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## THE ROLE OF TRIBULATION AND VIRTUE IN CREATIVITY: A SACRED TEXTURE ANALYSIS OF 1 PETER

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God's strategy to diffuse Christianity in vacillating economic, political, and economic environments is creative and reflects his nature to work in inexplicit and paradoxical ways.<sup>1</sup> In a sacred textual analysis of 1 Peter, employing the exegetical strategies of socio-rhetorical criticism, it is proposed that God uses tribulation and trials to effect individual and collective transformation. This transformative process, predicated on a believer's grateful response to grace, produces organizational cooperation over competition, forgiveness over grudges, and harmony over discord,<sup>2</sup> which is necessary to attain moral excellence and the good relationships needed for creating innovative organizations that require ongoing renewal for today's turbulent environments that organizations face. This essay further focuses on the nuances of spiritual transformation and character development, a process similar to that noted by Paul in Romans 5:3-6. It also focuses on the creative tools Peter uses, such as metaphors and opposites, to teach the requisites for spiritual formation/character development, as well as transformational leadership used by Peter in seeking to transform the Christian community toward moral excellence.

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It is difficult to find leadership articles and reports that do not address the need for innovation and creativity, whether this is in terms of new or improved products, services, systems, and processes that sustain the organization in the midst of ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> Vernon Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 121.

<sup>2</sup> David DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 318.

change, which may threaten the organization's long-term sustainability. These threats of turbulence, however, can be perceived by leaders as a form of trial and tribulation, moving leaders to look positively at these changes as an opportunity to innovate, or negatively, resulting in the leader doing nothing but holding on to the status quo. Also appearing in leadership headlines and titles is the importance of values and an increasing interest in the role of virtue ethics in leadership and organizational effectiveness. As we can see, it may be prudent to investigate how innovation, creativity, change, perceptions of trial and tribulation, values, and virtues are interwoven to help the organization reinvent or renew itself while staying grounded in the sea of change they face today and will certainly face in the future. As research indicates, these concepts are interwoven. Rosa Chun found a correlation between virtue and innovation and organizational success. Innovation (being imaginative, spirited, innovative, and excited) was correlated with the virtues of integrity (social responsibility, trustworthiness, sincerity, and honesty) and courage (ambitiousness, achievement orientation, and leading).<sup>3</sup>

While research on innovation, creativity, and values in leadership journals is vast, and some research on positive mindsets toward turbulence (primarily advocated by Gryskiewicz<sup>4</sup>) is available but not as vast, it is more difficult to find leadership literature that focuses on virtue and virtue development or spiritual formation and which leadership style best facilitates and is conducive to the spiritual formation process. One of the few leadership styles that addresses virtue as foundational to its character transformation is authentic transformational leadership, a concept articulated by Bernard Bass who describes transformational leadership as composed of four dimensions—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—and who defends transformational leadership as a legitimate style in his and Steidlmeier's paper *Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership*.<sup>5</sup>

Also not found in leadership literature is a comparison between Bass and Steidlmeier's dimensions grounded in virtue that contribute to creative and innovative thinking and the creative means God chose to diffuse (e.g., the creative process to communicate the innovation of the gospel and Christian ethos throughout the Christian community<sup>6</sup>) the gospel in a world that at the time was undergoing dramatic political, economic, and social change. It is at this juncture that this paper will attempt to compare and contrast Bass and Steidlmeier's dimensions that lead to innovation with God's system for forming the hearts and minds of his children as well as Peter's teaching modalities to convey God's system for spiritual change based on a sacred texture analysis of 1 Peter using the intertextual and social-cultural analysis process of socio-rhetorical criticism. This analysis fundamentally revealed that God worked in very

<sup>3</sup> Rose Chun, "Innovation and Reputation: An Ethical Character Perspective," *Creativity and Innovation Management* 15 (2006), 63.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Gryskiewicz, *Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation, and Renewal* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Bass and Paul Steidlmeier, "Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership," <http://cls.binghamton.edu/BassSteid.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Montgomery, *The Lopsided Spread of Christianity: Toward an Understanding of the Diffusion of Religions* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 162.

inexplicit, paradoxical,<sup>7</sup> and creative ways and at the least worked through the experiences and passions of his children to diffuse Christianity throughout the world in the first century.

Thus, this paper wishes to communicate the paradoxical and creative methods God and Peter used. God used “tribulation” and “trials,” which can be perceived as political, social, and cultural change, particularly that which is opposed to Christianity, to develop holiness and virtue in his followers. Authentic transformational leaders do the same when they have a positive mindset toward change that threatens the sustainability of the organization. Peter used the creative tool of “pairs of opposites” to teach the requisites for spiritual formation and character development. Today’s leaders can draw upon these to create the synergy needed to move both members and the organization as a whole beyond the status quo and into Christlikeness. Peter’s authentic transformational leadership can serve as an example for moving or transforming the Christian community toward moral excellence. Before delving into these areas, a discussion about what is meant by tribulation, tribulation’s active role in developing virtue, and the role of these two concepts in the growth of Christianity might be beneficial.

### I. Background: Tribulation, Virtue, Innovation, and Church Growth

*Thlipsis*, the Greek word for tribulation, means to press together or have pressure.<sup>8</sup> Metaphors for tribulation include oppression, affliction, distress, and straits.<sup>9</sup> Scripture teaches that tribulation cannot separate believers from the love of Christ;<sup>10</sup> is worked out with others;<sup>11</sup> is not feared;<sup>12</sup> is worth exulting over as it brings about perseverance,<sup>13</sup> spiritual maturity, Christlikeness, and trust in God;<sup>14</sup> works for good for those who love him;<sup>15</sup> and accompanied the giving of the word.<sup>16</sup> Tribulation is God’s way to “prune” his children to produce more fruit, virtue, and godly character is produced.<sup>17</sup>

The role of tribulation as God’s pruning device is important in the growth of Christianity. Jesus warned about the cost of following him.<sup>18</sup> God allowed persecution knowing it would create the right tension to develop strong godly leaders who would learn to trust, rely, and live out a faith based on the promises he communicated in his word and through Christ. The spiritual formation of these godly leaders would help

<sup>7</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 121.

<sup>8</sup> *New American Standard Bible with Strong’s Numbers*, ed. Crosswalk.com.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Rom 8:35 (NASB).

<sup>11</sup> Rev 1:9 (NASB).

<sup>12</sup> Rev 2:10 (NASB).

<sup>13</sup> Rom 2:9 (NASB).

<sup>14</sup> James 1:1-13 (NASB).

<sup>15</sup> Rom 8:28 (NASB).

<sup>16</sup> 1 Thess 1:6 (NASB).

<sup>17</sup> John 15:2 (NASB).

<sup>18</sup> Matt 24:9 (NASB).

Christianity overcome persecution in the first century.<sup>19</sup> As Christians overcame evil by doing good, such as when Christians about to be devoured by wild beasts sang hymns on their walk into the Coliseum, they modeled true goodness to others. A leader that models Christian virtue during tribulation and inspires it in others attracts people who desire greater goodness in the world. Is it any wonder that a correlation between the admirable and praiseworthy virtues (*arête* in Greek meaning “excellent”<sup>20</sup>) of integrity, courage,<sup>21</sup> honesty, reliability, trustworthiness, and caring<sup>22</sup> is linked with sustaining organizational innovation,<sup>23</sup> just as it was linked to the growth of the church in the midst of persecution? The Christian being persecuted because of his holy or righteous character was at peace with God—through the blood of Christ who won victory over death—and could accomplish any feat or trial he was presented with; thus, peace with God brings peace of mind.<sup>24</sup> This peace catalyzes and becomes the conduit for peace with others and the foundation for good relationships with others. Furthermore, these good relationships with others create caring cultures that allow individuals to share tacit insights.<sup>25</sup> Collectively, these relationships help people share concepts together, such as a vision that relies on tacit ideas and feelings.<sup>26</sup> This sharing among people contributes to innovative ideas.<sup>27</sup>

We might consider the house church in the first century, which spread the gospel quickly throughout the known world,<sup>28</sup> as an innovation spawned by strong relationships forged and molded in tribulation that required the believers to unite and trust in God and each other to sustain the church. In these early first-century house churches the spirit of *koinonia* (e.g., deep fellowship with one another) was developed and nurtured. As it became part of the community’s character, it required each person to rely on his spiritual gifts to accomplish God’s purposes<sup>29</sup> even in the midst of trial, which, as we will see in greater detail later, served as the mobilizing force for accomplishing God’s purposes. To recap this section, examine the following diagram (Figure 1), which portrays the connection between trials, virtue development, relation development, and innovation.

<sup>19</sup> Dimitris Kyrtatas, “The Significance of Leadership and Organization in the Spread of Christianity,” in *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Explanation*, ed. W. V. Harris (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005), 63.

<sup>20</sup> Raymond Devettere, *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 60.

<sup>21</sup> Rosa Chun, “Innovation and Reputation: An Ethical Character Perspective,” *Creativity and Innovation Management* 15 (2006), 63.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>24</sup> *Mathew Henry Commentary*, ed. Crosswalk.com, John 16:33.

<sup>25</sup> Georg Krogh, Kazuo Ichijo, and Ikujiro Nonaka, *Enabling Knowledge Creation: How to Unlock the Mystery of Tacit Knowledge and Release the Power of Innovation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 55.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>28</sup> “House Church,” *The M Word Blog*, <http://themword.typepad.com/mainblog/2007/07/house-church.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Strom, “What of Earth is Koinonia,” *The Secrets of the Early Church* (2004), <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~revival/secrets-ch.html>.

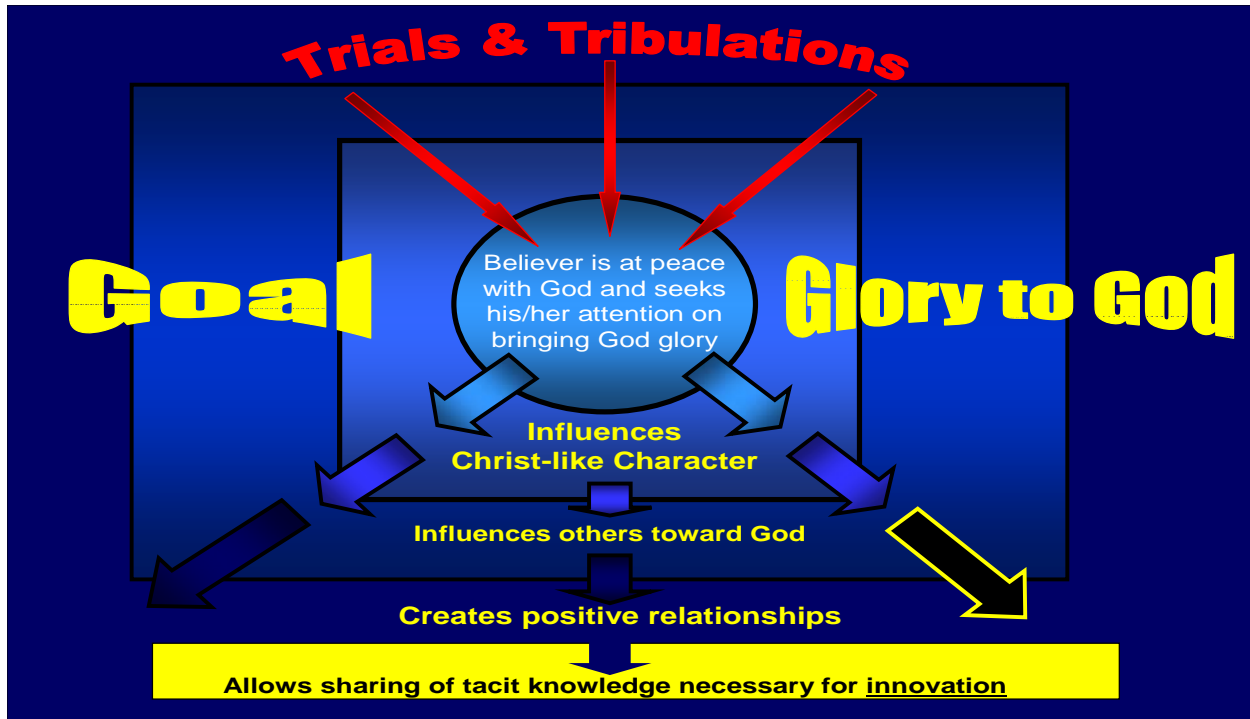


Figure 1. Diagram portraying the connection between trials, virtue development, relation development, and innovation.

We can further our understanding of the nuances of spiritual formation or virtue development by looking to the historical and social-cultural context of the first century, the context in which 1 Peter was written. The historical and social-cultural context reveals the tribulation that put pressure on the first-century church, not to divide it but to strengthen it. The church adapted and innovated in ways that may not have been possible without these trials. We now investigate the historical or political context of the first-century church, primarily the environment of those written to in 1 Peter.

## II. Historical Context of 1 Peter and Tribulation

The Greco-Roman world worshipped different gods, as well as local gods in Asia Minor,<sup>30</sup> through religious practices, rites, and rituals,<sup>31</sup> thus supporting the pagans' desire to live in idolatry.<sup>32</sup> For all practical reasons the Roman government tolerated different religions as long as emperor worship was observed,<sup>33</sup> thus maintaining the supremacy of the Roman religion.<sup>34</sup> Repression resulted only when emperors believed the religion threatened its law and order.<sup>35</sup> Because Christianity was considered a sect

<sup>30</sup> Martin Goodman, *Roman World 44 BC to 180 AD* (London, UK: Routledge, 1997), 240.

<sup>31</sup> James Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 89-102.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Pet 4:3 (NASB).

<sup>33</sup> Goodman, *Roman World*, 132.

<sup>34</sup> Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World*, 105.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 105-107.

of Judaism that was tolerated,<sup>36</sup> it did not come under persecution until a fire ravaged Rome in 60 AD.<sup>37</sup> Emperor Nero blamed Christians, making them the scapegoat for the fire.<sup>38</sup> Persecution escalated when Christians refused to take an oath to the emperor guardian spirit, drawing suspicion that Christians did not support Roman supremacy.<sup>39</sup> In the Roman locality of Asia Minor, however, the region Peter wrote to, less severe persecution took the form of ostracization and insult,<sup>40</sup> comparable to today's peer pressure.<sup>41</sup> It is at this juncture that the social-cultural context of 1 Peter is discussed with the goal of emphasizing how social groups sought to conform group members to cultural norms rather than to what Christ taught.

### III: Social-Cultural Context of 1 Peter

Exploring the social-cultural context of 1 Peter is important; otherwise, the typical American/European interpretation using the individualist/guilt-oriented values, instead of the "group-oriented" and "honor-shame values characteristic of the Mediterranean society,"<sup>42</sup> results in misleading interpretations. DeSilva uses social rhetorical analysis of honor and shame to support his thesis that "challenge-riposte" exchanges were used to gain honor at the expense of someone else by posing challenges that cannot be answered.<sup>43</sup> The challenge-riposte was a mechanism, according to Malina, to "enter the social space of another"<sup>44</sup> with the motivation to temporarily or permanently dislodge the other person from his social space<sup>45</sup> for the sake of winning public honor. Public honor and worthiness is transferred to the challenger "if the person challenged cannot or does not respond to the challenge posed by his equal."<sup>46</sup> We could imagine how much more challenging this game might be in a pluralistic society. Malina argues that the pluralistic society prevalent in the first century was bound to create conflict due to the multiple and diverse social groups each having its own definition of honor.<sup>47</sup> Each person was continuously challenging another to gain honor, which would not build relationship but instead create division. As we know from scripture, the Christian always seeks to honor others,<sup>48</sup> always thinking of and serving others in love.<sup>49</sup>

Also important in the first-century culture was the use of shaming tactics to bring a transgressor back into conformity with group norms. Shaming tactics might include "insult, reproach, physical abuse, confiscation of property," and, at worst, execution.<sup>50</sup> Peter, reciting Isaiah 8:14 in 1 Peter 1:7-8, reasserts prophesy indicating the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Goodman, *Roman World*, 239.

<sup>41</sup> DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 26.

<sup>42</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture*, 76.

<sup>43</sup> DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 29.

<sup>44</sup> Robbins, *Exploring the Texture*, 80.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>48</sup> 1 Pet 2:17 (King James Version).

<sup>49</sup> Gal 5:13 (KJV).

<sup>50</sup> DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 36.

cornerstone (Jesus) would become a rock of stumbling and offense to others. The unbeliever, surprised that the believer no longer joins him, seeks to malign the believer.<sup>51</sup> If the shaming tactics proved successful, the unbeliever's norms and attitudes were realigned to those of the believing community.<sup>52</sup>

The best riposte to a challenge and shaming tactics, according to Webb, was virtuous living.<sup>53</sup> The new status as a child of God belonging to a new family required a response different from their previous life.<sup>54</sup> Believers were asked to give honor to all people and authority, just as Christ did, even if it meant suffering, knowing that God would judge righteously.<sup>55</sup> The believer would not be without reward, but would be considered "blessed,"<sup>56</sup> receiving an inheritance reserved for him in heaven.<sup>57</sup>

As we have seen, pressure by the Roman government to conform to emperor cult worship and the pressure from the Christians' previous social group to adhere to social-cultural norms in opposition to values and virtues taught by Jesus would cause tribulation for believers. The only way to persevere and not fall back into old ways<sup>58</sup> was for the believer to desire pure spiritual milk so that by it he or she may "grow up to salvation."<sup>59</sup> Growing up to salvation required that the believer become holy in all his conduct just as God is holy.<sup>60</sup> Yet, this growth process, known as spiritual formation or character development, would require refinement through fire (e.g., trials and tribulation for the purpose of testing one's faith so that the result would be praise and glory to God).<sup>61</sup>

Teaching this concept, however, was not easy. Peter, like Jesus, knew the value of using metaphors from the physical world to convey deep spiritual truths. Thus, Peter helped Christians connect or correlate the physical and spiritual in order to change their hearts and minds, making them stronger to withstand the political and social-culture pressures rather than revert to old ways.

#### IV: Metaphors and Opposites

One of the first metaphors Peter used to teach a spiritual truth was about the seed. The physical perishable seed and the spiritual imperishable<sup>62</sup> seed reflect God's system for accomplishing his will. Why would God choose to accomplish his work through opposites, such as the physical and spiritual?<sup>63</sup> Bushnell asserts the constant action and reaction between the relationship of nature and the supernatural, when taken

<sup>51</sup> 1 Pet 4:4 (NASB).

<sup>52</sup> DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 47.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Webb, "The Petrine Epistles: Recent Developments and Trends" in *The Face of New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and Grant Osborne (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 378.

<sup>54</sup> Webb, *The Face of New Testament Studies*, 385.

<sup>55</sup> 1 Pet 2:13-23 (NASB).

<sup>56</sup> Luk 6:22, Matt 5:10, and 1 Pet 4:11 (NASB).

<sup>57</sup> 1 Pet 1:4 (NASB).

<sup>58</sup> 1 Pet 1:14, 2:1 (NASB).

<sup>59</sup> 1 Pet 2:2 (NASB).

<sup>60</sup> 1 Pet 1:16 (NASB).

<sup>61</sup> 1 Pet 1:6, 7 (NASB).

<sup>62</sup> 1 Pet 1:23 (NASB).

<sup>63</sup> "Chapter 24: The Works of God Go in Pairs by Opposites," *The Clock of God*, <http://goodnewschristianministry.org/clockchapter24.htm>.

together, represent the true system of God in that the “supernatural is the ever-present creative cause of the natural and the source of the restoration of the natural.”<sup>64</sup> The supernatural and natural work together and thus use of metaphors to teach opposites are beneficial to the student, particularly in learning acceptable behavior, such as good<sup>65</sup> and evil.<sup>66</sup> Irenaeus, a second-century church father, writes in *Adversus Haereses* that by receiving knowledge of good and evil<sup>67</sup> believers might be “trained by means of them” so that the believer might choose goodness<sup>68</sup> over evil. Supporting Irenaeus, Westman states,

As the creation of the inner world proceeds, as the psyche develops, there is an invariable pattern of action: the Word is uttered, the ear hears, the choice is made, the eye opens, and what stands revealed is a new aspect of human reality. This archetypal pattern appears here for the first time, in what has always been called the Fall of Man. It is, I suggest, the opposite, for it makes creativity possible in *both* orders of experience. Without the awareness of the truly other, nothing could have or can happen.<sup>69</sup>

Metaphors and opposites, such as good and evil, can be an impetus for moving beyond the status quo toward Christlikeness.

#### V: Motivator for Virtuousness

1 Peter 1:23, a recitation of Isaiah 40:6-8, emphasizes that eternal life is dependent upon the word rather than the flesh, with the latter the physical life that eventually dies. And, having been born again from an imperishable seed rather than the perishable seed of physical life, the believer turns away from the behavior of the flesh,<sup>70</sup> such as malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander.<sup>71</sup> Now belonging to God’s family<sup>72</sup> the believer is holy as God is holy,<sup>73</sup> holiness being one of the overarching virtues of God.<sup>74</sup> Peter’s recitation of Leviticus 11:44 reaffirms that the believer is consecrated to God in every aspect of his life and will gradually grow in virtuousness.

#### VI: Virtuousness

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> 1 Pet 2:12 (NASB).

<sup>66</sup> 1 Pet 2:14, 16; 3:9 (NASB).

<sup>67</sup> Gen 3:7 (NASB).

<sup>68</sup> Irenaeus, “Adversus Haereses” in *The Early Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Clement of Rome to St. Athanasius*, ed. Henry Bettenson (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1976), 70-71.

<sup>69</sup> Heinz Westman, *The Springs of Creativity* (New York, NY: Atheneum, 1961), 84.

<sup>70</sup> 1 Pet 1:14 (NASB).

<sup>71</sup> 1 Pet 2:1 (NASB).

<sup>72</sup> *New American Standard Study Bible*, 1813.

<sup>73</sup> 1 Pet 1:16 (NASB).

<sup>74</sup> Greg Herrick, “Virtues Leading to Christlikeness,” *Bible.org*. [www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=77](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=77).



Stephen Evans writes, "Virtues are general character traits that provide inner sanctions on our particular motives, intentions and outward conduct."<sup>75</sup> Character is a "tendency stemming from who you are at your core level, to act in certain ways"; "not simply an impulse, good or bad, but rather a settled habit of mind"; "has a function of providing judgment on motives and outward actions"; and relates "to who we are as people."<sup>76</sup> Finally, holiness is consistent with God's moral law,<sup>77</sup> is the absence of evil, and based on what is infinitely good and excellent.<sup>78</sup>

Love, the second overarching character of God, is at the "very heart of God," motivating God to seek "the welfare of the lost and rebellious sinners."<sup>79</sup> The believer, too, seeks the best for others.<sup>80</sup> In love a believer can "be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit, not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead."<sup>81</sup> 1 Peter 3:10-12, a recitation of Psalm 35:12-16 and Proverbs 16:7, describes actions of loving others. They keep their tongue from evil and lips from speaking deceit, turn away from evil and do good, and seek and pursue peace. In this way the believer does what is good,<sup>82</sup> thereby showing forth God's glory.

Love also honors others over the self. The believer gives honor to every human institution<sup>83</sup> and person for fear of God,<sup>84</sup> knowing each person bears the image of God.<sup>85</sup> In holiness the "tarnished image" of creation in God's image is removed, facilitating a steward role in God's creation.<sup>86</sup> In holiness, the believer is able to see each culture and ethnicity as God's "amazing breadth of God's creativity and expression."<sup>87</sup>

## VII: Contingencies of Character Development (Holiness and Love)

Character development relies on two motivations: (1) a desire for nourishment in the word, resulting in knowledge,<sup>88</sup> and (2) active relationships with a community of believers. A believer, having "tasted the kindness of the Lord," desires the pure milk of the word, just as a newborn desires milk, so that being nourished on the word he grows "in respect to salvation."<sup>89</sup> The word "newborn" in 1 Peter 2:2 is a repetition of the argument that the person in Christ is born again from the imperishable seed<sup>90</sup> and

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> 1 Pet 3:8-9 (NASB).

<sup>82</sup> 1 Pet 4:12-12 (NASB); *New American Standard Study Bible*, 1817.

<sup>83</sup> 1 Pet 2:13 (NASB).

<sup>84</sup> 1 Pet 2:17 (NASB).

<sup>85</sup> *New American Standard Study Bible*, 1815.

<sup>86</sup> "What is the Image of God" in *Thinking Through Faith* (2006), InterVarsity's StudentSoul.org. [www.intervarsity.org](http://www.intervarsity.org).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Daryl Charles, "The Language and Logic of Virtue in 2 Peter 1:5-7," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 8 (1998), 61.

<sup>89</sup> 1 Pet 2:2-3 (NASB).

<sup>90</sup> 1 Pet 1:23 (NASB).

needs nourishment from spiritual milk to grow. As the believer is nourished by the word, he comes to greater knowledge, and, when accompanied by obedience, grows in holiness and a greater love for God, thus increasing in love for all.<sup>91</sup> Without spiritual nourishment, however, a believer withers and dies. Unable to overcome shaming tactics, he retreats to his old ways.

Peter, as suggested by John Elliot, called upon believers to maintain their distinctive Christian identity through “group consciousness, cohesion, and commitment.”<sup>92</sup> These values helped sustain, regenerate, and grow the community in times of tribulation. Community became important to the “aliens’ scatter throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”<sup>93</sup> because their social status as a Christian made them reviled by others, even though they were native-born.<sup>94</sup> This community became, according to Elliot, a “home for the homeless.”<sup>95</sup> Peter gives a vision to this community, describing it as a “spiritual house” of believers that is constructed by each “living stone.”<sup>96</sup> The “spiritual house” having been built around the cornerstone of Jesus Christ offers sacrifices acceptable to God.<sup>97</sup> This fulfills Isaiah’s prophecy in 28:16 in that the “choice stone” would be costly (purchased through the blood of Christ) and has been tested (Christ overcoming death). The spiritual house is further occupied by a “holy priesthood.”<sup>98</sup> The spiritual house is not a physical place<sup>99</sup> where God once resided, but a spiritual house indwelt by the Holy Spirit.<sup>100</sup> These “living stones” are not physically connected but spiritually connected, forming the basis for social networks based on a common bond. These social networks—open to all believers regardless of physical domicile—are one of the reasons Rodney Stark believes Christianity spread.<sup>101</sup> At this point this paper diverges to investigate the commonalities and differences of Peter’s leadership style to that of Bass’ four dimensions of the authentic transformational leader.

### VIII: Comparison to Transformational Leadership

Kyratas asserts that Christianity could not have spread without able leaders.<sup>102</sup> The goal of effective and able leadership in the early Christian movements corresponded with the theological hope of progression in Christlikeness.<sup>103</sup> Peter, having experienced reconciliation and redemption from sin and failure,<sup>104</sup> based his leadership on the “good shepherd” himself.<sup>105</sup> Peter further encouraged elders to follow

<sup>91</sup> Gray, James. “The Obligation of Love,” *Fundamentalist Journal* (1986), 49.

<sup>92</sup> Webb, *The Petrine Epistles*, 377.

<sup>93</sup> 1 Pet 1:1 (NASB).

<sup>94</sup> Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World*, 57.

<sup>95</sup> Webb, *The Petrine Epistles*, 384.

<sup>96</sup> 1 Pet 2:5 (NASB).

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> *New American Standard Study Bible*, 1814.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Montgomery, *The Lopsided Spread of Christianity*, 10.

<sup>102</sup> Kyratas, *The Spread of Christianity*, 66.

<sup>103</sup> Makoski, *Horace Bushnell*, 149.

<sup>104</sup> John 21:15-17 (NASB).

<sup>105</sup> John 10:11 (NASB).

likewise. In following the example of the chief shepherd, church leaders would receive the “unfading crown of glory.”<sup>106</sup> Leadership would be exercised not under compulsion, but through volunteering and exemplary service, showing one’s self as an example to others.<sup>107</sup> It is the type of leadership that is most similar, yet different in some ways due to the source of the leader’s underlying motivations, to Bass’ transformational leadership style.

In some aspects, Peter’s leadership exemplifies Bass and Steidlmeier’s definition of authentic transformational leadership in that Peter’s leadership was grounded in moral virtues. Differing, however, from Bass and Steidlmeier’s assertion that authentic transformational leadership is rooted in the long-standing literature of Socratic and Confucian typologies, specifically the Western Socratic tradition of ethics rooted in “liberty, utility, and distributive justice,”<sup>108</sup> Peter’s transformational leadership is sourced in the holy virtues of love and justice,<sup>109</sup> which are sourced in God and effects transformation into his likeness. Yet, commonality might be found between Socratic and godly virtue in the idea that “liberty, utility, and distributive justice” might be manifestations of the follower who consents to be led,<sup>110</sup> just as godly virtue is not based on forced conversion. Christ never forced anyone to follow him. However, “liberty, utility, and distributive justice” does not necessarily result in holiness—only virtues such as love and justice can accomplish this task. It is this task that Peter attempts to draw the Christian and Christian community to in 1 Peter.

Now comparing the means by which this task is accomplished, the following paragraphs will attempt to compare and contrast Bass’ four dimensions of the authentic transformational leader with Peter’s leadership. First, Peter meets Bass’ dimension of “idealized influence” in that Peter does not use terminology such as “we-they” in terms of “we having good values and they do not,”<sup>111</sup> but instead being “born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” the Christian was to honor every person and government authority, whether suffering unjustly or not, for the sake of glorifying God.<sup>112</sup> Hence, although Peter discerned the difference between the behavior of a wicked and godly person, he did not point out “we” or “they,” but chose to focus on virtue development that would help every Christian work toward greater virtue and turn away from the wickedness that Christ saved man from. Yet, the source for Peter’s “idealized influence” is not in Peter but in Christ who is working through Peter.

Second, Peter provides “inspirational motivation”<sup>113</sup> in that he provides a vision for what type of life the Christian should live and how he should progress in holiness. This progression can only be accomplished by focusing on the best in others, as Bass and Steidlmeier assert, so that harmony might be created and charity might become the

<sup>106</sup> 1 Pet 5:4 (NASB).

<sup>107</sup> 1 Pet 5:2-3 (NASB).

<sup>108</sup> Bernard Bass and Paul Steidlmeier, “Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership” (1998), <http://cls.binghamton.edu/BassSteid.html>.

<sup>109</sup> Herrick, “Virtues.”

<sup>110</sup> Bass and Steidlmeier, “Ethics.”

<sup>111</sup> A Gregory Stone, Robert Russell, and Kathleen Patterson, “Transformational Versus Servant Leadership: A Difference in Focus,” *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 25 (2004): 350.

<sup>112</sup> 1 Pet 2 (English Standard Version).

<sup>113</sup> Bass and Steidlmeier, “Ethics.”

norm.<sup>114</sup> As we learned earlier, these virtues become the basis for good relationships that lead to community and subsequently knowledge sharing and innovation.

Third, Peter stimulates the intellect of the Christian mind. In his use of the metaphors to teach God's system of opposites, he challenges the Christian to move beyond the temporal to think about eternity. The political and social systems that the followers lived in would not endure, but that these would perish. Because these systems will not last, the Christian need not focus on the perishable but on the imperishable word and will of God. Further, Peter unequivocally challenges the Christian to rethink or reframe the value or role of tribulation or problems in a Christian's life, just as Avolio and Bass assert the transformational leader will question the validity of old ways and seek to reframe problems.<sup>115</sup> Peter's reframing of tribulation can mean the difference between hopefulness—which can bring spiritual development and the likeliness for which God will be praised and glorified—and helplessness. It is also at this juncture that today's leaders can find tremendous value in having a positive mindset toward the possibilities that come with change, particularly political, social, economic, and environmental change. These changes, if approached positively, can create a tension that ignites the creative and innovative energy necessary to close the gap between the current reality and a desired future.<sup>116</sup>

Last, Peter does not wish to lord over his followers; instead, he chooses to help develop other Christians to become leaders, which Bass and Steidlmeier assert the authentic transformational leader promotes,<sup>117</sup> in the sense that a person's character will attract and influence others to Christ and inspire them to desire to become Christlike. Peter is not concerned about becoming more powerful, as Bass and Steidlmeier would assert the pseudo or "false" transformational leader would be. The authentic transformational leader determines how he could use his power to serve others,<sup>118</sup> just as Peter chose to serve the Christians' need for eternal life and to overcome the tribulations that came with living for Christ. To accomplish this task, Peter focuses on increasing what Bass and Steidlmeier assert is the "awareness of what is right, good, important, and beautiful,<sup>119</sup>" moving the Christian beyond self-interest toward the interest of God, the Christian community, and the life of the Christian in terms of what type of life God desires for the Christian.

## IX: Conclusion

Although this essay touches only the surface of 1 Peter, it is hoped that the objectives set forth in the introduction were accomplished. The call to glorify God as a community and an individual through holiness, particularly in times of tribulation, provides the necessary development of virtue needed for organizations, communities, and societies that are in need of innovative and creative ideas to sustain themselves in turbulent times, just as the Christian church needed to sustain itself over numerous

<sup>114</sup> Bass and Steidlmeier, "Ethics."

<sup>115</sup> Stone, Russell, and Patterson, *Transformational Versus Servant Leadership*, 351.

<sup>116</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1990), 156-157

<sup>117</sup> Bass and Steidlmeier, "Ethics."

<sup>118</sup> Bass and Steidlmeier, "Ethics."

<sup>119</sup> Bass and Steidlmeier, "Ethics."

years of persecution and tribulation. To accomplish these feats from an organizational perspective, it takes authentic transformational leaders whose motivation is a desire to be like Christ and who aspire to help others along this journey. While traveling this journey, the authentic transformational leader will have manifested in his leadership idealized influence that draws from none other than Christ himself; inspirational motivation that provides a compelling vision of the Christian praising and glorying God by standing in holiness and overcoming life's tribulations; intellectual stimulation by creating gaps between the "ought" and "is," thus, sparking creativity and innovation; and consideration by using his power to help develop others to become leaders and create cultures where harmony and charity are the norm. These four dimensions, working together, grounded on a virtuous foundation in the turbulent and trying environment, bring to knowledge Peter's authentic transformational leadership that strives to influence the community of believers to glorify God by having the character of Christ.

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#### About the Author

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