LEADERSHIP IN CORINTH: RECIPROCITY AND LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE IN 2 CORINTHIANS 6:11-13

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The present article provides insight to the emerging field of Christian leadership by exploring the relationship between leader and followers in 2 Corinthians through the lens of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. In contrast to the cultural norms of the first century and the universal principle of reciprocity explored in contemporary leadership research, the church in Corinth resists withholding a reciprocal relationship with the apostle Paul despite his sacrifices for the community. By investigating the community’s reluctance to enter into the kind of relationship one should expect, the article pinpoints diverging views on leadership as a hindrance for the development of reciprocity and exchange, proposing that implicit leadership theories (ILT) may moderate the effect of benevolence on relationships in dyads and groups. Suggestions for further research are provided.

This article aims at providing new insight to the emerging field of Christian leadership by exploring the relationship between leadership and followership in Paul’s second letter to the church in Corinth, more specifically what seems to be a lack of reciprocity between Paul and the community despite the apostle’s sacrifices for its members. Although the study touches on several parts of the Corinthian correspondence, the pericope under investigation is 2 Corinthians 6:11-13. Despite the growing interest in employing methods and theories from the social sciences in studies of the Bible, little or no research has been done to link the construct of leader-member exchange (LMX) with leadership in the Pauline corpus. This organizational leadership theory suggests that benevolence on part of the leader evokes positive response from
The apparent absence of such outcomes in Corinth raises the question of what hinders the community of believers to respond in a manner one should expect. By investigating the Corinthian community’s reluctance to enter into the kind of reciprocal relationship that Paul expected and the culture anticipated, the article seeks to point out dynamics or structures that may hinder the development of healthy exchange and reciprocity in dyadic and group relationships, thus providing knowledge that is relevant for all organizations—religious as well as non-religious.

I. THE CITY, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE CULTURE

When Paul arrived in Corinth in the fall of A.D. 50, the city was a buzzing Roman colony built on the ruins of the classical city destroyed in 146 B.C. Truly one of the great cities of the empire, the vast amount of inscriptions found within its borders witness a growing civic and individual pride at the time of Paul: “Corinth was a city where public boasting and self-promotion had become an art form.” The church in Corinth was not unaffected of these tendencies, and Paul’s correspondence with the community is partly a response to issues originating from social and cultural factors in Corinth. Thus, “without denying the importance of ideas or the life of the mind, we must take more seriously the dialectic between ideas and social structures.” Prior to the analysis of the pericope in 2 Corinthians 6:11-13, it is hence necessary to highlight some of the socio-cultural dynamics that may have been influential in the Corinthian church relevant for this study, especially that of honor/shame and patronage/reciprocity.

Honor and Shame

In the Roman society, honor was an important status-oriented ordering principle. Although the definitions of honorable and shameful behavior varies over time and space, the social values of honor and dishonor were central to all cultures inhabiting the Mediterranean rim in the first century A.D. Because honor “is a claim to worth and the social acknowledgement of that worth,” there is a constant dialectic between the norms of society and the ways individuals reproduce these norms in specific behaviors. Honor, then, understood as “the affirmation of a person’s worth by peers and society awarded on the basis of the individual’s ability to embody the virtues and attributes his or her

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4 Ibid., xv.
society values,"⁸ results in conformity because individuals or groups who do not stay within the perimeters of accepted values will be written off by the group as shameless or errant. As a person’s worth was based on the recognition of others, the self-promoting inscriptions flourishing in Corinth served to boost a person’s credit in the public eye.⁹ This system of honor and shame were supported by the structures of the Roman notion of patronage, studied next.

**Patronage and Reciprocity**

The Greco-Roman world was fundamentally a patronal society made up by an infrastructure of networks based on favor and loyalty in an ongoing exchange, where bonds of indebtedness functioned as glue to ensure social cohesion.¹⁰ In a world where the majority of the population experienced lack of monetary and social wealth, many people found themselves in need of help in one area or another. This need was meet primarily through the relationships between patrons and clients, the former providing some sort of benefit in exchange for gratitude, loyalty, and service that, in turn, would contribute to the patron’s status and power.¹¹ Hence, prestations that seemed to be disinterested and voluntary, was in fact based on economic self-interest.¹² In contrast to regular friendships, patron-client relations were asymmetrical and particularistic with the patron being the one in power due to access to limited resources. Failure to return gratitude for favor was a great offense and would result in a breach of the relationship.¹³

Chow holds that some of the behavioral problems in the Corinthian church stemmed from the way the wealthy elite in its midst brought with them the accustomed mindset of patron-client relationships into church relationships.¹⁴ Although Paul remarks that there were “not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble” (1 Cor 1:26) in the Corinthian church, it is likely that the community drew a number of its members from the wealthy Greco-Roman elite. This insight emerged in the 1970s as Theissen brought the sociological studies of the early Christianity to new prominence,¹⁵ arguing that the church in Corinth was marked by internal social stratification, with a few members coming from the upper strata while the majority from

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the lower stratum.\textsuperscript{16} Although only a minority came from the upper classes in Corinth, this group seems to have been very dominant,\textsuperscript{17} even to the point that the most active and important members came from the rich and socially powerful classes. Also, it is probable that most of the problems Paul addresses in Corinth originate from this group of people.\textsuperscript{18} With this socio-cultural context explored, the study now turns to the text under investigation.

II. THE TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 6:11-13

Paul writes 2 Corinthians prior to his third visit in Corinth (2 Cor 13:1). Although problems associated with Paul’s relationship with and leadership over the Corinthian church is evident even through a surface reading of the epistle, the text has shown itself to be notoriously hard to interpret due to the critical problems regarding its integrity, especially as it relates to the multiple partition theories suggested by commentators of the letter. Based on the notion that 2 Corinthians reflects very different circumstances, many scholars regard the text as a composite letter, though there is no consensus on the reconstruction of the text or the chronology of the different fragments.\textsuperscript{19} Witherington holds that most of these theories build on wrong assumptions, because “there is not a shred of textual evidence to support the view that any part of the letter as we have it did not originally belong where it now is.”\textsuperscript{20} The fallacy of the commentators clinging to the composite hypothesis is, according to Witherington, that they have not taken Paul’s use of ancient rhetorical conventions sufficiently into consideration. Consequently, they are failing to identify the apostle’s digressions in the argument throughout the letter as such, reflecting how historical methods have their limitations as they were not developed to examine the inner nature of texts as written discourse. In order to more fully integrate the study of texts as they interact with phenomena outside the text, some scholars have therefore proposed socio-rhetorical criticism as “a systematic approach that sets multiple contexts of interpretation in dialogue with one another.”\textsuperscript{21} Witherington holds that Paul deliberately used rhetorical forms and devices to get his message through to the Corinthians. In the case of 2 Corinthians, this article concurs with Witherington’s claim that the epistle is a piece of forensic rhetoric, emphasizing the apostle’s need to reconcile the community to himself (in contrast to 1 Corinthians where the purpose is to

\textsuperscript{17} See David W. J. Gill, «In Search of the Social Elite in the Corinthian Church», Tyndale Bulletin 44, nr. 2 (1993): 323–337.
\textsuperscript{20} Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 329–330.
reconcile the community with each other) by means of a powerful argument for his ministry among them and his relationship with them.22

In 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 this culminates in an emotional appeal to the Corinthian community to give him and co-workers the rightful place in their hearts: “We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.”23 As evident from the use of the pronoun “you” in this passage, Paul addresses the community directly as he did earlier in 5:20 and 6:1, only this time the focus is on the Corinthians’ relationship with Paul, not God. The two appeals are clearly interconnected, however, as to be reconciled with God involves getting reconciled with Paul, his servant.24 The apostle points out the stark contrast between his own affections towards the Corinthians and their feelings towards him: His heart is open and they are not restrained by him. They, on the other side, are restrained in their own affections and have closed their hearts for him. The placement of the passage in the overall argument of the letter makes this lack of commitment to Paul even more bizarre, as it follows one of four “hardship lists” found in the Corinthian correspondence (2 Cor 6:5-10. Cf. 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:7-12; 11:23-28). It is likely that Paul uses these vivid descriptions of suffering and hardship in 2 Corinthians to strengthen the case of his leadership, especially as he connects the afflictions he endures directly with the benefit of the church: “If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation” (2 Cor 1:6, cf. 4:12, 15; 5:13; 11:7). The multiple occurrences of hardship lists indicate that Paul expects the community to grant him loyalty based on the sacrifices he has done for them. Paul wants reciprocity, a recompense (gr. antimisthia) for his afflictions, expressed in terms of loyalty and open hearts in the Corinthian church.

As mentioned above, part of the internal problems in Corinth stemmed from behaviors associated with patronage. Some of Paul’s issues with the community may have come from the same root as Paul refused to accept their patronage by insisting on working with his hands to support himself (1 Cor 9:3-15; 2 Cor 11:7-9), thus identifying with the lower classes.25 Though he rejects to submit to any form of patronage from the Corinthian elite and strongly exhorts them to turn away from their habitual ways of interaction based on social standing, Paul does not discard the notion of reciprocity in general. On the contrary, 2 Corinthians 8-9 reveals how Paul was seeking to develop reciprocal relationships between the churches he had planted so that beneficence between Christians could span the Mediterranean.26 Also, the apostle was not hesitant to accept economic support from churches elsewhere (Phil 4:15-18; 2 Cor 11:8-9). Paul did undermine the status-ridden notions of leadership found among the Corinthian elite and the “super-apostles” contesting his leadership by providing images of servanthood (2 Cor 1:24; 2:6; 4:5), stewardship (1 Cor 4:1), and strength through weakness (2 Cor 11:30-12:13). Yet, it is not evident that he let go of the idea of reciprocity in the same

22 Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 328–337.
23 All Scriptural references are from NASB
25 Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 208–209, 448.
token. As seen above, there is a pattern of cause and effect throughout the Corinthian correspondence in which Paul makes a connection between his own affections and the well-being of the community, and it is on this basis that the appeal in 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 should be understood. Paul does not break with the principle of patronage and reciprocity, but redefines it in light of the Gospel and envisions a radical change in relationships between leaders and followers in the churches of God: “Patrons within the church are acting as stewards of God’s gifts (2 Cor 9:8-10), so that the concept of stewardship … replaces notions of patronage and beneficence (with the potentially divisive claims to power and loyalty that accompany them) in the earliest churches.”

Consequently, for leadership the reciprocal relation is inverted: The leader does provide resources to his followers, yet such benefits are provided from below, from a posture of weakness and service, with the goal of the strengthening the community. This is in line with the findings of Wheatley’s study on patronage in early Christianity, suggesting that while patronage was not abolished by Christ and the early church, the concept was radically transformed and the traditional honor-game inverted. Consequently, the community is to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16), although the ultimate allegiance is to Christ (1 Cor 4:3-5).

As mentioned above, the codes for honorable and disgraceful behavior vary in time and space, thus different groups may define piety quite differently. Hence, a conflict of loyalty may develop if a group or leader promotes values divergent from those held by the majority culture, forcing members of the minority culture to change in order to ignore the opinion of nonmembers about their behavior. In other words, “adherence to the group’s values and ideals will only remain strong if that person redefines his or her circle of significant others.” This is exactly what is going on in Corinth, as Paul’s work among the community stands and falls on the acceptance of his leadership. The discourse on holiness and separation from evil succeeding Paul’s plea for reciprocity (2 Cor 6:14-7:1), often held to be an insertion, fits into this picture because Paul as a leader of a minority group in a pagan majority culture, needs to counter the external pressure for conformity and the internal erosion of commitment through the establishment of shaming tactics and honor discourses. Paul endorses and advocates values contrary to that of his surroundings because he believes that the social skeleton of the Corinthian society is ill-suited for the formation of the people of God. If his work is to succeed, he must be seen and embraced as the social architect and the most significant other in the Corinthian church. Building on a social identity theory of leadership, Barentsen suggests that leaders influence primarily through their ability to

direct the social identification process of other community members, thus aligning values, beliefs, and behaviors of the group.\textsuperscript{32} Whether they will succeed or not, depends among other things on the existence of other alternatives offered by competing leaders. Applied on 2 Corinthians, the letter reveals intense competition for leadership. Witherington is thus right in the assertion that “social and practical matters are more to the fore than theological and ethical matters at the close of 2 Corinthians. The fundamental problem is the Corinthians’ image of Christian leadership.”\textsuperscript{33} The Pauline letters in general and the Corinthian correspondence in particular not only describe Paul’s leadership but are leadership\textsuperscript{34} because they aim at altering the understandings and behaviors of the addressee.\textsuperscript{35}

In the defense of his leadership, Paul argues that he is not merely one among the Corinthians’ “ten thousand guardians in Christ” (1 Cor 4:15) but their father in the faith, thus functioning as a mediator in their relationship with God even to the point that their bond with Christ stands and falls upon their relationship with him.\textsuperscript{36} The contractual nature of this relationship is evident in the kinship language found throughout the correspondence (1 Cor 3:1-2, 4:14-15; 2 Cor 6:13; 12:14). The sibling metaphor (3:1), so rich with connotations to reciprocity and obligation,\textsuperscript{37} underscores the way the community belongs to each other and to Paul. The father analogy carries the same meaning\textsuperscript{38} as first century conventions held that children owe a debt of gratitude to their parents.\textsuperscript{39} Also, the imagery indicates that Paul assumes a pedagogical stance toward the Corinthians.\textsuperscript{40} Paul goes out of the way to assure that he is not to be associated with the kind of father figure the emperor or the other teachers might be (1 Cor 4:9-13), yet he expects them to submit to his authority and leadership because it is demonstrated by, not derived from, his words, deeds, and converts. He is their instructor and facilitator, the agent of Christ, as he is “trying to transform patronal relationships in Corinth in order to better socialize his converts.”\textsuperscript{41} To question Paul’s authority is thus to question Christ. In summary, the dominant concern in 2 Corinthians deals with the leadership contest, since the winner would have the right to define what it means to be a Christian and what practices this identity involves.\textsuperscript{42} In other words, the message is dependent upon the credibility of the messenger. In order to more fully investigate the Corinthian community’s reluctance to enter into the kind of reciprocal relationship that

\textsuperscript{33} Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 348.
\textsuperscript{34} Efrain Agosto, Servant Leadership: Jesus & Paul (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2005), 106–109.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Witherington, Conflict and Community in Corinth, 400–401.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 457.
\textsuperscript{42} Cf. Barentsen, Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission, 211.
Paul expected and the culture anticipated, the article now turns to LMX-theory in search for answers to what may hinder the development of healthy exchange and reciprocity in dyadic relationships.

III. THE THEORY: LMX

Succeeding leadership studies that emphasized leadership traits and leadership behaviors in the middle of the 20th century, the relationship between leaders and follower became the locus of interest in the last decades of second millennium. One prominent example of such dyadic theories is the Leader-Member Exchange theory: “The distinguishing feature of LMX theory is the examination of relationships, as opposed to the behavior or traits of either follower or leaders.” LMX is consistently correlated with positive organizational outcomes such as satisfaction, member job performance, commitment, perceived organizational support, and altruism, and goes beyond the material transaction to include social exchange as well (e.g., approval, trust, esteem), thus encompassing both transactional and transformational forms of leadership.

It is the emphasis on relationships between leader and follower that makes the LMX theory a promising starting point for exploration into the possible reasons for the lack of a reciprocal relationship between Paul and the Corinthian community. One downside about using LMX-theory to make sense of leader-follower relationships in the first century, however, is that this theory is based upon the idea that leaders develop exchange relationships with each follower as they together define the role of the subordinate. The focus is on what happens within a single relationship. Such perspective makes sense in individualistic Western societies, but the culture of Corinth at the time of Paul was a highly collectivistic one, implying that people naturally would place great emphasis on loyalty in forms of support for the members of the exchange relationship. Although LMX has developed to include studies on group and network levels, it still focuses on leadership relationships among individuals and may thus

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46 Gerstner and Day, «Meta-Analytic Review of Leader-Member Exchange Theory: Correlates and Construct Issues»; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn, «Reciprocity in Manager-Subordinate Relationships».
show itself inadequate to address problems between the leader and a group, such as the relational breach between Paul and the church in Corinth. In order to avoid theoretical mismatch, the article now draws the attention to the theories underpinning LMX, that is, Social Exchange Theory (SET).

Social Exchange Theory and the Norm of Reciprocity

LMX-theory is usually derived from Social Exchange Theory, suggesting that when individuals are treated well by another, they build an obligation to return the benevolence. Put differently, “the norm of reciprocity” puts one party under obligation when benefitted by another, the recipient being indebted to the donor until he repays. The reciprocity norm generates a sense of goodwill so that *quid pro quo* imitation over time results in commitment and trusting relationship. It is not surprising, then, that research demonstrates that high quality LMX relationships include higher levels of respect, trust, and loyalty. Gouldner holds that the underlying principle of reciprocity is essential to the stability of social systems and is likely to be found across time and culture: “A norm of reciprocity is, I suspect, no less universal and important an element of culture than the incest taboo, although, similarly, its concrete formulations may vary with time and place.” The notion of reciprocity evident in the Roman custom of patronage, Paul’s plea in 2 Corinthians 6:11-13, and in LMX-theory are arguably expressions of the same underlying principle or norm. Consequently, the fissure between the ancient text and the modern theory is perhaps not as large as one should expect.

IV. THE TEXT AND THE THEORY: ANY NEW INSIGHTS?

Having briefly outlined tenets of LMX and SET important for this study, it is time to return to the Corinthian correspondence and the question of what hinders the development of a reciprocal relationship between and the Christian community in the city. As reciprocity is the norm in human relations (Gouldner, 1960) and “the basis of human cooperation,” recipients of positive actions would naturally experience some sense of indebtedness that only can be reduced through reciprocation. This principle was fundamental to the mechanisms of patronage and honor in the time of Paul, hence

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52 Settoon, Bennett, and Liden, «Social Exchange in Organizations», 220.
55 Gouldner, «The Norm of Reciprocity», 171.
he as the spiritual patron of the community’s new faith could expect that the community would return his sufferings on their behalf with loyalty and open hearts. 2 Corinthians reveals that this is not the case.

In order to address the enmity in Corinth through the lenses of LMX-theory, it is vital to see how the construct relates to the situation at hand. As briefly hinted above, there are several points of convergence between the two. Firstly, the universal principle of reciprocity and exchange provides the foundation for LMX as it does for giving and receiving around the Mediterranean basin in the first century. Notably, in both cases reciprocity goes beyond the mere exchange of material goods to include social exchange such as respect and loyalty. Secondly, both 2 Corinthians and LMX-theory center on the relationship between leaders and followers. In this matter the construct is quite unique as other approaches to leadership typically address characteristics of leaders, followers, or contexts, making it a promising point of departure for the investigation of what goes on in Corinth. Finally, the development of LMX-theory has gone from being merely descriptive to be both descriptive and prescriptive, thus making it more in line with the highly prescriptive norms of giving and receiving that were woven into the societal fabric in the time of the New Testament. In sum, this article proposes that a cautious use of LMX is appropriate for studies of the biblical texts.

This being said, however, the LMX-theory is not designed to address the most important relationship in ecclesial leadership. While the focus of the LMX-construct is on the relationship between leader and follower, the crux of Paul’s leadership deals with people’s relationship to Christ. Paul’s ultimate goal is to “present every man complete in Christ” (Col 1:28), hence he is “in labor until Christ is formed in you” (Gal 4:19) and fears that his followers’ minds will be led astray from “the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:3). As seen above, LMX-theory sheds some light on the interaction going on between Paul and the Corinthians, but it falls short because it fails to address the theological convictions driving Paul’s attitudes and behaviors toward the community. It should be clear by now that the apostle and the churches he planted by no means were unaffected by the habits and values of the larger society, yet to uphold honorary codes is not the driving motive behind Paul’s plea in 2 Corinthians 6:11-13. On the contrary, the apostle alters and redefines the cultural conventions of his day in several aspects. Wheatley suggests that beginning with the example of Christ the authors of the New Testament developed the idea that the God of Israel is the supreme patron who alone is the giver of all benefits and the receiver of all credit. Consequently, the cursus honorum as motivation for human benefactors should be abandoned so that individuals who emerged as leaders or people of authority within the Christian community were not to receive exalted titles or privileges, but to draw their designations from the lower estates. Paul’s emphasis on sufferings and his own shortcomings should be understood in this light.

In a study on Paul’s gift from Philippi, Peterman shows that the mechanisms of social reciprocity did not have the power to take prominence over the gospel in the life and ministry of Paul, a fact made clearly in his refusal to accept support from the church

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57 Northouse, Leadership, 147–153.
58 Wheatley, Patronage in Early Christianity, 40–42.
albeit it would bring him in conflict with the more prominent members of the church.\textsuperscript{59} This leads Peterman to contend that the apostle does not “repudiate social reciprocity or its language.”\textsuperscript{60} While it is clear that the gospel had the upper hand in the Pauline dealing with his communities, Peterman’s conclusion in dubious because Paul in fact does rely on reciprocal language in his plea to the community. It is true that Paul refused to accept material support from the church in Corinth because it would place him in a position of obligation to the upper strata of the community, but he did know the power of social reciprocity and made sacrifices in terms of personal pain in order to win over the Corinthians. The apostle exceeds and red defines the dynamics of his society but he does not nullify the idea of reciprocity evident in the mechanics of patronage and benevolence. On the contrary, he drives home is argument by utilizing both reciprocity and kinship language to address the lacking and expected return from the community in Corinth. In sum, it is clear that while Paul builds his argument on material provided by the wider society, he radically redefines the system of patronage both in content and direction. By insisting that the weakest members in the community deserve the greatest honor (1 Cor 12:22-24) and emphasizing his weakness as a proof of his leadership abilities, he is seriously out of sync with the cultural conventions of his days. Precisely this breach with cultural conventions caused the turmoil in Corinth. Hence, this article argues that divergent views on leadership is what constitutes the relational break described in 2 Corinthians.

Put in empirical language, conflicting perspectives of leadership may moderate the effect of benevolence on the relationship, hence undermining some of the results one should expect to find based on LMX research. Settoon et al. report that individuals engage in different levels of reciprocation depending on the exchange partner.\textsuperscript{61} This may be due to the fact that despite the dyadic nature of LMX, different parties in the relationship may perceive the relation differently.\textsuperscript{62} Such differences in leader-member agreement may influence the reciprocal relationship in several ways. For example, the amount of equality in exchanges may vary with relational qualities, so that individuals who trust and respect one another and are committed to the relationship will not be as concerned about making sure that their exchanges are of equal value as will people in lower quality exchanges. Further, if the two parties of the exchange aim at obtaining mutual benefits, interest are likely to move from a focus on self-interest to a focus on mutual interest.\textsuperscript{63} Research also demonstrates that the extent of agreement in leader-member exchange increases as the length of intensity of dyadic interaction and relationship tenure increases.\textsuperscript{64}

While SET may sufficiently explain the dynamics behind the development of high or low LMX, it remains an enigma as to why the parties of a dyad may rate the same

\textsuperscript{59} Peterman, \textit{Paul’s gift from Philippi}.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{61} Settoon, Bennett, og Liden, «Social Exchange in Organizations».
\textsuperscript{64} Sin, Nahrgang, og Morgeson, «Understanding Why They Don’t See Eye To Eye», 149–151.
relationship differently. This raises the question of LMX disagreement.65 Gils, Quaquebeke, and Knippenberg suggest that perception discrepancy within the dyad may be explained through the implicit theories of leadership and followership the parties bring to the relationship. In case of the leader, a follower is inclined to evaluate him according to the expectation the individual has to a person in a leadership role.66 This is referred to as leadership categorization theory, of which Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT) is derived.67 At its core, this theory holds that followers evaluate their leaders according to schemas of what constitutes good and bad leadership, hence "recognizing someone as a leader ultimately depends on the match between a target's features and the follower's mental representation of a leader."68 The more the leader displays what the follower perceives to be characteristics of good leadership, the more likely the follower is to subordinate. This applies to reciprocation as well, as the follower's impression of the leader's contribution to the joint relationship affects how this contribution should be reciprocated.69 Although prototypes and schemas of effective leadership are shaped by the social factors such as the past relationships and interactions with close others,70 the international GLOBE study demonstrates that leadership prototypes also exist on the cultural level.71 Thus, leaders whose behavior is congruent with cultural norms and society's expectations of their leaders are thus more prone to do well than those who violate cultural expectations. Returning to the turmoil in Corinth with this in mind, it is likely that the break in relationship between the apostle and the community he established comes from deviating views on leadership. As discussed above, Paul does not want to conform his leadership along the lines of neither Jewish nor Greco-Roman ideologies, and are thus at conflict with both the majority culture in Corinth and the "super-apostles" influencing the Christian community in the city. Because of this intentional break with the expectations of most, if not all, members of the congregation had to its leader, Paul was not perceived as such and the lack of exchange in form of open hearts (2 Cor 6:11-13) was a result thereof. In sum, the reciprocation one should expect on the basis of cultural norms in the first century and reflected in the dynamics of social exchange described in current leadership theories was moderated by the diverging views on leadership between Paul and the community.

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65 Gerstner and Day, «Meta-Analytic Review of Leader-Member Exchange Theory: Correlates and Construct Issues»; Sin, Nahrgang, and Morgeson, «Understanding Why They Don't See Eye To Eye».
68 Ibid., 962.
69 Gils, Quaquebeke, og Knippenberg, «The X-Factor».
V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The textual analysis above revealed that the conflict going on between Paul and the church is Corinth is more about leadership than it is about theology, although the two are closely connected as Paul’s countercultural view and praxis of leadership is theologically informed. There is no way that Paul will adhere to the expectations of the community as the crux of his message and ministry is the crucified Messiah (1 Cor 1:17-25; 2:1-2; 2 Cor 4:7-18, 13:4). His success in Corinth thus depends upon his ability to render the church’s perception of what Christian leadership entails. A first question for further research then arises: Should Christian leadership be implemented from the top (i.e., the leader transforms the perceptions of Christian leadership) or from below (i.e., a transformation in the perceptions of leadership paves the way for the Christian leader)? Applied to the conflict in Corinth, two scenarios emerge: (a) by accepting Paul as their leader the community will eventually come to accept his countercultural notions of leadership because he takes the role as the prime social architect; or (b) by accepting his views on leadership the community will also accept Paul as their leader because he is the prime example of Christ-like leadership and thus worthy to imitate (1 Cor 4:9-15). It is outside the scope of this article to discuss which comes first, yet it should be stated that neither LMX nor ILT alone has the explanatory power to point the way because neither addresses the transformation of schemas people use to perceive and evaluate effective leadership. This task cannot be left unnoticed, however, as Christian leadership regularly comes in conflict with ideologies of leadership in the wider society. Barentsen convincingly shows that a social identity perspective on leadership may address some of these challenges, although it does not take sufficiently into consideration the phenomenon of reciprocity and exchange pivotal to the argument in the present article. Future research must thus deal with the constant tension within the Christian faith of being in the world, yet not of the world. More precisely, there is a need to investigate the extent to which Christian leadership should exclude or embrace secular notions of leadership.

Second, future research needs to address how the massive focus on reciprocity in the ancient world relates to Christian leadership. Even though this article shows that Paul transforms and inverts the conventional expectations of giving and receiving in the first century, the basic principle of reciprocity remains even to the point that it is a central aspect of Christian ethics. It is thus pertinent to ask whether Christian leadership ever goes beyond the universal norm of reciprocity. If not, there is no such thing as a free lunch even among the people of God and put bluntly, all the sacrifice Paul boasts about in the Corinthian correspondence is nothing less than selfish acts performed to attract their loyalty. More research is hence needed to investigate if Mauss’ (2011) maxim that all human exchange is “based on obligation and economic self-interest” holds true for Christian leadership as well. Finally, empirical studies are

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72 See Barentsen, Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission.
74 Mauss, The gift, 1.
necessary to test some of the observations in this article. One study could examine how ILT moderates reciprocity in leader-follower relations in dyads and groups. Another study could investigate the effects of mutual role expectation communication on LMX agreement.75 Although more knowledge on the dynamics of reciprocity is crucial for the emerging field of Christian leadership, the current article reveals that Paul believed that only the leader who sacrifices for the community is worthy to be followed. A lot of hard work lies ahead to more fully understand how exchange relates to leadership — both for the scholar and the leader — yet the apostle will remind them both that hardship, though sometimes misunderstood, is at the core of Christian ministry and formation.

75 Such an approach is proposed by Gils, Quaquebeke, and Knippenberg, «The X-Factor».