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TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP

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With all the dynamic research in leadership over the past fifty years, the writings of Hickman,[1] Northouse,[2] and Yukl[3] reveal that leadership studies do not generally embrace theology in the leadership context. This study examines this reality and proposes a common language for the convergence of theology and leadership. A theological treatment of leadership is offered through an exegesis and socio-rhetorical critical analysis of the Christological hymn of Philippians 2:5-11, along with the application of the common language in this theological treatment. The paper concludes by applying the convergence of theology and leadership as found in this text to social definitions of leadership and transformational leadership theory.

I: Foundational Definitions

The great proliferation of ideas and methodologies that explore organizations and leadership over the past fifty years reveals that there is a wide variety of theoretical approaches that explain the leadership phenomenon. Collectively, the research findings provide a picture of a process that is sophisticated and complex, as well as theories that inform the practice of leadership. As the empirical bases, theoretical development, and methodological foundation of the field of leadership continue to evolve, it is evident by

[1] Gill R. Hickman, *Leading Organizations: Perspectives for a New Era* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998).
[2] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004).
[3] Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organization,* 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002).

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omission that theological considerations of leadership are not penetrating the literature of leadership, nor keeping pace in terms of advancement. One reason may be understood at a foundational level. While theology attempts to explain God,[4] leadership is essentially man-centered as it is anthropological and sociological in nature.[5] Investigating in greater detail the definitions of theology and leadership aids in understanding this divergence; it also builds a basis for the interrelation between the two.

Theology Defined

Garrett states that theology is "the ordered consideration or study of God."[6] As is common in other fields of study, the long history of theological studies is as varied as the authors who pursue such studies and reflects multidimensional strains of analysis and reporting. For instance, some theologians approach theology from a pure historical perspective by simply examining diverse theologians in history and their theologies.[7] Others speak of theology in a philosophical way, dealing almost exclusively with philosophical, linguistic, or sociological matters as a way of explaining God.[8] Karleen asserts that this view of theology attempts to organize data from all sources concerning God and his activities (e.g., history, philosophy, logic, law, and other fields) and often seeks to explain God without significant reference to the Bible.[9] Alternatively, Hodge discusses that there are theologians that approach theology as a science. He claims that a scientific approach in any field of study should move beyond the tactile recordation of data to the systematic organization of that data so that meaning may be assigned.[10] The science of theology must therefore include something more than a mere knowledge of facts. It must embrace an exhibition of the internal relation of those facts, one to another, and each to all.

The comments by Hodge lay the foundation for understanding the evolution of a common approach in biblical theology that pursues the systemization of biblical matter into a coherent a posteriori schema. This approach has become known as "systematic theology." Discussing the nature of systematic theology, Hodge states that the Bible is no more a system of theology than nature is a system of chemistry or mechanics. We find in nature the facts that the chemist or mechanical philosopher has to examine and from them ascertain the laws by which they are determined. Likewise, the Bible contains the truths that the theologian has to collect, authenticate, arrange, and exhibit in their internal relation to each other. Hodge states, "This (process) constitutes the difference between biblical and systematic theology. The onus of the former is to ascertain and state the facts of Scripture. The office of the latter is to take those facts,

[4] Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985)

[5] Robert Layton, *An Introduction to Theory in Anthropology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[6] James L. Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 2.

[7] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (1872; repr. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 1-2.

[8] Paul S. Karleen, *The Handbook to Bible Study: With a Guide to the Scofield Study System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[9] Ibid.

[10] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*.

determine their relation to each other and to other cognate truths, vindicate them, and show their harmony and consistency."[11]

From systematic approaches to biblical theology have arisen such categories as Calvinistic theology, Reformed theology, Armenian theology, Covenant theology, Dispensational theology, and others.[12] All reflect assumptions and paradigms that drive the discussion and practice of systematic theology, as well as nuances of differentiation within each paradigm.

Delimiting Leadership

As opposed to theology that seeks to explain God, leadership concerns itself with the person of the leader and the dynamics between leaders and followers that result in a form of influence.[13] Yet, in delimiting leadership one may become as perplexed as Burns, "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth."[14] As in Baker's speech, some people see leadership effectiveness solely related to the accomplishment of important tasks: "leadership is knowing what needs to be done . . . and getting it done."[15] Increased evidence in recent years seems to suggest that social effectiveness skills are crucial: "leadership is a social influence exerted on individuals and/or groups to achieve goals."[16] Congruent with the social skills paradigm—and though much debate remains about its veracity in relation to leadership—emotional intelligence has emerged as one of the most notable leadership effectiveness constructs.[17]

Other definers of leadership emphasize certain sophisticated leadership behaviors: "contextual thinking, directional clarity, creative assimilation, reciprocal communications, change orchestration, drive and perseverance."[18] Bass's model of transformational leadership stands atop this line of thought. He outlines four behaviors that represent effectiveness in leadership as these behaviors transform followers: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence.[19] Jesus described an effective leader as quintessentially one with a capacity to serve and love his or her followers.[20] Additionally, some researchers see

[11] Ibid., 3.
[12] Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997, c1989).
[13] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice.*
[14] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1978), 158.
[15] James Baker, former US Secretary of State, "Coalition Building during the Gulf War" (speech, October 26, 2001).
[16] Philip A. Lewis, *Transformational Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 61.
[17] Douglas L. Prati et al., "Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Effectiveness, and Team Outcomes," *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 11, no. 1 (2004): 21-40.
[18] Human Resource Development Press, (2004), www.hrdpressonline.com/product_info/leadership_effectiveness_profile.htm.
[19] Bernard M. Bass, "From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision," *Organizational Dynamics* 18, no. 3 (1990): 19-36.
[20] Luke 22:24-27 (New International Version).

other matters as predictive of leader success. These include situational elements,[21] the skill to embrace chaos and ambiguity,[22] and the quality and willingness of followers.[23]

While the above definitions of leadership reflect only a small percentage of the ways people have sought to explain leadership over the past fifty years, the examples illustrate the variety of assumptions and the multitude of definitions of the construct.

The Need for Convergence

Though there is multidimensionality within the parameters of the definitions of theology and leadership, the limited scope of the definition of each resulting in the exclusive objects of study move the fields of theology and leadership naturally apart. Reflecting this drift, many Bible colleges and seminaries ignore the training of pastors in leadership implying that it is not within their purview and, in effect, convey the message that if a minister understands the nature of God and the doctrines of faith, that is enough.[24] Yet extensive work by authors such as Welch, Barna, and Schwarz into the declining effectiveness of church leaders demonstrates that theological education alone is not adequate. In an era where church leaders receive more theological training than ever, Barna asserts through his studies that leadership is the primary problem facing the future of evangelical churches.[25] Welch's investigation shows that graduates of seminaries, facing now the realities of ministry, regret that they did not receive more leadership training.[26]

Schwartz's groundbreaking research goes even further. His study in the 1990s into over 1,000 churches across the globe reveals that formal theological training of church leaders had a generally negative correlation to both church growth and overall quality of churches.[27] This may be due in part to a pastor's excessive reliance upon teaching and doctrine (at the expense of exercising leadership) to grow the church and impact people. Welch, Barna, and Schwartz depict that many people extensively trained in Bible and theology lack the ability to contextualize that knowledge and make it effectually alive in the hearts of people. These concerns fall within the domain of leadership studies.

While theology often excludes considerations of leadership, the writings of Northouse[28] and Yukl[29] reveal that leadership studies do not generally embrace theology in the leadership context. Yet, the number of books describing the problems of leadership, the lack of moral and ethical clarity in the principles and practices of

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[21] Paul Hershey and Ken Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982).

[22] Karl E. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

[23] Ira Chaleff, *The Courageous Follower: Standing up to and for our Leaders* (San Francisco: Barrett & Koehler, 1995).

[24] Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005).

[25] George Barna, ed., *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People,* The Leading Edge Series (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997).

[26] Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry.*

[27] Christian A. Schwartz, *Natural Church Development* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996).

[28] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice.*

[29] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations.*

leadership, the egocentric outcomes of leadership, the inner dysfunctions of leaders, and the relationship of these dysfunctions to behaviors are profuse.[30] From the literature it seems that leaders trained intensely and exclusively in the theories, skills, and strategies of leadership have no guarantee of well-being or effectiveness. The writings above reflect a moral and spiritual void in leadership that results in a lack of clarity, security, and purpose so necessary for leaders today. These authors provide substantial evidence as to the need for something more. Could theology speak to these issues and possibly other matters relevant to leadership theory?

Concerns and observations in this discussion beg the question: Is there a need for a theology of leadership, and could a convergence of the concepts enhance and enlighten both subjects? Or, could a combination of the concepts, rather than speaking to each field separately, provide a holistic paradigm that empowers scholars and Christian ministers alike? To answer these questions, this article posits a theology of leadership by establishing a common language to aid the convergence of the fields. Then, a theological treatment of leadership is offered by applying the common language to the Christological hymn of Philippians 2:5-11, one of the earliest biblical texts describing the leadership, purpose, and focus of the Christ.[31]

II: Establishing a Common Language

In spite of the quintessential disparity between theology and leadership, there is precedence for convergence and common language. Some scholars argue that theology only reflects man's social constructions of God; thus, it provides strong links between theology and sociology (e.g., "sociology of religion").[32] Within the subcategory of study called "anthropology of religion," anthropologists investigate religion in history and culture and shed light on the ways man has understood God and practiced allegiance to the Deity.[33] Theologians and anthropologists have long used the term "anthropomorphism" (*anthropos*, man; *morphe*, form), meaning "a phrase employed to

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[30] Les Carter and Jim Underwood, *The Significance Principle* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998); Kevin Cashman, *Leadership from the Inside Out* (Provo, UT: Executive Excellence, 1998); Richard Foster, *Money, Sex and Power* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985); John W. Gardner, *Self Renewal: The Individual and the Innovative Society* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1963); Os Guinness, *Character Counts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999); James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1993); Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985); Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, , Sr., *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997); Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); Michael R. Milco, *Ethical Dilemmas in Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1997); Samuel D. Rima, *Leading from the Inside Out* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000); Thomas J. Stevenin, *People Power* (Chicago, IL: Northfield, 1996).

[31] John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1969).

[32] Max Weber, *Sociology of World Religions: Introduction* (2005), http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/world/intro/world_intro.html#ide-int; Ronald L. Johnstone, *Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion,* 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003); Alan Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World: A Sociological Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000).

[33] John R. Bowen, *Religions in Practice: An Approach to the Anthropology of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Allyn & Bacon Publishing, 2002); Michael Lambeck, ed., *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion* (Ames, IA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

designate any view of God's nature that conceives of him as possessing or exercising any attributes common to him with mankind."[34] Some theologians and philosophers broaden the term by claiming that any and all language describing Deity is anthropomorphist in nature, i.e., we cannot understand God but through human conceptions, attributes, and words.[35] Johnson and Duberly posit that the history of epistemology itself has vacillated between the paradigms of positivism that claim objective, external reality discovered via the scientific method and a conventionalist or postmodern epistemology describing knowledge as socially constructed through subjective assumptions.[36] These sociological, anthropological, theological, and epistemological assertions in relation to the knowledge of God provide for the fusion of theology and leadership and blur the lines between the two offering a more inclusive and paradoxical approach to the analysis.

In leadership studies, Greenleaf's seminal work brought the phrase "servant leadership" into existence.[37] His research posits that leadership practiced in a manner consistent with the divine attributes of Jesus' servant character is effective and influential. Though by omission it is readily seen that the construct of servant leadership has not yet become a recognized part of conventional leadership literature, Greenleaf introduced practical theology into leadership theory and laid the groundwork for future empirical validation of the construct.[38]

Edwards states that attempting to converge and integrate different concepts and disciplines of study begins with developing a common language.[39] Figure 1 illustrates this detail. The language must reveal and remain consistent with the conceptual realities of each subject without changing the essence of each.

Philosophy has long been the arbiter of language defining ways of speaking about meaning and reality.[40] Some have called philosophy "the spawning ground of conceptual frameworks which then become the bases for new sciences."[41] Edwards states that whether or not this is what philosophy actually is, it has undoubtedly been one of philosophy's main functions. Due to philosophy's role in determining language that is universally valid and applied across disciplines, traditional terms that contain philosophical validity are sought for this discussion and provide credibility to the argument for the convergence of theology and leadership. These terms are ontology, methodology, and teleology.

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[34] Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 131.

[35] Erickson, *Christian Theology;* Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2.

[36] Phil Johnson and Joanne Duberly, *Understanding Management Research* (London: Sage, 2000).

[37] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977).

[38] Myra L. Farling, A. Gregory Stone, and Bruce E. Winston, "Servant Leadership: Setting the Stage for Empirical Research," *The Journal of Leadership Studies* (1999); Paul Wong and Don Page, "Servant Leadership: An Opponent-Process Model and the Revised Servant Leadership Profile" (paper, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA, 2003); Kathleen A. Patterson, "Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model" (paper, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA, 2003).

[39] Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vols. 4, 7, and 8 (New York: MacMillan Company and The Free Press, 1967).

[40] Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* vols. 4, 7 and 8*;* William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press.1980); Chris Rohmann, *A World of Ideas* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999); Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[41] Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 4, 389.

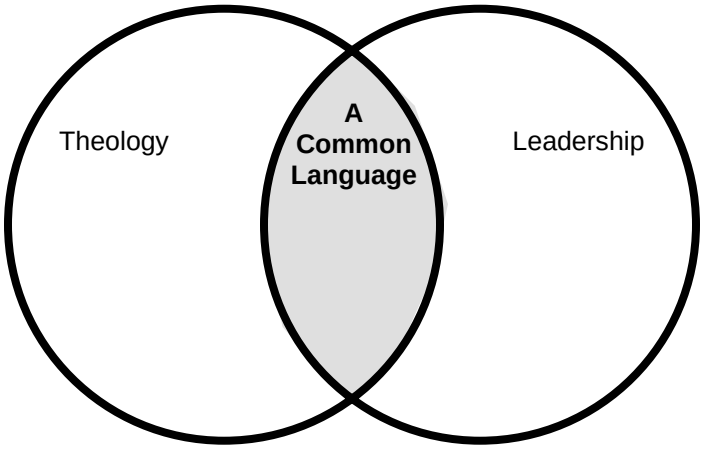

Figure 1. Creating a common language.

Ontology

Derived from the Greek *ontos* ("being") and *logos* ("knowledge"), the classic philosophic term "ontology" means the knowledge of being and refers to what is sometimes called "first science" or "first philosophy."[42] Ontology is concerned with what it means to "exist," i.e., to be, and leads to a priori thought or knowledge arising from a concept or principle that precedes empirical verification.[43] Throughout the centuries, ontological arguments have primarily occurred in relation to God's existence, but have also perpetuated other philosophical concepts such as "sufficient reason," "necessary beings or things," and "contingency."[44] Many modern philosophers see ontology in terms of a logical and linguistic form stating that something exists dependent upon the values we assign to the vocabulary we happen to use when referring to it.[45] This adjectival association of the term is more common today in many fields of study signified with the phrase "ontology of" and defines for disciplines—such as linguistics, law, information science, and genetics—forms of basic structure in the "essence" or "first matters" of things.[46]

[42] Rohmann, *A World of Ideas,* 41.

[43] Erickson, *Christian Theology*; Rohmann, *A World of Ideas*; Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*.

[44] Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*.

[45] Rohmann, *A World of Ideas.*

[46] Alexander Maedche, *Ontology Learning for the Semantic Web*, The Kluwer International Series in Engineering and Computer Science, vol. 665 (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002); Bran Selic, Richard Benjamins, Pompeu Casanovas, and Aldo Gangemi, eds. *Law and the Semantic Web: Legal Ontologies, Methodologies, Legal Information Retrieval, and Applications* (New York: Springer, 2005); Steven Gross, *Essays on Linguistic Context Sensitivity and Its Philosophical Significance* (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2001); Richard C. Lewontin, et al., *Modern Genetic Analysis: Integrating Genes and Genomes*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. H. Freeman. 2002).

Theology and ontology. The major a priori or rational argument for God's existence is the ontological argument.[47] Reese and Erickson state that the ontological argument was first formulated by Anselm (AD 1093-1109) in his *Proslogion* when he states that God is the being that nothing greater can be conceived and that God is conceptually necessary.[48] According to Anselm, these two points logically lead to the conclusion that God must exist.[49] The ontological argument has been promulgated through the centuries by people such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Barth, and Hartshorne.[50] Immanuel Kant is most widely known for challenging its validity.[51] For the sake of this discussion, it is important to note that the ontological argument for God moves from the definition of his nature as a perfect being to the conclusion that he exists.

Evolving from the ontological argument, evangelical theologians such as Erickson, Garrett, and Strong describe God in terms of his character and nature.[52] Just as God is non-contingent and necessary in and of himself, his attributes can be described in the form of that which is absolute and relative:

> The absolute attributes of God are those which he has in himself. He has always possessed these qualities independently of his creation. The relative attributes, on the other hand, are those which are manifested through his relationship to other subjects and inanimate objects. Infinity is an absolute attribute; eternity and omnipresence are relative attributes representing the relationship of his unlimited nature to the finite objects of the creation.[53]

Erickson posits some of the absolute or self-contained qualities of God (we might even say "ontological qualities") as spirituality, personality, life, infinity, and constancy.

The theological discussion by Erickson of God's absolute and relative attributes allows us to understand more fully ontology as it is often referred to today.[54] God's absolute attributes that are noncontingent and self-existent (his ontological qualities) could be thought of in terms of "who God is," i.e., his nature and essence. On the other hand, his relative attributes that exist in relation to his creation are the expressions of his nature. These we witness in the tactile world. They allow us to know God, understand who he is, and relate to him. They could be termed "what God does" and they provide clues to his nature.

Ontology of leadership. Bennis states, "I am surer now than ever that the process of becoming a leader is the same process that makes a person a healthy, fully integrated human being."[55] Thompson concurs, "It is our position that the leadership

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[47] Erickson, *Christian Theology.*
[48] Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*; Erickson, *Christian Theology.*
[49] Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion.*
[50] Ibid.
[51] Erickson, *Christian Theology.*
[52] Erickson, *Christian Theology;* Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2*;* Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Old Tappen, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1979).
[53] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 267.
[54] Erickson, *Christian Theology.*
[55] Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader,* rev. ed. (New York: Perseus Publishing, 2003), xxiv.

qualities that will be required of corporate executives are not skills that can be learned. . . . Our premise is that leadership is not exceptional, but the natural expression of the fully functional personality."[56] Bennis and Thompson reflect the understanding that leadership begins with the person of the leader. They would argue that leadership is not primarily about what one does, but first a matter of who one is. In other words, we lead from who we are.

Yet general research in the discipline of leadership has not thoroughly considered the inner phenomena of leadership nor investigated ontological aspects of leaders that affect behavior. Among other authors, Palmer illustrates the need to do so. He says that many leaders possess deep insecurity about their identity and worth and thus exhibit behavior that undermines leadership. Their leadership actions flow from insecurity; instead of leading for the benefit of others and the organization, they lead for the purpose of proving themselves as being good, right, effective, or competent.[57] Gergen also spoke of the inner disposition of leaders and the external effect of that disposition. He used the example of former President Richard Nixon stating, "At one moment he could be splendidly remote, almost regal, and in the next, snarling and angry at any hiss that came from the bushes."[58] Hendricks may have summarized the argument most succinctly when he said, "The greatest crisis in the world today is a crisis of leadership. And the greatest crisis in leadership is a crisis of character."[59]

Consistent with the contemporary philosophical and theological use of the term "ontology" as described earlier, I reserve the phrase "ontology of leadership" for that sphere concerned with the inner, a priori nature of the leader and define it as a new framework by which to investigate the innate needs, views of reality, internal disposition, and hidden dynamics of leaders, thereby making manifest any evidence of leadership behavior.

Methodology

The term "methodos," strictly speaking, means "following a way" from the Greek *meta* ("along") and *odos* ("way").[60] Edwards stated that in philosophy "method" refers to the specification of steps that must be taken to achieve a given end: "The nature of the steps and the details of their specifications depend on the end sought and on the variety of ways of achieving it."[61] Speaking of "methodology," he notes the term as the branch of the philosophy of science that takes upon itself the examination and critical analysis of the special ways in which the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines.[62] Blackburn discusses methodology as the general study

[56] John W. Thompson, *Corporate Leadership in the 21st Century* (1991), www.acumen.com/pdf/corporate.pdf, 1.
[57] Palmer as cited in Larry C. Spears, *Insights on Leadership* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1998).
[58] David Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 28.
[59] Howard Hendricks (May 2003), www.dts.edu/ccl/.
[60] Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 4.
[61] Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 339.
[62] Ibid.

of method in particular fields of inquiry, e.g., science, history, mathematics, psychology, philosophy, and ethics.[63]

Understanding methodology from Edwards and Blackburn informs the use of the term for this discussion. In the process of developing a common language, it is rational to move from the a priori nature of God and the leader to the praxis (or method) of each, i.e., what they "do" to accomplish their desired ends. In this sense, methodology and ontology are tightly connected as methodology flows from the nature of the person of God and the leader. Edwards states that methodology takes upon itself the examination of the special ways in which the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines.[64]

Methodology and theology. God's methods flow from and are perfectly consistent with his nature.[65] Not only do we define God with ontological attributes that are self-contained, we gain clues to his nature from his actions (see discussion of absolute and relative qualities of God). In classical Christian theology, these tactile aspects of God's nature are categorized in two ways: God's "general revelation" of himself and God's "special revelation" of himself to humankind.[66] Garrett delimits the terms in the following manner:

> General revelation is that disclosure of God which is available to all human beings through the created universe (nature) and in the inner nature of human beings (conscience). On the contrary, "special" revelation is the historical disclosure of God to the people of Israel and in Jesus Christ. The distinctly Christian revelation of God is, therefore, special or historical revelation.[67]

Christian evangelical theologians such as Erickson, Garrett, Strong, and Walvoord strongly argue that the Bible bears witness to God's general revelation and is itself a part of God's special revelation, both of which are magnanimously fulfilled in Jesus Christ. According to them, Jesus (as will be seen in the Christological hymn section) is the epitome and summative revelation of God giving supreme evidence of God's "ontos" by perfectly expressing the actions of God consistent with his nature.[68]

Methodology and leadership. Research into the phenomenon of leadership has led to theories that essentially focus on tactile traits or necessary behaviors of leaders, i.e., methodology of leadership that has evidence of effectiveness. To illustrate this point, the examination now focuses briefly on the major groups of leadership theories contained within the history of leadership studies.

One of the earliest approaches for studying leadership was the trait approach.[69] This approach emphasizes attributes of leaders such as personality, motives, values, and skills. Yukl explains that underlying the assumption of trait theory is that some

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[63] Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*.
[64] Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, 339.
[65] Erickson, *Christian Theology;* Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2.
[66] Erickson, *Christian Theology;* Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2*;* Strong, *Systematic Theology.*
[67] Garrett, *Systematic Theology, vol. 1-2,* 323.
[68] Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord.*
[69] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice.*

people are natural leaders and endowed with particular traits not possessed by others; therefore, they manifest certain effective leadership behavior.[70]

Whereas trait theory asserts that effective leaders possess common traits, whether born with or learned, great man theory posits that powerful leaders are endowed at birth with innate qualities.[71] Matched with historic situations and the fate of timing, these qualities produce effective leaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke refer to the prominent place of this theory in leadership research. They state that it is unequivocally clear that leaders are not like other people; they possess the "right stuff," and this stuff is not equally present in everyone.[72]

Moving past trait theory and great man theory, research turned to how leaders behaved toward followers. This became the dominant way of approaching leadership within organizations in the 1950s and early 1960s.[73] Different patterns of behavior were grouped together and labeled as styles. This became a very popular activity within management training—perhaps the best known being Blake and Mouton's managerial grid.[74] Various schemes appeared; despite different names, the basic ideas were very similar.

Social theory of leadership suggests, "since the practice of management relies heavily on social influence processes, social influence motivation as measured by power motivation, measure of desire for influence, or measures of pro-social influence motivation (often inappropriately labeled dominance), will be predictive of managerial success and leader effectiveness."[75] The theory holds that leadership is a process by which individuals and groups work toward the common goal of improving the quality of life for all. The motivation for this work comes from social exchanges between leader and follower.[76]

Fiedler's contingency theory assumes that group performance depends on leadership style, described in terms of task motivation and relationship motivation, and situational favorableness.[77] Situational favorableness was determined by three factors: (1) leader-member relations—the degree to which a leader is accepted and supported by the group members, (2) task structure—the extent to which the task is structured and defined, with clear goals and procedures, and (3) position power—the ability of a leader to control subordinates through reward and punishment.[78] Fiedler suggests that it may be easier for leaders to change their situation to achieve effectiveness, rather than change their leadership style.

One prominent leadership theory receiving much focus today is Bass's (1990) model of transformational leadership. He outlines four behaviors that represent

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[70] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations.*

[71] Shelley A. Kirkpatrick and Edwin W. Locke, "Leadership: Do Traits Matter?," *Academy of Management Executive* 5 (1991): 48-60.

[72] Ibid., 49.

[73] Michele E. Doyle and Mark K. Smith, *Classical Leadership. The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* (2001), www.infed.org/leadership/traditional_leadership.htm.

[74] Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, *The New Managerial Grid* (Houston, TX: Gulf, 1978).

[75] Robert J. House and Ram N. Aditya, "The Social Scientific Study of Leadership: Quo Vadis?," *Journal of Management* 23, no. 3 (1997): 409-473.

[76] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations.*

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

effectiveness in leadership as these behaviors transform followers: (1) individualized consideration, (2) intellectual stimulation, (3) inspirational motivation, and (4) idealized influence. Northouse (2004) states that transformational leadership refers to the process "whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower."[79] Most concur that transformational leadership takes place over time as leaders develop "trust, admiration, loyalty and respect."[80]

The theories above suggest a progression in thought as to the phenomenon of leadership and, though certainly not exhaustive of the theories of leadership, are exemplary for the discussion. The varied definitions, the past and present research, and all the analysis done throughout the years provide evidence that method and methodology (i.e., what leaders do) has taken center stage in the research. This paradigm of investigation is consistent with the positivism of the modern era.[81] The review also reveals that causal connections have not adequately been made between who a leader is (*ontos*) and what he does (*methodos*).

Teleology

From the Greek *telos* ("end") and *logos* ("discourse" or "doctrine"), teleology refers to "the doctrine that ends, final causes, or purposes are to be invoked as principles of explanation."[82] Blackburn calls teleology "the study of ends or purposes of things."[83] Edwards provides a framework for its use in this discussion in that the term functions as a way of completing philosophic thoughts about certain constructs:

> The term locates a series of connected philosophical questions. If we grant that there is such a thing as purposive or goal-directed activity (as we must, since for example, a political campaign aimed at victory represents a clear, uncontroversial case), we may ask the following questions: (1) By what criteria do we identify purposive activity? (2) What is the nature of the systems that exhibit purposive activity? (3) Does the nature of purposive activity require us to employ special concepts or special patterns of description and explanation that are not needed in an account of nonpurposive activity?[84]

This explanation and the questions cited within it allow the connection of ontology, methodology, and teleology. Edwards infers an ontological question by asking, "What is the nature of the systems that exhibit purposive activity?" He goes on to allude to the philosophic category of methodology by drawing a distinction between functional activity (methodological) and purposive activity (teleological), but then connects the two by offering a possible relationship.[85]

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[79] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* 170.
[80] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 253.
[81] Johnson and Duberly, *Understanding Management Research*.
[82] Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, 571.
[83] Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, 374.
[84] Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, 88.
[85] Ibid.

It becomes obvious then that philosophy seeks to move the matter of understanding ourselves and the world around us from ontology (something exists) to methodology (What happened to help us understand what exists?, i.e., the science of praxis), to teleology (What is the purpose of such existence?). Theology and leadership intersect at these questions.

Theology and teleology. The term "teleology" is well understood in theology. The word expresses a historical argument for God's existence, moving from the purposive design of the universe to the necessary existence of a designer, or God.[86] Garrett states that it is the fifth argument set forth by Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225-1274) in his *Summa Theologica*.[87] Accordingly, it is said that planets, animals, and plants "work for an end" of which they seem to lack knowledge. The fact that they normally attain their end comes "by design, not by chance." Hence, there must be "an intelligent being by whom all natural things are directed to their end."[88] William Paley (1743-1805) set forth this argument in classic form with the analogy of the watch.[89] He asks that if a man comes upon a watch lying in a field, will he not naturally conclude (due to the watch's order and complexity) that it exists as a result of an intelligent designer and not by accident?[90] Therefore, according to Paley, it is more reasonable to assume the purpose and design of a Creator, rather than the random establishment of the universe. Though Kant and others have raised objections to the teleological argument, it stands as one of the major philosophical grounds for belief in God.[91]

Christian theologians such as Garrett, Erickson, and Strong embrace the teleological argument for God's existence but demand more from the concept. Strong advances the principle that while the teleological argument is ample in understanding that a Designer (God) exists, it fails to reveal other critical teleological dimensions of God as expressed within Christian tradition. Though the argument postulates the fact of a Designer, and that in an a posteriori manner, we conclude that there is purpose in his design and the teleological argument does not provide enough evidence as to what *kind* of Designer exists or what exactly is the purpose in his design. These questions are absolved via the specific revelation of God through the Bible and ultimately in Jesus Christ.

Teleology and leadership. Leadership has always been concerned with the purpose of influence and the goal of "getting results."[92] Winston, in fact, argues that leadership may only be measured in an a posteriori manner, namely, in the results that it gains in followers: "Thus, if you have no followers you have no measure of leadership."[93] Leadership in this sense is follower-centric and may be argued void of ontological considerations of the leader. Discussing leadership exclusively in this

[86] Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Aquinas as cited in Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2, 86-87.
[89] Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Strong, *Systematic Theology.*
[92] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations;* Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice.*
[93] Bruce Winston, "Traits Followers Esteem in Leaders" (online dialogue, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA: February 19, 2005).

framework may also minimize the content of leader methodology by essentially stating that if influence and desired ends are accomplished, the means by which to achieve them are optional. So the question is begged: Is there (or should there be) a connection between what a leader does and what his or her purpose is in doing it? Or, in other words, for what purpose do leaders influence? And even more specifically, what is the proper purpose by which leaders should lead? This is a question of teleology.

Inherent in the discussion of teleology in leadership is the need to address such topics as morality, ethics, and spirituality. Here motivations of the leader and the content of those motivations are investigated. In lieu of the unwillingness of positivistic researchers to discuss such "soft" topics, some such as Seidel illustrate the absurdity of trying to avoid the inclusion of them.[94] He argues that all leadership seeks a goal or purpose that goes beyond the direct influence of followers. In effect, the *telos* of all leadership, though in a tactile way may seem to only be the influence of followers, is directly tied to the benevolent or malevolent nature of the leader. Authors in more recent years understand this notion and are focusing scholarly attention toward inner qualities of leaders such as authenticity, ethics, love, emotions, and integrity.[95] These subjects contain a moral distinction and presume that leadership begins in the heart of the leader and often dictates his or her actions.

Summary

In the process of establishing the common language of ontology, methodology, and teleology, imbrications of the concepts of theology and leadership emerge and provide a framework for convergence. First, it is argued that theology possesses an ontological, methodological, and teleological structure. Simply stated, theology seeks to explain who God is, what he has done, and what his purposes are for humankind. God's *ontos* is his self-contained nature. It is who he is. The statement of God to Moses in Exodus 3:14 is consummate and exemplifies this fact, "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Theology

[94] Andrew Seidel, *Leadership Directions* (curriculum written for the College of Biblical Studies, Houston, TX: MSCL 4631 Student Guide, 2005).

[95] Bruce J. Avolio et al., "Unlocking the Mask: A Look at the Process by Which Authentic Leaders Impact Follower Attitudes and Behaviors," *The Leadership Quarterly* 15 (2004): 801–823; Bernard M. Bass and Paul Steidlmeier, "Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership Behavior," *Leadership Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1999): 181–217; Ronald H. Humphrey, "The Many Faces of Emotional Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 493–504; Howard Harris, "Is Love a Management Virtue?," *Business and Professional Journal* 21 (2002): 3-4; Janet R. McColl-Kennedy and Ronald D. Anderson, "Impact of Leadership Style and Emotions on Subordinate Performance," *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 545–559; S. Bartholomew Craig and Sigrid B. Gustafson, "Perceived Leader Integrity Scale: An Instrument for Assessing Employee Perceptions of Leader Integrity," *Leadership Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1998): 127-145; Patrick A. Duignan and Narattam Bhindi, "Authenticity in Leadership: An Emerging Perspective," *Journal of Education Administration* 35, no. 3 (1997): 125-209; Tiffany Keller and Ron Cacioppe, "Leader-Follower Attachments: Understanding Parental Images at Work," *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* 22, no. 2 (2001): 70-75; Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice;* Patterson, "Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model"; Rima, *Leading from the Inside Out;* John J. Sosika, Bruce Avolio, and Dong I. Jung, "Beneath the Mask: Examining the Relationship of Self-Presentation Attributes and Impression Management to Charismatic Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 217–242; Bruce E. Winston, *Be a Leader for God's Sake* (Virginia Beach, VA: Regent University School of Leadership Studies, 2002).

also addresses God's *methodos.* Erickson describes this as his relative attributes, i.e., his acts in relation to humans and may be categorized by the terms "general revelation" and "special revelation."[96] The *telos* of God is certainly a topic of theology among Christian theologians. It could be summarized that writers such as Garrett, Erickson, and Strong posit that God's ultimate purpose in creation and in history is to bring glory to himself by reconciling men and women to himself through Christ.[97]

Leadership may also be explained using the language of ontology, methodology, and teleology. The writings of Northouse, Yukl, and Pugh and Hickson reveal that leadership is about the person of a leader (i.e., "who he is"—the ontology of leadership) expressing behavior (i.e., a methodology) to accomplish a desired end (i.e., teleology).[98] Ontologically, leadership is concerned with the existence and essence of the one leading. That is, when we talk about leadership we must include the character, nature, and disposition of the leader. What is the *ontos* of the leader? As Bennis states, this is the first matter of leadership:

> But until you truly know yourself, strengths and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the word. The leader never lies to himself, especially about himself, knows his flaws as well as his assets, and deals with them directly.[99]

The multitude of theories and practices of leadership in the research over the past fifty years describes the methodologies offered in the field. A *methodos* of leadership might reflect the leader's "theory in use,"[100] behaviors, skills, or standard operating practices that leaders individually employ in the exercise of their leadership. Though not always deliberately present, the teleological dimensions of leadership are also manifest in the literature of leadership. Seidel illustrates that whether it be a selfish purpose or an altruistic purpose, all leaders are guided by some sort of *telos.*[101]

But how do the fields of theology and leadership converge based upon the categories of ontology, methodology, and teleology? How is a "theology of leadership" formed? For this discussion we turn to the Christological hymn of Philippians 2:5-11, the premiere biblical text illustrating the work and nature of Christ.[102] Hermeneutic analysis and sacred-texture analysis of the text occurs.

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[96] Erickson, *Christian Theology.*

[97] Erickson, *Christian Theology;* Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1-2; Strong, *Systematic Theology.*

[98] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations;* Derek S. Pugh and David J. Hickson, *Great Writers on Organizations*, 2nd ed. (Aldeshot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 1999).

[99] Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader,* 40.

[100] Chris Argyris, "Teaching Smart People How to Learn," *Harvard Business Review* 69, no. 3 (1991): 99-109.

[101] Seidel, *Leadership Directions*.

[102] Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord.*

III: The Christological Hymn of Philippians 2:5-11

From Exegesis to Application

Woolfe states, "The Bible is a repository of spiritual guidance and religious vision—but it also happens to be the greatest resource for leadership ever written."[103] The Christological hymn of Philippians 2:5-11 is no exception. Yet, any implications to leadership from the Scripture must be based upon proper exegesis and hermeneutic principles. Without such, misguided interpretations take place upon which "theories" are built.[104] In order to extrapolate the passage from Philippians to modern leadership contexts, some general exegetical, hermeneutical, and application-focused processes are offered.

With respect to New Testament epistles, Fee and Stuart state two initial principles for interpretation. First, it is necessary to note that the epistles themselves are not a homogenous lot. Some epistles (the Pauline epistles 2 and 3 John) are not considered written for the public and posterity, but were intended only for the person or persons to whom they were addressed. Other epistles are artistic literary forms and letters intended for public dissemination. Second, one thing that is common to all of the epistles is that they are what are technically called *occasional documents* (i.e., arising out of and intended for a specific occasion), and they are from the first century. "Although inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus belonging to all time, they were first written out of the context of the author to the context of the original recipients."[105] Since they are occasional in nature, particular hermeneutical care must be taken before extracting modern applications.

To help with this process, there are some basic rules that Fee and Stuart espouse in the formation of principles when considering them as normative for Christians in the twenty-first century.[106] First, a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or his or her readers. This role does not always help one find out what a text *means*, but it does help to set limits as to what it *cannot* mean. Second, whenever people share comparable particulars (i.e., similar specific life situations) with the first-century hearers, God's word to people is the same as his word to those in the first century. "The great caution here is that we do our exegesis well so that we have confidence that our situations and particulars are genuinely comparable to theirs."[107]

The above guidelines leave us with the remaining question: To what degree does the record of Philippians 2:5-11 set biblical precedents for the application of leadership theory today? The research of Fee and Stuart, Wiersbe, Jamieson et al., Carson, and Pfeiffer and Harrison teaches that application to modern leadership theory may exist, but only after discovering the intent of Paul in writing verses 2:5-11 in light of the verses

[103] Lorin Woolfe, *The Bible on Leadership: From Moses to Matthew—Management Lessons for Contemporary Leaders* (New York: AMACOM, 2002), 2.
[104] Gordan D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993).
[105] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, 48.
[106] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*.
[107] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*, 65.

preceding it, particularly Philippians 1:27-2:4.[108] The occasion is that Paul is in prison (1:13, 17) and the Philippian church has sent a gift through a member named Epaphroditus (4:14-18). Apparently, Epaphroditus became sick and the church heard of it and was saddened (2:26); but God spared him. Now Paul is sending him back (2:25-30) with this letter in order to tell them how things are with him (1:12-26), thank him for their gift (4:10, 14-19), and exhort them on a couple of matters—to live in harmony and avoid the Judaizing heresy. Paul completes the initial section by telling his readers how he is getting along in his imprisonment. This new section (2:5-11) is a part of the exhortation to unity.[109]

So why is there an appeal to the humiliation and exultation of Christ? Paul's point (in context) is that humility is the proper attitude for believers to have unity.[110] Jesus, in his incarnation and death, is the supreme example of the humility that Paul wants them to have. Paul's focus is not to teach us something new about Christ. Rather, he is appealing to these great truths about Christ to get the Philippians to be like Jesus, not simply to know about him. This form of construction from the passage allows us to accurately reconstruct applications to leadership for today in the context of Paul's intent.

Once the exact grammatical-historical intent of the passage is unearthed, one is better qualified to give it any legitimate application that its language and context allows. At the stage of application, rules are employed that protect interpreters from error and provide confidence in assigning significance. McQuilkin emphasized caution in determining how a text is applicable to modern-day people and cultures or intended to function as a mandate for normative behavior. He proposes the following questions to aid in the process:[111]

1. Does the context limit the recipients or application?
2. Does subsequent revelation limit the recipient or the application?
3. Is this specific teaching in conflict with other biblical teaching?
4. Is the specific teaching normative, as well as the principle behind it?
5. Does the Bible treat the historic context as normative?
6. Does the Bible treat the cultural context as limited?

As noted, the original intent of Paul in Philippians 2:5-11 is the exhortation to unity and the proclamation of and reference to the nature of Christ as an example of humility to aid the Philippian church in understanding how unity might be achieved. It is within this context that the message of Philippians 2:5-11 possesses significance to leadership.

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[108] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*; Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary—An Exposition of the New Testament Comprising the Entire "BE" Series* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996, c1989); Robert Jamieson et al., *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997); Donald A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, rev. ed. of *The New Bible Commentary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994); Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Acts 2:17) (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962).

[109] Pfeifer and Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament.*

[110] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all It's Worth*.

[111] Robertson McQuilkin, "Problems of Normativeness," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the* Bible, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 222-236

First, the application to leadership involves the occasion, recipients, and purpose of the writing. Paul wrote this letter to the entire church, i.e., a group of people comprised of both leaders and followers. As such, the context does not limit the recipients to only non-leaders, and any exhortations to the church include those in leadership positions. Moreover, since the purpose of the writing is unity in the family of Christ, and since other writings in the New Testament demonstrate the leader's distinct role as a catalyst for unity in the church[112] and an arbiter of it,[113] the need for humility within the character of the Philippian church leaders is prominent in the text. As being responsible for the effective functioning of the church, leaders would possess an inherent (and possibly enhanced) interest in Paul's words as he describes the conditions for unity in that church body.

Second, the admonition to unity is illustrated in this passage through the work and nature of Jesus Christ, and Paul communicates these realities by juxtaposing Jesus' humility to his position and power. Position and power are two constructs that uniquely concern leaders and functions of leadership. Leaders generally hold titles and positions "over" people. In lieu of Jesus' use of power in his position of authority, Philippians 2:5-11 has particular application. Those in power or position should acquire particular significance from the passage.

Third, in Philippians 2:5-11 Jesus' servant attitude and character are expressed in summative nature. The apostle says of Jesus that he took "the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). This servant motif permeates descriptions of leadership in the record of Jesus' actions and words;[114] Paul's writings;[115] and other places in the New Testament.[116] We may only apply a principle from a biblical passage if it is a principle that can be sustained apart from a single text. Since the servant nature of Christ serves as an example of and motivation for leadership throughout the New Testament, it is fitting to make appropriate applications with such a summative description of that nature as is found in the Christological hymn. Here it may be assumed that as a servant Jesus epitomizes what leaders should do—namely, lead for the benefit of others.

Applying Philippians 2:5-11 to modern leadership is not in conflict with the original intent of the text or other biblical teaching. Moreover, it is consistent with many other texts pertaining to leadership. The specific teaching in this text, as well as the principles behind it, may be inclusive of and considered normative for leaders of both the first century and today. It is normative in its historic context and is not limited in its cultural context.

Not only does this passage incorporate essential theological truths into notions of leadership, it also allows us to demonstrate the application of the common language of ontology, methodology, and teleology. These applications are produced from a sacred-texture analysis using the categories prescribed by Robbins.[117] They are (1) Deity—in this passage the analysis refers to the nature of deity in Christ (ontology), (2) divine history—the text in Philippians 2 illustrates what God did in history through Jesus

[112] Eph. 4:11-13.
[113] Acts 15:1-29.
[114] John 13:13-17; Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-28.
[115] 1 Thess.2:1-12.
[116] 1 Pet. 5:1-4.
[117] Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1996a).

(methodology), and (3) religious community—in context this analysis reveals a resulting purpose (teleology) for Christ and his incarnation. Likewise, all three sacred-texture categories have implications to leadership.

Sacred-Texture Analysis of Philippians 2:5-11

Robbins calls sacred-texture analysis "seeking the divine in the text," meaning that there are texts that communicate particularly about God, his work, and realms of spiritual life. Robbins offers the following categories to guide us in the programmatic search for sacred aspects of this text, i.e., systematic and creative ways to explore Philippians 2:5-11 regarding its holy, divine nature.[118]

Deity. Describing the nature of God as contained in a text is a first step toward analyzing and interpreting a sacred texture.[119] It is also our starting point for the convergence of theology and leadership. Walvoord states that one of the most important theological assertions of the New Testament, if not the most important of all, is the nature of God as found in Christ.[120] The Philippians 2 passage provides a presentation of God that has been a subject of great debate for centuries,[121] namely, that the eternal God took upon himself human limitations and that in Christ resides the paradox of God and man in one. This is known as the incarnation of Christ and the Philippians 2:5-11 passage is labeled the premier description of the kenosis (self-emptying) of Jesus as the result of incarnation itself.[122]

Walvoord comments that the act of incarnation is ascribed by the strong word *ekenosen* (English, kenosis) from *keno,* meaning "to empty" (cf. four other instances in the New Testament: Romans 4:14; I Corinthians 1:17 and 9:15; and 2 Corinthians 9:3).[123] The crux of the exposition of this important passage hangs on the definition of the act of kenosis. Walvoord states that some have interpreted this text as meaning that Christ in some sense gave up part of his deity in order to become man. To allay this conclusion he asserts that the passage does not state that Christ ceased to exist in the form of God, but rather that he added the form of a servant. This is noted by the word *morphei*, translated "form," which speaks of the outer appearance or manifestation. As it relates to the eternal deity of Christ, it refers to the fact that Christ in eternity past in outer appearance manifested his divine attributes. He was not a mere form or appearance, but that which corresponded to what he was eternally. In becoming man he took upon himself the form of a servant, that is, the outward appearance of a servant and the human nature that corresponds to it. Walvoord says that this is further defined as manifesting the "likeness" (Greek, *homoiomati*) of man in that he looked and acted like a man. The passage declares in addition that he was "found in fashion as a man" (Greek, *schemati*) "indicating more transient manifestations of humanity such as weariness, thirst, and other human limitations. Taking the whole passage together,

[118] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology.*
[119] Ibid.
[120] Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord.*
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

there's no declaration here that there was any loss of deity, but rather a limitation of its manifestation."[124]

It is certainly also clear from other declarations of Paul[125] that he recognized that Jesus Christ in the flesh was all that God is, even though he appeared to be man. One must conclude and embrace the paradox that Jesus was both God and man in the same person and did not lessen his character as God by taking the form of a servant. He was fully God and fully human.

Divine history. Robbins states that many sacred texts presuppose God's direct work in historical processes and events toward certain results.[126] In New Testament theology, God's teleological goals are spoken of in terms of eschatology, apocalyptic literature, or salvation history.[127] Eschatological passages represent history as moving toward the time of last things. Apocalyptic texts reveal certain people who see revelations from heaven making events of the end-times known before they occur. With salvation history passages, God's plan for humans works itself out through a complicated, but ongoing process that moves slowly toward God's ultimate goals. Philippians 2:9-11 contains all three of these concepts concerning divine history.

Though the methodological and teleological connections are present in this sacred-texture category, it is evident that God's "divine history" is epitomized in the incarnation of Jesus and this has methodological implications. For it was "the way" (*methodos)* God came that reveals so much about him. As the passage states, Jesus came as a man, and we learn from the gospels that he came as a man in the form of a baby born of lowly status. Jesus lived an "ordinary" life and identified fully with being human. He lived without sin in the midst of a sinful world and gave his life magnanimously on the cross for humankind.[128]

Religious community. Eschatologically, Paul reinforces in this text the Christian theme that history possesses a teleological reality culminating in Christ's exultation. Yet, what must guide the discussion of teleology is consistency to proper hermeneutic principles and remembering Paul's intent in this passage to encourage and enable other believers to live in unity. While Paul describes eschatological realities, he does so with the *telos* of the formation and nurturing of religious community.[129] In Christian theology, this is the realm of ecclesiology, which focuses on the assembly of the people (*ecclesia*) called out to worship God as well as the nature of that community. "Regularly, primary issues of ecclesiology concern the relation of the community to God, the relation of members of the community to one another, and the commitment of people in the community to the people outside of it."[130]

From the context of this passage one sees that Philippians 2:5-11 expresses Paul's concern for the way believers should relate to and treat one another. Representative of Jesus' powerful illustration in John 13 when he washed the disciples'

[124] Ibid., 139-140.
[125] Eph. 3:14-21; Col. 1:15-23.
[126] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology.*
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology.*
[130] Ibid., 127.

feet as a symbol of the way they were to serve others, this passage in Philippians carries a beautiful, divine quality as Paul compels believers, who live in deep connection with the Christ who emptied himself, to possess the same attitude by treating others with humility and servanthood.

A Theology of Leadership Applied from Philippians 2:5-11

Based upon the analysis offered that illustrates Paul's intent in Philippians 2:5-11 to instruct believers about unity, and based upon the categories of sacred-texture analysis of the passage stated above, summary insights of leadership are gleaned and form a framework for the definition and praxis of leadership theories investigated further in this paper. This achieves the objective of gaining a theology of leadership.

Ontological implications. We begin with our ontological concern. At the convergence of theology and leadership is the following question: Who is God and, therefore, who should the leader be? The first insights discovered concern the sacred-texture category labeled deity by Robbins.[131] As stated above, from the analysis of Philippians 2:5-11, Paul's description of the nature of Christ (i.e., Christ is God and man in one) is understood. This is the paradox of the incarnation that also leads to the concept called kenosis. Whereas the incarnation conceptualizes the paradoxical character of Christ, the kenosis deals with the resulting behavior that flows from that character, namely that he "emptied himself." The seemingly illogical reality of the incarnation reveals that leaders seeking to reflect a Christlike character must exist in a kind of "paradox of character." This means that godly leaders who possess positions of authority must at the same time not consider that position "something to be grasped," but instead operate in humility. For them, positional authority and the disposition of humility should not be mutually exclusive. With God's help, the two may coexist within the character of the leader, as they did in Christ. This construct goes to the heart of the uniqueness of Christian leadership.

From this *incarnational* character of a leader flows the ability of the leader to "empty himself" (kenosis). Thus, the more a leader possesses a character representative of the incarnational Christ, the more capacity he or she has to exhibit extraordinary leadership acts such as sacrifice, perseverance, humility, and the proper use of power.[132] In this sense, the character of the leader is the fuel for and provides the capacity for effective leadership. The kenosis description in Philippians 2 assumes the need for all leaders who are "full of self" to grow and change in character.[133] Leaders representing Christ empty themselves to submit their own goals and agenda for the purposes of God, the mission of the organization, and/or the people that they lead.[134]

Methodological implications. The sacred-text analysis category labeled divine history illuminates in this passage the way leaders may accomplish desired ends. Within

[131] Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology.*
[132] Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2001).
[133] Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition.*
[134] Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership.*

Philippians 2:5-11, God's plan for history occurs in an unlikely manner—the incarnation, the kenosis, the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, and the exultation of Christ via the resurrection. The passage teaches that the path of humility, sacrifice, and people-centered deeds (that seek the best interest of followers) accomplishes godly ends for leaders. It is a reminder to Christian leaders that their leadership is not about their own history, but of God's. It expresses the need for leaders to align their agendas with God's and play their part in his divine history through leadership that reflects Jesus.

Teleological implications. Through the analysis category entitled religious community, one may recognize that Philippians 2:5-11 contains the culmination of Paul's expression of his concern for the way believers relate to and treat one another.[135] In verse 5, Paul says, "Have this attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus." He gives this admonition for what reason? Unity. Unity and the cohesiveness of followers are concerns for all leaders seeking to be effective.[136] These concerns are often dealt with in the leadership literature via the constructs of organizational "groups" or "teams." In this passage Paul, by way of the example of Jesus, provides principles for the way unity may occur between people: (1) those in positional authority possess a disposition of humility and sacrifice, (2) the group possesses a strong understanding and commitment to the overriding purpose of the group, and (3) everyone in the group is willing to sacrifice his own agenda for the accomplishment of this purpose.

IV: Implications of a Theology of Leadership to Conventional Definitions and Transformational Theory of Leadership

When seeking to determine if a theology of leadership is at all necessary, comparisons to social definitions of leadership (i.e., those void of theology) and the application of theology to conventional leadership theories informs the discussion. Both sections below allow the reader to understand theology's relevance to the concept of leadership by witnessing where practical theology converges with or deviates from definitions and theories of leadership.

Comparisons to Social Definitions of Leadership

The leadership lessons from all three categories of sacred-texture analysis illustrate the distinctive nature of Philippians 2:5-11 as the text applies to leadership. In the passage lie countercultural concepts of leadership compared to contemporary social definitions. For instance, leadership today is often seen to be associated with the pursuit of authority and power.[137] Blackaby and Blackaby state that once power is gained in leadership, it is usually directed toward the benefit of the person in power, not followers, and it is also used to gain even more power and authority.[138] The discussion of the sacred-texture analysis of deity in Philippians 2:5-11 teaches about the proper use of power. Jesus fully embraced his position as God's only Son and the authority attendant

[135] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*.
[136] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations.*
[137] Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership.*
[138] Ibid.

with it.[139] Yet in that position he not only used power differently, he defined it uniquely. For Jesus, power is not limited because it is spent for the good of others—rather it is unleashed. He enhanced the power of power by using it to fulfill its magnanimous goal—the redemption of people. We are not less powerful, nor do we limit it, if we apply power in ways of serving in the benefit of others as Jesus did.

Social definitions of leadership also tend to conceive that the way leaders accomplish desired goals is to exercise selfish agendas, as the socially based model does not make the distinction in motivation for behavior.[140] Yet, the sacred-texture analysis of divine history in the text reveals that to accomplish godly ends leaders must embrace selfless agendas and walk in ways that serve others. The paradox of the passage expresses that if a leader is humble and serves, divine goals will be achieved. Hybels and Wilkens call this "descending into greatness."[141]

Social definitions of teamwork or group dynamics often call for teams to practice some of the same characteristics of humility and mutual submission as outlined in Philippians 2.[142] Yet the reality is that teams in today's world are often characterized by weak commitment, loose connections, only ample tolerance, and a lack of unity.[143] Arrow, McGrath, and Berdahl call these "concocted" groups.[144] Although Philippians 2:5-11 is not suggesting that all teams must have spiritual connections (though many teams could benefit by such), the sacred-texture analysis category called religious community may provide insight to help groups move beyond task functions to understand how people experience community in the midst of accomplishing tasks and how they may be unified around altruistic purposes. It is the difference between groups that merely tolerate team members as opposed to groups that experience unity. The example of Philippians 2:5-11 might provide a recipe for such unity.

Application of Theology to Transformational Leadership Theory

Northouse states that transformational leadership refers to the process "whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower."[145] Upon closer examination of the traits of transformational leadership as developed by Bass and Avolio,[146] one may deduce from the Philippians text that Jesus indeed exercised this form of leadership and that Paul as well practiced transformational leadership toward his readers in his communication of Philippians 2:5-11. In the text, there are patterns consistent with traits of transformational theory in the incarnation, the kenosis, the sacrificial death of Jesus

[139] Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord.*
[140] Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership.*
[141] Bill Hybels and Rob Wilkens, *Descending into Greatness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).
[142] Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations.*
[143] Greg L. Stuart, Charles C. Manz, and Henry P. Sims, *Team Work and Group Dynamics* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999).
[144] Holly Arrow, Joseph E. McGrath, and Jennifer L. Berdahl, *Small Groups as Complex Systems* (Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage, 2000).
[145] Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* 170.
[146] Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio, "Developing Transformational Leadership: 1992 and Beyond," *Journal of European Industrial Training* 14 (1990a): 21-27.

on the cross, and Paul's exhortation for believers to possess the same attitudes of Christ. All these form the basis for comparison:

1. *Idealized influence.* This describes leaders who act as strong role models for followers: followers identify with these leaders and want very much to emulate them. Richards and Richards state that the incarnation and resulting kenosis of Jesus ultimately expressed in his death on the cross is a magnanimous example to all believers.[147] This fits perfectly in the construct that transformational leaders provide an idealized model for followers and as such influences them toward action.
2. *Inspirational motivation.* This factor is descriptive of leaders who communicate high expectations to followers, inspiring them through motivation to be committed to and a part of the shared vision of the organization.[148] The mantra of Philippians 2:5-11 is that through the humility, selflessness, and sacrifice of Christ mankind is redeemed and he is exalted as Lord. Is there any more inspirational motivation or greater vision than to be challenged, as by Paul, to act toward others in selflessness and sacrifice?
3. *Intellectual stimulation.* This means leadership that stimulates followers to understand deeply and to challenge their own beliefs and values.[149] Intellectual stimulation came naturally from Paul's admonition to "Have this same attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). He stimulates his readers intellectually in the form of the prose of this text. In almost a poetic way, Paul paints a vivid mental image of what it looks like for believers to love other people in a Christlike manner.[150] The altruistic nature of the actions of Christ as well as the profundity of the paradox that Paul communicates must have aroused the minds of his readers to consider their own involvement in the divine act of love toward others.
4. *Individualized consideration.* This is representative of leaders who provide a supportive climate in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of followers and act as coaches and advisors while trying to assist individuals to become fully actualized.[151]

In the matter of the exultation of Christ, Paul was speaking about the glory and fulfillment of sacrificial love and how God's agenda for mankind could be accomplished. His call for believers to be actualized in their faith through the humble exercise of deeds of sacrifice and love provided a way for them to experience the fullness of Christ. As noted in the context of the entire book of Philippians and, particularly in the first four verses of chapter 2, this was constantly Paul's concern,[152] namely, that believers would come into all the benefits and blessings of knowing Christ by walking as he walked.

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[147] Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987).
[148] Bass and Avolio, "Developing Transformational Leadership: 1992 and Beyond."
[149] Ibid.
[150] Richards and Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary.*
[151] Ibid.
[152] Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*.

Paul's consistent message, epitomized here in Philippians 2, is that in giving ourselves sacrificially to others, individuals are fulfilled and God is glorified.

V: Conclusion

It becomes apparent that theology and leadership may indeed inform and illuminate each construct. Relating theology to current leadership theories through a common language has promise for further leadership research. When practically applied in the organizational context of leadership, theology possesses a unique and relevant significance as illustrated by the analysis of Philippians 2:5-11. The example posits that such theological treatments are virtue-structured ways by which to influence people that encompasses a multitude of possibilities and implies that this approach to leadership is not unrealistic or naïve, but instead is eminently practical, even pragmatic. Consequently, it is imperative that theology receive greater application in leadership research and not be ignored due to its religious nature. The fusion of the two fields may possess elucidatory value, providing researchers and practitioners alike better models on leadership in the world. In the process we may validate that what lies in the heart of a leader is indeed significant and worthy of fervent investigation.

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