



The Roles of Intercultural Competence and Unity in Authentic Transformational Leadership: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of Ephesians 3:1-13

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Whereas both ethical and authentic leadership are closely linked to transformational leadership, scholars have examined their respective and combined applications. Both are listed, analyzed, and debated (among others) as effective styles of cross-cultural leadership, fueling positive results within organizations, communities, and within regional culture clusters. Within the framework of ethical cross-cultural leadership are several questions surrounding intercultural communication competence and the role unity plays within authentic transformational leadership. An examination of these subjects addressed through a socio-rhetorical critical analysis of Ephesians 3:1-13, utilizes cultural intertexture analysis to investigate some of the primary factors within ethical transforming leadership. This investigation encapsulates several prevalent leadership and communication theories to include intercultural communication competence, cultural intelligence, and authentic transformational leadership factors. The appropriate communicative mission and praxis of authentic transformational leaders appeal to follower's sensibilities, engenders a collective vision for change, and incites fierce loyalty and dedication to the collective mission. Through Paul's insightful explanation and shared revelation on the mysteries of God, the burgeoning and now interculturally inclusive first-century Christian church is strengthened, enlightened, and encouraged to grow together.

As the early church grew in numbers, it was incumbent upon leadership to communicate revelatory and innovative ways to motivate and engender a follower's loyalty, inclusion and ultimately, their trust in the providence and plan of God for a united church (ἐκκλησία). The spread of both the gospel and the revelation of the "mystery of Christ" became the topic of conversation, wedged between the impassioned prayers by who many believe was the apostle Paul (Aune, 2010; Best, 1999; DeSilva, 2004; Eph. 3:4, ESV). Much like any contemporary organization, the early church reflected an imperative to develop an eternal, intercultural, and unified system of transformation which blanketed regional, cultural, spiritual, communal, and personal practices of the period. In recent years, increasing numbers of organizations are

expanding beyond national boundaries, and subsequently, leaders within these new intercultural contexts must learn to engage followers of differing backgrounds and experiences (Van Dyne, Ang, & Koh, 2009). There are a growing number of researchers analyzing the correlations between transformational leadership and intercultural intelligence as measured by that leader's ability to effectively lead and manage within multicultural environments (Gandolfi, 2012; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Ramsey, Rutti, Lorenz, Bakarar, & Sant'anna, 2017).

Moodian (2008) suggested that culture shapes human behaviors. As such, how can authentic transformational leadership as exhibited by the apostle Paul in the selected pericope, instruct both ancient and contemporary leaders how to generate unity, obedience, loyalty and optimal performance from new "foreign" membership (followers) (Moodian, 2008, p. 81). Ephesians 3:1-13 illustrates a scenario that provides a fresh perspective for the Christian application of authentic transformational leadership focused on intercultural evangelism, socialization of new converts into established faith communities, and the expansion of new, transformed, and culturally expansive churches.

Leadership Theories

In the past 75 years, scholars estimate over 65 different approaches, pointing to the development, methodology, and praxis of effective leadership (Fleishman et al., 1991; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013). One's reaction to a problem or difficulty presented as a result of divergent cultural preferences often reveals what culture influences them the most. Paul, in his Ephesians 3:1-13 discourse, called the new and existing believers to wholly defer to the sacrificing, inclusive, transformative, and mysterious culture of Christ.

Transformational Leadership (TL)

Initially developed by Burns (1978) and later extended by Bass (1985) and additional scholars (Avolio, 1999; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Bass, 1993; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Jung, Yammarino, & Lee, 2009; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990) Transformational Leadership (TL) is an examination of leaders who transformed organizations, individuals and societies. This transformative leadership method, as observed by researchers, utilized the development of followers into moral agents as a direct result of a leader's moral behavior, which produces like-minded organizations filled with followers who are groomed for high performance and ultimately lead others (Zhu, Avolio, Riggio, & Sosik, 2011).

More than thirty years later, scholars continue to point to Bass's (1985) definition of a transformational leader as "someone who raised their awareness about issues of

consequence, shifted them to higher-level needs, influenced (others) to transcend their own self-interests...and to work harder than they originally had expected they would" (Bass, 1985, p. 25; Ramsey et al., 2017, p. 461).

The four original TL components proposed by Bass (1985) were: (a) inspirational motivation, (b) idealized influence, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. By 1990, Podsakoff et al. extended his work, identifying six principal factors of TL, which are: (a) identifying and articulating vision, (b) providing an appropriate model, (c) fostering acceptance of group goals, (d) high performance expectations, (e) providing individualized support, and (f) intellectual stimulation. These components, in relationship to the praxis and development of efficient authentic transformational leadership within intercultural organizations, are expounded further in the cultural intelligence portion of this examination.

TL, for many scholars, exemplifies a shifting presence within the sphere of leadership praxis that profoundly contributed to the leadership studies framework (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Bass, 1993; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993). Additionally, there are a number of contemporary researchers who have presented strong correlative evidence between transformational models of leadership and positive and productive organizational outcomes (Bruce & Hinkin, 1998; Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Den Hartog et al., 1999; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Van Woerkom & de Reuver, 2009; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003; Yammarino et al., 1993).

Within the construction of ethical leadership are other supporting leadership theories, such as, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership, which emphasize a specific set of seven values including: (a) integrity, (b) altruism, (c) humility, (d) empathy and healing, (e) personal growth, (f) fairness and justice, and (g) empowerment (Yukl, 2013, p. 347-348). Each of these attributes is reflected in the selected pericope and serve as primary components within the next topic of this discussion – authentic leadership (AL).

Authentic Leadership (AL)

As evidenced by the findings of Burris, Ayman, Che, and Min's (2013) findings, often members of differing cultural backgrounds develop a perceived conclusion that leadership of a different cultural background is inauthentic. As previously mentioned there are a staggering number of simultaneous scholarly and practitioner writings on the competing and complementary conceptions of leadership theory; among those, is authentic leadership (AL) (Avolio et al., 2004; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, 2010; Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumbwa, 2010; Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016; Cianci, Hannah, Roberts, & Tsakumis, 2014; Copeland, 2016; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005a; Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005b; Gardner,

Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Hannah, Lester, & Walumbwa, 2005; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrang, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Luthans, Norman, & Hughes, 2006; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2018).

The introduction of an original paradigm for AL by Luthans and Avolio (2003) communicated a standalone, “theory-driven model identifying the specific construct variables and relationship that can guide authentic leader development and suggest researchable propositions” (p. 244). Within the last decade a growing scholarly focus on AL, yielded additional academic responses to the cacophony of ethical breaches, international discord, and poor management within social, corporate and government leadership practices (Avolio, 2010; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2011; Gardner et al., 2005a; Ilies et al., 2005).

The descriptions of authentic leaders include clarity about personal identity, consistent, transparent disclosures, and behavior in alignment with personal values, motivations, beliefs, and self-awareness which promotes ethical follower behaviors (Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). As such, AL is comprised, according to scholars, on four primary factors: (a) self-awareness, (b) balanced processing, (c) relational transparency, and (d) internal moral perspective. A point of distinction within AL, in comparison to other leadership behaviors, is the emphasis on internal over external values, as reflected above which reflect an inverted and atypical method of governing a leader’s actions within an organization (Ryan & Deci, 2003 as cited in Banks et al., 2016, p. 247). Brown and Trevino (2006) echoed this distinction that “being motivated by positive end values and concern for others (rather than by self-interest) is essential to authentic leadership” (p. 599).

Self-awareness

The first component within AL reflects a sober understanding and assessment of one’s weaknesses and strengths in light of self-analysis of continuity and consistent behavior that supports one’s talents, goals, beliefs, values, and knowledge (Banks et al., 2016; Gardner et al., 2005a; Gardner et al., 2005b; Ilies et al., 2005). A high self-awareness among authentic leaders, within research findings, serves as the transparent display of intention, motivation and sustainment of follower buy-in, as the organization meets its performance goals (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio, 2010; Avolio et al., 2010; Copeland, 2016; Gardner et al., 2011; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2018).

Scholars have also explained that an authentic leader exhibits “altruism and virtue during leadership episodes...enhance activation of a morally laden working self-concept within followers” (Hannah et al., 2005, p. 68). Additionally, the demonstration of self-awareness serves as a cornerstone to AL, as a leader’s identity frames the conception of the world around them. Diddams and Chang (2012) posited the absence

of acute self-awareness within authenticity leaves room for the development, praxis and perpetual concession of “authentic” narcissistic, ill-informed, and maleficent behaviors (p. 596). Scholars agreed that the fuel behind a positive merger of authenticity and leadership lies firmly in an elevated sense of clarity and a thorough investigation of self-knowledge (Avolio et al., 2010; Diddams & Chang, 2012; Gardner et al., 2005a; Gardner et al., 2005b; Kernis, 2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Shamir & Eilam-Shamir, 2018). Ultimately, the practice of self-knowledge in AL should be accompanied by “epistemic humility,” as the recognition of one’s limitations and the necessity for the consistent pursuit of a balanced understanding of self (Ryan, 1996 as cited in Diddams & Chang, 2012, p. 596).

Balanced (Unbiased) Processing

A leader’s sense of self as reflected in AL’s self-awareness component is primarily driven by the intrinsic and deliberate exhibition of honorable behaviors (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Ilies et al., 2005; Luthans et al., 2006). The marriage of one’s authenticity with personal integrity serves as the defining characteristics of unbiased processing and personal self-development within AL. Leaders who exercise this component of AL, according to Kernis (2003), are usually impartial, and business and social frameworks tend to recognize negative and positive attributes. The active pursuit of input and non-defensive consideration of ideas, critiques, and praise, provides authentic leaders with a foundation for balanced processing of interactions (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Diddams & Chang, 2012; Kernis, 2003).

The kind of objectivity resident in the application of balanced processing, allow authentic leaders (with imperfect objectivity) to gather and process pertinent data about themselves, which may be either affirming or corrective (Gardner et al., 2005a). This method of utilizing a conscious, intentional, and targeted pursuit of knowledge, serves as the key for growth within an authentic leadership paradigm, collectively and personally. Further, scholars noted a strong positive correlation for leaders who “actively seek out feedback (particularly negative feedback)” and their ability to obtain “an accurate sense of their work and their relationships to superiors, followers, and peers” (Ashford & Tui, 1991; Diddams & Chang, 2012, p. 597; Hayward & Hambrick, 1997). The use of an authentic practice as a developmental leadership process highlights the personal and communal areas of inconsistency and the fluctuations that can emerge in pursuit of a transformative vision. As such, scholars explained the path through developmental inconsistencies identified between who a leader is and the pursuit of a new and better identity instills humility, transparent leadership, and authentic self-growth (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004).

Relational Transparency

The third attribute of AL refers to the ways that a leader’s genuine and transparent exhibition of self as displayed to followers reflects accurate information about true

opinions, thoughts, and feelings (Gardner et al., 2005a; Gardner et al., 2005b). Authentic leaders, purposely share values, standards, and ideals, allowing followers and spectators to evaluate their respective actions with their language (Cianci et al., 2014). This practice allows authentic leadership to set the pace with respect to establishing a clear moral and behavioral example as an expectation for the collective functioning of an organization, group, or team.

AL calls for the establishment of an open environment that fosters the exchange of information and viewpoints and the utilization of self-disclosure within leaders (Avolio et al., 2009). Moreover, an essential characteristic of AL is the deliberate promotion of a high level of both self-clarity, and behavioral modeling in a consistent manner, which is replicable among followers (identifying similarly) who respond positively to the expressed morals and values of leadership (Diddams & Chang, 2012; Hogg, 2001; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Luthans et al., 2006).

Internalized Moral Perspective

The final component of AL points to a leader's ability to foster an internalized moral perspective (moral self-identity) reflecting an ability to be governed by an internal moral compass as a means of behavioral self-regulation (Avolio et al., 2009). As such, a commitment to strong moral identity within AL promotes the determination for congruity between dedication to appropriate behavior and consistent ethical action when faced with difficult situational contexts (May et al., 2003). The establishment of this form of moral constitution allows authentic leaders to police their decisions in compliance with an established code of standards, behaviors, and morals (Hannah et al., 2005 as cited in Cianci et al., 2014, p. 583).

Scholars have also suggested that when leadership models authentic behaviors, they often mirror expressed value sets and moral desires over and beyond the preferences satisfaction or acceptance of others (Ilies et al., 2005). Conversely, researchers have also suggested that authentic leaders exhibit a strong inclination toward inclusion, often promoting diversity in both follower perspective and experience, which in turn promotes loyalty, trust and overall perception of authenticity (Arda, Aslan, & Alpkan, 2016). Bridging these contentions is the assertion made by Walker and Henning (2004) that the moral example set by authentic leaders governs followers, keeping them on a clearly defined path toward the establishment of a transformed model of behavior and establishment of a moral standard as an organization.

Authentic Transformational Leadership (ATL)

Avolio and Gardner (2005) submitted that AL as a leadership concept might overlap with several other positive theories of leadership, such as servant leadership, spiritual leadership, charismatic leadership, and transformational leadership. Conversely, Luthans and Avolio (2003) argued that while authentic leadership is a construct that

“could incorporate charismatic, transformational, integrity and/or ethical leadership,” that each framework may overlap, but could also be classified independently as distinct constructions (p. 4). This conception is supported by some scholars who suggested a positive correlation between the root construction of AL and its incorporation of both transformational and ethical leadership styles (Avolio et al., 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May et al., 2003). Further, Bass and Steidlmeier’s (1999) work established a connection between AL and TL, introducing the theoretical conception of Authentic Transformational Leadership (ATL).

ATL as a theoretical framework, as proposed by Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) extended the formative work of both Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) in the establishment of transformational leadership, respectively. Scholars purported that authentic transformational leaders embodied a moral carriage, serving as representatives of change, who transformed organizations, individuals, and nations into mirrored reflections of morality and mission effectiveness (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). An authentic transformational leader synthesizes the dynamics of and between “moral identity and the moral actions of followers” (Zhu et al., 2011, p. 801). The combination of Burns (1978) transformational social influence process and other scholars insistence on the insertion of morals, character, concern for others, and clear articulation of an aspirational collective vision all support the construction of an ATL framework (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Sosik, 2006).

Zhu et al. (2011) explained that “ATL includes both transactional and transformational components of moral decision making which contributes to leaders and followers with high moral identity... who act on that identity... by conducting authentic moral decision making... and action(s)...(p. 805). This ethical, moral, authentic, and transformational fusion of leadership styles and identity establish the behavioral environment and culture for organizations.

Cultural Intelligence, Intercultural Communication, and the Apostle Paul

Some researchers pointed to the strong correlation between transformational models of leadership and many varieties of effective organizational outcomes (Bruce & Hinkin, 1998; Bycio et al., 1995; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Van Woerkom & de Reuver, 2009; Walumbwa et al., 2008). There is a collective outcry within contemporary research for “more culturally intelligent global leaders” (Elenkov & Manev, 2009; Manning, 2003; Ramsey et al., 2017, p. 462). As evidenced by the expressed focus of this examination, the inclusion, and operation of both cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence are revealed in the writing and work of the apostle Paul as demonstrated by the chosen pericope.

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

Cultural intelligence (CQ) as defined by Earley and Ang (2003) is one's ability to effectively adapt to new, diverse cultural contexts and operate well within a cross-cultural atmosphere. Scholars list this as a distinguishable competence in the delineation of effective cross-cultural relationships and connections (Ang, Van Dyne, & Rosckstuhl, 2015; Earley, 2002; Ng, Tan, & Ang, 2011; Ramsey et al., 2017). Researchers have also explained that the cross-cultural interconnectivity mandate that individuals and groups comprehend and adjust acceptable behaviors based on the values, beliefs, and customs of alternative cultures in order to sustain effective interaction and exchange (Ng et al., 2011). As such, the skills, information, and abilities garnered by the CQ construct provide leaders with the tools to foster positive performance within organizations (Groves & Feyerherm, 2011; Kim & Van Dyne, 2012; Ramsey et al., 2017).

Ramsey et al. (2017) explained that transformational leaders "create a connection with followers that raise the level of motivation and morality (and) ... help followers reach their fullest potential" (p. 463). Supporting this assertion, Elenkov and Manev (2009) contended that leadership, exhibiting high CQ, often reflects transformational leadership behaviors. Additionally, researchers explained that an effective transformational leader quickly ascertains cultural differences, ascribes accurate interpretation of others' behaviors, and adapts well (Elenkov & Manev, 2009, p. 361). Researchers concluded that transformational leaders utilize CQ as an iterative and impactful method for adapting to new cultural contexts (Ang et al., 2007; Ang & Van Dyne, 2008; Earley, 2002; Ramsey et al., 2017, p. 463; Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016).

As such, scholars suggest a seamless marriage between the practical application of thoughts and actions in the CQ construct and the six components of TL proposed by Podsakoff et al. (1990). The process of identifying and articulating a vision points to the motivation and actions of leadership that illustrates a goal and inspires followers to unify in pursuit of a future vision (Ramsey et al., 2017). In an intercultural environment, authentic transformational leaders with a high CQ, identify, examine and understand the places of cultural convergence and dissidence within their followers and articulates vision (using culturally appropriate language) in a manner that unifies the group.

Providing an appropriate model also signifies a high CQ leader, who cultivates the ability to exhibit culturally appropriate behavior that sets an excellent example for followers. An authentic transformational leader can demonstrate what it takes to include others and pursue a vision, without excluding vital parts of the team, which fosters trust and loyalty among subordinates who strive to emulate leader behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Ramsey et al., 2017). The third component, fostering acceptance of group goals refers to the promotion and insistence on cooperation among distinct portions of the team, in pursuit of a collective goal. Effective authentic transformational leadership utilizes CQ within this component, through a heightened awareness of the

kind of interaction necessary within intercultural environments will produce efficient working teams that exploit the ability resident in a given team. The investigation and deliberate use of collective focus within teams support the fourth TL component of high-performance expectations (Podsakoff et al., 1996). An active, authentic transformational leader utilizes their modeling of behavior to establish excellence as an integral part of the collective organizational culture.

Additionally, these leaders utilize the fifth TL component, (providing individualized support) to ensure that each member of the team is recognized and that they meet individuals' needs, within a dynamic and multiculturally supportive environment (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Podsakoff et al., 1996). Finally, intellectual stimulation within an intercultural organization refers to the leader behavior that challenges subordinates to scrutinize bias and challenge assumptions in pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness. The use of informed critical assessment on behalf of the authentic transformational leader, within this component, models for followers, the necessity for the consistent application of appropriate communication and behavior as the intercultural organization grows and expands (Podsakoff et al., 1996; Ramsey et al., 2017)

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

Authentic transformational leaders rely heavily on their communication skills to effectively convey the mission, illustrate the vision and competently construct meaning (Howell & Frost, 1989 as cited in Gandolfi, 2012, p. 528). Scholars studied competence concepts in the 1950s and both then and now define it as, "the ability to do something successfully or efficiently" (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 15; Oxford Online Dictionary, 2018). Chen (1989) defined ICC as "the ability of an interactant to execute communication behaviors to elicit a desired response in a specific environment" (p. 13). As such, the exhibition of ICC within leadership hinges on two criteria: (a) effectiveness, and (b) appropriateness (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 15). The theoretical construction of ICC by Chen (1989, 2005) presented three conceptual models of ICC, with the third illustrating a comprehensive representation of the tri-leveled aspects of this construct (Chen, 1989; Dai & Chen, 2014; Koester, & Lustig, 2015; Martin, 2015). The existing ICC model represented three aspects: (a) cognition (intercultural awareness), (b) affect (intercultural sensitivity), and (c) behavior (intercultural adroitness) of ICC (Dai & Chen, 2014, p. 19).

As delineated above, authentic transformational leaders skillfully navigate diverse and inconsistent contextual situations, individuals, and organizations through the skilled utilization of clear and transparent communication "using language, images, symbols, and metaphors" (Gandolfi, 2012, p. 528). Additionally, this researcher identifies, intercultural communication competence as reflected in Ephesians 3:1-13's contents, composition, and meaning for the first and continuing Christian church by the apostle Paul.

CQ & ICC's Application to Apostle Paul

Paul's former occupation as a devout and zealous Pharisaic leader, his subsequent transformative experience in Damascus and apostolic mantle as commissioner of new Gentile-inclusive churches, reflect the various inputs he navigated (with the help of the Holy Spirit) to establish his identity. Likewise, the burgeoning first-century Christian worldview, amidst the dominance of Roman culture and an established Jewish framework, presented an actualized model, sufficient for this examination of a real-world (albeit ancient) intercultural leadership paradigm. Leadership, on every level, is often subjected to a level of public scrutiny, assessments, and judgments, when introducing new beliefs, revelations or cultures (ἐθνῶν, Gentiles), as is the context of the selected pericope (Eph. 3:1, 8 ESV).

The Ephesians author's use of narrative and storytelling in sharing the revelation of the mysteries of God also serve as an authentic transformational leader's tool within contemporary educational environments for fostering an open environment of self-awareness and authenticity (Andenoro, Popa, Bletscher, & Albert, 2012; Burris et al., 2013). Potential evidence of an authentic transformational leadership style with Paul is the expression of humility (Eph. 3:1, 8), self-disclosure (Eph. 3:1, 4-5, 7-9), relational empathic connection (Eph. 3:1-4, 8-10, 13), and his dedication to respond (and alleviate) tense or confusing points of failure and disunity among followers (Eph. 3:1-4, 8-10, 13). Scholars contend that when leaders (like Paul) establish a type of prototypical example for followers that reveals shortcomings, sober self-assessments, and weaknesses, it reduces anxieties and increases cohesiveness in the establishment of organizational culture (Hogg, 2001). Shamir and Eilam (2005) expounded on this with the assertion that authentic leaders who model behavior openly, increase empathic exchanges with followers, which instills trust, loyalty, adherence, and faithful observance of instructions. This integrated relationship is evidenced within the pericope, not just in the acceptance of Paul's mysterious revelation, but also the continued and successful spread of the gospel beyond this letter's diverse recipients, to the furthest expanses of civilization presently.

The ancient written and lived exhibition of CQ as represented in Paul's identification of vision, proper modeling of appropriate behavior, fostering a collective focus on group goals, and the establishment of high expectations for followers reflects an ATL construct (Ramsey et al., 2017, pp. 463-464). Paul's writing style reflects an understanding of the direct link between his ability to construct and clearly communicate an inspirational vision as a critical part of the dissemination of the gospel message, and the sustainment and growth of a burgeoning Christian church. It becomes of paramount importance, especially for the members of an intercultural organization like the one addressed in the Ephesian letter, for followers within a culturally diverse environment to have transformative ethical leadership. Transparent leader modeled behaviors appropriately reconcile interpretive breaches often created when indigenous and nonindigenous,

original and emergent, elder and younger, or Jews and Gentiles are working toward a unified vision and purpose.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

There are six distinctive chapters within a letter included in the cacophony of defining communication within the New Testament epistles, which are attributed to an author “speaking in Paul’s voice if not Paul (Sherwood, 2012a, p. 100). The author (presumed as Paul for this analysis) examined social topics of varying degrees presented a “reformist” model, which, according to Robbins, (1996a) provides “insights about the ways... social organization(s) should be amended” (p. 73). While others contend that Ephesians is a Deutero-Pauline epistle, not content to grant authorship to Paul (DeSilva, 2004; Ehrman, 2004). Best (1998) explained that Ephesians authorship, though contested among scholars, clearly reflects a sophisticated Greek style of communication reminiscent of a Hellenistic Jewish Christian, who wanted the letter’s contents assigned to the apostle Paul. He contended further, that while the question of pseudonymity lingers, some intercultural issues were arising within the growing Christian church that needed attention, “in the way Paul would have done had he still been alive” (p.13). In light of these interpretive and historical debates, scholars have also explained that while many agree that Ephesians existed within Asia Minor, they collectively have offered no conclusive data that the intended recipients of this epistle lived in Ephesus (Aune, 2010; Best, 1999; Blevins, 1979; DeSilva, 2004; Ehrman, 2004; Van Aarde, 2017).

Moreover, scholars argued within other historical-cultural analysis of this letter, that Ephesians was written while the apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28:16-31) (MacDonald & Aune, 2010). Furthermore, the language within this text, considering other Pauline writings is distinctive, with more than 90 unique words throughout the undoubtedly Pauline epistles (Muddiman, 2001). The backdrop within Ephesians, for Paul’s prayer and treatise, is an interweaving of God’s mission, the mission of the church, and the individual and collective mission of its members (Van Aarde, 2016, 2017). Within its writing is a deliberate illustration of the connectivity and unique individuality within the collective Christian “body,” necessary for the sustainment and growth of the church.

Paul, identifying as a prisoner, pointed this letter’s recipients to the revelation of the mystery of God, which upends many social, cultural, and religious norms of the period and deliberately working to unite an intercultural collection of followers by “bringing light for everyone” (Eph. 3:1:9a, ESV).

Socio-Rhetorical Criticism

Robbins (2004) identified socio-rhetorical criticism as the approach to interpretive analysis utilizing integrated techniques to understand Scriptures and other ancient

texts. He explained that “socio-rhetorical interpretation began with analysis and interpretation of social and cultural dynamics in written works” (Robbins, 2004, p. 6). This method employs a two-fold focus on the *socio*, which refers to the depth of knowledge resident in many of the social sciences (sociology and anthropology) and the *rhetorical* focus which refers to the ways that a text’s language communicates to readers (Robbins, 1996a; Robbins, 1996b). This combination of resources examines the ways individuals utilize language within the various practices in the world. While the socio-rhetorical analysis informs readers, its service does not uncover meaning within a given text; instead, it provides interpretive data for the ways the text engaged readers in its original context (Robbins, 1996a; Robbins, 1996b; Robbins, 2004). This multi-dimensional interpretive model prescribes the observation of one of all the following textures: (a) inner texture, (b) intertexture, (c) social and cultural texture, (d) ideological texture, and (e) sacred texture (Robbins, 1996a; Robbins, 1996b; Robbins, 2004).

The focus, within this examination, is on Robbin's (1996a, 1996b) second listed texture within socio-rhetorical criticism, called intertexture. Intertexture within writing surveys a continuum of interpretive fields including (a) oral-scribal intertexture, (b) cultural intertexture, (c) social intertexture, and (d) historical intertexture.

The consideration of Ephesians 3:1-13 in relation to other passages reflects Robbins (1996b) contention that this form of analysis does not deliver a comprehensive survey and can only provide “a representative range of intertextual phenomena” (p. 96). An examination of the interpretive language within the selected pericope continues the author’s original conversation for a contemporary audience and reveals some of the religious traditions and ancient cultural implications within the text. The objective of socio-rhetorical analysis is to employ the tools individuals utilize daily into a framework of interpretation that exists in the contemporary world (Robbins, 1996a).

As such, the socio-rhetorical analysis of Ephesians 3:1-13, highlights to social, cultural and religious implications within Paul’s writing and its function as an integral portion of the structure, thought and skillful use of rhetoric, calling a diverse people to forgo argument in pursuit of unity; as “members of the same body and (equal) partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus...” (Eph. 3:6b, ESV).

Intertexture Analysis: Ephesians 3:1-13

MacDonald and Aune (2010) explained that the author of Ephesians often points to other scripture, however, there are only a few direct quotations within the contents of the letter, both outside of the selected pericope (Ps. 68:18. in Eph. 4:8-9; Gen. 2:24 in Eph. 5:32) (p.544). Furthermore, the concept of mystery as examined in this writing, bears witness to the development and pervasive messages resident in Gnostic belief and texts during that period are also echoed within Ephesians, with researchers noting excerpts akin to the Gospel of Philip (MacDonald & Harrington, 2000, p. 331). Additionally,

students of the Holy Scriptures note references to other scriptures within the Ephesians letter, indicating the many Hellenist rhetorical and societal influences and the imperative particularly in the first three chapters to accurately explain “God’s purpose for the world” (MacDonald, 2004; MacDonald & Aune, 2010, p. 544).

Leading up to the third chapter in the Ephesians letter is the discussion of Jewish attitudes toward foreigners and the deliberate inclusion of Gentile Christians within the household of God (Eph. 2:19-22). Immediately following this rhetorical disruption of established Jewish ethnocentric attitudes within the community, Paul immediately models self-sacrifice for the heightened vision of evangelistic duty, by beginning an intercessory prayer on behalf of the Gentile readers (Eph. 3:1, ESV). Scholars note that the author’s prayer for the Gentiles is interrupted briefly in Ephesians 3:2-13 and will resume later in verse 14 “on account of...” the unifying message or grace and access to the revelation of the mystery of God (Ehrman, 2004; Ryrie, 1966; Sherwood, 2012b; Thielman, Yarbrough, & Stein, 2010). Additionally, interpreters consider the selected portion of the Ephesian letter as being representative of an “anacoluthon” resting as a kind of syntactic hiccup within an intercessory prayer for others (Krueger, 1986; Wiles, 2007). Supporting this contention, are the scholars who suggested that the Ephesians writer “had not cleverly planned what he was going to write” and in the middle of an intercessory prayer in prison, “digressed to say why he was in prison, and then, reminded by his own digression that had been on the verge of prayer, decided to go back to prayer...” (Thielman et al., 2010, p. 188).

Cultural intertexture examines the language (phrases and words) within a given text and its engagement with the established cultural patterns, norms, traditions, and behaviors (Robbins, 1996a; Robbins, 1996b). With a focus on the assumed knowledge resident within writing that only individuals and groups from that time or generally associated with a given culture would understand innately. Robbins (1996a) explained further that cultural intertexture engages intersections within texts utilizing two formulations (a) allusion and echo or (b) reference (pp. 58-59).

Within the selected text, are specific references to intertextual themes (values) familiar to this letter’s recipients, and more precisely reflect the values resident in the ethical representation of ATL in this pericope. The Ephesians 3:1-13 writing, separated into portions of the text, delineated within this examination, by cultural and religious themes that align with the contemporary list of ethical leadership values resident in both AL and TL conceptions. The swirling interpretive spiral DeSilva (2004) envisioned, with respect to hermeneutics, is applicable in this instance, as the ancient readers of Ephesians would have known (more than a contemporary reader) the Jewish cultural references that the author included in this portion of the text in (a) Ephesians 3:5, ESV *ἕτερος γενεά οὐ γνωρίζω υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου*, which means “in other generations was not made known to the sons of men,” (Isaiah 56:6-7; 49:6 ESV); and (b) Eph. 3:8 ESV *ἀνεξιχνίαστος*, which means “unfathomable or unsearchable”, (Job 5:9, 9:10 ESV) (Blue Letter Bible,

2018b; Rivers, 2018, p.4) These selections represent cultural echoes rather than references according to Robbins (1996a), as they are “subtle and indirect,” and the meaning for readers may conflict about the precise nature of cultural intertexture within the pericope (p.60).

Moreover, use of Robbins (1996a) oral-scribal analytical method of intertexture is additionally applied to the selected text using an ideological framework to study the text; considering other scriptural use of indirect references such as imprisonment, intercession, suffering, mystery, humility, fellowship (unity), and wisdom.

Identity, Intercession & Imprisonment – Ephesians 3:1

Akin to the self-sacrifice resident in both AL and TL is the exhibition of altruism within the opening verse of the selected pericope. Paul begins this portion of writing by expressing his role, empowered by the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26, 34, ESV) as advocate and intermediary. This identification as a literal and figurative imprisoned intercessor mirrored the altruistic model of Christ as humanity’s intercessor (Heb. 7:25, 10:22; John 14:6; 1 Jn. 2:1-2, ESV; MacDonald, 2016). The writer’s ability to joy in suffering, with an understanding of the reason (χάριν Eph. 3:1) for his imprisonment as being profitable, “for the sake of you Gentiles” (ὕπὲρ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν, Eph. 3:1, ESV). His identification as “prisoner” (δεσμιος) in the opening verse of chapter three stands in direct contrast with the writer’s concurrent self-identification as “Paul,” which carries a weight of authority for recipients of other New Testament epistles (Gal 5:2; Col. 1:23; II Cor. 10:1, ESV).

For the author, the designations of his being both an apostle and a prisoner, were distinctions of honor, praise, and Divine service, as mirrored in the account of his fruitful imprisonment in Philippians 1:8-14, ESV (Blevins, 1979; MacDonald, 2004). In both accounts there is the paralleled praxis of intercession, imprisonment, and service for others, that was both “heard” (Eph. 3:2) and “become known” (Phil. 1:13) for the benefit of Gentiles (Eph. 3:1) and “the whole imperial (Praetorian) guard” (Phil. 1:13) (Blevins, 1979).

Serving as an opening cultural and social backdrop for letter recipients, is the illustrative Christian practice of unity in suffering for the sake of another and the supplementary establishment of a united and empowered (and long-established) network of fellowship (even in suffering) (Phil. 3:10; Rom. 5:3; Jn. 16:33). In addition to the other New Testament references supporting this contention, is the detailed account of “affliction” and suffering, Jewish patriarch, Joseph endured in Acts: 7:9-17, which ultimately precipitated (for a time) the continual multiplication and increase of the people of God. The author’s use of language in this opening verse may also reflect what scholars noted as a direct connection to this kind of altruistic praxis of identification and sacrifice mirrored in the cultural practice of the ancient mystery cults within the

Hellenistic period. It is recorded that during this time, groups often utilized, as the concluding portion of rituals enacted for the revelation of mysteries, the demonstrative “act of being chained” (Blevins, 1979, p. 507).

The Revelation of the Mystery of Christ – Ephesians 3:2-7

Both empowered and commissioned by the (χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ) “grace of God,” Paul begins the deliberate unraveling the (μυστηρίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ) “mystery of Christ.” This revelation further establishes the apostolic imperative and prerogative of full disclosure for the sake of extending the reach of an impeccable godly witness (Beale & Gladd, 2014). Ryrie (1966) explained that the “mystery” (μυστήριον) points to a secret containing an elevated or profound truth and within the New Testament there are twenty-seven occurrences with “both ideas of something secret and something deep” (p. 26). The Ephesians letter encompasses a large portion of these references to mystery with six occurrences in the book (Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19) (Beale & Gladd, 2014, p. 147; Blue Letter Bible, 2018a).

Furthermore, scholars familiar with the pagan mystery religions of the period explain that “only the individual who has passed through... initiation is enabled to comprehend deep ‘mysteries’ in the Greek cults” (Beale & Gladd, 2014, p. 317). Paul, being aware of the concurrent messages within society placing the gospel message against the often-similar teachings of heresy (disguised as the truth) opted to utilize this paradigm by utilizing an inclusive communication technique which offered incontrovertible and eternal access to the redeemed. Paul not only set himself among the elite (privy to the truth hidden by mystery) but enticed new believers to hold firm and avoid deception from other influential pagan mystery religions, by offering converts equal access to revelation held in store for the most elite within their society. Additionally, this particularly mysterious premise illustrated within this Pauline writing, makes no absolute or indirect connection to the actual recipients of this letter, only further solidifying its interpretive ambiguity. An anchor through many of the vicissitudes within the contents, inspirations, interpretation, and authorship of Ephesians 3:1-13, is the consistent, intercultural competence, cultural intelligence, authentic transformational methodology, and gracious apostolic model illustrated in Paul’s writing and leadership style.

Yukl (2013) defined integrity as the open and honest communication, which consistently aligns with “espoused values, admits and accepts responsibility for mistakes (and) does not attempt to manipulate or deceive people” (p. 348). Scholars explained that this was considered a kind of special mission for Paul, to minister and uncover the truth for the benefit of others (Gentiles) (Blevins, 1979). Serving as a mortal embodiment of the price and privilege of being both called and purposed the God’s grace, Paul expresses the desire to share with the Gentiles, who have become “fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through

the gospel" (Eph. 3:6). This upright intention to unify those once pushed to the furthest recesses of the redeemed collective now is given the keys once held in-store only for the "holy apostles and prophets by the spirit" (Eph. 3:5, ESV). This action reflects what Ryrie (1966) explained that employment of an "amillennial eschatology" for this portion of scripture, illustrated that "Paul is not saying that the mystery is something that was not revealed until New Testament times but is a further revelation of the covenant promises made with Abraham" (p. 24). In this intertextual interpretive lens, Paul is represented as a New Testament Abraham, called out of his way, to abandon much of what he knew (Judaism's law and social codes). His response articulated clearly in Ephesians 3: 6-9, illustrates his humble intention in pursuit of both purpose "to preach to the Gentiles" and the promise of "unsearchable riches... and... light for everyone". The impetus for this extension to others, provide readers glimpses of an Old Testament praxis of interactions between the "undeserving," "unfaithful," or literally faithless individuals and a Holy, almighty, and eternally faithful God (Eph. 3:2, 8-10; Is. 54:5; Jer. 3:14, 22; Hos. 1:16, 23).

Humility, Riches, Connection, & Righteous Suffering – Ephesians 3:8-13

This undeserved access to Divine provision, is the impetus for Paul (also a benefactor of undeserved grace) to offer access to the otherwise marginalized and unworthy portions of religious (Jewish) society by illustrating the elevated and profound truths revealed through access to the universal (ἐκκλησία) "church" (not ordered by locality, creed, or station) (Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-25, 27, 29, 32) (Blue Letter Bible, 2018a). MacDonald and Aune (2010) explained that the "universal *ekklesia* exists on account of what God has accomplished in Christ and... it has the power to make God's wisdom known to the spiritual powers in heavenly places (Eph. 3:10) (p. 545).

As such, the author's example, and fervent commitment to extend the application of the mystery of Christ and the work of God to others provides the framework for the remaining verses within the selected pericope. The imprisonment that began this journey is now fueled and propelled by God's grace (χάρις) which brings, much like the effective leadership model within a given organization, an efficient and effective fulfillment of purpose for all participating members (Eph. 3:7-8). In this context, fulfillment for Christian believers, articulated as (ἀνεξιχνίαστον πλοῦτον τοῦ Χριστοῦ) "the unsearchable riches of Christ," which include unity and "fellowship" (κοινωνία) made both accessible and visible to "all men" (Eph. 3:8-9, ESV).

Akin to the function and purpose of ATL, Paul first positions himself as an individual model who through humility, by God's grace, and like Christ, served as the second prototype for the construction, praxis, and mission of the collective "church." As such, Paul's treatise within verses ten through thirteen of the selected passage now commissions the church into the Divine battle of which he has engaged in (and currently battles imprisoned by Rome) against the (literal and spiritual) principalities

and powers, while concurrently unveiling “heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10, ESV). Blevins (1979) highlighted intertextual references (1 Peter 1:12, 1 Timothy 3:16 and Hebrews 1:14) which discuss the fact that the angels operating as primary participants in the work of redemption as “ministering spirits,” were not privy to the mystery, nor the purpose of the gospel of Jesus (pp. 510-511). Christ, as supported within the interrelation of these New Testament texts, functions as redeemer and intercessor. Ephesians 3:1-13, describes an intercultural catalyst, intent on creation of a universal church for both Jews and Gentiles (Blevins, 1979, p. 511).

Ultimately, God’s divine purpose, as expressed within the selected pericope, called for universal and total liberation through Christ (Eph. 3:11). This elevated and eternal mission needed to employ the clever use of ancient rhetorical communication that offered a substantive response to the heavy influence of Gnostic and pagan traditions and belief which hampered the practices and impeded the developing faith of new Christian converts. Often as is the case among the privileged in any group, the apparent willingness of such an individual to forego the perks, rights, and licenses of their station in dedication to the collective mission, incites follower loyalty, support, and emulation. Likewise, within Ephesians 3:1-13, is Paul’s dogged determination, even to the point of interrupting a prayer set in motion, to accurately unveil the rights, privileges, and access, he, and others (privileged) to be like him failed to seek out. As such, this dedication as representative of authentic transformational leadership praxis, gloried (by the grace of God) in suffering and “tribulation” (θλίψις) for the cause of Christ and the inclusion of others (Gentiles), who were presently and in the recent past, viewed as little dogs (Mt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30).

The apostle Paul’s work within Ephesians utilizes the model of Jesus as one doggedly focused and dedicated to the point of death on the ministry of reconciliation. As such, the two kinds of existence resident during the time of this letter, (Christian and non-Christian, Jews and Gentiles) set against each other in full opposition (Best, 1999; Blevins, 1979). As a rhetorician, elevating the contention to an eternal revelation of the work of God through Christ, the Ephesians author can deliberately address the inconsistency within ancient Gnostic practices. Additionally within this conceptual backdrop, is the daunting apostolic task of dismantling an elite and exclusionary Jewish social and religious paradigm by appropriately communicating the eternal vision of a united and inclusive intertextual culture of Christian belief and ecclesial membership. Paul’s obedience to God’s commission ignores the definite personal and corporate threats of rejection, suffering, and even imprisonment associated with any denunciation of organizational, religious or socially established norms.

Conclusion

A determination through this examination of the cultural topics within Ephesians 3:1-13, providing evidence that the apostle Paul exemplified authentic transformational

leadership in his expressed, actualized and expression of a unified vision for the first-century Christian church and beyond. Although not explicitly included in the pericope, the word unity references the author's work, as being commissioned on behalf of the collective body of believers, aligning with the theoretical construction proposed in the ATL conception (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

The present need for culturally intelligent and intercultural competent and ethical leadership fundamental to societal development and progress was just as necessary in the ancient societal and spiritual environment in which the author of the Ephesians letter operated. The collective knowledge, skill, and attitude of established and emergent authentic transformational leaders require progressive and continual action as developmental practice for the establishment of efficient organizations, nations, or churches (Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001). The global period has welcomed the rapid development of intercultural contexts and cross-cultural theories, attempting to formulate researched responses to combat the culturally blind and insensitive portions of organizational practice and leadership (Collard, 2007, p. 740).

The research question is: What is the Role of Intercultural Communication Competence in Authentic Transformational Leadership? Utilization of contemporary theoretical development and research findings of TL, AL, ATL, CQ, and ICC collectively, provide a template for an effective authentic transformational leader which is applied in context to both the author and recipient of Ephesians 3:1-13, exploring intertexture of socio-rhetorical analysis and contemporary findings relative to leadership theory, cultural intelligence and, intercultural competence, respectively.

The context and application of Ephesians 3:1-13, within a contemporary context, actively illustrates ICC, which allows all associated members of an organization (of varied forms) to "become better strangers to each other and thus better known to each other and ourselves" (Van Deurzen, p.81 as cited in Andenoro et al., 2012, p. 102). The interrelations of some socio-rhetorical critical analysis mechanisms utilized against the structure, contents, and historical significance of Ephesians 3:1-13, are worthwhile endeavors for researchers studying organizational leadership.

The construction, authorship, and intention, while highly debated by researchers, theologians, and scholars alive, provides an integral portion of New Testament construction to the effect, purpose, and plan of God as evidenced by the life of Christ and his subsequent followers. The vast array of simultaneous cheers and jeers, on the contents of Ephesians, does not even slightly diminish its significance or the stated intention of releasing profound illuminated truths held within the "mystery of Christ... now... revealed..." (Eph. 3:4-5). The distinct, unobstructed, and deliberate insights resident in the pericope, participates in the divine purpose set in motion with the introduction of Jesus (the Christ) to the earth. The destined plan and purpose of Christ (as mystery), in Ephesians 3:1-13 is made available to all willing Christian believers, as

they are unified collectively by both belief and privileged access to the promise of an earthly ecclesia with a mission to grow in numbers with the purposeful inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Holy Scriptures uncover, challenge, and inform one's individual and collective adoption of diverse methods, patterns, and rituals, presented within researched scholarly theoretical and empirically measured examinations that frame the praxis of contemporary leadership models presently. As such, the contents of Ephesians 3:1-13, presents a leadership and follower model within an echoed "tri-fold convergence of Jews, Gentiles and the mission of God as reflected in contemporary organizational leadership with the (intercultural) interactions of leaders, followers" within a given community (Rivers, 2018, p. 4). The subsequent and expected growth and development of healthy Christian organizations, communities, and nations, establish models for dynamic collections of transforming emergent organizations, utilizing the Ephesians 3:1-13, applied themes (unity, transparency, sacrifice, purpose) to cooperatively achieve the elevated progressive mission of the sum over its parts. Further supporting this understanding of effectiveness is the contention by scholars, that organizations should employ a combined praxis of both task and relations-oriented behaviors working cooperatively, to establish a continually effective system of operation (Yukl, 2013, pp. 51, 402). ATL, as demonstrated in the pericope, within the writing and apostolic leadership of Paul, foreshadowed the type of development and concerted effort leaders utilize in building "a strong culture to support empowerment" (Yukl, 2013, p. 329).

The author of the Ephesians writing, employed use of narrative within a wildly complex intercultural context, to reconcile the breaches between a group of people representative of diverse experience, expectations, and beliefs, as the use of ancient rhetoric, narrative and spiritual revelation of mystery, further developed, unified fostered a new level of unified freedom, openness, and self-awareness. In Paul's transparent identification as a prisoner, his clear delineation of membership as a Christian believer, and in the revelation of the mysteries of God, this authentic transformational leader fostered unity among the many cultural representatives in a way that generated a unified message of solidarity and community among a broad representation of cross-cultural experiences both then and now.

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