

The Leadership of Jesus: A Literature Review and Research Proposal

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Through review of scholarly literature, this study explores the leadership of the Scriptural Jesus and offers preliminary propositions on the intra-individual processes effectively used by him. These propositions may be helpful in directing future empirical studies in the field of leadership useful for building toward an integrated, multilevel theory of effective leadership. This paper explores the characteristics of Jesus' leadership found in extant academic literature. These characteristics are further examined through an ordered classification of leadership theories and empirical research. The leadership of Jesus is conceptualized through a multilevel process lens, building from a hierarchy of leadership processes. Finally, preliminary propositions on the intra-individual decision-making process used in Jesus' leadership are presented as part of a future research study proposal.

An academic review on the topic of leadership leads to many observations, chief among them the concern for valid and reliable theory and practice. A number of major research approaches have been utilized in the study of leadership including traits, behaviors, power-influence, situational, and integrative approaches (Yukl, 2001). Leadership is furthermore conceptualized in extant literature at differing levels such as individual, dyad, group, and organizational (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2001) However, Yukl asserts that very few, if any, theoretical frameworks encompass all approaches at all conceptual levels.

The search for such a framework would appear to be a catalyst for much of extant leadership literature. Bennis (2007) calls for collaboration between social-neuro-cognitive scientists in order to find an integrated leadership theory, though missing from this call for collaboration is an invitation inclusive of theologians and biblical scholars. This omission seems glaring, given the rising attention evident in research during the past decade on spirituality, especially spirituality in the workplace (Mohammed, Hassan, & Wisnieski, 2001).

Bennis (2007) additionally suggests our world needs exemplary leadership to deal with the many, imminent threats to global stability and sustainability. This study seeks to establish the biblically based model of Jesus' leadership through an integrated approach to the study of leadership; as a proposed exemplary leader for today's world, Jesus' model is additionally believed by this author to be one that may be situated at all conceptual levels. The purpose of this paper is to review extant scholarly literature on the leadership of Jesus and to advance preliminary propositions on the intra-individual processes effectively used in his leadership. These propositions may be helpful in directing future empirical studies in the field of leadership, especially for building toward an integrated, multilevel perspective.

This paper first explores the characteristics of Jesus' leadership found in extant academic literature. These characteristics are further examined through the pattern utilized by Yukl (2002) for the classification of leadership theories and empirical research. Secondly, the leadership of Jesus is conceptualized through a multilevel process lens, building again from the hierarchy of leadership processes utilized by Yukl. Finally, preliminary propositions on an aspect of Jesus' leadership are presented as part of a future research study proposal.

Leadership Characteristics of Jesus

Scholarly findings based on studies of the life of Jesus are scarce. A number of authors choose to describe the leadership of Jesus obliquely through the examples, teaching, and models of His followers, notably Paul and Peter (Moessner, 1986). The use of parallelism is further supported in the assertion that the period of Jesus and the subsequent period of the emergent church "though distinguishable, form one inseparable era" (Moessner, p. 272). However, and despite the scarceness of academic leadership research based directly on the person of Jesus himself, this paper first focuses on what evidence has emerged in the past 30 years related to the leadership traits, behaviors, power-influence, and situational approaches to leadership found in the life of Jesus Christ.

Traits. One of the first approaches utilized in the study of leadership is that of traits (Yukl, 2001). According to leadership scholars, the trait approach to understanding leadership pays particular attention to the personal attributes of leaders such as personality, motivations, values and skills (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2001). According to Yukl, an underlying assumption to this approach is the belief that some individuals "are endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people" (p. 12).

In fact, Jesus is positioned by several authors as unique (Scott, 1998; Smothers, 1985; Sparks, 1998). Smothers identifies Jesus' uniqueness as the "heir of all" (Mark 12), and "agent of creation" (John 1:3). According to Sparks, Jesus was every Jewish hero rolled into one unique personhood. Koenig (2007) suggests Jesus' uniqueness stems from his charisma, which is defined as a special gift from God bestowed for the purposes of leading and building up others for God's purposes.

However, Koenig (2007) also suggests that a weakness of ego was not characteristic of Jesus; he displayed gifts of discernment and boldness. Discernment is described by Koenig as a Spirit-led perception of God's presence and saving work. Positing Paul as the greatest imitator of Jesus, Koenig describes boldness as courage and confidence (1 Cor. 2:6, 12-14; Phil1:20). Neyrey (1998) uses text from Matthew 22 as evidence of Jesus' courage to stand in defense of his work and mission. Koenig also references Matthew 10:19, 22 as evidence of Jesus' innate courage in his teaching of the disciples and his model of courage in Matthew 26:53-54. Moessner (1986) describes Jesus' courage in facing suffering and rejection evidenced in Luke 9:31-50, 51-19:46).

Gangel (1987) cites Matthew 11:28-30 as "the only passage in which Jesus stated what He is like as a person," (p. 456). In this passage Jesus says to his followers "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (New International Version). Jesus' gentleness, and thus the gentleness of a Jesus-like leader, posits Gangel, is emphasized again in Matthew 5:5, 12:18-21, 23:10-12, and John 11:33,35.

In contrast to a view of humility as weakness or passivity, the humbleness of Jesus is described by Gangel (1987) as "a right view of oneself in relation to God and other" (p. 458). Jesus' strongest modeling of humility came in his complete obedience to his Father as evidenced in Mark 14:36 and in his service to his followers seen in John 13:5 (Gangel). Despite his acclaim as healer and teacher, Gangel further suggests Jesus' demonstration of humility is made clear in his openness to and apparent joy in being with and playing with children (Matt:19:13-15).

Moessner (1986) further describes Jesus as resolute in consummating his prophetic calling while Good (1983) speaks of Jesus' total commitment to his vocation.

Powell (1990) notably uses the negative example of leadership traits possessed by those portrayed as enemies of Jesus, specifically the religious leaders of Jesus' time including the Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priests, and elders of the Temple, to exemplify the antithesis of leadership traits displayed by Jesus. These leaders are described in Scripture, says Powell, as self-righteous... unmerciful...unloving...seeking to justify themselves before others (Luke 16:15) and rejecting the purpose of God (Luke 7:30). Kingsbury (1987) also highlights the undesirable, and thus non-Jesus like, traits of Jewish leaders, describing them as evil, hypocritical, lawless, false teachers, and spiritually blind; they are remiss in caring for the people (Matt. 9:36), pitiless (Matt. 23:4), pretentious (Matt. 23:5-12), fearful (Matt. 21:11, 46; 26:5); in their guile they are manipulative (Matt. 26:4; 27:20);

Missing from the extant literature focusing on the leadership traits of Jesus is a scholarly search for how these or other leader attributes are directly related to Jesus' leadership behavior and effectiveness. Until such study is done, it seems premature to assert that the identified leadership traits in Jesus are appropriate for leadership success in current contexts or styles. On the other hand, the appropriate application of Jesus' leadership behaviors is of interest to current researchers.

Behaviors. According to Yukl (2002), the behavior approach to the study of leadership examines the typical patterns of leader activities, functions, and responsibilities and how leaders effectively spend their time.

Among researchers who have focused on Jesus' leadership behaviors are those interested in his service to others, and specifically as viewed through the lens of servant leadership (Koenig, 2007; Patterson, 2003; Sendjaya & Santos, 2002). Koenig asserts "it has become a truism that Christian leadership must be none other than servant leadership" (p. 29) and addresses Jesus' servanthood as evidenced in Mark 10:42-52. According to Wilson (1976) Jesus' servanthood began as a kenotic process – emptying himself of outward display of deity, following the will of his Father. Sendjaya & Santos suggest the servant leader is symbolized at the highest level by Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet and Russell (2003) posits Jesus as the embodiment of a servant leader.

Other authors, in contrast to considering Jesus' servant leadership, have measured Jesus through the lens of charismatic leadership behaviors. For example, Piovanelli (2005) suggests charismatic leaders have the ability to clearly communicate a vision to their followers and to subsequently motivate them to carry out that vision. Jesus' use of persuasive skills incorporated both of these actions, posits Piovanelli, as he recruited his followers and prepared them for service. Conger and Nanungo (1998), describing the charismatic leader, note the ability of a such a leader to (a) be sensitive to follower abilities and needs, (b) to formulate and articulate organizational goals, and (c) to build trust in and achieve the articulated vision. Jesus did this by being sensitive to the disciples' abilities and needs by asking "who do others"… and "who do you say I am?" (Bekker, 2005, p. 16). In asking these questions, Jesus gained insight into His disciples' abilities to discern truth and their potential need for further training.

Milavec (1982) suggests Jesus also demonstrated empowering behaviors through the developmental process of apprenticeship, daily living in community with the disciples. Jesus furthermore commissioned them and assured them of his support (Matt. 28:18-20) and held them accountable as evidenced in Matt. 25:14-30 (Milavec).

Among the behaviors ascribed to Jesus in the literature, Horrell (1997) describes his activities as an itinerate preacher, depending entirely upon the generosity of others for their material support. This pattern stands in contrast to later imitators such as Paul-Peter who were regarded instead as community organizers and who insisted on working at their own trade to support themselves (Horrell). However and perhaps most notable among the leadership behaviors of Jesus is that of teaching.

Keller (1998) posits one of the strongest images of Jesus in the Gospels is that of teacher. Other than the title "Lord," Jesus is called "teacher" more often than any other name in the New Testament (Keller, p. 450). This author notes four types of teachers with adult followers during the time of Jesus' lifetime: (a) philosopher, (b) sage, (c) interpreter, and (d) prophet. Elements of each of these categories are present in Jesus' teaching, according to Keller, however it is the behaviors of rabbi/rabboni that is most represented in Jesus' relationship with his disciples. It was not learning by itself that made the disciples his pupils, but rather the prolonged close association with their teacher -

as the disciples accompanied their sage, serving him, observing him, and studying his thoughts and actions whether in the market, under the shade of a tree, or in discussions with other teachers (Jones, 1997 as cited in Keller). Powell (1990) notes Jesus' teaching through the use of open denunciation (7:44-47; 13:15; 16:15) and clear exhortation (10:28, 37; 11:41; 14:12-14).

Despite the similarities to other rabbis of this time, Jesus is again represented as unique in his role of teacher – he was uncredentialed, teaching with unprecedented authority, seeking out his disciples rather than being sought, and made himself available to all who would hear for the purpose of transformation rather than information (Keller, 1998).

The activities of Jesus are also addressed in the literature as fulfilling the role of a priest. According to Denney (as cited in MacLeod, 2005), a high priest is defined as “the person through whom and through whose ministry people draw near to God” (p. 331). Although MacLeod (2005) examined text from the book of Hebrews in respect to Jesus' priesthood, Heil (1995) explored the book of John in analyzing explicit references to Jesus as a priest. The results of Heil's study suggest that Jesus may be viewed by the reader as priest but was not likely identified as such by his contemporaries. A number of authors, however, discuss Jesus as priest for his modeling knowledge of Scripture and love for his audience (Plassman, 1949; Cave, 1946; Scofield, 1943).

In addition to acting as priest, Croatto (2005) notes Jesus additionally acts as prophet throughout his ministry, most notably in the book of Luke. Croatto (2005) defines a prophet as “appointed to announce good news to the poor, liberation to the captives, vision to the blind . . . , and a time of divine favor” (p. 455).

As previously noted, Jesus also demonstrates strong persuasive behaviors and masterful use of rhetoric (Tannehill, 1981; Bultmann, 1968). As noted by (Hoehl, 2007), Jesus used six types of rhetoric to persuade his audiences. Among the types demonstrated by Jesus is the use of (a) correction stories, or replying to a comment with contrast (Tannehill, 1981); (b) commendation stories that commend the values and attitudes contained in Jesus' discussions; (c) controversy dialogues used to rebuke through rhetorical questions, analogous situations, and principle statements (Bultmann, 1968, Tannehill, 1981); (d) quest stories involving individuals who seek healing, faith, or protection (Tannehill, 1981); (e) stories of inquiry to test and teach his disciples (Tannehill, 1981); and (f) description stories to reveal a previously concealed truth.

Powell (1990) also uses examples of the antithesis of Jesus' leadership in noting Luke's portrayal of the behaviors of the religious leaders of Jesus' time as lovers of money (16:14), desiring exaltation from the people (11:43; 20:46-47), and despising the very people Jesus came to serve (18:9). According to Powell, Jesus demonstrates behaviors of acceptance and inclusion, sharing food at their table (7:36; 11:37), teaching them (10:25-37; 14:12-14), healing (8:40-42, 49-56), and praying for them (23:46). Jesus not only preaches love for enemies (6:27-31) but practices it, underscored by others who followed and imitated him (Powell, cf. Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

The studies referenced above contribute to our understanding of the leadership behaviors modeled by Jesus but scholarly applicability of the whole of Jesus' behaviors to current contexts of

leadership effectiveness is lacking. According to Yukl (2002), hundreds of surveys have been conducted during the past 50 years to examine the relationship between individual and specific leadership behaviors and indicators of leadership effectiveness. While most research examining leadership through a behavioral approach generally uses observation, interviews, and questionnaires (Yukl), the previously noted studies have been necessarily limited to review of documented early accounts of the life of Jesus.

The potential, however, for a study examining the presence, or absence, of the entirety of the above noted behaviors, in a currently defined successful leader, stands to be explored. Other opportunities lie in the approach to understanding Jesus' leadership through the lens of power-influence.

Power-Influence. Power-influence research, according to Yukl (2002) examines influence processes between leaders and others. While the studies mentioned in the following section do not directly explore the effects of influence processes, they do offer insight into the power-influence processes present in the life of Jesus. Most of the results explore power-influence through the constructs of authority. Kingsbury (1987) notes the use of the term leader in Matthew refers to persons who occupy positions of authority in Israel (Matt. 15:14; 34:16, 24).

In a broader view of power-influence, Powell (1990) describes Jesus' authority as divine in contrast to the religious leaders of the day who do not possess such authority (Matt 7:28-29). Moessner (1986) describes Jesus' authority as rising from his deep sense of calling as evidenced in Luke 9:29-35. On the other hand, (Piovanelli, 2005) discusses the charismatic authority of Jesus in light of Weber's charismatic leadership, citing Theissen (1992) in characterizing Jesus' behavior as a wandering charismatic.

Jesus' authority was inherently legitimate and derived from heaven with the "connotation of freedom from all sovereignties other than God's" (Dillon, 1995, p. 112). Witmer (1965) defines Jesus' authority as legitimate because of the relationship to his Father but defines the authority attributed from the recognition received by others as ascribed authority.

Hellerman, (2000) suggests Jesus acted in ways that increased his ascribed authority, personally claiming his authority and exercising power and control on a frequent basis. Koenig, (2007) finds that Jesus combines personal and legitimate authority with virtue in a "perfectly God-pleasing way" (p. 26). Spencer (2005) calls Jesus' authority audacious, noting that his call to his followers and his mission agenda were non-negotiable and completely on his terms and within his control.

As previously noted, Jesus' demonstrated activities commensurate with those of an itinerant preacher; Horrell, (1997) finds significant power and authority exercised primarily by itinerants, in contrast to later emergence of authority and power found in resident leadership evidenced in the pastoral epistles (1 Tim 2:8; Titus 2).

Titles in common use for ascribing authority in first-century Jewish communities include rabbi, father, and master (Saldarini, 1992). In Jesus' time rabbi was a title of honor, father used as a title of respect for an elder, and master a reference to a guide and most often used by school heads and

institutional founders. However, rather than using any of these titles for Jesus, says Saldarini, the author of the gospel of Matthew uses the title of teacher as a synonym for rabbi, father, or master. Matthew also uses the example of first-century scribes and Pharisees as negative examples to define true power-influence, according to Saldarini, and forbids the use of titles or the exercise of highly authoritative roles (Matt 23:8-12). Among images used by Matthew to describe the negative use of power-influence by the scribes and Pharisees the ideas of malfeasance, hypocrisy, and lawlessness are found (Powell, 1990; Saldarini)

The imagery of a prophet is another means of conveying the processes of power-influence in the life of Jesus. Moessner, (1986) clarifies Israel's history in receiving her prophets as messengers and mediators of Yahweh's salvation. Croatto (2005) asserts Jesus developed a multiple prophetic function for himself in the tradition of the great prophets, as Elijah in prophet-healer, being persecuted, and as interpreter of Scriptures. And, although Jesus is regarded as a prophet like Moses (Croatto, 2005; Horsley, 1985), he stands alone as unique as the fulfillment of previous promises (Moessner, 1986).

As a model for power-influence in effective leadership, participative leadership is described as power sharing and empowerment of followers (Yukl, 2002). The enthusiasm with which Jesus empowered others was a process of confidence-building (Theissen, 1992) which included voluntary homelessness for the sake of his mission, demanding the same of all who would follow him as disciple (Good, 1983). Inherent in Jesus' scope of power sharing is ethnic inclusiveness, such as found in Matthew 8:5-13 and non-violent responses to threat and persecution (Sparks, 2006).

Situational. Yukl (2002) describes the situational approach in the study of leadership as emphasizing "the importance of contextual factors that influence leadership processes" (p. 13). Situation variables in this study approach include exploring the characteristics of followers, nature of work performed at the unit level, type of organization, and the external environment (Yukl). There are, according to Yukl, two ways of approaching leadership study through the situational approach: (a) through attempts to discover how leadership processes differ or are similar across different situations, and (b) by attempts to identify aspects of a situation that influence the relationship of leader attributes to leadership effectiveness. This last approach is often described through contingency theories.

In this survey of extant literature related to the leadership of Jesus, no scholarly research findings emerge specific to the situational approach of study. However, Mays (2003) contributes to the literature from findings based on previous scholarly research. In her work, Mays posits Jesus did not simply employ differing leadership styles to fit a particular situation, but demonstrated instead polytrophic leadership. Mays defines this construct as meaning "to nourish in many ways" (p. 51). The polytrophic leader "seeks to meet the needs of the follower by discovering his/her unique individual differences" (Mays, p. 53), adopting a holistic view in responding to each individual. Jesus responded to people in different ways, contends Mays, by adapting to as appropriate to the needs of the situation.

The previous sections of this paper have focused on leader characteristics and research approaches to study leadership. In contrast, the following section considers leadership research as conceptualized through leadership processes.

Leadership Processes Modeled by Jesus

“Leadership can be conceptualized as (a) an intra-individual process, (b) a dyadic process, (c) a group process, or (d) an organizational process” (Yukl, 2002, p. 13). Most of the extant research literature on the topic of leadership is focused on only one of the levels of process given the complexity of a parsimonious and easily applied multilevel theory (Yukl). This paper further explores the leadership of Jesus through the conceptualization of process levels.

Intra-Individual. “Leadership theories that focus on processes within a single individual are rare” (Yukl, 2002, p. 14) and significant limitations exist in focusing leadership theory at the intra-individual level, including a lack of what “most theorists consider to be the essential process of leadership, namely the influence over others” (Yukl, p. 14). However, Yukl does note the helpfulness of understanding intra-individual processes, such as cognitive decision processes or self-leadership theory, for the purposes of developing more useful leadership applications.

A study by Winston, (2004) offers early and potential insight into Jesus’ decision making. Whereas much decision-making is completed at levels directed by rules and laws or through a rational process, Jesus made decisions based on *agapao*, an inherent love of others (Winston). Given the uniqueness of Jesus as leader noted in previous sections, this is an area that is ripe for research and future studies and is more fully discussed in the later section on research proposal.

Dyadic. The dyadic approach to the study of leadership focuses on the relationship between leader and follower, typically in a reciprocally influential process (Yukl, 2002). Theories of leadership effectiveness conceptualized at the dyadic level include charismatic and transformational leadership, according to several authors (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2002). As found in previous sections, although popular press on this topic abounds (Banks & Ledbetter, 2004; Blackaby & Blackaby R, 2001; Jones, 1992; Miller, 1995) the availability of scholarly research in this area is limited.

Piovanelli (2005) describes the charismatic leadership of Jesus as an emotional bond between Jesus and his disciples. Their motivation and commitment to follow and collaborate with shared risks and stigma is evident in multiple texts of the New Testament (Piovanelli).

Koenig (2007) expands on the dyadic relationship noting church leaders were led into their prominence as noted in John 16:13. Good (1983) describes the unique relationship between Jesus and his Father, confirmed through his baptism and the gift of the Spirit.

Malina B. J. (1996) describes Jesus’ person-centered leadership as successfully managing individual needs, evidence for example in Matt 20:20-24. This style of leadership, however, eventually evolved into group centered as seen in Matt 28:8-12 which required strong leadership (Malina). The imperative message of Jesus’ leadership, the inclusion of and valuing of the disciple and the trust

relationship between leader and followers as inheritors of His mission, is directly related to Bass' (1985) core components of authentic transformational leadership (Malina).

Group. A key question in the group approach to leadership study is “how leadership emerges in formal and informal groups” (Yukl, 2002, p. 15). Saldarini (1992) describes this relationship by noting “Jesus is the one leader and all his followers are brethren” (p. 671). The members of Jesus' group are to be servants to one another and hierarchically structured roles occur but with an emphasis on equality (Saldarini). However, Koenig's (2007) focus, rather than a focus on New Testament models of leadership as hierarchical or non-hierarchical, suggests “all systems of ranking show themselves transfigured by their conformation to the crucified and risen Christ” (p. 27).

Other authors describe a participatory or shared leadership at the group level. For example, Good (1983) describes how Jesus shared with his disciples the divine powers at work in his ministry as evidenced in Luke 9:1-9. Gangel (1987) references Matthew 11:25-30 as evidence of shared leadership in Jesus' offer to share the burden of the ministry. Although the samples of group level research on Jesus' leadership are limited, even less is available at the organizational level.

Organizational. Yukl (2002) describes the limitations of the group process approach to leadership study as short-sighted in its focus, given the reality of a group's existence in a larger, open system. Although some of the previously group level research could be reasonably extrapolated to the organizational level, no scholarly research has apparently been completed specific to Jesus' leadership. Instead, organizational results are explored through the development of the church in later years under the leadership of followers such as Peter and Paul.

Although clear opportunities exist for further exploration of Jesus' leadership effectiveness at the organizational level, as well as in several other approaches previously noted, the arena of the intra-individual approach is the proposed focus for further research.

Proposed Research

While there seems to be no shortage of popular press on the leadership of Jesus (Blackaby & Blackaby R, 2001; Briner & Pritchard, 1998; Jones, 1992; Mays, 2003; Milavec, 1982; Winston, 2002), the paucity of scholarly research on the topic of Jesus' leadership may be evidence of the challenges involved in the study of a first-century Mediterranean leader. In their review of literature related to spirituality in the workplace, Mohammed, Hassan, and Wisnieski (2001) suggest that neglect of a particular topic of research may be a reflection of intellectual bias rather than methodological concern. The limitations of current research on the leadership of Jesus as previously highlighted in this paper and the call for an integrated theory of leadership issued by well-known leadership scholars such as Bennis (2007) suggest the need to further the research on leadership through a broader view, inclusive of leaders known through spiritual or religious contexts.

Topic of research. The potential for development of an integrated theory and model is great; however such a scope is beyond the reach of the focus of this paper. Instead, the focus for a proposed study is at the intra-individual processes, the foundational level of a hierarchy of processes discussed

by Yukl (2002) as one way to conceptualize leadership. Although Yukl suggests that leadership theory itself should not be focused on this level, study at this level nonetheless provides insights helpful for the development of more integrated leadership theories.

According to Yukl (2002) intra-individual processes include “psychological theories of decision making, motivation, and cognition to explain the behavior of an individual leader” (p. 14). Yukl further notes the involvement of leadership in decisional processes necessary for the effectiveness of a team or organization. How this process occurs is “strongly influenced by the various stakeholders and by cultural norms and societal laws” (Yukl, p. 433).

The decision-making processes utilized by Jesus is an area open to further exploration, especially given the findings from this study on the uniqueness of Jesus and work initiated by Winston (2004). Kingsbury (1987) asserts the canonical Gospels are commonly referred to as “the story of Jesus” (p. 57) and are the source of a number of texts useful for an exploration on Jesus’ decision-making processes.

This recommended research seeks to explore the following propositions: (a) Jesus demonstrates the use of higher-ordered decision-making as motivated by *agapao* when accused by the religious and political leaders, and (b) leaders and the populace demonstrate the use of rules-based and rational decision-making in calling for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Scope of exegetical analysis. The canonical Gospel are primarily focused on the life and actions of Jesus (Powell, 1990). For the purposes of a proposed study on the decision-making processes utilized by Jesus, the story of the interaction between Jesus and Pontius Pilate is likely to offer insights on the multi-leveled opportunities for decision-making faced by leaders in daily work. Specifically, passages from Mark 15:1-15, Luke 23:1-43, John 18:28-40, and 19 1-11 all depict the pericope of Jesus and Pilate and may be used as the basis of the proposed study. The method of analysis proposed is socio-rhetorical criticism or interpretation.

Research methodology. Robbins (1996) defines socio-rhetorical criticism as one approach to interaction with literature and the authors of literature. Socio-rhetorical criticism explores text through five different textures: (a) inner texture, (b) inter-texture, (c) socio-cultural texture, (d) ideological texture, and (e) sacred texture. The use of inner texture analysis creates insight into scripture as written by the original author for the intended audience. Authors write with intention and whatever meaning can be discerned resides in the intention of the author (Fee, 2000).

Bekker (2005) illustrates the use of Robbins' (1996) social rhetorical interpretation, in particular inner texture analysis, for the purposes of accurately discerning intention and interpretation of scripture. The inner texture analysis utilized for the proposed study uses aspects of the structure as presented by Bekker and focuses on one of the five kinds of inner texture described by Robbins for analysis: (a) repetitive-progressive, (b) opening-middle-closing, (c) narrational, (d) argumentative, and (e) sensory-aesthetic texture.

The argumentative texture and pattern of the proposed pericope serves to investigate "multiple kinds of inner reasoning in the discourse" (Robbins, 1996). Reasoning, according to Robbins, can be logical or qualitative, and may be fully explored and supported by extant rhetorical theory. The pericope proposed for examination is expected to demonstrate the levels of decision-making posited by Winston (2004), inclusive of the higher-order decision-making motivated by *agapao* and demonstrated by Jesus in his leadership.

Argumentative texture, asserts Robbins (1996), provides reasons for events to occur as they are found to occur in retrospection. The study of argumentative texture in the canonical Gospels of the New Testament is thus proposed as a means for exploring the decision-making processes in the leadership of Jesus.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate a number of leadership attributes, behaviors and use of power-influence in the life of Jesus; additional findings emerge on various levels of processes occurring in Jesus' leadership. As a potential exemplary leader for today's world, Jesus' model is believed by this author to be one that may be situated at all conceptual levels. For the purposes of advancing understanding of Jesus' leadership, preliminary propositions on the intra-individual processes effectively used by Jesus in decision making are detailed as is a research methodology for future research. These propositions may be helpful in directing empirical studies in the field of leadership, especially for building toward an integrated, multilevel perspective based on the leadership of Jesus.

This paper first explores the characteristics of Jesus' leadership found in extant academic literature. These characteristics are further examined through the pattern utilized by Yukl (2002) for the classification of leadership theories and empirical research. Secondly, the leadership of Jesus is conceptualized through a multilevel process lens, building again from the hierarchy of leadership processes utilized by Yukl. Finally, preliminary propositions on an aspect of Jesus' leadership are presented as part of a future research study proposal.

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