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## JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES IN LEADERSHIP: RENEWING THE VISION

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In the Fall of 2006, the *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* launched as the “culmination of a dream” of the School of Business and Leadership at Regent University (Winston, 2006, p. 1). With the stated mission of *Christian Leadership to Change the World*, there was a need for a journal that offered a platform from which Bible and leadership scholars could present their research about what the Holy Scriptures has to say about leadership. Over the next eight years, under the leadership of Dr. Corné Bekker, the journal became a valuable asset to leadership scholars interested in the role of Scripture in the development of Christian leadership throughout the world. After a two-year hiatus, JBPL is back. In partnership with the School of Business and Leadership’s annual Research Roundtables, JBPL serves to give a voice to those scholars whose heart is to explore the Biblical principles of leadership. Thus, we have worked hard to *Renew the Vision* and bring you this edition.

Upon review of JBPL, it became clear that, from its inception, the *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* sought to better understand the complex nature of leadership from a Biblical perspective. And, at the core of this mission is the desire to better understand the leadership of the Church’s ultimate leader, Jesus Christ. JBPL began by establishing the need for a common language between theology and leadership, an “ontology of leadership” whereby “the inner, *priori* nature of the leader and define it as a new framework by which to investigate the innate needs, views of reality, internal disposition, and hidden dynamics of leaders, thereby making manifest any evidence of leadership behavior” (Ayers, 2006, p. 11). Ayers accomplished this by examining the work and nature of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11. Ayers asserted: “Jesus Christ in the flesh was all that God is, even though he appeared to be man” (p. 22). Therefore, to understand the leadership of Jesus Christ is to understand the person and nature of God: the study of leadership is not about our own history, but God’s (Ayers, 2006).

The debate regarding the leadership of Jesus runs parallel with a larger discussion of the nature of leadership as it is complex, heated, and multi-faceted. Yet,

Poon (2006) asserted that the leadership of Jesus Christ “centers on a love that flows from heaven and extends toward those He serves and leads” (p. 63). Poon concluded with a call for Christian leaders to move toward a holistic approach to leadership that abides in and models love. The initial edition of JBPL provided a general framework for this holistic approach; referencing terms such as servant leadership (Ayers, 2006; Gyertson, 2006); spiritual leadership (Poon, 2006); transformational leadership (Ayers, 2006; Poon, 2006); situational leadership (Middleton, 2006; Poon, 2006); and authentic leadership (Poon, 2006). As demonstrated here, there are many terms and constructs used to describe Jesus’ leadership. Given this, we must take the suggestion of Gary (2007): “a research agenda related to Jesus’ leadership must rigorously think across multiple theoretical traditions and on multiple levels of analysis” (p. 97). Further, Gary asserts “any leadership research agenda that aims to understand Jesus must aggressively ground itself...behind the texts and beneath the stones of Jesus’ day” (p. 98).

The theme of this issue is “Gospel Perspectives of the Leadership of Jesus”. And, continuing the spirit and message of JBPL, the call of Christian leadership is grounded in the Apostle Paul’s words to the church in Philippi in the Christological Hymn:

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:5-11, ESV).

In the Christological Hymn, the Apostle emphasized the work of Christ on the Cross and called upon believers to apply the pattern of His character and behavior to their own lives (Horne, 1960). Peterson (1985) wrote: “The stories we tell declare who we are (or at least who we think we are) and profoundly shape who we are.” (p. 178). With regards to the Christological Hymn, Peterson wrote: “we should recognize it as the story Paul chooses to tell (again) to the Philippians, because this narrative is the very heart and foundation of the church’s identity” (p. 178). Paul provided a dynamic shift in thinking: “in the local church in Philippi a battle was being fought for personal honor, for personal rights, and for personal credit. Jesus’ life, on the other hand, was characterized by self-surrender, self-renunciation, and self-sacrifice” (MacLeod, 2001, p. 326). Corné Bekker concluded a presentation in 2006 on the Christological model of Christian leadership with this admonition:

The story of Christ’s voluntary humiliation, service and obedience unto death was a dangerous story to tell in Roman Phillip...and it comes as little surprise that both Paul and Philippians church suffered persecution there (Philippians 1:30). It remains a difficult and dangerous story to tell, especially within the leadership domain, but one that offers the hope of the returning to a humane, empowering approach to leadership communicated in humility and love (p. 15).

In order to understand the nature of the Church, researchers must first understand the identity of Jesus Christ. Further, researching Christian leadership necessitates an examination of the leadership of Christ. The story of Christ and His Church continues, and the need for Christ-centered leadership remains integral to the Church's future.

While this edition contains diverse perspectives of Christian leadership, the main thrust of the articles seeks to better understand the life and leadership of Jesus Christ as described in the Gospels. Echoing the call and commitment to servanthood from which JBPL was founded, it is the hope and prayer of the editorial staff of JBPL that this edition serves the body of Christ through a rigorous and prayerful examination of the Holy Scriptures.

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### About the Author

Dr. Joshua Henson currently serves Regent University as an adjunct professor in the School of Business & Leadership lending his expertise in the fields of exegetical analysis and ecclesial leadership to the Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership program as instructor and dissertation chair in the Ecclesial Leadership concentration.

For over 11 years, Dr. Henson has also served the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) as senior pastor, regional overseer, and conference speaker. He currently serves as the lead pastor of Crossroads Church in Ocala, FL. He has published and presented exegetical research on contemporary leadership from a biblical perspective at academic and denominational conferences. He has also lectured at numerous academic institutions both in the United States and in South America. Dr. Henson serves as the editor of the *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*. Dr. Henson's research interests include biblical leadership, the Pastoral Epistles, Christian spirituality, moral and ethical development, and developing ethical organizational mission and vision.

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