



journal of biblical  
perspectives  
in leadership

## SURVEYING LEADERSHIP THEORY INTEGRATION TRENDS IN UNDERGRADUATE COURSEWORK AT SELECTED BAPTIST SCHOOLS

Jason B. Palmer

---

Analyzing the intersection of Christian theology and leadership theory in undergraduate coursework at selected Baptist colleges and universities contributes data about the breadth of students' exposure to popular leadership theories. Empirical evidence correlates participating faculty members' rate of theoretical introduction to perceptions about each theory's theological compatibility with Christian orthodoxy. Trends in the number of leadership theories presented are shown to vary as a function of undergraduate enrollment. The survey invites further study on patterns of theoretical coverage and the process of theological analysis of leadership theory.

*Keywords:* Christian theology, leadership theory, Christian higher education

### I. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of Christian theology and leadership theory provides rich opportunities for important critical reflection. Christian researchers engaging at this nexus appear to hold diverse perspectives on the overall suitability—and particularly the theological compatibility—of popular leadership theories with Christian orthodoxy and practice. Christian scholars who identify compatibility gaps in leadership theories are left with at least three options to resolve this dissonance: accept the theory in the form presented despite any recognized conceptual friction points, reject the theory in favor of some other existing or future framework considered to be more biblically faithful, or sufficiently modify the theory so the revised version comports sufficiently with prioritized

theological convictions.<sup>1</sup> Some scholars are willing to utilize a leadership model in its original or popularized form provided the theory is assessed to be at least principally, if not distinctively, congruent with Christian orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> A second position rejects theories considered to be rooted in heretical principles and then seeks to replace those theories with more biblically legitimate approaches.<sup>3</sup> A third stance taken by many Christian researchers is to lean on the value of general revelation and modify a given leadership theory—to Christianize it—thereby bringing the theoretical framework within the boundaries of orthodoxy before employing the revised expression.<sup>4</sup> Fresh exploration into how Christian members of the academy form theological conclusions on leadership theories and make decisions about if and how they introduce those theories to students in higher education coursework stands to improve understanding about an important feature in the contemporary landscape of Christian leadership.

Baptist colleges and universities constitute one subset within the broader landscape of Christian higher education. Most Baptist schools in the United States are affiliated with the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities (IABCU), a voluntary organization of forty-three member schools in four countries: Canada, Haiti, the Philippines, and the United States.<sup>5</sup> The thirty-nine domestic member schools are spread across fifteen States. The Mississippi River serves to geographically divide domestic member schools almost exactly in half. The twenty-one institutions listed in Appendix 1 are positioned to the west of this prominent geographical feature, and the remaining nineteen schools reside to the east. The current research is a qualitative study that aims to contribute heuristically to the field of Christian leadership by answering this question: How do selected IABCU member schools located west of the Mississippi River integrate popular leadership theories into the academic preparation of undergraduate students to build and manage effective organizations?

I began with four hypotheses. First, the data will show respondents introduce servant leadership to undergraduate students more so than any other theoretical leadership construct. Second, the data will demonstrate that respondents expose transformational leadership to undergraduate students at a rate second only to servant leadership. Third, the respondents will identify servant leadership as the leadership

<sup>1</sup> Jack Barentsen and Dustin D. Benac, "The Value and Impact of Servant Leadership Discourse in Church Leadership Studies," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Servant Leadership*, ed. Satinder Dhiman and Gary E. Roberts (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2023), 499–503. J. Keith McKinley, *Evaluating Leadership: A Model for Missiological Assessment of Leadership Theory and Practice* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2024), 163. Jason B. Palmer, "Theologically Analyzing Secular Leadership Theory: Evidence of Pelagius's Teachings in the Servant Leadership of Robert Greenleaf," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 23, no. 1 (2024): 79.

<sup>2</sup> Marty McMahon, "A Solid Foundation for Servant Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Integration of Business* 26, no. 1 (2023): 60.

<sup>3</sup> Larry G. Locke, "The Clay Feet of Servant Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Integration of Business* 22, no. 1 (2019): 34–42.

<sup>4</sup> Examples include Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015) which modifies adaptive leadership theory and McKinley who modifies transformational leadership theory.

<sup>5</sup> "Member Schools," International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities, accessed May 28, 2025, <https://www.baptistschools.org/member-schools/>. The member school list reflects two changes since the time of the survey. One international institution—Southern Baptist College, Philippines—has been added, and one domestic institution has been removed: Southwest Baptist University. The present research uses the member school list reflected online as of September 13, 2024.

approach, theory, or model having the highest theological compatibility with Christian practice. Fourth, the data will support a general correlation between the frequency of a leadership approach, theory, or model's introduction to undergraduate students and faculty members' perceptions on the approach, theory, or model's theological compatibility with Christian practice.

One general assumption permeates this study: the Baptist Faith and Message and The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy effectively describe the authority of the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Several narrower assumptions follow. First, all twenty-one institutions in the survey group offer at least one undergraduate course that introduces students to one or more leadership theories. Second, surveying ten member schools—particularly the five with the highest undergraduate enrollment and the five with the lowest undergraduate enrollment—will yield a valuable sample of faculty trends and perspectives among all twenty-one member schools in the survey group. This second assumption acknowledges the limitations in broadly generalizing the results associated with smaller data sets. Third, researcher's employment in a full-time staff and adjunct faculty role at one of the ten surveyed schools at the time of the survey, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, will not appreciably impact the reliability of the results.

The lag in enrollment data reflected on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) database limits the research, in that the NCES enrollment data available on October 19, 2024 still reflects enrollment figures reported for Fall 2023. The research is further limited by the willingness of the academic deans at the ten surveyed institutions to forward the survey instrument to all eligible faculty members—and only eligible faculty members—and the willingness of those eligible faculty to voluntarily complete the survey. I delimited the study first by investigating only domestic IABCU member schools, second by narrowing the survey group roughly in half using a prominent feature of physical geography, third by choosing ten member schools from the survey group for engagement based on selected enrollment criteria, and fourth by considering undergraduate curriculum to the exclusion of graduate and doctoral level coursework. Peter Northouse's descriptions of each identified leadership approach, theory, and model serves as the definitional baseline for this study.<sup>7</sup>

## II. RESEARCH DESIGN METHODOLOGY

The research methodology consisted of first developing an original survey instrument using Qualtrics software. The survey instrument content is available in Appendix 2. I then used the NCES database to ascertain the latest publicly available enrollment data reported by each of the twenty-one domestic IABCU member schools located west of the Mississippi River.<sup>8</sup> Using this enrollment data, I identified the five

<sup>6</sup> "Baptist Faith and Message 2000," Southern Baptist Convention, accessed October 4, 2024, <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>. "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, October 28, 1978, [https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI\\_1.pdf](https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 9th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> "College Navigator," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed September 13, 2024, <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. See Appendix 1.

schools with the largest undergraduate enrollment and the five schools with the smallest undergraduate enrollment. The five institutions with the largest reported undergraduate enrollments were Baylor University (15,213), California Baptist University (8,334), Missouri Baptist University (4,549), University of Mary-Hardin-Baylor (3,072), and Dallas Baptist University (2,971). The five schools with the smallest undergraduate enrollments were Howard Payne University (773), Williams Baptist University (562), Jacksonville College (471), Texas Baptist College at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (309), and Criswell College (122).

I used those ten schools' publicly accessible websites to identify the academic deans appearing to oversee the preponderance of undergraduate leadership coursework and sent each of those ten deans—one per institution—a personalized email on September 13, 2024 that included a link to the survey instrument. The email requested that each respective dean forward the invitation to faculty members at their institution who met the research criterion of teaching one or more courses introducing leadership theory to undergraduate students. I proposed a two-week survey window and requested that voluntary participants respond by September 27, 2024. As of September 23, 2024, nine responses had been received from four of the ten institutions, so I sent one reminder email to the academic deans at the six surveyed schools with no faculty respondents thus far. After this reminder, four more respondents from three previously unrepresented institutions completed the survey. I prioritized the anonymity of individual respondents and the attributability of any specific responses to participating institutions.

The survey instrument consisted of five questions. Question 1 asked the participant to select the primary IABCU member school at which they teach one or more undergraduate courses that introduce leadership theory to undergraduate students. The primary purpose of this question was to confirm that the respondent was a faculty member at one of the ten surveyed institutions and, therefore, eligible to participate in the study. All current IABCU institutions were listed as selectable responses. Question 2 asked participants to indicate the type of faculty appointment held: full-time or adjunct. This information was collected to see if any noticeable trends presented between full-time and part-time faculty respondents. Question 3 listed ten leadership approaches, theories, and models drawn from the ninth edition of Northouse's *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (2022) and asked respondents to select all of those which they introduce to undergraduate students in their coursework. Question 4 listed those same ten leadership approaches, theories, and models and asked respondents to assess whether they consider each to be theologically compatible with Christian practice, theologically compatible when appropriately modified, or not theologically compatible even when modified. An undecided option was also provided. Question 5 asked respondents to identify the course names and course numbers of the undergraduate classes they teach that introduce leadership theory. Like Question 1, Question 5 was intended to further validate the eligibility of the respondent for participation in the research by confirming their current role in teaching undergraduate coursework.

### III. RESULTS

Fourteen faculty members from at least seven of the ten surveyed institutions listed in Table 1 voluntarily responded to the survey instrument prior to the deadline for a 70% institutional response rate. One of those fourteen was a full-time faculty respondent who completed the survey but did not select an institution from the dropdown menu on Question 1. I assessed the likelihood of that respondent teaching at one of the ten surveyed IABCU schools to be high since the survey was only distributed via direct communication between me and academic deans at the ten selected institutions; however, this respondent's data was omitted from the study since institutional affiliation with a school in the survey group could not be positively confirmed. Another full-time faculty member at school in the survey group partially completed the survey on October 4, 2024; however, this survey was omitted from the study due to its late submission and the relative incompleteness of the data provided. Data from the remaining twelve surveys (n=12) were included in the study. This set of twelve included the response of one full-time faculty participant who did not answer to two sub-portions of Question 4: the theological compatibility assessments regarding authentic leadership and adaptive leadership.

**Table 1. Surveyed IABCU Member Schools**

Institution	Enrollment		Number of Faculty Respondents	
	Undergraduate	Total	Full-Time	Adjunct
Baylor University	15,213	20,709	1	0
California Baptist University	8,334	11,495	1	0
Missouri Baptist University	4,549	5,231	0	0
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor	3,072	3,575	2	0
Dallas Baptist University	2,971	4,348	2	0
Howard Payne University	773	838	0	0
Williams Baptist University	562	584	1	0
Jacksonville College	471	471	1	0
Texas Baptist College at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	309	2,286	0	0
Criswell College	122	163	2	2
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

All twelve answered Questions 1 and 5 in ways that confirmed their eligibility to participate in the study. The full-time and adjunct faculty appointment information collected in Question 2 provided some information; however, the small number of participating adjuncts mitigated the significance of any associated findings. Further, the data related to full and part-time faculty status could not be presented in a way that protected institutional anonymity. As a result, that information is withheld from the research report.

Five of twelve respondents (42%) indicated that they introduce the trait approach to undergraduate students. None of the twelve respondents (0%) consider trait

approach to be theologically compatible with Christian practice; however, ten (83%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. Two respondents (17%) consider trait approach to be not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in modified form. Table 2 summarizes the data from respondents regarding the trait approach.

**Table 2. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Trait Approach to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Trait Approach to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Trait Approach to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	0	0	0
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	4	6	10
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	1	1	2
Undecided	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>

Six respondents (50%) indicated that they introduce the skills approach to undergraduate students. Three of the twelve respondents (25%) consider skills approach to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Nine (75%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. Table 3 summarizes the data from respondents regarding the skills approach.

Seven respondents (58%) indicated that they introduce the behavior approach to undergraduate students. Three of the twelve respondents (25%) consider skills approach to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Eight (67%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. One (8%) finds behavior approach to be not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in modified form. Table 4 summarizes the data from respondents regarding the behavior approach.

Eight respondents (67%) indicated that they introduce the situational approach to undergraduate students. Three of the twelve respondents (25%) consider situational approach to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Nine (75%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. Table 5 summarizes the data from respondents regarding the situation approach.

**Table 3. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Skills Approach to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Skills Approach to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Skills Approach to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	2	1	3
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	4	5	9
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>

**Table 4. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Behavior Approach to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Behavior Approach to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Behavior Approach to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	3	0	3
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	4	4	8
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	1	1
Undecided	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>

**Table 5. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Situational Approach to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Situational Approach to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Situational Approach to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	2	1	3
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	6	3	9
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>

Six respondents (50%) indicated that they introduce the goal-path approach to undergraduate students. One respondent (8%) considers goal-path approach to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Ten (83%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. One respondent (8%) is undecided on the theological compatibility of goal-path approach. Table 6 summarizes the data from respondents regarding the goal-path approach.

Six respondents (50%) indicated that they introduce leader-member exchange theory to undergraduate students. Two respondents (17%) consider leader-member exchange theory to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Eight (67%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. Two respondents (17%) are undecided on the theological compatibility of leader-member exchange theory. Table 7 summarizes the data from respondents regarding leader-member exchange theory.

Ten respondents (83%) indicated that they introduce transformational leadership to undergraduate students. Six respondents (50%) consider transformational leadership to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Five (42%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. One respondent (8%) is undecided on the theological compatibility of transformational leadership. Table 8 summarizes the data from respondents regarding transformational leadership.

**Table 6. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Goal-Path Approach to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Goal-Path Approach to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Goal-Path Approach to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	1	0	1
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	5	5	10
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	1	1
TOTALS	6	6	12

**Table 7. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Leader-Member Exchange Theory to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Leader- Member Exchange Theory to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Leader- Member Exchange Theory to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	2	0	2
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	4	4	8
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	2	2
TOTALS	6	6	12

**Table 8. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Transformational Leadership to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Transformational Leadership to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Transformational Leadership to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	5	1	6
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	5	0	5
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	1	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

Seven of twelve respondents (58%) indicated that they introduce authentic leadership to undergraduate students. One of the twelve respondents chose not to provide a response regarding the theological compatibility of authentic leadership. Five of eleven respondents (45%) consider authentic leadership to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Five of eleven (45%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. One of eleven respondents (9%) is undecided on the theological compatibility of authentic leadership. Table 9 summarizes the data from respondents regarding authentic leadership.

Eleven respondents (92%) indicated that they introduce servant leadership to undergraduate students. Eight respondents (67%) consider servant leadership to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Three (25%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. One respondent (8%) is undecided on the theological compatibility of servant leadership. Table 10 summarizes the data from respondents regarding servant leadership.

**Table 9. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Authentic Leadership to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Authentic Leadership to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Authentic Leadership to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	3	2	5
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	4	1	5
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	1	1
No Response	0	1	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>

**Table 10. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Servant Leadership to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Servant Leadership to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Servant Leadership to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	7	1	8
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	3	0	3
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	1	0	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>

Eight of twelve respondents (67%) indicated that they introduce adaptive leadership to undergraduate students. One of the twelve respondents chose not to provide a response regarding the theological compatibility of adaptive leadership. Three of eleven respondents (27%) consider adaptive leadership to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. Seven of eleven (64%) consider the approach to be capable of theological compatibility when appropriately modified. One of eleven respondents (9%) is undecided on the theological compatibility of adaptive leadership. Table 11 summarizes the data from respondents regarding adaptive leadership.

**Table 11. Faculty Perceptions on the Compatibility of Adaptive Leadership to Christian Practice**

	Faculty Introducing Adaptive Leadership to Undergraduate Students	Faculty Not Introducing Adaptive Leadership to Undergraduate Students	All Faculty Respondents
This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	3	0	3
When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice	5	2	7
This leadership approach, theory, or model is not theologically compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form	0	0	0
Undecided	0	1	1
No Response	0	1	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>

#### IV. DISCUSSION

A thought-provoking nautical thread undergirds the Bible's treatment of the concepts of leading and leadership. In the Old Testament, Proverbs 11:14 states, "Without guidance, a people will fall, but with many counselors there is deliverance."<sup>9</sup> Brown suggests *direction* and *counsel* as alternative translations for the word often rendered *guidance* [תְּחִבָּלָה], and Klein adds two more options to that list: *wisdom* and *cunning*.<sup>10</sup> Brown and Klein each go on to suggest the Hebrew root word connotes the

<sup>9</sup> All biblical quotations come from the Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 287. Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987), 697.

idea of “rope-pulling” and is related to “steering, directing a ship.”<sup>11</sup> The process of effectively leading organizations seems to bear some close similarities to the safe navigation of a maritime vessel.

In the New Testament, Paul includes the concept of *leading* or *administration* in Romans 12:8 [προϊστάμενος] and 1 Corinthians 12:28 [κυβερνήσεις] as part of lists of spiritual gifts. The term used in the letter to the church at Corinth is found only once in the New Testament. The verb form [κυβερνώω] of this accusative feminine plural noun is a nautical term meaning to steer or guide a vessel, and, according to Danker, the plural noun form in 1 Corinthians 12:28 “indicates varieties of such leading positions in the ecclesial body of Christ.”<sup>12</sup> The need for capacity to develop and implement strategies for stewarding vessels through difficult circumstances and avoiding shipwreck invites Christian leaders to explore the theories that best equip them to build and manage effective organizations. Just as nautical pilots train rigorously to master their craft, those aiming to lead as God expects do well to consider critically the best theories and practices for realizing this outcome.

Guiding organizations that accomplish their missions and flourish on an interpersonal level finds choice soil in biblical *servanthood* which Dew defines as “the character that causes us to place others before ourselves, helping where people have need, and finding joy in a life focused on others.”<sup>13</sup> Mark 9:35 records Jesus telling His twelve disciples, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all.” In Matthew 23:11, Jesus says, “The greatest among you will be your servant.” The Lord went beyond talking about servanthood. He practiced servanthood incarnationally. Philippians 2:7-8 tells us, “Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” Christ’s example serves as a standard for evaluating popular theoretical frameworks for leadership.

Northouse identifies ten leadership approaches, models, and theories for consideration: trait approach, skills approach, behavior approach, situational approach, path-goal approach, leader-member exchange theory, transformational leadership, authentic leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership. Christian scholars, however, lack consensus on how to handle leadership theories that some posit are founded upon various unorthodox assumptions and principles. The positions held by such critics can be illustrated with a few examples of which are values-based theories.

First, James MacGregor Burns popularized transformational (or transforming) leadership and juxtaposed it with transactional leadership, but he did nothing to tether his concept to Christian orthodoxy even generally.<sup>14</sup> Bass and others further developed transformational leadership, but McKinley shows that a theological analysis of transformational leadership (and every other) leadership theory is critically important for

<sup>11</sup> Brown, 287. Klein, 697.

<sup>12</sup> Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 573.

<sup>13</sup> James K. Dew, Jr., *Let This Mind Be in You* (Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2023) 1, 66.

<sup>14</sup> James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

Christians endeavoring to integrate leadership concepts well. McKinley suggests theological examination on teleological, ontological, authority, and ethical grounds.<sup>15</sup>

Second, a growing number of Christian academics argue that Robert Greenleaf's servant leadership is unsupportable by Christian theology.<sup>16</sup> While Christianized versions of servant leadership are easy to find, some scholars consider Greenleaf's seminal works to be theologically questionable. I have elsewhere demonstrated support for Niewold and Kimotho's separate claims that Greenleaf's seminal work on servant leadership bears the evidence of Pelagius' heretical positions regarding the inherent goodness of human nature and the effectiveness of human free will.<sup>17</sup> If those findings are accepted, then Greenleaf's servant leadership theory demands a Christian response of either sufficient modification or rejection. Instead of coopting Greenleaf's "servant leader" terminology to describing Jesus as Reed and myriad others have done, the need to recover a biblical servanthood that is untethered from unorthodox theological baggage is magnified.<sup>18</sup> The case of servant leadership theory illustrates the necessity of critical analysis of leadership theories using the biblical and theological lenses.

Third, Ronald Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory relates leader behaviors with individuals' work and promotes defining and solving tough problems through changes "in values, beliefs, or behavior" and may involve the inclusion of "competing value perspectives" for success to be realized.<sup>19</sup> Equipping and mobilizing practitioners to engage adaptive problems in a way that clarifies aspirations, moves them closer to a solution, and fosters thriving in the face of formidable adversity is the essence of adaptive leadership theory.<sup>20</sup> The expectation that tackling tough problems will often

<sup>15</sup> J. Keith McKinley, *Evaluating Leadership: A Model for Missiological Assessment of Leadership Theory and Practice* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2024), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977). For example, Jack W. Niewold, "Incarnational Leadership: Towards a Distinctly Christian Theory of Leadership," PhD diss., Regent University, 2006; Jack W. Niewold, "Beyond Servant Leadership," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 1, no. 2 (2007): 118–134; Audrey V. Shirin, "Is Servant Leadership Inherently Christian?," *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* 3, Article 13 (2014): 23–25; Locke; Stephen G. Kimotho, "Is Servant Leadership a 'Christian Theory'? A Critical Examination of Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Concept," *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (2019): 71–78; Hwa Yung, *Leadership or Servanthood?: Walking in the Steps of Jesus* (Carlisle: United Kingdom: Langham Global Library, 2021), 12–14, 128; Jack Barentsen and Dustin D. Benac, "The Value and Impact of Servant Leadership Discourse in Church Leadership Studies," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Servant Leadership*, ed. Satinder Dhiman and Gary E. Roberts (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2023), 489–516; and Jason B. Palmer, "Theologically Analyzing Secular Leadership Theory: Evidence of Pelagius's Teachings in the Servant Leadership of Robert Greenleaf," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 23, no. 1 (2024): 79–102.

<sup>17</sup> Palmer, "Theologically Analyzing Secular Leadership Theory."

<sup>18</sup> Lora L. Reed, "Servant Leadership as Demonstrated in one 21st Century Church: A Case Study," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 13, no. 1 (Fall 2023): 33.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994), 22, 23, 25. Northouse, 285, 299, 300.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 14, 303. Bernard M. Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research & Managerial Applications*. 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2008), 17. Heifetz, 87. See also Linda Louise Schubring, "A

necessitate an evolution in values is a distinguishing component of progress within the framework of adaptive leadership theory; nevertheless, many Christians demand theological limits to acceptable adaptation in tackling tough problems.<sup>21</sup>

West and Stoeckle warn “Christian religious leadership authors” against committing “the double-sin of uncritically appropriating industrial paradigm constructs from assumptive systems which are incompatible with their core principles of transcendental, theistic, humanistic, and revelation-dependent epistemology and ethics.”<sup>22</sup> To heed this warning and avoid the tendency to “simply baptize secular leadership models and import them into our work for Christ without subjecting them to critical examination,” any productive analysis of must clarify the origins of each approach and consider current scholarship in light of Christian theology.<sup>23</sup>

Literature in the field of Christian literature constitutes one source for understanding the intersection of Christian theology and leadership theory. Another source is curriculum content involving leadership theory. The perspectives of the faculty members teaching those courses regarding the theological legitimacy of theories shapes the frequency and manner of introduction. The present study explores faculty trends regarding the introduction of leadership approaches, theories, or models in academic coursework and faculty assessments of each framework’s theological compatibility with Christian practice to better understand the intersection of Christian theology and leadership theory.

Properly comprehending undergraduate students’ comparative exposure to various leadership approaches, theories, or models hinges largely on understanding the frequency with which faculty introduce those frameworks during academic coursework. The survey data show that respondents present servant leadership to their undergraduate students more than any other leadership approach, theory, or model thereby validating my first hypothesis. The data demonstrates respondents introduce transformational leadership at a rate second only to servant leadership thereby validating my second hypothesis. When the remaining eight leadership approaches, theories, and models in Table 12 are considered in descending order, the frequency with which respondents introduce those frameworks seems to follow routinely observed levels of comparative popularity in Christian academic literature and collegial dialogue. Despite some contemporary researchers’ examination of trait approaches, especially regarding leader emergence and effectiveness, and their assertion that trait approach is experiencing a revival particularly over the past decade, trait approach alone bears the

---

Study in Adaptive Leadership: How Christian Associates’ Teams and Individuals in Europe Navigate Change,” D.I.S. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Heifetz, 26, 34, 35. Joseph Mathew, “Persistent Pioneers: Training Leaders for Mission to Unreached People Groups through India’s Light the World Missions,” D.I.S. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2020, 16–17. Bolsinger, 41, 65–66, 94, 104, 106, 128. Jason B. Palmer, “Missiological Adaptation as a Framework for Chaplains in Civil-Military Engagement,” *Military Chaplain Review* (November 2024): 19–25.

<sup>22</sup> Russell W. West and John D. Stoeckle, “Theorizing Religiously-Based Organization Leadership: Mapping the Intersections,” *Journal of Religious Leadership* 4, nos. 1–2 (2005): 162.

<sup>23</sup> Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus’ Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values, and Empowering Change* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1991), 34.

unenviable distinction of being the only surveyed framework that is introduced by less than half of respondents.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 12. Comparative Introduction of Leadership Approaches, Theories, and Models**

	Number (Percentage) of Respondents Introducing to Undergraduate Students	Number (Percentage) of Respondents Not Introducing to Undergraduate Students
Servant Leadership	11 (92%)	1 (8%)
Transformational Leadership	10 (83%)	2 (17%)
Adaptive Leadership	8 (67%)	4 (33%)
Situational Approach	8 (67%)	4 (33%)
Authentic Leadership	7 (58%)	5 (42%)
Behavior Approach	7 (58%)	5 (42%)
Leader-Member Exchange Theory	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
Path-Goal Approach	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
Skills Approach	6 (50%)	6 (50%)
Trait Approach	5 (42%)	7 (58%)

Table 13 ranks the ten leadership approaches, theories, or models with respect to respondents' perspectives on each one's theological compatibility with Christian practice. Few Christian leadership scholars will likely be surprised to find servant leadership outpacing all nine theoretical competitors thereby validating my third hypothesis. Servant leadership's first-place theological compatibility placement matches the theory's comparative frequency of introduction in coursework taught by the respondents. Likewise, transformational leadership occupies the second place in both lists. Continuing the trend, authentic leadership, adaptive leadership, and situational leadership appear among the next three places in both Tables 12 and 13. Behavior approach, skills approach, leader-member exchange theory, path-goal approach, and trait approach follow the pattern by appearing among the bottom portion of both groups.

Comparing the data submitted by faculty at larger schools with the data submitted by smaller schools in more detail reveals some discernable trends regarding the scope of student exposure to theory. Four of the twelve respondents indicated that they introduce all ten leadership approaches, theories, and models, and all four of those respondents teach at one of the five surveyed schools with the highest undergraduate enrollment. In total, the six respondents from the five largest schools averaged

<sup>24</sup> Northouse, 30. D. Scott DeRue, Jennifer D. Nahrgang, Ned Wellman, and Stephen E. Humphrey, "Trait and Behavioral Theories of Leadership: An Integration and Meta-analytic Test of Their Relative Validity," *Personnel Psychology* 64 (2011): 7–52. John Antonakis, David V. Day, and Birgit Schyns, "Leadership and Individual Differences: At the Cusp of a Renaissance," *The Leadership Quarterly* 23 (2012): 643, 648. Stephen J. Zaccaro, Jennifer P. Green, Samantha Dubrow, and MaryJo Kolze, "Leader Individual Differences, Situational Parameters, and Leadership Outcomes: A Comprehensive Review and Integration," *The Leadership Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2018): 38. Micha Popper, *Leaders Who Transform Society: What Drives Them and Why We Are Attracted* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 16.

introducing 8.2 of the ten leadership approaches, theories, and models to undergraduate students, whereas the six respondents from the five smallest schools averaged introducing 4.2 of those same ten frameworks.

Of the one hundred eighteen individual responses from the twelve respondents regarding theological compatibility with Christian practice, there were thirty-four (28.8%) assessments of theological compatibility and seventy-four (62.7%) instances of perceived theological compatibility with appropriate theoretical modification. These two categories sum to 91.5% of the total cases. Only three responses (2.5%) found a given approach, theory, or model to be incompatible with Christian practice even when modified. The other seven responses (6%) reflected undecided positions.

**Table 13. Comparative Perceptions of Theological Compatibility with Christian Practice**

	Number (%) Indicating Theological Compatibility	Number (%) Indicating Theological Compatibility When Modified	Number (%) Indicating Lack of Theological Compatibility	Number (%) Undecided
Servant Leadership	8 (67%)	3 (25%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Transformational Leadership	6 (50%)	5 (42%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Authentic Leadership (n=11)	5 (45%)	5 (45%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)
Adaptive Leadership (n=11)	3 (27%)	7 (64%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)
Situational Approach	3 (25%)	9 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Skills Approach	3 (25%)	9 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Behavior Approach	3 (25%)	8 (67%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)
Leader-Member Exchange Theory	2 (17%)	8 (67%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)
Path-Goal Approach	1 (8%)	10 (83%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Trait Approach	0 (0%)	10 (83%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)

The twelve surveys identified thirty-four incidents of respondents assessing a given leadership approach, theory, or model to be theologically compatible with Christian practice. In twenty-eight of these cases (82%), the respondent indicated that they introduce the leadership approach, theory, or model in undergraduate coursework. In the other six cases (18%) where a respondent finds a leadership approach, theory, or model to be theologically compatible with Christian practice, they do not introduce the theoretical concept to undergraduate students.

The twelve surveys identified seventy-four incidents of respondents assessing a given leadership approach, theory, or model to be theologically compatible with Christian practice when appropriately modified. In forty-four of these cases (59%), the

respondent indicated that they introduce the leadership approach, theory, or model in undergraduate coursework. In the other thirty cases (41%) where a respondent finds a leadership approach, theory, or model to be modified such that it becomes theologically compatible with Christian practice, they do not introduce the theoretical concept to undergraduate students.

Twelve surveys identified three incidents of respondents assessing a given leadership approach, theory, or model to be not theologically compatible with Christian practice even when modified. In one of these cases (33%), the respondent indicated that they introduce the leadership approach, theory, or model in undergraduate coursework. In the other two cases (67%) where a respondent finds a leadership approach, theory, or model to be theologically incompatible with Christian practice even when modified, they do not introduce the theoretical concept to undergraduate students.

The twelve surveys identified seven incidents of respondents indicating that they were undecided as to whether a given leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice. In one of these cases (14%), the respondent indicated that they introduce the leadership approach, theory, or model in undergraduate coursework. In the other six cases (86%) where a respondent is undecided on whether a leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice, they do not introduce the theoretical concept to undergraduate students.

## V. FINDINGS

The data presented in Table 12 suggests respondents are broadly familiar with the ten leadership approaches, theories, or models referenced in Northouse's work. For nine of the ten theoretical concepts Northouse identifies, at least half of the twelve respondents indicated that they introduce the leadership framework to undergraduate students. The data supports a general state of theoretical literacy in the field of leadership among the respondents which strengthens the quality of the findings.

I found a consistently strong correlation between the rate of a leadership approach, theory, or model's introduction to undergraduate students and the respondent's perception of the theological compatibility of leadership approach, theory, or model with Christian practice. The relative rate of introduction is almost directly proportional to perspectives on the theological compatibility of those leadership approaches, theories, or models. Theoretical frameworks judged to be more theologically compatible get introduced more often, and those frameworks assessed to be less theologically compatible get presented predictably less often. This general correlation affirms my fourth hypothesis. This finding is particularly important given that the level of assessed theological compatibility significantly impacts whether responding faculty members ever introduce a theoretical concept.

Respondents from five schools in the survey group with the largest undergraduate enrollment indicated that they introduce undergraduate students to a wider range of the leadership approaches, theories, or models referenced in Northouse's work compared to the respondents from five schools with the smallest undergraduate enrollment. The participating faculty from the larger schools reported

introducing their undergraduate students to essentially double the number of leadership approaches, theories, or models compared to their colleagues at sister schools with smaller undergraduate student bodies. All six respondents (100%) from the smaller schools indicated that they introduce servant leadership, and five (83%) introduce transformational leadership. If these trends were to prove representative of all IABCU member schools, then schools with smaller undergraduate enrollments appear to have an opportunity to open the aperture of theoretical awareness in the field of leadership among undergraduate students.

Respondents overwhelmingly contend that the ten leadership approaches, theories, and models are either theologically compatible in their original or popularized form or can be made compatible through suitable modification. Most respondents hold that most theoretical constructs require modification before they are deemed theologically compatible with Christian practice. Respondents rarely introduce theories to students that they either assess to be theologically incompatible with Christian practice or have not come to a decision regarding the theory's theological compatibility. The lack of exposure to leadership approaches, theories, or models that some undergraduate students experience as a function of patterns associated with the size of their school's enrollment or their professor's theological assessments could limit the number of theoretical frameworks upon which they have to draw for building and managing effective organizations.

These findings invite practical recommendations and implications for integrating leadership theory into undergraduate coursework at Christian institutions. A first would see all professors who teach leadership theory maximize the number of leadership theories that they introduce. The second would appeal to faculty for students to be provided opportunities to critically assess each leadership theory's aspects of compatibility and incompatibility with Christian theology. McKinley's Leadership Assessment Matrix is commended as an evaluative tool for this work.<sup>25</sup> A third suggestion calls for instructors to propose best practices to students for adapting leadership theories for sufficient compatibility with Christian orthodoxy when such modification is deemed appropriate. Operationalizing the findings in these ways stands to enhance the equipping of students for faithful application of leadership theories in diverse circumstances.

I also identified findings related to research methodology. The survey instrument could have been improved in several ways. First, Question 1 could have provided respondents with a "none of the above" option when selecting a primary institutional affiliation. This would have ensured every respondent had an applicable choice in the drop-down menu of options. Second, a question could have been added that inquired about the highest degree earned by the respondent. This would have enabled to researcher to weight responses according to academic credentials. Third, a question could have been added that inquired about the number of graduate hours the respondent had completed in the field of leadership. This would have enabled to researcher to better assess responses according to academic experience. Fourth, the survey could have been bolstered through subsequent interviews with participating

---

<sup>25</sup> McKinley, 156.

faculty members to better understand their pedagogical decisions and theological perceptions.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The present survey investigated the way selected IABCU member schools located west of the Mississippi River integrate popular leadership theories into the academic preparation of undergraduate students to build and manage effective organizations. The importance of critical theological analysis of leadership theory found support through the strong correlation observed between participating professors' perception of the theological compatibility of a given leadership approach, theory, or model with Christian practice and their decision on whether to introduce that leadership approach, theory, or model to undergraduate students. Having empirical evidence that describe trends that seem to be commonly observed in the field of Christian leadership provided substance to ongoing academic discourse.

The study also identified the need for further inquiry. If respondents consider most secular leadership theory to be either theologically acceptable or modifiable to become theologically acceptable, then what process are they using to guide them in modifying leadership approaches, theories, or models to bring each leadership framework within the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy? Learning more about how Christian faculty members at a tactical level conduct the process of theoretical modification makes a phenomenological study particularly attractive. Additional research would be also necessary to make generalized claims regarding all IABCU member schools located west of the Mississippi River, all IABCU member schools, and the more comprehensive collection of Christian institutions of higher education such as those affiliated with the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Future studies could be further expanded to include contexts beyond undergraduate coursework (i.e., graduate and doctoral coursework, local church and parachurch ministry settings, and the practice of leadership by Christians in the marketplace).

The intersection of Christian theology and leadership theory is an area ripe for contribution. Regardless of how theologically compatible Christian scholars find the various leadership approaches, theories, or models to be with Christian practice, the significance of critically reflecting on theoretical systems through theological lenses is crucial. The process of critical examination allows scholars to differentiate the descriptive and prescriptive treatment of leaders and leadership found in the Bible from the array of popular leadership approaches, theories, or models rooted, too often, in secular assumptions and heretical principles. In so doing, Christian researchers continue the quest for a distinctively and holistically Christian understanding of leadership.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Niewold, "Incarnational Leadership."

**APPENDIX 1: UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT DATA FROM IABCU MEMBER SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER**

State	Institution	Undergraduate Enrollment Indicated in NCES as of October 19, 2024
Texas	Baylor University	15,213
California	California Baptist University	8,334
Missouri	Missouri Baptist University	4,549
Texas	University of Mary Hardin-Baylor	3,072
Texas	Dallas Baptist University	2,971
Texas	Houston Christian University	2,823
Texas	Wayland Baptist University	2,275
Missouri	Southwest Baptist University	1,836
Arkansas	Ouachita Baptist University	1,730
Texas	East Texas Baptist University	1,579
Texas	Hardin-Simmons University	1,347
Oklahoma	Oklahoma Baptist University	1,330
Missouri	Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	1,009
Louisiana	Louisiana Christian University	832
Texas	Howard Payne University	773
Arkansas	Williams Baptist University	562
Texas	Jacksonville College	471
Texas	Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	309
Texas	Criswell College	122
California	Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention	No enrollment data posted
Texas	Stark College and Seminary	No enrollment data posted

## APPENDIX 2: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Question 1: At which member school of the International Baptist Colleges and Universities (IABCU) do you teach one or more undergraduate courses that introduce leadership theory to students? If you hold multiple appointments, please select the institution at which you teach most.

Answers (select one from a dropdown menu):

Baptist Health Sciences University  
Baylor University  
Blue Mountain Christian University  
Bluefield University  
California Baptist University  
Campbell University  
Campbellsville University  
Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary and College  
Carson-Newman University  
Charleston Southern University  
Clear Creek Baptist Bible College  
Criswell College  
Dallas Baptist University  
East Texas Baptist University  
Fruitland Baptist Bible College  
Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention  
Hardin-Simmons University  
Houston Christian University  
Howard Payne University  
Jacksonville College  
Louisiana Christian University  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Mississippi College  
Missouri Baptist University  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary  
North Greenville University  
Oklahoma Baptist University  
Ouachita Baptist University  
Queensland University of Haiti  
Samford University  
Shorter University  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Southern Philippines Baptist Theological Seminary  
Southwest Baptist University  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Stark College and Seminary

The Baptist College of Florida  
Union University  
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor  
University of the Cumberlands  
Wayland Baptist University  
William Carey University  
Williams Baptist University

Question 2: What type of faculty appointment do you hold at that institution?

Answers (select one):

Full-time Faculty  
Adjunct Faculty

Question 3: Which of the leadership approaches, theories, and models listed below do you introduce to students in your undergraduate leadership courses? Note: List drawn from Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 9th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2022).

Answers (select as many as appropriate):

Trait Approach  
Skills Approach  
Behavior Approach  
Situational Approach  
Path-Goal Approach  
Leader-Member Exchange Theory  
Transformational Leadership  
Authentic Leadership  
Servant Leadership  
Adaptive Leadership

Question 4: Which of the following assessments best describes your perspective as a Christian scholar on the leadership approaches, theories, and models listed below?

Trait Approach  
Skills Approach  
Behavior Approach  
Situational Approach  
Path-Goal Approach  
Leader-Member Exchange Theory  
Transformational Leadership  
Authentic Leadership  
Servant Leadership  
Adaptive Leadership

Answers (select of the following four choices for each of the options below):

- Option 1: This leadership approach, theory, or model is theologically compatible with Christian practice
- Option 2: When appropriately modified, this leadership approach, theory, or model can be made theologically compatible with Christian practice
- Option 3: This leadership approach, theory, or model is not compatible with Christian practice even in a modified form
- Option 4: Undecided

Question 5: What are the course names and course numbers of the undergraduate courses you teach that introduce leadership theory?

Answers (blank text box provided)

## About the Author

Jason B. Palmer, Th.M., joined the staff of Goodwater Church—a church plant in Whitefish, Montana—as Executive Pastor in July 2025 following six years as Dean of Spiritual Life and University Chaplain at University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. He is an ordained Southern Baptist minister, retired U.S. Army Chaplain, and Ph.D. student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary majoring in Christian Leadership. His research interests focus on the intersection of Christian theology and leadership theory.

## References

- Antonakis, John, David V. Day, and Birgit Schyns. "Leadership and Individual Differences: At the Cusp of a Renaissance." *The Leadership Quarterly* 23 (2012): 643–650. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.05.002.
- Bass, Bernard M. *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research & Managerial Applications*. 4th ed. New York: Free Press, 2008.
- Bolsinger, Tod. *Canoeing the Mountains*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015.
- Brown, Francis. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.
- Burns, James MacGregor. *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row, 1978.
- Danker, Frederick William, ed. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.

- DeRue, D. Scott, Jennifer D. Nahrgang, Ned Wellman, and Stephen E. Humphrey. "Trait and Behavioral Theories of Leadership: An Integration and Meta-analytic Test of Their Relative Validity." *Personnel Psychology* 64 (2011): 7–52.
- Dew, James K., Jr. *Let This Mind Be in You*. Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2023.
- Dhiman, Satinder, and Gary E. Roberts, eds. *The Palgrave Handbook of Servant Leadership*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2023.
- Ford, Leighton. *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values, and Empowering Change*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1991.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York: Paulist Press, 1977.
- Heifetz, Ronald A. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994.
- Heifetz, Ronald A., Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009.
- International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities. "Member Schools." Accessed March 15, 2025. <https://www.baptistschools.org/member-schools>.
- International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy." October 28, 1978. [https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI\\_1.pdf](https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1.pdf).
- Kimotho, Stephen G. "Is Servant Leadership a 'Christian Theory?' A Critical Examination of Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Concept." *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (2019): 71–78.
- Klein, Ernest. *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987.
- Locke, Larry G. "The Clay Feet of Servant Leadership." *Journal of Biblical Integration of Business* 22, no. 1 (2019): 34–42. <https://cbfa-jbib.org/index.php/jbib/article/view/519/531>.
- Mathew, Joseph. "Persistent Pioneers: Training Leaders for Mission to Unreached People Groups through India's Light the World Missions." D.I.S. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2020. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- McKinley, J. Keith. *Evaluating Leadership: A Model for Missiological Assessment of Leadership Theory and Practice*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2024.

- McMahon, Marty. "A Solid Foundation for Servant Leadership." *Journal of Biblical Integration of Business* 26, no. 1 (2023): 57–64. <https://cbfa-jbib.org/index.php/jbib/article/view/656/650>.
- National Center for Education Statistics. "College Navigator." Accessed September 13, 2024. <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>.
- Niewold, Jack W. "Incarnational Leadership: Towards a Distinctly Christian Theory of Leadership." PhD diss., Regent University, 2006. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- . "Beyond Servant Leadership." *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 1, no. 2 (2007): 118–134. <https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol1no2/JBPLVol1No2.pdf>.
- Northouse, Peter G. *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. 9th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2022.
- Palmer, Jason B. "Theologically Analyzing Secular Leadership Theory: Evidence of Pelagius's Teachings in the Servant Leadership of Robert Greenleaf." *Journal of Religious Leadership* 23, no. 1 (2024): 79–102. <https://arl-jrl.org/journal-of-religious-leadership>.
- . "Missiological Adaptation as a Framework for Chaplains in Civil-Military Engagement." *Military Chaplain Review* (November 2024): 19–25. <https://mcr.scholasticahq.com/article/133265-missiological-adaptation-as-a-framework-for-chaplains-in-civil-military-engagement>.
- Popper, Micha. *Leaders Who Transform Society: What Drives Them and Why We Are Attracted*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005.
- Reed, Lora L. "Servant Leadership as Demonstrated in one 21st Century Church: A Case Study." *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 13, no. 1 (Fall 2023): 15–39. [https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol13no1/Vol13Iss1\\_JBPL\\_Full\\_Issue.pdf](https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol13no1/Vol13Iss1_JBPL_Full_Issue.pdf).
- Schubring, Linda Louise. "A Study in Adaptive Leadership: How Christian Associates' Teams and Individuals in Europe Navigate Change." D.I.S. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2012. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Shirin, Audrey V. "Is Servant Leadership Inherently Christian?" *Journal of Religion and Business Ethics* 3, Article 13 (2014): 1–25. <https://via.library.depaul.edu/jrbe/vol3/iss1/13>.
- Southern Baptist Convention. "Baptist Faith and Message 2000." Accessed October 4, 2024. <https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000>.

West, Russell W., and John D. Stoeckle. "Theorizing Religiously-Based Organization Leadership: Mapping the Intersections." *Journal of Religious Leadership* 4, nos. 1–2 (2005): 149–187. <https://arl-jrl.org/journal-of-religious-leadership>.

Yung, Hwa. *Leadership or Servanthood?: Walking in the Steps of Jesus*. Carlisle, United Kingdom: Langham Global Library, 2021.

Zaccaro, Stephen J., Jennifer P. Green, Samantha Dubrow, and MaryJo Kolze. "Leader Individual Differences, Situational Parameters, and Leadership Outcomes: A Comprehensive Review and Integration." *The Leadership Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2018): 2–43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2017.10.003>.