Acts 2: An Example of the Divine Empowerment of Leaders

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The Holy Bible reveals the pre-existent nature of leadership, provides examples of divinely ordained leader-follower relationships, and forms the basis for leadership theory. Through intertexture analysis of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, this paper explores the use of the gift of prophecy, through the Holy Spirit, to communicate God’s divine empowerment of leaders in the early Christian church as in the Old Testament. Through summary examinations of contemporary leadership theories, early Christian leaders’ behaviors are compared to the salient leadership behaviors associated with each of the theories as revealed in Acts chapter 2. The present piece demonstrates that, while the theoretical description and classification of these theories may be contemporary, their practice is ancient. Following a pattern that is evident in Scripture from before the beginning of time, Jesus Christ and subsequent leaders of the early Christian church divinely received their authority and empowerment to lead believers from God through the Holy Spirit.

The original example of leadership is provided by God the Father and manifested in the leader-follower relationship between Him and Christ the Son. While they are equal members of the Godhead (Philippians 2:5-6), Jesus subordinates Himself and submits to the Father’s will (1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28). Out of this relationship, combined with the understanding that the Godhead is pre-existent (Romans 1:20), one may logically conclude that the dyadic relationship between Father and Son, and their divine example of leadership, are likewise pre-existent. If creation reveals anything about the Creator then this dyad and the example of leadership emerging from it should be manifest throughout creation. We find leadership ordained in scripture through examples such as the ordered relationships between God and man, man and the rest of God’s creation, men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children, kings and subjects, mentors and apprentices, slave owners and slaves, political leaders and citizens, and God’s prophets and the people.

Under the Old Covenant, the people were required by God to obey the prophets (Deuteronomy 18:19). After the exodus from Egypt, beginning with Moses and at the request of the children of Israel, prophecy became God’s primary mechanism for communicating His will to His people (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). God prescribed a two-part test for the people to determine whether or not the words of the prophet were
genuinely spoken by God’s authority. The first test was whether or not the prophet’s words contradicted God’s commandments even if the prophecy came to pass (Deuteronomy 13:1-2). If they did contradict God’s commandments, then the prophecy was not to be obeyed and the prophet was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:3-5). Assuming the prophecy passed the first test, the second test examined whether or not the prophecies spoken by the prophet proved to be true or came to pass (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). If the prophet invoked God’s authority by claiming the prophecy was God’s words and the prophecy failed, then the prophet would die (Deuteronomy 18:20). As long as the words of the prophet spoken under God’s authority did not contradict God’s law, and the prophecies came to pass, the people were required to obey the prophet. Failure to obey legitimate prophecy was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 18:19). It is through the operation of the gift of prophecy, or as some of the prophets called it, contrary to God’s instruction (Jeremiah 23:33-39), “the burden of the Lord” (Habakkuk 1:1; Zechariah 9:1, 12:1; Malachi 1:1, King James Version), that God made His will known in most matters, often including His empowerment of leaders (Numbers 27:22-23; 1 Samuel 9:15-17, 16:12-13; Deuteronomy 18:15; Matthew 16:18; Acts 9:15).

In the earliest days of the Christian church, Christianity was not viewed as a new, separate religion but rather a sect of Judaism (Krauss, 1892, pp. 133-134). In fact, initially, salvation through Jesus Christ was held by the early Christians to be available only to Jews (Acts 11:19; Schott, 1996). Accordingly, at this time more than any, Christian thought and doctrine was primarily influenced by Jewish text, laws, and traditions (Taylor, 1990). This influence extended to early Christian understanding of how leaders were divinely empowered by God and revealed through the operation of the gift of prophecy or other divine revelation at the prompting of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18). It is based on this premise that Luke argued for Christ’s authority and divine empowerment by God as a leader and, by extension, the disciples’ authority and divine empowerment by Christ as leaders (Acts 2:29-36; Horner, 1980, p. 24). A detailed, intertexture analysis of the 2nd chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is instructive for this purpose.

**Background Overview**

**The Book of Acts**

The book of The Acts of the Apostles is the fifth book in the New Testament Christian canon. It is most widely believed to have been written by Luke the Evangelist, a Gentile physician (Colossians 4:14), approximately 60-64 A.D. (Boa, 1985). Acts records the age of the apostles including some of the earliest history of the Christian church, from the time of Christ’s post-resurrection appearances to His disciples (Acts 1:3) through the time of Paul’s journey to and imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30). The first half of the book covers the formation, establishment, organization, and governance of the early
church and the deeds of Christ’s disciples, especially Peter, during this period. The second half of Acts is dominated by the conversion, development, and evangelical ministry of the apostle Paul.

Acts 2:1 opens with the gathering together of Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly the physical presence of the awaited Holy Ghost is made manifest and is seen visibly resting on the heads of each of the believers in the form of what appeared to be tongues of fire (Acts 2:3). This indwelling of the spirit quickens each of them to speak in foreign languages unknown to them (Acts 2:4). Peter announces to all present, including some skeptics, that what they have just witnessed is the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy regarding the outpouring of the spirit and Messiah’s resurrection. He then accuses the Jewish leadership for crucifying Jesus and argues that He is the risen Messiah who also fulfills the prophecies recorded in Psalms 16 and 110.

**Intertexture Analysis**

Robbins’s (1996) system of socio-rhetorical criticism referred to intertexture analysis as the “second arena” of his approach (p. 96). According to Robbins, “in this arena the interpreter still interprets the text as a ‘work,’ the production of an author. This means the interpreter works in the area between the author and the text, not between the text and the reader” (p. 96). Intertexture analysis examines the interfaces between the studied text and phenomena outside the text. These phenomena include other texts and oral traditions (Oral-Scribal Intertexture), historical context (Historical Intertexture), social norms (Social Intertexture), and (Cultural Intertexture) (Robbins, 1996).

**Acts Chapter 2: Intertexture Analysis**


**Oral-Scribal Intertexture**

According to Robbins (1996), “Analysis of oral-scribal intertexture includes recitation, recontextualization, and reconfiguration of other texts, both oral and scribal, in the foregrounded text” (p. 97). The second chapter of Acts provides three opportunities for intertexture analysis. All three are examples of recitation. The three antecedent Old
Testament texts which Acts 2 intersects are: a) Joel chapter 2, b) Psalm 16, and c) Psalm 110. The first of these intersections is presented in Table 1 on the next page:

Table 1
Comparison of Acts Chapter 2 to Recitation of Antecedent Text from Joel Chapter 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 And it shall come to pass afterward, <em>that</em> I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions;</td>
<td>17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour my spirit.</td>
<td>18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.</td>
<td>19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.</td>
<td>20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 And it shall come to pass, <em>that</em> whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and</td>
<td>21 And it shall come to pass, <em>that</em> whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Note. King James Version; Date references from Reese (1977).

In comparing Acts 2:17 to Joel 2:28 one finds that Acts recites almost exactly the same words as those of Joel except for a very few additions of individual words and minor changes. Acts 2:17 adds the word “of” between the words “out” and “my Spirit” (King James Version). The word “and” is added after the words “prophesy” and “visions” (King James Version). The sequence of the phrases “your young men shall see visions” and “your old men shall dream dreams” is reversed from that of Joel 2:28 (King James Version). The one significant difference between Acts 2:17 and Joel 2:28 is found in the beginning of the two verses. After the word “pass” Joel reads “afterward, that” while Acts reads “in the last days, saith God” (King James Version). Robbins (1996) stated, “conjunctions (and, for, but, etc.) and qualifying phrases... may be removed or added when a verse from scripture is put on the lips of a speaker in New Testament narrative” (p. 104). In Joel the words “afterward, that” (King James Version) simply indicate the events being described will occur at some future point(s) in time (Kaiser, 1980). In Acts, Peter uses the words “in the last days, saith God” (King James Version) to make two points: a) Christ’s death and resurrection marked the beginning of the period known as the last days (Keener, 2009). With this historical transition, some of the events prophesied in Joel were fulfilled in the contemporary miracles witnessed by the multitude in Jerusalem during Pentecost (Roberts, 1960); b) the words “saith God” (King James Version) were added to authenticate that the message was God’s word being relayed by a prophet, in this case Joel, not necessarily the words of the speaker, Peter (Atkins, 1950).

Likewise, when comparing Acts 2:19 to Joel 2:29, one finds essentially identical wording with a few very minor variations. These variations include the omission of the word “also;” the use of the phrase “on my” rather than “upon the” twice, once preceding the word “servants” and once preceding the word “handmaidens;” the use of the word “handmaidens” rather than “handmaids;” and the use of the phrase “I will pour out in those days of my Spirit” as opposed to “in those days will I pour my spirit” (King James Version). Again, there is one exception to the overall similarity; the addition of the words “and they shall prophesy” (King James Version) at the end of the verse in Acts (Keener, 2009). This addition may be explained by the fact that Peter is demonstrating that the miraculous gift of tongues the multitude of foreigners had witnessed, “prophesying,” was not caused by imbibing spirits but rather the direct result of the visible outpouring of the Lord’s spirit to both men and women that had occurred just moments earlier in fulfillment of the prophecy spoken by Joel (Acts 2:16; Keener, 2009; Menzies, 2000; Roberts, 1960).

PSalm 16 is a messianic psalm prophesying future events regarding Christ (Horst, 1985; Juel, 1981; O’Toole, 1983, Trull, 2004). The psalm opens with the verse “Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust” (Psalm 16:1, King James Version). In the context of
this messianic psalm the words “me” and “I” refer to Christ (Horst, 1985; Juel, 1981; O’Toole, 1983, Trull, 2004). Comparing the recitation in Acts 2:25-28 of the text from Psalm 16:8-11, there are at least two clear markers in Acts 2:25, “For David speaketh concerning him” and Acts 2:27, “neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (King James Version) that indicate the object of this text is not David, but Jesus Christ, speaking to and of God (Trull, 2004). There is nothing in the text to indicate the remainder of Acts 2’s recitation of the text from Psalm 16 is referring to anyone else other than Jesus Christ speaking to and of God. In Table 2 on the next page is a side by side comparison of each verse from Acts 2:25-31 reciting the scribal text of Psalm 16:8-11.

Table 2
Comparison of Acts Chapter 2 to Recitation of Antecedent Text from Psalm 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 I have set the Lord always before me:</td>
<td>25 For David speaketh concerning him,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because <em>he is</em> at my right hand, I shall not be moved.</td>
<td>I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:</td>
<td>26 Therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my flesh also shall rest in hope.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.</td>
<td>27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Thou wilt show me the path of life:</td>
<td>28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in thy presence <em>is</em> fulness of joy;</td>
<td>thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at thy right hand <em>there are</em> pleasures for evermore.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Note. King James Version; Date references from Reese (1977).

Acts 2:25-28 recites almost exactly the same words of Psalm 16:8-11. Acts 2:25 begins with a phrase, added by Peter, to remind the audience that what followed was prophesied by David, “For David speaketh concerning him” (Acts 2:25, King James Version; Trull, 2004). There are minor word variations between each pair of verses that do not have a material effect on the meanings. Acts 2:25 substitutes the word “foresaw” for the phrase “have set,” “my face, for” for the words “me: because,” “on” for “at,” and “that I should” for “I shall” in Psalm 16:8 (King James Version). When comparing Acts 2:26 to Psalm 16:9 only the first word and last four words are identical. The remaining text strings “did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh” (Acts 2:26, King James Version) and “my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also” (Psalm 16:9, King James Version) use some slightly different words in different order but convey essentially the same meaning. Interestingly, in the first half of the verse, the speaker uses the past tense in Acts 2:26 while Psalm 16:9 uses the present tense. The second half of both verses employs the future tense. Acts 2:27 is identical to Psalm 16:10 with the single exception of the first word in each verse. Acts 2:27 begins with the word “Because” while Psalm 16:10 begins with the word “For” (King James Version). Like Acts 2:26 and Psalm 16:9, Acts 2:28 and Psalm 16:11 have few identical words but communicate the same message. Only the first word in each verse is identical. The remainder of the texts share similar wording in different order, “hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance” (Acts 2:28, King James Version) and “wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11, King James Version). Also, like Acts 2:26 and Psalm 16:9, the verses employ differing tenses. The first half of Acts 2:28 uses past tense while the second half of the verse uses future tense. The first part of Psalm 16:11 uses future tense and switches to present tense. Psalm 16:11 also ends with the additional phrase, “at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11, King James Version; Bock, 1986).

Taken in its full context, there is little ambiguity in Acts 2:25-28. The referents clearly point to Jesus Christ speaking to and of God. This clear reference is supported by the fact that the verses immediately preceding the referenced text, Acts 2:22-24, refer to “Jesus of Nazareth” by name, summarize His ministry, describe His death, and recount His resurrection by God (King James Version). There is nothing in the text to suggest that, as it progresses from verse 24 to verse 25 and beyond, there is any change in the text’s subject. One may then reasonably conclude that “him,” “I,” and “my” in Acts 2:25 refer to Christ and “Lord” refers to God (King James Version). In verse 26, the three instances of “my” also refer to Christ (King James Version). In verse 27, two occurrences of “thou” and one instance of “thine” refer to God while “my” and “Holy One” refer to Christ (King James Version). In verse 28, two references to “thou” and one to “thy” refer to God while two occurrences of “me” refer to Christ (King James Version). This then would imply that the relevant verses in Acts 2 serve not as a reconfiguration or
recontextualization of Psalm 16 but rather a reminder of what the audience of observant Jews should have already known: Psalm 16, while sung by David, was not about David (Juel, 1981; Trull 2004). It was a prophecy regarding the Messiah that had been recorded more than one thousand years prior to the events described in Acts chapter 2 (Kaiser, 1980), a prophecy that had been partially fulfilled before their eyes and in their hearing. Psalm 16 held special meaning for the Christians of the early church because they recognized it for what it was and had been since the time it was recorded: an ancient messianic prophecy, elements of which they had, with their own eyes and ears, witnessed fulfillment (Kaiser, 1980).

Peter’s restatement before an audience of pious Jews of the meaning and intent of Psalm 16 is reminiscent of the exchange between Christ and a group of Pharisees and lawyers who had gathered to tempt Him (Matthew 22:34-40). After correctly answering that Christ would be the son of David, Jesus asked the Pharisees “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son” (Matthew 22:41-45, King James Version)? This leads to the third intersection between Acts chapter 2 and the oral-scribal intertexture of the Old Testament, Psalm 110:1. Psalm 110:1 is the verse to which Jesus referred when He questioned the lawyers and Pharisees in Matthew 22:44. It is the same verse to which Peter refers in Acts 2:34-35. In Table 3 on the next page is a comparison of all three instances of this text.

Table 3
Comparison of Acts 2 and Matthew 22 to Recitation of Antecedent Text from Psalm 110

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 110:</td>
<td>Matthew 22:</td>
<td>Acts 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 The Lord said unto my Lord,</td>
<td>44 The Lord said unto my</td>
<td>34 For David is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit thou at my right hand,</td>
<td>Lord, Sit thou on my right</td>
<td>ascended into the heavens:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hand,</td>
<td>but he saith himself,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until I make thine enemies</td>
<td>45 The Lord said unto my</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thy footstool.</td>
<td>Lord, Sit thou on my</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>right hand,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>til I make thy enemies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thy footstool.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35 Until I make thy foes thy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>footstool.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. King James Version; Date references from Reese (1977).

Psalm 110 self-identifies as “A Psalm of David” (Psalm 110:1, King James Version). There is remarkable similarity between the three instances of this text. The original text
found in Psalm 110:1 is twice recited in the New Testament, once by Jesus in Matthew 22:44 and again by Peter in Acts 2:34-35. The first half of Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:44, and Acts 2:34 use identical wording with one minor exception. Psalm 110:1 uses the word “at” while Matthew 22:44 and Acts 2:34 use the word “on” in reference to “my right hand” (King James Version). The second half of Psalm 110:1, Matthew 22:44, and Acts 2:35 also use almost identical wording. Psalm 110:1 and Acts 2:35 both begin with the word “until” while Matthew 22:44 uses the word “til” (King James Version). Psalm 110:1 refers to Christ’s adversaries as “thine enemies” while Matthew 22:44 uses “thy enemies” and Acts 2:35 refers to them as “thy foes” (King James Version). Like Psalm 16, it is clear that Psalm 110:1 is a messianic prophecy, which both Jesus and Peter confirm in their respective quotations of the Psalm (Juel, 1981). Again, it is clear David is not speaking of himself in this verse but is prophesying of Christ (Juel, 1981; Trull, 2004). “The Lord” mentioned in Psalm 110:1 is a reference to God, “my Lord” is a reference to Christ. Likewise the words “my” and “I” refer to God while “thou,” “thine,” and “thy” all refer to Christ (King James Version; Bock, 1986). The corresponding words and equivalent words in Matthew 22:44 and Acts 2:34-35 carry the same meaning. Matthew 22:44 and Acts 2:34-35 then are not reconfigurations of Psalm 110:1. They too constitute validation that the original text, Psalm 110:1, is and always has been in reference to Christ (Bock; 1986; Juel, 1981). Christ and Peter are merely restating and reminding their respective audiences of this truth that had been recorded more than one thousand years earlier.

Historical Intertexture

What distinguishes historical intertexture from other types such as social or cultural intertexture is the specificity of the referenced historical event or timeframe (Robbins, 1996). According to Robbins (1996), “Historical intertexture differs from social intertexture by its focus on a particular event or period of time rather than social practices that occur regularly as events in ones life” (p. 118). The first two chapters of Acts provide historical intertexture because they meet this criterion in two ways: a) They contain very specific time references that confine the recorded events to a period of less than 50 days from the time of Jesus’ first post-resurrection appearance to His apostles to the following day of Pentecost; b) Peter’s efforts to identify the specific events and relatively short, well defined period of time of Jesus’ life on earth as the beginning moment of the otherwise non-specific “afterward” or “last days” (Keener, 2009).

At the micro level, the historical context for the events described in the first two chapters of the Acts of the Apostles is as dynamic as it is brief. These two chapters encompass a span of time less than two months after Jesus’s death and only ten days after His ascension back into heaven (Acts 2:1). It is a short period of hope, excitement, and growing boldness for the apostles in the early days of the church immediately after Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection (Acts 1:3) but before the Jewish leaders or the
Roman occupiers of Judea began taking further overt, violent action to repress the growing movement (Acts 7:57-58). For the Jewish leaders, it is a period of emerging threat, and a growing sense of fear, and hatred toward Christians (Keller, 1980). This growing internal strife and instability within the Jewish community at Jerusalem intersects with the underlying historical context of social unrest and, at times, violent reaction by Jewish zealots against Roman occupation and rule (Keller, 1980).

At the macro level, the pivotal time period recorded in the beginning of the book of Acts marks an historical transition of truly biblical proportions. Throughout the Old Testament, there are references to a period referred to in the Septuagint by the Greek word eschatos, *the last days* in English. This is the origin of the word eschatology, the doctrine of last or final things; the end of history (Tenney, 1967). In Acts 2:17-24, Peter argues, with scriptural support, that Jesus’ life constitutes an epochal moment delineating the entry of all mankind into the transformational last-days age that includes the current period (Keener, 2009). This belief was unofficially codified across the Holy Roman Empire through the adoption of the Gregorian calendar approximately 500 years later and remains the internationally accepted standard dating system to this day (Tenney, 1967). Peter announced this claim by altering the words of the prophet Joel while quoting him, when he said in Acts 2:17, “And it shall come to pass in the last days” rather than the original, “And it shall come to pass afterward” (Joel 2: 28, King James Version; Keener, 2009). Peter invokes God’s authority and attributes this statement to God’s name when he appends this statement with the declarative, “saith God” (Keener, 2009). The micro and macro level effects of this very specific time period illustrate the enormous and lasting impact this historical intertexture had and continues to have.

**Social Intertexture**

According to Robbins (1996), “Social intertexture occurs when the discourse refers to information that is generally available to people in the Mediterranean world” (p. 127). The second chapter of Acts makes several references to information that may have been considered common knowledge to those living in the area of the Mediterranean. These references are displayed in Table 4 below.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse(s)</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:5</td>
<td>“And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:7</td>
<td>“… Behold are not all these which speak Galileans”?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References to multiple Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern nationalities and languages.

“...These men are full of new wine”.

“... these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day”.

“... on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out... of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy”:

Reference to King David.

References to breaking bread.

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common”;

Note. King James Version

The first three references point to the extent to which Judaism had spread throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle-East, and to the cosmopolitan nature of Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish faith (Gilbert, 2002). Implied in this cross-cultural environment was a prejudice that country folk such as those from Galilee were unsophisticated and therefore unlikely to be multi-lingual (Grant, 1986). This was an assumption directed at Jesus himself during His ministry and a prejudice with which His disciples were certainly familiar (John 7:52; Grant, 1986). The next two references speak to a belief that passionate, unexplained displays of ecstasy were the result of drunkenness (Horst, 1985). Acts 2:18, like Joel 2:29, clarifies for a patriarchal society that God’s spirit will be poured out upon men and women alike. In Acts, the prophecy recorded in Joel 2:29 is appended with the additional words, “and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:18, King James Version; Keener, 2009). The message seems to be consistent with that later recorded by the apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, where he stated, “But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head...” (I Corinthians 11:5, King James Version). These references appear to be intended to prepare male-dominated Jewish and Gentile societies for a more active role by women than they were accustomed (Keener, 2009). Acts 2:29 makes reference to “the patriarch David,” King David, who was a widely recognized historical figure throughout the region (Horst, 1985). Chapter 2, verses 42 and 46, indicate strong social bonds formed when people share food together (Lawson, 2001). This behavior is common in Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern societies (Horst, 1985). According to Acts 2:44, the believers at Jerusalem formed a commune (Keener, 2009). While not unheard of in the Mediterranean world, it does appear to have been rare (Horst, 1985).

Cultural Intertexture

Robbins (1996) observed, “Cultural intertexture refers to the logic of a particular culture. This may be an extensive culture essentially co-extensive with the boundaries
of an empire, or it may be what Clifford Geertz describes as a ‘local’ culture” (p. 129). Overall the cultural context of the book of Acts is Mediterranean but many other, diverse cultures intersect with Mediterranean culture in the context of Acts (Robbins, 1996, p. 129). Robbins describes these as “many cultural voices... in dialogue” (p. 129). These voices, according to Robbins, include: “(a) Jewish diaspora discourse; (b) Greco-Roman discourse; [and] (c) Palestinian Jesus discourse (p. 129). As we shall see at the time of Acts 2, Pentecost 29 AD, Jerusalem became the temporary nexus of many of these cultures (Reese, 1977).

**Jewish diaspora discourse.** The first intertexture of Acts 2 with Jewish diaspora discourse is the reference to the believers in Jerusalem speaking, through the Holy Spirit, in other languages previously unknown to them (Acts 2:4). It soon becomes clear that the purpose of this miracle was to carry the Lord’s message to many Jews who were members of the diaspora (Acts 2:6-12; Gilbert 2002; Trull 2004). Since it was Pentecost (Acts 2:1; Ropes, 1923), a holy day to Jews, many Jews who were dispersed across many nations around the Mediterranean had gathered together in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:5; Gilbert, 2002; Trull, 2004; Wedderburn, 1994). Next, Peter appealed to this multi-national, multi-cultural audience of Jewish expatriates who had temporarily returned home with a unifying message that Joel’s prophecy and the hope of Israel had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:16-22; Trull, 2004). Peter also charged that, as Jews, even though they were not permanent residents of Jerusalem, they shared in the guilt of Jesus’ crucifixion (Acts 2:23). This charge resulted in their self-conviction and led to many of them being baptized (Acts 2:37-41). Given their transient presence in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5), Peter’s assurance that Christ’s promise of “the remission of sins” was available even to “all that are afar off” (Acts 2:38-39, King James Version), and Peter’s exhortation to “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40, King James Version), it would seem obvious that the result of this mass conversion would be to leverage the diaspora and quickly plant the seeds of Christianity in all those afar off places around the Mediterranean and Middle-East to which the Jews were dispersed (Wedderburn, 1994). Interestingly, Luke’s account of Peter’s speech is obviously truncated (Acts 2:40; Horsley as cited by Maxwell, 2006). We are left with no record as to the remainder of Peter’s words.

**Greco-Roman discourse.** Greco-Roman discourse is, in the example of Acts 2, essentially an additional cultural layer. If the broader Jewish diaspora discourse represents cultural intertexture at the macro level, and the Palestinian Jesus discourse represents cultural intertexture at the micro level, then the Greco-Roman discourse represents a middle layer of cultural intertexture. Many of the
nations among which the Jews were dispersed were, at this time, part of the Roman Empire (Gilbert, 2002) and had, prior to that, been part of Alexander’s Empire (deSilva, 2004). The Roman Empire’s communication infrastructure facilitated the rapid spread of Christianity as thousands of the diaspora who were baptized returned to their respective homes (Keller, 1980).

**Palestinian Jesus discourse.** The first instance of Palestinian Jesus discourse occurs in the first verse of Acts 2. It refers to all of Jesus’ followers being gathered together in “one place” (Acts 2:1, King James Version) in Jerusalem. It is at this point that Christ’s promise to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, in fulfillment of both His promise and Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-30) is realized (Acts 2:2-4). In Acts 2:22, Peter first explicitly references Jesus as the cause and the source of all the miracles described, past and present. Peter appeals to the audience members’ common faith and understanding of Old Testament scripture to prove that Jesus is the one of whom David prophesied in Psalm 16 (Juel, 1981; O’Toole, 1983; Trull 2001). The combined condemnation for Christ’s crucifixion and hope offered by Christ’s promise of the redemption of sins resulted in thousands at Jerusalem being baptized in the name of Jesus and the establishment of a growing Christian commune in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44-47; Keener, 2009).

**Acts Chapter 2: Implications for Leadership Theory**

In the Old Testament, God revealed His empowerment of leaders to others through prophecy. Examples include David, Cyrus, Jesus, etc. (I Samuel 16:1; Isaiah 45:1; Psalm 118:26). Peter, speaking to a Jewish audience, capitalized on this by quoting Old Testament prophecies regarding Christ, rehearsing how those prophecies were fulfilled through Christ, and ultimately using this to prove God’s empowerment of Jesus as the Christ and as the head of the church (Keener, 2009). He further used these arguments to establish Christ’s apostles, by extension of this authority, as the temporal leaders of the early church through His commission and the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 1:8; Estrada, 2004 cited in Shauf, 2006; Lawson, 2001; Robertson, 2005). The primary principle of leadership empowerment evident from this intertexture analysis is that all leadership empowerment flows to leaders, believers and unbelievers alike, directly from God. Acts serves as the greatest example of this principle as Peter confirmed Jesus was made “both Lord and Christ” by God (Acts 2:36, King James Version; Keener, 2009). A number of contemporary leadership theories are illustrated in Acts. These include charismatic, transformational, and ethical leadership theories. The following is a brief summary of each and description of how they relate to Acts.
Charismatic Leadership

Yukl (2010) cited Weber (1947), who stated,

Charisma occurs during a social crisis, when a leader emerges with a radical vision that offers a solution to the crisis and attracts followers who believe in the vision. The followers experience some successes that make the vision attainable, and they come to perceive the leader as extraordinary (p. 261).

Few contemporary leadership theories are more descriptive of Christ’s ministry than Weber’s description of charisma. What could be more extraordinary than not just the perception but the reality of conquering death? The book of Acts opens with a reminder to the reader that, at the time of this account, Jesus had been crucified, and resurrected Himself as He predicted in John 2:19. Acts 1:3 records His post-resurrection appearances to His apostles. By transitioning from a focus on the leader, Jesus, to one on the followers, His apostles, one may identify the charismatic influences on follower behavior. They are:

(1) articulating an appealing vision, (2) using strong, expressive forms of communication..., (3) taking personal risks and making self-sacrifices..., (4) communicating high expectations, (5) expressing optimism and confidence in followers, (6) modeling behaviors consistent with the vision, (7) managing follower impressions of the leader, (8) building identification with the group..., and (9) empowering followers (Yukl, 2010, p. 265).

Many of these influences may be observed in Acts. In the first chapter of Acts, Jesus strongly communicated an appealing vision, high expectations, and confidence in His apostles by informing them they will carry forth His message of salvation beyond Jerusalem to the farthest parts of the earth (Acts 1:5–8). This transformative message was punctuated by Jesus’ dramatic ascension into heaven (Acts 1:9). By this point, Jesus had already faced personal risk and made the ultimate sacrifice (Acts 1:3). All the testimonies of the New Testament agree that the behaviors Jesus modeled were consistent with a shared vision. While we sometimes think of “impression management” in a negative or inauthentic context, there are examples in the Scripture where Jesus appeared to manage at least the timing of His appearances. The disciples’ identification with the group developed over the entire course of His ministry and was based on emulating Christ’s personal example of following His Father’s Plan for Salvation (Luke 22:42). Lastly, there are many examples of Christ empowering His followers. In Acts 1:8, we find just one such example as Jesus specifically informed the apostles of their imminent empowerment to be delivered through the Holy Spirit.
Transformational Leadership

Similar to charismatic leadership, the guidelines for transformational leaders feature a number of the same or similar behaviors described above as charismatic influences on follower behavior. According to Yukl (2010), these transformational leadership guidelines are, “articulate a clear and appealing vision, explain how the vision can be attained, act confident and optimistic, express confidence in followers, use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values, lead by example” (p. 289). The significant overlap between these two sets of behaviors becomes obvious when presented in a tabular format as shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5
Comparison of Behaviors of Charismatic versus Transformational Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charismatic</th>
<th>Transformational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate an appealing vision</td>
<td>Articulate a clear and appealing vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using strong, expressive forms of communication</td>
<td>Use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking personal risks, and making self-sacrifices</td>
<td>Lead by example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating high expectations</td>
<td>Explain how the vision can be attained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing optimism and confidence in followers</td>
<td>Express confidence in followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling behaviors consistent with the vision</td>
<td>Lead by example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing follower impressions of the leader</td>
<td>Act confident and optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building identification with the group</td>
<td>Use dramatic, symbolic actions to emphasize key values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering followers</td>
<td>Express confidence in followers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Bass and Riggio (2006) described transformational leaders as those who, “empower followers and pay attention to their individual needs and personal development, helping followers to develop their own leadership potential” (as cited in Hickman, 2010, p. 77). This description appears to correlate strongly to Christ’s relationship with and development of His disciples. It is the last part of Bass and Riggio’s description that appears to distinguish transformational leadership from other leadership theories.
Focusing on “followers… personal development [and] helping followers to develop their own leadership potential” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, as cited in Hickman, 2010, p. 77). As with charismatic leadership, we again find evidence of these behaviors documented in Acts chapter 1, particularly in Acts 1:2-8.

Ethical Leadership

Yukl (2010), citing Trevino, Brown, and Hartman, (2003), noted that, “When asked to describe ethical leaders, executives identified several aspects of behavior and motives (e.g., honest, trustworthy, altruistic, fair), but they also identified aspects of behavior involving attempts to influence the ethical behavior of others” (p. 409). Yukl goes on to describe several similar leadership theories as different conceptions of ethical leadership. These theories are authentic, servant, and spiritual leadership (Yukl, 2010). Behaviors associated with each of these ethical leadership constructs are illustrated in the first two chapters of Acts.

Authentic leadership. Yukl (2010) identified the distinguishing characteristic of authentic leadership in this way, “The behavior of authentic leaders, including their espoused values, is consistent with their actual values” (p. 424). It is impossible to conceive of a leader more authentic than Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, one third of the Godhead, unmarred by sin, and one of His many names in Scripture is “Truth” (John 14:6, King James Version). Part of His purpose here on Earth was to model authentic behavior; to provide living proof that, through the Spirit, it is possible for man’s behavior and actual values to be consistent with those espoused and expected by God. Yukl stated that,

The core values for authentic leaders motivate them to do what is right and fair for followers, and to create a special kind of relationship with them that includes high mutual trust, transparency..., guidance toward worthy shared objectives, and emphasis on follower welfare and development.... An authentic relationship also means that followers share the leader’s values and beliefs, and followers recognize that the leader’s behavior is consistent with their shared values (p. 424).

Consider the examples of Jesus’ s authenticity displayed in Acts chapter 1. He proved Himself worthy of His followers’ trust by fulfilling seemingly fantastic promises He had earlier made to His apostles, to resurrect Himself after death and to reappear to them (Acts 1:3). Jesus’s care for His followers was so genuine that, rather than being immediately reunited with His Heavenly Father, He reassembled with His disciples and abided with them for more than a month (Acts 1:3). He reiterated His promise that the Father would soon send a Comforter, the Holy Ghost, to fill them with His Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). On the surface, one might think Jesus’ s response to His apostles’ questions

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regarding the restoration of an independent kingdom of Israel displayed a lack of transparency but that is not the case. He was being open and authentic with His disciples by simply informing them that the answer to their question rests with God and was not for them to know (Acts 1:6-7). Before departing for the final time, Christ left them with final guidance toward the shared goal of carrying His gospel around the world (Acts1:8).

**Servant leadership.** Yukl (2010) stated that, “Servant leadership in the workplace is about helping others to accomplish shared objectives by facilitating individual development, empowerment, and collective work that is consistent with the health and long-term welfare of followers” (p. 419). According to Greenleaf (1977), “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. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first....” (as cited in Hickman, 2010, p. 90). Key leader values associated with servant leadership share similarities with those documented for charismatic and transformational leadership. They include: “1. Integrity… 2. Altruism… 3. Humility… 4. Empathy and healing… 5. Personal growth... 6. Fairness and justice... 7. Empowerment...” (Yukl, 2010, p. 420).

Jesus may be considered the original servant leader. When His disciples disputed among themselves who was greatest, Jesus corrected them:

> And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves” (Luke 22:25-27, King James Version).

Throughout His ministry, Jesus personified all the values and behaviors associated with servant leadership. Jesus promised His disciples He would rise from the dead and reappear to them. He demonstrated integrity by fulfilling this promise (Acts 1:3). Jesus modeled the values of empathy and healing for His apostles as well as commitment to their development by remaining with them and continuing to instruct them regarding the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Lastly, He displayed the behavior of empowerment (Acts 1:8).

**Spiritual leadership.** “Spiritual leadership describes how leaders can enhance the intrinsic motivation of followers by creating conditions that increase their sense of spiritual meaning....” (Yukl, 2010, p. 421). Dent, Higgins, & Wharff (2005) observed, “Many authors and scholars link spirituality to... leadership
(Fairholm, 1998; Fry, 2003; Strack, Fottler, Wheatley, & Sodomka, 2002)” (p. 627). Yukl (2010) cited Fry (2003; 2005) who stated “spirituality… includes two essential elements in a person’s life. Transcendence of self is manifest in a sense of ‘calling’ or destiny, and the belief that one’s activities… have meaning and value beyond… obtaining economic benefits or self-gratification” (p. 422). Surely, if anyone ever had an authentic sense of calling or destiny, it was Jesus Christ. His life and ministry were prophesied many centuries before His coming (Acts 1:16; 2:16-36). His impact is even acknowledged by unbelievers. H.G. Wells wrote, “I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.” Jesus understood that His ministry, and that of the apostles after Him, was not focused on anything in this life. This is evident in His response to their questions regarding the re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6).

Conclusion

Leadership is much more than a human construct. It is divinely ordained and pre-existent. The concept of leadership; many specific leader-follower relationships, including the dyadic relationship between God and Christ; and the behaviors associated with several contemporary leadership theories may all be revealed in Holy Scripture through socio-rhetorical criticism. While the theoretical description and classification of these theories may be contemporary, their practice is ancient. What man has taken thousands of years to study and document has been codified in God’s Word from the beginning. “That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9, King James Version). Through the example of Jesus Christ, one may observe all the behaviors described by these theories enacted in a single book of the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles is just one such example. Christian leaders who wish to understand and follow the example of Jesus and His apostles as authentic, charismatic, transformational, spiritual servant leaders would be well served by studying this pericope.

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