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## TRANSFORMATIONAL PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

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Pastoral leadership can take on many roles and can vary from church to church, but what must remain constant is the mission of the church to make disciples of all nations. For the local church to be effective at reaching the world for Jesus Christ, making disciples of all people groups, they will need strong pastoral leadership. Leadership that is able to create and sustain true transformation. This paper presents a case for transformational pastoral leadership and attempts to define it, concluding that this form of leadership is able to both initiate and maintain the transformation that congregants must experience to fulfill their God given role in the Great Commission. Transformational pastoral leadership provides a blueprint, which pastors can use to help them lead their congregations in the commission given to them by Christ their Lord.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The need for strong pastoral leadership that is able to bring transformation to individual members and congregations as a whole has always existed since the inception of the church and will continue to be needed until Jesus comes back to receive His bride. There exists an interplay between practical and theoretical leadership skills that can be found throughout church history that must be taken into consideration by those called to lead the church of Christ (Beeley, 2009). Willimon (2016) argues that many pastors experience burnout because they do not understand their role as the leader of the church and have stepped into pastoring with the idea of simply meeting the needs of congregational members. Pastors must have a clear understanding of their biblical role as the leader of the local church and their responsibility to bring transformational change to the lives of its members (Cole, 2010).

The Barna Group (2017) found a growing number of people are leaving the local church, these individuals declare they love Jesus, but they do not love the church; they feel they have no need for the local church in their lives. Packard and Hope (2015)

found that church members often feel disconnected from their pastor and the leadership of the church, and as such, they are unwilling to allow the pastor to speak into their lives; whether it be instruction, correction, or edification they are closed off to any attempt of the pastor to influence their lives. These findings reveal a portrait of the local church that is failing to bring the transformation needed to the lives of its members, which the Scriptures call for (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22-24). Although the current research and literature helps to identify the problem facing the local church, it does little to provide a solution. This paper seeks to uncover that solution by both defining transformational pastoral leadership and presenting a case for it, while at the same time opening the door for future theoretical work in the area of transformational pastoral leadership.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pastoral leadership can be defined and expounded upon in many ways and as we examine the Scriptures and the literature on it, we are able to form a better understating and a clearer picture of it. The Apostle Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus, when speaking of the duty of a pastor, uses the word ἐπίσκοπος, which is often interpreted as bishop by many translations. The term more descriptively stated would be overseer, and, according to the Strong's Concordance, carries the meaning of "a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent" (Strong, 1987). Therefore, a pastor is an overseer of the affairs of God, a steward of the local church where he or she has been called to serve and oversee the affairs thereof (Goodrich, 2013).

Manala (2010) points to the idea that an overseer is a manager of God's house, which is the local church, and not the owner of it. Goodrich (2013) also see the pastor as an overseer of the household of God, which he understands to be the local church. The pastor as an overseer of the church is to be concerned with the entire well-being of the church and its functions (Towner, 1994). As a steward of God's affairs, the pastor manages the household of God, looking after the members of the local church (Goodrich, 2013). Smith (1998) indicates that the pastor as an overseer doesn't focus in on any one part of the church's operations, but takes a position of leadership where they are able to see all the working parts of the local church. In taking a position such as this, the pastor is able to ensure that all the parts of the church are working in harmony towards the goals and mission of the church (Smith, 1998). Through an examination of the literature we can find at least six components that go together to make up pastoral leadership (Goodrich, 2013; Smith, 1998; Towner, 1994).

### *Teaching*

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to Titus, describes the need for pastors to both know the Scriptures and to be able to teach and expound upon them to others, saying, "He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it" (New Revised Standard Version, Titus 1:9). Towner (1994) finds at least two reasons that surround Paul's instructions to Titus, which are reflective of those he also gave to Timothy concerning overseers/pastors. First, pastors need to be

committed to following the teaching of Christ, which were handed down by the Apostles (Towner, 1994). Second, pastors need to be able to confront false teachings that contradict Scriptural truths and reprove them with sound doctrine (Towner, 1994). Willimon (2016) points to the instructions of Jesus to His disciples, to teach all He had commanded them to those they had baptized, demonstrating that the Christian faith does not come naturally and that pastors must be capable of teaching those they lead. Pastors are charged with confronting others with biblical truths, and they are to be certain to do it in a manner that allows the teaching to be contextualized into the lives of those who hear the message (Osborne, 2006). As teachers, pastors serve as educators who teach their congregations how to live in the world as a counter culture, that has been charged to interact with the world for the purpose of spreading the Gospel message, yet they are not to allow the world's culture to subvert them (Willimon, 2016). Pastors must be able to correctly teach the timeless Scriptural truths to their congregants in a manner that allows them to both understand and apply those truths to their lives (Osborne, 2006).

### *Caring*

With the coming of the Protestant Reformation came a shift of sorts in the expected duty of the pastor (Willimon, 2016). Before this movement the pastor's primary function was as a conveyer of sacraments, but, the ushering in of the reformation created a need for pastors to care for the souls of individuals (Willimon, 2016). After the resurrection, as Jesus prepared to leave this earth, He left Peter with these instructions, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). John records Jesus telling this to Peter three times in a row, which caused some concern in Peter's mind, but Jesus was emphasizing the need of pastoral care for those who had chosen to follow Him (Laniak, 2006). The pastor is to care for the souls of the sheep, which includes their total being: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being (Laniak, 2006).

For a pastor to fully engage in the leadership role they have been called to, they will need to embrace the responsibility to care for those who have entrusted themselves to their leadership (LaMothe, 2012). Throughout the Old Testament and into the New, God speaks of those who are called to lead His people as shepherds. God clearly depicts the shepherd as one who is willing to sacrifice for the sheep, and has an honest concern for their well-being, as they take care of the sheep out of a pure heart that is not self-seeking (Laniak, 2006). LaMothe (2012) exerts that pastoral care extends to the needs of the individual, the families of the pastor's congregants, the communities they live in, and even society as a whole. This view of pastoral care will surely take tremendous courage and resolve on the part of the pastor to fully embrace such a leadership role (LaMothe, 2012).

### *Setting the Example*

Pastors, given the role of overseer of a local church body, must set a godly example for how their congregational members are to behave, for those members will be looking to them to lead the way by both words and deeds (Goodrich, 2013). The Apostle Paul told the church in Philippi, “Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.” (Phil. 3:17). Paul, as a leader and overseer of many churches, had to live as an example for them to follow (Barentsen, 2011). Paul’s character had to be above reproach, as the eyes of all the church were on him; he was responsible for setting a good example for them to follow (Barentsen, 2011). Pastors of the local church must likewise commit themselves to setting an example for their congregants to follow, living lives that demonstrate high levels of moral character, committed to living out the word of God (Goodrich, 2013).

James wrote, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1). James addresses the need for pastors and all who desire to lead in the church to be humble, understanding their words and actions are being judged by other, therefore they must make every effort to ensure they match up, demonstrating the good character that all of God’s leaders are to portray (DeSilva, 2004). St. Chrysostom (1979) notes that leaders of the church should be blameless in their character, excelling in their behavior beyond that of those they are in charge of leading. “For he who bears rule should be brighter than any luminary; his life should be unspotted, so that all should look up to him, and make his life the model of their own” (Chrysostom, 1979, p. 438).

### *Prayer*

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He told His followers, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come” (John 16:12). The Holy Spirit reveals the will of Jesus to His church, which the pastor has the privilege of leading (Whitacre, 1999). Because the Holy Spirit is the one who directs the follower of Christ in the path they should go, the pastor must be entuned with the Spirit of truth if they are to rightly lead their congregations, this can only be done with a commitment to prayer (Spurgeon, 2006). The pastor as a shepherd to the local church must have the realization that they are not leading and tending their own sheep, but the sheep of God, and as such they must be committed to staying in touch with the Master and leading the sheep according to His will (Lamiak, 2006).

Sanders (1994) says, “The spiritual leader should outpace the rest of the church, above all, in prayer” (p. 85). The pastor as the leader of the congregation must embrace the importance of spending time in prayer and understand the intimacy that is gained with God through that time, if they are going to lead the people of God in a way that pleases their Master (Spurgeon, 2006). Towner (1994) points out how prayer is directly linked to the evangelistic mission of the church, and how it serves to focus the church and its leaders in on the will of God for the congregation and the world surrounding them. Every local church pastor is certain to face various trials and struggles within their congregations and will need the wisdom of God to handle these

situations; it is only by seeking God's guidance in prayer that they will be able to affectively guide their congregations through these trials and struggles (Stulac, 1993).

### *Visionary*

Pastors as visionaries have the ability to inspire the congregations they lead to move towards a given goal or task (Tilstra, 2010). Visionary pastoral leaders have the means to guide their congregants through many of the troubled and unstable waters they will have to face in today's world (Puls, Ludden, & Freemyer, 2014). When pastors are able to generate a clear and concise vision, which the congregation will embrace, it provides the church with a purpose for being and a direction to follow (Nichols, 2007). Manala (2010), when speaking of the need for leadership within local churches, says, "Leading has to do with vision, the effective use of the power of persuasion with a view to sufficient motivation and commitment of functionaries" (p. 4). Pastors, who function as charismatic leaders, have the ability to move congregants to passionately embrace a shared vision that will glorify their God and expand His Kingdom upon this earth (Tilstra, 2010).

A shared vision creates the power of advancement within the minds of congregational members to achieve the goals and complete the mission the pastor is attempting to lead their local church towards (Nichols, 2007). Vision is a mighty motivating force that empowers the pastors, but, every local pastor must make certain that the vision they are casting is not self-serving, but rather serving to advance their Lord's Kingdom (Tilstra, 2010). Once congregational members have embraced a shared vision they will willingly make sacrifices to see that vision become a reality, therefore the pastor must make sure the vision they are casting is centered on the good of the church and not merely the good of the pastor (Nichols, 2007). Manala (2010) points out that pastors need to look to the guidance of the Holy Spirit when attempting to cast a vision, so that their vision will be one that is led of God and serves to benefit the church as a whole.

### *Advancing the Gospel*

As the leader and visionary of the local church the pastor is charged with perpetuating the mission of the church to advance the Gospel message throughout the world (Spurgeon, 2007). Van Engen (1991) makes this statement concerning the local church, "As congregations are built up to reach out in the mission to the world, they will become in fact what they are by faith: God's missionary people" (p. 16). The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Ephesus, speaks of the role of the pastor and other leaders in the church, when he says, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12). The pastor of the local church is to equip the congregation so that they may be able to effectively carry out the ministry of the church in building up the body of Christ (Liefeld, 1999).

The local church pastor, as one of the gifts God gave to the church, has the responsibility of making the way for the building up of the body of Christ, which lies at the heart of the Great Commission (Van Engen, 1991). Although recent research has

shown how the understanding of this mandate by Christ can vary with pastors of different denominations, the biblical responsibility of the pastor to lead the way for their congregants to fulfill the mission and spread the Gospel has not changed (Barna, 2018). The pastor of every local congregation has the responsibility of serving as a master architect that prepares for the building of God's Kingdom by properly equipping the congregation to fulfill the mission of spreading the Gospel (Liefeld, 1999; Spurgeon, 2007).

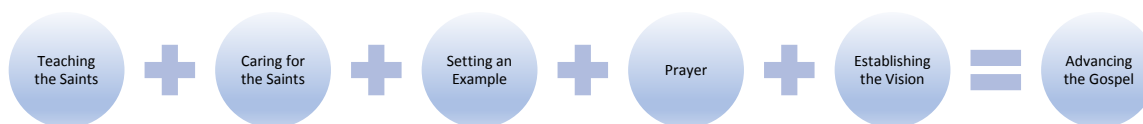


Figure 1: Pastoral Leadership

### III. THE BIG PICTURE

The first five constructs of pastoral leadership, which were covered in the literature review, work together to make the sixth construct, advancing the gospel, possible. At the heart of pastoral leadership must be the work of preparing and leading the local church in the work of the Great Commission (Exell, 1975). Jesus told His followers that “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18-19). The concept of authority in the Mediterranean world in the days of Jesus would have been quite different than most would understand it today. Authority in first century Palestine would not have been a debatable topic, nor would it have been questioned when coming from an authoritative figure, but simply accepted and followed as an absolute (DeSilva, 2004).

In the eighth chapter of Mathew's account of the Gospel, the author offers an expansion on his understanding of the concept of authority. Matthew tells the story of a Roman centurion who had a sick servant and makes a request of Jesus to heal his servant. Jesus agrees to come to the home of the centurion and heal the sick servant. To the amazement of Jesus, and surely everyone who stood by observing, the centurion replies to Jesus saying, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, go, and he goes, and to another, come, and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and the slave does it” (Matt. 8:7-9). Here, perhaps better than anywhere else in the New Testament, is the concept of authority in the Roman world depicted, which Jesus and His disciples lived both in and under. The Centurion, being a man under the authority of Rome, is also backed by the authority of Rome, and when he gives an order it is carried through without question or hesitation, simply because this authority is recognized by his soldiers and slaves (Keener, 1997).

Those who spoke with authority, as the Roman centurion did, were not questioned, but obeyed (DeSilva, 2004). When Jesus spoke His final words to His followers before His ascension, telling them He has all authority and therefore they are to go and make disciples of all nations, He is speaking to them as a Master with even

greater authority than the Roman centurion (Clark, 1977). In recording Jesus saying, He has been given all authority, Matthew is not only proclaiming the deity of Jesus, but His right to command His servants and His servants' obligation to follow the commands of their Master (Keener, 1997). The authority Jesus speaks with when He gives the Great Commission to His followers, is not authority that can be challenged or questioned, it is absolute in both heaven and on earth, and is to be revered as such (Van Engen, 1991).

Roman slaves understood this obligation to follow such authority without question. They knew the authority their master held, and the authority that was over him that would not permit his words to fail (Keener, 1997). When the master said go, they went, and when the master said do, they did, and again, it was done without question or hesitation. This concept of authority is sadly missing, for the most part, in the twenty first century Church. The word go spoken by the Roman centurion, in Matthew's account of the Gospel, provoked the complete obedience of his servant as a literal command that was given by their master (Exell, 1975). The word go, which was spoken by Jesus to His followers in the first century, was a command that provoked His servants to move with unquestionable obedience, to what they perceived as a literal command (Clark, 1977). The Church of the twenty first century has turned the command to go and make disciple of all nations into a request, or choice, that must be carefully considered. The Great Commission has become a special calling for an elite few, instead of a command given by a Master to all His servants; a literal command that was to be obeyed without hesitation or reserve (Thomas, 2000). Hudson Taylor, who spent 51 years as a missionary in China, describes the command to go, which was given by our Lord as well as anyone has, saying, "The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed" (Culpepper, 2011, p. 138). This is exactly how the first disciples who heard Jesus speak His final words would have understood the commission He was giving them; it was a command to be followed, not an option to be considered. For congregants within the local church of twenty-first century to embrace such an attitude they'll need to undergo a powerful transformation.

#### IV. TRANSFORMATION

The Apostle Paul writes to the church in Rome telling them:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:1-2, ESV).

Paul wanted the church to offer themselves to the service of Christ without reservation, but to do this they would need a transformed life, which could only be brought on by a renewed mind (Osborne, 2004). This process of renewal, which enables the follower of Christ to live a transformed life, is an ongoing re-programming process where the mind is made more like that of Christ and less like that of the world (Osborne, 2004).

Research performed by the Barna Group (2018) reveals that just over half of all church goers have never heard of the Great Commission, and that of all church goers

surveyed only 17% reported understanding what the Great Commission was all about, for many that had heard of it had no idea what it even meant. Their research also revealed that even when Scriptural reference was given to define the Great Commission that many associated it with the idea of social justice and charity, rather than the idea of spreading the Gospel message and making disciples of all nations (Barna, 2018). Failure to both know and understand the Commission of Christ, will hinder members of the local church from offering themselves as a living sacrifice to Christ to aid in the mission of making disciples of all nations (Thomas, 2010).

Did Paul truly expect all believers to present their lives as a sacrifice for the furtherance of the Gospel message? Is this truly what the Great Commission is all about? The answer to both of these questions can be found in Paul's writings. First, Paul is clear that all he does is for the furtherance of the Gospel when he plainly says, "I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:33). Paul had made the salvation of those who have yet to experience the saving grace of Jesus Christ his priority, he had stepped beyond his own culture and people to touch the lives of others for the sake of the Gospel (Johnson, 2004). Then, immediately following his words at the end of chapter ten, he tells the church, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Here, Paul admonishes the church in Corinth to imitate his behavior, which is merely a mirror image of Christ, in living a life of humility, self-denial, giving of oneself, and in love, taking up the interest of others, so that they may receive the life-giving message of the Gospel (Johnson, 2004). The church in Corinth, as every local church today, was to exist and operate for the sake of those outside its membership; the Great Commission is not an activity the local church partakes in, but the reason for its existence (Liubinskas, 2013). For members of the local church to join together and live in a manner that seeks the salvation of the lost in all that is done, the church will need a pastor who is transformational in nature (Carter, 2009).

## V. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership can be best noted for its ability to bring transformation (Yukl, 2013). Transformational leadership is comprised of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2013). The transformational leader has the ability to motivate followers to go beyond what they thought they could do, to raise their expectations and the effort they are willing to exert (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders are able to raise the awareness of their subordinates in a manner that helps to transform their conscious perception of certain ideas (Jung & Sosik, 2002). The charismatic nature of a transformational leader touches followers on an emotional level causing followers to look to them as role models following the example put forth by their leader (Choi, 2006). Transformational leaders are able to move followers to embrace the goals and values of their organization, they enable them to see a bigger picture that transcends their own personal needs (Yukl, 2013). They are able to birth a transformation within their followers that causes them to seek to achieve self-actualization; a place where they feel their lives are making a difference (Bass, 1985). Two powerful ways that transformational leaders are able to influence the behavior of subordinates and the direction an organization flows are by initiating cultural change



within the organization they lead and by strengthening the commitment level of employees (Kim, 2014; Mahalinga & Suar, 2012).

Transformational leaders are not only able to bring transformation to individual followers, but also to the culture of the organizations they lead (Abbasi & Zamani, 2013; Mahalinga & Suar, 2012). They are able to shift the values and perception of an organization, bringing lasting change that significantly effects the way a company operates (Abbasi & Zamani, 2013; Mahalinga & Suar, 2012). The ability of a transformational leader to bring about cultural change is a powerful aspect of leadership, for organizations can strategize and plan with great precision, but, if the culture of the organization is contrary to the strategies and plans that have been designed, they are certain to fail (Groysberg, Lee, Price, & Cheng, 2018). Transformational leaders are game-changers, in that they can initiate and propagate the cultural change needed to implement new strategies and new ideas (Northouse, 2013).

Transformational leaders have a direct impact on the commitment level of employees to the organization. Kim (2014) found there was a direct relationship between transformational leadership and the commitment level of employees. Research has shown transformational leaders, in their ability to bring cultural change, were also able to positively affect the level of commitment subordinates demonstrated towards the organization they were employed at (Kim, 2014). Transformational leaders are able to move followers to a place where their needs and desires are literally transformed in a manner that brings them in-line with the mission and goals of the organization; they give them a bigger of vision to embrace in life (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Transformational leaders show individual concern for those they are charged with leading, which increases the level of influence they have over subordinates (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The combination of concern for the individual and the ability to move employees needs to a place of self-actualization, makes transformational leaders a powerful asset for originations (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The ability to bring transformation to individuals and organizations as a whole, is a powerful leadership trait for the local pastor to consider, as they approach the manner in which they choose to lead their local congregations.

## VI. TRANSFORMATIONAL PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

At the heart of all pastoral leadership must be the drive to lead the congregation into the work of the Great Commission. Every component of pastoral leadership must be aimed at preparing and transforming congregational members into fully functional mature followers of Jesus Christ, so that they may fulfill their role in the Great Commission (Liubinskas, 2013). Pastors must care for the needs of their congregants in a manner that enables them to fulfill their God given destiny. The redeemed men and women of the church have a purpose that goes beyond merely having good lives and coming to church. They are redeemed and joined to a local church, which helps them to grow, mature, and over-come various challenges, so that they may become part of the local church's efforts to fulfill the commission of Christ (Metcalf, 2015). This is implying that the local church and its pastor must see itself as more than a gathering place that simply meets the needs of its members, as William Booth said, "We are not sent to minister to a congregation and be content if we keep things going. We are sent

to make war and to stop short of nothing but the subjugation of the world to the sway of the Lord Jesus” (Yaxley & Vanderwal, 2003, p. 145).

### *Idealized Influence*

Idealized influence speaks to the ability of the pastor to positively and purposely affect the behavior of their congregants by demonstrating a high level of integrity in their own behavior. It's a proclamation of the pastor's capability to influence the direction the local church takes. It is the charisma factor the pastor holds that draws members to them, which is fueled by respect congregants have for their demonstrated character (Fryar, 2007). Unfortunately, nearly two-thirds of all pastors in the United States feel as though they have little influence over the way their congregants believe and behave, which is reflective of the findings that reveal only one out of five U.S. adults believe that local pastors exert any kind of influence within their communities (Barna, 2017).

On the other hand, Rowold (2008) conducted a study to see the difference in pastors who practice transformational leadership verses those who practice transactional leadership, he found that pastors practicing transformational leadership exerted strong influence over their congregational members. A transactional pastor is able to discern the needs of their congregational members and then perform their leadership role in a manner that meets those needs; leadership done in this manner is simply a transaction of the expressed needs of followers and the pastor leading in a manner that meets those needs (Willimon, 2016). Transformational pastors are not trapped by the expectations of their follower, but are able to lift them to a higher level of purpose, a level at which they are able to become a productive part of the local churches efforts to fulfill the commission of Christ (Rowold, 2008; Willimon, 2016). If pastors are going to influence their congregants in a manner that helps them to become productive members in the work of their Lord's commission, they'll need to be transformational in their leadership.

James, the brother of our Lord, showed himself to be a leader who was able to exercise influence over those who followed him in a manner that allowed for the commission of Christ to be advanced by the church at large. Confronted with the debate over whether or not the new Gentile believers should be made to keep the Law of Moses, James makes the determination that they should not (Luke 15:19). The idealized influence that James exerted in his leadership can clearly be seen in the response of the elders, apostles, and the entire church's willingness to follow and come into agreement with his determination (Luke 15:22).

### *Inspirational Motivation*

Inspirational motivation can be seen in is the willingness of church members to follow the pastor into new and uncharted waters. It is the ability of the pastor to inspire new desires in those they are leading. Inspirational motivation is often displayed in the language a pastor uses to communicate with their followers, both the words spoken, and by the emotional content which they are relayed (Choi, 2006). Pastors who are transformational in their leadership are able to inspire their followers to embrace a vision that is much bigger than themselves; one that has the ability to bring meaning to their

lives as individual followers of Christ, and, one that has the potential to impact those around them for eternity (Fryar, 2007).

The power of a leader to inspire and motivate their followers to embrace a higher vision can clearly be seen in the last address of Jesus to His followers (Bruce, 1976). Jesus had instructed His followers to go out and make disciples of all nations, but the disciples were curious about the restoration of the nation of Israel. Jesus looks to focus their affection on a higher vision, one that will reach beyond the nation of Israel into the entire world. Jesus tells them, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8). Jesus inspires His followers with a promise of power to complete the task He has given them, for He is not only giving them a command to follow, but He is also imparting a grander vision than the disciple currently held (Bruce, 1976). The language and actions of Jesus serve as a source of motivation and inspiration for His disciples, whom Luke plainly portrays as having embraced His vision throughout the Book of Acts.

### *Intellectual Stimulation*

Intellectual stimulation speaks of the pastor's ability and willingness to challenge the commonly held thoughts of congregational members; specifically, thoughts that are counterproductive to the mission of the church. Pastors who are intellectually stimulating, encourage creative thinking and are supportive of ideas that stretch traditional approaches to fulfilling the Great Commission (Tollefson, 1987). They take a teaching approach in correcting the behavior of congregants, so that they may understand how their actions are influencing the world around them and what affect they are having on the local church's work to fulfill the Great Commission (Tollefson, 1987).

This component of intellectual stimulation can be seen in the way the Apostle Paul confronts the church in Corinth. The believers in Corinth had received the gift of the Holy Spirit and were actively engaging in those gifts throughout their services. Paul is concerned that their services have no apparent order, and that the use of the gifts of tongues without any structure or order will be a hindrance to fulfilling their mission to win the lost of the city to Christ (Godet, 1977). Paul tells them:

If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reprov'd by all and called to account by all. After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed, that person will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, "God is really among you" (1 Cor. 14:23-25, ESV).

Paul's concern is clearly for those outside the body of Christ, and he desires for the Corinthians to be productive in the commission of their Lord, therefore he reasons with them (Johnson, 2004). Paul engages the church through intellectual stimulation, as he attempts to reason with them, helping them to understand how their current church environment could be counterproductive to the church's mandate to spread the Gospel

message (Godet, 1977). All the Apostle Paul engaged in was for the furtherance of the Gospel message; a picture he clearly painted for the church in Corinth. Paul told them, "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor. 9:23). By appealing to the church intellectually, the apostle hopes to stimulate their thinking in a manner which bring their actions in-line with his own.

### *Individualized Consideration*

Individual consideration speaks to the pastor's ability to hear and listen to the concern of congregational members; to consider the individual needs of their followers, as they demonstrate in both word and deed concern for those needs (Packard & Hope, 2015). The pastor acts as both counselor and coach in helping congregants with their needs, so that they may reach a level of self-actualization, where they can fulfill their God given call (Metcalf, 2015). This component of transformational leadership may be one that many local pastors fail to perceive the significance of in their labors to advance the church in its mission. In a study aimed at understanding the top traits of a good pastor, Barna (2017) reported that 48% of adults thought that the number one trait that a pastor needed to be successful was a love for people and a desire to help them fulfill their needs. When pastors were asked the same question only 30% of them felt the idea of loving people and helping them to fulfill their needs was the most important trait a pastor could possess (Barna, 2017). This gap in perception could hinder local pastors from being effective in their ability to bring lasting transformation to the lives of their congregants, which will directly affect their ability to fulfill their God given role in the commission Jesus gave to His followers.

The practicality and positive affect of local pastors taking individualized consideration for their congregational members can be testified to by Luke's account of a man named Joseph. Joseph is the biblical embodiment of a leader who is able to bring the best out of others, meeting them where they are and helping to bridge the gap from their God given potential and their current life circumstances (Larkin, 1995). Joseph was so adapt at taking consideration for the needs of others and heling them to reach the fullness of their potential that the apostles in Jerusalem nickname him Barnabas, which Luke tells us means son of encouragement (Acts 4:36). Barnabas demonstrates the ability of individualized consideration, to help transform the lives of those who have chosen to follow Christ, when he takes the newly converted Saul into his care. Saul was called by Jesus to bear witness of the Gospel, but everyone in the church feared him and did not believe his conversion was true (Acts 9:26). Barnabas takes Saul, who would eventually be referred to as Paul, and introduces him to the apostles in Jerusalem, testifying to the validity of his conversion (Acts 9:27). Barnabas, through the individualized consideration he showed to Saul, effectively opened the door for him to begin the ministry he had been called to do.

Table 1

*Transformational Pastoral Leadership*

Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration
Positively influences member behavior	Speaks life giving words	Challenges conventional thinking	Hears and listens to individual members
Embodies the vision	Inspires bigger possibilities and desires	Encourages creativity	Shows concern for individual congregant needs
Sets the standard for others to follow	Shows positive emotional content	Supports innovative ideas	Counsels and coaches
Demonstrates godly character	Encourages new first steps	Teaches when correcting	Expresses unconditional love for individual members

## VII. DISCUSSION

Jesus prayed for His followers, saying:

I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world (John 17:15-17, ESV).

Looking at this prayer, some conclusions can be reached about the will of our Lord. Jesus wanted His followers in the world, for if they were taken out of the world, they could not complete the commission He was giving them. Yet, at the same time, He knew if they behaved like the world, they were living in they would be unproductive in the commission. The followers of Christ then, and now, needed to be in the world, but they would not be able to behave as the world they were in. This kind of living would require a transformation of both thought and behavior, which is exactly what transpired in the lives of the first Christ followers.

If local churches are going to fulfill the mandate of Christ to make disciples of all nations, they will need pastoral leadership that is able to bring transformation to its members. New converts will continue to act and behave as the world system they live in if they are not led by a leader who is able to bring transformation to their lives. Churches, filled with new believers who have not had a transformation in thought and behavior, will think and behave the same as the world it has been commissioned to make disciples of, which will greatly hinder its ability to fulfill the mandate of Christ. The

local church that does not have a transformational pastor will never reach the height of their potential. Transformational pastoral leadership should serve as a vehicle to help local congregations reach the fullest of their God given potential in the commission of Christ.

### VIII. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

What does transformational pastoral leadership look like, and, how can it be applied to help the local church to carry out the commission of Christ? Listed below, and expounded upon, are seven practical applications that pastors can apply to become transformational in their leadership.

1. First, it looks like pastors setting an example of godly character and being in the midst of the people, refusing to isolate or separate themselves from the people they lead, but rather allowing their presence to minister to congregational members and to the community they are in (Puls et al., 2014). The ministry of presence can be a powerful tool for the local pastor to use in allowing their influence to be felt, which requires pastors to be in the midst of the people.
2. Second, it looks like pastors preaching the vision of the church from the pulpit, motivating their congregants to embrace a higher and grander purpose for their lives; clearly communicating the vision in a manner that members can plainly articulate (Nichols, 2007). Then, giving them opportunities to participate in the vision of the church, according to their giftings. This means members of the local church should be given a gifting-test to see where they are best suited to serve in the efforts of the local church to fulfill the commission of Christ. Congregational members who serve in their area of gifting will feel more inspired and motivated to carry out the mission and vision of the church, as the congregation functions as one body with many parts (Liubinskas, 2013).
3. Third, it looks like pastors challenging and evaluating old systems and programs to see if they are still beneficial to the church's efforts to fulfill the Great Commission (Willimon, 2016). Local pastors can stimulate the intellect of their members by getting them involved in answering the tough questions about the functionality of long held systems and programs within the church. Pastors can use focus groups, certain discipleships groups, or many forms of collaborative groups to help evaluate the functionality of the current church systems (Dougherty & Whitehead, 2011). This will help to create a sense of ownership amongst congregational members for the mission of the church.
4. Fourth, it looks like pastors establishing a system that can provide for the needs and growth of each individual congregant. Small groups provide a system of care and consideration for the needs of congregational members, which helps to ensure that no individual is overlooked or neglected. Through the use of small groups local pastors can create a wave of consideration for each member of the congregation, as they minister to the needs of each group leader, and in turn these small group leaders can minister to the needs of each person in their group (Boren & Egli, 2014). Understanding that Jesus only took into continuous consideration the needs of twelve men, it would be a bit foolish for local pastors to attempt and minister to the needs of hundreds; a system, such as small groups, must be established to care for the individual needs of each member.

5. Fifth, it looks like pastors making the most of social media to speak life giving words of encouragement into their congregational members. Lim (2017) in a study aimed at discovering the most productive ways for churches to use Facebook, found that messages that offered encouragement received significantly more interaction than any others. Yet, regardless of this fact churches were found to use Facebook to offer encouragement to its members only 3% of the time (Lim, 2017). Pastor can use social media outlets, such as Facebook, to speak words of encouragement and affirmation to their members. Expressed gratitude through words of encouragement and affirmation by pastors is a great way for them to build strong relationships between themselves and their members, which will increase member's loyal-engagement to the mission of the church (Lambert et al., 2010). With the time constraints that many pastors face, making the most of social media to offer encouragement and affirmation just makes sense.
6. Sixth, it looks like pastors creating an atmosphere where the creativity of their staff and congregational members is able to thrive. One way this can be done is by designating a yearly planning time where the pastor gathers with their staff members and lay leaders within the congregation (Johnston, 2014). During this time the pastor would lead the group in setting goals for the church and devising a plan to reach those goals. Team members would be able to use their God given creativity in this setting to help the local church find innovative methods for reaching the lost and making disciples (Johnston, 2014). Pastors could successfully use this technique to intellectually stimulate their staff and congregational members to help them to consider new possibilities and reach for new heights.
7. Seventh, it looks like pastors creating opportunities for congregational members to step beyond their comfort zones into new and challenging experiences. This could be done through short term mission trips, which would last approximately two weeks. For these trips to be truly transformational in nature they would need to be centered upon the commission Jesus gave to His church, making them much more than simply a tourist group participating in a religious exercise to build camaraderie (Priest, Wilson, & Johnson, 2010). Many short terms missions are focused on providing a tourist type experience that exposes participants to economically disadvantaged people; they disregard the mandate of the Great Commission and provide no long-term transformation for participants (Freidus & Caro, 2018). Short term mission trips should help individual followers of Christ to see the world through a lens that is focused by the *hand of Great Commission*, and at the same time empowers participants to engage the unreached with the Gospel message, bring transformation to the communities and nations they travel to. A new perspective on the world and the mission of the church can help to promote a renewed mindset, which could promote lasting transformation within congregational members.

Table 2

*Connection of transformational leadership components with practical applications*

	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individual Consideration
Being with the people	X	X		
Preach the vision	X	X	X	
Collaborate – evaluation groups	X		X	
Small groups		X		X
Social media	X	X		X
Yearly planning times	X	X	X	
Short term missions	X	X	X	X

## IX. CONCLUSION

Strong transformational pastoral leadership is a necessary foundational element for a church to thrive and be successful in the mission its Lord has called it to. Local pastors must be able to help their congregational members travel down the path of transformation their Lord has called them to walk. The Apostle Paul reminded the believers in Ephesus that God had created them anew for a distinct purpose, saying, “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life” (Eph. 2:10). Pastors are to play a leading role in helping their congregants to fulfill the purpose for which Christ has redeemed them, which can be done through strong and practical transformational pastoral leadership. Transformational pastoral leadership has many practical applications, and through these applications local pastors can find tools to help them bring transformation to their congregational members, so that they may serve as a great force on the earth to advance the Kingdom of their God.



### About the Author

Tim Gregory serves as the senior pastor of Family Worship Center. He has served in a pastoral role for 20 years; the last 15 of those years as a senior pastor. Over the past 17 years he has led several short-term mission teams to countries such as: Russia, Tanzania, Niger, Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

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