lead in the marketplace.

A final resource that proved invaluable to the lesson preparation process, although difficult to properly attribute, was the teaching and practical wisdom provided through the coursework in the professional doctoral program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Each seminar was immensely beneficial and provided insights that undoubtedly influenced the project material. The impact of the instruction provided by Dr. Kevin Peck, Dr. Justin Irving, Dr. Hershael York, Dr. Jimmy Scroggins, and Dr. Matthew Haste is hard to overstate, and the knowledge and wisdom gained through their classes were an important part of the preparation process that led to each lesson.

### **Final Logistics**

With the lesson content prepared, a few logistical issues remained. Because of unforeseen delays related to construction on the PVCC church building, a major concern was finding a space where a large class could meet. Thanks to the flexibility of multiple staff members and ministries, children's classes were temporarily relocated to allow the training to be held in the Student Ministry room for six weeks. This space was more than

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<sup>6</sup> Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership* (East Sussex, England: Psychology, 2006); Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1977); Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

adequate to facilitate the class and provided the further benefit of excellent audio, video, and lighting equipment that were used in the class.

With this obstacle overcome, the remaining barrier to successful implementation was the timing of the class. It was decided that the training would be held on Sunday mornings during the 9:00 a.m. service to maximize participation. The response to the invitations was better than expected, and the church staff became concerned that they would lose their most faithful volunteers for six weeks while they attended the leadership training during the most heavily attended church service, which would hinder week-to-week operations. This was especially problematic as the class was to begin just weeks after the opening of the new church building, while attendance was surging, and volunteers were still adjusting to new systems and procedures in the new space. Great care was taken to validate these concerns and preserve staff unity, and a compromise was reached. The church staff would plan ahead and attempt fill the spots of people who wished to attend the training, and when alternates could not be found, they would do their best to make it so that volunteers would only have to miss one or two weeks of the training at most. Each session was recorded and uploaded to a YouTube playlist, and an email was sent out each week with a link to the videos so participants could catch up on any missed sessions. Thanks to the hard work of the church Audio/Video team, all sessions were recorded and successfully distributed, which helped ensure participants could receive all the course content while not crippling the church's Sunday operations.

### **Implementation Period: Weeks 27–33**

With final preparations complete, implementation of the project officially began on Sunday, February 2, 2025. The leadership development process became known as Leadership 101, a class consisting of six sessions that were approximately eighty minutes long. As part of the feedback from the pastoral team, additional video lessons were assigned each week for homework, working through the *Gospel Fluency* curriculum

by Jeff Vanderstelt and Ben Connelly.<sup>7</sup> Most participants completed the majority of the Leadership 101 classes in person, although a few viewed the sessions entirely via video due to scheduling conflicts and travel.

### **Pre-Class Communication**

The week before the class began, a final email reminder was sent to participants who had registered, reminding them of the date and time and confirming the location of the class. This email contained a link to a digital version of the Leadership Assessment Survey, which participants were asked to complete before they attended the first session to fulfil the project's first goal. Several leaders responded with questions about balancing attending the class with prior commitments to serve in Sunday morning church ministries. They were encouraged to make up any missed sessions via video links that would be emailed to them each week.

### **Session 1: Foundations of Leadership at PVCC**

The first class was an overview of the leadership development process at PVCC and the biblical and theological foundations of Christian leadership. Much of the content for this session was shaped by material from chapters 1 and 2 of this project, as well as books and resources mentioned previously in this chapter. This introductory session laid the groundwork for the discussion over the six-week implementation period. It demonstrated a clear rationale for the importance of the process for developing leaders at PVCC.

The first section of the class sought to develop a definition of leadership and its function in light of the creation mandate found in Genesis 1:26–31. Participants gained an understanding that, as leaders, they are called to bear God's image (show people what he

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<sup>7</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt and Ben Connelly, *Gospel Fluency Handbook* (Bellevue, WA: Saturate, 2017).

is like), multiply others who will do the same, and cultivate the spaces in which they lead to promote flourishing. A Christian leader's authority to do this is ultimately a delegated authority that flows from the Lord, so a vision was presented for leadership as stewardship.

The second section of the class sought to define what kind of leaders PVCC should seek to develop. Leaders should be faithful, healthy, and effective in their callings, and should be engaged in equipping the saints for the work of ministry to which they have been called. Particular emphasis was placed on PVCC's ecclesiology as a pastor-led congregational church. This structure necessitates that the church's members primarily accomplish the work of ministry, therefore requiring existing leaders to invest deeply in equipping others for the work. The competency-focused leadership development model outlined in *Designed to Lead* was presented, illustrating the need for the church to invest in equipping its people with foundational leadership competencies that are transferrable to different contexts, which led directly to a description of the PVCC Leadership Pipeline.<sup>8</sup> The competencies desired were included in the Ministry Plan.<sup>9</sup>

The third section of the class outlined the structure for leadership development codified in the Ministry Plan, and participants were introduced to the different levels of leadership identified as essential to the continued growth of PVCC. Participants were encouraged to find where they currently fit into the leadership pipeline and begin thinking about what role the Lord might be calling them to pursue for development over the next five years. Finally, participants were given an overview of the content that would be covered in subsequent class sessions and were reminded about the *Gospel Fluency* video homework that would be emailed to them during the week with the class videos for any session they might miss.

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 194–95.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 4.

## **Session 2: Leaders Who Flourish**

The thesis for the second class was the common leadership adage: “Healthy leadership starts with healthy leaders.” Much of the content for this class was distilled from chapters 2 and 3 of this project. Class began with a discussion of a definition of what it means to be healthy and the components of a leader’s life that contribute to health. Acts 20:28 and 1 Timothy 4:16 were examined to show the importance of a leader paying careful attention not just to their ministries and the people that they serve but also to their own lives and doctrine. Three characteristics were identified that contribute to leader health: character (1 Tim 3; Titus 1), balance (Exod 18:21–23), and right identity (Gal 2:20).

After making the case for leader health, the following section moved into the first leadership value of PVCC, “Rest to Run.” This value asserts that a leader’s ability to work hard for the Lord flows from a deep relationship of rest and delight in him. The group discussed several reasons why rest is difficult in their lives in this cultural moment and brainstormed personal practices or disciplines that can help promote health. In particular, practices related to a leader’s spiritual life, emotional/physical health, family life/singleness, and relational health were discussed.

Participants were encouraged to reflect on their lives and assess their health in each area by rating them on a scale of 1–10 and spend time praying for the Holy Spirit to bring to mind specific practices that were discussed that they might consider implementing to pursue growth in those areas. Participants were reminded that progress, not perfection, was the goal. Their pursuit of growth in these areas should be undertaken in a spirit of prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to move in power as he is the one who ultimately gives the gift of sanctification as they engage in these practices. Finally, participants were asked to complete the final page of their worksheet, where these exercises culminated in developing an intentional plan for daily, weekly, and monthly disciplines to bring greater health in their lives and leadership.

### **Session 3: Leading Teams Who Flourish**

The third session focused on leading healthy teams. It began with a rationale for developing others rooted in the second PVCC leadership value, “Grow Your Gift.” While this value often focuses on personal development, participants were reminded that the people to whom God has entrusted them are perhaps their greatest gift, and they must be careful not to overlook developing and growing that gift. The reasons for this investment were outlined as multiplied effectiveness, alignment with God’s mission of disciple-making, and the fact that leadership is temporary and necessitates investment in future leaders.

The second section of the class discussed biblical and contemporary leadership development models. The model of Jesus, outlined in chapter 2 of this project, was discussed in detail, showing the pattern of calling, training, releasing, coaching, and multiplying. Contemporary frameworks such as the “leadership square”<sup>10</sup> were presented, and class participants discussed how such frameworks could be applied on their own teams to develop others.

The third section of the class focused on the third PVCC leadership value, “Honor Up, Down, and All Around.” This value expresses the importance of showing honor “up” to those under whose authority we serve, “down” to those we lead, and “all around” to everybody on our teams and in the church. In particular, the discussion of this value centered around the importance of knowing people and their diverse perspectives and honoring that diversity in communication and decision-making. Several factors were named that might contribute to the diverse worldviews among different groups in the church, but much of the conversation focused on the generational differences that are present within PVCC and how that might affect the way leaders approach various situations. Profiles were given for Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and

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<sup>10</sup> This framework was found in numerous books and articles without attribution, and the original source was unable to be determined. The consistent pattern was “I do, you watch; I do, you help; you do, I help; and you do, I watch.”

Generation Z, and participants discussed the differences in how each approaches issues of authority, communication, decision-making, and work/life balance or integration.

Finally, four leadership styles were presented: Positional Leadership, Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Democratic Leadership. Each style was defined and described in detail along with their associated strengths and weaknesses. This discussion culminated in a presentation of the Situational Leadership model, where leaders can adapt their leadership and use different styles to best suit the person they are leading and the particular situation with which they are presented. Participants ended the session by working through case studies as a group, using Situational Leadership to determine which leadership style would be most effective and appropriate in common church leadership scenarios.

#### **Session 4: Healthy Leadership Culture**

The fourth class examined the role of culture in leadership. Beginning with a discussion of what leadership culture is and how participants have experienced it in both positive and negative ways, the first section of the class explored the impact of culture on the health and productivity of teams. Participants were encouraged to keep culture-creation at the forefront of their actions, as culture can be highly formative and shapes the way people experience their leadership. Strategies were explored to help leaders become good stewards of culture, including clearly defining culture, embodying it with their lives, and regularly communicating through the language of cultural values. To close this section, the specific leadership culture of PVCC was explained, including the leadership values of “Rest to Run,” “Grow Your Gift,” “Honor Up, Down, And All Around,” “Fight For Unity,” “Celebrate Loud and Often,” “Bleed For The Bride,” “Reject Good For Great,” and “Press On.” After introducing these values, participants discussed case studies from common situations leaders at PVCC might face, allowing them to apply these concepts to how they might approach situations in ways that reinforce healthy culture.

The second section focused on the fourth PVCC Leadership Value, “Fight for Unity.” The importance of healthy conflict to healthy culture was emphasized in this section, and the class worked through a diagram plotting the extremes of passivity and aggression on a spectrum. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their conflict style and place themselves on the continuum. Then, the leadership traps associated with being on either extreme of the spectrum were discussed as a class. Moving on from the importance of healthy conflict, Matthew 18 was discussed in detail as a model for healthy conflict resolution. This discussion was supplemented with biblical and practical wisdom for how to deal with difficult situations. Volunteers were asked to roleplay a conflict scenario walking through Matthew 18, which was an entertaining and memorable exercise to apply the principles discussed in the class.

The final section of this session explored the fifth PVCC leadership value, “Celebrate Loud and Often.” Discussion around this value emphasized the role of creating a context of joy and celebration in maintaining a healthy culture, as it brings much life and vitality to the teams that participants will lead and to the church as a whole. Several benefits of joy were presented, including how it helps prevent burnout, deepens relationships, inspires creativity and production, and builds equity to persevere through difficult seasons of ministry. Leaders should be intentional to celebrate “catching” people living out cultural values, key wins and team successes, personal milestones, and growth. Finally, participants were encouraged to work to create this culture of celebration by building it into regular team rhythms, learning how team members best receive celebration, and finding specific ways to show appreciation to team members.

### **Session 5: Leading with Missional Urgency**

The fifth session sought to inspire leaders to keep the church’s mission at the forefront of their ministry and to lead with a sense of urgency in light of that mission. The class began with a discussion seeking to define the mission of the church. Surveying a variety of scriptures to gain a holistic understanding of Christ’s mission, this discussion led



to the explanation of the mission statement of PVCC, which is “Knowing God and Making Him Known . . . Together.” The class discussed examples of what can happen when churches and leaders lose sight of God’s mission, reinforcing the importance of keeping the mission front of mind. Specific practices were presented that can help leaders in this important task, like staying rooted in the Word, practicing missional community, and setting goals/celebrating wins that are shaped by the mission.

The second section of the class focused on the book *The Trellis and the Vine* by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne.<sup>11</sup> The book’s central metaphor was a helpful picture of the church—a trellis that required maintenance and care but existed to support the vine’s growth. This metaphor was applied to PVCC, reminding participants that the administration and organizational work of the church must always be rooted in a desire to see the vine of spiritual growth flourish in its people. The group participated in a classification exercise, discussing different ministries and activities in the church and classifying them as “trellis work” or “vine work.” Finally, participants worked through an exercise where they discussed different “Ministry Mind-Shifts” that could help reframe the “trellis work” in which they would often be engaged in light of the “vine work” that it would help facilitate.

The third section of the class helped participants to personalize the mission of Christ, thinking specifically about the different spheres of influence God has given them to steward missionally. Their worksheets included a “Saturate Map,” a tool PVCC has used to identify the various mission fields God has sovereignly given to individuals and the specific people under their influence who they feel burdened to reach. Participants wrote the names of people in their homes, workplaces, and church ministries on that map and were challenged to take their next step in urgently seeking to reach them with the gospel. Finally, participants identified from that diagram the name of one individual who

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<sup>11</sup> Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias, 2009).

would be their “one”—someone they would commit to praying for daily and looking for opportunities to share the gospel with in 2025. This exercise in personalizing the mission of Christ was intended to energize leaders with a renewed sense of urgency that would bleed over into their leadership within the church.

The final portion of the class focused on the remaining PVCC leadership values of “Bleed for the Bride,” “Reject Good for Great,” and “Press On.” Each of these values was presented in light of the church’s overall mission and was shown to be essential to faithfully fulfilling God’s mission. The class concluded with small group discussion and prayer about each participant’s biggest takeaway from this session and for the Holy Spirit to do significant work in reigniting PVCC’s heart for God’s mission.

### **Session 6: Gospel-Centered Leadership**

The final class began with a review of the material covered in the *Gospel Fluency* video series that had been assigned for homework. Participants were presented with the essential nature of being able to speak the truths of Jesus into everyday life, and the need for this kind of common language centered around the gospel in their leadership journeys at PVCC. Several case studies were discussed outlining leadership scenarios they might face, and participants practiced translating them through the Gospel Fluency framework of “Who is God?,” “What has God done?,” “Who are we?,” and “How should we live?”

Moving on from Gospel Fluency, the next section of the class reviewed the previous five class sessions and explored how they all come together to produce the unique culture of health PVCC hopes to intentionally cultivate in its leaders. This led to an overview of the different ministries of PVCC and how each serves to advance the gospel as the church lives out God’s mission. The PVCC Leadership Pipeline was presented a second time, and leaders were again asked to find where they currently were in the structure, what the next step God might be calling them into might be, and what they felt like their long-term leadership potential could look like through the Holy Spirit’s help.

To close the class, I presented some final thoughts about the importance of humility and service in leadership at PVCC, as well as gratitude for each participant's heart and sacrifice for the mission of Christ. Participants were then given the Leadership Assessment Survey to fill out a second time to measure the effectiveness of this project. They were also given an application to complete indicating which specific ministries or areas of service they were interested in pursuing for leadership.

### **Ministry Plan: Weeks 1–32**

The fifth goal of the project was to develop a ministry plan for incorporating the Leadership Development Process into the ongoing operations of PVCC. The foundations for this plan were established at the pastors' retreat in August 2024, and it was formally developed in February 2025. The plan was initially intended to be finalized and submitted to three pastors of PVCC for review after the implementation period. Due to extenuating circumstances in my personal life, the writing process for this project was accelerated, leading to the finalization and review of this plan occurring concurrently with the implementation period.

The Ministry Plan began with a rationale for the importance of leadership development in the church, appealing to passages like Ephesians 4:12 for biblical support to emphasize the need to focus on equipping the saints for the work of ministry. The plan looked to Exodus 18:13–22, where Jethro called Moses to raise up leaders who “oversee thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens” (v. 21) as a model for establishing a framework of different levels of leadership within the church and articulated a formal Leadership Pipeline for PVCC. This pipeline was loosely based on the example provided by Geiger and Peck in *Designed to Lead*,<sup>12</sup> and described people who are self-leaders (ministry participants), leaders of teams/groups, leaders of leaders, ministry leaders, and pastors.

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<sup>12</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 191.

Each level of the Leadership Pipeline described the role and function of the leader and the different ways one could serve in the church at that level of leadership.

The Ministry Plan described different trainings that would be offered to prepare leaders for leadership at each level. Leadership 101, the class implemented for this project, would serve as a six-week foundational training to cover the core components of healthy Christian leadership and the PVCC leadership culture. All future leaders would start here, and some would be invited to progress up the pipeline in accordance with their calling and capacity for leadership.

Two additional trainings were detailed, the specifics and implementation of which are beyond the scope of this project but were included in the Ministry Plan for future development. Leadership 201 would be a two-week training for group/team leaders who showed potential to become leaders of leaders. It would go into more detail covering skills like developing and coaching other leaders, resolving conflict, and divisive doctrines. Leadership 301 would be an additional two-week training for individuals who the pastors selected as potential ministry leaders who could one day oversee entire departments or ministries of the church. Leadership 301 would cover administrative skills, vision development, communication, how to lead meetings, and how to motivate leaders.

A clear Pastoral Development Process was also included in the Ministry Plan for leaders selected by the PVCC pastors and affirmed by church members as candidates who might one day become pastors of the church. This process would occur over 6–12 months, during which candidates complete all previous leadership trainings. At the beginning of the process, they would be given a questionnaire to determine their strengths and weaknesses, a tailored reading list, and a development plan to help them grow into their calling. Candidates would participate in case studies, give reports on their assigned readings, and shadow current pastors for hands-on training and coaching. At the satisfactory completion of this development process, they would be presented to the

members of Pleasant Valley for a vote of affirmation and subsequently installed as pastors of the church.

In addition to these general leadership training classes, all leaders would undergo trainings that focus on the skills necessary for the particular role in which they would be serving. They would also have another leader serving over them as a coach, who would give support, feedback, and correction when necessary as they gain experience in leadership.

This plan was completed and submitted to three PVCC pastors for review on March 2, 2025. These pastors evaluated the Ministry Plan using the Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool.<sup>13</sup> The plan was approved with 100 percent of all criteria receiving a rating of either “sufficient” or “exemplary,” which met the fifth goal of the project. In the final week of the implementation of the Leadership 101 class, the plan was presented to participants to help them see a potential pathway as they seek to grow into the level of leadership to which God is calling them.

#### **Follow-Up Period: Weeks 34–35**

After the completion of the leadership training and the approval of the Ministry Plan, three major tasks remained for the completion of the project. First, participants who had completed the training needed to be matched with their ideal leadership position so that they could begin leading, and a post-implementation analysis of trends in volunteer leadership could be done to determine the success of goal four. The Leadership Application for each participant was reviewed by the PVCC staff, who contacted new leaders by the end of week 35 and invited them to begin serving. The post-implementation analysis was performed once leaders were placed into their new roles.

The second major task performed in this period was to analyze the Leadership Assessment Surveys, comparing the pre- and post-class surveys utilizing a *t*-test for

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<sup>13</sup> See appendix 2.

dependent samples to determine the effectiveness of the training in developing leaders and accomplishing the project's third goal. The results of this analysis are presented in chapter 5.

The final major task in the follow-up period was to interview five participants whose survey data showed an increase in knowledge of the material covered to determine the factors that led to success. These participants were chosen at random and were limited based on their availability. Interviews were conducted either in person or over the phone,<sup>14</sup> and the audio was recorded to create transcripts to analyze for common themes that could help further evaluate the third goal of the project as well as the project's overall strengths and weaknesses.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the project implemented at Pleasant Valley Community Church through the preparation, implementation, and follow-up periods. Every aspect was in service of the five goals of the project. The next chapter will evaluate the effectiveness of this project in accomplishing these goals.

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<sup>14</sup> See appendix 6 for the interview guide.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

When evaluating the effectiveness of this project in developing leaders who flourish in their callings at Pleasant Valley Community Church, there is much to consider. True flourishing at PVCC will be measured over the years and decades to come. As leaders abide in Christ and fulfill his mission while embracing health and wholeness in their ministries, the hope is that many more leaders who demonstrate flourishing will be raised up to lead with great effectiveness and longevity for God's kingdom. This kind of flourishing was challenging to evaluate immediately after the implementation of this project, so its true fruit will be revealed over time.

While its long-term success remains to be seen, there are several metrics by which the effectiveness of this project can be evaluated in the short term as we wait and pray for the Holy Spirit to bear fruit in the lives of these new leaders and their ministries. This chapter will begin by evaluating the purpose of the project and whether it was a worthwhile pursuit in the life of PVCC. Second, this chapter will evaluate the project's goals and whether they were met. The third and fourth sections will examine the project's strengths and weaknesses through reflection and participant feedback. The fifth section will explore what could have been done differently and will likely need to be adjusted as this course is repeated in the future. The final two sections will shift to a more personal tone and outline the theological and personal reflections that have impacted me as I have journeyed through this process.

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

The purpose of this project was to establish a process for developing leaders who flourish at Pleasant Valley Community Church in Owensboro, Kentucky. This purpose guided every aspect of the project, from the development of goals to the curriculum design, training implementation, and creation of the ministry plan that sought to integrate the development process across all ministries of PVCC. When evaluating the project, the relevance of its purpose was an important foundation in discerning its overall value.

Chapter 2 explored several biblical and theological themes, highlighting the necessity of developing leaders. Looking to the Old Testament, a clear pattern emerged showing that when leaders invested in the work of leadership development, God's people remained faithful when that leader's time came to an end. Moses mentored Joshua, bringing him along through many major crises and breakthroughs he experienced as the leader of Israel. When Moses's life drew to a close, Joshua was ready for the Lord to install him as the new leader to continue leading God's people into faithfulness. Joshua, in contrast, did not invest in a clear successor, beginning a cycle of faithlessness repeated across generations.

In the New Testament, Jesus highlighted the crucial nature of leadership development, investing deeply in his disciples, who were then equipped to carry the ministry forward after his ascension and start a work of multiplication that led to billions being saved. The mission of Christ is to go and make disciples, and for churches to be faithful to that mission they must invest in the work of developing and discipling more leaders to engage in that work. The purpose of this project was to do just that—create an intentional process for leadership development at PVCC that would allow it to be faithful to its mission. This purpose followed the pattern of the Bible and was in service of the very reason for the existence of the church, and therefore was of deep relevance and value.



The project's purpose centered upon more than simply developing leaders, but developing leaders who flourish. Chapter 3 demonstrated the many components of health, or flourishing, in leadership. The process for leadership development should produce in participants key competencies that promote health and wholeness in their inner lives, relational lives, and among the teams that they lead. This is an urgent need among leaders at PVCC, as significant burnout and turnover have occurred in the lives of many leaders. Between the writing of chapter 1 of this project and the completion of its implementation, PVCC has had nine staff members and pastors leave their positions, many of whom cited burnout, unhealth, and leadership anxiety as major factors that contributed to their resignations. Additionally, numerous lay leaders in the church stepped out of leadership during this period for similar reasons, pointing to a culture that is not sustainable. While this was not wholly unexpected during a major building project, as PVCC enters its next season of ministry, the project's purpose in developing leaders who flourish in their callings will be critical to the long-term health and effectiveness of the church.

In short, the purpose of this project remains one of great value. The importance of leadership development and the methods by which leaders should invest in others is found throughout the Bible. The primacy of human flourishing in the contexts in which leaders are called to serve is well-supported by the Bible, modern science, and contemporary practice. Finally, the conditions found in the immediate context of PVCC show that the project's purpose of establishing a process for developing leaders who flourish is both timely and necessary for the good of the church and the glory of God.

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

To accomplish the purpose of this project, five goals were set: (1) assess the perception of Christian leadership principles and confidence to lead among current and prospective leaders at Pleasant Valley Community Church, (2) develop a six-session curriculum to equip leadership candidates by teaching foundational leadership principles, (3) equip pastor-selected leadership candidates with the core competencies to lead

effectively in the church, (4) increase the number of church members serving in leadership positions, and (5) develop a ministry plan to incorporate this leadership development process into the ongoing operations of Pleasant Valley Community Church.

The first goal was to assess the perception of Christian leadership principles and confidence to lead among current and prospective leaders at Pleasant Valley Community Church. To complete this goal, the Leadership Assessment Survey (LAS) was administered to those who were invited to participate in the training. The LAS was sent out the week before the first session and was also given on paper to those in attendance on week one who had not previously filled it out online. The research methodology required that at least thirty participants complete the LAS to be considered successful. The project exceeded this goal, with 65 people completing the survey. The insights gained from this assessment not only confirmed the need for the training but also helped shape areas of needed emphasis as the lessons were adjusted each week to serve participants best.

One of the first insights provided by the LAS was that there was strong agreement about the statement that “The Bible provides guidance for how to lead well” (see table 1) These responses were not surprising, as a class of Christians seeking to grow in leadership would be expected to place a high value on God’s Word to guide leadership.

Table 1. “The Bible provides guidance for how to lead well”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	0%	0%	6.2%	26.2%	67.7%

While there was strong agreement with the general idea that the Bible provides guidance for leaders, the assessment showed that fewer felt they understood its teachings about leadership (see table 2).

Table 2. “I understand the Bible’s teachings on leadership”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	1.5%	0%	26.2%	58.6%	13.8%

What was more interesting was that as the questions honed in on specific aspects of biblical leadership principles, participants’ confidence in and understanding of those concepts was weaker (see tables 3, 4, and 5).

Table 3. “I understand the concept of leadership that promotes flourishing”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	3.1%	10.8%	35.4%	32.3%	18.5%

Table 4. “I understand the Servant Leadership Paradigm”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.5%	18.5%	10.8%	23.1%	29.2%	16.9%

Table 5. “I understand biblical principles for handling conflict”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	3.1%	32.3%	44.6%	12.3%	0%

As the statements moved from the more abstract concepts of flourishing toward more specific leadership scenarios like handling conflict, the survey data showed a decreasing understanding of the biblical concepts relevant to leadership. This would suggest that while prospective leaders strongly believe the Bible has much to say about leadership, fewer felt like they understood it, and even fewer had confidence in applying

Christian leadership principles to real-world leadership situations. This insight helped shape class discussion to ensure that the curriculum did not merely focus on abstract leadership theory but connected it to actual situations in which participants might one day lead.

Other noteworthy observations from the LAS were related to previous training participants had received. Of the 65 respondents, only 16, or 25 percent, stated that they had been through any leadership development process in a local church. Of that 25 percent, when asked to describe that process, half described a basic volunteer training focused primarily on role-specific skills rather than core leadership competencies. Of the respondents, 58 percent indicated that they had been through a leadership development process outside the church in settings like their workplace or the armed services. This observation further justified the purpose of this project, demonstrating that there is a deficiency in leadership development within the church being filled with secular voices in the marketplace that may not promote true flourishing in leaders.

Some final observations from the LAS were related to the specific context of PVCC. As highlighted in table 6, there was surprising agreement about the statement “I understand the leadership values of PVCC.” Of the respondents, 84.6 percent indicated some degree of agreement despite being unaware of the stated leadership values created for PVCC leaders. This would imply that the existing pastors and staff have done a good job embodying these values in a way that respondents felt that they understood the church’s leadership culture, even though they had never been formally taught about it.

Table 6. “I understand the leadership values of PVCC”

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	6.2%	9.2%	35.4%	35.4%	13.8%

Less encouraging were the insights gained from table 7. When asked how well PVCC has prepared them for leadership within the church, the respondents' results were much closer to the center of the Likert scale, demonstrating the fruits of an unstructured development process. The more "organic" process previously employed by the church produced leaders, but a minority agreed or strongly agreed that it had been adequate in their preparation for leadership.

Table 7. "PVCC has prepared me for leadership within the church"

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.5%	6.2%	21.5%	40%	23.1%	7.7%

Finally, when asked if they understood a clear pathway for advancing as a leader in the church, only 13.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed, even though they were currently participating in training that was the first step on that very pathway.

Table 8. "I have a clear pathway for how to advance as a leader in the church"

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	15.4%	16.9%	53.8%	10.8%	3.1%

The insights found in the LAS provided a clear assessment of the perceptions of Christian leadership principles and confidence to lead among current and prospective PVCC leaders, successfully fulfilling the project's first goal. They also provided invaluable data to refine the developed curriculum, helping to accomplish the second goal.

The second goal of the project was to develop a six-session curriculum to equip leadership candidates by teaching foundational leadership principles. The

curriculum was developed to explore the biblical and theological foundations of Christian leadership, healthy leadership that promotes flourishing in the leader's life, leading teams who flourish, creating a healthy leadership culture, and leading with missional urgency. The process and results of this curriculum development process were previously outlined in chapter 4.<sup>1</sup> This goal was measured by an expert panel of Christian leaders who utilized a rubric to evaluate the curriculum's biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability.<sup>2</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when at least 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. After receiving feedback from the expert panel, the curriculum plan was revised. In the final evaluation, 100 percent of the criterion achieved ratings of "sufficient" or "exemplary," with 40 "exemplary" ratings and 6 "sufficient." The second goal was considered met based on this feedback.

The third goal of the project was to equip pastor-selected leadership candidates with the core competencies to lead effectively in the church. This goal was measured by re-administering the LAS within one week after participants completed the course, and was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples showed a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores. Additionally, this goal was measured by interviewing five participants who demonstrated increased knowledge between their pre- and post-survey scores to understand better the factors that led to the change. Of the 94 participants who participated in any portion of the training, 30 people, or 32 percent, attended or viewed the video of at least 85 percent of sessions and were considered to have completed the course. Twenty-four of these participants completed both the pre- and post-course survey. It was from this group that the data for a *t*-test of dependent samples was gathered. The *t*-test showed a positive statistically

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 5.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1.

significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores:  $t(23) = -6.189, p < 0001$ .<sup>3</sup> This positive difference demonstrated that the curriculum successfully increased the knowledge of leadership principles to lead effectively in the church.

Additionally, five participants who showed an increase in their pre- and post-survey scores were interviewed to understand better the factors that led to the change. After analyzing transcripts of the interviews, several common factors emerged as particularly beneficial to these participants' development. These included the organization of the material, practical application of the content, focus on leadership health, explanation of PVCC's leadership culture, engaging presentation style, and applicability of the course to leadership outside the church. After examining the positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores and interviewing participants to understand the data better, the third goal was considered accomplished.

The fourth goal was to increase the number of church members serving in leadership positions. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-analysis of trends in volunteer leadership. At the time of this project's implementation, 101 individuals were identified as leaders in the church, which served as the base number against which any changes were compared. In the final session of the class, 21 people who had not previously served in leadership filled out an application to move forward into leadership. After reviewing these candidates, the pastors and staff of PVCC matched all of them into an ideal area of leadership in the church where they would immediately begin the process of serving as leaders. This represented a 21 percent increase in leaders in the church, which exceeded the 15 percent minimum required by this goal, marking its successful accomplishment.

The fifth and final goal of the project was to develop a ministry plan to incorporate this leadership development process into the ongoing operations of Pleasant

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 7.

Valley Community Church. Three pastors of PVCC measured this goal using a rubric to evaluate the plan's functionality, communication processes, training elements, and ability to be integrated into each ministry of PVCC.<sup>4</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level. One hundred percent of the criterion achieved ratings of "sufficient" or "exemplary," with 25 "exemplary" ratings and only 2 "sufficient." Based on this feedback, the fifth goal was considered met, achieving the successful accomplishment of all project goals.

### **Strengths of the Project**

After reflecting on the project and receiving feedback from participants who were interviewed, several strengths became apparent. First, and perhaps most importantly, every aspect of this project was faithful to God's Word and in alignment with his mission for the church. The assessment of the curriculum and the evaluation of the Ministry Plan both returned unanimous agreement on this point, and it was reflected as a prominent theme in the interviews conducted after the course was completed. This project was intended to serve PVCC and help it multiply its ministry effectiveness in a faithful and sustainable manner. While the long-term fruit remains to be seen, the project appears to have succeeded in this aim.

A second strength of the project was that it focused not simply on abstract principles or leadership theory but provided real-world applications and opportunities to practice leadership skills participants may encounter. This was an emphasis borne out of feedback from the expert panel reviewing the curriculum and the insights gained from the LAS. Various teaching methods were used, including lectures, case studies, self-reflection, group discussions, and role-play exercises to connect with diverse learning styles and help participants learn to apply the concepts covered. In the interviews conducted after the

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 2.



course, the value of this approach was a recurring theme among everyone interviewed. One interviewee affirmed the effectiveness of this, stating, “The conflict resolution exercise that you guys did was so intentional to connect with people who would maybe tune out during a lecture, because they could see [the principles] acted out with Joe and Andy getting into it up there.” The practical nature of the class helped participants grow in their ability to understand how to apply the principles of flourishing to their lives, strengthening the project significantly.

A third strength of the project was that it looked to timeless biblical and theological principles for flourishing leadership and tied them to contemporary leadership practice to ensure that the concepts were relevant to leadership both inside and outside the church. One person who was interviewed commented on the benefit of this: “I really enjoyed how the leadership principles could be applied, not just in the church, but in my job . . . it helped me see how I can impact people for the gospel in my leadership at work.” When asked to elaborate, the participant shared, “The leadership styles lesson in particular helped me understand the diversity in my workplace. It was just good to think about different ways to lead and different things that I could say to my younger co-workers and just understanding how they see the world and what they value.” Another interviewee stated, “I’ve been in a leadership position at work the majority of my adult life, and this showed me how little I know and how much I can learn. I had never considered that the Bible is a good resource for my leadership, and I want to learn more and seek biblical guidance more often rather than just reading leadership books.” Two interviewees suggested that the course be packaged so that it could be replicated in other churches or the businesses they lead. It is my humble hope that the project will promote flourishing not just at PVCC but outside the church as leaders apply biblical principles in the marketplace in a way that would greatly benefit the overall community.

A fourth strength of the project was its emphasis on developing healthy leaders. Great care was taken to reinforce the principle that a leader’s ability to bear fruit flows

from how they abide in the vine (John 15:4–8), and that this spiritual vitality must flow from us into those we lead as we develop them to flourish in their calling. One interviewee summarized his biggest takeaways: “If I’m going to lead people to Christ, I have to follow Him. . . . If I’m wanting to lead, then I have to follow, because I will not lead where I’m not following, and I will lead them to the things that I *am* following.” Another interviewee who recently resigned from her position on the church staff emotionally shared about her departure: “When you were discussing the process for healthy leadership development, I elbowed [my husband]. If that had happened, I may not have been so triggered with anxiety. Had I experienced that . . . oh my gosh, I could cry.” An intentional process for developing healthy leaders is desperately needed at PVCC, and a strength of this project is its care in investing deeply in leadership health as we follow Christ.

A final strength of the project was the intentionality in developing a Ministry Plan to create a strategy for how this leadership development process would integrate with the overall operations of the church. This was an important consideration from the outset, as there was a strong desire for this to be more than simply a one-time class. The course was designed to serve as the first step on a clear pathway for leaders to continue to develop and discern specific opportunities to practice healthy leadership in the local church. One of the interviewees spoke to the thoughtfulness of this structure and the assurance it gave her in the leadership in the church, remarking, “It makes me feel more confident in our pastors because of the intentionality it took to develop this class and the leadership structure and share it with potential and current leaders in our church. I think it shows the importance of investing in leaders and helping them connect with whatever ministry God is calling them to pursue.” Another interviewee built on this, stating, “The Leadership Pipeline was helpful because before I had to just make assumptions, but practically the next step wasn’t very clear. But with this, it’s like, ‘this is how you do it—’ there will be classes and trainings in the future. . . . Seeing the [underlying] leadership structure helped

me see that the roots are good, so the fruits are good.” By giving a clear “next step” for leaders to begin serving in the church and a consistent leadership pipeline that would translate across all ministries of the church, leaders could begin to envision what their leadership journey might look like over the years to come.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

Several weaknesses to the project became apparent throughout the implementation period and were affirmed by the interviews conducted after the course was completed. The first and most common weakness cited by interviewees was that there was too much content for the limited time in which the class met. During several sessions, the class ran short on time, and some planned exercises had to be rushed or assigned to be completed at home. In two sessions in particular, the class exceeded the allotted time, causing some of the content to be quickly summarized at the end rather than given the time and discussion that would have been best.

A second weakness of the project was the large size of the class. Because this was the first time formal leadership training had been offered in over eight years, the response to the invitations exceeded expectations. Attendance peaked at seventy-one people on the first week, with an average of forty-seven people per week and ninety-four individuals attending at least one in-person session. The large class size limited time for engagement and discussion, especially for participants who were more introverted and did not feel comfortable speaking out in front of such a large group. It also limited how personal the leadership development process could be, as there was not time for me to connect with everyone.

A third weakness of the project was the limited response from those who were invited. Though participation exceeded expectations and the class became too large in a way that hindered its effectiveness, the response rate among current and prospective leaders was still relatively low. Of the 101 current leaders at the church, only 38 percent attended any portion of the training. Of the 120 prospective leaders who were invited, 46

percent attended. Ninety-four different people attended at least one class session, but only 31 percent followed through to attend at least five out of the six sessions in person, which was the metric given for successful class completion. While many participants who missed in-person sessions were able to catch up online, only three people who were not physically present in the last session filled out a digital copy of the LAS. This suggests that even though each video session had between 30–50 online viewers, the engagement of these viewers was low. When participants were asked about the factors that led to inconsistent attendance, the most common reasons cited were illness, inclement weather, and responsibilities in other ministries on Sunday mornings. The low participation rate and the fact that the class was too large for personal engagement point to the need to rethink the training structure, which is explored in the next section.

A fourth weakness of the project was the timing of the class. The Sunday morning timeslot was chosen to maximize participation for new leaders who were not leading, but unfortunately, it limited involvement for those already leading or serving in ministries associated with the Sunday morning church gathering. A further weakness of the timing was that it was held in February and March, months that experienced a significant surge of both illness and inclement weather. Many participants missed sessions because they were sick, and in one week, a snowstorm made it difficult for some to attend.

A final weakness of the project was structuring it so that the Gospel Fluency video homework was not discussed until the final week of the class. While this choice was made to keep the class better organized from a thematic perspective, it provided little incentive for participants to stay on track by watching the lessons week-to-week. When interviewing participants after the class had ended, it was found that many had procrastinated on this homework and either failed to watch all the sessions or rushed through them in the final week. A further weakness related to the Gospel Fluency video homework discovered in the interviews was that its delivery system was too complicated. The videos were provided as individual links sent out one or two at a time each week.

This was confusing for some of the participants since they had to go back to their email to find the link for the next video, and if they got behind and needed to watch more than one, they had to find multiple emails with individual links. The lack of incentive to keep up with the content, coupled with the complicated delivery system, limited the effectiveness of that aspect of the curriculum, and many simply did not watch the videos.

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

In light of the weaknesses of the project, I would make several changes to the leadership development process as it is repeated in the future. First, I would extend the class time by twenty minutes. When interviewed, participants agreed that there was too much content for the time allotted, but when asked what could have been cut, there was universal agreement that all the content was good and beneficial. The interviewees all recommended extending the class time to allow more margin to fully cover the course content and provide increased space for thoughtful discussion with the class.

Second, I would experiment with offering the class more often. With additional class options per year, the class size would be reduced as people are spread out over more training sessions. These additional classes would ideally be held at a different time, such as a Wednesday night, to provide greater flexibility for those who found it difficult to commit to a Sunday morning class. This would hopefully engage some leaders who did not participate during the implementation period. Offering classes during a different season, such as the fall, might also help mitigate some of the attendance issues, as snow would not be a hindrance, and many of the seasonal illnesses prevalent in winter are less pervasive. A final benefit to offering additional classes during a different time is that having an option that is not on a Sunday morning would allow more pastors and staff to participate and even lead portions of the training, providing a diversity of perspectives that was not offered during the initial implementation.

A third change I would make to the training is adopting a more personal recruitment strategy to engage potential participants. While the identification process

seemed to work well, the limited response suggested that some recruits might benefit from a more personal touch encouraging them to attend. In addition to sending out the email invitation employed during the initial implementation, future sessions might benefit from personal conversations with pastors, staff, and ministry leaders who affirm the giftedness of recruits and encourage them to attend the training.

A final change I would make would be to open each session with a brief discussion of the Gospel Fluency video homework each week rather than waiting until the final week to discuss it in full. This would provide ongoing discussion of the material in a way that would reinforce it over multiple weeks for increased retention and would better motivate participants to keep up with it week to week. While this was initially decided against to keep each session more focused, with some thoughtfulness, the Gospel Fluency content could easily be bridged as an application of whatever lesson is being covered each week in a way that would not significantly affect the focus of each lesson. I would also simplify the delivery system and send the full list of videos each week so participants would not have to sort through multiple emails to find the videos if they get behind.

### **Theological Reflections**

Looking back on the project, three key theological insights were revealed to me that are worthy of discussion. First was the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian leadership. As discussed in chapter 2, the Lord is intricately involved in the process of developing and guiding leaders in the work of ministry. The Spirit calls and equips future leaders as we intentionally invest in their development, and healthy leaders must rely on his leadership as they fulfill their callings. As Matthew 9:38 commands, we must pray that the Lord sends out more workers into the harvest, not focusing primarily on programs or processes for developing leaders but prayerfully viewing those constructs as a means of joining the Lord in the work he is ultimately doing. Since the Lord is the one doing the work in the power of the Holy Spirit, leadership should be viewed as a stewardship rooted in humility.

A second theological insight impressed on me through this process was the centrality of a leader's responsibility to abide in the vine. John 15:4–5 demonstrates that if we are to bear fruit, we must abide in him. A common leadership saying emphasized during the implementation period was that “healthy leadership starts with healthy leaders.” For leaders to truly bring health and flourishing to their teams and organizations, they must stay rooted in the flourishing that can only come from their relationship with the Lord. By paying careful attention to their spiritual lives and their walk with Jesus, the Lord produces spiritual fruit in leaders and in those they lead as they work to fulfill God's mission.

A final theological reflection from this project was the reality that leadership development is ultimately a work of discipleship. As was demonstrated in chapter 2, a major goal of leadership development in the Bible is to ensure that God's people are not left “as sheep without a shepherd” (Num 27:17; Matt 9:36). Leaders exist to serve God's people and shepherd them as they seek to make disciples of Jesus. The pattern of leadership development in the Bible is one of discipleship—of calling disciples to “imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1) and grow more into his image. All Christians are called to lead in some capacity, whether leading others to Jesus in discipleship relationships, leading their families, leading in more formal capacities in their workplaces or churches, or shepherding God's church in the role of pastor. This leadership cannot be divorced from “followership”—being disciplined by more mature believers as they learn to follow Jesus and engage in his ministry in whatever sphere of leadership the Lord has entrusted to them to steward. Leaders must be disciples seeking to learn to follow Jesus more faithfully. They must heed Paul's charge to Timothy to entrust what they have learned “to faithful men who will be qualified to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). By ensuring that all constructs for developing leaders emphasize the centrality of discipleship, the church will be more faithful to God's Word and more fruitful in its mission to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that [Jesus has] commanded” (Matt 28:19–20). As the church is

faithful in this mission, we can rest in the promise that Jesus is with us in that work until the very end.

### **Personal Reflections**

Reflecting on the journey of writing and implementing this project, I have deep gratitude for three areas in particular. First, I thank the Lord for his kindness in orchestrating this process to build his church. When I first decided to pursue doctoral studies, I had no idea how strategic the timing and content of my studies would be to the life of PVCC. This project was such a necessary contribution to the health and future success of the church. While personally stressful, its timing in the middle of a major building project was perfectly ordained to provide a foundation of flourishing as the church prepares for the season of growth it is entering. The sovereignty of God has been clearly demonstrated throughout this process, and I am deeply grateful for his provision as it has come to fruition.

Second, I am grateful for how the Lord has used this season to stretch and grow me. With the challenges of raising a young child, many personal difficulties, and the enormity of the church building campaign intersecting with this project, the last two years have been some of the most stressful of my life. Yet, at the same time, the Lord used this process to produce immeasurable growth in my leadership and my rootedness in him. The content developed for the class benefitted me most of all. Though my data was not included in the surveys, I am confident that this process helped me develop into a leader who is experiencing greater flourishing in my calling. I am a better husband, father, pastor, and friend because of how the Lord sustained me through this journey, and I pray that the Holy Spirit continues to produce this fruit in me in the years to come.

Finally, I am deeply grateful for the support of my family, my fellow pastors, and the people of PVCC. When I began to feel called to focus this project on developing leaders who flourish, the affirmation received from my fellow pastors confirmed that this was ultimately a work of the Lord. Seeing new leaders energized and excited to engage in



the work of ministry through the presented teachings was one of the most gratifying experiences of my ministry. I have great joy in God's kindness in allowing me to participate in his work. While the Lord has undoubtedly used this process to grow my affections for his church, he has also used it to grow our family tremendously. The journey was difficult at times, and there were many late nights and stressful seasons along the way, but my family's unwavering support through adversity taught me much about what a flourishing family looks like through the help of the Holy Spirit. Though this journey is ending, I am confident that I will look back on it with immense gratitude to the Lord for the ways he used it to develop me into who he was calling me to be.

### **Conclusion**

Developing leaders who embrace true flourishing in their callings is an essential work of the church. In a culture plagued with isolation, burnout, toxicity, and the idol of performance, there is a tremendous opportunity for churches to model a compelling alternative. Pastors must "equip the saints for the work of ministry" by training them to embrace health and wholeness in their personal lives, relationships, and among the teams they lead so God can be glorified in their ministries. Establishing a process to invest intentionally in this work was a first step in this crucial task, and one that I pray bears great fruit in the lives of the people of PVCC, in the work of the church, and for the mission of Christ as we seek to make disciples of all nations. I pray that the Lord would use it mightily as more leaders are developed and deployed to bear his image to the world, cultivating contexts of flourishing and beauty that would bring him glory.

## APPENDIX 1

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The following instrument is the Leadership Development Curriculum Evaluation. It consists of the rubric sent to an expert panel of two PVCC elders, one department chair who works in higher education, two local church pastors, and one Christian executive who leads in the business world. The panel evaluated the course material on the basis of biblical faithfulness, scope, teaching methodology, and practicality.

Name of Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Leadership Development Curriculum Evaluation</b>					
<b>1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Biblical Accuracy</b>					
The content of the curriculum is hermeneutically sound. All Scripture is properly interpreted, explained, and applied.					
The content of the curriculum is theologically sound and faithful to the Bible.					
<b>Scope</b>					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers the basics of Christian leadership.					
<b>Methodology</b>					
Each lesson was clear, containing a big leadership idea.					
The curriculum makes use of various learning approaches such as lecture, discussion, case studies, and role play.					
<b>Practicality</b>					
The curriculum clearly details principles that are useful for developing leaders who flourish.					
The curriculum includes opportunities to apply leadership principles through discussing case studies.					
At the end of the course, participants will have the knowledge necessary to begin developing as a leader.					

Other Comments:

## APPENDIX 2

### MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION TOOL

The following evaluation tool was sent to three PVCC elders, who evaluated the strategic ministry plan and its effectiveness in integrating this leadership process throughout the church's various ministries for ongoing development.

Name of Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The goal of the ministry plan to develop leaders is clearly stated.					
The need to multiply leaders in various ministries at PVCC is clearly stated in the ministry plan.					
The material presented in the ministry plan is faithful to the Bible.					
The material presented in the ministry plan is theologically sound.					
The components of the ministry plan are well-organized and concise.					
A timeline for implementing the ministry plan is clearly stated.					
The number of people necessary for implementing the ministry plan has been stated.					
Obstacles that may hinder implementing the ministry plan have been stated.					
I believe the plan, when executed, will promote leadership development at PVCC.					

Other Comments:

## APPENDIX 3

### LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The following instrument is the Leadership Assessment Survey (LAS). It consists of seven general questions, a leadership self-assessment consisting of twenty-seven statements with a six-point Likert Scale, and three open-ended questions. The instrument's purpose was to assess participants' perceptions of leadership principles and their confidence in leading.

## Leadership Assessment Survey

### Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure the current participant's perceptions of leadership principles and practices as well as their confidence to lead. This research is being conducted by Andrew Norris for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project under the direction of the Professional Doctoral Studies office at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked to answer questions before the project is implemented and you will be asked the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completing this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Name or D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to participate  I do not agree to participate

Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

### General Questions

1. How many years have you been a follower of Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How many years have you been a member of a Christian church? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Are you currently serving as a ministry leader, group leader, or discipler of other believers?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
4. How many hours a week do you read your Bible for personal study or devotion?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Do you pray daily?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

6. Which of the following categories best describes your current leadership role in the church?
  - a. Team Member: Leads self, works with others.
  - b. Team/Group Leader: Provides leadership for a volunteer team or small group.
  - c. Coach/Captain: Leads other leaders and provides coaching or direction for multiple group leaders/volunteer team leaders.
  - d. Ministry Leader: Oversees an entire area or department of ministry.
  - e. Senior Leadership/Pastor: Provides vision/strategic direction for the church as a whole.
  
7. Which of the following categories best describes what you feel your current leadership *potential* to be in the church?
  - a. Team member: Leads self, works with others.
  - b. Team/Group Leader: Provides leadership for a volunteer team or small group.
  - c. Coach/Captain: Leads other leaders and provides coaching or direction for multiple group leaders/volunteer team leaders.
  - d. Ministry Leader: Oversees an entire area of ministry with the responsibility of leading leaders.
  - e. Senior Leadership/Pastor: Provides vision/strategic direction for the church as a whole.

### Leadership Self-Evaluation

**Directions:** Evaluate yourself by reflecting on the statements below and placing a check mark in the box that most closely represents your current practices or beliefs.

The scale is as follows:

SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree DS = Disagree Somewhat,  
 AS = Agree Somewhat A = Agree SA = Strongly Agree.

Self-Evaluation	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
1. I understand the Bible's teachings on leadership.						
2. Christian leadership principles are applicable to leadership outside of the church.						
3. Every Christian is called to lead in some capacity.						
4. I am confident in my ability to lead my family, if applicable.						
5. I am confident in my ability to lead teams of people (10 or fewer).						
6. I am confident in my ability to lead leaders of teams.						
7. PVCC has prepared me for leadership within the church.						



Self-Evaluation	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
8. PVCC has prepared me for leadership outside of the church.						
9. I depend upon the Holy Spirit as I lead others.						
10. Prayer is one of the most important practices when making leadership decisions.						
11. It is important for leaders to serve those they lead.						
12. I understand the Servant Leadership paradigm.						
13. It is important for leaders to help their followers grow and develop.						
14. I feel confident in my ability to develop other people.						
15. I understand the leadership values of PVCC.						
16. A leader's character matters more than their performance.						
17. A leader's attention to their home/personal life has an impact on their leadership capacity.						
18. It is important for leaders to display authenticity to their followers.						
19. Strong leaders are honest about their weaknesses.						
20. Leaders must empower through delegating tasks to others.						
21. The Bible provides guidance for how to lead well.						
22. I understand biblical principles for handling conflict.						
23. A leader's humility is more important than their skill.						
24. I understand the concept of leadership that promotes flourishing.						
25. It is important for leaders to relationally invest in their teams.						
26. I have a clear pathway for how to advance as a leader in the church.						
27. Feedback from a coach/mentor is essential to my development as a leader.						

**Directions:** Please provide a written response to the following questions:

28. Briefly define leadership:

29. Have you ever gone through a leadership development process outside of the church?  
If so, please describe.

30. Have you ever gone through a leadership development process within a local church?  
If so, please describe.

APPENDIX 4  
MINISTRY PLAN

The following Ministry Plan was designed to provide a framework for the implemented Leadership Development Process (known as Leadership 101) to fit into the larger ongoing operations and ministries of Pleasant Valley Community Church.

## MINISTRY PLAN

As PVCC seeks to live out its mission to *Know God and Make Him Known...*

*Together*, developing lay-leaders to engage in the work of ministry is essential to multiply our effectiveness in making disciples. Just as Jethro called Moses to appoint leaders and delegate tasks in Exodus 18:13–22 to those who “oversee thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens,” the pastors of PVCC must create a framework detailing the different levels of leadership across all ministries and develop leaders to fulfill their callings in these roles in order to promote greater leadership health and effectiveness. This Ministry Plan describes that strategy.

### Leadership Pipeline

<b>Leadership Type:</b>	<b>Role:</b>	<b>Function:</b>	<b>Competencies:</b>
Senior Leadership	Pastors	Provides vision/strategic direction for the church as a whole.	Theological Mastery, Teaching Ability, Character/Qualifications, Counseling
Ministry Leader	Ministry Director (Men/Women), Staff Member, Kids Director, etc.	Oversees an entire area of ministry or department.	Administrative Skill, Vision Development, Effective Communication, Leading Meetings, Polity
Leader of Leaders	CG/DG Coach, VK Guest Experience, Volunteer Coordinators, etc.	Leads other leaders and provides coaching or direction for multiple group leaders or volunteer team leaders.	Divisive Doctrines, Leadership Development, Conflict Resolution, Motivating Leaders
Team/Group Leader	Small Group Leader, Kids Classroom Leader, Volunteer Team Leader, etc.	Provides leadership for a volunteer team, small group, or classroom.	Leadership Values, Gospel Fluency, Healthy Leadership, Healthy Culture, Leading Healthy Teams, Missional Urgency
Team/Group Member	Volunteer, group member, etc.	Leads self, works with others.	Humility, Consistency, Role-Specific Skills, Mission/Vision/Values

## **Development Strategy**

As potential leaders are identified who are possible fits for each level of leadership, the five pastors of Pleasant Valley will offer trainings to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12). As participants are invited into the development process, they will go through the training, be paired with a leader(s) at a higher level for ongoing coaching, be invited to follow-up trainings to grow in role-specific skills, and begin to gain experience leading in their new role. Scheduling will be a major obstacle to leaders participating in all trainings, so the sessions will be recorded in order for participants to catch up later. The trainings offered are detailed below.

- **Leadership 101:** Six-week training covering the foundations of healthy Christian Leadership and the desired leadership culture at Pleasant Valley. Required for all Team/Group Leaders and above. Offered 2/25–3/25.
- **Leadership 201:** Two-week training consisting of longer sessions covering concepts relevant to leading and coaching other leaders. Competencies covered include things like leadership development, resolving conflict, and divisive doctrines. Required for all Leaders of Leaders and above. Offered 8/25.
- **Leadership 301:** Two-week training consisting of longer sessions serving as an introduction to concepts relevant to leading an entire department of ministry. Competencies covered include things like administrative skill, vision development, communication, how to lead meetings, and how to motivate team members. Required for all Ministry Leaders and above. Offered 9/25.

**Pastoral Development Process:** 6–12 month process involving completing all previous leadership trainings. Each candidate will have a tailored development plan based on the results of a questionnaire they are given to help them grow in their unique areas of need. All candidates will attend pastor’s meetings where they will observe existing leadership dynamics/structures, work through case studies, and present findings from personalized reading lists. They will also shadow existing pastors and receive coaching, and through this will learn the foundations of what it means to have a healthy plurality. In 2025, two candidates were invited into this process at the beginning of the year, and we hope to install them as pastors in December. Required for all future pastors.

APPENDIX 5  
COURSE CURRICULUM

The following curriculum plan shaped the content of each session of the Leadership 101 Class held during this project's Implementation Period. The plan outlines the main theme of each session, objectives, content covered, and resources used in preparing each lesson.

<b>LESSON PLAN #1</b> 28:19-20	<b>SCRIPTURE REF.</b> Gen. 1:26-29; Matt 28:19-20
Subject/Course: Topic: Lesson Title:	Leadership 101 Church Leadership Foundations of Leadership at PVCC
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	<i>Upon completion of the workshop, the student will be able to:</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain the Biblical and theological foundations for leadership.</li> <li>2. Understand the Creation/Cultural Mandate and Great Commission.</li> <li>3. Describe the leadership structure/pipeline at PVCC.</li> </ol>
Summary of Tasks/Action:	
Pre-Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Leadership Assessment Survey.</li> </ol>	
Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Instructional Overview</u>: Introduction to Biblical Leadership, Explanation of PVCC Leadership Structure, Introduction to new PVCC Leadership Pipeline.</li> <li>2. Small-group discussion of case studies and personal applications.</li> <li>3. Exercise analyzing past leadership experiences through a theological lens.</li> <li>4. Completion of handout worksheets.</li> </ol>	
Materials/Equipment:	
Computer with Internet connectivity: <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i> Workshop handout/notes, writing instrument, notebook. Bible or Bible App.	
References:	
<p>Irving, Justin and Mark Strauss. <i>Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders</i>. Baker, 2019.</p> <p>Irving, Justin. <i>Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish</i>. Baker, 2023.</p> <p>Geiger, Eric and Kevin Peck. <i>Designed to Lead</i>. B&amp;H, 2016.</p> <p>Coleman, Robert. <i>The Master Plan of Evangelism</i>. Revell, 2008.</p> <p>Jones, Timothy Paul and Michael Wilder. <i>The God Who Goes Before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership</i>. B&amp;H Academic, 2018.</p> <p>Vanderstelt, Jeff. <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i>. Saturate The World, 2017. Holy Bible (CSB), 2017.</p>	
Take Home Tasks:	
Student is to view Gospel Fluency videos entitled Introduction and Week 1 before next session.	

<b>LESSON PLAN #2</b>	<b>SCRIPTURE REF.</b> Gen 12:2; John 15:4-5; 1 Sam 16:7
Subject/Course: Topic: Lesson Title:	Leadership 101 Church Leadership Leaders Who Flourish
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	<i>Upon completion of the workshop, the student will be able to:</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the concept of human flourishing.</li> <li>2. Explain the PVCC leadership value, “Rest to Run.”</li> <li>3. Analyze the importance of flourishing in the leader’s character/spirituality</li> <li>4. Summarize the importance of flourishing in the leader’s physical health.</li> <li>5. Understand the importance of flourishing in the leader’s emotional health.</li> <li>6. Assess the level of flourishing in the leader’s own relationships.</li> </ol>
Summary of Tasks/Action: Pre-Workshop:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View Gospel Fluency videos entitled “Introduction” and “Week 1.”</li> </ol>
Workshop:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Instructional Overview</u>: Introduction to human flourishing in leadership. Introduction to the importance of flourishing in spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational health.</li> <li>2. Brainstorming/discussion of specific practices that can promote flourishing, self-assessment exercise of the leader’s own flourishing.</li> <li>3. Exploration of “Leadership Traps” related to material and related case studies, and reflection/analysis of leadership failures the student has experienced.</li> <li>4. Exercise practicing stillness and prayer.</li> <li>5. Completion of handout worksheets and “Rule of Life” planning document.</li> </ol>
Materials/Equipment:	<p>Computer with Internet connectivity: <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i>. Workshop handout/notes, writing instrument, notebook. Bible or Bible App.</p>
References:	<p>Scazzero, Peter. <i>The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World</i>. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.</p> <p>Cuss, Steve. <i>Managing Leadership Anxiety: Yours and Theirs</i>. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2019.</p> <p>Wilhoit, James. <i>Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ Through Community</i>. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022.</p> <p>Tripp, Paul David. <i>Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church</i>. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.</p> <p>Vanderstelt, Jeff. <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i>. Saturate The World, 2017.</p>
Take Home Tasks:	Student is to view Gospel Fluency video entitled, “Week 2” before next session.



<b>LESSON PLAN #3</b>	<b>SCRIPTURE REF.</b> 2 Tim 2:2; Mark 10:42-45; Rom 12:10
Subject/Course:	Leadership 101
Topic:	Church Leadership
Lesson Title:	Leading Teams Who Flourish
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	<i>Upon completion of the workshop, the student will be able to:</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the PVCC Leadership Values of, “Honor Up, Down, and All Around,” and “Grow Your Gift.”</li> <li>2. Recognize the Servant Leadership Paradigm and compare to competing models.</li> <li>3. Apply the Transformational Leadership Paradigm.</li> </ol>
Summary of Tasks/Action:	
Pre-Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View Gospel Fluency video entitled “Week 2.”</li> </ol>	
Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Instructional Overview</u>: Introduction to contemporary leadership development models, diversity on teams, and leadership styles to adapt to individual situations.</li> <li>2. Reflection on past leadership experiences, how they represent the different models, and role-play of how to handle situations utilizing different models.</li> <li>3. Discussion of “Leadership Traps” related to material.</li> <li>4. Completion of handout worksheets.</li> </ol>	
Materials/Equipment:	
Computer with Internet connectivity: Gospel Fluency Video Series. Workshop handout/notes, writing instrument, notebook. Bible or Bible App.	
References:	
Greenleaf, Robert K. <i>Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness</i> . New York: Paulist, 1977.	
Bass, Bernard M., and Ronald E. Riggio. <i>Transformational Leadership</i> . New York: Routledge, 2014.	
Irving, Justin and Mark Strauss. <i>Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders</i> . Baker, 2019.	
Irving, Justin. <i>Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish</i> . Baker, 2023.	
Vanderstelt, Jeff. <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i> . Saturate The World, 2017. Holy Bible (CSB), 2017.	
Take Home Tasks:	
Student is to view Gospel Fluency videos entitled “Week 3” and “Week 4” before next session.	

<b>LESSON PLAN #4</b>	<b>SCRIPTURE REF.</b> Matt 5:9; 1 Thess 5:11; Philip 4:4
Subject/Course:	Leadership 101
Topic:	Church Leadership
Lesson Title:	Healthy Leadership Culture
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	<i>Upon completion of the workshop, the student will be able to:</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the PVCC Leadership Values of, “Fight for Unity,” and “Celebrate Loud and Often.”</li> <li>2. Demonstrate the importance of conflict resolution.</li> <li>3. Relate the importance of a culture of humility to effective leadership.</li> <li>4. Communicate the importance of creating contexts of joy and celebration in the Lord.</li> </ol>
<b>Summary of Tasks/Action:</b>	
Pre-Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View Gospel Fluency videos entitled “Week 3” and “Week 4.”</li> </ol>	
Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Instructional Overview:</u> Introduction to leading teams through conflict and creating unity in the church. Introduction to the importance of a joyful culture of celebration.</li> <li>2. Exercise practicing specific conflict resolution strategies.</li> <li>3. Role-play exercise employing humility vs. pride in leadership situations.</li> <li>4. Case studies and discussion of “Leadership Traps” related to material.</li> <li>5. Completion of handout worksheets.</li> </ol>	
<b>Materials/Equipment:</b>	
Computer with Internet connectivity: Gospel Fluency Video Series Workshop handout/notes, writing instrument, notebook. Bible or Bible App.	
<b>References:</b>	
Lencioni, Patrick, <i>The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012.	
Tripp, Paul David. <i>Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church</i> . Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.	
Irving, Justin. <i>Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish</i> . Baker, 2023.	
Vanderstelt, Jeff. <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i> . Saturate The World, 2017. Holy Bible (CSB), 2017.	
<b>Take Home Tasks:</b>	
Student is to view Gospel Fluency video entitled “Week 6” before next session.	

<b>LESSON PLAN #5</b>	<b>SCRIPTURE REF.</b> Rom 10:13-14; Col 3:23-24; Philip 3:14
Subject/Course:	Leadership 101
Topic:	Church Leadership
Lesson Title:	Leading With Missional Urgency
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	<i>Upon completion of the workshop, the student will be able to:</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the PVCC Leadership Values of “Bleed for the Bride,” “Reject Good for Great,” and “Press On.”</li> <li>2. Relate the importance of keeping the urgency of God’s mission front of mind to effective leadership.</li> <li>3. Identify and discuss common “Leadership Traps” related to material.</li> <li>4. Examine how each ministry is in service of the greater mission of the church.</li> </ol>
Summary of Tasks/Action:	
Pre-Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View Gospel Fluency video entitled “Week 6.”</li> </ol>	
Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Instructional Overview</u>: Introduction to the mission to make disciples and the theological and biblical urgency of the work, and the metaphor of the trellis and the vine. Connecting missional urgency to perseverance in leadership.</li> <li>2. Classification exercise determining what is “trellis work” and “vine work.”</li> <li>3. Reflection on personal leadership experiences and discussion of case studies.</li> <li>4. “Saturate Map” exercise identifying key relationships in which to live out God’s mission in participants lives.</li> <li>5. Completion of handout worksheets.</li> </ol>	
Materials/Equipment:	
Computer with Internet connectivity: Gospel Fluency Video Series Workshop handout/notes, writing instrument, notebook. Bible or Bible App.	
References:	
Lencioni, Patrick, <i>The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012.	
Irving, Justin. <i>Healthy Leadership for Thriving Organizations: Creating Contexts Where People Flourish</i> . Baker, 2023.	
Colin Marshall and Tony Payne. <i>The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything</i> (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009)	
Vanderstelt, Jeff. <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series. Saturate The World</i> , 2017.	
Take Home Tasks:	
Student is to view Gospel Fluency videos entitled “Week 7” and “Week 8” before next session.	

<b>LESSON PLAN #6</b> 4:14-16	<b>SCRIPTURE REF.</b> Ephesians
Subject/Course: Topic: Lesson Title:	Leadership 101 Church Leadership Gospel-Centered Leadership
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b>	<i>Upon completion of the workshop, the student will be able to:</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice the concept of “Gospel Fluency.”</li> <li>2. Review course material.</li> <li>3. Connect the Mission/Vision/Values of PVCC and how the different ministries align under these frameworks.</li> <li>4. Understand next steps to begin/continue leading at PVCC.</li> </ol>
Summary of Tasks/Action:	
Pre-Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View Gospel Fluency video entitled “Week 6.”</li> </ol>	
Workshop:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Instructional Overview</u>: Summary of Gospel Fluency and its relationship to leadership. Overview of PVCC Ministries and how they serve to advance the PVCC mission of Knowing God and Making Him Known. Review of leadership pipeline and next steps.</li> <li>2. Discussion of Gospel Fluency concept. Role play exercise practicing Gospel Fluency.</li> <li>3. Review Course Material.</li> <li>4. Discussion of PVCC Ministries and Leadership Structure.</li> <li>5. Completion of handout worksheets.</li> <li>6. Completion of Leadership Assessment Survey.</li> <li>7. Completion of application form to begin the leadership placement process.</li> </ol>	
Materials/Equipment:	
Computer with Internet connectivity: Gospel Fluency Video Series. Workshop handout/notes, writing instrument, notebook. Bible or Bible App.	
References:	
Vanderstelt, Jeff. <i>Gospel Fluency Video Series</i> . Saturate The World, 2017. Holy Bible (CSB), 2017.	
Take Home Tasks:	
Student is to complete Leadership Assessment Survey within 7 days of final workshop.	

APPENDIX 6  
INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following Interview Guide was used when interviewing five participants who showed improvement in their pre- and post-training scores to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and noteworthy factors that contributed to the project.

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Question 1:** What were the strengths of course?

**Question 2:** What were the weaknesses of the course?

**Question 3:** What content did you personally find most beneficial to your leadership?

**Question 4:** What do you wish had been covered that was omitted from the curriculum?

**Question 5:** What specific practices or takeaways are you hoping to incorporate into your leadership?

**Question 6:** What do you wish had been covered in more detail?

**Question 7:** How could the material have been better presented to increase your personal growth?

**Question 8:** What did you take away from this course that was surprising or unexpected?

**Question 9:** How did this class change your view of leadership at Pleasant Valley?

**Question 10:** What other feedback do you have that might be helpful in better understanding the effectiveness of this course?

APPENDIX 7  
T-TEST RESULTS

<b>T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means</b>		
	<i>Pre-Test Total</i>	<i>Post-Test Total</i>
Mean	131.9583333	146.0833333
Variance	180.9981884	81.47101449
Observations	24	24
Pearson Correlation	0.566093605	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	23	
t stat	-6.189668587	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00000129009191 642563	
t Critical one-tail	1.713871528	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00000258018383 285127	
t Critical two-tail	2.06865761	

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## ABSTRACT

### ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS WHO FLOURISH AT PLEASANT VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH IN OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY

Andrew Logan Norris, DMin  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2025  
Faculty Supervisor: James H. Edwards III

The purpose of this project was to establish a process for developing leaders who flourish at Pleasant Valley Community Church in Owensboro, Kentucky.

Chapter 1 provides the church context, rationale for why such a leadership development process is needed, specific goals, and the research methodology for the project.

Chapter 2 explores the biblical and theological basis for this project. It examines the mentoring relationships of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and his disciples, and the role of the Holy Spirit in ministry to extrapolate biblical patterns and principles for leadership development.

Chapter 3 establishes the outcomes the development process hoped to accomplish: the production of leaders who flourish in their character, relationship with the Lord, family life, relationships, servant leadership, and transformational leadership.

Chapter 4 describes how Pleasant Valley Community Church implemented the leadership development process and outlines the course curriculum.

Chapter 5 evaluates the project's effectiveness, including how well the five goals were met and the overall purpose was accomplished.

## VITA

Andrew Logan Norris

### EDUCATION

BA, University of Kentucky, 2011

MDiv, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013

### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastoral Intern, Heritage Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky, 2010–2012

Pastoral Intern, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Colonial Heights, Virginia,  
2012–2012

Communication Coordinator, Pleasant Valley Community Church, Owensboro,  
Kentucky, 2012–2020

Connection Pastor, Pleasant Valley Community Church, Owensboro, Kentucky,  
2021–2024

Pastor of Adult Discipleship and Missions, Pleasant Valley Community Church,  
Owensboro, Kentucky, 2024–