

## THEORIZING RELIGIOUSLY-BASED ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP: MAPPING THE INTESECTIONS

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### INTRODUCTION ~ NO CANON FOR TASTE

*"De gustibus non est disputandum."* It can be paraphrased simply, *"There is no canon for taste."* But what does this curious statement have to do with theorizing religious-mission organizational leadership? Let us answer by describing an experience to which many professors of religious organizational leadership might relate, especially when searching for adequate textbooks to support their teaching and scholarship.

I (Russell) had just reviewed Arthur Bedian and Daniel Wren's "Most Influential Management Books of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century." I also had reviewed an un-recallable number of leadership-related websites to see if a religious-leadership equivalent of this management-type of review existed.<sup>1</sup> I had also spent the better part of a month reviewing as many of the primary texts listed on this Bedian and Wren's "Top 25" chart as I could obtain. Even though the authors invoke C.S. Lewis' admonition against the "snobbery of chronology" (the temptation to dismiss our historical predecessors imperfect simply because their antecedent concerns did not anticipate ours adequately), the content of the well-culled list left me somewhat vacant. As I sought a reason for this disappointment, the obscure Latinism listed above emerged from some lexical deep within me.

The *management canon* clearly lacks completeness and utility for *everyone* at the managerial leadership study table.

<sup>1</sup> I am adopting the blended "managerial leadership" to escape the dichotomous "manager vs. leadership" distinction. I do not wish to instigate here that debate, but will rather declare my assumption that these are not different kinds of people as much as these are complementary functions, which are apposite on a situational continuum. The term refers to that which makes up the conceptual spaces of organizational leadership studies. Collins' and Elwood literature review on the subject models this precedent. See Doris B. Collins, and Elwood F. Holton III, "The Effectiveness of Managerial Leadership Development Programs: A Meta-Analysis of Studies from 1982 to 2001," *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, (Vol. 15, Issue 2), 217-248.

The list is adduced from the cumulative construct tastes of management, biases which might be best characterized as naturalistic in worldview, empirical in research methodology, industrial in operational context, and utilitarian in ethics.<sup>2</sup> Given the significant worldview differences embedded in these commitments, it is difficult to obligate religious mission leaders to Bedian and Wren's "most influential books" list and others like it,<sup>3</sup> without significant qualification.

This essay attempts to construct a bridge that can make the managerial bookshelf more accessible to such leaders and scholars. It scans the literatures of formal leadership study in search of intersections valuable to organizations that can be described as being transcendentive, transformative, and redemptive in their leadership and mission. This exploration

<sup>2</sup> See *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 221-225, 2001. In this article, the authors provide service to management scholars by reporting the annotated results of an internal survey of 137 members of the Fellows Group of the *Academy of Management*. The 25 texts listed include (in order listed): Frederick Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911); Chester Bernard's *Functions of the Executive* (1938); Peter Drucker's *The Practice of Management* (1954); Douglas McGregor's *The Human Side of Management* (1960); Herbert Simon's *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-making Processes in Administrative Organizations* (1947); Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch' *Organizational and Environment: Managing Differentiation and Integration* (1967); James March and Herbert Simon's *Organizations* (1958); Abraham Maslow's *Motivation and Personality* (1954); Michael Porter's *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors* (1980); Fritz Roethlisberger and William Dickson's *Management and the Worker* (1939); Alfred Chandler, Jr.'s *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of American Enterprise* (1962); Richard Cyert and James March' *A Behavior Theory of the Firm* (1963); Max Weber's *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1922); Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn's *the Social Psychology of Organizations* (1966); Chris Argyris' *Personality and Organization: The Conflict Between System and the Individual* (1957); Henri Fayol's *General and Industrial Management* (1916); Rensis Likert's *New Patterns of Management* (1961); Joan Woodward's *Industrial Organization: Theory and Practice* (1965); Elton Mayo's *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (1933); Tom Burns and George Stalker's *The Management of Innovation* (1961); W. Edwards Deming's *Quality, Productivity and Competitive Position* (1982); James Thomspon *Organizations in Action* (1967); George Homans' *The Human Group* (1950); David McClelland's *The Achieving Society* (1961), and; Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mauser and Barbara Snyderman's *The Motivation to Work* (1959). The "also rans" list with a significant number of votes included: Peter Selznick's *Leadership and Administration* (1957); Victor Vroom's *Work and Motivation* (1964); Karl Weick's *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (1969) and Geert Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences* (1980).

<sup>3</sup> Similar canonical projects, mostly with business management context biases include: Stuart Crainer. *The Ultimate Business Library: 50 Books that Shaped Management Thinking* (New York: Amacom, 1997); Daniel Goleman's *Business: The Ultimate Resource* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Book Group, 2002); and, Gary Shaw, and Jack Weber. *Managerial Literacy: What Today's Managers Must Know to Succeed* (Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin, 1990).

is not an exhaustive one, but rather a selective one that seeks to be representative. With the research assistance of a valued colleague, John Stoekle, a doctoral candidate in intercultural leadership studies, we seek to explore frameworks that leadership educators might adapt in their study of organizational leadership theory across various sectors of organizations. Given our interest in securing the loose canon of religiously-oriented organizational leadership scholarship, (and recognizing most religious leadership educators are primarily self-taught in the subject), we have been careful to include references, which offer overviews, surveys, integrating schemes and taxonomies. The essay is organized in three movements. These are: *Status of Theorizing the Religious-Based Organization, Coming to Terms with a Loose Canon, and Transformative Intersections in Religious Based Organizational Leadership.*

### **STATUS OF THEORIZING RELIGIOUS-BASED ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

We begin with the question: What is the status of theorizing religious based organizational leadership in the wider bibliography of organizational leadership? For our purposes, the term *theory* is an explanatory system that seeks to connect points of relationship in a phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> A *leadership theory* describes any conceptual representation of elements of the leadership process which can offer reliable explanations of leadership-related<sup>5</sup> phenomena beyond a singular occurrence. By invoking *religious* we refer to organizations constituted for the purpose of advancing transcendent, sacramental, spiritual, and faith-filled moral aims. This is what sociologist Peter Berger calls the 'human

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<sup>4</sup> Bernard Bass, *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook for Leadership: Theory, Research and Managerial Applications*. 3rd Edition (New York: Free Press, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Naturally, the use of leadership-related within the definition begs a credible definition of the term leadership. For our purposes, leadership refers to: that socially-situated phenomena involving a specific group's attribution of status upon one or more of their own, for a specific circumstance in which that group's authorized agents orchestrates episodically-necessary qualities, resources and forces to transform the previous circumstance into a new and desirable state of equilibrium.

enterprise' of instituting 'a sacred cosmos.'<sup>6</sup> To be clear, we have found few instances of the phrases "religious-mission organization," "religious-based organization," "religiously-motivated organization." The closest forms to this term are found in Helen Cameron's work "Organisational Theory and the Non-Profit Form - A Perspective from the Study of Religious Organisations." In this essay, she locates the religious organizational form within a sociological repertoire of forms. She names five types found within the sociology of organizations literatures: churches/sects (a Weberian distinction); congregations and sects/denominations (Niebuhr's America-centered reaction and refinement of Weber's use of sect, derived from the German State church context); and *cult* (Troeltsch's distinctions concerning sects). She adds to these the categories of religious orders,<sup>7</sup> associations, and agencies.<sup>8</sup> Value expressiveness is a defining feature of all of these organizations.

When this project began, "religious-mission leadership" made up the foundational concept that we sought to investigate. The assumption was that mission made the most difference in the organizational typologies. While this may be the best way to categorize organizational types, the term *mission* is not without baggage.<sup>9</sup> It is easily confused with *missions* or *missionary* when coupled with the word organization. From these associations, it tends to negatively connote colonialism, cultural imperialism, and overseas specialized ministries conducted by intercultural ministry specialists.

Recently a new breed of missiologists have sought to reform the term for their ecclesio-centric visions of the "church beyond walls" by employing the word "missional." This is understood to be a church that is engaged in culture and societal works of witness regardless of its location. It is still too early to tell whether this term will be valuable to the

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Margaret Harris, "Organizing God's Work," from *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, 1967, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Nygren and Miriam D. Ukeritis, "Nonprofit Executive Leadership Education Study," *Theological Education* XXIX, No. 117-131, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Cameron, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Maak, "The Affective Dimension of Religious Leadership," *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. XXXII, Number 4, Oct. 2004, pp. 419-420; "Missiology's Journey of Acceptance in the Educational World," *Missiology*, Vol. XXXI, Number 2, April 2003, 131-153.

study of religious-based organizations.<sup>10</sup> However, there remains another problem in that searches for this term and its various uses yield little in relation to organizations. The closest terms with the mission/missional semantic range came back through search engines as “religiously-motivated organizations.” The one term that began to appear which is most closely associated with intersectorial organizations was “religious-based organizations.” This term, more than any in use, is associated with a range of organizational types which are distinctly motivated, organized, and structured in decidedly religious, spiritual, transcendentive, and moral ways. These organizations would most likely self-identify with the conceptions used in this paper.

One means of determining the status of the religious-based organization is to examine the entire universe of leadership literature for instances of mention. An exhaustive sample proved to be too broad for this project, so a representative sample of leadership literature was chosen. Contingent upon the concepts one uses to initiate the query, approximately half a dozen texts can be found in print that provide a significant overview of leadership theory. Taking my method from James Anderson’s similar analysis of communication theories, we queried books in print with the concepts “leadership theory,” “leadership process,” “leadership conceptualization” and “leadership construct” or synonyms of these terms.<sup>11</sup> Books with more than one edition received higher values since we reasoned that subsequent editions implied satisfied market users and time transcending qualities.

The search yielded several texts as primary candidates for analysis: Martin M. Chemers and Roya Ayman’s, *Leadership Theory and Research: Perspectives and Directions*; J. Robert Clinton’s, *A Short History of Leadership Theory*; Murray Hiebert and Bruce Klatt’s, *The Encyclopedia of Leadership: A Practical Guide to Popular Leadership Theories and Techniques*; Robert N. Lussier and Christopher F. Achua’s, *Leadership: Theory,*

<sup>10</sup> Darrell L. Guder, *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality* (Trinity Press International, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Another approach to expanding this search would involve inclusion of ‘organization,’ ‘organizational,’ ‘organize,’ and other synonyms in combination with leadership themes.

*Application, Skill Development*; Peter G. Northouse's, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*; and Jon L. Pierce and John W. Newstrom's, *Leaders and the Leadership Process*.

Several other titles appeared in the queried returns, but were disqualified from the final list since they were either domain-specific or partial in their treatment, e.g., educational leadership or nursing leadership. These included: Tony Bush, *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management*; Patti L. Chance and Edward W. Chance, *Introduction to Educational Leadership and Organizational Behavior: Theory into Practice*; Russ Marion, *Leadership in Education: Organizational Theory for the Practitioner*; and Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins, *Leadership Roles and Management Functions in Nursing: Theory and Application*. One other text, which contained one of the queried terms, was eliminated in that it was not specifically oriented toward surveying leadership theories. This was Robert G. Lord and Douglas J. Brown, *Leadership Processes and Follower Self-Identity*.<sup>12</sup>

Although Bass's *Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research and Managerial Applications*, should have arrived in the books in print search that was conducted, it did not. A case could be made for its inclusion as well as several encyclopedic and literature review-oriented texts like it, including: Gary Yukl's, *Leadership in Organizations*; James McGregor Burns et al's four-volume, *Encyclopedia of Leadership*; the three-volume, *International Library of Leadership*; Robert Terry's comparison of six theory types in, *Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action*; and Joseph C. Rost's critique of the industrial paradigm, examining 587 leadership texts in *Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Most of these texts provide meta-analyses, trend analysis, and research journal content reviews for the most recently published texts, but they do not present an explanatory proposal for particular theories, (perhaps Gary Yukl's work being the primary exception).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> There are two unavailable texts, which fit the parameters, and may be relevant to reviewers for the *Journal of Religious Leadership*. C. B Crawford *Understanding Leadership: Theories and Concepts* — Out of Print; William L. Gardner, et al, *Authentic Leadership Theory and Practice: Origins, Effects and Development* - Not Yet in Print.

<sup>13</sup> I consider Gary Yukl's organizational text to be one of the most helpful basic leadership texts, especially since he reviews, critiques and then attempts to reconcile shortcomings in what he himself has learned from the evaluation process. His *Multiple Linkage Model* accounts for the confounding variables, which seem to elude most leadership theorists.

along with Chemmers<sup>14</sup>), so we chose not to include them for sake of manageability. Conceivably, a more intensive content analysis would include these sources, as well as representative journal articles which are the substance of these review texts.

In table one, the thematic findings from the analysis are reported. The comparison showed a unity on the following theoretical themes: *biographic* (to include trait, profile, behavior, style, and skill theories), various contingency approaches (to include Michigan and Ohio Studies behavioral studies' favorable fit model, situational management and leadership models, normative leadership model, path-goal theories); *psycho-social approaches* (to include psychodynamic, emotional intelligence, behavioral complexity, self concept, self efficacy, and social learning theories); *social exchange models* (to include leader-follower-situation construct, transactional leadership, leader-member exchange, leader effectiveness theory); and *provocative expression theories*<sup>15</sup> (to include transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, normative leadership theory, servant leadership, critical leadership theory, leadership emergence theory).

If a text contained theory sets not found in the other comparison texts, these theories were listed under the heading "Sundry Theories." Inclusion in this category is not equivalent to the theory being especially provocative or that the reviewer is the author of the theories, rather it is recognition that this compiler represents differences with other compilers in their theory-set nominations.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Chemmers was a student and friendly critic of Fiedler (of Fiedler's contingency theory, one of the most influential theoretical proposals of the last century of leadership study). Chemmers builds on the contingency theory-building program, seeks to correct some of its parsimony problems. In the end he offers a snapshot of the a leadership situation which also accounts for moderating variables of culture, gender, organizational constraints and other seldom-included items in broad scope proposal.

<sup>15</sup> I borrow the language of "provocative theories" from Robert Terry's insightful examination of leadership theories. He reduces these theories to six types, three traditional and three provocative. Transformational leadership and charismatic approaches are examples of how he reframed these theories to contrast them with conventional and historical studies. See "Six Views of Leadership" in *Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1993).

**Table 1. Content Comparisons of Leadership Theory Texts**

	<i>Biographical Theories</i>	<i>Exchange Theories</i>	<i>Contingency Theories</i>	<i>Psycho-Social Theories</i>	<i>Provocative Theories</i>	<i>Sundry Theories</i>
<i>Chemers/ Ayman</i>	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	Attribution Theories Cognitive Approaches Gender/Intercultural Emergence Correspondent Inference Theory Organism-Evolution Perspective Function/Process Integration
<i>Clinton</i>	◆	◆	◆			Normative Decision Theory Multiple Linkage Model
<i>Hiebert/ Klatt</i>		◆	◆		◆	Recursive Leadership Attribution Theory
<i>Lussier/ Aebina</i>	◆	◆	◆		◆	Normative Leadership Theory Reinforcement Effectiveness Theory
<i>Northouse</i>	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	Psychodynamic Approach Women in Leadership Ethical Theory Comparisons
<i>Pierce/ Newstrom</i>		◆	◆		◆	Leadership Process Ambiguity of Leadership Substitutes/Neutralizers Theory Cross Cultural Emergence Idiosyncrasy Theory

Interestingly, leadership is conceptualized around a relatively small field of theoretical families, despite the field's reputation for complexity. The five to six themes identified represent an extensive survey of the normative literatures of organizational leadership. This study represents the adequacy of these fields to represent questions of religious-based organizational leadership. But are these normative literatures really normative for religious-based organizational leadership? To the degree that the research and theory building programs, which generated the initial studies, were organized around questions that were generalizable to all humans, sub-cultural groups and organizational types, the answer is an emphatic affirmative. But few leadership theories are conceived or



tested with this kind of broad validation.<sup>16</sup> This forces us to come to terms with the ambivalent findings of this survey.

### **Coming to Terms with a Loose Canon**

No place is it more evident than in a textbook comparison project like this, how relative is the construction of leadership knowledge. The comparison reinforces that in such matters of taste there is no canon. Few schemes are universal to each text, although a few theories repeatedly vie for wide generalization. Unfortunately, religious-based organizational leadership as a subset of organizational leadership inherits many of the same problems as its parent field. These results have caused us to conjecture whether the status of religious-based organizational leadership scholarship is best described as a continuum that ranges from *absence* to *ambiguity*. This approach is inadequate, however, for one of the world's most enduring organizational entities - the church and its related agencies. For this reason, we chose to include *appreciation* as a complement to this continuum.

**Absentia.** Why the absence? Absence of the religious-based organization may not be due to antagonism to the church and its related agencies,<sup>17</sup> but the practical effect of the exclusion is the same. Categories exist in the literature wherein one might expect contributions of religious, spiritual, transcendentive, theological scholarship to be intelligently included, but these are seldom found. These absences are most notable when constructs turn toward: self-

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<sup>16</sup> In a very interesting intercultural proposal, Robert House et al. have argued that transformational and charismatic leadership approaches may come closest to bearing universal theoretical signatures. This conjecture comes after a 61-nation extended study entitled "The Globe Project," House explores organizational effectiveness constructs across executive and managerial units in sample international organizations. Field research conducted by highly trained languageable field researchers, the research seems to repeatedly point toward themes consistent with the assumptions of charismatic and transformational leadership constructs.

<sup>17</sup> It is not at all uncommon to find references to ministers, church, allusions and quotations from sacred texts sprinkled throughout organizational scholarship. In most instances these amount to "cultural" references akin to illustrations with historical figures, classic works of art, monumental exploits and categories of like things, e.g. "Much of our description of history is the story of military, political, religious, and social leaders who are credited or blamed..." (Yulke, 1); "Ministers, doctors, coaches and teachers are all examples of individuals who have the potential to influence us" (Northouse, 6); "leaders as prophets, priests, chiefs and kings served as symbols, representatives, and models for their people in the Old and New Testaments, in the Upanishads, in Greek and Latin classics, and in the Icelandic sagas" (Bass, 3).

transcendence, spirituality, commitment, stewardship, ethics, morality, authenticity, valuing, motivation, persuasion, service and servanthood, and human nature. Not a few corporate writers have tripped into such themes with seemingly little awareness of mature literatures which preceded their work that might have added texture and depth to their efforts.<sup>18</sup> These absences, however, represent a warrant for religious organizational leadership researchers and scholars to enter the interdisciplinary conversation, with credible scholarship, and to offer language and frameworks where these are lacking.

Several interacting dualisms work to conspire toward this oversight of the religious-based organization. The scholarly space dedicated to theoretical consideration is prejudiced necessarily toward the industrial paradigm, a dominant worldview that is naturalistic, pragmatic, and utilitarian. Given the worldview of religiously motivated agents who engage in complex organizing, a worldview which is describable as theistic, transcendence-oriented, spiritually-receptive and moralistic, the religious factor is out of fit with the *bottom line* demands of outward industrial and corporate life.<sup>19</sup> The bottom line score card has tended to determine the priorities, although the new era of a balanced score card may accommodate the religious-based organization. While this vocational dualism helps explain the religious organization's absence, it is not the only dualism at play.

Throughout most of the last century religion was considered a private matter in America, attended to ritualistically on special days of the week and year, but not necessarily being related to the outworking of vocation and an organizational ethos.<sup>20</sup> This dualism, a distinctly Western phenomenon, allows for compartmentalization between matters of faith and vocation that becomes personal and public, sacred and secular, spiritual and material. Many societies of the world consider these divisions artificial unto

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<sup>18</sup> A few examples of recent include: Boleman and Deal's, *The Soul of Leadership, Authentic Leadership*, Shepherd Leadership.

<sup>19</sup> A section entitled "Church of the Holy Corpocracy" in Ralph Este's *Tyranny of the Bottom Line: Why Corporations Make Good People Do Bad Things* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996), 6, makes the point that involvement in corporate life does not come without its moral and spiritual hazards.

<sup>20</sup> Jeavons, 30-46.

hypocritical, and practically unfeasible.<sup>21</sup> But such compartmentalization has allowed some to find ways of introducing the power of the interior into the workplace.<sup>22</sup> In the last thirty years the interior life and its outworking have been made mentionable in the wake of the moral and ethical downfall of prominent leaders.

Another reason for the religious-based organization's absence in the study of leadership relates to the changing social environment wherein both organizational leadership scholarship and the economic engines of society have grown up along side one another. The last century of managerial leadership scholarship developed in the evolutionary environment of three of the most profound technological shifts in human history. At the turn of the last century, the agrarian age was still the primary economic modality for most people on the earth. But an industrial age, particularly in America and Europe, began displacing that hand-to-plough world through new scientific and technological inventions applied to manufacturing and production processes. Before the century would end, the information age, building on lessons learned through industrialization, would be firmly in place. The transition from the city-block sized mainframe computer (able to add, subtract, multiply *and* divide) to the laptop computer that runs complex software programs, along with blackberries and ear-bud cell phones has become the norm. Meditating on questions of religious organizing in the face of such technological change would have seemed superfluous unto odd. But certainly the story of Frankenstein always stands as a watchword to technological change agency, that God *and* the Devil are intimately involved in the details. But, again, whose job is it to raise these questions?<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See Geert Hofstede *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind - Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1997), 250.

<sup>22</sup> See J. Conger. *Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); Ian I. Mitroff and Elizabeth A. Denton's "A Study of Spirituality in the Workplace" (Sloan Management Review, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Summer 1999, Vol. 40, No. 4, 83-92); and also, Arnaldo Oliveira's "The Place of Spirituality in Organizational Theory," (*Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 17-21).

<sup>23</sup> Peter Drucker, considered the father of modern management by many, consulted the moral center of his Christian faith, as he argued for social responsibility in organizational execution. His prolific influence as a thought leader on business, governmental and third sector managerial leadership practice throughout the

During the last century, a particular form of evangelical Christianity came to dominate a major portion of the American culture-scape. It focused on a vertical-oriented focus on the redemption of the individual at the expense of a horizontal-oriented focus on church agency in the redemption of culture. This separation in priorities has created spaces of neglect and abdication in the outworking of culture and society. But an answer to the question above is that God was working in industry even though the church did not always understand its role in forming a culture-keeping vocational consciousness that construed work in the marketplace as the sacramental work of the church in culture. Thus, the boardroom and the assembly line, during the industrial era, were more characterized by inhuman and inhumane views of the person and productivity rather than by a healthy spirituality.<sup>24</sup>

Ambiguity. Why ambiguity? It seems habitual, in the history of formal leadership studies, to offer obscurity when profundity is lacking. Many leadership studies by esteemed scholars begin their best books with a series of disclaimers and qualifiers in the name of the topic's unassailable mystique.<sup>25</sup> However, if the parent field of study is hard to decipher, the concept of religious-based organization leadership in the wider literatures of formal leadership studies is an ambiguous one at best.

Leadership, as a formal study, derives from a profuse and perplexing scholarly tradition, one that is only just over one hundred years old in the American research tradition. Its copious buildup of research has offered a world of rich

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second half of the last century substantiates the importance of vocational stewardship in the execution of religious based organization. See Peter Drucker "The Age of Social Transformation" *Leading Organizations: Perspectives for a New Era*. Editor. Gill Robinson Hickman (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> It is to be noted that a remarkable shift has been underway in the last twenty years. As some theorists have called the era in which we find ourselves to be the "An Era of Complexity," this time frame is characterized by a search for rootedness, principles and virtue. That the books of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leadership*, *Principled-Centered Leadership* by Stephen Covey, the Moral Compass and Book of Virtues series by Bill Bennett (pre-gambling disclosures) and *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box* have become national best-sellers in this era is signal of a popular demand for morality-centered writing, and these each from professedly religious writers.

<sup>25</sup> In *Leadership in the 21st Century*, Peter Senge, et al., (2002) offer a critique on the practice of obfuscating the leadership topic; he also offers an alternative reading to this approach by reframing most of leadership studies history as management history.

insights into one of the most “studied phenomena on earth.” From that same buildup, leadership scholars have also offered disarray, confusion, contradiction, and triviality, making it also “one of the least understood phenomena on earth.”<sup>26</sup> While there are many reasons for the ambivalent results regarding the study of leadership, two reasons are worthy of mention.

First, leadership is the rightful domain of sense-making beings, requiring each human to form implicit constructs of what comprises ideal and blemished leadership prototypes. Leadership scholars refer to this *a priori* condition by names such as “implicit leadership theory,” “prototypical leadership model,” or “culturally implicit leadership theories.”<sup>27</sup> Each refers to the same construct, a condition that is represented by that stock of images, expectations, attitudes, behaviors, and cultural scripts which account for what each person takes as a given about leadership and the leadership process. This state of affairs explains why one can interview ten people on their definition of leadership and receive ten (if not thirteen) different replies. But this *a priori* construct does not fully explain the confusing state of the leadership concept in its academic literatures.

Second, many leadership scholars and practitioners who write about the topic of leadership and organizations routinely do so with little epistemic self-consciousness. In doing so, they assert their own implicit theoretical perspectives without referencing the origins and content of their prototypes, or acknowledging that audiences, readers, and colleagues already have prior commitments that already fill this lexical space. This lexical relativity problem - we each have our own view of leadership, and some of us publish and practice our view as if it was *the* view - places most formal leadership studies on perpetual motion wheels similar to those found within hamster cages. These positions create high volumes of peripatetic activity, which contribute little actual advancement in persuasive and productive knowledge claims about leadership. From our studied point of view and that of

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<sup>26</sup> James McGregor Burns, *Leadership* (Harper and Row, 1978).

<sup>27</sup> Bernard Bass, *Handbook for Leadership: Theory, Research, and Applications*.

others,<sup>28</sup> this “ferment in the field” is the starting place of current leadership studies, and it heavily constrains how religious leadership scholars and educators must proceed as they initiate generative knowledge spaces such as the *Academy of Religious Leadership* and the *Journal of Religious Leadership*.

A number of religious leadership scholars and practitioners who publish, and who have generated a small but burgeoning library of literatures, have begun to commit the same self-referencing mistake that has mired the wider community into imprecision and relativity. Additionally, many Christian religious leadership authors commit the double-sin of uncritically appropriating industrial paradigm constructs from assumptive systems which are incompatible with their core principles of transcendental, theistic, humanistic, and revelation-dependent epistemology and ethics.

Evidences of this naïve appropriation can be found in the two dominant Protestant evangelical reactions to leadership. An examination of their publishing practices and attitudes on leadership reveals that these two contrasting reactions are on the ends of an attitudinal spectrum ranging from *aversion* to *embrace*. The aversion pole is evident in statements like “servant leadership is an oxymoron,” as one Christian organizational leader asserted in a public meeting. He went on, “one may be a servant—that is all. There is no need to modify this condition with the power virus of leadership.” This well-known and highly regarded Christian organizational leader could not disassociate leadership from coercion, abuse, and authoritarianism. He seemed confident that he was summarily representing the ethos of biblical spirituality while doing so (as well as the entire spectrum of leadership thinking). Another example, less crude, of the aversive pole might be the seminal text, *Church Leadership: Following the Example of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) by O. Lawrence Richards. Richards seeks to represent a biblical theology of leadership in this thoughtful work. He sets up a series of contrasts between indistinct industrial paradigm

<sup>28</sup> We are not alone in our conclusions concerning leadership studies’ state of indistinctness and self-referencing. For example, in *Leadership: The Art of Making Things Happen*, Robert Kegan provides ample case evidence in his examination of the formal leadership studies field, its centerpiece being the examination of incompatibilities between 222 referenced definitions of leadership in his second chapter.

models and their production and profit aims on one hand and the relational nurturance mission of the church on the other. Richards gives a textual voice to the attitude of many Christians on leadership, and other social and natural science disciplines. This dualism has a long career, accounting for abdications from many of the opinion-molding arenas in society such as government, law, economics, and various hard and soft sciences. This is an unfortunate position, but it is not the only one.

The opposite end of the continuum offers a sunnier appropriation of organizational leadership themes. In this vein, “everything rises and falls on leadership,” at least, that is how John Maxwell, (one of the publishing lightening rods of the leadership embrace pole), sees the matter. Leadership, on the embrace end, is a virtual talisman of qualified success. This means that if its traits and techniques can be mastered, giving due diligence to issues of Christian spirituality of course, then one can actualize, accelerate, and achieve. Human potential is just below the surface in each of us, and leadership is the means and end of releasing that potential into its “God-given” end.

While our next statement may not be applied universally, it can be applied substantially as a way to understand what articulators from this pole are talking about. In these works you can replace the word *leadership* with the word *self-actualization* and usually find you are within the same semantic range.<sup>29</sup> This is as unfortunate as the aversive reaction. Each extreme end of the continuum tends toward errors in unsubstantiated generalizations, methodologies, and operational recommendations.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Examples of the self-actualization motif is evident in: Be a People Person. (1989: Victor Books); *The Winning Attitude: Your Pathway to Personal Success* (1996, Nashville: Nelson Books); John C. Maxwell. *Today Matte : 12 Daily Practices to Guarantee Tomorrow's Success* (2004, Atlanta: Center Street).

<sup>30</sup> Maxwell projects a scientific confidence when he confuses experientially-informed opinion with universal and irrefutable covering laws with in *21 Irrefutable Laws: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville: Thomas Business Books, 2002). The laws, so-called, are easily refuted by assertion of counter-examples that most anyone can generate with some thought. However, these counter examples take nothing away from Maxwell's good intentions to help persons self-actualize more predictable circumstances.

Both of these reactions grow in the same soil of an uncritical view of leadership as a construct. Aversion and embrace reactions each give evidence of a virulent dualism in operation. Both are guilty of the first error of lexical relativity (referred to above). And these two reactions add additional layers of confusion and mystique to the communication problem that plagues formal leadership studies. So what can be done? How does one offer sense-making schema in such a complex conceptual space? The average person usually makes sense of this space by employing functional leadership and organizational judgments that have implicit theories embedded within them. On the other, and a great number of leadership scholars and practitioners seem to be unaware of the need to take account of these implicit pre-existing theories. That the question must be asked betrays the ambiguous state of the art for religiously-motivated organizational leadership.

Ambiguity accounts for a great deal of the mixed returns in leadership studies. While the literature on organizational leadership is immense, almost beyond reasonable categorization, some researchers have made impressive efforts to do so. Many of these works have become normative for mapping efforts within leadership studies. A few exemplars include: Bass and Stodgill's, *Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research and Managerial Applications*; Kenneth and Margorie Clark's, *The Measure of Leadership*; J. Thomas Wren, Douglas A. Hicks and Terry L. Price's, *International Library of Leadership*; and the most recently the four-volume James McGregor Burns et al., *Encyclopedia of Leadership*. These texts are indexes of the width, depth, and breadth of formal leadership study, taxonomically covering more than a century of some of the best literature on leadership. But for a researcher with a mental picture of distinct religious organizational forms, with distinctive questions and needs, these volumes are nearly mute. A content analysis of these resources forces one to assume the authors must consider a religious organization to be as any organization, one that is subject to the same vicissitudes as any inculturated social collective. Or, they force one to assume the authors must not consider a religious organization at all.



## INVITING APPRECIATION OF THE RELIGIOUS-BASED ORGANIZATION

The preceding sections dealing with absentia and ambiguity in relation to the study of the religious-based organization in organizational leadership literatures are needlessly inadequate. Given the importance of the religious impulse in every society, critical appreciation and engagement of organizational leadership by religious leadership practitioners is warranted. Ambiguity and absence persist in the formal literature of organizational theorists because of the relative absence of credible scholarship from the religious organizational realm. In every instance where scholarship of this character emerges, the field of leadership studies demonstrates a propensity to be inclusive, rather than exclusive.<sup>31</sup> The remainder of this paper constitutes an attempt to remedy the ambivalent status of the religious-based organization in organizational scholarship. Critical appreciation, not ambivalence, is the desired response. It is our assertion that extant organization leadership scholarship is sufficiently relevant to religious-based organization practitioners and scholars. What may be lacking is the work of translation. Meaningful intersections are needed which would allow religious-based organization practitioners and scholars to make better use of the existing managerial bookshelf. The road works both ways. These intersections must be critically framed so as to allow organizational scholars who may not be engaged in religious-based organization practice or scholarship to gain access to research and theory-building conducted by religious-based organization scholars.

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<sup>31</sup> In the preface to the third edition of *The Handbook of Leadership*, called "What's New in This Edition," Bass outlines those evolutions in the field of leadership studies since the last (1981) edition. In it he charts how cognitive science has liberated leadership from social psychological moorings; the maturation of research methodology, especially related to culture and environment; societal changes that necessitate new inquiries, how that health professionals, data processing administrators and police officials have become increasingly the subject of study; new journals, biographies, "pop" leadership books and centers of study and research are mentioned. This important state-of-the-art text is the case in point that as shifts occurs, of a credible nature, they are included as relevant to the domain, but not all. Bass inveighs what he calls "know-nothings" who perpetuate "know-nothingisms" when they misread or misuse the state of research to advance populist agendas at the expense of the weaknesses of the leadership field (xi).

Another look at the matrix above, Table 1 "Content Comparisons of Leadership Theory Texts," should raise a more significant question: What is missing (not only for religious-based organizations), but for organizational leadership in general? Implicit theories of leadership, episodic constraints in leadership theory, and significant consideration of domain-specific contextual constraints to leadership are missing. The latter advantage not only the work in religious leadership organizational settings, but also military, educational, healthcare, sports, and other context-specific expressions. But these could be subsumed under contingency theories, at least not as most contingency theories are presently construed. Some elements within each of the theory sets will be relevant to the religious-based organization as is, but not all elements. Is this because religious-based organizational leadership is attributable to such leaders being different kinds of persons? But they are not anymore than military, sports team, or educational leaders. Rather, these leaders within their specific contexts are different by degrees. Organizational context impacts and constrains operational styles.<sup>32</sup>

Are these organizations distinct forms, which cause them to be distinct forms? Are there distinct organizational forms across the sectors? Is there anything about the content of theoretical schemes, represented by organizational leadership textbooks, which precludes the religious based organization form? Each of the six themes from the survey is relevant to religious-based organizations. It is a work of translation. Religious-based organizational practitioners and scholars need not reconstruct the field, but must rather locate the meaningful intersections. Theorizing the religious-based organization from within extant literatures of leadership requires, on the religious leadership side of the conversation, a reckoning with identity-definitional questions, form-structural questions, and sectorial-ecological questions. These three dimensions are explored below.

<sup>32</sup> Hooijberg and Choi argue for the qualified cross-sectorial application of organizational leadership theories and literatures; they write from a public/private sector stance in their "Framework of Competing Values" study of public administration and leadership. Hooijberg, G. M., and Choi, J. H. "The Impact of Organizational Characteristics on Leadership Effectiveness Models: An Examination of Leadership in a Private and a Public Sector Organization." *Administration and Society*, September 2001, 403-431.

Given the emergence of an era of intersectorial hybridization, wherein public, private, nonprofit, and religious-sector service organizations increasingly are sharing the same social space (with this raising new questions concerning sectorial funding constraints), the religious-based organization will become more and more the subject of intersectorial scholarship. We now turn our attention to this emphasis.

### TRANSFORMATIVE INTERSECTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Despite the insistence by some that religious-based organizations are in a class unto themselves, most organizational scholars respectfully differ with them.<sup>33</sup> The religious-based organization, through the eyes of an organizational theorist, is essentially a culture-constrained expression of how humans introduce betterment, make sense, accomplish collective tasks, reduce uncertainty and perpetuate their ideals in their worlds. No one would disagree that the *way* a religionist goes about such actions might differ from the way public and private-sector organizations would. However, their transcendence, morals, and nurture-oriented missions do not make them different enough to represent a different *kind* of collective, but rather they are different only by degrees. As we seek to theorize, the religious-based organization suggests at least three intersecting points of scholarship that can help us. Each scholarly intersection seizes upon shared concerns of all organizational types. They are principally selected because they provide language for the religious organization to be viewed in all its similarity and distinctness at once while also highlighting the role of leadership within the organizational process.<sup>34</sup> These common organizational dimensions include: (a) how core structural elements affect *institutional identity patterns*; (b)

<sup>33</sup> Richard and Hoeldtke and Dibbert each are examples of the unique category view of religious-based organizations.

<sup>34</sup> Tosi in *Theories of Organization*. (1983, New York: John Wiley) makes a helpful distinction that is always present but seldom stated in organizational leadership studies. One may study organization and organizations as topics of inquiry, without necessarily even approaching questions of leadership. The leadership apparatus, regardless of the myriad of approaches, ranging from hierarchical control to radically distributed leadership authority, is always embedded within the social structure of organizations, but not always identified as such.

how managerial leadership approaches affect *involvement patterns*; and (c) how the *ecological patterns* affect organizational reflexes. Each of these theoretical dimensions is discussed below under the headings *Identity Intersections*, *Involvement Intersections*, and *Ecological Intersections*.

## IDENTITY INTERSECTIONS

One of the first questions for religious-based organizational participants is whether the religious-based organization is actually commensurate with organizational types in other sectors. The question is usually framed like this: Can you *really* apply formulations meant for business or government to the church and service agencies? The assumption underlying such a question is based on a belief that transcendental interests and values of these non-secular organizations might necessitate exemptions from those experienced by secular ones. This exclusion is explained by a rationalization that contrasts between hard calculative and remunerative worlds of government and business respectively and the soft nurturing humanitarian world of the social sector.<sup>35</sup> However, seldom has the religious-based organization been carefully<sup>36</sup> laid beside other organizational types to determine if these assumptions are, in fact, warranted. Those who have made progress in these comparisons demonstrate that a task and missional orientation is absolute in all complex organizational types, while organizational competence is not. It is on this secondary finding that most nonprofits, and the religious expressions of these, fall short, and *not* merely because of their religiously motivated human services orientations.<sup>37</sup> Those who have come closest to conducting these comparative studies, have tended to come way with more egalitarian and inclusive views, making room in their taxonomies for the religious-

<sup>35</sup> Jeavons, 59.

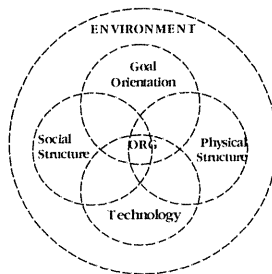
<sup>36</sup> The emphasis is on the adverb "*carefully*." Taxonomical comparisons can be found, but construct biases of authors, which have developed the tables to emphasize incommensurability often, do so successfully. This approach is particularly common in popular religious-based organization literature. See Margaret Harris and David Billis, *Organising Voluntary Agencies: A Guide through the Literature* (London: Bedford Square Press, 1986), 29.

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Harris and David Billis, *Organising Voluntary Agencies: A Guide through the Literature* (London: Bedford Square Press, 1986).

based organization and its leadership apparatus.<sup>38</sup> We have selected Mary Jo Hatch's "Five Circles Model of Organization"<sup>39</sup> in order to make visual both core structural and purposive realities. The model allows one to "look through" the skeletal makeup of most any organization.

In its most basic form, an organization is a social collective with a common purpose. Onto this core framework, multiple layers of particularization can be overlaid. More complex organizational definitions stress the interlinking frameworks and systems that orchestrate human meaning-making (culture), human involvement (social structure, e.g., human resources), physical structure (buildings, symbolic arrangements, e.g., the corner office), technology (tools to get the job done, e.g., computers, finances, material), and environment (the external and contextual influences on internal states). This framework underlies the design of complex governmental agencies like the U.S. Navy, neighborhood community action groups like *Meals on Wheels*, stock exchange index companies like *Home Depot* and *McDonald's*, even nonprofit *Red Cross* blood collection centers, and local church communities both small and large. Each of these extremely varied organizational service types, with their variant legal structures, missional slants, and capital disbursement models, share common skeletal elements pictured in the model below.

**Figure 1. The Five Circles Organizational Model**



<sup>38</sup> The respective work of organizational sociologists, Weber, Parsons and Etzioni, particularly are notable on this point.

<sup>39</sup> It is possible, since Hatch does not reference the origin of the Five Circles Model that it originates in "Leavitt's Diamond: A Model of Organization." In "Applied Organizational Change in Industry: Structural, Technological and Humanistic Approaches," in *Handbook of Organizations* (1965), Figure 1, 1145, ed. James March (Chicago: Rand McNally). Labels for "Goal Orientation" are adapted from "Culture" as culture is subsumed under Leavitt's view of social structure. Hatch's model has been altered slightly to reflect the themes found in Leavitt's "Organizational Diamond."

Were we to end our discussion with the Five Circles Model, making the universality of structuration obvious, our work would be incomplete. We need to overlay on this the unique identity dimensions of the organization's constitution. This identity dimension, not unlike the personality dimension of a human being, separates one organization from the next.

While few organizational scholars will be completely satisfied with selection criteria which inform the description of this dimension, most will agree that at least these four elements of identity can be found in most complex organizations. For our purposes of locating the religious-based organization on the organizational scholarship map, we frame these dimensions in the acrostic "PACE." PACE refers to an organization's performance framework, actioning mechanisms, capital resourcing, and evaluative measures. *Performance Framework* includes those elements of mission, vision, values, philosophy, and programming. These inform core priorities, strategies and programming, and technologies. They provide means for comparison to determine progress, success, health, and effectiveness. *Actioning Mechanisms* are those administrative, orchestrative, and processual elements, which direct human motivation for involvement toward organizational purposes. This area involves human resource and information organizing strategies and technologies. *Capital Resourcing* relates to all areas of material and finance procurement, allocation, and disbursement. This area involves all the means of revenue acquisition, controls, accounting, development, spending, stewardship, and accounting. *Evaluative Measures* are those elements of organization-wide discipline, which plan and track progress toward intended results. This area involves extensive and intensive monitoring and feedback-gaining practices which are used for managerial leadership decisioning, control, supervision, organizational learning, and process improvement. These elements together comprise a major portion of an organization's identity.

An organization's identity is a combination of its PACE and its response to the core structural features (refer back to Figure 1), linked together by its leadership apparatus. The leadership function, by most definitions and philosophies, tends toward interaction and integration of these constitutional elements in ways which cause them to

appropriately matter to that group's ideal objectives. Leadership, both on the individual and institutional ends of a continuum, will be orchestrating purposeful activities, moderating actioning processes, facilitating capital resource and linking these to accountability and stewardship through evaluation. The PACE functions like a diagnostic when linked to an institution's Five Circles, revealing alignments and misalignments according to diagnostic criteria deemed most relevant to a particular investigation. These two dimensions, functional form (the five circles) and its substance (PACE), moderated by its leadership apparatus to respond to organizational opportunities and dilemmas, allow scholars to compare the religious-based organization with any other kind of organization at the structural level. Its identity, as a religious-based organization, is a function of the managerial leadership's facilitation of such features as values expressions within its goal orientation, core technology (often, "people processing"),<sup>40</sup> and evaluative practices.

All of these items are portrayals of that which is *within* the organization. It is a one-dimensional static picture Karl Weick and others would call a fiction if it were left in this skeletal depiction.<sup>41</sup> In Figure 2, a picture of the societal environmental context adds texture to the discussion of organizational identity. Parsons' model of societal organizing emphasized that organizations on a macro level are afforded recognition in social space that is proportionate to the needs such organizations address in the context of a particular society's values. For example, if health care is valued by a society, organizations that prioritize caring for health needs will be understandable, welcomed, solicited.<sup>42</sup> Sources of a

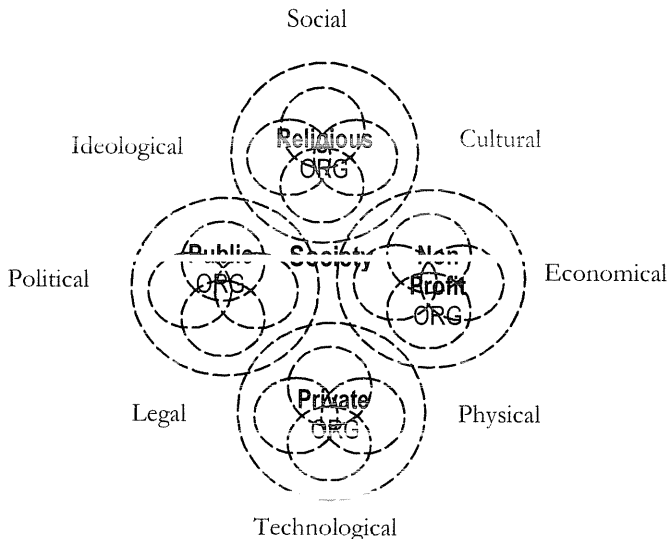
<sup>40</sup> W. Richard Scott *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems* (Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2003), 22.

<sup>41</sup> He admonishes, if organizations are referred to, or pictured as I have done above, as nouns, they are myths. He accepts Gregory Bateson's open system's dynamic assumptions captured in "stamp out nouns." See, "Middle range Theories of Social System," (*Behavioral Science*, 19, 1974), 358.

<sup>42</sup> See Talcott Parsons's *Structure and Process in Modern Society* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960). Parson's structural model of organizational repertoire is a classic integration of structural-functional sociology. His "AGIL" matrix of structural needs within social structures can be used at the macro societal level, right down to the local group level community. AGIL is an acrostic which captures four needs: (1) Adaptation ~ Obtaining resources from the environment for survival; (2) Goal Attainment ~ Setting meaningful courses of action; (3) Integration ~ Maintaining solidarity of all units within a system; (4) Latency ~ Perpetuating cultural values and identity.

society's normative priorities are implied by the terms circumscribing the societal model.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 2. Intersectoral Environmental Model**



Ordinarily when American civil society's organizational repertoire is portrayed, its traditional configuration reflects three dominant sectors: public, private, and nonprofit. A review of the literature renders the religious organization's omission as near absolute.<sup>44</sup> The religious organizational type is added here because each of the various organizational types occupies the same environmental space. It shares the same common structural denominators. They are each affected by prevailing environmental constraints such as social

<sup>43</sup> These normative themes are inspired by Ninian Smart's *Dimensions of the Sacred: Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (University of California Press, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Sources viewed where we might have expected to find references to the religious based organization form: Kramer, R. M. (1998). "Nonprofit Organizations in the 21st Century: Will Sector Matter?" *Nonprofit Sector Research Fund Working Paper Series*: 62; Sven-Erik Sjostrand. "The Organization of Non-Profit Activities." *SSE/EFI Working Paper Series in Business Administration*. No. 1999:7. September 1999; Helmut K. Anheier. "Managing Non-Profit Organisations: Towards a New Approach." *Civil Society Working Paper 1*. January 2000; Debra C. Minkoff. "The Emergence of Hybrid Organizational Forms: Combining Identity-Based Service Provision and Political Action." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Vol. 31 no. 3. September 2002. 377-401. © 2002 Sage Publications. 0145-5614/02/3103-0377\$10.00; "Changing Face of Social Service Volunteering: A Literature Review." *Research Unit, Knowledge Management Group, Canadian Ministry of Social Development*, December 2001.



processes, cultural contours and demands, physical and climate-related conditions, legal compliance, political and ideological climate, economic vicissitudes, and the state of technological arts. These external factors permeate internal states of collective organizing; they bear upon the adequacy of organizational leadership, governance, and management.

But this discussion of structure can easily become dislocated from an important underpinning reality. All organizations, regardless of sectorial makeup, must have human involvement.

### INVOLVEMENT INTERSECTIONS

Organizations do not exist merely to offer services or to proffer goods and experiences. They also exist for people. They are radically social in their origins, purpose, and outcomes. All of the structural elements can exist undisturbed in the antiseptic life of textbooks, but never motivate persons to a commitment to an organization's purpose without the kind of leadership apparatus, which consistently engenders appropriate human involvement.

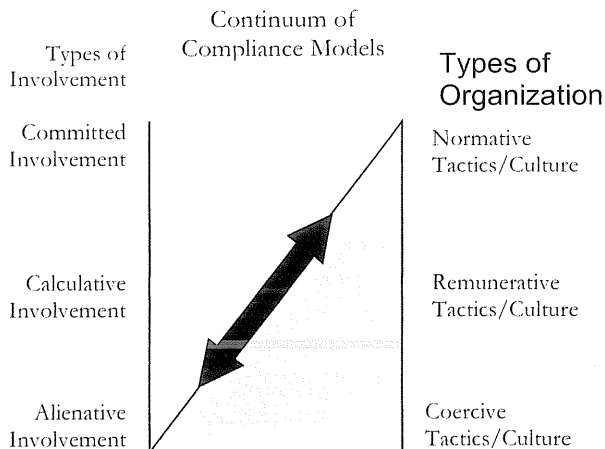
Involvement is related to environment in that managerial modality can heavily shape both organizational forms and its relationship to its environment (which in our case includes issues of intersectoriality). Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist of organizations, has been one of the seminal organizational theorists dealing with the question of human involvement in organizational life. He built his edifice on the slab laid by Weber's view of ethical control theories, but did so in ways, which went quite beyond Weber. Etzioni offers a triad of organizational types, which have become household words, e.g., public sector, private sector and (in later writing) "the third sector." These three fields of civil engagement are characterized by three organizational approaches to compliance gaining. In *Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* he observed: public sector organizations, such as government agencies and the military, tended toward coercive power relations; private sector organizations, such as industrial corporations, relied upon remunerative strategies of compliance; and, "third sector" organizations - this domain is home to such organizations as religious groups, philanthropic

agencies, educational institutions, arts and sciences groups and hospitals — manipulated normative symbols to obtain buy-in. It is of note that the ambiguous dubbing of this sector, “third sector, invited a flurry other nominations, e.g., social, moral, voluntary, nonprofit, cultural, independent, non-organized, informal, and third arm of government sectors (to name a few). It is little wonder that the religious-based organization has an indistinct status in this mixture.

Robert J. House’ “Compliance Model of Organizations” (Figure 3) graphically captures Etzioni’s theory.<sup>45</sup> The model shows the links between organizational types (coercive, remunerative, and normative) to involvement types (alienation-oriented, calculation-oriented, and commitment-oriented). He observes governmental and military organizations as inherently coercive. Alienation is the dominant expression of involvement of the laity in such organizations. In the world of commerce, exchanges are central to the motivational structure. Participants are forced into a calculative relationship with their work exchanges in order to secure remuneration. Normative organizations, like schools and churches, induce commitment by manipulating symbols and meaning. On Etzioni’s spectrum commitment is inherently positive and alienation is its polar opposite; calculative motivations are the centered set which can improve or devolve in one direction or the other. The model can easily leave the impression that organizations fit squarely into the three types, based on the dominant managerial leadership approaches.

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<sup>45</sup> House, R. J. “The Distribution and Exercise of Power in Complex Organizations: A Meso Theory.” *Leadership Quarterly*, 2, (1991), 23-58.

**Figure 3. Etzioni's Compliance Model of Organizations**

Etzioni's model is important to theorizing leadership in the religious-based organization because it accounts for, in one explanatory model: (1) distinctions between organizational types, (2) implied leadership approaches in these distinct types (observed by Etzioni in his data sample) and, (3) markedly different measures for motivation and involvement. The model also offers a conceptual ground upon which judgments can be made as to whether Etzioni's generalizations, based on the organizations within his sample and the historical timeframe of his research, still hold true in light of the hybridization acknowledged by sectorial, institutional, and ecological scholars. In lay terms, the question can be asked this way: Is it conceivable that evidences of coercion and remuneration can be located in the involvement practices of religious-based organizations? One needs to look no further than the epic spiritual abuse cases of the last 40 years on the toxic end along with some hierarchical denominational polities on the authoritarian end. But it is just as easy to locate public and private sector examples which are able to put normative and symbolic compliance dynamics to good use. Even Etzioni made room for this symbolic-normative impulse in military organizations, and coercive-alienative involvement in mental hospitals and educational institutions he examined at the time.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> In a section on "dual compliance structures," Etzioni suggest that while the phenomenon occurs, it usually has a draining effect of on compliance gaining

Underestimation of the religious-based organization's organizational value is curious. For more than two thousand years the Christian church has persisted with high degrees of stability in core structural essentials, while enabling immense amounts of agility and cultural absorption. One of its defining features has been its ability to use symbols to induce positive involvement without use of legal control or force, or monetary rewards. Inasmuch as Peter Drucker calls an organization like *The Salvation Army* "the most effective organization in America" and the Mormon Church continues to be the largest volunteer organization on earth, (boasting only one paid employee), it would seem that in the current era of transformational leadership's popularity, wherein the moral intelligence of members is raised in the leader and member interplay, organizations bent on accelerating in the moral intelligence of their members could do well to take a page out of the motivational book from which religious-based organizational leadership practitioners have been reading. Increasingly organizational scholars are questioning the value of constructs which partition society by public, private, and social-sector distinctions. In a monograph entitled, *Will Sector Matter in Ten Years?*, Ralph Kramer points out several trends in the study of organizations which justify the question around which his article is constructed.<sup>47</sup> This mood invites organizations of all types to compete on the basis of quality performance and not form of legal constitution, revenue disbursement, or value expression.

## ECOLOGICAL INTERSECTIONS

Environment is a key theoretical intersection between extant organizational scholarship and the religious-based organization. For most of the last century, organizational theorists who thought to reflect on questions of involvement did so with erroneous or incomplete views of the religious-based organization on this issue. This inaccuracy rendered a societal portrayal, which, while parsimonious at a theoretical level, did not reflect the variant realities of religious

withdraw commitment. *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, (New York: The Free Press, 1961), 55.

<sup>47</sup> Kramer, 62

organizing. This status requires religious-based organizational leadership scholars to contribute to the scholarly understanding of these organizations. In this section, we will look at the environmental consciousness of modern organizations, especially how these organizations are impacted by their orientations toward permeability of organizational boundaries and relations.

The religious-based organization, historically the birth-mother of most other philanthropic endeavors in America,<sup>48</sup> is often found to be missing in the nonprofit/voluntary sector literatures. In Margaret Harris and David Billis' influential, *Organising Voluntary Agencies: A Guide through the Literature*,<sup>49</sup> the religious-based organization is conspicuously absent. Key handbooks in nonprofit research and practice perpetuate the same oversight.<sup>50</sup> Our unfamiliarity with the political apparatus which might inform development of such projects notwithstanding, it would seem that even by sheer "market share" in the providing of human and social services, (not to mention its status as recipient and redistributors of the preponderance charitable gifts), that religious-based organizations might have been more significantly noticed in more than thirty years of scholarly engagement of this sector. The religious question has emerged in the social sector scholarly deliberations only in the last ten years, but with a political mood which defends against interlopers from accessing scarce government and philanthropic funding.<sup>51</sup> When religious-based organizations appear in the third sector organizational scholarship, (a body of scholarship which is self-conscious of its thin showing, compared to the immense industrial organizational literatures), they usually appear as

<sup>48</sup> Jeavons offers a grand tour of America's church-based philanthropic sector roots in *When Faithfulness in the Bottom Line: Management of Christian Service Organizations* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 3-46.

<sup>49</sup> (London: Routledge Publishing February, 1993).

<sup>50</sup> Examples of survey texts along this line include: Tracy Daniel Connors, *The Nonprofit Handbook: Management* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001); Robert D. Herman, & Associates, *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Gary M. Grobman, *The Nonprofit Handbook: Everything You Need to Know to Start and Run Your Nonprofit Organization* (Harrisonburg, PA: White Hat Communications, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> James Vanderwoerd, "How Faith-Based Social Service Organizations Deal with Secular Pressures Associated with Government Funding," *NonProfit Management and Leadership*, Vol. 14, No. 3, Spring 2004, 239-262; Lewis, David, "Theorizing the Organization of Non-Government Development Organizations," *Public Management Review*, 325-342.

singular case studies. When these cases are success stories of organizational excellence legitimacy is often questioned.<sup>52</sup>

It is doubtful whether this lowly position in the study of organizations pecking order is likely to change. Few religious organizational leadership scholars have entered credibly the scholarly conversation. The amount of religious-based organizational leadership research is miniscule compared to the wider field of organizational leadership. This is inconsistent with the level of interest in themes related to religious-based leadership, themes such as servant leadership, spirituality in the workplace, faith-based organizations as competitors for sector service funds, and ethic/morality concerns across all sectors. These concerns warrant social scientists to lend their attention to this important human concern. Many researchers and theorists agree this is a critical omission in the sociology of organizations. However, Tom Jeavons in his *When Faithfulness is the Bottom Line: Christian Service Organizations*, does not believe that the slight attention in the organizational literature is one of intersectorial mapping, nor one of priority. He views the matter as a fundamental misunderstanding of the religious-based organization's potential to seriously engage task. Protesting the influences of early structural sociologists of organization, which reduced religious organizations' societal contribution to cultural, symbolic, normative, and pattern maintenance functions, Jeavons makes a case for retaining the values expressive functions *and* a robust missional task structure.

New organizational forms are emerging, which modulate age-old classifications into public, private, and "third sector." Decreases in governmental spending in the 1980s triggered the so called "crisis in the welfare state,"<sup>53</sup> and a new area of social policy was born resulting in an emergence of

<sup>52</sup> In Bill Hybel's *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) he tells of an invitation to Harvard to "defend" his use of organizational development techniques in response to case studies written about his congregations (Harvard Business Review, "Willow Creek Community Church" (A), Harvard Business School, February 9. Case No. 9-691-102); it is one of the largest churches in America). Jo Anne Schneider, "Trusting That of God in Everyone: Three Examples of Quaker-Based Social Service in Disadvantaged Communities," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 3, September 1999 269-295. (c) 1999 Sage

<sup>53</sup> "The Crisis of The Welfare State" by Clarence B. Carson. Published in The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty - April 1983. <http://www.fee.org/vnews/>. Downloaded on July 19, 2005.

intersectorial models that stood between the state and the private sector. These current trends suggest an era of hybridization is underway, making the religious organizational form, a viable subject of inquiry. They are becoming the subject of study for the same reasons nonprofits became subjects of study in the early 80s: the shrinking funding pie. The nonprofit sector earned a distinct space on the spectrum because of a so-called crisis in the welfare state. It emerged between the governmental sector and the business economy. Because of their ability to offer moral and normative response as human services providers, they increasingly assumed higher profiles as organizations. Philanthropists, in their need to make funding decisions, used the same criteria for judgment as might have been used in a capital venture investment. Return on investment (ROI) was a transferable calculus, in most respects - status of management team, fiscal stability, and organizational competence to deliver goods and services, etcetera - with one major difference. Increased profits are not redistributed to shareholders or stakeholders, but rather these are plowed back into services, operations, and stabilizing portfolios (as appropriate to their legal tax exempt statuses). The same process is repeating itself to give the religious-based organization more organizational prominence.

Bush-era "compassionate conservatism" which makes legislative space for a "charitable choice" doctrine has put the emphasis, not on the legal form of organizations, but of the performance of organizations. In this environment, a religiously-based organization which can smartly deliver services is an equal competitor for funding priorities as a public or private service provider. This unprecedented development has increased the public awareness of the innovation, performance, efficiencies, and holistic benefits of religious-based organizations and their leadership. However, while popular interest and reaction has occurred, organizational scholarship has not kept pace. When *sectoring* language is used to describe the organizational landscape, it remains divided into a three-neighborhood map: public, private and nonprofit (or one of its many pseudonyms). Absent from the scholarly landscape is the religiously-motivated organization. Compared to organizational

leadership in the industrial paradigm, neither governmental nor nonprofit organizational scholarship can compare. While public administration studies boast a significantly larger library shelf, the nonprofit organizational research program in the United States could be described as pre-adolescent.<sup>54</sup> Several handbooks have emerged, but each is mute on religious-based organization. While trends within the field of organizational sociology are creating pressure, which may make the three-sector a conceptual anachronism,<sup>55</sup> the first drafts of the new maps continue to be obscured in their under-representation of the religious organization.<sup>56</sup>

A survey of the composite literatures that comprise the conversation of these topics indicates that only in a few instances do organizational writers have compulsions that they *ought* to mention the religious field (for completeness sake), but beg off with rationalizations of "beyond the scope of the present study," or "somebody should study this." The work of David Billis is cited as useful in reconfiguring the three-sector model to represent the current and shifting realities. Others advise an intersectorial approach as a matter of hygiene in the theory-building process in matters of generalizability. The words of organizational leadership theorist Robert House are exemplary of this view:

We suggest, therefore, that researchers, whenever possible, include respondents from dissimilar types of organizations in their studies to address the question of the universality of their findings more directly and

<sup>54</sup> Literature reviews discovered the "voluntary sector," as a topic of research interest, goes beyond the United States. The religious form is more likely to be discussed as a normal course of conversation than it is in American journals and handbooks. Notable examples of this include: Cameron, Helen, "Organisational Theory and the Non Profit Form - A Perspective from the Study of Religious Organizations;" Sven-Erik Sjostrand, "The Organization of Non-Profit Activities," *SSE/EFI Working Paper Series in Business Administration*, No. 1999:7; and, Margaret Harris *Organizing God's Work: Challenges for Churches and Synagogues*.

<sup>55</sup> Some assert it has been one for some time. Kramer is not convinced sectorial divisions were ever anymore than conceptual fictions.

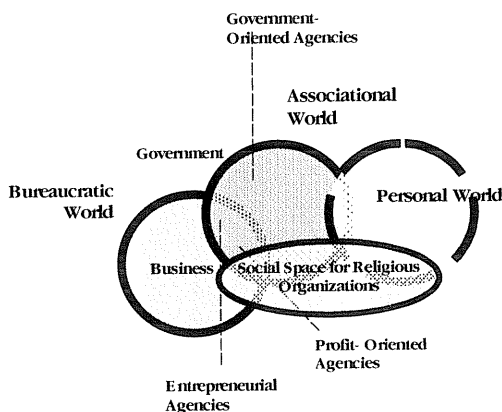
<sup>56</sup> Ralph Kramer presents a convincing case that new trends are afoot in organizational sociology, trends which make it possible for the three-sector model to undergo serious challenge. He argues that the fields of political economy, organizational ecology, social economy, neo-institutionalism, and the concept of "the welfare mix" have promising proposals within them to account for and further foster the new era of hybridization. Kramer, R. M. (1998). "Nonprofit Organizations in the 21st Century: Will Sector Matter?" *Nonprofit Sector Research Fund Working Paper Series*: 62.



empirically. It is only through these types of studies what we can improve our understanding of the universality and locality of our models of leadership...many more studies are needed to see to what extent generic organization management theories can help us better understand similarities and differences between public sector and other types of organizations.<sup>57</sup>

Several writers are notable in their treatment of the voluntary sector and their work may be useful in the theorizing of religious organizations. David Billis is frequently cited in his intersectorial portrayal of the various sectors in the UK context. The clarity of his model makes analogies to other Western countries, like the US, unproblematic. The Billis model is important to this discussion because it presages the ecological rationale that is currently emerging, a rationale that makes room for silent partners in the works of social meaning-making and servicing providing. While the religious-based organization does not appear by name on his model, its logic makes clear where it might be placed, (depending on the mission or the particular organization). We adapt Billis's model to make conspicuous the religious-based organization; it is situated between the personal and associational worlds, with significant degrees of overlap with both the entrepreneurial and bureaucratic worlds (see our note in shaded box imposed on Billis Model).

**Figure 4. Billis Intersectorial Model (Adapted)**



<sup>57</sup> House, 23-58.

This model is helpful for conceptualizing, but is not helpful if bureaucratic and associational worlds imply that rational-formal structuration is categorically public and private organizational forms and organic and informal are associational ones. This is not the case. As many nonprofit scholars advise, polity forms within nonprofits are fluid, each taking shape around a multitude of variables, which may include such factors as purpose, ideology, life cycle, and environment.<sup>58</sup> For this reason, models of organizational theory which are accommodating to the intensely value-expressive nature and equally intense task-directed nature of the religious-based organization are needed if much clarity is to be introduced which reflects what actually happens in religious-based organizing. W. Richard Scott's work on environmental relations is one such theoretical framework sufficiently generative to accommodate these variations, while also inviting commentary from the wide literatures of organizational leadership, including the popular non-empirical literatures of religious leadership practitioners.

In his book, *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems*, Scott proposes an insightful framework for explaining how mission and social structure shape organizations. The field of study is captured in three models of organizing - rational, natural and open systems - as the subtitle implies. We find in the Scott explanation an important framework for explaining why the religious-based organization, while distinct in key particulars, is but one of many organizational destinations on the map of organizational sociology. After providing a brief overview of Scott's three-fold typology, we will attempt to locate religious-based organization within it.

One's first view of organizations<sup>59</sup> may tend to be the dominant view of organizations in the Western world - the rational model. Words like "bureaucracy," "hierarchy," "chain of commands" and "headquarters" are household terms. The

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<sup>58</sup> Cameron asserts: insufficient attention has been paid to the texture of these organizations and their leadership forms, most has centered on the bureaucratic model with which most would be familiar given its central role in the contemporary organizational landscape. (p. 10)

<sup>59</sup> Each of these dimensions is presented as they appeared in time in the research agenda's, which comprise much of the normative organizational scholarship of the last century.

rational approach stresses formalization of rules and roles and the specificity of goals. These two elements inform the evolution of organizational design, which tasks are prioritized, what human resources are needed, and the distribution of resources among organizational participants. Scripted roles for behavior are formulated. Roles are prescribed; personnel are induced to fulfill the "assignment," despite individual attributes. Four theoretical schools are associated with this model of organizing: Frederick Taylor's scientific management,<sup>60</sup> Henri Fayol's administrative theory,<sup>61</sup> Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy,<sup>62</sup> and Herbert Simon's theory of administrative behavior.<sup>63</sup> Scott's definition of *rational systems* is that, "Organizations are collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized social structures."<sup>64</sup>

The second view of organizations involves highly adaptive social systems, which adapt and survive in ways similar to organisms. Their organic character does not negate presence of formal elements of organizing, such as information networks, status bestowal, and ordered work arrangements. Rather, such formal elements are so deemphasized so as to be viewed as means and not as ends. They evolve to serve the organization's purposes and processes and not the other way around. It should be stressed; formalization is not merely underdeveloped, but "self-consciously and energetically anti-formal in practice...in their ideologies as normative systems." This negating impulse may *be* the basis for involvement. Examples of this include: Chester I. Barnard's cooperative systems theory,<sup>65</sup> Peter Selznick's institutional theory<sup>66</sup> (persons, not roles, with lives and motives beyond the organization), and Talcott Parsons' AGIL system.<sup>67</sup> Scott's definition is that, "Organizations are collectivities whose

<sup>60</sup> *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911).

<sup>61</sup> Henri Fayol's *General and Industrial Management* (1916).

<sup>62</sup> *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1922).

<sup>63</sup> *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-making Processes in Administrative Organizations* (1947)

<sup>64</sup> Scott, 22.

<sup>65</sup> *Chester Bernard's Functions of the Executive* (1938).

<sup>66</sup> Peter Selznick's *Leadership and Administration* (1957)

<sup>67</sup> Talcott Parsons popularized *Adaptation* - acquiring sufficient resources; *Goal Attainment* - setting and implementing goals; *Integration* - maintaining coordination among elements of the group; *Latency* - creating, preserving and transmitting the system's distinctive culture and values

participants share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informally structured to secure this end.”<sup>68</sup>

The third view, open systems organizations, perhaps is the most espoused model in our time. It emphasizes an organization's interdependence upon its environment for resources vital to existence, resources such as information, materials, and energy, which are transformed through internal organizational process and reintroduced into the environment. It is contrasted with the other views, which tend toward closed, self-referencing systems. This model views participants as having drive, but not for the survival of the organization (as with the organic model), but rather for the achievement of their own divergent and opportunistic interests, “they join and leave the organization depending on the bargains they can strike.” Scott's definition is that, “Organizations are coalitions of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors.”<sup>69</sup> Examples in theory include: Systems Design - highly complex systems are studied using probabilistic and statistical techniques, as well as simulation models; Jay Lawrence and Lorsch's Environmental and Lorsch's Contingency Theories - guided by the general hypothesis that organizations whose internal features best fit the demands of their environment will achieve the best adaptation;<sup>70</sup> Weick's Model of Organizing - social psychological approach as opposed to the structural level of analysis of system design and contingency theory.<sup>71</sup>

Scott's theoretical framework cross references open/closed dimensions with rational/natural dimensions to diagnose what kind of environmental patterns may be operational. While the 2 x 2 system does not accommodate all organizational theories, it does accommodate a significant number of well-known proposals from the last century of scholarship. The

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<sup>68</sup> Scott, 23.

<sup>69</sup> Scott, 23.

<sup>70</sup> Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch' *Organizational and Environment: Managing Different Variations* (1967).

<sup>71</sup> Karl Weick's *The Social Psychology of Organizing* (1969): Enactment: construct a “picture” of the situation; Selection: filter happenings; Retention: keep useful rules or routines.

model of his theory can be represented with type I-IV organizations in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Scott’s Four-Fold Environmental Relations Model

Rational System ~ High Formalization			
Closed System ~ Applies to: Self, Group, Structural Levels	Type I Closed Rational Systems	Type III Open Rational Systems	Open System ~ Applies at Ecological Levels
	Theories: View organizations as "mechanisms;" environment is ignored; people are as interchangeable as parts.	Theories: View organizations as isolated spaces for coalitions of conflicting interests. .	
	Type II Closed Natural Systems	Type IV Open Natural Systems	
	Theories: View organizations as an organism; survival of the group's cause and system paramount; oblivious to environmental effects.	Theories: View organizations as organisms seeking survival in ecosystems.	
Natural System ~ High Low Formalization			

What do these three meta-approaches to theorizing organizations have to do with the religious-based organization? One of the dominant influences to an organization’s shape, including that of the religious-based organization, is its relationship to its environment. Governmental organizations, by their orientation in the societal matrix are public-benefit organizations. Their goal orientations must include a service orientation for the perceived greater good. Secular nonprofit organizations, in order to qualify for their tax-exempt status must have a public benefit orientation; this is a legal accommodation afforded them by the government. Private organizations, such as

business corporations, exist for the mutual benefit of its primary shareholders. But for whose benefit do religious-based organizations exist? In legal form, they are afforded the same tax-exempt status as nonprofit organizations, but does this mean they in actuality *do* exist for public benefit? The organizational behavior of some religious orders, congregations, and religious agencies can be characterized under Peter Selznick's "organization versus institution" distinction.

An interesting turn of this same preservation and extension concept can be found in what nonprofit scholar Helmut K. Anheier calls the "palace and tent" metaphorical distinction.<sup>72</sup> When an organization derives its energy from a cause beyond itself, to be a benefactor to others, its mission and results makes it classifiable as an organization. When a collective's goal orientation and outcomes tend toward preservation of itself, for its own stakeholders' mutual benefits, its behavior is more like that of an institution. Most everyone knows of organizations, public, private, nonprofit and religiously motivated, which lean toward one or the other of these poles. And if entire organizations cannot be classified categorically, then it is possible that subunits departments or chapters may function this way. This description fits a thousand congregational communities across the country, a thousand religious orders over the centuries, and a thousand nonsectarian agencies that began as value expressive organizations with a vibrant missional message. Being successful, they experienced growth. In time, they turned attention to coordinative practices fidelity *also* demands. In absence of structural governors to do otherwise, greater and greater allocations of energy, capital, and orchestration were given to organizational development, human resource development, preservation of core technologies, and strategic management. From Anheier's tents, these organizations hardened into Selznick's institutional palaces. Open and

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72 Palaces are physically stable domiciles of preservation, prosperity and perpetuation. Their environmental stance is one of invulnerability; environmental conditions must accommodate them. Tents are agile, temporary, functional, permeable domiciles. They, because of their material vulnerability, are more responsive to environmental conditions. For a more detailed discussion of environmental ecology, read: Helmut K. Anheier, "Managing Non-Profit Organisations: Towards a New Approach." *Civil Society Working Paper 1*. January 2000.

natural systems became closed and rational ones. The redundancy of this organizational drama is persistent throughout history. But does it have to be this way? Scott's three-perspective triad is the final organizational theory set offered in this theory-mapping project in that on to its frame, a great number of generative organizational formulations relevant to the religious organization can be mapped.

### **CONCLUSION: RESPONDING TO AN EMERGING ERA OF INTERSECTIONS**

The emergence of a new era of hybridization and intersectorial cooperation, wherein organizational form is secondary to organization performance, invites a concomitant new era of organizational scholarship focused on the organizing and leading of religious-based organizations. Now, more than ever, religiously motivated leadership organizers should join the conversation to learn organizational leadership lessons from the past, form communities of inquiry and practice to capture lessons being learned today, and prepare winsome organizationally-savvy leaders to participate in the outworking of a moral and spiritually satisfying vision of being in the world. So we urge, in this article, that religious leadership scholars accept the cultural mandate offered in Christian scripture, that persons be stewards of the cultural spaces, the cultural moment, the cultural garden (Gen. 1:26-28). This cultural moment is one in which questions of religious import - significance, morality, ethics, spirituality, relativity, spiritually-informed human services, cultural literacy in matters of religion(s), intercultural competence in matters of diversity management - are on the tongues of board members, shareholders, government leaders, school teachers. This article urges the establishment of a workable canon of religious leadership education materials, which include reconsidered extant canons of management, which might make an article like this superfluous in the years to come.