NEW WINE SKINS: THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS APPLIED TO LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

DANIEL M. COLLINS

The Luke-Acts narrative uses parables to communicate the message of the gospel, inviting ideological change concerning outsiders and insiders within the kingdom of God. Using socio-rhetorical criticism to build on the work of other religious scholars, this article focuses on the historical cultural, intertextual, and ideological analysis of Luke 5:33-39. The exegesis includes the cultural historical contexts of Jesus as protagonist, of Jewish religious leaders as antagonists, of Luke as author and early church leader, and comparisons of the chreia within the synoptic gospels. The cultural symbols of fasting, weddings, and wine, along with the ideological message of insiders and outsiders emerged as key interpretive themes. Jesus' proclamation of a spiritual kingdom that included the excluded by offering forgiveness to the unclean was a revolutionary and conversionist message. Luke's narrative gave security to Gentile believers and hope to religious leaders through the message of redemption through Jesus the Messiah. Combining the fields of theology and leadership research, the hermeneutic is applied using three organizational constructs: field theory, learning organizations, and storytelling.


This article combines the fields of theological and leadership research in order to search for convergences within organizational leadership constructs. As Ayers (2006) proposed, “the fusion of the two fields may possess elucidatory value, providing researchers and practitioners alike better models on leadership in the world.” Using socio-rhetorical criticism and the work of other religious scholars, the article focuses on the historical cultural, intertextual, and ideological analysis of Luke 5:33-39 with applications to change theories and leadership praxis. The exegesis begins with the cultural historical contexts of Jesus as protagonist, of Jewish religious leaders as antagonists, and of Luke as author and early church leader. A structure of the pericope and comparison of the chreia within the synoptic gospels reveals key differences in Luke’s account. An intertexture analysis examines the cultural significances of wine, fasting, and Jewish didaskalos teachers. The ideological message of insiders and outsiders within the kingdom of God emerged as a key interpretive theme along with a two-fold conclusion in the Luke pericope. The hermeneutic is applied to three organizational change constructs – field theory, learning organizations, and storytelling – along with suggestions for further exegetical and organizational research.

I. HISTORICAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS


According to DeSilva (2004), the time of Jesus included both a growing Zionist hope for a political messiah and an intensification of strict Torah obedience. Judas Maccabaeus (165 B.C.E.) began the messianic hope for political salvation with his revolt against the Greco-Syrian government including the recapture and cleansing of the Temple and the installment of his son Jonathan as high priest and political king (DeSilva, 2004). With the rebuilding of the temple after exile and the racial cleansing enforced by Ezra and Nehemiah, “many Jews regarded the intensification of attention to
the doing of Torah and bringing every aspect of their lives into line with the law of God as the paramount strategy to attaining well-being of the nation and of individuals" (DeSilva 2004, p. 51). Though the Roman Republic recaptured Jerusalem and established their laws, the hope of political freedom through another messiah remained strong among the Jews. The Jewish religious leaders believed strict obedience to the Torah would open the way for this messiah and bring political freedom to the Jewish nation. "In sum, the religious leaders view[ed] themselves as custodians of the law and prophets and reject[ed] the preaching of the good news of God's kingdom. They came into conflict with Jesus on both accounts, for it is Jesus who fulfills the law and prophets and it is Jesus who initiates God’s rule” (Powell, 1990, p. 102).

Throughout the books of Luke-Acts, Luke uses Scribes and Pharisees (Luke 5:21-30, 6:2-7, 7:30, 11:53, 15:2, 16:14; Acts 15:15, 23:6-9) to represent these self-righteousness religious leaders who opposed Jesus and his message (Powell, 1990). They “trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt” (Luke 18:9). Even after Jesus’ ascension and the formation of the early church, Christian Pharisees still viewed circumcision and the Mosaic law not just as Jewish cultural behaviors but as universal, God-mandated (Ex. 12:44-48, 17:3) salvific conditions (Story, 2010; Mahan, 2013). In Acts 15, the Pharisaic Christians traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch, a journey of 300 miles, to convince the Gentile believers to “be circumcised and keep the law, [or] their very salvation is at stake” (Just, 2010, p. 277). “These laws were so ingrained in Jewish, and Jewish Christian, identity that the very idea of eating with Gentiles was abhorrent” (Just, 2010, p. 277). Powell (1990) pointed out two antithetical examples of faith-filled religious leaders in Zechariah (Luke 1:59-80) and Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50-53), who appeared in the opening and closing of the Luke’s gospel. Through these examples, Luke showed that the conflict was “essentially one sided: the leaders reject Jesus but he does not reject them” (Powell, 1990, p. 102). Zechariah and Joseph of Arimathea represented God’s invitation even to the self-righteous Jewish religious leaders to share in the celebration and joy of repentance through faith in Jesus (Powell, 1990).

I. STRUCTURE AND SYNOPTIC GOSPEL COMPARISON

Considering the genre in the pericope, parables are complex literary forms due to internal structure, external context, and figurative metaphors, with the exegetical clues being major and minor points, repetition, conclusion, listener context, reversal of expectation, kingdom eschatology, and God metaphors (Osborne, 1991; Robbins, 2007). Jesus explained the purpose of parables as “seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand” (Luke 8:10), literary riddles that reveal truth only by decoding the clues and symbols of the story. Robbins (2007) cited the work of Bernard Brandon Scott (1989) where a “major feature of parable discourse is to reconfigure traditional expectations concerning who is securely an insider and who is certainly an outsider. Each parable in its own way uses the social map to show the unusual, unpredictable, and regularly disturbing nature of the kingdom of God” (p. 160). Luke structured the pericope in Luke 5:33-39 into five parts (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Structure of Luke 5:33-39
Conflict vs. 33 Pharisees and Scribes question Jesus

Parable #1 vs. 34-35 wedding celebration and fasting

Parable #2 vs. 36 new and old garments

Parable #3 vss. 37-38 new wine and old wineskins

Reversal of expectation vs. 39 “no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’ ”

Through the parables in the pericope, Jesus spoke figuratively about the “old forms unable to contain new gospel dynamism” since they “bottle[d] up spirituality in forms once considered appropriate but no longer so fitting” (Quicke, 2009, p. 171).

*Chreia* is an interpretive term to delineate “a brief statement or action aptly attributed to a specific person or something analogous to a person” (Robbins, 1996, p. 41). All three synoptic gospels included a similar new wineskins *chreia* (Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22). Though the dates are unclear, biblical scholars generally agree that the gospel of Mark formed the basis for Matthew, both written and distributed prior to the distribution of Luke-Acts (Hughes & Laney, 1990; Guthrie & Motyer, 1970). In comparison to the gospels of Matthew and Mark, Luke’s later version of the *chreia* amplified the story in three different verses (Table 1.2). In Luke 5:33, Luke added the phrase “but yours eat and drink (*pino*)” to describe Jesus’ disciples. Verse 36 clarified that the *chreia* is a series of parables. Verse 36 also added, “and the piece from the new will not match the old,” a theme revisited at the end of the parable. Verse 39 repeated the Greek word *pino*, connecting the opening and closing sections through repetition, and added a second ending to the *chreia*.

Table 1.2 (chreia distinctions highlighted by the underline)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Matthew 9</th>
<th>Mark 2</th>
<th>Luke 5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening: Pharisees question Jesus about fasting</td>
<td>14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”</td>
<td>18 Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”</td>
<td>33 And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle:</td>
<td>15 And Jesus said to</td>
<td>19 And Jesus said to</td>
<td>34 And Jesus said to</td>
</tr>
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The logical flow of the imagery in the parables follows a predictable pattern. Fasting is not compatible with a wedding since the bridegroom is present at the celebration feast. A new patch is not compatible with an old garment because the patch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wedding analogy</th>
<th>them, &quot;Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.&quot;</th>
<th>them, &quot;Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.&quot;</th>
<th>them, &quot;Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle: New and old garments</td>
<td>16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.</td>
<td>21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.</td>
<td>36 He also told them a parable: &quot;No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing 1: Mixing “old” and “new” paradigms are incompatible</td>
<td>17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.&quot;</td>
<td>22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.&quot;</td>
<td>37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing 2: The “old” will not desire the new kingdom</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>39 And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
will shrink and tear the older garment. New wine is not compatible with old wineskins since the old wineskin will burst. The new wine and garments represented Jesus’ message about the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 10:9; 11:2; 13:29; 16:16; 18:16-25). As Riley (1995) commented, “the gospel is new and requires a new religious context; one must leave behind the old garment and wineskin of Pharisaic religion for the new patch and garment, new wine and wineskin, of the gospel” (p. 233). However, Luke’s chreia then added a second ending, “and no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good,’ ” reversing the expected closing of new as better than old (Riley, 1995). This second ending will be explored further on in the article.

II. INTERTEXTURE ANALYSIS

“Intertextual analysis occurs within either implicit or explicit boundaries” (Robbins, 2007, p. 101) using cultural, social, or ideological analysis for a multifaceted exegesis of the Scriptural text (Robbins, 2007). Authors use cultural intertexture as a literary echo, "a word or phrase that evokes a cultural tradition" or heritage of the audience (Robbins, 2007, p. 110). The three parables in the pericope employed various cultural symbols. Wineskins were frequently made from tanned animal skins and used especially for travel (Freeman, 2004). “When the skin is green, it stretches by fermentation of the liquor and retains its integrity; but when it becomes old and dry, the fermentation of the new wine soon causes it to burst” (Freeman, 2004, 344–345). Wine symbolized spiritual life, celebration, and God’s blessing. Grain, wine, and oil represented God’s goodness and blessing within Israelite history (Jeremiah 31:12). Solomon wrote, “Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life” (Ecclesiastes 10:19). The sacrifice of the first lamb included wine as a drink offering along with flour and oil (Exodus 29:40). Isaiah symbolized God’s blessing and mercy with the imagery of wine (Isaiah 65:8). With this cultural background, it is not coincidence that as Jesus began his ministry to “preach the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43), his first miracle turned water into wine in Cana (John 2). Likewise, at the Passover supper Jesus said, “For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes, …this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20). Luke’s audience remembered this new covenant through the regular celebration of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:46; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

In the Jewish tradition, “the fast was regarded as an act of self-renunciation designed to mollify God’s wrath and move him to act in gracious disposition” (Elwell & Beitzel, 1988, p. 780). The Jewish people used fasting to call for God’s liberation (2 Chron. 20:3; Esther 4:3), to show repentance or humility (1 Samuel 7:6; Ezra 8:21), and to accompany intense times of prayer (Daniel 9:3). By juxtaposing fasting with the celebration of a wedding feast, Jesus focuses his listeners on the purposes of spiritual disciplines. Fasting is a beneficial spiritual discipline, but not in the context of a wedding celebration. In his imagery of a Jewish wedding and fasting, Jesus symbolically “addresses the whole structure of Jewish ceremonial and the religious status quo” (Quicke, 2009, p. 170), with the purpose of showing the context of the Mosaic law as a symbolic rather than salvific religious system.

Along with the cultural textures, the social intertexture examines the social roles, institutions, codes, and relationships within the characters in the text (Robbins, 1996).
Luke refers to Jesus as a *didaskalos*, teacher (Luke 7:40, 9:38, 10:25). The Greek term refers to a position of authority to instruct others (Louw & Nida, 1996, p. 415). The Scribes and Pharisees were *didaskalos* (Luke 2:46, 5:17), expected to both adhere to a strict interpretation of Toraic law and force other Jews to obey in order to gain the future political liberation of the Jewish nation (DeSilva, 2004). Jesus’ refusal to fast and pray according to the regulations of the Scribes and Pharisees and teach his disciples to do likewise conflicted with the socially expected role of a Jewish *didaskalos*.

Throughout the chapter of Luke 5, Jesus confronted the assumptions of the *didaskalos* system of the Scribes and Pharisees. In Luke 5:1-11, Jesus called his disciples not from the aristocratic Sadducee ranks or the Pharisaic scholars but from the common working classes (DeSilva, 2004). In verses 12-16, Jesus confronted the idea of clean and unclean by healing a leper, a man unfit by Mosaic law to enter the temple for worship, and afterward sending him to the priest as a “proof to them” (vs. 14). In verses 17-26, Jesus confronted assumptions about forgiveness, healing the paralytic with the phrase “your sins are forgiven you” (vs. 20). To the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus’ words were blasphemy, a violation of Mosaic law punishable by the death penalty. Jesus shared a meal with “tax collectors and sinners” (vss. 27-30), and when the Pharisees and Scribes questioned him, he replied, “those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are made sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (vs. 32). Luke’s emphasis in each event is the confrontation and incompatibility between the old and new socio-religious systems of the Scribes and Pharisees and the new kingdom of God.

III. IDEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Ideological texture within the Scriptures explores the “conscious or unconscious enactment of presuppositions, dispositions and values held in common with other people” (Robbins, 1996, p. 95). Using Wilson’s (1969) typologies, Luke was both conversionist – the world is corrupt, needs salvation – and reformist – salvation can change present structures (Robbins, 2007). “If the structures can be changed so that the behaviors they sanction are changed, then salvation will be present in the world” (Robbins, 1996, p. 73). Jesus consistently challenged the Pharisaical Jews (Luke 5:17, 21, 30, 33) by inviting the unclean, the marginalized, and those considered as outsiders into his ministry (Luke 2:32, 5:27-32, 10:25-37, 14:12-24) (Table 1.3). By challenging the socio-religious norms, Luke presented Jesus’ message of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43, 8:1, 9:2, 14:13-24) as a redefining of “the membership requirements of the people of God” (DeSilva, 2004, p. 355).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Insider-outsider message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luke 5:1-11</td>
<td>Jesus calls the first disciples</td>
<td>Jesus, Simon, James, John</td>
<td>Insiders: fishermen (working class) as Jesus’ disciples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 5:12-16</td>
<td>Jesus cleanses a leper</td>
<td>Jesus, man of leprosy, priest</td>
<td>Insider: leper (unclean) is made clean Outsiders: the priest is no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Insiders</td>
<td>Outsiders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Luke 5:17-26</td>
<td>Jesus forgives and heals the paralytic</td>
<td>Jesus, paralytic, Scribes and Pharisees</td>
<td>Insider: Paralytic forgiven and healed Outsiders: Scribes and Pharisees argue with Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 6:1-11</td>
<td>Jesus questioned about the Sabbath; Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath</td>
<td>Jesus, disciples, man with withered hand, Pharisees</td>
<td>Insiders: Jesus, disciples, man with withered hand healed Outsiders: Pharisees, strict obedience to Sabbath laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 15:11-31</td>
<td>Parable of the lost son</td>
<td>Father, oldest son, youngest son</td>
<td>Insider: youngest son who ran away but came home Outsiders: oldest son who stayed home but grew conceited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Dominant culture rhetoric presents a system of attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms that the speaker either presupposes or asserts are supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region” (Robbins, 1996, p. 86). The diaspora (Acts 7-8) had changed the mono-cultural Jewish dynamic of the early church. Within the new multi-cultural context, like the characters in the Luke 5 pericope, Pharisaical Christians attempted to force the Mosaic law onto the new Greek believers for salvation (Acts 15:5; Galatians 2-3).
Counterculture rhetoric uses “alternative minicultures …which are capable of influencing people over their entire life span, and which develop appropriate institutions to sustain the group in relative self-sufficiency” (Roberts, 1978, p. 113). Just as Jesus and his disciples challenged the religious assumptions of the Scribes and Pharisees, Luke-Acts voiced a counterculture, insider-outsider reversal that ran contrary to the beliefs of the Pharisaical Christians (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Early Church Insider/Outsider Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Counterculture, Insider-Outsider Reversal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acts 1:8</td>
<td>“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”</td>
<td>Jesus, disciples</td>
<td>Insiders: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth Outsiders: none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 8:26-40</td>
<td>Conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, unclean marginalized man from the ends of the earth (Robbins, 2007)</td>
<td>Philip, Ethiopian eunuch</td>
<td>Insider: unclean, marginalized, people from the ends of the earth Outsiders: none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 10</td>
<td>Peter receives a vision to share the gospel with Cornelius, a gentile Centurion</td>
<td>Peter, Peter’s friends, Cornelius, Cornelius’ household, the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>Insider: Cornelius and his household Outsiders: none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 11:19-21</td>
<td>Those who were scattered spoke the word to no one except the Jews. But some of them spoke to the Hellenists, “preaching the Lord Jesus Christ. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.”</td>
<td>Jewish Christians, Hellenists, the Lord Jesus</td>
<td>Insiders: Hellenists and the Jewish Christians who shared the gospel with them Outsiders: Jewish Christians who shared the gospel only with the Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 15</td>
<td>The Jerusalem Council</td>
<td>Apostles, elders, Peter,</td>
<td>Insiders: Greek Christians Outsiders: Pharisaical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Returning to verse 39 of the pericope, if Luke’s message was to establish the salvific confirmation for Gentile believers, why did his chreia conclude with a statement that seemed to imply that the old Pharisaic system was better than the new kingdom? A parallel passage from the Gospel of Thomas adds insight to this discussion. “And it is impossible for a servant to serve two masters: otherwise he will honor the one and treat the other contemptuously. No man drinks old wine and immediately desires to drink new wine. And the new wine is not put into old wineskins, lest they burst. Nor is old wine put into a new wineskin, lest it spoil it” (p. 47). According to the text in Thomas, the new wineskin parable is situated within the context of serving two masters.

In this way, Luke 5:33-39 could read as a series of parables with two conclusions for two audiences who had two different masters. To those whose master was the Jewish religious system, as in the Scribes and Pharisees, Luke relates to the difficulty of breaking entrenched patterns of older thinking since “no one after drinking old wine desires new” (Luke 5:39). But to the religious leaders who followed Jesus and his message of a new kingdom (Zechariah and Joseph of Arimathea), Luke shares that the new is not compatible with the old, and invites participation in the multicultural “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) kingdom of God. “Not all leaders are self-righteous hypocrites who reject the purpose of God. Some are righteous in God’s eyes and open to the plan of his new age. In this way, Luke prepares for their role in Acts, where the possibilities of repentance and conversion for them are realized” (Powell, 1990, pp. 107–108).

IV. APPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND PRAxis

A biblical exegesis of Luke 5:33-39 contributes to organizational leadership theory as an example of field theory, learning organizations, and storytelling. Lewin (1943; 1951) proposed field theory involving unfreezing, moving, and freezing phases. “In the unfreezing phase, people come to realize that the old ways of doing things are no longer adequate” (Yukl, 2013, p. 78). This was Jesus’ message in Luke 5, Matthew 9, and Mark 2, the old was no longer adequate and the new kingdom required change from old to new understandings. Jesus understood the strong resistance to change, “no one drinking old wine desires new” (Luke 5:39). “An attempt to move directly to the
changing phase without first unfreezing attitudes is likely to meet with apathy or strong resistance” (Yukl, 2013, pp. 78–79). Lewin (1951) described this resistance as a psychological force field. Unfreezing a field required a catharsis event, breaking “open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness, …necessary to bring about deliberately an emotional stir-up” (Lewin, 1951, Changing as Three Steps, para. 2). The multiple parables (Table 1.3) communicated over Jesus three year ministry can be seen as a purposeful catharsis in order to “break through their self-righteousness and to show them how to be justified before God instead of before humans” (Powell, 1990, p. 105).

Like Jesus, Luke also worked to unfreeze the assumptions about Gentile believers and create movement toward a unified community of uncircumcised Gentile believers and Jewish believers within the fellowship of the early church. This movement toward a new community plays a key role in sociological change. “Methods and procedures which seek to change convictions item by item are of little avail in bringing about the desired change of heart” (Lewin, 1948, Acceptance of New Values, para. 13). Lewin (1948) found a more effective means “for bringing about acceptance in re-education, …is the establishment of what is called an ‘in-group,’ i.e., a group in which the members feel belongingness. Under these circumstances, the individual accepts the new system of values and beliefs by accepting belongingness to a group” (Creation of an In-Group, para. 1). By focusing on God’s new kingdom community in the church (Luke 4:43, 8:1, 16:16; Acts 5:11, 9:31, 14:23), both Jesus and Luke invited a change of group identity that naturally resulted in changed ideology and behaviors.

Learning organizations “emphasize increased adaptability …focused on generative learning, which is about creating, as well as adaptive learning, which is about coping” (Senge, 1990, p. 8). Generative and adaptive learning involves anticipating and preparing for change, double-loop learning, regularly testing core assumptions, and an openness to emerging, evolving organizational structures (Morgan, 2006). The Jewish religious leaders evaluated themselves only from a human perspective, a view Jesus challenged as “unacceptable and irreconcilable with the point of view of God” (Powell, 1990, p. 100). Jesus’ revolutionist tone regularly tested core religious assumptions that stood in the way of establishing the kingdom of God.

Outlining the characteristics necessary for an effective learning organization, Senge (1990) redefined leaders as both stewards and teachers. Stewardship “is almost solely a matter of attitude” including an altruistic servant-minded leadership (Senge, 1990, p. 12). “Stewards …are called to exercise care and responsibility as they develop their people’s potential” as “servants of the people” (Stevens, 2012, The Historical Books, para. 3). Didaskalos teacher-leaders challenge tacitly held mental models that no longer fit current realities and “help people restructure their view of reality to see beyond the superficial conditions and events into the underlying causes of problems – and therefore to see new possibilities for shaping the future” (Senge, 1990, p. 12). Leaders create movement and change through creative tension, the uncomfortable reality of the present communicated alongside a compelling vision for the future. “An accurate picture of current reality is just as important as a compelling picture of a desired future” (Senge, 1990, p. 9). Jesus as didaskalos, challenges the common Jewish classes as well and other didaskalos (Scribes and Pharisees) with the purpose of unfreezing tacit religious beliefs. He both understands the difficulty of change, while presenting a compelling vision of a new kingdom of faith, forgiveness, and life. As a
servant leader, Jesus does not reject the Jewish religious leaders but “warns them of the dire consequences of their predicament (Luke 11:50-51; 20:15-19), he also prays for their forgiveness (Luke 23:46). He knows they reject the purpose of God because they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:46)” (Powell, 1990, p. 102).

Finally, like Jesus’ use of parables, effective leaders utilize storytelling to motivate change within their constituencies (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013). A comic-epic story, “should provoke a combination of scorn and admiration in the listener that encourages amusement but also inspires” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013, p. 178). Jesus was a master storyteller, using common parables with humor and irony to communicate difficult truths in socially acceptable forms. “A master storyteller unfolds state disturbances, crises, and redress to produce a new state open to possibilities. A great tale has closure and engages the reader or listener to pursue ‘what if’ speculations about the next series of events” (Nutt, 2010, p. 607). Luke’s narrative in Luke-Acts is a masterful story that opened the minds of his readers to the “what if” speculations of the good news of Jesus. The parable of new wine and new wineskins in Luke 5 represented God’s blessings and forgiveness available by faith to all peoples, insiders and outsiders, Jewish and Gentile, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

V. CONCLUSION

The Luke-Acts narrative intentionally softens readers to receive the gospel message of Jesus, inviting change through an ideological view of God's new kingdom community, the early church. The three parables in Luke 5:33-39 pericope symbolized the incompatibility of the new kingdom of God with the existing religious systems. Employing the cultural symbols of fasting, weddings, and wine, Jesus evoked cultural emotions of religious disciplines, celebration, and new life. The entrenched beliefs of the salvific and political necessities of Mosaic Law created strong resistance in both Jesus’ context as well as Luke’s role as a Gentile leader in the early church. Using parables and stories, Jesus worked to expose and unfreeze the self-righteous attitudes within the socio-religious system for movement toward humility and faith. Jesus’ proclamation of a spiritual kingdom that included the excluded was a revolutionary message; yet the examples of Zechariah and Joseph of Arimathea framed Luke’s narrative with the possibilities of hope, religious leaders that received the message of redemption for God’s people through faith in Jesus as Messiah (Luke 1:68-80).

“Jesus Christ forms the basis for the character of the leader incarnated within humanity” (Okesson, 2004, p. 30). Because the impact of Jesus' life and leadership divided history and launched the modern church age, the exegesis of the pericope in Luke was used to test validity for select leadership and organizational change theories. The pericope showed evidence of Lewin’s (1951) field theory for unfreezing and movement within ideological groups. Jesus showed similarities to the steward-servant leadership style of a learning organizational environment. Parables were an effective storytelling tool exposing conflictive yet necessary change. As this study focused on one pericope in Luke, a larger comparative study between the parables in the gospels may lead to other convergences in theological and leadership research. Looking at leadership succession and change, a comparative study of Acts could explore the leadership styles of the disciples and early church leaders as they negotiated the
dynamics of church growth within a changing environment. The convergence of theological and organizational fields of research reveals leadership concepts and that apply and empower both “scholars and Christian ministers alike” (Ayers, 2006, p. 7)

References


