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ARTICLES

BOOK REVIEWS

RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: LEARNING LEADERSHIP FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORS

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During the 2010–11 academic year, nearly seventeen percent of students attending a member institution of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) were not citizens of the United States. The 2010 Standards of Accreditation from the same organization are replete with expectations that faculty, curricula and other institutional resources build an awareness of globalization. Most of these ATS schools have cross-cultural requirements that include experiences, many of them international, to broaden the student's worldview, and theological education faculties are being called to a richer understanding of the world's cultures. That is why the theme for the Spring 2011 meeting of the Academy of Religious Leadership emerged as "Religious Leadership in Global Perspective."

Religious leaders have navigated boundary crossings for centuries, sometimes in peaceful mission, sometimes in conquest. Until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the crossings often mixed religion and politics as dominant cultures stepped into new, often less powerful, regions. The modern mission movements, beginning in late 1800s, broadened theological perspectives and intensified the need for listening to the diverse cultural expressions of faith around the world. These movements included the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference, the International Missions Council and eventually the World Council of Churches.

In the international students we welcome on American campuses today, we witness the beauty of

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God's activity in new accents of faithfulness. From them we learn the depth of love required for *accompaniment* ("walking with the poor" – Mexican student), the taming of *kiasu* ("fear of failure" – Singporean student) through the gift of faith, the Christian alternative to *caudillo* ("authoritarian power" – Ecuadoran student) and the spiritual implications of *Ubuntu* ("connectedness, community" – African student). As we enter into generative relationships with saints from beyond our own regions, our own faith, and social identity expand.

In the following pages you will find four perspectives on learning from our international neighbors. Dr. Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi of Southern Methodist University describes an odyssey of traversing frontiers with his article "What Does it Take to Learn Leadership Across Cultural and Religious Boundaries?: Perspectives, Observations, and Suggestions from a Cross-cultural Location." Since crossing boundaries results in encounters of difference, the author advocates the use of testimonies, "biographical engagement in the complex dynamics of communities seeking sustainability, dignity of life, and the basic needs for a simple but fruitful living." These shared stories help to care for the power differentials experienced between cultures.

Professor Cardoza-Orlandi uses three case studies to illustrate the spanning of margins. The first highlights the contextualization of the Gospel in the Disciples of Christ in Puerto Rico in the first half of the twentieth century. The second captures his experience of the work of CRREDA at the Mexico-Arizona border as they offer life-saving water stations and rehabilitation to migrants. The third case depicts "the return effect" – "an ambiguous yet strong state of being and reflection generated by an encounter with something new and unexpected, yet embodied in and perceived as something known, that challenges who we are, the way we live, and the order of our worldview and existence" – through the eyes of one of his students.

Drs. Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martínez provide insights from international scholars, as well as their own wisdom, in "A Practical Theology of Leadership with International Voices." Using Freire and selected writers, many of them outside the United States, the authors present a model of practical theology that blends discernment and leadership in a rhythm of praxis, analysis, reflection, story, and reshaping. They illustrate each stage of the model to make the theory more accessible for local congregations.

"The framework of missional ecclesiology creates a nexus that impacts the relationship of a church in context, leaders with participants, and the whole church with the Trinity." This is particularly relevant for ministry in a land like North America with porous borders. Martinez reminds us that immigrants to the United States are more than "objects of mission…[Their] stories…can help us understand that they are often subjects in mission, particularly to their countries of origin." Hearing each other's stories as joint givers and receivers of mission can assist the leader in revising praxis to better serve our ministry contexts.

Dr. Bryan Sims and the Rev. J. Paulo Lopes offer a functional cross-cultural model for leadership development in their article "Spiritual Leadership and Transformational Change Across Cultures: The SLI Leadership Incubator." Applying Heifetz's adaptive leadership literature to congregational renewal in the United States and Brazil, they suggest a process for new learning that re-examines existing values and assumptions called the SLI Leadership Incubator. The driving principles for the incubator experience are (1) strengthen spiritual leaders in a covenant community, (2) create space for transformation of individuals and teams in the process, and (3) develop fruit-bearing systems and processes.

Sims and Lopes describe an incubator experience in West Virginia and how the incubator model will be adapted for use in Brazil. The West Virginian incubator focused on issues such as returning to apostolic modes of

ministry that reach beyond the church facility. It also sought to establish a sense of *communitas*, or shared ordeal, that binds individuals to the faith community and orients the community outward to the needs of the world. In contrast, the Brazilian context is seeing rapid congregational growth and will require a shift in assumptions; an incubator implemented in the United States assumes a declining church, but the Brazilian congregation is likely to be vibrant and multiplying outreach. Covenants are more informal in that country, and trust building will require a contextualized approach.

The Rev. Kyle W. Herron's "Embracing the 'Other': Toward an Ethic of Gospel Neighborliness" invites the reader to bridge the fears that separate people from different cultures, ethnicities, traditions and orientations. For too long the Christian faith community has allowed differences to divide. It has failed to speak the Gospel of neighbor to destructive ideologies that "equate Muslims with terrorism, immigrants with illegality and crime and LGBT persons with moral and sexual deviancy." This failure has impacted cultures within and beyond the Church.

Herron bids us to adopt "a Christology that generously embraces our enemies, strangers and sinners." All people are created in God's image and as the other is loved, God is loved; the two acts are interlinked. Christian leaders must implement acts of peace building that welcome and advocate for the others in society as an expression of biblical "neighborliness." By doing so, faith communities around the world will rise to the challenge of Jesus' Good Samaritan parable.

As you hear the experiences of these authors, reconnect with your own story. Join us in the journey of broadening worldviews as we learn from each other. In this era of complexity and instant communication, may the deepening relationships with our international neighbors transform each of us and the people we serve.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO LEARN LEADERSHIP ACROSS CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES? PERSPECTIVES, OBSERVATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FROM A CROSS-CULTURAL LOCATION

CARLOS F. CARDOZA-ORLANDI

Abstract Based on one historical and two contemporary case studies, this article (1) provides concrete examples of the generative theological and missiological proposals emerging from marginalized groups – those considered deficient Christians and deficient human beings; (2) suggests a theoretical framework to help reflect and learn from cross-cultural experiences, particularly from the margins; and (3) names practices which can either facilitate or repress change in Christian communities' cross-cultural experiences. For Christian leaders, the article questions our implicit assumptions about cross-cultural engagements and interplay, and it challenges our current structures of control when faced with uncomfortable change.

Introduction and Methodology

What does it take to learn leadership across cultural and religious boundaries? This is a difficult question because it could lead us to assume that all learning across cultures and religions has the same dynamics. From my scholarly perspective, a universal, non-conflicting methodology and pedagogy of cross-cultural and cross-religious learning is thin and deceitful. Certainly it is a misguided and naïve assumption. I am arguing, however, that all cross-cultural encounters are asymmetrical: we never meet, engage and interact with people of other cultures and religions in the same plane of reference.

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Although the circumstances that bring people together in cross-cultural and cross-religious encounters and dynamics create a particular space of shared affinities and/or interests, people from different cultures and religions never meet in the same plane of reference. Difference – whether in terms of class, gender, age, sexual orientation, or ethnicity – is perhaps the common denominator in cross-cultural and cross-religious encounters and dynamics. Yet there is a strong inclination to dismiss those differences and asymmetry (usually when face to face with our cross-cultural and cross-religious friends) and quickly emphasize our unity and commonality for the sake of good relationships, and we frequently evade what could potentially be troubling and upsetting. Repeatedly, we dismiss power dynamics – the binomial of power and context which shapes and changes our encounters and interactions. The asymmetrical and contextual realities of cross-cultural and cross-religious encounters are *real*, yet are minimized at best and ignored at worst.

In order to suggest an answer to the question I posed above, let me offer some methodological grounding for cross-cultural and cross-religious encounters, dynamics, and learnings. This methodological grounding is not a theoretical structure but more akin to an open mathematical matrix where other variables can be included. As they are included, the matrix changes. I am giving you, the reader, my matrix so that it may help you in adding to/changing/reconfiguring your own matrix of engaging with and reflecting on cross-cultural and cross-religious dynamics.

My method is grounded in biography – or as my Pentecostal sisters and brothers might say, *testimonio*. This essay is about testimonies grounded in the experience of the people, particularly people who are at the margins. My method integrates leadership practices and critical reflection in and through *testimony*[1] – biographical

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[1] The distinguished Roman Catholic Asian theologian Peter Phan uses the term *myth* to describe the agency of common people. By using the term he

engagement in the complex dynamics of communities seeking sustainability, dignity of life and basic needs for simple but fruitful living. This method, as you will see, is also participatory – I wrestle to immerse myself in the lives of others on their own terms.[2] My method of theological and academic reflection seeks an embodied, historical and grassroots grounding. I strive for academic work and theological reflection that is understood by the layperson. Sometimes I achieve it; other times I need to go back to the drawing board. But I will not give up what I have understood to be my vocation as a world Christianity and mission studies scholar.

I will not deny that at times I have thought that my methodological insights were misunderstandings rather than ideas emerging from serious reflection. Then one of my colleagues shared with me bell hooks' reflections on theory and practice:

> When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-discovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. Indeed, what such experiences makes more evident is the bond between the two—that ultimately reciprocal process wherein one enables the other.[3]

She strongly persuaded me to understand that "[A]ny theory that cannot be shared in everyday conversation cannot be used to educate the public."[4] I embrace this concept and seek to be the kind of scholar and teacher who grounds mission studies theory – and in today's case,

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leaves open the source of the *myth*—it comes from all religions and cosmologies. I prefer to use *testimony* since because it is closer to my own charismatic *evangélico* tradition.

[2] I have done this in the United States and in predominantly Anglo-American institutions for the last seventeen years of my journey as a theological educator. However, my location within these institutions has provided for multiple cross-cultural and cross-religious experiences in the United States and in other parts of the world.

[3] bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 1994), 61.

[4] hooks, 69.

leadership inquiry and theory – in everyday life experiences and conversations, including my own.

Ann Fadiman suggests the following location in order to "see" better, to understand deeply:

> I have always felt that the action most worth watching is not at the center of things but where edges meet. I like shorelines, weather fronts, international borders. There are interesting fictions and incongruities in these places, and often, if you stand at the point of tangency, you can see both sides better than if you were in the middle of either one.[5]

For me, Fadiman's point is not just an observation but a *location requirement* for learnings in cross-cultural and cross-religious encounters and dynamics. A claimed objective and properly distanced location for engagement is a deceitful starting point because it denies our own biography, our own *testimonio*.

Our third and final point of departure is based on and inspired by Phil Wickeri's work on "Mission from the Margins," the title of his inaugural address at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Wickeri, who was the Flora Lamson Hewlett Professor of Evangelism and Mission at SFTS and currently is a theological advisor for the Anglican Church in China, has argued that the vitality in missional theologies and practices comes from people in the margins. He pushes for Christians at the old, declining centers to rediscover the Gospel and its missional character by dwelling and living in solidarity with mission agents at the margins. In other words, he not only recognizes the demographic transformation of the Christian religion but advocates life-giving, depth-of-faith mission practices and theologies from the margins. He invites Christians from the West to have open eyes, ears and hearts so that they might receive lessons and fresh reflections on mission.

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[5] Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997), vii.

The history of the Christian Movement is, in many ways, a history of cross-cultural encounters. The vitality of the Christian faith is discovered in the theological and ecclesial challenges that result from the serial (the ebb and flow) and non-replicating process of the transmission and reception of the Christian religion.[6] This process is characterized by the insertion of the Gospel in a multi-layered complex – cultural, economic, political, religious, and social. In this spatial complex of cross-cultural asymmetrical power interactions, different historical agents interact in a particular time and context. In other words, the faith's vitality is found in the interplay between those who cross boundaries – language exchange and translations, idiomatic expressions, gender and sexual orientation differences, class tensions, etc. – and in the asymmetric, polycentric power dynamics between cultures. It is a paradox in which the Christian religion finds its vitality and – in uncertain, often effervescent and puzzling cross-cultural and cross-religious experiences, a unique opportunity for exciting learning experiences. The Christian religion finds its vitality—and the unique opportunity to have some of the most exciting learning experiences—in typically uncertain and often effervescent and puzzling cross-cultural and cross-religious experiences

Below I will discuss three different cross-cultural case studies. The first case study is historical, belonging to the first half of the twentieth century; the other two are contemporary. I want to provide the reader with my *testimonio* of engagement with the historical material and the people in the contemporary scenarios. I share with the reader my own lessons learned from these case studies. I give the reader my matrix: my description of

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[6] For literature on this topic please see Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002); Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and *Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact on Culture*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, revised 2009); Dana Roberts, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Chichester, U.K: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

the factors that interacted with each other, and my own conclusions. But I also invite the reader to reconfigure my matrix and create her own matrix of cross-cultural encounters, particularly when it comes to the last two case studies.

First Case Study: What can we learn from a Puerto Rican *Evangélica* Poor Peasant Mulatto Woman?

In his Christian missionary imagination – *his* understandings of who the missionized are, *his* understanding of the Gospel and *his* expectations of what the Gospel will be for the missionized – George Milton Fowles, a mainline missionary to the Caribbean, portrays his values and prejudices. In his book *Down in Puerto Rico* (1910), part of the Series of Studies on Missions of the Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, Fowles gives North American youth, Protestant churches and mission organizations information about different missionary projects in the region, and promotes their contribution of economic and human resources.[7]

Anthropologically, Fowles moves to describe the Puerto Rican person in a rational attempt to understand and legitimize the missionary activity. Legitimizing the missionary activity ultimately means stating an ontological difference between the missionized – the

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[7] My work on Milton Fowles first appeared in "Facing the Dilemma: The Case for Latin America as a Mission Field," *Apuntes* 16.1 (Spring 1996): 17–29; "Nos llamaron: mulatos, fiesteros, pero redimibles: Antropología misionera y protestantismo en Puerto Rico," *Apuntes* 14(4) (Winter 1994): 99–111; and "Re-discovering Caribbean Christian Identity: Biography and Missiology at the Shore," *Voices: New Challenges to EATWOT Theology (The Journal of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians)*, XXVII(1) (June 2004): 114. I continue to work with his writings, but looking at Milton Fowles's work in dialogue with Puerto Rican grassroots and theologians *evangélicos*. I also provide some discussion on the two case studies below in my chapter "Christian Mission in an Era of World Christianity," in *Chalice Introduction to Theology*, Peter Goodwin Heltzel, ed. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008). The material in this chapter, however, addresses issues of cross-cultural leadership, while in these other materials the focus is theological and in the context of the history of the Christian movement.

objects of mission – and the missionary – the subjects of mission. He writes:

> They are impulsive, excitable, talkative, and demonstrative. On the streets, in the stores, in the homes, they talk in loud tones accompanied by many varied and suggestive gesticulations. The movements of the hands and arms, the expression of the body, the inimitable shrug of the shoulders, enable the listener to understand much of the conversation without hearing a word. With their naturally excitable nature, it is almost impossible for them to wait until one person finishes speaking, but several, and sometimes the whole company, are talking at once.[8]

Fowles' descriptions are far from neutral. In fact, the author alludes and connects the previous description with Puerto Ricans' incapacity to take on responsibilities, lack of interest in the dignity of work, evil practice of gambling and of vices, carelessness of dress, and absence of democratic sentiment where the majority decides for all.[9] Many of these evils, according to the author, are the result of (1) the inadequate administration of the Spanish government, (2) the Catholic Church's improper education of the people, and (3) the mixed blood of Puerto Ricans. Fowles comments:

> One of the pathetic features connected with the people of mixed blood is their desire to be considered white. As we have stated before, there is a comparatively small percentage of pure whites and a large percentage of persons of mixed blood. These latter want to be classed as whites. By a generous use of face powder, by a skillful dressing of the hair, by talking disparagingly of persons of negro blood, by explaining their own dark complexion as due either to the sun or to the Indian blood, or to a dark-skinned Spaniard, they

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[8] George Milton Fowles, *Down in Puerto Rico* (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, 1910), 46.

[9] Fowles, 47–9.

try to avoid suspicion themselves, but they cannot eradicate the unmistakable signs of the negro race. With this kind of feeling prevailing, one is surprised at the lack of sentiment against intermarriage. Especially among the poorer classes, blacks, whites, and persons of mixed blood live together indiscriminately. Among the higher classes, if a person has but a small amount of Negro blood he can pass as white and marry into the best families.[10]

Furthermore, Fowles's anthropological description focuses on issues of class and race. Nevertheless, in his description of Puerto Ricans, he also conveys an apprehensive and ambiguous perception regarding the interaction of cultures, races, and classes in Puerto Rico. While missionaries recognize the ethnic plurality of Puerto Ricanness to their judgment, the pathetic and inferior state of this bio-social condition is proof of the need for the Protestant faith.

Consequently, Fowles notes the contribution that Protestantism can make to the formation of the moral character of any people. In fact, most of the book focuses on advocating the importance of Protestantism in the redemption of this socio-cultural-biological condition. For Fowles, the Gospel is a socio-cultural-biological redeemer. The very character of the Protestant faith promotes the highest values for life. Fowles also describes Puerto Ricans' struggle in accepting these values, a struggle between the forces of genetic conditioning (a Darwinian framework typical of missionary theory of the period), their socio-cultural context, and the new socio-religious alternative offered by Protestantism. He states:

To raise a high moral standard of this kind among people who have been used to impurity of life in its priesthood, among the so-called higher classes, and quite generally among the lower classes, requires a great moral courage. One of the highest

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[10] Fowles, 60–1.

tributes that can be made to the Porto Rican [*sic*] people is that they have responded to these appeals to their noblest nature, and the standards thus set have called forth the devotion and loyalty of many thousands of Porto Ricans who show by their lives that they are *earnestly striving* to live up to this higher life that has been opened to their view.[11]

In his Christian missionary imagination, Fowles hoped for a "higher life" for the Puerto Rican Protestants. It seems that Fowles sees a socio-redeeming factor, but, coherent with his proposal, limits the power of the Gospel in the ethnic-biological condition of Puerto Ricans' mixed blood. In other words, Puerto Ricans are partially redeemed because their mixed blood condition limits their engagement with and embodiment of the Gospel.

What Fowles never imagined was that Puerto Rican Protestants, particularly Disciples of Christ, would actually challenge the North American missionaries with new and charismatic worship services at a time when the "Protestant project" was failing according to the missional motivations, expectations, and developments of the missionaries as named by Fowles.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico was the first mainline church to declare its autonomy from its "mother" church in the United States. This action was taken in the early 1930s after the island had experienced one of the most devastating hurricanes in its history and suffered, as a colony of the United States, major economic consequences during the Great Depression. The Disciples in Puerto Rico, finding themselves in a situation of anomie, experienced a revival that disturbed the missionaries' church order and worship patterns in most of the island's congregations. Missionaries, confused by the vitality and charisma, decided to close the churches. The nationals appealed to the U.S. courts in Puerto Rico and found themselves

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[11] Fowles (emphasis by author), 123.

protected. The churches had to be opened![12] This historical episode, still in need of further research, is an example of the irony of colonialism. Western, Christian, democratic colonial powers—the old Christian centers— through missionary work, contributed to the erosion of Christendom models and the emergence of a contextualized Christian faith.[13] This is a side-effect of the serial and non-replicating lens of the Christian movement. This is the Gospel matrix, the insertion of the Gospel in a multi-layered complex—cultural, economic, political, religious, and social—of cross-cultural asymmetrical power interactions, where different historical agents interplay in a particular time and context.

During the next decade, lay leaders began to create unique worship resources, particularly hymns. One of those lay persons was Ramona Alamo, a poor peasant mulatto woman. She was one of those who had the "pathetic features connected with the people of mixed blood" from the coastal town of Dorado. Alamo, author of many hymns, wrote "A Empezar de Nuevo" ("To Begin Anew"), which has become one of the most important and popular hymns of Puerto Rican Disciples.[14] In a context of worship and revival, Alamo gives a *testimonio* of leadership in this ecclesial and contextual transition.

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[12] Vargas, *Los Discípulos de Cristo en Puerto Rico, 1899–1987* (Costa Rica: DEI, 1988) 82–95.

[13] For a discussion on the contribution of colonial powers to the erosion of Christendom see Andrew Walls, "Christianity in the non-western world: a study in the serial nature of Christian expansion," *Studies in World Christianity* 1.1 (1995): 9–20.

[14] Lucas Torres, "El Avivamiento: Toma de conciencia en cuanto a nuestra identidad puertorriqueña expresada en la adoración y la música," (Asamblea del Centenario, Iglesia Cristiana [Discípulos de Cristo] en Puerto Rico, 15 de febrero de 1999) (unpublished manuscript), 3–4.

*A **testimonio** of creativity, intuition, discernment, and theological discontinuity*

I have been unable to date the hymn. Local church historians and pastors of the Disciples in Puerto Rico suggest the early 1940s, during the latter part of this period of theological and ecclesial emancipation.[15] Musically, the hymn does not follow any of the popular modalities of the time, though its tempo and rhythm clearly fit Puerto Rican popular musical patterns. Nor does it follow the pattern of the traditional hymnody that was used and transmitted by the missionaries, though its lyrics and character keeps the dignity and solemnity of traditional hymns. The hymn is a combination of a march, a *paso doble* (double step), and a simple combination of tunes that allowed the hymn to be accompanied by a guitar and other Puerto Rican instruments.

A Empezar de Nuevo (To Begin Anew)

Ramona Alamo (Translation Carlos F. Cardoza Orlandi)

Coro

A empezar, a empezar, a empezar de
nuevo otra vez
Hermanos en Cristo hay que empezar otra
vez.

Chorus

To begin, to begin, to begin anew again;
Brethren in Christ, to begin anew again

Estrofas

A empezar de nuevo la carrera en Cristo,
Oh Señor bendito guíanos con tu luz,
Danos nuevas fuerzas para seguir en ti
Deja que tu gracias se deje sentir

Dios llama a su iglesia a empezar de nuevo
Nuestra mente al cielo debemos tener
Siempre confiando y en comunión
Y recibiremos mayor bendición

Empezemos todos mirando nuestras almas
El gran sacrificio de Cristo en la cruz
Su bendita sangre derramada fue
Procuremos todos serle siempre fiel

Strophes

To begin anew our journey in Christ
Oh mercyful Christ, guide us with your light;
Give us new strength to follow you;
Let your grace overwhelm us

God calls the church to begin anew
Our minds to heaven should always be;
Always trusting and in fellowship;
We will receive greater blessing

Let us begin by searching our our souls; The
great sacrifice of Christ in the cross; His
blessed blood, shed it was; Let us all
seek to be faithful to him.

The lyrics are simple. It begins with an invitation to the church to begin anew, focusing on glorifying God in Jesus Christ. The call is to be faithful and live out the Gospel. The hope is that God's presence and grace will lead and guide the community in a new beginning.

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[15] Torres.

The hymn is simple, evangelical, unique, visionary, and in affinity with the Protestant theological framework of the time—yet it is Puerto Rican. It is grounded in the culture, seeking a new beginning rather than copying the communicated faith of the Anglo-American Protestant. In addition, this hymn has the same theological perspective and proposal that Karl Barth had in some of his writings regarding Christendom and mission in the early 1930s. Good theology and an astute religious *intuition* about the emerging contextualization process also come from a woman of a poor *barrio* (shanty town) in Puerto Rico. Through her *discernment*, she develops a theology that invites the faith community to "rediscover" its faith with *sabor boricua* "indigenous Puerto Rican flavor." Moreover, Alamo *discontinues* the transmitted socio-biological interpretation of the transmitted Gospel. She evokes the liberation of the gospel and dismisses the North American limited socio-biological interpretation of the good news for Puerto Ricans. She generates a theological discontinuity in the most prevalent context of Protestant Puerto Rican religious life, *el culto* (the worship service). Paradoxically, during this period and with the impact of the Great Depression, American missionaries were being called back home, and in the denominational mission boards there was a deep concern regarding the future of the Disciples missionary endeavor. However, Puerto Rican Disciples had taken control, were speaking in tongues, praying day and night, and rediscovering the Gospel; and Alamo led the way!

Second Case Study: Unexpected Leadership: Renewing Life by Saving Lives

Borders witness the encounters of death and life. And in these encounters complex interactions and dynamics emerge. It is a place of paradoxes and surprises. Borders are locations from where "interesting fictions and incongruities" can be seen. Borders provide a unique window to explore the power of human and context dynamics; they are a physical and symbolic location from

which "you can see both sides better than if you were in the middle of either one."[16]

The desert is a trail to new life, but it can also be a death alley. The landscape is rough. I walked the desert under the best possible conditions—no extreme heat or cold, hydrated, nourished, rested, and in good physical condition—and it was a difficult walk. We came in vans and drove for an hour, and then we walked two hours. It was a long and difficult journey, and yet extremely insignificant when compared to what immigrants walk!

Those crossing the border hire a *coyote*, or guide. This coyote is paid to take you through the desert at night—perhaps leaving at 11:00 p.m. at night and arriving at your destination in the other side at 1:00 p.m. the next day. Some are good coyotes, others are bad coyotes. Bad coyotes leave you in the desert; they do not protect you from thieves and abusers, or from the U.S. Border Patrol. And once you are alone, the desert overwhelms you. It quickly changes from a trail to new life to a death alley.

It's cold at night, and your coyote has left you in the dark desert. You have no water and no food. You see the sun come out, and you begin to feel the heat of the desert…80 degrees, 90 degrees, 100 degrees…and no water. Your feet are swollen and bruised. You have been beaten like the man in the story of the Good Samaritan. The desert is becoming the "(v)alley of death."

CRREDA is a rehabilitation center in the city of Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, a border city with Douglas, Arizona. In a city that is infected with drug trafficking and abuse, CRREDA is a place of refuge, not only for Mexicans and other migrants from Central America, but for poor people from Douglas, Arizona.

This governmental organization is administered by an ex-addict, one who strongly believes that *rehabilitation is intertwined with a ministry of saving lives*. The budget is extremely limited. Education and medicine are scarce. Resources are precarious. But saving lives is an

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[16] Fadiman.

imperative; there is no other option, diversion, or more important activity for CRREDA than saving lives.

Men of different ages are assigned to various groups. Some drive the pickup truck, and others fill the containers in the vehicles with gallons of water, food, and some first aid needs to help the migrants in their desert journey. The rehabilitation patients of CRREDA provide water! As in many religions in the world, water has very unique meanings in the Christian religion. "I am the water of life," states one of the Gospels; water for baptism, for a celebration of a new beginning in life; water for cleansing our thirst; water that flowed from Jesus' side in the cross; water of life! Rehabilitation is not rocket science, the director of CRREDA stated; it is a very concrete answer to a very concrete need. Migrants need water in the desert in order not to die, and they provide water! However, that concrete answer comes with challenging political, ideological, and life-threatening consequences.

The agents of mission are rehabilitating drug and alcohol addicts and some mentally ill people. It reminds us of that question in scripture: "Nazareth! Can any good thing come from there?" Agua Prieta, CRREDA, drug addicts? Can any good thing come from there/them? What good can come from rehabilitating drug and alcohol addicts? What good can come from mentally ill people? It is a mission of reconciliation: with God, other, and self.

The theology is simple, yet deep and biblical: "What better way to be liberated from our vices than to be servants to the migrants who are in need and see in them ourselves?" With these words the director of CRREDA in Agua Prieta gives us an insight into leadership in a context of limited resources.[17]

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[17] There is a growing literature, both academic and popular, on the importance of service work, volunteerism, short-term mission, and the healing and vitality that comes from sharing and engaging in other people's needs. Regrettably, most of this literature assumes a "have" and "have not" relationship, where the exchange of gifts, particularly the gifts coming from

The expectations of rehabilitation are connected to community, far from an individualistic, feel-good-about-oneself attitude or ethic. CRREDA's entrance wall has the following version of the Lord's Prayer.

Do not call me "Father," if every day you do not behave as my child;

Do not say "Our," if you live isolated in your selfishness;

Do not say "Who art in Heaven," if you only think about earthly/material things;

Do not say, "hallowed by Thy name," if you invoke it with your lips, but your heart is far from Him;

Do not say "thy Kingdom Come," if you mistake it for your material success;

Do not say "Thy will be done," if you do not accept the will when it is painful;

Do not say "give us this day our daily bread," if you do not worry about the hungry;

Do not say "forgive us our debts/trespasses," if you bear your brother and sister a grudge;

Do not say "lead us not into temptation," if you do not avoid occasions to sin;

Do not say "deliver us from evil," if you do not fight evil;

Do not say "Amen," if you have not taken seriously the words of the Lord's prayer.[18]

CRREDA's rehabilitating expectations generate leadership accountability to the patients themselves, the

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the "have not," are blurred by the asymmetry of power that sustains negative assumptions about the poor. Below is a list of materials that are either an example of the problem or try to contribute to resolve the problem, yet fall short in the returning contextual analysis: Bill Berry, ed., *Short-Term Missions Today* (Pasadena: Into All the World Magazine, 2003); Robert Priest and Tito Paredes, "Special Issue on Short-Term Missions in Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Theology: Christian Reflections from the Latino South* 2 (2007); Robert Priest, *Effective Engagement in Short-Term Missions: Doing it Right!* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2008).

[18] This is popular religion material. Possible author is Angel Riba, Charismatic Catholics. Translated by Juan Cardoza-Oquendo and Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi.

immediate community, and to those in need in their immediate context.

CRREDA exemplifies ecumenical leadership. CRREDA works with Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, with Pentecostals and indigenous religious groups. It is ecumenical—evangelical, ritualistic, sacramental, ethical, biblical, and eschatological. CRREDA also has a spirituality nurtured by prayer that goes beyond their rehabilitation process. They pray "A Prayer for My Migrant Sisters and Brothers:"

> Loving and merciful heart of Jesus,
>
> I pray for my migrant brothers and sisters. Have mercy on them and protect them from mistreatment and humiliation in their travel. They are identified by many as dangerous and poor because they are strangers. By the grace of God, let us respect and value their dignity. Touch our hearts with your goodness, Lord, when we see them as they travel. Protect their families until they return home, not with a broken heart but with their hopes fulfilled. Amen[19]

Many times this prayer is fulfilled. God has mercy on the migrants and protects them of injustice and danger. And God finds the migrant and the migrant finds God in the water that CRREDA provided as members of "No More Deaths" in Agua Prieta. Water that sustains two journeys: the journey of the migrant seeking new life and the journey of the rehabilitating addict seeking a renewed life.

CRREDA's Christian mission at and with the margins illustrates the surprising character of leadership creativity and courage in the midst of scarcity and persecution. The lesson is inspiring yet so difficult to internalize. Why? Perhaps our last case study may offer some insight to our inquiry.

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[19] Prayer written by Archbishop of Hermosillo José Ulises Macías, date unknown.

Third Case Study: Matt and the *Return Effect*: Are Leaders Obstacles or Facilitators of Change and Meaning?

I have shared with you two particular international and cross-cultural case studies which showcase traits of religious leadership – one historical and the other current. These case studies provide a window into leadership characteristics in contexts of anomie and poverty, asymmetrical relationships, lack of formal education, and normative power structures that limit financial and educational resources. I am consistently amazed by the power of the Holy Spirit to remind us of the creativity and courage of women and men in extremely difficult and transitional situations. Alamos' creativity, intuition, discernment, and theological discontinuity generate a contextual grounding that is still in place as Puerto Rican Disciples of Christ seek to live the gospel. CRREDA's embodiment of renewing life by way of saving lives in a dangerous environment testifies to the sacrament of human interaction and exchange across religions, cultures, ethnicities, class, and gender. Leadership is embodied in the risk to dwell in dangerous contexts and the courage to challenge political and ideological forces that dehumanize the actors of this desert drama. It is a leadership fueled by a spirit of participation that emphasizes liberation by service (rather than cautious self-interest participation), a spirit of mutual accountability – to God, community, and self.

The subtitle of this conference is a challenge: "Learning Leadership from Our International Neighbors." We gather here seeking to be learners of others. We learn. We see, we hear, we touch, we ask questions, we explore, we discover. We are intrigued, excited, reflective, and ready for change. In this process of learning from our international neighbors, we return to our places of leadership with enthusiasm and prepare for renewal. Yet, we quickly forget that we "return," and returning means that we go back to our context, we enter established structures of power and resources, leadership ethos, and institutional dynamics – and surprisingly we

think that this "return" does not affect our cross-cultural and cross-religious learnings.

My third case study is an exploration of what I call "the return effect." After twenty-one years of teaching and doing scholarly work on cross-cultural Christian mission, engagements, and interactions, I have acquired some insights into the experience of returning home. I want to emphasize that what I am sharing below are preliminary thoughts, ideas, and intuitions about the complex return home after a changing cross-cultural and cross-religious experience.

For the purposes of this essay, I will define the *return effect* as "an ambiguous yet strong state of being and reflection generated by an encounter with something new and unexpected, yet embodied in and perceived as something known, that challenges who we are, the way we live, and the order of our worldview and existence." The return effect is a preliminary stage for change— the beginning edge of chaos in relation to our understood order.

Two examples, one biblical and another contemporary, might help clarify my working definition. In Acts 10 we have the story of Cornelius and Peter.[20] Let me focus exclusively on the account of Peter's vision. The Holy Spirit gives Peter a vision where reptiles and other profane animals come to him in a sheet. Hungry, yet knowing that these animals are prohibited for food in his tradition, he sees something familiar, yet the voice of the Spirit suggests something very different from his customary food practices: "Peter, kill and eat." Peter does not hesitate. "This food is profane." The Spirit then responds with something new, yet also known: "Do not call profane what I have made sacred!"

One of my students at Perkins School of Theology coordinates short-term mission trips to Central America. In one of those trips, my student experienced the scarcity of clean water in a very remote and marginalized

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[20] I have a broader discussion of Acts 10 in my book *Mission: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003).

community. Just after a few hours at home in the United States, the sprinkler system of my student's house went off. The tears of my student's eyes were as abundant as the water spouting from the sprinkler over the yard. Water became the link between something new, and something known. In both the biblical and contemporary example, the anthropological insight is simple, yet profound: we can only know new things through what we already know.

Matt, the Return Effect, and Religious Leadership

Matt is a successful businessman. Most important, Matt is a devoted Christian leader in an urban city in the southeastern United States. Matt actively participates in ministry to the homeless in his congregation and community. His intensity and conviction about this ministry is so strong that Matt became friends with many of the homeless men and women served by the congregation. Throughout his ministry, Matt moved from being a servant of the homeless to a friend among friends. Matt had been living and engaging in a cross-cultural and cross-religious ministry. Rediscovering the gospel with his homeless friends, he had been dwelling in the sacrament of human interaction and exchange, and he was growing in faith!

One afternoon after working in the ministry, as he departed from what he called his community, one of his friends shouted, "Go Matt; go back to your nice suburban home and be well!" What to make of the statement was never clear to Matt. It was one of those statements charged with a particular tone that left the interpretation wide open. "Was it a nice but awkward farewell from his homeless buddy? Was it cynical? And if it was, why would my homeless buddy be cynical to me? Was I not his friend?"

This farewell kept Matt sleepless for a couple of weeks. While people speak about the power of words, much of that power is not just the words but also the place they come from – words have context so much as context have words. And these combinations are

explosive. Matt's body, thoughts, prayers, ideas, and spirit were under the spell of a combination of words and context from the location of his ministry and his homeless buddy and context and words from his location. What will Matt do with this cross-cultural experience?

Matt decided to speak to his spiritual leader, his congregational pastor. He shared the "ambiguous yet strong state of being and reflection generated by an encounter with something new and unexpected, yet embodied in and perceived as something known, that challenges who we are, the way we live, and the order of our worldview and existence." He shared the awkward farewell and asked the pastor why was he – body, spirit and soul – overwhelmed with intrigue, uncertainty, guilt, curiosity, and expectation. Matt was seeking direction and guidance after an awkward farewell from a new, yet unknown, location that triggered such explosive emotions and thoughts in his life.

The pastor's direction and guidance were simple and to the point: "Matt, do not let those thoughts overwhelm you, just remember that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ and you are following Christ and being obedient to Christ." Matt felt some relief, but the return effect from his encounter with his homeless buddy continued to shake his Christian faith and person. Could the pastor have said something different to Matt?

This story speaks to the importance of leadership, and I hope it affirms the vocation that we all have in reflecting and training future cross-cultural and cross-religious leaders. In our work, we will meet many people experiencing the returning effect. And as we and those who we serve face the unique challenge of "learning from others," particularly those others who are very different from us, we will have to decide whether we are going to defuse, neutralize, and strait-jacket new potentially life-changing learnings with authoritative religious language or encourage, exploration and liberate new beginnings. With the gifts of creativity, intuition, and discernment from the Caribbean and the Border, and the search for

levels of theological discontinuity and the sacramental reality of being renewed by saving others, and the potential gifts to be discovered by way of an ambiguous yet strong state of being and reflection generated by a cross-cultural and cross-religious encounter that has the potential of changing our lives, we thrust into a new reality.

In conclusion, I juxtapose below what I consider are leadership actions that, on the one hand, simply diffuse new learnings and on the other, nurture and generate new learnings and the possibility of change. Perhaps as we encourage the leadership actions that nurture and generate new learnings we will discover and embody a gospel re-discovered anew. Ramona Alamo reminds us that it is truly Christian to *empezar de nuevo* (begin anew)!

Leadership actions that diffuse new learnings *Reduce ambiguity and suppress change*	Leadership actions that nurture and generate new learnings, *accept ambiguity, and enter a process of change, exploration, and discovery*
(1) *Dominate* dynamics at the borders and margins between people and creation	(1) *Promote and Foster* dynamics at the border and margins between people and creation
(2) *Control* the interpretations of God's work in all dimensions of human life and creation	(2) *Broaden and amplify* the interpretations of God's work in the world in all human life and creation
(3) *Manipulate and control* new learnings using what we already know as a limit to discover something new	(3) *Unleash* processes of new learnings using what we know to learn new things.
(4) *Reify* the gospel in terms of one history and a set of experiences from one particular context and time	(4) *Discover and rediscover* the gospel of Jesus Christ in complex inter-cultural and inter-religious exchange

A Practical Theology of Leadership with International Voices

Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martínez

Abstract: Branson and Martínez have written elsewhere on matters of church leadership; in this article, they focus on contributions to this topic by scholars from other nations. They use the frame of practical theology to structure their inquiry, modeling the value of input from social theory, migration studies, various Christian resources, and personal and corporate local narratives. They posit that church leaders need to listen not only to international scholars but also to the international voices in their own church pews and in other churches. In particular, they draw attention to how the growing Latino population in the United States should impact our understanding of leadership.

Introduction

In broad terms, leadership is about shaping learning environments and connecting with diverse resources so that a social group can engage in change. Such environments are composed of men and women and their relationships, the habits they inhabit, the memories and knowledge readily available, their shared imaginary concerning identity and agency, their cooperative activities, and how they understand and relate to men and women who are near to or far from their group.

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Branson and Martínez co-authored Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities *(IVP Academic, 2011)*

In this article, Mark Lau Branson begins with two generic descriptions concerning churches and late-modern approaches to leadership, with apologies for the obvious stereotypes involved. From there he will describe and use a practical theology method to explore leadership praxis. The overall direction is to move from current praxis to new praxis. While steps are presented sequentially, in practice they will loop back on each other, reshaping meanings and surfacing new questions and resources. The overall method serves the discernment of new praxes, but the actual work of shaping the needed imagination and experiments is in step 5. While such a method has numerous sources for reflection, this article will pay special attention to non-U.S. voices. At several points, Juan Martínez provides sections that engage realities and stories related to specific U.S. contexts with a continuing and growing presence of Latinos. Both authors raise the following questions: What are the benefits of our porous borders in regard to churches (Latino and others) in the United States, and how does that situation call for rethinking leadership practices?[1]

Pentecost: Who matters? Who is an agent? (Branson)

The Pentecost event of Acts 2, in addition to being an audio-visual spectacle, focuses on languages, borders, ethnicities, power arrangements, belonging, and agency. Israel was literally an occupied country; a few weeks prior, Jesus had been crucified by Roman and Jewish rulers. It was unsettling for the authorities that Jesus' body was missing, that there had been reports of sightings and conversations, and that a modest messianic movement had not abated.

Shavuot (Weeks) is one of the three required Jewish festivals, but unlike Sukkot (Booths) and Pesach (Passover) it was only one or two days long. (God knows that when a farmer begins a grain harvest and leaves

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[1] Our own experiences have been primarily in the United States, so we write from and to that context. We believe much of what we write may be useful for our Canadian neighbors to the north.

home to sacrifice the first sheath, it is not the time for a week of picnics or liturgies.) Jerusalem likely had pilgrims who could either make the walk or were not tied to agrarian work, but this festival was not a major attraction for international pilgrims. That contextual reality may serve to clarify our reading of the Acts text. After the description of prayerful waiting, a roaring wind, a visual anomaly akin to flames, and a cacophony of diverse languages, Luke writes (Acts 2:5-11):

> There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. They were surprised and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them? How then can each of us hear them speaking in our native language? Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; as well as residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the regions of Libya bordering Cyrene; and visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the mighty works of God in our own languages!" (CEB)

The listed peoples represented a significant geographic spread, far beyond weekend treks. Based on grammar ("living in Jerusalem") and the shortness of the festival, it is likely that many of these Jews (including proselytes) were senior citizens who had moved to Jerusalem for their retirement years. They brought their ancient languages with them and perhaps set up neighborhoods so they could maintain regional customs and conversations. Like residents of Palestine, they were accustomed to the empire's language of Greek, and everyone usually functioned in that common language. So it was quite a surprise ("They were all surprised and bewildered") to hear their regional, parochial languages from these Galileans. Luke credits the entire event to

God's Spirit, which is consistent with how the Spirit makes concrete the life and mission of God.[2]

So this transitional and defining event places emphases on (1) the value of international connections; (2) the importance of culturally diverse groups in a geographic setting; (3) the use of diverse languages even when a dominant language is available; (4) the inclusion and potential agency of senior citizens; (5) the Spirit's innovative initiatives; (6) the central role of persons who are not in structural authority; and (7) the follow-up work of interpretive leadership (as Peter, using the common tongue, tries to explain everything). As the stories of Acts continue, the role of Antioch becomes notable, and the agencies of non-Palestinians and non-Jews gain prominence. If leadership is to be adequate to the Spirit's engagements, it needs to attend to what God makes real and possible among the common people – the diverse participants – in every location.

Practical Theology, Leadership, and International Voices (Branson)

How can U.S. church leaders benefit from leadership resources beyond our borders? What can churches gain by learning conceptual and practical resources rooted in other contexts? What benefits are available in the resources of academics and pastors from other nations as well as of the voices of immigrant and culturally diverse persons in our own churches? The constant work of relating actions with knowing, of shaping interpretive communities as communities of practice, is work that defines the relationship between church leaders and

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[2] Even though some theological perspectives indicate that the Holy Spirit is primarily ethereal, Craig Van Gelder posits, and we agree, that the Holy Spirit's presence in the Bible indicates concrete, located, specific activities of God-on-the-ground. This is especially relevant to our topic because a key role of leadership is that of discerning, with a group, how they can participate in God's initiatives. See *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 23–46.

churches. The framework of missional ecclesiology[3] creates a nexus that impacts the relationship of a church with its context, leaders with participants, and the whole church with the Trinity. Practical theology serves as a method for connecting diverse methods and resources for this set of topics.

I will outline a basic practical theology method and relate the method to the question of how U.S. churches might benefit from leadership resources available through porous borders, then Martínez will demonstrate that these resources are not just for academically-trained leaders but are also available in and through the everyday Christians in our churches.

The practical theology method that I will use is rooted in Brazilian educator Paulo Freire.[4] Among his significant contributions is his approach to *praxis*, which has its roots in Aristotle. There are two primary traits of praxis for Aristotle: that it is an activity of free persons and that the *telos* is embedded in the action. Working as an educator in the oppressive environment of Brazilian laborers, Freire sought means for liberation, and he knew this was not just a matter of more or even specialized information. The move toward agency had to be something that people chose, and the *telos* of freedom had to be embedded in the activities. Strategic plans for democracy committees would not work; education about the technical means of production in modern life was also inadequate. Rather, "This [liberation] can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it."[5]

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[3] For some primary books on missional ecclesiology, see Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church,* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); Darrell Guder (ed.), *The Missional Church,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); and Alan Roxburgh & M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church,* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), and Alan Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011).

[4] Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Crossroad, 1974) and *Pedagogy for the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1970).

[5] Freire, *Pedagogy*, 36.
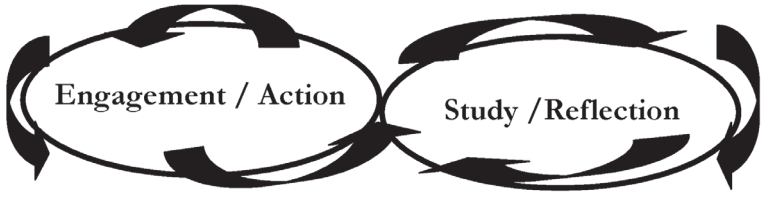
Freire's access was that of literacy education, and he leveraged this for something the Brazilian government did not appreciate. The adults who entered into the literacy courses did not just memorize words and definitions and conjugations; they received a new imaginary that they too were creators of culture.

This shift of imagination required another key move. Epistemology is not fundamentally a matter of amassing data – information – but requires a continuous cycling of action and reflection. An assumed mode of learning, in which people acquire theories that are then applied to life (theory-to-practice, or the banking approach), is rejected in favor of this iterative mode of praxis-theory-praxis. As individuals and as groups, we engage our environment (praxis); then we step back and reflect on ourselves, our environment, and on available theories and information; then we reengage, based on a new understanding of ourselves and our context. This is learning – this is knowledge – the action-reflection cycle that defines praxis-theory-praxis.
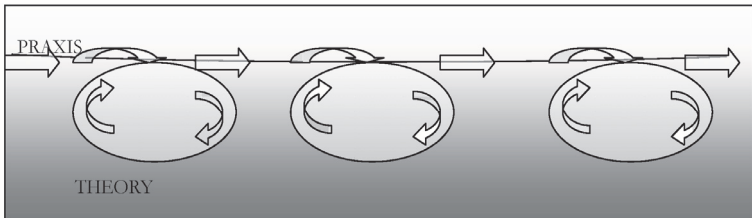
Freire's basic *praxis* model is behind the practical theology I have constructed, with appreciation to

Thomas Groome,[6] Ray Anderson,[7] and Craig Van Gelder,[8] in service of the work of theological reflection and congregational discernment. I understand the role of leaders to be that of attending to the work of a congregation's praxis in light of these resources. In basic terms: (1) we name and describe our current praxis, (2) we analyze our praxis and context by using cultural resources, (3) we bring our Christian texts into conversation with our praxis, (4) we tell and listen to our own stories regarding our praxis, and (5) we discern and experiment on our way to a new praxis.

The Holy Spirit gifts the church with perception wisdom, resources, courage and work, and continues to initiate in the church & context.

Church as sign, foretaste and instrument of the inbreaking Reign of God

1 *Name & describe* your current praxis.

Discern & shape your new praxis through imagination, prayer, experiments, and commitments. **5**

2 *Analyze* your praxis and context using resources of your culture to understand influences and consequences.

Recall & discuss stories from your church **4** and your own lives related to your praxis.

3 *Study & reflect* on Scripture, theology, and Christian history concerning your praxis and analysis.

With Freire and the practical theology method as means for sorting and discerning, I will engage other non-U.S. resources and indicate how they might contribute to leadership and discernment in U.S. churches. For convenience I will associate each author with a particular step of the practical theology cycle, but it should be self-evident that each will often overflow into other steps. This nonlinear, iterative mode is also how the method works in the daily life of a congregation; the categories serve to shape questions, observations, and imaginations, but forced categories would undermine the creative

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[6] Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1999).

[7] Ray Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis,* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001).

[8] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church.*

synapses we need if we genuinely want new praxes. I will connect Jürgen Habermas, Paulo Freire, and Jehu Hanciles with step 2 and René Padilla, Gerhard Lohfink, and Nancy Bedford with step 3, then reengage Hanciles in step 4. Martínez will bring Elizabeth Conde-Frazier and Justo González into steps 3, 4, and 5.

Step 1: Name and Describe Current Praxis (Branson)

This first step provides a description of current praxis, which in this article is framed by the theme of congregational leadership. This description names activities, actors, context, and forces that may shape praxis. In general terms, church leadership in the United States has been shaped by the historic forces of the Enlightenment and Romanticism as embedded in late modernity. For example, scientific rationalism, rooted in the Enlightenment, led to modern management theory and strategic planning.[9] Romanticism, with its fronting of sensuality, affectivity, and expressive individualism, shaped consumer preference and marketing, family systems based in therapeutic models, and a subfield of volunteerism.[10] Two common scenarios illustrate how these social forces show up in churches:

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[9] For an informed account of history, philosophy, and social theory behind modern organizations, see William Roth, *The Roots and Future of Management Theory: A Systems Perspective* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2000). There are significant benefits in learning new ways to see, as provided by the Enlightenment, but the overconfidence in human capacities to predict, manage and control is problemmatic to theological praxis. See Alan Roxburgh, *Missional Map-making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 73–85.

[10] I am not seeking to denigrate Romanticism's attention to affectivity, sensuality, and thick locality but merely to acknowledge the social history behind church attempts at marketing, and to offer a mode for engaging "the other" that does not treat them as objects. Concerning expressive individualism, see Robert Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), especially Chapter 6. On the relationship of desire to discipleship and church, see James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 75–85.

Pastor Jamie has a primary role of moving a congregation into the future. On a regular basis, Jamie takes the church board and other key leaders on retreat to create strategic plans for the board, staff, and committees. There are various required parts: a catchy mission statement, some quotable and frameable values, marketable goods and services, and perhaps a BHAG[11] to infuse energy. Jamie's skills in management, negotiation, and selling are key elements of this approach to leadership, because the congregation expects that kind of expertise in an organizational leader. So the plan is put into shape for marketing to the members – print, media, t-shirts. An emphasis is put on being united – because others in the church need to be sold on the plan before they will volunteer time and money. Jamie's role is much like that of a CEO who shapes marketing and recruitment functions. Theological and biblical resources are aligned with the plan for preaching and teaching (including comments during committee and board meetings).

Pastor Taylor has a role similar to Pastor Jamie, but the church's size and history have created a situation in which strategic plans are no longer created and the church has settled into a habit of "getting by." The board has functional responsibilities regarding programs and personnel and budgets, and they feel responsible for the viability of the church. Because the loss of any member or family would be noticeable, there is a high value on keeping members satisfied. There are conversations about being a "family" church and a confidence that they are "welcoming" of visitors, with confusion about why more people don't come and join. Taylor's attention is on pastoral care, insuring that the functional procedures continue, giving guidance to community service, and perhaps engaging civic life. Biblical and theological texts are evident in sermons and teaching in a way that focuses on God's grace and personal responsibility in discipleship.

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[11] "Big Hairy Audacious Goal" from James Collins and Jerry Porras, "Building Your Company's Vision," *Harvard Business Review* 74 (5) (1996): 65–77; the authors propose that large, emotionally engaging goals provide clarity and motivation; I believe this non-participatory mode is disrespectful of participants and misses what God makes available through the wider community.

Either of these churches can be visibly successful or not; either can be humanly warm or cool; either can be rooted in new or old theological and denominational systems. My focus on these leadership frameworks is intended only to identify basic assumptions and to see that those assumptions are rooted in a particular socio-cultural environment. For example, top-down management, seeing pastors as experts, a marketing approach to members, and the focus on satisfying customers are all assumed in modern organizations. This is the current praxis of congregational leadership. In each step of the practical theology process, other ways of seeing and acting will provide resources for alternative approaches.

Step 2: Analyze with Social Tools (Branson)

The purpose of step 2 is to use cultural resources to understand what is behind the current praxis, to more thoroughly understand the context, and to name potential resources for alternatives. Paulo Freire, engaging social and educational theories, provides insights into how leaders help others learn about, engage, and change their environments; Jürgen Habermas's proposal for "communicative competence," also rooted in critical social theory, promotes group understanding and cooperation; Jehu Hanciles's work on migration helps us understand congregational formation.

Freire emphasized that humans, individually and in groups, can be culture-creators.[12] When we assume that social arrangements are determined by others – that structures, resources, and even imagination are beyond our influence – we have lost our vocation as humans. In both of the illustrative churches, the members are not

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[12] To counter societal "massification," Freire sought critical consciousness through education that helped men and women become subject-actors in their own culture. See Freire, *Education,* 32–84. This fronting of the actions of ordinary people is also emphasized by Gustavo Gutiérrez, trans. Robert Barr, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1979) and Michel de Certeau, trans. Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

expected to be involved in an imaginary beyond what is given to them. They are consumers, volunteers, financers, and committee members. Freire employed a sequence of methods to change this situation. Because he was shaping a literacy program, he created images that prompted vocabulary while also prompting imaginations. A farmer, even on a small plot, lives in creation and learns how to change creation – the earliest meaning of the word "culture" has to do with farming. Gradually, through vocabulary and conversation, Freire's learners transfer farming ideas to society; they realize that they might be able to reshape social arrangements just as they plow and plant and harvest. This is a huge shift of imagination, and it needs to be tested. Freire's action-reflection cycle demonstrates how some small initiatives concerning money or working conditions or teamwork would let men and women see that they are culture-creators, which is consistent with the vocabulary they were learning. They were not merely objects; they were subjects. The action-reflection cycle is incremental and dangerous. Freire's literacy was too much of a political threat to the government, so he was exiled.

Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher and social theorist, also offers two interconnected and helpful frameworks. First, he describes how larger societal structures, as expressions of instrumental rationality, have a tendency to infringe on smaller social groups, such as local communities and microcultures. His language about the colonization of a people's *lifeworld*[13] parallels Freire's awareness that oppressed people do not believe they can create culture. In Habermas' framework, our mental capacities – our imaginations – have been colonized just as thoroughly as if conquers took control. Second, Habermas' confidence in what he believes are underdeveloped assets of modernity leads him to a theory of communicative action (which is often contrasted with

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[13] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, trans. Thomas McCarthy, (Boston: Beacon, 1987), 356–73.

strategic action).[14] The lifeworlds of a people are differentiated by the diverse "worlds" or "world concepts" in which they live: the objective world, the subject world, and the social world. The objective world is the "totality of entities about which true statements are possible," the social world is "the totality of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations," and the subjective world is "the totality of experiences to which the speaker has privileged access and which he can express before a public."[15] Habermas is dealing not with a theory of reality but a framework for communication. Each of these worlds has its own subject matter, its own sphere of vocabulary and syntax, and its own measure for validity. This chart summarizes this theory.

	Objective World	**Subjective World**	**Social World**
Type of speech	Descriptive	Expressive	Regulative
Subject matter	Propositional knowledge	Narratives and affects	Norms and intentions
Validity measurement	Truth	Honest	Just and appropriate

To the extent we embrace Freire's mode of shaping a learning community of acting subjects, Habermas's approach to communicative action is a resource for strengthening the group's capacities for understanding and cooperative activities.

Finally, Jehu Hanciles's masterful work on migration and globalization demonstrates how porous borders shape churches. (His work provides significant biblical and theological reflection, but we are using him as a source within migration studies.) The earlier

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[14] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 333.
[15] Habermas, vol. 2, 120.

synchronization of Christendom with the Western-based missionary movement has given way to multidirectional flows of peoples, cultures, and influence: "[F]ar from being a one-directional, single, unified phenomenon, the processes of globalization are multidirectional, inherently paradoxical, and incorporate movement and countermovement."[16] While economic globalization is driven by the West and can often be characterized as a new feudalism under an alliance of wealthy nations, other cross-border movements and linkages bring cultural peoples and perspectives from South to North, in what Hanciles calls "globalization from below."[17]

Hanciles's work is far-reaching for the global church, but our focus is on U.S. churches. It is notable that the church in the United States, in general terms, is not declining at the rate of European churches; Hanciles draws our attention to studies that indicate that 60% of immigrants are Christians,[18] mainly from Africa and Latin America, but also from Korea and the Philippines. Also, in his more extensive studies of African-initiated churches in the United States, it is notable that many of these churches are intentional about cross-cultural outreach and see no conflict between honoring their African cultures while shaping multicultural congregations and mission.[19]

Concerning matters that affect frameworks for leadership, the South-North migration of Christians who bring profound spiritual and missional commitments may, according to Hanciles, offer a different set of traits and modes:

> This non-Western missionary movement represents mission *beyond Christendom*: mission de-linked from structures of power and domination; mission undertaken from positions of vulnerability

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[16] Jehu Hanciles, *After Christendon* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 2; Hanciles is from Sierra Leone.

[17] Hanciles, 2, 15.

[18] Hanciles, 7.

[19] Hanciles, 364–73.

and need; mission freed from the bane of territoriality and one-directional expansion from a fixed center; mission involving agents who reflect the New Testament reference to the 'weak things of the world' (1 Corinthians 1:27)."[20]

Hanciles's understanding of migrations and mission are important factors for consideration as we gain resources to reflect on leadership praxis.

A practical theology of church leadership can benefit from these perspectives and resources. Freire emphasizes the diffusion of participation and initiative, demonstrating how a people who have been deprived of power can regain their role as subjects as they create culture. Habermas serves our awareness of context – how societal structures have shaped our congregations and the environments that we inhabit; he offers a framework for improving our communication, a framework that attends to personal stories and opinions, to data and observations that meet more formal requirements for objectivity, and to the obligations we have for shaping a shared future. And Hanciles helps us understand the importance of changing demographics as migrations impact our contexts and our churches, as illustrated by Martínez, below.

Borderlands & Cultural Shifts in the U.S. (Martínez)

The changing demographics of the United States, particularly in the Southwest, provide us with an illustration of Hanciles's thesis in our own country. The United States takeovers of the Southwest in 1848 (from Mexico) and Puerto Rico in 1898 (from Spain) shaped migration patterns from these countries in a way that created a borderland culture in the Southwest and continues to change the demographic composition of this country. When one adds the newer migration patterns created by the complexities of U.S. relationships in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and throughout Central America, it is not surprising that Latinos are now the

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[20] Hanciles, 369.

largest minority group in the country and that minorities are projected to become the majority sometime around 2050 or sooner.[21]

This movement is creating demographic changes in the United States, and is thereby also affecting issues of national identity. Some of the migrants are transnational people who live part of their lives in the United States and part in their countries of origin. Even many of those who permanently move to the United States are part of transnational networks that keep them closely linked to their countries of origin. This two-way movement of Latinos – and their ideas – creates an environment in which they are linked to more than one national identity and are invested in the future of more than one country.

Most of the people who have migrated to the United States have been working class people, poor people like those described by Hanciles. The vast majority of them are Roman Catholic and they are changing the face of American Catholicism. Today over thirty percent of the Catholic population in the United States is Latino and sixty percent of Catholics under thirty-five are Latino. They are among the most faithful and expanding segments of the church.[22] As the single largest population of active parishioners, Latinos are vastly under-represented in the leadership of the Catholic Church, which means that U.S. Catholicism has to make major shifts as it rethinks about what it means to be church in the United States.

But this growing Latino population is also affecting Protestantism. Since Protestant missionaries went south, and as more U.S. Latinos have come into contact with Protestant believers during the last century, a growing percentage of Latin Americans are Protestants. In

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[21] See the Pew Research Center's study, "U.S. Population Projections: 2005–2050," http://pewsocialtrends.org/2008/02/11/us-population-projections-2005-2050/ (accessed August 8, 2011).

[22] See "Reflections on the Hispanic Catholic Moment" by Fr. Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ, September 26, 2010, http://www.ncchm.org/619354.ihtml (accessed August 16, 2011).

particular, Pentecostalism has grown significantly in Latin America, so that many of the new immigrants now are Protestants. For example, Puerto Rico is 40% Protestant. There are several Latino denominations that are predominantly Puerto Rican, but several denominations, particularly mainline groups, have been importing seminary-trained leaders from the island to lead Latino ministries on the mainland. And because Puerto Rico has such a high percentage of Protestants, many Protestant Latino leaders in the United States have a Puerto Rican background.

Something similar is happening with Central American immigrants. Because many of them are already Protestants when they migrate to the United States, some of them are bringing their churches and denominations with them. This recent trend is accompanied by new ministry efforts among the U.S. population at large.

Other Protestant immigrants are joining existing U.S. denominations, particularly Pentecostal denominations. While many are forming Latino churches, others Latinos are joining "non-Latino" churches. Initially, Latino newcomers are over-looked, but some eventually become leaders; they are also changing the face of Pentecostal denominations. Currently, most of the growing and dynamic churches and denominations in the United States have a growing Latino presence. The denomination that has been most impacted by Latinos is the Assemblies of God. Today it is about 25% Latino and most of its growth is happening among Latinos.[23] A practical theology of leadership needs to call attention to contextual changes and migration patterns, not just as academic data but with awareness and responsiveness to

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[23] The General Secretary's Office of the Assemblies of God created a document called "Assemblies of God Statistics, USA" based on 2008 reports. It states that 20% of the denomination is Hispanic. Jesse Miranda, an AG Latino leader, told me that the AG is estimating that the number is closer to 25% as of 2011 (personal conversation). The book *Los Protestantes: An Introduction to Latino Protestantism in the United States* (Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO, 2011) by Juan Martínez addresses the growth of various denominations.

the men and women in the pews – their perspectives and networks, their well-being, and their gifts.

Step 3: Study and Reflect on Christian Resources (Branson)

For step 3, I work with René Padilla, Gerhard Lohfink, and Nancy Bedford regarding resources from our Christian tradition that can help us rethink leadership praxis. (The opening study of Acts 2 can also be regarded as appropriate for this step.) These theologians demonstrate capacities to address their own contexts while also providing perspectives that have great potential for U.S. churches.

René Padilla provides an integrative missional ecclesiology[24] that becomes the basis of a comprehensive framework for discipleship linking individual and congregational initiatives:

> Christian discipleship understood as a missionary lifestyle – the active participation in the realization of God's plan for human existence and the creation, revealed in Jesus Christ – to which the whole church and each of its members have been called, expresses, in a word, the essence of the church's mission.[25]

The church's mission is neither a focus on its own institutional structures nor on the work of an elite group of leaders. Rather,

> Gifts and ministries are the means used by the Spirit of God to equip the church as an agent of change in society – change that reflects God's plan for human life and the whole creation – and to equip all the faithful for the fulfillment of their vocation as God's co-workers in the world.[26]

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[24] C. René Padilla, "Introduction: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission" in *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation,* eds. Tetsunao Yamamori & C. René Padilla; trans. Brian Cordingly, (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004), 19–49; Padilla is Ecuadoran and has spent decades in Argentina.

[25] Padilla, 28.

[26] Padilla, 43.

Padilla's work undergirds a missional ecclesiology that attends to the topics of Christian anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, eschatology, and missiology. The vocation of the church (and of the members) is to participate in God's ongoing work of drawing the world (society) toward full humanness as revealed in Jesus Christ. In a framework that seems confusing to many U.S. Christians, Padilla's notes a congruence that affirms his Anabaptist theology (non-violent, non-coercive) and key elements of earlier liberation theologies (with an emphasis on justice, including the need to rearrange power dynamics) – that "the historical Jesus (is) a paradigm for the mission of the church."[27] In this framework, he is re-emphasizing the life of Jesus alongside the importance of Jesus' death and resurrection. Then Padilla calls for a non-hierarchical agency of those who make up the church, critiquing any worship and individualistic spirituality that is divorced from a daily life of engagement with context or any leadership framework of specialists providing a managed religion.[28] He seeks a different approach to organizational leadership:

> The historical nature of the church requires organization, but it is one thing for the church to be organized to maintain itself institutionally and to ensure its own survival, and something different to organize itself for integral mission, for collaboration with God in the fulfillment of his plan for human life and all creation…All churches are called to cooperate with God in the transformation of the world based on the gospel centered in Jesus Christ as Lord of the universe[29]

In these ways Padilla has re-emphasized the importance of the local church, framed priorities for organizational vocation and leadership, and called for all believers to

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[27] Padilla, 36.
[28] Padilla, 43–4.
[29] Padilla, 48–9.

engage all of creation toward an embodied eschatological hope.

Gerhard Lohfink, a German Roman Catholic priest, provides an important example of how praxis-theory-praxis can be implemented by a biblical theologian. His analysis of contextual forces and ecclesial life in mid-century led to his writing *Jesus and Community*.[30] His critique of Western individualism and the resulting cultural over-emphasis on interiority brought Lohfink to use his biblical scholarship to explore the essential social dimensions of faith, concluding, "What we now call church is nothing other than the community of those ready to live in the people of God."[31] In sequential chapters he exposits biblical texts and early resources concerning Jesus and Israel, Jesus and His disciples, the New Testament communities, and the ancient church. The framework of church as a contrast-society becomes central:

> [The] idea of the church as contrast-society does not mean contradiction of the rest of society *for the sake of contradiction.* Still less does church as contrast-society mean despising the rest of society due to elitist thought. The only thing meant is contrast *on behalf of others* and *for the sake of others…precisely because the church does not exist for itself, but completely and exclusively for the world, that it retain its own countenance.*[32]

Lohfink's work with the Sermon on the Mount, his descriptions of early church life, and his clarity about the church's missional existence on behalf of the world provide grounded and authoritative sources for today's churches. Lohfink's work was received by many as a refreshing, inspiring, faithful proposal in the midst of a theological era that too often served up theories that seemed disconnected from church life. Then, as Lohfink

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[30] Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community,* trans. John Galvin (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

[31] Lohfink, *Jesus and Community,* xi.

[32] Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*, 146 (italics in original).

received numerous invitations to speak and converse with churches, and as he moved from an academic environment to a church-based community, he began to rethink his exposition.

> There were many people who were seeking, on the basis of my book, to obtain concrete directions for the renewal of their parishes. I could not give them. It seemed as if the material itself refused to be made use of as a set of directions for pastoral practice.[33]

Lohfink re-enters the biblical materials with new eyes and provides us with *Does God Need the Church?* He is still convinced that God has always been calling and shaping a people on behalf of the world and that God's people are a contrast-society, and he affirms confidence in what he portrayed in the earlier volume. However, rather than describing traits of a model, a kind of repeatable blueprint, he finds that,

> It was always the Spirit of God who brought about new initiatives in the Church…Therefore following the plan of God means trusting in God's promises and remaining open to things that are humanly unforeseeable, in the knowledge and confidence of being sustained and led.

This ecclesiology of discerning God's current presence and actions is neither license for consumer choice nor a confidence in the interior biases of those disconnected from God's texts and community. Rather, it is a call to live in God's life, knowing "that God does not act anywhere and everywhere, but in a concrete place."[34]

Observing God's current, local initiatives is a key matter for organizational imagination and leadership. Lohfink realized that God did not provide strategies and plans but narratives, metaphors, practices, and signs, which we engage in our own specific times and locations by the Spirit, so that as we attend to those gifts we can

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[33] Gerhard Lohfink, *Does God Need the Church?,* trans. Linda Maloney, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press: 1999), vii.
[34] Lohfink, *Does God Need the Church?,* viii.

participate in God's life and mission. Discernment, concerning God and our own context, becomes central to the work of churches and the role of their leaders.

Argentinean Nancy Bedford, after expositing an ecclesial missiology grounded in the Trinity and the incarnation, focuses on discernment with attention to how the Holy Spirit engages the church in God's initiatives.[35] Churches do not need to receive master plans from books or hierarchy but instead are called develop skills and habits for timely and local faithfulness:

> The practice of discernment helps people in community, at a given time and place, to find out what actions appear to be consistent with their stand against evil, their desire to respond concretely to need, and their commitment to follow the way of Jesus Christ.[36]

Bedford draws on Luther and Bonheoffer in reclaiming the medieval monastic *hours* of *lectio, meditatio, oratio, tentatio*. In drawing on this historic tradition, Bedford also cites Paul Ricoeur's work on a hermeneutic of both suspicion and redemption; church work is penultimate.[37]

Lectio embraces the text as what was in events and inscription, what will be eschatologically, and what is as a specific church makes itself available to Word and Spirit regarding its own timely participation in *missio Dei*. With appropriate cautions about a church's capacities to manipulate meanings, Bedford values the communal, expectant practice that welcomes the Spirit to use the text to read us.[38] *Meditatio* is personal and corporate rumination – processing, listening, thinking, conversing as the church engages the text, submitting to the Spirit's

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[35] Nancy Bedford, "The Theology of Integral Mission and Community Discernment," in Yamamori and Padilla, (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004), 99–124.

[36] Bedford, in Yamamori and Padilla, 115.

[37] Bedford, in Yamamori and Padilla, 115, footnote 15; see also Nancy Bedford, "Little Moves Against Destructiveness: Theology and the Practice of Discernment," in *Practicing Theology,* eds. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy Bass, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2002), 157–81.

[38] Bedford, in Yamamori and Padilla, 116–120.

promptings, in the church's context. *Oratio* is prayer, a "conversation (that) might take the form of a supplication, an accusation, a demand, a request or a cry of pain or anguish. At other times, it can be an expression of thankfulness and of the peace which passes all understanding."[39] Bedford emphasizes that conversation involves a commitment to understand God's own viewpoint, so this is a listening, receptive activity. In Christian history, the fourth step is most often cited as *contemplatio*, an experience of awareness and rest in God's presence. In Bedford's exposition, the more Protestant version moves to *tentatio,* which counters the temptation to deception and avoidance in favor of "'trying out' what we believe we have discerned about our *sending* from our *lectio, meditatio* and *oratio*."[40] This experimental, tentative approach to discernment, in contrast to strategic master plans, makes possible a more innovative and participatory ecclesial life.[41]

In this set of resources for step 3, Padilla, Lohfink, and Bedford connect us with our theological heritage and traditional practices. We benefit because they engage the Christian tradition from the perspectives of their own communities of practice and invite us toward leadership frameworks that shape Christian communities that attend to scriptures, theology, traditional practices, the Spirit's promptings, and our own contexts.

Reading the Bible as Immigrants (Martínez)

Not only do professors and scholars from other nations provide important resources for U.S. churches, but the men and women in the pews of our churches are also key voices for our faithfulness. Justo González invites U.S. churches to listen to how Latinos read the

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[39] Bedford, in Yamamori and Padilla, 119.
[40] Bedford, in Yamamori and Padilla, 21.
[41] In this Practical Theology model, contexts, texts and resources are surfaced in service of shaping new praxis (step 5); so Bedford's work with the Christian tradition of discernment (noted here in step 3) can be engaged is the discernment work by leaders and participants in step 5.

Bible. In his book *Santa Biblia* he writes about "reading the Bible in Spanish."[42] Sometimes that literally means that people are reading in another language, but what is most important is that Latinos (and other minority groups) read from a different perspective. It is very important for leadership to encourage these culturally diverse voices at Bible studies, and to make sure that as we read the Bible we ask the question, "How are you reading it?" Leaders need to ask, "You who had an immigrant experience, what does Scripture say to you?"

González calls our attention to what Latinos can bring to the table, including what he calls a non-innocent view of history. Many people in the United States, especially many Christians, have a sense that somehow the United States is an exceptional country, a Christian country that has done little wrong, or has good intentions, even when it has not done right. Most people from Latin America recognize that all human governments are broken, are fallen. They also know that biblical figures are fallen people. So when average Latinos reads the Bible they are not surprised by the fact that David was an adulterer and a murderer, and that he was still God's elect. Most Latinos are not surprised by the people who are in Jesus' genealogy; they are not surprised that it includes prostitutes and other unwanted peoples. This is part of how we understand that God's grace works "in spite of." Leaders, as they attend to the participation of immigrants, with the priority of immigrants being subjects in the church, will want to bring these perspectives into the conversation.[43]

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[42] Justo González, *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

[43] Other examples of reading the Bible "in Spanish" are Oscar García-Johnson, *The Mestizo/aCommunity of the Spirit: A Postmodern Latino/aEcclesiology* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2009) and Eldin Villafañe, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); for other examples of how differing readings of scripture have an impact on theology, see Aida Besançon Spencer and William David Spencer (eds.), *Global God: The Multicultural Evangelical Views of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998). Mark Lau Branson and C. René Padilla edited a collection

Step 4: Recall and Discuss Stories

Habermas's theory of communication emphasizes that a group needs to shape interaction with attention to their objective, subjective, and social worlds. The subjective realities of church participants are key to awareness and understanding about each other and the context of the church's life and mission. When a church is working thoughtfully, reflectively, and prayerfully concerning praxis, there are numerous ways to surface important stories about the participants, the church, the context, and their more extended networks. In these conversations the goal is to learn about motivations, activities, imagined futures, contextual factors, inner promptings, information, diverse voices, roles, accomplishments, disappointments, how wisdom is gained, and various ways in which different persons provided elements of leadership.

Churches need diverse settings (large and small groups, festivals and worship, coffee bars and tea houses) as the telling and listening creates a fabric of narratives that are both personal and corporate. Sometimes stories can arise from the biblical narratives of step 3 or the cultural frameworks of step 2. There may be particular topics for stories (cultures and ethnicities, family roots and migrations, oppression and justice, avoiding or connecting with God, mercies and grace). The forms of church narratives may draw on historic traditions of storytelling or ballads. Regarding our topic of leadership, leaders can be asked when they felt the most synchronicity with members in ecclesial life and mission; participants can be asked when leaders provided guidance or helps concerning love of God and neighbor. As those stories are told, further questions can explore what actions were most valuable, how they experienced God's grace, and how they lived into God call to love neighbors. There is a crucial link between leadership and

of essays on biblical hermeneutics and Bible studies with attention to diverse perspectives in the Americas: *Conflict & Context: Hermeneutics in the Americas* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).

a church's missional formation (how it connects with local neighbors as well as missional initiatives of the global church), so stories are needed to serve discernment toward the kind of leadership and congregational practices that enhance that faithfulness.

Latino Stories and Church Perceptions (Martínez)

Most churches in the U.S. find it very difficult to see Latino immigrants as people who can be involved in mission. Historically, many U.S. churches have seen immigrants as objects of mission (if they have paid attention to them at all). Certainly most immigrants have a lot of needs, and churches can provide significant support. But leadership has a crucial role in helping people understand that just because an immigrant may need certain kinds of support services, and that a church's role in those services is important, immigrants are not just *objects* of mission. The stories of Latino immigrants can help us understand that they are often *subjects* in mission, particularly to their countries of origin. Latin American immigrant churches are often poor, but they tend to be involved in mission here, in Latin America, and around the world. Their approach to mission is very organic, following their familial and friendship networks, both in the U.S. and beyond.

Latin American immigrants in the U.S. are sending significant amounts of money to their relatives and friends in their countries of origin. They send more money than all of the U.S. foreign aid plus NGO support in the region put together. For example, about 25% of the economy of El Salvador is remittances, money that is sent by people here in the United States to help their relatives and friends. That is also the way U.S. Latino Christians are doing missions; they send money for church planting, orphanages, house construction, and many other types of projects in Latin America. They are also doing these types of mission in the United States, and they are working in different Latin America countries that represent the new networks they are creating in the United States.

Church leaders can create settings in which immigrant stories are shared within their own congregations and in conversations with Latino congregations. These stories can demonstrate the dynamic reality of how the poor, the immigrants, are being missionaries – how they are bringing the gospel north with them, and how they are using the resources they gain in the north to go back south and to go to other parts of the world.[44] It is not uncommon for some churches to send thousands of dollars for many good projects around the world (and these stories can be told). But there are people in the pews who are sending much smaller amounts yet making a much greater sacrifice and having a more direct impact, because this money is going directly to the point of need. These stories can shift our imaginations as we move into the discernment work of step 5.

Participants in many middle-class churches have their own understanding of an "average American experience." However, there are Latinos in their pews and in nearby churches who can provide new awareness and understanding when we hear their stories about reading the Bible, listening for the Spirit, and walking in faith in the midst of U.S. society. Churches can create spaces where we actively ask people to tell us what's going on – what is happening in their countries of origin, among immigrants they know, and how are they and other churches involved? If a church has only younger generations, they can invite the parents and grandparents to be guests; their stories can be welcomed as resources for understanding God's initiatives in various contexts. The foods and music of a culture can enhance storytelling by creating an environment of hospitality and expectation.

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[44] Over the last two years I have been involved in a study funded by the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California. I looked at how five transnational Latino Pentecostal churches developed mission projects in Latin America following their friendship and familial networks. The results of this study will be online at http://crcc.usc.edu/initiatives/pcri/la.html and available as part of a book on Pentecostalism in Los Angeles.

The U.S. bias toward certain understandings about power and importance can be challenged when those whom we assume to be weak are seen as actors, aligned with Bible stories, innovative in mission, and wise about their context. Churches need these stories if we are to have adequate resources for discernment.

Leaders can shape opportunities and motivations for storytelling. In the book *A Many Colored Kingdom*, author Elizabeth Conde-Fraizer has a chapter called "From Hospitality to Shalom."[45] In it she describes, in a very a concrete way, how church leadership can guide a congregation from hospitality to shalom. Churches often assume that if we are practicing hospitality then we've done something significant. Conde-Fraizer would say yes, this hospitality is significant, but it is only the first step. Hospitality provides the opportunity to open ourselves to others. In *Churches, Cultures and Leadership*, Branson and I note the importance and complexities of cross-cultural hospitality, because diverse cultures would engage new relationships differently.[46] For some cultures, bringing someone into their homes is a way to express hospitality. For others, creating homes of hospitality is a bit more complicated. But whenever we share the table, at church, in a restaurant, at neighborhood events, or in our homes, we have the opportunity to practice hospitality, since we are sitting together.

But Conde-Fraizer says that hospitality has to open the door to encounter. In encounter we need to listen to each other, we need to hear our stories. That's why Branson and I emphasize the importance of telling and listening to spiritual autobiographies.[47] How have we experienced being a Christian? How have we experienced the gifts and challenges of life? How have we experienced

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[45] Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "From Hospitality to Shalom" in *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*, eds. Elizabeth Conde-Fraizer, S. Steve King, and Gary A. Parrett (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 167–210.

[46] Branson and Martínez, 70–4, 132–53, 210–31.

[47] Branson and Martínez, 19, 24, 235–6.

God's presence in our lives? Here in the United States we also need to ask how we experienced being in the United States. Storytelling has to include everybody. It's not just the American listening to the immigrant; the immigrant also needs to listen to the Americans. We both have to tell our stories; we both have to listen to each other, encounter each other. This also means that we have to deal with the struggles, the pain, and sometimes the conflict that would come from listening to each other and recognizing that we do tell the story differently. We have had different experiences, and sometimes parts of our stories will clash and conflict, at which point it might be easier not to listen to each other and to walk away. Leadership is crucial in the encounter, inviting us to continue listening, to confront the conflicts that encounter sometimes brings to the life of the church or communities trying to work together.

The challenge to leadership is that of shaping spaces, encouraging stories, and conveying the value of all voices. Among the topics of our stories we need to include reflections on those who have provide leadership in our lives – formally and informally. When we hear how the leadership of others has influenced us and our churches, we can rethink what is important in our own praxes of leadership.

Step 5: Discern and Shape New Praxis (Branson)

How can leaders shape an environment in which participants move toward a new social imaginary and engage the work of innovation? A theological conviction behind the practical theology model is that God's reign is breaking in, notably in biblical texts, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, in the continuing activities of God's Spirit, and eschatologically as the future invades the present. God's reign of shalom, of saving justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and new creation, is engaged in step 5 as participants embrace and lean into God's reign. In order for churches to discern and engage God's inbreaking shalom, leaders nurture conversations, listening prayer, risk, and experimentation, rooted in

preceding steps and followed by continuing feedback loops and adjustments. For the purpose of this paper, what kind of experiments would help a learning community toward new leadership praxes? Step 5 draws on all of the resources of previous steps in service of framing these leadership perspectives and activities. From step 2, churches benefit from leadership that understands participants as subjects who gain competencies for communication as they clarify their vocation in a particular context. Participants gain an awareness of the changes in their context, especially regarding ethnicities and generations. From step 3, the church knows its need to counter societal norms that undermine Christian discipleship, that it does so in the presence of the living God who is among them and ahead on them in their context, and that they have inherited practices that make discernment an effective and empowering way of life. From step 4, the church has learned how to detect God's initiatives in their own personal and church narratives, how to surface their personal and corporate graces, and how to gain awareness of opportunities in their neighborhoods and networks. Each step offers insights into leadership – and thus each step also provides warnings about how leadership can thwart God's engagement of a people in a contextual missional life.

The discernment activities of step 5 may be in small groups or with an entire congregation. Some experiments will be informal, with perhaps only two or three participants; other experiments will engage a majority of a church, perhaps in partnership with other churches. Because the people in the pews are subjects, they are invited into the set of practices relevant to being Christians in a particular location – the discipleship priorities notes by Padilla, the Bible conversations encouraged by González, and *lectio divina* presented by Bedford. As they voice their growing awareness and understanding about the call of the gospel, their corporate imagination provides images of next steps – experiments that will help them discern the graces of God and how they might participate.

Discerning New Praxes in U.S. Borderlands (Martínez)

The activities of step 4 shape us for the discernment work in step 5. As we learn to listen, says Conde-Frazier, as we really encounter the other and start understanding why the other responds the way they do, we can build compassion. Compassion is about feeling with the other, recognizing why the other has the perspective that they do, and why that perspective is important to them. During discernment we won't necessarily begin with the same point of view, but we recognize that the other's perspective is important. This indicates the importance of Habermas's approach to communicative competence (in step 2). One cannot understand the other, one cannot have compassion, until one has listened.

Conde-Frazier notes that if we are to love the neighbor, hospitality needs to lead us to passion. Once we have understood and stood with the other and have felt their pain, then we can have the passion to walk together with the other. For example, U.S.-born people cannot have passion toward the undocumented until they encounter their stories and understand the complexities of the American experience. Unless one has compassion for their experience, one cannot have the passion necessary to say that the U.S. immigration system is broken.

Then, says Conde-Fraizer, after we feel compassion for each other, we can begin to build shalom – and we can work toward reconciliation. In this very simple model, Conde-Fraizer[48] encourages us as leaders to find ways to create hospitality, but then to use those spaces of hospitality to make sure that we have encounters, that we learn to listen to each other and then we go to the hard work not only of listening but of confronting how that listening affects us. Our discernment work may lead us to additional experiments with relationships, cooperation, and reconciliation. Because our learning shapes our hearts and perspectives, we work toward compassion

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[48] Conde-Frazier, 167–210.

and then create passion about working together. In that process we work together toward God's shalom and reconciliation.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE ACROSS CULTURES: THE SLI LEADERSHIP INCUBATOR

BRYAN D. SIMS AND J. PAULO LOPES

Abstract: The obstacle in many international contexts is too few leaders to equip and disciple the growing number of new disciples, which in turn breeds a lack of sustainability to movements. By contrast, a common obstacle domestically is overcoming a pastor-centered membership model of church for a lay mobilization model of disciple making. Using adaptive leadership, complexity, and missional DNA and with the assistance of international leaders and experience in a variety of contexts, SLI (Spiritual Leadership, Inc.) has developed three organizational principles that are proving to be transferrable across cultural boundaries with necessary contextualization. The contexts of West Virginia and Brazil have been selected to make specific cross-cultural application of this learning.

Introduction

What if you found yourself leading a dying church in a declining community? The people in the congregation are aging, they no longer live in the community around the church, and the cultural makeup of the community is different than those within the church. The church seems to have lost sight of its primary mission and lacks any sense of vision, which has resulted in mere maintenance and survival. What would you do?

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These types of congregations are legion, but we want to tell you about one in particular that we, the authors, worked with through the organization called Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI). It is a story that will serve as a vivid case study for our reflections in this space. The church is the product of three previous mergers of churches, each of which brought added resources and people for a season but did nothing to change the DNA. After about a decade, what remained each time was a group of divided people about the same size of only one of the churches before the mergers. This resulted in a membership model of church rather than a disciple-making model of church. Out of this came a growing sense of desperation to do something different but an unwillingness to merge again. In response to this desperation, this dying congregation made a bold move to sell everything they owned and pursue a complete restart.

To add yet another layer of complexity, leaders within this dying congregation recognized that many other churches in their community had similar stories and were also on the downhill slide toward slow death. A vision emerged of bringing churches together to restart – not merely to survive as before in merger, but instead to partner in new life that would bring missional impact in their community.

Does God still raise the dead? Is it possible for a complete restart to occur in which the tightly held values of the past can be transformed into something more missional? Can three unhealthy, dying congregations unite together and change the world around them? This is the story of Community of Grace United Methodist Church in Huntington, West Virginia.

As this story illustrates, one of the key problems in congregational renewal is finding ways to overcome a pastor-centered membership model of church for one that mobilizes the whole people of God and transforms the world through intentional disciple making. This

transformation necessarily becomes a cross-cultural experience if the gospel is to be incarnated.

Outside the European-North American context, the key obstacle is often having too few leaders to equip and disciple the growing number of new disciples, which in turn breeds a lack of sustainability to movements.[1] In attempting to address this issue, Western models have too often been adopted in international settings that lack indigenous contextualization. This is a dilemma on which SLI has been working passionately.

Over the last decade, Spiritual Leadership, Inc. has been leading transformation projects through a process called the Leadership Incubator in local churches, denominational groups, and Christ-centered nonprofit organizations. In each of these types of groups and in diverse contexts, this process is producing significant fruit. Recently, a group of leaders from various international contexts, including Brazil, Benin, Kenya, and India, participated with SLI over the course of a year to learn together and contextualize the Leadership Incubator for their own countries.

We assume that there are key transferrable principles of spiritual formation, leadership formation, and transformational movements that cross cultural boundaries. We also assume that the application of those principles must be inculturated indigenously (incarnated) and particularized to be useful. This paper proposes a synthesis of the key transferrable principles SLI's team of leaders are learning regarding how to cross cultural boundaries in the development of leaders and initiation of long-term transformational change. The contexts of West Virginia and Brazil have been selected to make specific cross-cultural application of this learning.

The Leadership Incubator is a process focused on the development of spiritual leaders in covenant community for the purpose of bringing greater missional effectiveness. This process brings leaders and their teams

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[1] P. Johnstone and J. Mandryk, *Operation World – 21st Century Edition* (Carlisle, United Kingdom: Pater Noster Publishing, 2005).

into an environment that transforms their ability to work together, continually improving both their lives as spiritual leaders and their ability to create generative ministries. Yet, before we explore the process of missional transformation, we need to direct our attention to an emerging paradigm of leadership, for it is the heart of the transformational process.

Complexity and Spirituality:
A New Paradigm of Leadership

Leadership studies have often been too simplistic in their approach, assuming that the actions and attitudes of leaders bring the rise or fall of organizations. As Yukl points out, much of the current leadership research has simply focused on leaders themselves, specifically their actions, roles, attitudes, and characteristics.[2] While leader actions and attitudes are important, a more realistic view of the world must see that what occurs within organizations and beyond (domestically and internationally) is much too complex to make such simple judgments. While certain research has sought to look at the context or situations in which leadership happens,[3] and still other research has looked at the dynamics occurring in the relationship of leaders and followers,[4] there is still a gap in understanding the actual process of leadership within organizations that takes the complex realities of twenty-first century organizational leadership into account.

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[2] G. A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006).

[3] F. E. Fiedler, *A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967) and P. Hersey and K. H. Blanchard, "Life Cycle Theory of Leadership," *Training and Development Journal* 23 (1969): 26–34.

[4] G. B. Graen and M. Uhl-Bien, "Relationship-Based Approach to Leadership: Development of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Leadership over 25 Years: Applying a Multi-Level Multi-Domain Perspective," *Leadership Quarterly* 6(2) (1995): 219–47.

Many organizations are facing today what Heifetz referred to as *adaptive challenges*.[5] These are challenges that require new learning, because applying current know-how is no longer effective. In the midst of such challenges, it is the natural response of many organizational leaders to attempt to lead based on former experience or to simply "fake it" when technical competence or previous experience no longer produce the results they had previously. Heifetz insists that adaptive work requires new learning not only by those with leadership roles but by everyone involved. Adaptive work requires creating an environment where values and assumptions can be challenged and revised and where learning and experimentation is welcomed.

In view of this, there must be a distinction drawn between leaders (including their most important roles) and the actual process of leadership. Leadership is most often defined as a process whereby one person influences a group toward achieving a common goal.[6] By contrast, leadership is now being understood as relationally constituted. An emerging literature called "complexity leadership theory" sees leadership as a complex, dynamic process that emerges in the interactions of people and ideas.[7] In this respect leadership catalyzes adaptive work, not by making change happen but by evoking change dynamics among people who work and learn together. The focus on leadership, then, shifts from the individual as a leader to the actions of leadership that foster creative and productive learning within organizations. Thus, leadership is fundamentally a system phenomenon.[8]

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[5] R. A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[6] P. G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 2004).

[7] B. B. Lichtenstein, M. Uhl-Bien, R. Marion, A. Seers, J. D. Orton, and C. Schreiber, "Complexity Leadership Theory: An Interactive Perspective on Leading in Complex Adaptive Systems," *Emergence: Complexity & Organization* 8(4) (2006): 2–12.

[8] R. Marion and M. Uhl-Bien, "Leadership in Complex Organizations," *Leadership Quarterly* 12(4) (2001): 389–418; R. Marion and M. Uhl-Bien,

Leaders enable the conditions within which the process of adaptive leadership occurs but are not themselves the direct source of change.

Writing on complex theories of leadership, E. B. Dent has endeavored to relate complexity theory with workplace spirituality.[9] Struck by the absence of consideration of spiritual dimensions or wisdom traditions within complexity research, Dent points out that although most researchers do not see God's hand in the data, his perspective in looking at the same evidence is that many complexity theory philosophies and evidence strengthen the case for the presence and action of a supreme being.

Another scholar/practitioner who has integrated complexity perspectives with Christian spirituality is Alan Hirsch, who studied the two most explosive Jesus movements in history, the early church and the Chinese underground church in the latter half of the twentieth century. He identified six key themes that were resident in both movements that are consistent with complexity.[10] Hirsch begins his book with a rather compelling diagnosis of the current state of Western Christianity:

> We find ourselves lost in a perplexing global jungle where our well-used cultural and theological maps don't seem to work anymore…The truth is that the twenty-first century is turning out to be a highly complex phenomenon where terrorism, paradigmatic technological innovation, an unsustainable environment, rampant consumerism, discontinuous change, and perilous ideologies confront us at every point. In the face of this, even

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"Complexity Theory and Al-Qaeda," *Emergence: Complexity & Organization* 5 (2003): 56–78; and M. Uhl-Bien, R. Marion, and B. McKelvey, "Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting Leadership from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Era," *Leadership Quarterly* 18(4) (2007): 298–318.

[9] E. B. Dent, "Reconciling Complexity Theory in Organizations and Christian Spirituality," *Emergence: Complexity & Organization* 5(4) (2003): 124–40.

[10] A. Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006).

the most confident among us would have to admit, in our more honest moments, that the church as we know it faces a very significant adaptive challenge. The overwhelming majority of church leaders today report that they feel it is getting much harder for their communities to negotiate the increasing complexities in which they find themselves. As a result, the church is on a massive, long-trended decline in the West.[11]

According to Hirsch, the inherited formulas, tools, and techniques will not likely work anymore. The church is facing an adaptive challenge to find a new paradigm for faithfulness as the body of Christ. Hirsch insists that "we are now living in a time when only a solution that goes to the very roots of what it means to be Jesus's people will do."[12] However, when glimpses of an answer come they are so radical and disturbing in nature that we often retreat to the safety of the familiar and the controllable.

By studying several of the greatest Jesus movements in history, Hirsch discovers the makeup of what he refers to as missional DNA (mDNA). As he puts it, "Einstein said that when the solution is simple, God is speaking…There are six simple but interrelating elements of mDNA, forming a complex and living structure."[13] These elements represent the simple rules or principles that form the fractal-like pattern of any authentic, missional Jesus movement. Simply put, these elements are present at every level within a living system, at the macro level (the overall movement), the group level, and the micro level (the individual). In fact, Hirsch says that this mDNA is present in every true follower of Jesus and every group of Jesus followers, although it may be latent or dormant. These six elements of mDNA are: (a) Jesus is Lord; (b) disciple making; (c) missional-incarnational impulse; (d) apostolic environment; (e) organic systems; and (f) *communitas,* not community. Further description of

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[11] Hirsch, 16.
[12] Hirsch, 17.
[13] Hirsch, 24.

these six elements, as well as other complexity research, will be forthcoming in the case study discussion.

SLI Leadership Incubator: The Adaptive Model

Using the backdrop of adaptive leadership, complexity, and missional DNA (mDNA) and with the assistance of domestic and international leaders and experience in a variety of contexts, SLI has developed an incubator process of leadership development. In the typical Leadership Incubator environment, 6 to 12 leaders spend significant amounts of time together for at least a year. Each session is structured around the integration of three organizational principles and three operational values that are proving to be transferrable across cultural boundaries. The three organizational principles are defined as a) becoming spiritual leaders, b) creating environments of transformation, and c) developing processes/systems that produce fruit. Each of these principles are characterized by three operational values: Loving, Learning, and Leading (L3).

In the environment and process of the Leadership Incubator, the assumption is made that learning happens best in community interaction and overcoming many of the obstacles faced today in various contexts will require new solutions. As previously mentioned, this is what Ronald Heifetz refers to as adaptive challenges.[14] Overcoming adaptive challenges requires new learning by all those with the problem. The leader's role in such situations shifts away from giving answers toward increasing the adaptive capacities of the team and organization. In seeking to model this same phenomenon, SLI invites leaders, including the aforementioned international leaders, into this process to learn adaptively together.

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[14] Heifetz.

Key Transferrable (Organizational) Principles of
the SLI Leadership Incubator:

The first organizational principle of SLI is *becoming spiritual leaders* in covenant community who love, learn, and lead (L3) together. We work on this principle by means of a variety of processes integrating spiritual formation and leadership development in covenant community. The theological foundation for this generative principle is that Christology leads to missiology and missiology, in turn, leads to ecclesiology. In other words, Christ must remain at the center for spiritual leadership. The mission of spiritual leaders is grounded in Christ's mission. The church, then, gets its identity from the mission it participates with in Christ, which is God's mission. This first organizational principle states that leaders should exercise authentically the type of leadership that is desired in others.[15] What is Christ-like leadership? The Apostle Paul describes Christian leadership as a unique form of servanthood modeled after Jesus. Christ-like leadership, described in Philippians chapter 2 involves *kenosis*, making the self nothing for the sake of God's mission in the world (complementary to Level 5 Leadership in *Good to Great).*[16]

The second organizational principle of SLI is *creating environments for transformation*. This begins with the intentional creation of L3 covenants in each Leadership Incubator team. This intentional environment involves the shift to a team leadership paradigm. Team leadership is necessary because the assumption is being made that solo leaders cannot overcome adaptive challenges alone. Instead, leaders create intentional environments in which the adaptive capacities of the organization can be increased through the interactive learning that occurs within shared team leadership. In this intentional environment, time is given to developing team-based

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[15] R. E. Quinn, *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996) and Arbinger Institute, *Anatomy of Peace: Resolving the Heart of Conflict* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2006).

[16] J. C. Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

spiritual formation practices and to developing and multiplying team-based ministry. The theological foundation for this is that God lives in community as the Trinity, and Jesus modeled trinitarian life in community, in *koinonia*, with the disciples. In Christian community, transformation occurs through interaction and mission together rather than through information given solely by a leader.[17] A communal environment moves teams of leaders into an incarnational process of inhabiting, of indwelling the lives and cultures of others, just as the Son of God came to dwell among us. The implication of this is that effective generative leadership requires incarnational learning: getting into the "shoes" or context of others and knowing it from the inside.

The third organizational principle of SLI is *developing processes/systems that produce fruit*. Leading change involves several key elements within the Leadership Incubator. First, the team engages in Ministry Action Planning (MAP), which is grounded in the current reality (context), focused toward embodying values, mission, and vision, and implemented through intentional disciple-making systems that allow for continual improvement and multiplication of team ministry and mission (mDNA).[18] Another element in leading change involves moving past technical problems to truly facing and overcoming adaptive challenges (getting to root causes) together.[19]

The materials that SLI uses are focused on these three organizational principles and are designed to elicit transformative interaction among the team of leaders. While the principles transfer across cultural lines, the specific content and delivery methods relaying those principles often shift as the principles are contextualized for specific situations. Rather than detail those contextual nuances in theoretical terms, the following discussion highlights how the SLI organizational

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[17] Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey.

[18] Hirsch.

[19] Heifetz.

principles play out in two different settings, one domestic and one international.

Case Study: Community of Grace UMC in Huntington, West Virginia

Here we pick up the transformation story in Huntington, West Virginia, which began with three dying and declining United Methodist churches. All three churches engaged in the beginning stages of a Leadership Incubator to discern how they might voluntarily die and be reborn as one new missional community of faith. SLI refers to this particular type of project as a ReStart.

The process began with the launching of a new team with participants from each of the three aforementioned churches. This team began by crafting a covenant for purposes of accountability and clarity of expectations. It included elements related to intentional spiritual formation together, trust and love for one another, and focus toward clarifying the current reality and discerning a unified vision. Through the creation of this intentional L3 covenant environment, the team began to grow spiritually together in a safe place and began to dream God's dreams again. In clarifying their current reality, they discovered that incremental change would never bring the kind of lasting and transformative fruit they were imagining. Led by the Holy Spirit, they pursued Christ and learned together Christ's vision for them. As a result, they began to model a new set of values for the congregations that put Jesus Christ at the center of their lives and focused on Christ's mission into the world. Only out of this focus did the church have meaning and purpose.

Coinciding with all of this, the team began to lead the congregations into joint prayer, discernment, and listening. Since there was no set agenda for where this Leadership Incubator process would lead, the three churches had the opportunity to pray and listen to one another regularly for most of a year. The ReStart team facilitated these times of prayer and listening events but saw their role as recorders of learning rather than

presenters of information. Through these discernment events, a clear vision began to emerge of where God was leading them. After many months, the three churches voted separately to voluntarily close their doors, which involved giving up their leadership, buildings, and charter. The hope was to recapture the best of the missional heritage of the three churches without carrying all of the baggage into the future.

At above 90 percent in each of the congregations, the decision was to close and ReStart as one new missional community of faith. They took the name Community of Grace United Methodist Church and began their journey toward living out God's vision for them. A new team was formed to continue the Leadership Incubator process that was particularly selected based on complementary gifts and passions (see Ephesians 4). While the pastors of the three former churches were involved in all of these transitions, the new church was clearly shifting away from the former pastor-centered membership model to a lay-centered missional disciple-making model. The remainder of the story will be described using Hirsch's framework of mDNA.

Jesus is Lord

As Hirsch points out, the simple confession that Jesus is Lord is at the center and circumference of every significant Jesus movement, and with this confession they changed the world. In order to survive persecution that was present in both the early Church period and in the Chinese movement, faith became linked in utter simplicity to Jesus, and they jettisoned all unnecessary impediments. Hirsch explains that the simple gospel (meaning "good news") message of Jesus spread in patterns similar to an epidemic. "Given favorable social and religious conditions, and the right people relationships, easily transferable ideas can create powerful movement that can change societies."[20] Thus, as the

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[20] Hirsch, 86.

people of Israel were to have allegiance to One God (Deut. 6:4–9), so Jesus becomes the one reference point for life and existence for the church. This means that everything – one's work, one's domestic life, one's health, one's worship – has significance to God and is to belong to God in Christ Jesus. This necessarily removes any division between what is sacred and secular, but instead all of life belongs to God. The early Christian movement and the Chinese underground church discovered this claim that Jesus is Lord as their sustaining and guiding center in the midst of a massive adaptive challenge. The other five elements of mDNA revolve around this one.

At Community of Grace, the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of John served as the foundation on which the whole transformation process was built. John 15 insists that abiding in Jesus is the key to fruitfulness and joy and that apart from Jesus we can do nothing. With this in mind, the ReStart team and each consecutive leadership team at Community of Grace purposed to set apart Jesus as Lord (I Peter 3:15), and they built accountability to this commitment into their covenant. It was their conviction that being authentic disciples of Jesus must precede any efforts at making disciples of Jesus. This reiterates SLI's first organizational principle of becoming spiritual leaders (like Jesus). Staying deeply connected with Jesus forms the root from which the fruit comes through the Spirit's activity in the branches.

Apostolic Environment

The John 15 passage of abiding in Christ uses the imagery of the vine and the branches. Interestingly, this imagery has application both personally and collectively. It is critical for each individual follower to abide in Christ; however, the metaphor is one of a vineyard, not a vine and single branch. In the Western context, this is often overly individualized.

The second organizational principle of SLI is creating an environment for transformation. This environment is one of love, trust, and mutual accountability in covenant community. The Trinity serves as the primary model for

this type of community, and the New Testament describes how the early Church followed this pattern in the gospels and the book of Acts. This environment creates the context for deeper pursuit of loving God and neighbor (L1), as well as for learning (L2) and leading (L3) together. Thus, it is a formational and relational environment, as well as a missional environment since those within the environment are pursuing greater effectiveness at both being and making disciples. Hirsch describes this as an apostolic environment, which is one of the elements of mDNA.

Simply put, the word apostle means "sent one," so for Jesus movements to multiply to become movements, a sending environment is necessary. Once again, Hirsch points out the massive adaptive challenge that the church is facing, which is rooted in the prevailing Constantinian (Christendom) form of church, with all its associated institutional rigidity. Missiologist Alan Roxburgh insists that the current situation is one of liminality, a transition from one fundamental form of the church to another.[21] This liminality necessitates that apostolic role. Hirsch indicates that true apostolic influence is characterized by a more bottom-up, highly relational quality of leadership rather than the typical CEO-type leadership that tends to disempower others.

Donde Ashmos Plowman and his colleagues discuss how small changes in the initiating conditions brought about the emergence of radical change in a church.[22] The small change came from an informal group only somewhat connected to the church that acted primarily out of boredom and began a homeless breakfast. In this context, a far-from-equilibrium state gave way to emergent self-organization. That far-from-equilibrium

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[21] A. J. Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership & Liminality* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997).

[22] D. A. Plowman, L. T. Baker, T. E. Beck, M. Kulkarni, S. T. Solansky, and D. V. Travis, "Radical Change Accidentally: The Emergence and Amplification of Small Change" *Academy of Management Journal* 50(3) (2007): 515–43.

state was brought about by four factors: (a) imminence of organizational decline; (b) change in leadership; (c) struggles with identity; and (d) ongoing major organizational conflict. They point out that in a complex adaptive system (CAS), individuals and groups form a nonlinear network. Every time two people interact, the actions of one have consequences on the other, whose response feeds back information to the first person, who then responds again. The result is a continuous circular loop, or what Weick called a "double interact."[23] Negative feedback attempts to counteract deviations, while positive feedback amplifies them. In this particular church situation, the actions served to amplify the small change into continuous radical change. The interaction of resources, language, and symbols not only amplified the initial small change but also impacted each other bringing further amplification. Interestingly, the pastoral leaders in the church were not involved in the initial small change, but their use of language and symbols helped to clearly articulate the transformation that was occurring and served to create what Hirsch calls an apostolic environment.[24] This language of transformation "played a role in creating, sustaining, and maintaining the church's unfolding new vision and values."[25]

At the leadership-team level, Hirsch suggests an open learning system, which allows for "fit and split" and "contend and transcend."[26] The term *fit* refers to that which binds together in unity, namely the group's common ethos and purpose. *Split* occurs when diversity of expression is intentionally allowed in the team. *Contend* refers to leadership permitting and even encouraging disagreement, debate, and dialogue around core tasks, and *transcend* means that all in the group collectively agree

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[23] K. E. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

[24] Hirsch.

[25] Plowman, Baker, Beck, Kulkarni, Solansky, and Travis, 532.

[26] R. T. Pascale, *Managing on the Edge: How Successful Companies Use Conflict to Stay Ahead* (London: Viking, 1990).

to overcome disagreement for the sake of finding new solutions. This type of team approach to leadership serves to create apostolic environments as well.

The former reality of the three congregations that became Community of Grace was one of decline and despair. Leadership was reserved for only a few (primarily clergy), and the environment was more about survival than mission. The ReStart process brought with it a shift to a team approach to leadership and mission. Over time, this team environment brought empowerment to the whole people and brought a grassroots, relational quality to the emerging transformation. Within this team environment, pastors had important roles to play, but they were neither the center of ministry nor the source of change. Similarly to the Plowman et al. discussion, both the pastors and key lay leaders began to recognize God's vision emerging and point attention to it by use of language and symbols.

The leadership team that formed upon the launch of the new community of faith functioned in the same covenantal (L3) ways as did the initial ReStart team. Built on the foundation of spiritual formation in covenant, the team became an open learning system as Hirsch and others describe. In this environment, the team experienced remarkable unity of purpose, while simultaneously sharing tremendous diversity of perspectives. Their shared mission together gave them the courage to risk and opened the doors for the church to become a sending community.

With unity and trust in place in the leadership team, they were able to clarify the current reality of their context. As in the Plowman et al. article, the far-from-equilibrium state at Community of Grace was brought on by similar factors. The leadership team spent time discerning, researching, and clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of the new community of faith. In addition, they began extensive research in the city of Huntington that led not only to learning but also to discovering a sense of vision for what their impact could be. This

vision was emergent in nature over time and the leaders on the team used language and symbols to point others in the church and community to this vision. In the midst of discerning this emergent vision, the team also clarified their values and challenged their former assumptions about church. They began to hold one another accountable to personally embodying their new shared values, mission, and vision. This set the context for Community of Grace to become a sending environment.

Missional-Incarnational Impulse

In order to understand their sense of mission, Community of Grace looked no further than Christ's Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20. They determined to understand and embody what it meant to both be and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This necessarily led them outside the walls of their church into the community in which they live. This new impulse was a radical shift from their former attractional model.

Hirsch describes the missional-incarnational impulse as the "dynamic outward thrust and the related deepening impulse, which together *seed* and *embed* the gospel into different cultures and people groups."[27] Thus, this missional-incarnational impulse is the practical outworking of the mission of God and the incarnation. It is rooted in how God redeemed the world and how God revealed himself to us. Hirsch contrasts a missional/sending impulse with the attractional model that is more popular in the Western church. The former is about multiplication and the latter is about addition.[28]

The Incarnation (see John 1:1-18) is God's mysterious action of moving into our neighborhood in Christ Jesus as an act of humble love. Jesus not only identified with us in a radical way but also revealed to us the human image of God. As Hirsch puts it, "The Incarnation not only qualifies God's act in the world, but must also qualify

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[27] Hirsch, 25.

[28] Hirsch.

ours."[29] If God reached out to us in a loving, humble, incarnational way, then our reaching to the world should likewise be incarnational. "Incarnational ministry essentially means taking the church to the people, rather than bringing people to the church."[30] Together, this missional-incarnational impulse represents the church's innate reproductive capacity. "If you think about it, this is actually how all powerful movements start. It begins with a group of people impassioned with a cause that reproduces itself through multiplication systems."[31]

The missional-incarnational impulse at Community of Grace is still growing. It began to form in the leadership team's covenant discussions about being authentic disciples and God's mission into the world in Christ. These discussions prompted experimentation in the community, which began simply with listening to the people in their neighborhood. This listening planted seeds for relationship to form that provided insight into how they could love and serve their neighbors. Out of this, partnerships began to emerge between the church and the neighborhood association, the schools, and other churches. In addition, they began to hold "Engage" events in the community to build relationship and serve others and potentially connect them to the family of Jesus followers.

Disciple-Making and Organic Systems

The new missional-incarnational impulse brought the necessity of developing an intentional system of making disciples, which is one of the ways they embodied SLI's third organizational principle. Hirsch points out that the second element of mDNA is disciple making, which is the irreplaceable and lifelong task of becoming like Jesus by embodying his message. According to Hirsch, it is an irreplaceable core task of the Church and must be structured into every church's basic formula. This is

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[29] Hirsch, 133.
[30] Hirsch, 135.
[31] Hirsch, 139.

where Jesus himself focused his efforts. This element "is at once the starting point, the abiding strategic practice, as well as the key to all lasting missional impact in and through movements."[32] He explains that forming simple disciple-making systems was key not only to the two primary movements he studied but also to many others including the Methodist movement in eighteenth century England led by the Wesleys. Embodying this element requires a move away from consumerism in local churches and toward creating environments for people to become like Jesus. This is not only embodying Christ-likeness, which involves patterning and modeling, but also transmission of Jesus' life and message in viral patterns through relationships.

Another element of mDNA is to devise organic systems. Interestingly, organic images of the church and the kingdom of God abound in scriptures, including the body, field, yeast, seeds, trees, living temples, vines, animals, etc. According to Hirsch, these images draw their primary theological foundation from the biblical doctrine of creation (cosmology). "The Holy Spirit is described as the essence of life/spirit: it was he who brooded over the chaos of the preformed universe and brought forth form."[33] All too often, though, contemporary images of church leadership and structure are mechanistic. Hirsch characterizes a living systems approach as one that seeks to structure the common life of an organization around the natural rhythms and structures that mirror life itself. This was certainly true in both the early church and Chinese underground church movements. Organic structuring fosters greater adaptation to different conditions and activation of latent intelligence when needed (emergence) precisely because structures for human interaction are constantly forming and reforming around people's intrinsic interests and needs.

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[32] Hirsch, 103.
[33] Hirsch, 181.

With clarity around their focus (values, mission, vision), the leadership team at Community of Grace engaged in designing an intentional and simple disciple-making system. This simple system was designed to be generative in nature and required the launch of more teams with the same mDNA as the leadership team (L3 covenant environment). Over the course of the next few months, the participants in the leadership team began launching new teams that were directly relationally connected to the leadership team and to one another in partnered mission. These four teams represented the different steps or stages in the church's new disciple-making system: Engage, Connect, Grow, and Send.

The Engage team is particularly focused on engaging outside the walls of the church building in incarnational ways with those in need and disconnected to the good news of Christ. Their role is to develop relationships with persons in hopes of connecting them to the family of Jesus followers and to Jesus. This team hands off persons to the work of the Connect Team that helps people get connected to the church and to Jesus in authentic relationships. As true connection happens, the work of the Grow team facilitates the development of disciples of Jesus through intentional covenant groups. Finally, the work of the Send team assists disciples in discerning their own gifts and passions and sends them into ministry and mission accordingly. Thus, the cycle begins again and is continuously repeated and reproduced.

It is important to remember that this organic network is held together by a common set of values, principles, and purpose rather than an institutional structure. This type of organic system has the potential of virus-like growth, which both Hirsch[34] and Marion and Uhl-Bien[35] compare even to organizations such as Al Qaeda. Hirsch says, "It is this aspect of organic multiplication at a remarkable rate that makes the missional-incarnational

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[34] Hirsch.
[35] Marion and Uhl-Bien.

impulse so very powerful."[36] Organic multiplication begins much slower than addition, but in the end is infinitely more effective.

Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja indicate that CAS become more vulnerable the more homogenous they become.[37] They write, "To thwart homogeneity, nature relies on the rich structural recombination triggered by sexual reproduction,"[38] which maximizes diversity. This is why churches, like people, must multiply by reproduction rather than cloning. Hirsch says that "*reproducibility* needs to be built into the initiating model through the embedding of a simple guiding system that ensures that the organization will continue and evolve through a process akin to sexual reproduction, whereby we share new genetic information and yet remain the same species."[39] He isolates the elements of mDNA as these simple, reproducible, guiding agents in Jesus movements.

By structuring themselves in an intentional, organic system around disciple making, Community of Grace has overcome their former mechanistic structure and created the environment for generative growth. In this system, what was once leadership by the few has become leadership distributed to many through intentional reproduction. In fact, the four new teams (Engage, Connect, Grow, Send) created by lay leaders on the leadership team are now involving around 25 percent of the congregation in leadership and responsibility of embodying their disciple-making system. There are many others as well who are involved in mission and ministry being led by these teams. It is important to note that while Community of Grace has radically restructured around disciple making, their new structure is still in line with the requirements laid out in the United Methodist Book of Discipline.

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[36] Hirsch, 207.
[37] Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja.
[38] Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja, 28–9.
[39] Hirsch, 213.

The fruit of all of this is a new (resurrected) missional community of faith that is intentionally developing disciple-making disciples within covenant teams that are reproducing similar teams. They are engaging the poor, baptizing and discipling new Jesus followers, and sending people into partnered mission and ministry. Additionally, they are building partnerships with other churches, with the school system, and with the neighborhood association to more effectively embody their mission and values. They are indeed living into their vision becoming a vital church living through the power of the Holy Spirit, creating passionate disciples of Jesus Christ, and transforming lives and the world.

Communitas, not Community

The final element of mDNA is *communitas,* not mere community. Hirsch describes it this way, "The persecuted church in both the early Christian movement and in China experience each other in the context of shared ordeal that binds them together in a much deeper form of community than the one we have generally become accustomed to."[40] He indicates that in the Western church there has been a significant move from the missional idea of "me for the community and the community for the world" to the more consumptive "the community for me." Hirsch draws upon anthropologist Victor Turner's use of the ideas of *liminality* and *communitas*.[41] Turner studied rite-of-passage ceremonies in African tribes, and the term *liminality* was used to describe the transition process accompanying a fundamental change of state or social position. It is that period "betwixt and between" that is "frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility."[42] In the midst of *liminality,* those experiencing the shared ordeal move from being disoriented and individualistic to a deep

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[40] Hirsch, 218.

[41] V. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1969).

[42] Turner, 95.

bond of comradeship and community forged by the conditions of *liminality*. This deep comradeship and community is what Turner refers to as *communitas,* which is always linked to the experience of *liminality*.

For Hirsch, *communitas* presents a challenge to the safe, middle-class, consumerist captivity of the church. "And it is here where the adaptive challenge of the twenty-first century could be God's invitation to the church to rediscover itself as a missional *communitas*."[43] Hirsch argues that *liminality* and *communitas* ought to be the normative experience of the pilgrim people of God. Transformation is a biblical norm: it comes in the context of great challenge, including the exodus, the exile to Babylon, the time of Jesus, and the early church. The implication is that the church is "always reforming," always transcending its current forms.

All living systems will cease to exist if they fail to respond to their environments. The law of requisite variety reminds us that "the survival of any living system depends on its capacity to *cultivate* (not just tolerate) adaptability and diversity in its internal structure."[44] The system in static equilibrium does not have the adequate internal resources or mechanisms to respond to adaptive challenges. Therefore, self-transcendence is essential to organic health. This principle is all the more true of the church. According to Hirsch, "*Mission is, and must be,* [as the movement beyond itself] *the organizing principle of the church.*"[45]

The adaptive challenges that the three former churches were facing brought a desperation that helped initiate change. The willingness to change allowed leaders to come together into covenant and reconnect with the primary mission of the church. In the midst of these shared adaptive struggles, *communitas* began to emerge. To this point, the members of the leadership teams regularly articulate their deep trust, love, and camaraderie with one

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[43] Hirsch, 222.
[44] Pascale, Millemann, and Gioja, 20.
[45] Hirsch, 232.

another in those covenant environments. In the midst of *communitas,* leaders were able to articulate the emerging vision in ways that transformed their living in the present.

For this purpose, a vision of ourselves in mission, going beyond present boundaries, engaging people and cultures that are truly "other," catalyzes communal action. As Hirsch states,

> [H]olding a definite sense of vision (a preferred future) and mission informs and alters how people think and how they will behave in the present. Viewed this way, the future is a means to alter behavior. The new behavior shapes the ends, which in turn alter the future, and the spiral continues.[46]

Thus, vision serves as a catalyst, a tag, or a strange attractor.[47] Visions such as Kennedy's moonwalk and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech evoke missional *communitas.* Hirsch says, "We look back on such events as "inevitable" but "it is not so at all. We seem to lose perspective on the missional *communitas* that visions like these evoke…When we are caught up into it, and pursue it, we are changed, and we go on to enact history."[48]

SLI's role in the Leadership Incubator is simply to keep the three organizational principles before the leadership teams and to provide objectivity and accountability for those teams to live out precisely what they themselves are designing as the Spirit leads. Thus, SLI is modeling the pursuit of Christ (becoming spiritual leaders) and participating in the covenant, while intentionally creating and shepherding the environment and process. All the design and fruit from the Leadership Incubator has emerged from those in the new church who were facing those adaptive challenges.

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[46] Hirsch, 233.

[47] Marion and Uhl-Bien.

[48] Hirsch, 234.

Context 2: Brazil

The West Virginia case study illustrates the three SLI organizational principles and how spiritual leadership can grow and transformational change can occur across cultural lines. It is helpful, however, to discuss the use of these principles within an international context. The context of Brazil was chosen because of the interest in launching SLI Leadership Incubators there and due to the participation and reflections of a key Brazilian leader within SLI.

In Brazil, there are two unique challenges that are being faced: context and the question of necessity and/or relevancy. One challenge presented by the Brazilian ministry context is that, unlike most of the contexts in which the Leadership Incubator model has been applied, this is a church that has experienced much growth in recent years. Consequently, not only do materials need to be translated, but they also need to be refocused, since much of the English translation of materials assumes a context of decline within the church. While the key organizational principles apply in the growing church context as they do in a declining church context, there is a significant shift in focus from turnaround and renewal to accelerating and sustaining momentum. Additionally, the translation of materials also includes shifts in metaphors and symbols and delivery time reduction, since at least one facilitator (during initial Leadership Incubators) is assumed not to be fluent in Portuguese. Translation and interpretation potentially doubles the time of presentations.

Context also presents itself as a challenge when it comes to establishing covenant. This is due to the fact that covenantal relationships, while formed very naturally in Brazilian culture, are also very informal in nature. Therefore, intentionally establishing covenant for a particular reason brings the risk of being unnatural or forced. One needs to discover ways (with the help of local leaders) to naturally develop the need for covenant in the context of a Leadership Incubator. Nonetheless, the adaptive nature of the Leadership Incubator allows

for enough flexibility to become effective in diverse contextual settings.

The question of necessity and/or relevancy is a challenge because even though it is believed that the core principles of the Leadership Incubator remain true and effective across cultures, it is still up to local leaders to decide whether or not this is a model that might be effective in developing generative ministries in their context. According to Bishop João Carlos Lopes, president of the council of bishops of the Methodist Church in Brazil, a leadership development model such as the Leadership Incubator is needed and vital to the current situation of the Methodist Church in Brazil.[49] It is needed not only as a means of accelerating growth but also as a means of creating balance and sustainability in the midst of growth. The uniqueness of the Leadership Incubator model lies in the fact that it does not simply develop spiritual leaders. It does so in the context of community, where leaders learn with and from each other, grow together in faith, and learn how to develop *systems that allow for continual improvement and multiplication of team ministry and mission* (mDNA).[50] Such movement does not always happen naturally in the context of rapid growth and the urgency of daily "to-dos."

Bishop Lopes added that the flip side of rapid growth is a certain blindness that occurs amongst leaders due to the excitement in the midst of growth. This can bring a failure to realize the continuous need for change in order to adapt to new demands. New situations make our past experiences and thought references inadequate to address the current demands. This takes us back to Heifetz's *adaptive challenges* and the idea that current challenges require new learning because applying current know-how is no longer effective.[51] There are few situations in the life of organizations that present more challenges requiring new learning than one of rapid growth. The Leadership

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[49] J. C. Lopes, (Interview April 5, 2011).
[50] Hirsch.
[51] Heifetz.

Incubator model allows leaders to refocus and learn together in the context of their teams. At the same time, they develop stronger relationships with each other and with God. The long-term nature of this model keeps it from being "hit or miss" and allows for cyclical continuity.

That all being said, the temptation for leaders in Brazil to forget their "first love" and lose sight of spiritual growth and intentional disciple making is as real as it is for our North American brothers and sisters. Thus, the focus on becoming spiritual leaders (principle 1), creating environments for transformation (principle 2), and developing fruit-producing processes/ systems (principle 3) is not only applicable but crucial. The intentional focus on these principles is precisely what is needed to accelerate movement and momentum both spiritually and missionally. The environment of the L3 covenant is key.

The long-term expectation created in an international partnership such as this is that Brazilian leaders would in turn be able to contextually utilize the Leadership Incubator in their missional efforts. Bishop Lopes added that the Methodist Church in Brazil now has missionaries in England, Peru, Paraguay, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. As the Leadership Incubator model adapts to the ministry context in Brazil, there are no reasons for it not to be used reversely in Brazilian missionary efforts.

Critical Reflection and Summary

Although the SLI Leadership Incubator is producing much fruit, it is important to identify some challenges and limitations for this model. Regarding challenges, the model has been applied in a variety of different cultural contexts within the United States, but there is much to learn about contextualization within international contexts. Those international leaders who have applied this model are pleased with the initial results, but much more data is needed.

One important limitation of this model is that it is not designed to produce quick results. While fruit can be seen in the initial moments, the SLI Leadership Incubator is designed with a long-term view of organizational change in mind. Another limitation is that the model is such a different paradigm from what many leaders are used to using. As such, many leaders who experience the model have difficulty applying all they are learning in their own context.

The SLI Leadership Incubator is an environment and process that has application in many cultural contexts. While much more detail can be given related to contextualization, the previous discussion highlights the adaptive nature of the Leadership Incubator and how it is being utilized in multiple cultures. Much can be shifted in the form and particular content for purposes of contextualization, but the key organizational principles of SLI translate across cultural lines.

EMBRACING THE OTHER:
TOWARD AN ETHIC OF GOSPEL NEIGHBORLINESS
KYLE W. HERRON

Abstract: Xenophobia, or fear of the other, is not new to the human experience; although it is difficult to measure, there seems to be an intensified fear of the other in our recent history. The other includes persons from particular cultures, ethnicities, and the major religious traditions of the world. For specific examples, I will consider LGBT persons, undocumented immigrants, and Muslim Americans. Xenophobia marginalizes each of these groups in American life. Remarkably, our fears originate, in part, in a coterie of Christian leaders whose message stands in tension with the Christian Gospel, a message that includes a broad understanding of neighborliness toward others. A minority within the entire ecclesial community, this prominent and strident group of leaders perpetuates our fears. This small society does not (and must not) speak for all Christianity.

The Human Condition, the World, and Evil:
Where We are Right Now

In the United States, the so-called "melting pot," we nevertheless remain a society of others. Strikingly, much of our culture's xenophobia originates within the Christian faith community itself. The shifting demographics within and beyond our borders, which are caused by the unprecedented migration and mobility of persons around the globe, demands that we reconsider faith and ministry in ways we have not previously done. The conversation, worldview, and rhetoric among Christians in the United States must change. It must change because what we say and do in the United States is heard and interpreted by many, Christians and otherwise, beyond our borders. Thomas Banchoff observes:

> The fact that the United States is a Christian-majority country with a significant Jewish community has a global impact. For while one might be able to distinguish between the United States and Christianity (or the Judeo-Christian) at an analytical level, the juxtaposition and interpenetration of material power and religious tradition inflect world politics at the level of *perceptions* [emphasis mine]…Most citizens in Muslim-majority nations, for example, view the United States as a Christian nation…By its sheer economic, political, and military weight, the United States does multiply the influence of Christianity.[1]

Given this far-reaching influence, how we view, speak of, and care for the other within our own context matters abroad. Unfortunately, not all Christian leaders embody the kind of gospel neighborliness necessary for authentic dialogue in the global community of the twenty-first century. These leaders include Rick Warren, John Hagee, Rick Scarborough, Rod Parsely, Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Scott Lively, and others. Collectively these leaders influence millions of followers via their mega-pulpits and numerous multi-media outlets. Their impact domestically and globally means that their message, some of which include dangerous rhetoric, is absorbed by the culture. This truth only magnifies the need for alternative voices to emerge if we hope to realize the transformation for which we long.

Ministry and Mission

Without doubt neighborly voices exist within Christian leaders who engage in productive dialogue here and abroad. However, as well-intended as those efforts are, the conversation is muted for at least two reasons. First, there remains what Namsoon Kang calls a

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[1] Thomas Banchoff, "Introduction: Religious Pluralism in World Affairs," in *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics,* ed. Thomas Banchoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 29.

"residue" of "Westcentricm."[2] Kang says, "there is a rhetoric of 'Christianity-the-West' versus 'World Christianity-the Rest' that assumes the West maintains the status of being discursively the normative and institutionally the center in world Christianity".[3] This perspective perpetuates an "us vs. them" frame of mind that can limit dialogue. Second, local congregations rarely embrace statements issued by national religious leaders, particularly those from mainline denominational heads, if they are even made known to parishioners.

In the meantime, the conversation regarding alterity has found its way beyond the church community and into the wider culture via the recent popular television series, "Lost." Over six seasons, "Lost" engrossed millions of viewers who watched fictional survivors of a plane crash find themselves stranded and "lost" on a mysterious and uncharted island. Soon, the survivors find they are not alone on the island. The survivors label the newly-discovered group simply as the "others." The series took viewers on a journey that involved seeing "otherness" from multiple perspectives through the various characters. Philosopher Karen Gaffney observes:

> Lost reveals the multiple ways in which otherness operates, how it both creates fear and is created by fear, how it serves as a divide-and-conquer strategy, how it creates an 'us versus them,' and how those who are associated with otherness are linked to savagery and to a lack of civilization.[4]

Gaffney concludes with the fitting question, "What is it about our current historical moment that has produced a television show that forces us to realize the socially constructed nature of otherness and see the apparatus of

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[2] Namsoon Kang, "Whose/Which World in World Christianity?:Toward World Christianity as Christianity of Worldly-Responsibility," in *A New Day: Essays on World Christianity in Honor of Lamin Sanneh,* ed. Akintunde E. Akinade (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), 35.

[3] Kang, 35.

[4] Karen Gaffney, "The Others Are Coming: Ideology and Otherness in *Lost,*" in *Lost and Philosophy,* ed. Sharon M. Kaye (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 140.

ideology?"[5] In the United States, many equate Muslims with terrorism, immigrants with illegality and crime, and LGBT persons with moral and sexual deviancy. These groups are the current others in our culture. They are blamed for natural disasters, economic uncertainty, rising crime rates, societal discord and the so-called "breakdown" of the American family. They have advocates in the culture, but some of their strongest opposition comes from the aforementioned Christian voices.

Ecclesiology: An Honest Assessment of Today's Church in the United States

One of the strengths of American culture is that it may rightly boast a mosaic of religious diversity. It has also inherited one of its greatest challenges, as these same religious groups compete to shape and define the moral soul and character of our nation. Protestant Christianity has been the prevailing religious perspective. One could further argue that this perspective has been shaped by a theologically and biblically conservative manifestation of Christianity. This brand of Christianity in America, argues Bauer, goes by many names: evangelicalism, conservatism, and fundamentalism: "These forms of Christianity claim adherents on every continent; but it is in America they have taken root most firmly and borne the most fruit. They barely exist in Western Europe; their success elsewhere owes everything to American missionary work among the poor and undereducated." [6] Bauer paints with a broad brush for sure, and it may be prejudicial to portray evangelicals, conservatives, and fundamentalists as a composite group. Unfortunately, the perception generated, largely by media, is that these groups are one and the same. More important, though, it is these groups, whether or not they are treated separately or collectively, that have given rise to the aforementioned

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[5] Gaffney, 147.
[6] Bruce Bawer, *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1997), 8.

leaders who wield far-reaching influence over the religious conversation that occurs within and beyond our culture.

One might argue that the influence of these voices is simply overstated. The evidence suggests otherwise, however, and reveals how effective these leaders have been. Tom Sine points to the failure of biblical scholars and other Christian leaders who do not share the ideology of the religious right to see the gap between themselves and the message consumed by the average American Christian. Consider, for example, the religious literature read by folks in American congregations such as Tim Lahaye's popular *Left Behind* series.

> Academics often don't recognize how influential [evangelical leaders] like LaHaye are…Much of his influence on the church and the culture, regrettably, has not been positive. The *Left Behind* series, written with Jerry Jenkins, is propagating his ideological views to an audience that reaches far beyond his evangelical culture. LaHaye's writings tend to foster both an eschatology of disengagement and the politics of fear. Those reading the *Left Behind* series often say, "Regardless whether you like the books or not, they certainly are biblical." But LaHaye's eschatology is not supported by a careful study of scripture. Most biblical scholars largely reject the eschatological assumptions of this kind of pop end-times literature.[7]

Despite my own cautioning against the questionable theology and biblical scholarship contained in these novels, they were popular even among my own parishioners. One dangerous aspect of LaHaye's message is that it encourages impressionable Christians to see no purpose in acts of justice if the world is going to end anyway. So, the reach of this coterie of leaders is real,

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[7] Tom Sine, "Who is Tim LaHaye?," *Sojourners Magazine*, September–October 2001, 36.

extending not only into the pews of congregations everywhere but deep into the arena of politics as well.

Christian conservatives have made a sharp turn toward politics especially to consolidate more power and influence in recent decades. Many of the aforementioned voices are intrinsically tied to principal pundits and elected officials in the power structures of the American political arena. Consequently, they exercise considerable influence over public policy, affecting the lives of people everywhere, both domestic and foreign. This matters because virtually all aspects of life in the United States has become politicized, including how we relate to our global neighbors. The conversation has fallen along partisan lines and the "language of partisan politics has come to shape how we understand others"[8] Combine this trend with the ideologies of Christian conservatives who have influenced and infiltrated United States politics and you have entire groups of "others" who are branded enemies of church, state, and society.

In the culture wars of the early 1990s, for example, former Republican presidential primary candidate Patrick Buchanan galvanized Christian conservatives with what has been dubbed his "culture war" speech at the 1992 Republican National Convention. In his speech he warned against a litany of issues including abortion on demand and right for gays, should the American people elect Bill Clinton to the White House.[9] Bill Clinton won the election anyway, but the fundamentalist "fear machine" was set in motion. The fundamentalists embraced a strategy that is reactionary to any aspect of society they perceive as a threat to what they have labeled a "Christian Nation." The problem is that reactionary

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[8] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press), 105.

[9] Patrick J. Buchanan, "Address to Republican National Convention", August 17 1992, transcript and audio visual, http://www.americanrhetoric.com /speeches/patrickbuchanan1992rnc.htm.

fundamentalism offers nothing in the way of solutions for the "ills" of society. Hunter argues:

> Fundamentalism…is a reaction to the discontents the contemporary world generates. Yet, it is also nihilistic because its identity is established, in the most primordial way, negatively – in reaction to the cultural deprivation of the late modern world. The proof of its nihilism is its failure to offer any creative achievements or constructive proposals for the everyday problems that trouble most people. Is it any wonder that fundamentalism tends to contribute to estrangement and cruelty?"[10]

Instead of solutions, we have witnessed a move toward the altar of political and coercive power by these strident voices. Using the influence of their mega-pulpits and relationships with powerful public officials and influential popular personalities, these leaders have helped cultivate an environment in which it is acceptable to marginalize, alienate, denigrate, torture, and even murder the other in our world. I would like to consider the following examples to show how Christian leadership has shaped the dialogue in our culture in unwelcoming terms.

The "Others": Who is My Neighbor?
The "Other" as Muslim

Diana Eck, director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard, observes that in the United States the "sharp edge of Christian prejudice has been keenly felt by many new religious communities."[11] American Muslims, while not new to the United States, have certainly sustained the deepest blow in recent years. The claims of a few that President Barack Obama was a clandestine Muslim is telling of American attitudes towards Islam. In recent history the international community was embroiled in outrage over Florida Pastor Terry Jones's plan to burn a

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[10] Hunter, 26

[11] Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001), 309.

Koran on the ninth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on United States targets in New York City and Washington, D.C. Public outcries came from religious and political leaders across the liberal and conservative spectrum insisting that Terry Jones renege. Interestingly, some of those critics have had a history of inflaming anti-Muslim rhetoric. Few would argue that the acts of violence committed by terrorist over ten years were reprehensible. But this moment in history has been perceived by some Christian leaders as a "blank check" to marginalize and demonize Muslims in the United States and around the world. Curiously, there was little discussion in the public arena about what kind of climate would make it permissible for a pastor to think he or she could publically burn a sacred text of any kind.

One of the greatest religious offenders is John Hagee, pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas. Pastor Hagee is unapologetic in his views of Muslims. He contends that "all Muslims are programmed to kill and we can thus never negotiate with them."[12] Hagee's name might not register on the radar of many Americans, but John Hagee has managed to inflame anti-Muslim rhetoric and exercise a great deal of global political influence over the United States in the Middle East. He was among several conservative Christians who could "easily get someone on the phone" in the George W. Bush administration.[13] Just over five years ago, Hagee founded Christians United for Israel (CUFI), a Christian Zionist organization whose purpose is "to provide a national association through which every pro-Israel church, parachurch organization, ministry or individual in America can speak and act with one voice in support of Israel in matters related to biblical issues."[14] CUFI is

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[12] John Hagee, interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, September 16, 2006.

[13] Scott McClellan, interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, June 2, 2008.

[14] "About Christians United for Israel", Christians United for Israel, http://www.cufi.org/site/PageNavigator/about_aboutCUFI (accessed March 24, 2011).

opposed to any two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. CUFI has grown through hosting events in congregations across the United States. Its annual national summit has been attended by some of the most influential policy makers in the United States, making it a strikingly powerful organization.

Hagee's perspective is false. Muslims are not programmed to kill any more than all Christians are without blame. Hagee's position offends reason and truth. Yet many American Christians share it unquestioningly. The unwelcoming response to the planned construction of Islamic Park51 community center in New York City, just a few blocks from the former site of the World Trade Center, was telling. Rhetoric like Hagee's creates an environment in which it is acceptable to marginalize Muslims in the United States and abroad. The effects on the peace process in the Middle East are untold. Furthermore, voices that might offer alternative solutions to violence are lost in the conservative "noise" and may even sustain collateral damage. Such has been the case with Arab Christians who have lived side by side with Muslims for centuries in the Middle East. Razek Siriani of the Middle East Council of Churches in Aleppo, Syria, says, "It's funny what Americans think about things. They've never heard of Arab Christians. They assume all Arabs are Muslim-terrorists." He continues, lamenting that Western Christians may have made matters worse:

> It's because of what Christians in the West, led by the U.S., have been doing in the East…to many Muslims; this looks like the Crusades all over again, a war against Islam waged by Christians. Because we're Christians, they see us as the enemy too. It's guilt by association.[15]

Arab Christians, however, might offer an invaluable contribution to the dialogue if not for the virulent and mostly unchecked xenophobia that originates from the

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[15]Razek Siriani, quoted in Don Belt, "The Forgotten Faithful," *National Geographic*, June 2009, 85–6.

few. Father Paolo Dall'Oglio, a monk with the Dier Mar Musa monastery near Damascus, engages in regular interfaith dialogue with Muslims. He observes:

> You can't live alongside people for a thousand years and see them as the children of Satan. On the contrary, Muslims are us. This is the lesson the West has yet to learn and that Arab Christians are uniquely qualified to teach. They are the last, vital link between the Christian West and the Arab Muslim world. If Arab Christians were to disappear, the two sides would drift even further apart.[16]

The anti-Muslim protests at mosques around the country in the last year and the more recent congressional hearings on radical Muslims in the United States only inflame the issue. The conversation must be reframed for the establishment of authentic and transformative relationships with our Muslim neighbors.

The "Other" as Undocumented Immigrant

The face of the American population is rapidly changing. "We are well on our way to becoming a 'minority majority' country, with the number of foreign born higher than at any time in the past century. How we move from being strangers to neighbors is one of the great challenges of America's new century of religious life."[17] Unfortunately, recent anti-immigration legislation, such as Arizona's SB 1070, serves as an obstacle rather than a way to meet the challenge. Despite denominational statements calling for immigration reform, the conversation has not changed. In fact, even the National Association of Evangelicals has issued a statement favoring immigration reform.[18] Even so, there remains

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[16] Father Paolo Dall'Oglio, quoted in Don Belt, "The Forgotten Faithful" (National Geographic, June 2009) 85-86.

[17] Eck, 296

[18] "Immigration 2009," National Association of Evangelicals, http://www.nae.net/resolutions/347-immigration-2009 (accessed April 4, 2011).

within the ranks of some Christians a growing network of pastors who are opposed to immigration reform and align themselves with Tea Party activists. Texas pastor Rick Scarborbough is the most notable as his organization, Vision America, has received endorsements from Texas Governor Rick Perry, evangelical author Tim Lahaye, and founder of Focus on the Family, James Dobson. Scaroborough has declared that, if this country becomes thirty percent Hispanic, we will no longer be America.

Undocumented immigrants, as well as legal immigrants due to profiling, are vulnerable to a broad range of discriminatory practices, including indentured servitude, harassment, hostility, violence and misplaced blame of rising crime rates. For immigrants who are detained, many of whom have committed no crime and have a legal right to be in the United States, often find themselves in indefinite detention where they are exposed to more potential violence. For example, immigration detention centers are exempt from the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003.[19] Consequently, incidents of sexual violence have been on the rise for the last decade and usually go unreported because the offenders are often detention center guards.[20]

Despite the injustices the church remains relatively quiet beyond statements issued by national and denomination religious leaders. However, for a nation of immigrants, we need courageous leaders in local communities to extend the radical embrace of strangers.

The "Other" as LGBT

Discrimination toward LGBT persons has been rightly described by many as the last acceptable form of prejudice in our American culture. It is unique among

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[19] Human Rights Watch, http://www.*hrw*.org/en/news/2011/02/15/us-immigration-facilities-should-apply-prison-rape-elimination-act-protections (accessed April 4, 2011).

[20] National Sexual Violence Resource Center, *National Prison Elimination Commission Report*, http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/reports/national-prison-rape-elimination-commission-report (accessed April 1, 2011).

"others" in that there exists bigotry toward gay men and women even among other marginalized groups. It is the one form of discrimination on which many groups find agreement. In the United States, Christian conservatives have led a fierce campaign against LGBT persons. Gays have been blamed by personalities such as Pat Robertson and the late Jerry Falwell for some of the most deadly events in the last century, including Hurricane Katrina and AIDS. The most frequent claim, of course, is that gays threaten the institution of marriage and therefore the very fabric of society. No evidence exists to support these claims, but that does not deter the opposition. In fact, more potent voices have only begun to emerge. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, for example, claimed to have raised over forty million dollars in support of the 2008 California Marriage Protection Act via the Mormons for Eight campaign.[21] This amendment proposal was an anti-gay measure veiled as an effort to protect "traditional" marriage. The Mormon effort was a profound influence in the passage of the amendment. The powerful sway of the Mormon church is joined by a chorus of popular voices that include Rod Parsely, Joyce Meyer, Rick Warren, and Joel Osteen. Each of these celebrity pastors has gone on record publically with their bigotry toward gays. Some of the more recent statements come from Joyce Meyer and Joel Osteen:

> Joyce Meyer: "If I believe the Bible, then I don't believe that a gay lifestyle or a homosexual lifestyle is the right way to choose to live. I believe that there's something so much better."[22]
> Joel Osteen: "I've always believed the scriptures shows that it's [homosexuality] a sin…I say it's wrong because that's what the scripture says…I don't believe homosexuality is God's best for a person's life."[23]

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[21] Mormons for Eight, http://mormonsfor8.com (accessed March 22, 2011).
[22] Joyce Meyer, interview by Larry King, *Larry King Live*, CNN, May 19, 2005.
[23] Joel Osteen, interview by Piers Morgan, *Piers Morgan Tonight,* CNN, January 26, 2011.

Defense of these statements have been argued from the
position of protected free speech and contention that
these leaders are simply speaking the truth found in
scripture. One might even argue that these positions
contain no calls for violence toward homosexuals. While
they *are* protected by free speech, the position that they
are rooted in biblical truth is debatable, given the diverse
scholarship on the matter.

An anti-gay statement from an influential pastor – or
local one, for that matter – need not include explicit calls
for violence to result in violent consequences. Such
language fosters a climate in which it is acceptable to be
hostile toward gay people. Rev. Harry Knox, who served
on President Barack Obama's Faith Advisory Committee
and is now senior pastor of Metropolitan Community
Church in Houston, Texas, echoes this point: "When
people hear in church that God doesn't love
homosexuals, it authorizes people who are hateful in their
hearts or fearful to go out and commit violence."[24] Hate
crimes toward gay people abound and confirm the truth
of Knox's words. For purposes of this discussion,
however, one of the most poignant examples in recent
history occurred after several evangelical Christian
leaders, most notably Dr. Scott Lively, visited Uganda in
2009 to spread their anti-gay message.

Dr. Scott Lively is founder and co-founder of
Abiding Truth Ministries and Watchmen on the Walls,
respectively. These anti-gay organizations operate on a
global scale. In March 2009, Lively and two other
Christian evangelists led seminars in churches, schools,
colleges, and even before members of parliament warning
about the so-called gay agenda on the rise in Africa.[25]
Lively's stereotypical, inaccurate, and irresponsible

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[24] Harry Knox, News 39 Houston, Texas, transcript, http://www.39online
.com/news/local/kiah-osteen-gay-sin-story,0,2182508.story (accessed March
31, 2001).

[25] Scott Lively, "Report from Uganda," *The Family Resource Center* (blog),
Defend the Family, March 17, 2009, http://www.defendthefamily.com/pfrc
/archives.php?id=2345952.

characterization of homosexuality serves only to vilify LGBT persons in Uganda and elsewhere. This personal vilification is what landed both of Lively's groups on the Southern Poverty Law Center's list of hate organizations.[26] The fallout from Lively's anti-gay tour was ghastly. Members of the Ugandan parliament, with the full support of popular evangelical Ugandan pastor, Martin Ssempa, who has had strong ties with America pastor Rick Warren, submitted a proposed bill that would enhance already state sanctioned homophobia to include the death penalty for homosexuals.

Hostility toward LGBT persons quickly intensified and was punctuated by the murder of gay rights and human rights activist David Kato in January 2011. Jeffrey Gettleman, East Africa bureau chief for the *New York Times*, recounted the consequences of Lively's visit in this way:

> I think a lot of people in Uganda, and the part of Africa where I live – in Kenya – and most of this continent and probably most of this world, there's many people who are homophobic. But it didn't take a violent form. It was – people thought that – in Uganda, people thought gay people were strange, that they were outliers. But they weren't really fired up to do anything about it. It was only after the visits by these Americans, who billed themselves as experts in dealing with homosexual issues, that the Ugandan politicians and church groups got really angry about it and suggested killing gay people.[27]

Condemnation of the legislation was swift among gay rights activists, religious leaders, and government officials on an international scale. Evangelicals in the United States, however, were slow to denounce the legislation.

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[26] http://www.defendthefamily.com/pfrc/archives.php?id=2345952 "Hate Map", *Southern Poverty Law Center,* http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-map (accessed April 9, 2011).
[27] Jeffrey Gettleman, interview by Michel Martin, *Tell Me More*, NPR, January 28, 2011.

How would they denounce state sanctioned murder of homosexuals while maintaining the anti-gay position that inspired the legislation? Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church and author of the bestselling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, was among them. Rick Warren explained his long silence on the matter by saying, "As an American pastor, it is not my role to interfere with the politics of other nations."[28] Many in the evangelical community shared in his reluctance and sentiment. Meanwhile, as in the case of Muslims and undocumented immigrants, the rhetoric that vilifies LGBT persons goes largely unchecked in American congregations.

Much of this will not come as a surprise to many who follow these and other justice issues in our world. At first glance it even seems contradictory to recent findings about religious people in America. In their sweeping survey of religious life in America, sociologists Robert Putnam and David Campbell conclude that, overall, religious Americans actually make better neighbors.[29] However, they judge good neighborliness on the level of giving to philanthropic endeavors (church offerings included), participation in civic duties, and level of trustworthiness. But these characteristics look more like the marks of a good citizen than a neighborly follower of the gospel. This makes their most telling find all the more compelling – religious Americans are less tolerant of dissent and civil liberties: "The fundamental correlation between religiosity and intolerance has been confirmed in dozens of studies over the last half century."[30] This poses a difficult challenge to those neighborly Christians whose voices get lost in the noise of the political and religious right.

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[28] Rick Warren, "Letter to the Pastors of Uganda," YouTube video, 6:32, posted by "saddlebackchurch," December 9, 2009, http://www.youtube.com /watch?v=1jmGu9o4fDE&feature=player_embedded.

[29] Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 443–93.

[30] Putnam and Campbell, 482.

A Christology that Generously Embraces Our Enemies, Strangers, and Sinners

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37) has become a tired and worn text, "making it difficult to recognize how revolutionary a message it bears."[31] However, if the recent remarks of Alabama Governor Robert Bently are any indication, then the parable requires further reflection. Governor Bently made these remarks during his inauguration speech on January 17, 2011, at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, the very same church once served by Martin Luther King Jr: "Anybody here today who has not accepted Jesus Christ as their savior, I'm telling you, you're not my brother or my sister."[32] Appropriately, Governor Bently's words caused a stir. Questions abound: What do his words (or any politician that holds similar views) say about how he will serve and govern those whom he does not consider a "brother or sister" (his so-called neighbor)? What about people who have not "accepted" Jesus Christ as both "Lord and Savior," and who perhaps never will? What message does it send to those across oceans or within other national borders? Bently's words have been spoken and consumed. This solitary, profound instance, suggests we ignore the Gospel narratives at our own peril and at our own spiritual woundedness. The lawyer's question in the Good Samaritan parable is more than "just" the stuff of children's Sunday school:

> A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and

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[31] Bawer, 36.

[32] Robert Bentley, ABC News, Birmingham, Alabama, transcript, accessed May 3, 2011, http://abcnews.go.com/US/alabama-gov-robert-bentley-criticized-christian-message/story?id=12648307.

> when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He
> went to him and bandaged his wounds, having
> poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on
> his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took
> care of him. The next day he took out two denarii,
> gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of
> him; and when I come back, I will repay you
> whatever more you spend.' Which of these three,
> do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell
> into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one
> who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go
> and do likewise."[33]

Here Jesus underscores the two commandments that
underpin his entire public ministry: love of God and love
of neighbor. This beloved, but careworn, parable spoken
by Jesus shapes an ethic of love that becomes paramount
for early Christians. Gerd Theissen writes:

> The primitive Christian ethic of love of neighbor is
> a radicalization of the Jewish ethic. What is new is
> the twofold commandment to love God and one's
> neighbor come to the center and is explicitly called
> the greatest commandment. It already exists before
> Jesus, but not in such a central position.[34]

The parable of the Good Samaritan is Luke's way of
communicating the "weightier things of the law." Simply
put, loving one's neighbor is the more important
admonition. The implications for Christians everywhere
are compelling. Understanding this parable in theological
terms means "we need to see the image of God in
everyone, not just the members of our [own] group."[35]
"There is no dichotomy between the commands to love
God and love neighbor. Indeed, when one loves God,
one lives out love for others as well."[36] I think it is fair to

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[33] Luke 10:30–37, NRSV.

[34] Gerd Theissen, *The Religion of the Earliest Churches: Creating a Symbolic World*
(Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 66.

[35] Amy Jill-Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish
Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 146.

[36] R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke, vol. 9*, The New Interpreter's Bible
(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 228.

say that most Christians would agree with this assessment. Where this parable causes us trouble is when we try to identify with, and label, the character according to our current context.

Amy Jill-Levine suggests this is an antagonistic parable highlighting the adversity between the Samaritans and Jews of old. To understand it today would means reading the parable in this way: "The man in the ditch is an Israeli Jew; a rabbi and a Jewish member of the Israeli Knesset fail to help the man, but a member of Hamas shows him compassion."[37] Bawer offers the more common Christian interpretation, suggesting that the disenfranchised are represented by the Samaritan and show Christians how to love; meanwhile, both the priest and the Levite represent the oppressive religious establishment.[38] But if I may offer another possibility: in consideration of our discussion of "others," the man or woman in the ditch is the other: the Muslim, the gay, the immigrant, the stranger, the foreigner. The robbers, if I may suggest, are the strident voices among Christian leadership whose use of degrading language strip others of their dignity and humanity.

"'Radical neighborliness' is a matter of action; not who performs that action," Culpepper writes. "Jesus has turned the issue from the boundaries of required neighborliness to the essential nature of neighborliness. Neighbors are defined actively, not passively."[39] Proximity of the neighbor does not matter, nor does the neighbor's identity. Theissen writes:

> First, love of neighbor becomes *love of enemy* (Matt. 5.43). Here one's enemy is not just one's personal enemy. Rather, "enemies" are spoken of as a group which has the power of persecution and discrimination. Second, love of neighbor is extended to become *love of the stranger* (Luke 10.25).

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[37] Levine, 149.

[38] Bawer, 37.

[39] Culpepper, 238.

In the exemplary story of the Good Samaritan, the Samarian proves to be a "neighbor," not on the basis of a pre-existing status but on the basis of his behavior. Thirdly, love of neighbor becomes *love of the sinner* (Luke 7.36). The woman who was a sinner, who is discriminated against by [her accusers], is accepted by Jesus, and she responds with her love by moistening his feet with her tears and drying them with her hair.[40]

Perhaps the most poignant understanding of neighborliness comes from Martin Luther King's own understand of the Good Samaritan when he asks, "what happens to the person in the ditch if we don't help them?"[41] The neighborly Christian, then, is the one who responds, provides, cares, and advocates for the other. Xenophobia has no place among neighbors. And curiously, proselytizing and expectation of conversion are absent from this narrative. As far as we know, all figures in this parable continue their lives living out their respective faiths. It is plainly an extension of Gospel neighborliness without any questions asked or any expectations of repayment. Thus, every time the lawyer's question is asked by any one of us, Jesus' answer will always same: *Love your neighbor, no questions asked.*

Worship: Neighbors and Sacred Space

So, if Christian neighborliness is a matter of action what does it look like in our current historical context? The possible answers are many. But we can hardly begin to entertain them until we move beyond popular notions that the Christian faith is a private matter. Jesus invites us to join him in a public ministry that imagines the possibilities of the reign of God in the present moment. Yes, the eschatological hope of the "not yet" sustains but we must remember and participate fully in the "now"

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[40] Theissen, 66.

[41] Martin Luther King, Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.,* ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: HarperSanFranciso, 1986), 285.

part of the axiom. Hunter calls for a faithful presence in which "we are fully present to each other within the community of faith and fully present to those who are not."[42] Nothing can offer a more a more profound witness than the church's most public act: worship, particularly our gathering for the Eucharist.

William Cavanaugh describes the Eucharist as "that performance which makes the body of Christ visible in the present. If the church is to resist disappearance, then it must be publicly visible as the body of Christ in the present time, not secreted away in the souls of the believers or relegated to the distant historical past or future."[43] In our gathering for word, prayer, and sacrament, we are active participants in God's imagination for a new kind of altar. This is not the altar of coercive power that sacrifices others. No, at this altar, we are reminded, in the words of Jürgen Moltmann, that "Jesus' history is first of all an expression of God's solidarity with the victims of violence and torture. Christ's cross stands between the countless crosses set up by the powerful and the violent throughout history, down to the present day."[44] That means it stands in the detention centers and torture chambers of the state, including our own government. It stands with gay persons, disowned by society, rejected by faith communities everywhere, and too often beaten and left for dead. It stands with our sisters and brothers of faiths, as well as those caught in the crossfire of our conflict. It means we, too, who gather at the Eucharistic altar must also stand with the other. In doing so we become the other, because we no longer participate in a system that leaves people for dead at the margins. It means we call out our own if necessary, albeit in love, so that vilifying rhetoric does not get a pass.

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[42] Hunter, 244.

[43] William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 1998).

[44] Jürgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today's World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 65.

Re-visioning what it means to be a neighbor, and thereby learning from our neighbors will not be an easy challenge in parish ministry, especially for local leadership. For one the consumer mentality of people, when it comes to choosing a faith community, means some people will leave when these issues are addressed. We have to be willing to let that happen. Another factor is that emerging generations are keeping their distance from the church. Putnam and Campbell label this group the "nones" because they are choosing no religious affiliation. As they explain, "This youthful generation seems unwilling or unable to distinguish the stance of the most visible, most political, and most conservative religious leaders from organized religions in general."[45] Yet, there may be opportunity here because, while they maintain their distance from the church, they may be most willing to hear alternative voices.

That is why local clergy must claim their prophetic role in the local parish, as well as the community at large. To abdicate this role only perpetuates the current climate and further alienates emerging generations already repelled by the church. Scott Appleby, director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame, explains for example that peace building is often hindered first because of the "failure of religions leaders to understand and/or enact their potential peace-building roles within the local community."[46] He further suggests that clergy may need to form relationship they are not accustomed to. The new global landscape, "might feature Catholics Mormons, Jews, Muslims, agnostics, and atheists forming an ethical alliance against a rival bloc of Catholics, Jew, Mormons, agnostics, and atheists. Often the first task of religious peacemakers is to challenge or otherwise neutralize their belligerent coreligionists."[47]

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[45] Putnam and Campbell, 131.

[46] R. Scott Appleby, "Building Sustainable Peace: The Roles of Local and Transnational Religious Actors," in *Religious Pluralism, Globalization and World Politics,* ed. Thomas Banchoff. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 127.

[47] Appleby, 128.

The same can be true of relationship building with our neighbors. Like Samuel who responds to God by calling in to account the leadership of his own mentor, Eli, we need leadership willing to call into account those who would misrepresent the neighborly gospel of Jesus Christ. We need leadership willing to risk the embrace of others in our world. It may well be that new voices arise from the "nones" in our midst.

Given the influence Western Christians still have in the global community we need alternative voices who are willing to gather around a different kind of altar; one that is a metaphor for life and compels us to embrace the other. Perhaps, we embrace this "Gospel neighborliness" as the Sufi poet, Rumi, who speaks to us even today across space and time, understands it:

> *Where Jesus lives, the great-hearted gather.*
> *We are a door that's never locked.*
> *If you are suffering any kind of pain,*
> *stay near this door. Open it.*[48]

[48] Coleman Barks, trans., *The Essential Rumi* (Edison, New Jersey: Castle Books, 1997), 201.

BOOK REVIEW

BEARING FRUIT: MINISTRY WITH REAL RESULTS
BY LOVETT H. WEEMS JR. AND TOM BERLIN
NASHVILLE: ABINGDON PRESS, 2011
128 PP.
ISBN: 978-1426715907

This new book by Lovett Weems and Tom Berlin builds on the conversation about fruitfulness and accountability that is taking place in the United Methodist Church as well as in other denominations. A particular conversation partner seems to be United Methodist Bishop Robert Schnase, author of the popular *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*.[1] The biblical grounding for approaches to fruitfulness and vision is a particular strength of this book, as are the many examples taken from experience in particular congregations. This book also exhibits and extends the strength of Weems's earlier work, in presenting the best of secular writing on leadership in an accessible way and through a theological lens.

In research and writing for the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, Weems has identified three categories that capture the various descriptors of effectiveness: character, competence, and contribution. Weems and Berlin say that clergy are doing well overall on the first two, but the dimension of contribution needs more attention for revitalized pastoral leadership. Contribution is what the leader accomplishes as steward of the church's mission (xiii). They note that evaluation often focuses on assessing the process, but that we also need to find ways to assess results even when they are to some extent intangible.

As in Weems's book *Take the Next Step*,[2] the dimension of vision is the element of leadership given the most attention in *Bearing Fruit*. After an excellent chapter on "A Biblical

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[1] Robert C. Schnase, *The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).

[2] Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *Take the Next Step: Leading Lasting Change in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003).

Mandate for Fruitfulness," Weems and Berlin talk about mission, values, and vision in the context of church leadership. Finding vision in the church is different than in a secular, business context, because the church's vision is "the vision to which God is calling the people" (39). Discerning vision means finding the congregation's particular calling, in a specific time and place, that will bring joy to the people and bear fruit for God's reign in the world. It will be a God-sized vision that needs the power of the Holy Spirit to be fulfilled.

A particularly helpful chapter is "The Two Most Powerful Words for Fruitful Leadership: *So That.*" Beginning with biblical examples, the authors talk about the importance of *so that* statements to focus on outcomes – the anticipated fruitfulness of an activity rather than the process. Weems and Berlin give an extended example of one church naming the "so that" statements in a discussion of worship, moving from excellent worship seen as an end in itself to an exploration of the kind of impact worship can make in people's lives. For example, the church has a choir not as an end in itself, but *so that* the choir's music contributes to worship, becoming a channel of the Holy Spirit, *so that* people can hear the good news, *so that* they become faithful disciples, *so that* they serve others.

Many of the book's examples are taken from Floris United Methodist Church in Herndon, Virginia, where Tom Berlin is the senior pastor. Floris was an established congregation when Berlin was appointed there, and the growth in the congregation had taken place over a ten-year period of time when the book was written. As Berlin puts it, "the story told in this book about Floris Church is not a dramatic story of overnight success" (105) but one of a church that found a God-sized vision that was fruitful beyond what they would have considered possible.

The authors note that the large teaching churches considered best practices congregations present such spectacular success that pastors who come to learn from them can end up disheartened by the gap between the example of these churches and the modest progress they are able to make in their home congregations. The gradual

changes in the Floris Church are presented as a more accessible model.

Weems and Berlin identify and discuss some of the objections to a focus on results – "I am called to be faithful, not effective; I am called to a ministry of presence; this is just where we are in the life cycle of our congregation." They also talk about the difficulties of leading change, a process they image as a marathon rather than a sprint. There is also a good chapter on the pastor's self-care as stewardship of our greatest resources, our bodies and minds. They give many words of encouragement for those times when results are long in coming.

Another helpful book that deals with fruitfulness and evaluation is Sarah Drummond's *Holy Clarity: the Practice of Planning and Evalution.*[3] Speaking to church people and contexts, Drummond presents several models of planning that complement Weems's and Berlin's book. Charting resources, inputs, outputs, impact, and indicators does not sound very energizing but can help a group distinguish outcomes from processes and identify ways to measure or assess the outcomes. Stakeholder mapping is a way of identifying the groups that care about and are affected by a given action or program, and what information they can provide for planning and decision-making. The condition-intervention diagram asks the question "What change do we seek by doing this action?" This also helps to get to the "why?" that is behind the "what" of a given activity. There is also a very helpful section on the postmodern world and how this worldview affects ministry.

Sometimes pastors feel responsible – and may be held responsible – for situations and outcomes that we do not control. Such things as the number of baptisms in a given year are not totally within a pastor's control, and sometimes worrying about outcomes like this can work against the kind of progress being sought. This is a hazard of a focus on fruitfulness in terms of measurable results. On the other hand, we need to be accountable for outcomes if we are to

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[3] Sarah B. Drummond, Holy Clarity: The Practice of Planning and Evaluation (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2009).

be honest about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what effects it is having. *Bearing Fruit* is a practical and encouraging discussion of fruitfulness that offers helpful and encouraging ways approach this important dimension of ministry.

Reviewed by: Karen Dalton
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BOOK REVIEW

BUILDING BELOW THE WATERLINE:
SHORING UP THE FOUNDATIONS OF LEADERSHIP
BY GORDON MACDONALD
PEABODY, MA: HENDRICKSON PUBLISHERS, 2011
250 PP.
ISBN: 978-1-59856-669-7

In *Building Below the Waterline*, Gordon MacDonald reflects upon his life and imparts valuable wisdom for Christian leaders, particularly pastors. MacDonald uses the Brooklyn Bridge to illustrate the importance of building a strong foundation below the waterline before building above it. He argues that shoring up the foundation of a leader's soul to withstand a lifetime of personal and professional challenges requires worship, devotion, and spiritual discipline.

MacDonald, currently editor-at-large of the *Leadership Journal*, wrote this book for people (such as himself) who go through life learning things the hard way (8). The retired pastor, former president of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and former chairman of World Vision, mentors leaders of all ages throughout this easy-to-read book. But don't be fooled by the book's accessibility. *Building Below the Waterline* deserves careful reading, intentional interaction with the questions at the end of each chapter, and completion of the recommended activities.

The book is divided into two parts: The Inner Life of a Leader and The Outer Life of a Leader. In Part One, MacDonald carefully builds below the waterline by addressing topics such as "Cultivating the Soul," "Searching Your Motivations," and "Knee-driven Ministry." He stresses that the leader's soul, like the bridge's foundation, requires constant attention in order to remain standing. MacDonald presents ideas and suggestions which challenge the reader, not prescribed solutions. Throughout each chapter, he incorporates his life experience with illustrations from the Hebrew and New Testaments and quotes from a variety of theologians. The reader will benefit from interacting with MacDonald as he carefully balances references to his personal accomplishments and failures.

MacDonald's use of the bridge metaphor begins to deteriorate in Part Two – The Outer Life of a Leader. These chapters focus more on the execution of pastoral duties than building a foundation below the waterline. For example, "The Power of Public Prayer" could be considered a tutorial on the pastoral prayers in a Protestant worship service. The content is good but this is a jarring shift of focus that comes without warning from the author. The reader would have been better served by an introduction at the beginning of Part Two explaining how the subsequent chapters fit into the metaphor. The title of the third chapter in Part Two, "When Things Get Ugly," unwittingly describes the reader's confusion at that point. Several of the following chapters, such as "How a Mighty Church Falls," "Ten Conditions for Church Growth," and "Ministry's Sweet Spot," seem out of place in this book, though interesting and thought-provoking. The inclusion of these chapters diverts the reader's attention away from the author's purpose of shoring up the leader's foundation *below* the waterline.

MacDonald temporarily regains his footing in the final two chapters though they should have been included at the end of Part One. In "Pastor's Progress," his discussion of the dark side of life and ministry, its struggles and challenges, as well as God's grace and forgiveness, is personal and honest. He encourages the reader to consider God's involvement during the "dark moments" and identify the lessons learned.

In "When It's Time to Leave," MacDonald acknowledges that recognizing the right moment to leave is one of the most difficult decisions a leader makes but must be done in a timely manner. He understands the quandary pastors face throughout their ministries: "Leave too early, and you are likely to feel that you're a quitter and your work incomplete. Hang on too long, and your good work unravels and becomes counterproductive." (240) In order to facilitate this difficult decision, he provides two lists: "Nine Questions for Forming a Healthy Exit Strategy" and "Eight Signals that It's Time to Leave." This final chapter would have been much stronger if MacDonald had sequenced "Eight Signals" first and if the "Nine Questions" required more than "yes" or "no."

Unfortunately, MacDonald succumbs to the practice of summing up the book into a list of principles in the afterword. This is particularly disappointing since he avoided being prescriptive throughout the book. Further, the four principles (1. Experience conversion on a daily basis, 2. Support your life with daily discipline, 3. Live out of a sense of call, 4. Develop community around you) seem inadequate in light of the author's purpose to shore up the foundation of a leader's soul to withstand a lifetime of personal and professional challenges through worship, devotion, and spiritual discipline.

MacDonald's use of the bridge metaphor was initially intriguing but ultimately, like the London Bridge in the nursery rhyme, it fell down. However, pastors of all ages will still benefit from reading this book.

Reviewed by: Sheila Strobel Smith, author of *The Complexities of Pastoral Change and Transition in the Megachurches of the Baptist General Conference, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church (USA)*

BOOK REVIEW

WHY DAVID SOMETIMES WINS:
LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND STRATEGY
IN THE CALIFORNIA FARM WORKER MOVEMENT
BY MARSHALL GANZ
NEW YORK AND OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009
316 PP. PAPERBACK
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During the twentieth century, labor organizers tried four times to mobilize farm workers, in attempts to increase workers' wages, improve working conditions, and secure state protection and rights to collective bargaining. Mobilization efforts failed in the 1920s, 1930s, and in the years following the Second World War. The efforts of the 1960s and '70s, however, succeeded in winning significant gains for workers and their union. How can scholars explain such success, especially when it was achieved by a group that started out with limited organization, few resources, little if any power, and intense opposition from farmers and other unions?

In *Why David Sometimes Wins*, Marshall Ganz examines the question of how powerless groups can best much more powerful organizations. Drawing on social movement theory, organization development theory, the history of the farm worker movement, and his own sixteen-year participation in the movement as a volunteer and staff member, Ganz develops a concept that he calls "strategic capacity" to explain the effectiveness of the farm worker movement. Strategic capacity, as he describes it, is the ability of a group to develop good strategy; such capacity is constructed from the interface of leaders' motivation and commitment, access to relevant knowledge, and ability to learn from experience. Ganz contends that because of who they were and how they worked together, the farm worker leadership developed a strategic capacity that equipped the movement to respond quickly to environmental change, make effective decisions, adapt to its own growth, and outflank its competitors and opponents.

Most of the book allows readers to see strategic capacity in action. Ganz tells the story of the birth and development of the farm worker movement from 1959 to 1967, describes some of its work in the 1970s, and in an epilogue brings readers up to date on the changes in the United Farm Workers organization since the mid-'70s. He contrasts the work of the UFW and its predecessor organizations with the organizing efforts of the Teamsters Union and the AFL-CIO. These comparisons are helpful, and they allow readers to discern how the unconventional approaches of the farm workers allowed them to make gains that eluded the Teamsters and the AFL-CIO, despite the fact that these two organizations had significantly more resources and power than did the UFW.

Ganz makes a strong case that mutual trust, imagination, and learning are at the heart of being able to create an effective strategic capacity. The ability of leaders to hear and learn from each other, to experiment and learn from both successes and failures, and to see opportunities in the next event or interaction – whatever it is – establish an ethos in which learning can occur. Such learning is enhanced with diverse leadership, people with varied gifts and networks who can both read the environment with different lenses and bring those varied perspectives to deliberations and action. Learning is also enhanced with open dialogue that encourages people to work together to create new approaches that can solve new problems.

Readers who are interested in knowing more about how to develop and lead learning organizations will find this book particularly helpful. In *Why David Sometimes Wins* Ganz provides a well-documented case of an organization that learned how to learn and discovered how to grow from challenge to challenge. In the epilogue he also briefly describes how the UFW lost its capacity to learn, so the book provides both how-to and how-not-to examples. This would be an excellent book to use alongside more theoretical works about learning organizations or innovative leadership.

Although it is not a central focus of *Why David Sometimes Wins*, scholars and practitioners of religious leadership will find this book helpful in two additional ways. First, Ganz

articulates clearly the ways in which religious leaders in the California Migrant Ministry and other organizations worked collaboratively with the farm workers to promote their causes. Readers can discern explicit lessons in how religious leaders can be effective partners in community justice work. Second, Ganz describes how Cesar Chavez and other leaders in the movement used religious symbols to advance their work. Movement leaders utilized prayer, pilgrimage, and other spiritual practices to bear witness to their economic and political demands, and these practices were effective; they connected in authentic ways to the religious lives of the workers and they resonated with the larger public. Readers can glean lessons about how religious practices and symbolism can enrich efforts toward social change. Ganz, therefore, provides data and descriptions from which readers can draw insights about the role and voice of religion in larger social movements.

I recommend this book highly, though it does get repetitive in a few places and Ganz misses the opportunity to be rigorously reflective as a former participant in the movement that he studies. Nonetheless, the book clearly documents a learning organization in action, and it will be useful for scholars and practitioners.

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