LEADER EMERGENCE AND THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS 2

JULIANNE R. CENAC

Are leaders born or made? To provide additional consideration to this question, this paper suggests that leaders emerge. Based in the theoretical studies of leader emergence, a socio-rhetorical analysis is performed using Acts 2 as a text. Subjects of leadership traits, leadership development, and leadership emergence are analyzed within the scriptural text to determine if strong support or evidence of leader emergence exists. Through the phenomenon of the Holy Spirit, the findings show there is strong support for leader emergence as a viable consideration of leadership origin beyond innate traits and training or development.

Among the most contested questions in the field of leadership is this: Are leaders born or made? While both positions can be substantiated in the literature, this paper asserts that it is possible neither position is completely true in absolute terms, and that leaders, in the truest sense, are neither all born nor all made. At initial consideration, this statement seems controversial in nature and without merit. However, through closer examination of phenomenological examples of leadership in early periods of history, a third and rarely discussed alternative is revealed. That is, leaders emerge.

Emergence is defined in the lexicon from the intransitive verb *emerge*, meaning to rise from obscurity, coming out into view, or manifesting.[1] For the individual in

---

[1] "Emerge," *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emerge

leadership, this burgeoning area of study depicts emergence as conceptually evolving, not necessarily stored nor inherent in any one individual, but rather called forth or revealed through social interactions or within certain contexts.[2] Emergence as a concept suggests fluidity, meaning (1) emergence is not previously observed in the system under observation, (2) emergence involves coherence and integration yet maintains some of its original identity, (3) it occurs at a global or macro level, (4) it is dynamic, and finally, (5) it has ostensible qualities. To that end, from this theoretical basis, it seems appropriate to explore the ideals of leadership emergence in a spiritual context to further illuminate understanding of the phenomenon itself.[3]

For example, in addition to an emergence theory, what is to be said of the more contemporary positions that leaders are born or made when also viewed through the lens of Scripture? Therefore, using the text from Acts 2, the following examines this question using socio-rhetorical criticism to find support for perhaps a more precise perspective of leadership origin. But, first, before reviewing the scriptural relevance for leader emergence, the following provides a theoretical understanding of the three leadership suppositions in question.

I. LEADERS ARE BORN

Trait theories of leaders seem to provide the greatest support to the supposition that leaders are born. Trait approaches to leadership are among the earliest studied by scholars and focused on innate qualities and characteristics of the leader.[4] Also referred to as great man theory, trait theories differentiate between those traits found in leaders versus followers.

At the root of all trait theories are the assumptions posed originally by Galton's 1869 work titled *Hereditary Genius*.[5] Galton's two focal points of research asserted that leaders are extraordinary individuals whose actions can influence change, and leaders uniquely possess certain traits that are innately acquired to enable their leadership. For example, Ralph Stogdill's work provided the initial basis for trait theory and personal characteristics.[6] His survey of leadership traits originally measured attributes including: (1) intelligence, (2) initiative, (3) self-confidence, and (4) sociability among others.[7]

Yet, in an effort to provide a stronger taxonomy and structure for understanding traits, social science researchers later developed what is now known as the five-factor model. Its conception is traced to the work of Tupes and Christal and has been widely

---

[2] Douglas Griffin, *The Emergence of Leadership: Linking Self-Organization and Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 20.

[3] Jeffrey Goldstein, "Emergence as a Construct: History and Issues," *Emergence* 1 (1999): 49-73.

[4] Bernard Bass, *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 79-85.

[5] Francis Galton, "Francis Galton," in *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences*, Gavan Tredoux, ed. (London: MacMillan, 1869), http://galton.org/books/hereditary-genius/text/pdf/galton-1869-genius-v3.pdf

[6] Ralph M. Stogdill, "Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," *The Journal of Psychology* 25 (1948): 35-71.

[7] Bass, *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership,* 79-85.

adopted for its application in leadership studies.[8] The five factors include the traits: (1) extraversion, (2) agreeableness, (3) conscientiousness, (4) emotional adjustment, and (5) openness to experience.[9]

Furthermore, research provides additional perspective in understanding trait theory and its application to innate leadership. For example, a study found that two of the five-factor model traits showed the traits of agreeableness and extraversion with the strongest significance related to transformational leadership.[10] Since it is believed that traits are innate, the findings of this study provide a small but meaningful consideration to the notion that even contemporary models of leadership may in fact support the reasoning that leaders are born. A recent theoretical study filters through decades of trait theory studies from across the social sciences related to leadership.[11] In this study, an integrated model is proposed to better understand traits within leadership. What is interesting to note within Zaccaro's comprehensive model is the acquiescence that traits merely make up a leader's cognitive and social repertoire, and that it is the result of other environmental factors and variables that play a role in leadership emergence, effectiveness, and advancement. This acknowledgement or inclusion of the term *emergence* related to leadership seems to hint at Zaccaro's evolved perspective from earlier acknowledgements of innate leadership.

II. LEADERS ARE MADE

Juxtaposed to the argument of leaders being born is likely to be the supposition that they are made. Leadership development is not only a thriving area of research but is also a thriving industry. If an individual lacks innate ability, those who support the notion that leadership can be learned, would assert that training and development could substantiate leader deficiencies or gaps.[12] For example, leader development at the individual level largely focuses on intrapersonal dynamics, skills, and abilities.[13] Or, in addition to traditional approaches, current leadership development also emphasizes social processes that leaders must engage and navigate.[14] Training to develop these areas then requires greater flexibility in conceptual approaches.

However, if the approach is taken that leaders are made and therefore learning leadership is an extension of social learning for the leader, the more complex nature of viewing and developing the leader within the organizational environment is lost. In other words, the development is still focused on enhancing and honing the individual absent

---

[8] Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal, "Recurrent Personality Factors Based on Trait Ratings," Technical Report ASD-TR-61-97 (Lackland Air Force Base, TX: U.S. Air Force, 1961), 6.

[9] Timothy A. Judge and Joyce E. Bono, "Five-Factor Model of Personality and Transformational Leadership," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 85 (2000): 751-765.

[10] Ibid., 757-758.

[11] Stephen J. Zaccaro, "Trait-based Perspectives of Leadership," *American Psychologist* 62 (2007): 6-16.

[12] Mark Brundrett and Ann Dering, "The Rise of Leadership Development Programmes: A Global Phenomenon and a Complex Web," *School Leadership & Management* 26 (2006): 89-92.

[13] Julian Barling, Tom Weber, and E. Kevin Kelloway, "Effects of Transformational Leadership Training on Attitudinal and Financial Outcomes," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 81 (1996): 827-832.

[14] David Day, "Leadership Development: A Review in Context," *The Leadership Quarterly* 11 (2000): 583.

the greater context and setting that include other actors such as followers, dissenters, constituents, and environment.

III. LEADERS EMERGE

Just as distinct chemical elements form new properties under certain conditions, leadership can emerge within individuals and organizations in certain environments. The dynamics affecting leadership today call for leaders to balance more, know more, and contend with complex challenges.[15] Furthermore, that they are responsive to the complexity and adaptive nature of their organizations and their environments.[16] Different from Robert Clinton's leadership emergency theory, which examines how Christian leaders develop throughout their lifetime, emergence in this context implies a more finite occurrence.[17] Therefore, examining leadership as a more fluid and dynamic phenomena may provide a fresh perspective that goes beyond the assertions of leadership origin beginning within the individual or the training intervention.

For example, a historical study examined two groups of twenty supervisors.[18] Within the test group, individuals that emerged as leaders were noted and pulled from the test group. The test group was then observed over subsequent weeks to determine what would happen within the group. The results found that each time emergent leaders were pulled out of the test group, an additional set of leaders would emerge. In the control group, with the same few individuals emerging to lead the group, these individuals were left in to continue leading. This resulted in fewer occurrences of leader emergence than the test group.[19] The implication here is that given certain conditions or environmental context, leaders will emerge. This supports the Zaccaro model described earlier.[20] So then, while other more recent empirical studies have been conducted on the subject of leader emergence, they are not sufficient in number—compared to the areas of trait theory or leadership development—to offer as rigorous an analysis within this limited context. Therefore, additional interdisciplinary approaches to the study of leader emergence seem to offer greater course for observation.

IV. SOCIO-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF ACTS 2

While the leadership literature provides substantive support for understanding the premise and origin for leadership from a theoretical view, comparatively it is said that we seem to know very little from the literature about its origin.[21] In other words, how does

---

[15] Charles Manz and Henry P Sims, *The New Superleadership: Leading Others to Lead Themselves* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2001), 56-57.

[16] Griffin, Douglas, *The Emergence of Leadership: Linking Self-Organization and Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 57.

[17] J. Robert Clinton, *Leadership Emergence Theory: A Self-Study Manual for Analyzing the Development of Christian leaders* (Altadena, CA: Barnabas, 1989).

[18] Eugene Jennings, "Forced Leadership Training," *Personnel Journal* 31 (1952): 176-179.

[19] Ibid., 178.

[20] Stephen J. Zaccaro, "Trait-based Perspectives of Leadership," *American Psychologist* 62 (2007): 6-16.

[21] Bernard Bass, *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*, xi.

leadership emerge? What is the context for emergence? What are the characteristics that are present in leaders as they lead? Are these characteristics innate or learned? And finally, what is to be said of those individuals who have never led, yet assume leadership roles and lead effectively? To answer these questions from an empirical approach is seemingly difficult given the experimental and ethical nature of what would be required to observe answers to these questions over time.[22] Yet, if the observed phenomenon of what occurs during leadership as it emerges could be examined more deeply, it might provide rich and in-depth examples for analysis.

Therefore, the following provides an examination of the emergence of leadership in historic leaders from Biblical accounts. These historic leaders serve as suitable sources for observation, particularly those from Scripture, because of the numerous narrative accounts that exist and illustrate their lives, their emotions, and thoughts along with their leadership. While any number of Hebrew and Christian Scriptures would provide a wealth of examples, in particular, the events surrounding Pentecost and the transformation of the disciples in Acts 2 make it an ideal and provocative background to observe leader emergence through the phenomenon of the Holy Spirit. Within Acts, (1) the transformation of followers to leaders takes place, (2) the formalization of their leadership transformation occurs before the most influential of all Jerusalem, and (3) the study of the phenomenon of the Holy Spirit is made richer because of the detailed narrative recorded by its likely author, Luke.[23]

Acts 2, traditionally authored by the disciple Luke, is divided into three segments: (1) the empowering event by the Holy Spirit and witness, (2) Peter's sermon and the crowd's response, and (3) the early community of Christ.[24] According to the text, the disciples were now gathered together in Jerusalem and had been there waiting, as Jesus' instructed before His ascension, to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.[25] And it is here, at this point, the stage is set for a greatly anticipated transformation. Through the methods of rhetorical analysis, additional perspective can perhaps be gained in understanding what is about to take place within these segments of Scripture as the socio-rhetorical techniques unfold greater meaning within scriptural text.[26]

Significance of the Setting

To begin, looking at the setting of the disciples in Acts 2, perhaps requires understanding the verses that immediately precede it. Acts 1:15 tells of Peter among the disciples and close followers to put in context the betrayal of Judas and exhort the

---

[22] David V Day and Charles E. Lance, "Understanding the Development of Leadership Complexity Through Latent Growth Modeling," in *Leader Development for Transforming Organizations: Growing Leaders for Tomorrow*, ed. David V. Day, Stephen J. Halpin, and Stanley M. Zaccaro (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 41-69.

[23] Nelson P. Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders: The Apostles in the Ritual of Status* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 210-228.

[24] Ben Wittherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 128.

[25] Acts 1:4-8; Jn 15:26-27, 16:1-8.

[26] Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 3.

need to replace him. Examining Peter's charge through a socio-cultural texture, the significance is revealed. The prevailing social attitudes of honor and shame in the passages prior to Acts 2 reveal the social significance of the disciples' need to replace Judas with a twelfth member.[27] In other words, it was critical in that day for the shame associated with Judas' betrayal and suicide to be rectified and the honor of what Jesus' ministry represented. The future work of the disciples and success of the Jewish–Gentile ministry was dependent upon it.

Returning to Acts 2, within the first three verses, there are examples of sensory–aesthetic texture, which evokes the senses, emotions, and thoughts.[28] There is evidence of this as Luke presents the reader with the sights, sounds, imagery, and even fear or reverence as the Holy Spirit enters the room.[29] In fact, Luke is described as purposeful in using the powerful imagery and metaphor "like a blowing of a violent wind" or "tongues as of fire."[30] In addition, the author provides a sense of community in the emotion of the disciples being gathered together in one place. The upper room, as it is sometimes described, is symbolic as a place of gathering, prayer, and a place set apart from the others for purging and the ritual of transformation to take place among the disciples.[31] The power and omniscience of the Holy Spirit here combined with the formality and set apartness of the disciples seems to almost foretell or establish the significance of the event.

Furthermore, in verses 2:5 and 2:8-10, Luke describes with great detail who precisely is observing this event. In verse 5, he notes through the social texture of the text, "Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven." The distinction here is that the Jews had gathered in Jerusalem as *pious* or devout Jews, and that the significance of this term *eulabeis* or *pious* is always referred to the Jews who were permanent residents of Jerusalem—not likely Jews who had journeyed for the feast.[32]

In addition to understanding there were resident Jews present, there were others gathered in the crowd. Scripture denotes it was the day of Pentecost. Pentecost, also called the Feast of Weeks because it occurred on the fiftieth day after Passover, was among the most significant festivals where all Jews gathered in celebration.[33] In fact, through the social texture, it is noted that the population of Jerusalem at that time of Pentecost was estimated to have been as high as 180,000-200,000, with the largest crowds forming in the temple precincts.[34] Therefore, based on these observations from the text, the setting becomes even more elaborate as the disciples are now gathered together, in the most central area of Jerusalem, at the most heightened significant time of year, with the largest influx of people, in the most populated district of the city as a background for the Holy Spirit's arrival.

---

[27] Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders*.

[28] Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 30.

[29] Acts 2:1-3.

[30] John B. Polhill, *The New American Commentary: Acts* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992).

[31] Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders*, 104.

[32] Polhill, *The New American Commentary*.

[33] Wittherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 130-131.

[34] Ibid., 156.

However, the social tapestry of the text provides even more significance to this setting. In verse 4 from the text, we know that everyone in the room was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. It is conceded that a great debate remains as to the precise nature, ability, and implication of this verse for first century and modern times. However, scholar William Shepherd asserts, perhaps for the context of merely understanding more about the function of the Spirit, traditional differences of the text can be diminished:

> My goal in making use of these literary theorists is to determine how the character of the Holy Spirit functions in the narrative—how it works, what it represents, and why. I will finally be asking, in light of the close correlation between charters and people, what Luke's characterization of the Holy Spirit implies for the God of Luke's proclamation. My thesis is that in Luke–Acts, the character of the Holy Spirit signals narrative reliability, and that ultimately the Spirit's presence and action is that of God.[35]

So then, as the Scriptures note in verse 4, that as the Spirit gave utterance all those present in the house began to speak in other languages, Luke in verses 6-8 is careful to describe a list of languages being spoken. These languages are of the native countries from which the *godly* Jews had migrated. Moreover, the *godly* Jews are hearing these Galileans speak about the glorious works of God not in Aramaic, their native tongue, but in the various specific languages and dialects of the diverse crowd.[36] Among the nations and territories listed, all had extensive Jewish communities.[37] Furthermore, the Lukan phrasing is distinct, using a rare word in the phrase: "as the Spirit enabled them." The wording here, he posits, means to *utter, to declare, to speak with gravity* and is the same wording as used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for prophesying as noted in 1 Chronicles 25:1, Ezra 13:9, and Micah 5:12.

Therefore, in summarizing our understanding of the setting and the crowd through the sensory–aesthetic and social textures, it can be said that the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is intended to be a significant event with as many observers as possible to witness firsthand the power of God and the transformation of the twelve disciples to apostles, even leaders to carry forward the ministry of Jesus. Yet, through additional analysis, there may be even greater perspective gained.

Significance of the Spirit

Beyond understanding the setting and the crowd within this first section of Acts, there is also the work of the Holy Spirit and the crowd's response to His presence. The empowerment by the Holy Spirit is described as a way to signify the disciples' witness was authorized by God.[38] The demonstration of the relationship between the divine

---

[35] William H. Shepherd Jr., *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke–Acts.* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1994), 101.

[36] Acts 2: 4-13.

[37] Polhill, *The New American Commentary.*

[38] Ju Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit in Luke–Acts (*Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 228-230.

nature and human nature is the essence of sacred texture within the scriptural text.[39] For instance, in Acts 2:14-42 is perhaps one of the most compelling charges given by Peter not only explaining the presence and demonstration of the Holy Spirit but also recounting the context of the event within the prophetic words of Joel. The result of Peter's proclamation of the gospel is so provocative that the crowd was "cut to the heart" and needed to know what to do in response to his charge.[40] This again, illustrates within the text the relational dynamic of the sacred connecting with humanity.

In addition to the sacred, there are other layers that form the tapestry of the text and basis for interpretation of this passage. These dimensions of the social and cultural texture of a text reflect the very same institutions and structures of a society.[41] Two examples from Peter's discourse in 2:14-42 are the mention of the time of day and, secondly, the mention of prophesy from Joel. Nine in the morning was a customary prayer hour, the third hour of the day.[42] Traditionally, the Jews would eat in the fourth hour; therefore, to be drunk at this time was unlikely, particularly during feast season as most of the drinking would customarily take place at night.[43]

Therefore, Peter's defense or explanation of the Holy Spirit's actions may have perhaps been to assure the crowd of the legitimacy, authenticity, and power of God's presence they had just witnessed. Ironically, Peter's own boldness and self-efficacy in this discourse, as a result of the filling of the Holy Spirit, may have done more to convince and convict the crowd than the actual rhetoric of his argument itself. In other words, the disciples underwent a significant transformation to fulfill the ministry of Jesus, and by receiving the Holy Spirit, any previous deficiencies were mitigated as they prepared to continue Jesus' work.[44] Secondly, Peter's reference to Joel was to direct the crowd of Jews' attention to the fulfilling of prophesy. "Peter's conviction was in keeping with the rabbinic consensus that the Spirit no longer rested on all Israel but would return as a universal gift at the end time."[45]

Additional occurrences of the work of the Holy Spirit are found throughout the Scriptures. Examining the historical texture or intertexture of this Acts 2 passage, there are numerous connections to understanding the phenomenological experience of the Holy Spirit and the inner workings of leaders throughout Biblical history. Throughout the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, there is evidence of God's Spirit, the Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit endowing certain leaders, judges, kings, or prophets with power or special ability. This endowment is not predictable for every individual that held a leadership office, but rather, that God conferred His Spirit at will on certain individuals, and reclaimed it from others as evidenced in 1 Samuel 16:14.[46] To that end, Table 1

---

[39] Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 120-126.

[40] Wittherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 153.

[41] Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[42] Polhill, *The New American Commentary.*

[43] Ibid.

[44] Martin W. Mittelstadt, *The Spirit and Suffering in Luke–Acts* (London: T & T Clark, International, 2004), 88.

[45] Polhill, *The New American Commentary*, 109.

[46] Hur, *A Dynamic Reading of the Holy Spirit,* 43.

provides a select list of leaders who have experienced the Holy Spirit in some way in their work or ministry.

Table 1. Holy Spirit phenomena and select Biblical leaders

Scripture phenomenon	Leader	Holy Spirit
Exodus 31:3	Bezalel	I have filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, intelligence, and skill in all kinds of crafts
Numbers 11:17	The Seventy	Portion of the Spirit taken from Moses and put upon the leaders
Numbers 27:18	Joshua	Who has the Spirit in him/Full of the Spirit of Wisdom
Deuteronomy 34:9		All the Children of Israel listened to him, He led Israel
Judges 14:6	Samson	The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power
1 Samuel 11:6	Saul	The Spirit of God came upon him in power
1 Samuel 16:14		Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul
1 Samuel 16:13	David	From that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power
Isaiah 61:1	Isaiah	The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor
Matthew 3:16	Jesus	He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and

Scripture phenomenon	Leader	Holy Spirit
		lighting on him.
Luke 4:1		Full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert
Luke 4:14		Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit
Acts 2:4	Peter	And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit
Acts 4:8		Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit

Persons of various statuses were called into their roles of leadership by virtue of God's spirit filling them or enduing them with a special grace, power, or ability. "God is depicted selecting several individuals and raising them up as warriors/leaders on whom he bestows the miraculous power of leadership through his Spirit."[47] Hur continues noting the characteristics of this endowment are not permanent and that the Holy Spirit empowerment with judges was temporal, even repeated, and often given to individuals at times of national crisis.[48] This perhaps presents a glimpse into the God-ordained purposes of leadership, particularly when the Holy Spirit is imparted or employed. Therefore, the most notable demonstrations of the Spirit endowment phenomenon are (1) prophesy, (2) supernatural power or extraordinary ability, (3) impenetrable wisdom, and (3) religious/ethical sustaining power.[49]

Significance of the Early Church Ethos

Finally, in probing the third and last segment of Acts 2, the ideological texture and intertexture seem to reveal a foundational setting for the followers and the early Church. Acts 2:42-47 helps the reader further understand the Lukan view of the early Church and its practice. As it is nearly impossible for any narrator to remain objective without influence or impartiality from the world around them, their ideology will inevitably frame or prejudice the reader of a text accordingly.[50] So then, while some scholars have criticized the author's account of the Acts of the Apostles as blissful and aggrandizing, even the life of the early Christians identified in Acts 2:42-47, Acts 5:1-10 reveals from

---

[47] Ibid., 43.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 293.
[50] R. Allen Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 42-43.

the Lukan perspective the commitment required to follow Christ.[51] Furthermore, the empowering of the Holy Spirit with the disciples would not have merely been to endow them with power to witness and lead others, but rather, the coming of the Spirit was also to prepare the disciples for suffering and persecution, a part of the ministry of Jesus.[52] This view is supported by another socio-cultural observation in that the apostles were leaders and that their type of public leadership would normally carry with it a level of status similar to that of public officials who would often receive gifts in exchange for obligations and honor.[53] The portrayal in Luke 22:24-27, however, calls for a breaking of this "patron–client relationship" and calls for service to be performed without expectation of status or honor in return.[54] This principle is significant as it depicts the now apostles as entering into a leadership role of service rather than prestige. The communal depiction of the believers under their leadership in Acts 2:43-47 seems consistent with this observation.

V. DISCUSSION

This paper sought to examine the supposition that leaders are neither born, nor made *per se*, but rather that leaders emerge. Through extensive perspective and tapestry of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, there is evidence that the notion of leader emergence has a preponderance of support in Scripture. First, consider the perspective of trait theory and leaders being born. From the analysis provided in Scripture, it does not appear that God favored traits. This is evident in the consistent selection or empowering of individuals to lead who not only, in many cases, did not possess outward traits to lead, but if anything would have been the last considered to lead (e.g., Moses to address Pharaoh, yet not gifted in speech; David, to be anointed king of Israel as the youngest of his brothers and vocation of a shepherd). In fact, it was the people of Israel who pled with Samuel to give them a king so that they could be like the other nations because Samuel had grown old and had appointed his own sons as judges over them.[55] Also, it is interesting to note, even while it was God who led Samuel to anoint Saul king, that Saul happened to fulfill the traits of great man theory, as the Scriptures say, "He was an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites— a head taller than any of the others."[56] The point is that the analysis from Scripture indicates leaders do not have to possess innate abilities or skills to lead.

Secondly, from the analysis, leadership is not about the leader himself. Luke's account in the latter verses of Acts 2 provides a glimpse of an ethos intended for the early Church and thereby an implication for its leaders. The findings from within this section seem to illustrate a counter purpose for leadership than that found in the literature today. That is, leadership, as demonstrated in Scripture, is not for the leader. It

---

[51] Wittherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 153-157.

[52] Mittelstadt, *The Spirit and Suffering in Luke-Acts*, 134.

[53] Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders,* 62.

[54] Ibid.

[55] 1 Sm 8:1-9.

[56] 1 Sm 9:2.

is not an ability for individuals to possess for their own purposes and fulfillment. Rather, in Scripture we see the phenomena of the Holy Spirit nearly always equipping, empowering, and endowing individuals with power, wisdom, skills, abilities, and insight to do the work of the Father. The Holy Spirit is most often bestowed upon an emergent leader to give them extraordinary faith, boldness, or power for the good of the people, the followers, and the work of the ministry. This assertion turns the traditional thinking of leadership upside down. By altering one's perspective to see leadership as a fluid, mutable concept that can occur in one as much as another, is a divergent path from the origins of leadership studies, which seem to focus on leadership as a characteristic one owned or possessed that was favored from birth.

Finally, there is one last observation to the analysis of this text which requires only a brief review of the life of Peter as depicted as a follower, disciple of Christ, and the apostle of the Church to grasp the concept and significance of leader emergence. From the timid, unconfident, even neurotic behavior demonstrated throughout his time with Jesus—particularly at the trial prior to the crucifixion of Jesus[57]—to the emboldened leader speaking and directing in Acts 2:14-42, it is evident that the empowering of the Holy Spirit enabled Peter with gifts and abilities he did not demonstrate prior. This is consistent with Goldstein's definition of emergence provided earlier.

In conclusion, while the limitations of this analysis are the focus of a particular event in history as documented in Scripture, there are implications for leadership and the future study of leadership that can be realized. Leadership is perhaps a far more perplexing subject than current research reflects. To observe and truly understand leader emergence, additional socio-rhetorical studies of the phenomenon as well as actual experimental studies may be warranted. The findings of this research should stir others to consider the potential of this area of leadership. How many great, but undiscovered, emergent leaders have been overlooked or presumptively ignored (in research and practice) because they did not resemble society's subjective outward credentials. Perhaps the initial discussion from these findings will provoke further study of leader emergence in other contexts.

---

[57] Jn 18.

About the Author

Julianne R. Cenac currently serves as assistant vice president for Professional and Continuing Education at Regent University, where she is building a division to develop workforce and executive development programs for the region and beyond. Working internationally, she has served as a consultant to executive leaders within government, the commercial sector, and nonprofit organizations to develop their leadership, transform and restructure institutions, develop strategy, and improve organizational and employee performance. With 18 years' experience, Ms. Cenac also presents and guest lectures at international conferences on the subject of leadership. She holds a B.A. in journalism with an emphasis in Russian studies from the University of Houston and a Master of Business Administration. Currently, Ms. Cenac is in the dissertation phase toward earning a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership. Her research interests include behavioral repertoire and global leadership, leadership complexity, and emergence. Email: jcenac@regent.edu