

SERVANT LEADERSHIP AS THE BIBLICAL MODEL

by

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Robert Temple wrote a number of years ago that “he who leads the way preserves himself, and keeps his companion safe. Though they may perish, yet their names will endure.”<sup>1</sup> In thinking about leadership that is follower-focused, James MacGregor Burns asserted over 40 years ago that “one of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership,”<sup>2</sup> yet he noted that, “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, many leaders, philosophers, and writers over the years, as varied as Machiavelli, Mao Zedong, Plato, and Confucius have described the lack of leadership and the need for meaningful leadership during their lifetimes. Over written history, leadership has been the subject of thousands of books, yet with little agreement on the definition of what actual leadership truly is, what leaders really do, and how leadership is best executed. However, servant leadership and its focus on followers, supported by the leader’s desire to serve for the greater good of those followers, directly addresses Burns’ claimed need for leadership in this era, and provides a solution for how to successfully achieve meaningful leadership.

The idea of improving a follower’s efforts, capabilities, and efficiencies through the leader’s example of servanthood is serious and essential for the follower’s growth and wellbeing, while also important for the leader’s improvement and growth. Jesus Christ argued over two thousand years ago that the simple execution of servant leadership was the appropriate style of leadership that his followers should employ, and this simplicity was what made this kind of servanthood to Christ profound. This current study focuses on Christ’s teaching on servanthood and the idea that personal maturation of the leader and the follower will lead to a life not only of

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Temple, *Wall Street Journal*, (January 4-5, 2020): C10.

<sup>2</sup> James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1978), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

servanthood for all, but also a life of flourishing and thriving, for follower and leader alike, as well as for the organizations and groups with which they are associated.

In this same vein of thought, Robert K. Greenleaf as early as 1970 defined a servant leader as a servant first, one who begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve and then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.<sup>4</sup> Greenleaf asked, in his best test of servanthood, if the followers “while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants.”<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Christ taught that a leader must be a servant first,<sup>6</sup> noting that he, himself came not to be served but to serve,<sup>7</sup> calling for his followers to serve others by following his example of washing his disciples’ feet.<sup>8</sup> Summarizing this idea, James A. Laub argued that “servant leaders are defined by their character and by demonstrating their complete commitment to serve others.”<sup>9</sup>

Ultimately, Christ taught his followers that the leader should be a servant<sup>10</sup> and that they should follow Christ’s own example of servanthood.<sup>11</sup> Supporting this same idea, the writer of Hebrews taught that Christ’s followers were to “remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”<sup>12</sup> Thus, a cycle of servanthood should be initiated wherein the followers of servant leaders should develop

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<sup>4</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader*, (Indianapolis, IN: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, 1970), 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 22:26 (ESV).

<sup>7</sup> Matt 20:28.

<sup>8</sup> John 13:14-15.

<sup>9</sup> James A. Laub, *Assessing the servant organization: Development of the organizational leadership assessment (OLS) instrument*, (Doctoral dissertation, 1999): 81, Available from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No. 9921922).

<sup>10</sup> Luke 22:26.

<sup>11</sup> John 12:26.

<sup>12</sup> Heb 13:7.

and grow in their own servanthood and begin to serve others in their growing servant leadership as each follower follows his or her own leader's examples of servanthood.

Interestingly, there are many contemporary examples of servant leadership in the corporate world, with companies as diverse as Southwest Airlines, TDIndustries, Chick-fil-A, and Toro, among others, ascribing to this form of follower-focused leadership style. In this regard, Peter G. Northouse noted that servant leadership has been "adopted as a guiding philosophy in many well-known organizations such as The Toro Company, Herman Miller, Synovus Financial Corporation, ServiceMaster Company, Men's Wearhouse, Southwest Airlines, and TDIndustries."<sup>13</sup> Even a recent blog by a Southwest Airlines' employee blogger restated the organization's values, noting "at Southwest, we honor three basic tenants: to have a Servant's Heart, a Warrior Spirit, and a Fun-LUVing Attitude."<sup>14</sup> In this way, the servant-hearted leadership style taught and lived by Christ is a continuing, valuable, and effective leadership style for businesses, churches, and non-profits today.

Servant leadership was Christ's leadership model and he expected and encouraged his disciples to lead through servanthood. Similarly, Greenleaf observed that servant leaders desire to serve their followers and in that service to see their followers become servants themselves.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the servant leader should be:

1. Follower-focused
2. Humble
3. Ready to serve but also motivated to lead
4. Empathetic to those who follow

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<sup>13</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and practice* (6th ed.), (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 223.

<sup>14</sup> Southwest Airlines Blog, *dweck*, *Who taught you to have fun?* (10-18-2012 12:53 PM) Available from: <https://www.southwestaircommunity.com/t5/Blog/bg-p/stories/page/170>

<sup>15</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

5. Desirous of those served to become servant leaders themselves<sup>16</sup>

The servant leader's focus on his or her followers' needs, successes, and ultimate betterment facilitates and promotes each follower's growth in his or her own abilities, self-efficacy, and servanthood, initiating and enabling a cycle of self-perpetuating success. Supporting this concept, Laub also observed that servant leaders place "the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader, . . . promote the valuing and developing of people, . . . the providing of leadership for the good of those led, . . . the total organization, and those served by the organization."<sup>17</sup> Servant leadership focuses primarily on helping followers develop and perform at their highest potential, with leaders putting the needs of their followers before their own needs. This altruistic leadership selflessness results in an ongoing cycle of success for both the followers and the leaders, which produces a growing servant leadership environment for any organization, including those in the commercial marketplace, church and ministry, and other groups and non-profits.

Fundamentally, the greatness of a leader is not found in the leader's self-gain, but instead in the advancement of his or her followers. As Greenleaf concluded, "the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness."<sup>18</sup> In this cycle of success and flourishing, not only do the followers benefit, but the leadership and overall organization benefits as well, as each person gains in maturity and in the cycle of ongoing service to others and the organization as a whole.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Laub, 81.

<sup>18</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Essentials of Servant-Leadership*, In Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 20.

Although perhaps less known to many leaders in business, government, and non-profits, the servant leadership style and its cycle of ongoing success and servanthood should lead to a more efficient and productive work environment, happier and more fulfilled employees, and therefore, a better financial position for the company, government entity, or non-profit. This self-replicating cycle of efficiency and productivity is beneficial for the business and its ongoing financial strength, which is likewise beneficial for the employees and leaders, as they gain a more stable and financially safe place to work and serve. However, although beneficial to business and other organizations, the theory was developed and taught by Jesus Christ as he led his disciples and followers. Based on Christ's concept of servanthood, in this paper, the author will show that servant leadership, an efficacious leadership style and one appropriate for many types of leaders in almost any type of organization or leadership situation, fulfills the biblical model and is the prescribed leadership model that Christ taught.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Rachel Feintzeig recently observed about job satisfaction that “those who can connect their work to a higher purpose . . . tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, put in longer hours, and rack up fewer absences.”<sup>19</sup> Consequently, people that believe more purposefully in their profession and their calling to their work become more certain of their ability to accomplish those things they put their effort into<sup>20</sup> and, as these same people find meaning in their lives they gain confidence and a desire to help others grow as well. This flowering of helping others is the beginning of serving others that leads to servant leadership. At the same time that workers grow in their view of their work as a calling, they also grows in their ability to complete that work.

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<sup>19</sup> Rachel Feintzeig, “I Don't Have a Job. I Have a Higher Calling.” *Wall Street Journal*. February 25, 2015, B7.

<sup>20</sup> Albert Bandura. *Social Learning Theory*, (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 80.

Moving from viewing oneself as a stonecutter or a bricklayer to becoming a cathedral builder, those who find calling in their lives increase assurance in their abilities to follow through and complete each task and then, in service, begin thinking of how to help others succeed as well. Meaning and purpose lead to loyalty to the team and engagement with the organization, and ultimately, to heightened and strengthened self-efficacy and focus on others,<sup>21</sup> which can and should lead to the servanthood of servant leadership.

The philosophy of servant leadership is an approach to leadership that enhances the leader's and the followers' efficacy. Robert Greenleaf, the earliest advocate of servant leadership as a leadership theory, noted that the servant leadership model focuses on helping followers develop and perform at their highest potential, putting the needs of others before the needs of self, with the result of more effective organizational execution and achievement.<sup>22</sup> As noted in an earlier publication, Greenleaf utilized a best test to define servant leadership, asking if "those served grow as persons? Do they while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants."<sup>23</sup> In fact, Greenleaf's best test of servanthood actually describes a follower growing in personal efficacy and, therefore, the organization's growing in efficacy, strength, and financial health. Although it is possible that a person could mature and grow, yet not aid the organization, a servant leader's altruistic focus on the follower actually will improve organizations as the environment is so improved by their service and the cycle of reproducing new servant leaders.

According to Greenleaf, the servant leader positively impacts followers' lives by encouraging each follower to become their best selves, focused on others as the end result. This

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<sup>21</sup> Feintzeig, B7.

<sup>22</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader*, (Indianapolis, IN: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 1991), 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

leader and follower growth builds a cycle of flourishing which leads to more servanthood and fulfills Greenleaf's best test of a servant leader. This cycle of flourishing, while helping each person in an organization, is also creating a cycle of flourishing for the organization's health as well.

Without acknowledging it or perhaps even knowing it, Greenleaf built on Jesus Christ's millennia old teaching. Christ was the single, key pioneer who conceived of the idea of the leader as servant over two thousand years ago. His teachings on servanthood as being an integral characteristic of leadership provided his followers with an understanding of what a maturing, functional, spiritual life entailed. Basically, the model of what a disciple of Christ should look like. Not until Greenleaf developed the term servant leadership in 1970 with his early essay on servant leadership, "The Servant as Leader,"<sup>24</sup> did any academic work begin in this theory of leadership. Essentially, all other academic servant leadership writing has been developed since Greenleaf's 1970 publication.

### **Academic Servant Leadership**

From an academic perspective then, the author will begin with Robert K. Greenleaf. Greenleaf, formerly a longtime AT&T executive in management research, "coined the term *servant-leadership* in his seminal 1970 essay, 'The Servant as Leader.'"<sup>25</sup> Greenleaf had founded The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership in 1964, and for the next 25 years he distinguished himself in this second career as a consultant, teacher, and author on servant leadership concepts, writing a number of books and essays on the subject. These servant leadership works provided

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<sup>24</sup> Greenleaf, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 18.

Greenleaf's initial definition and essential knowledge and understanding of servant leadership, which supplied the basis for the last five decades of servant leadership research and writing.

Greenleaf explained that his philosophy of the servant as leader had its source in Hermann Hesse's 1932 book, *Journey to the East*,<sup>26</sup> in which the central figure, Leo, acted as a servant to a group of travelers, sustaining them by doing their menial labor but also with his spirit and song. This group abandoned its journey and disbanded once Leo disappeared, and its members then wandered for a number of years until Leo again found the narrator and returned him to the society that sponsored their journey. At this point, the narrator discovered that Leo was "in fact the titular head . . . its guiding spirit, a great and noble leader."<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, this group of travelers could not stay together and be successful without Leo, the servant of extraordinary presence, because he was in reality its actual leader. Greenleaf concluded from this story "that the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness."<sup>28</sup>

Greenleaf defined servant leadership as beginning "with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead."<sup>29</sup> This conscious choice represents the servant-hearted person choosing to lead others through his or her service. Greenleaf observed that a servant leader seeks "first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served."<sup>30</sup> As noted earlier, Greenleaf's well-known best test of servant leadership is completely follower-focused and leads the follower to a maturing, growing,

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<sup>26</sup> Hermann Hesse, *Journey to the East*, (H. Rosner, Trans.), (New York, NY: Noonday Press, 1957 (original work published 1932)).

<sup>27</sup> Greenleaf, 2002, 19.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 24.

and flourishing life that ultimately leads to the one who was served becoming a servant leader as well.

Therefore, in Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership, the leader has an innate desire to serve first rather than to lead first. Greenleaf contrasted the leader who would serve first with those who would lead first, and noted that this contrasted pair were actually opposite from each other. Greenleaf's negative, "leader-first" leader acts on personal self-interests with a "need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions."<sup>31</sup> By contrast, the servant leader puts others' needs before those of his or her own and makes the follower's needs the highest priority.

As Larry Spears, former president and Chief Executive Officer of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, noted of Greenleaf's altruistic approach to leadership, "servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, building a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making."<sup>32</sup> Greenleaf concluded that his hope for the future relied in part on his belief in the commonplace and average people of each community, many of whom themselves might become servants who would then lead.<sup>33</sup> Greenleaf believed that these followers would be able to properly identify the servants whom they would follow, making those they followed in service their leaders, while as they followed they too would become leaders as well.<sup>34</sup>

Spears summarized servant leadership at its core as "a long-term, transformational approach to life and work—in essence, a way of being—that has the potential for creating

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<sup>31</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Larry C. Spears, *Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant Leadership*, In Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 4.

<sup>33</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

positive change throughout our society.”<sup>35</sup> Spears’ inclusion of the transformational approach connects directly with Burns’ 1978 seminal definition of a transforming leader as one who “recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower . . . the result of [which] is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders.”<sup>36</sup> Burns went further, defining moral leadership in the context of the transforming leader, asserting that both the “leaders and the led have a relationship not only of power but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values.”<sup>37</sup> Burns’ moral and transformational leadership is fulfilled in Greenleaf’s servant leadership as both “leaders and followers are engaged in a common enterprise; they are dependent on each other, their fortunes rise and fall together.”<sup>38</sup>

Spears extended the research on servant leadership by identifying ten characteristics that he believed were central to the theory’s definition and understanding. Spears’ characteristics included: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.<sup>39</sup> Spears argued that these ten attributes represent and “serve to communicate the power and promise that this concept offers to those who are open to its invitation and challenge.”<sup>40</sup>

Considering the objectives of servant leadership described by Greenleaf initially in 1970 and understood through his best test, Spears’ 2004 ten characteristics of the servant leader focuses attention on the legitimate use of power, including the ethical constraints as well as the beneficial results, which can be achieved through its suitable and appropriate use. Spears explained and clarified the characteristics as follows:

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<sup>35</sup> Larry C. Spears, “Practicing Servant-Leadership.” *Leader to Leader*. 2004, Fall, 7-11.

<sup>36</sup> Burns, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Burns, 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 426.

<sup>39</sup> Spears, 2004, 8-9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

- **Listening:** Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. While these are also important skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will.
- **Empathy:** The servant-leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. One assumes the good intentions of coworkers and does not reject them as people, even if one finds it necessary to refuse to accept their behavior or performance.
- **Healing:** One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is part of being human, servant-leaders recognize that they also have an opportunity to 'help make whole' those with whom they come in contact.
- **Awareness:** General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Awareness also aids one in understanding issues involving ethics and values. It lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position.
- **Persuasion:** Another characteristic of servant-leaders is a primary reliance on persuasion rather than positional authority in making decisions within an organization. The servant-leader seeks to convince others rather than coerce

compliance. The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups.

- **Conceptualization:** Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to ‘dream great dreams.’ The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. Servant-leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day focused approach.
- **Foresight:** Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future. It is also deeply rooted within the intuitive mind.
- **Stewardship:** Greenleaf’s view of all institutions was one in which CEOs [Chief Executive Officers], staffs, and trustees all played significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society. Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion rather than control.
- **Commitment to growth of people:** Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As a result, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within the institution. The servant-leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything possible to nurture the growth of employees.

- Building community: The servant-leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives. This awareness causes the servant-leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, Dirk van Dierendonck identified 44 characteristics that have been ascribed to servant leadership by researchers since Greenleaf originally wrote on the concept in 1970. However, van Dierendonck distinguished a smaller subset, noting “six key characteristics of servant-leader behavior that bring order to the conceptual plurality”<sup>42</sup> as outlined in his conceptual model, as seen in Figure 1. Van Dierendonck’s six key characteristics include: empowerment and development of people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, direction, and stewardship.<sup>43</sup> These key characteristics are not only consistent with Greenleaf’s thought, but sound like they came directly from the New Testament and Christ’s teaching as well.

The conceptual model illustrates the interplay of servant leadership with not only leader-follower relationships and the elements of psychological climate, such as trust and fairness, but further includes self-actualization components consistent with personal efficacy.<sup>44</sup> In addition, van Dierendonck’s key characteristics of empowerment and development of the followers, acceptance of their needs and feelings, and providing specific direction to each, connects the idea of the selflessness approach as well as the follower focus of servant leadership theory. The

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<sup>41</sup> Spears, 2004, 8-10.

<sup>42</sup> Dirk van Dierendonck, “Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis,” *Journal of Management*, no. 37 (July 4, 2011): 1232.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

conceptual model illustrates the cyclical, reproductive nature of servanthood with followers growing in servant characteristics and then producing ongoing and new servant leader—follower relationships, wherein the former follower becomes the new servant leader and leads new followers toward servanthood characteristics.

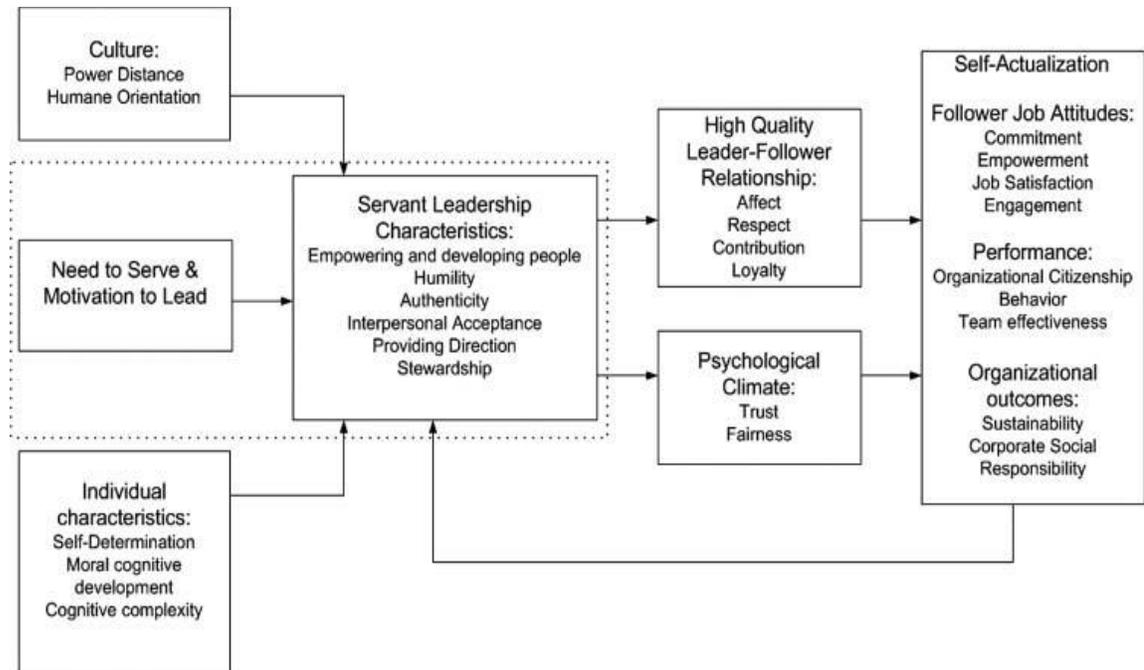


Figure 1. Description of a Conceptual Model of Servant Leadership<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, many of Spears' ten characteristics<sup>46</sup> as well as Greenleaf's ideas lend themselves to follower support and growth. Servant leadership attributes, including listening, empathy, persuasion, community building, and the commitment to the growth of others, all contribute to a follower's maturity and improvement. Persuasive leadership that encourages the follower toward personal task successes is a positive attribute of servant leadership. Moreover,

<sup>45</sup> van Dierendonck, 1233.

<sup>46</sup> Larry C. Spears (Ed.), *Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's Theory of Servant-Leadership Influences Today's Top Management Thinkers*, (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1995).

vicarious experiences, in which a follower participates in a successful outcome modeled and accomplished by the leader, is also a characteristic of Greenleaf's servant leadership.

In fact, the principles of servant leadership have been taught and practiced for thousands of years, by both sacred and nonreligious traditions and philosophers. Ancient monarchies, modern royal coronations, politicians, public servants, and civil servants all have acknowledged that their roles are based in service to their people or constituents, either by their commitments, their actions, or the literal words incorporated into their titles.<sup>47</sup> As early as the fourth century BCE, Aristotle documented his concept of virtue in which a connection to the idea of serving others could be established and that the act of loving was more important than being loved.<sup>48</sup>

As noted earlier, Greenleaf's servant leadership theory develops both service and leadership as characteristics of the servant leader, which leads to the improvement of the follower and the betterment of the leader. Greenleaf's definition of servant leadership thus includes showing acts of love to others and preferring the other's needs before one's own needs. Nevertheless, in contrast to Greenleaf, as van Dierendonck argued of Aristotle's virtue theory, "the strength of this model lies in the conceptualization of the notion of the need to serve; however, it neglects the leader aspect."<sup>49</sup> It was not until after Aristotle that the notion of servanthood as part of leadership was identified and described during Christ's earthly ministry and instruction.

Furthermore, many varying religious traditions include or included components and principles based in servant leadership. Sen Sendjaya, James C. Sarros, and Joseph C. Santora

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<sup>47</sup> Sen Sendjaya and James C. Sarros, "Servant Leadership: Its Origin, Development, and Application in Organizations," *Journal of Leadership and Organization Studies*, no. 9(2) (2002): 58.

<sup>48</sup> Kathleen A. Patterson, *Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model* [Servant Leadership Roundtable]. (Virginia Beach, VA: Regent University), 2003.

<sup>49</sup> van Dierendonck, 1232.

noted that “a common thread among these [religious] approaches is the internal conviction that the servant leader is a servant of a higher being or power, and in obedient gratitude to that higher being or power, serves other people.”<sup>50</sup> Servant leadership has been deeply ingrained in human history, society, philosophy, and religious thought for many centuries. Interestingly, in this regard, Greenleaf came to the conclusion that his “hope for the future rests in part on [his] belief that among the legions of deprived and unsophisticated people are many true servants who will lead.”<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, it was Christ who developed and prescribed the idea of the leader as servant and the benefit and expectation of servant leadership for his own disciples. This leadership theory has benefited many non-believers as well as believers in an unexpected example of the provisions of common grace.

### **Criticism of Servant Leadership**

Interestingly and unfortunately, this others-focused, humble, and servant-hearted leadership style has met with some criticism, both in ecclesiastical and secular domains. Some in the church have found fault, noting that teaching on servant leadership might obscure other important teachings in the New Testament, particularly the Gospel message,<sup>52</sup> perhaps believing that focusing on servanthood could become an end in itself.

Additionally, nonreligious critics of servant leadership have noted its altruistic attitude, which these critics find to be incompatible with the profit motive necessary for business. These critics find that in contrast to the servant leadership model, for-profit entities’ ownership needs may clash with the needs of the organization’s employees. Often, business leaders view profit maximization and the enhancement of shareholder value as the highest and only priority.

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<sup>50</sup> Sen Sendjaya, James C. Sarros, and Joseph C. Santora, “Defining and Measuring Servant Leadership Behavior in Organizations,” *Journal of Management Studies*, no. 45(2) (March 2008): 406.

<sup>51</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

<sup>52</sup> J. Todd Billings, “The Problem with ‘Incarnational Ministry,’” *Christianity Today*, no. 56(7) (July/August 2012): 58.

Regarding this point, Rich Hughes, Robert Ginnett, and Gordy Curphy note that,

The most common criticism is that although the idea of servant leadership has a certain popular appeal in what we might call its “soft” form (for example, leaders should be more concerned about others’ well-being and development, should create a more developmental climate in their organizations, and should seek what’s good for the whole organization rather than just their own advancement), when taken more literally and extremely the concept seems to suggest that serving others is an end in itself rather than a means to other organizational goals and purposes. That version strikes many as impractical even if laudable.<sup>53</sup>

Gary Yukl expounded on the point, noting that leadership that serves its employees first might be excessively biased to the employees’ needs over the broader organization’s profit margins and financial performance, thus potentially harming or conflicting with ownership’s best interest.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, Northouse asserted that servant leadership has a utopian, moralistic, and prescriptive tone that may be perceived as narrow, dogmatic, rigid, and dictatorial.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the misinterpretation of servant leadership has been ascribed to potential conflict with other leadership principles such as goal-setting and vision-casting as well.<sup>56</sup>

Ultimately, these same critics contend that servant leadership is potentially unrealistic and even arbitrary, by focusing on an idyllic, utopian, and therefore fundamentally unattainable paradigm, one that lacks direction in its narrow and idealistic focus. In their minds, businesses that utilize the servant leader model would lose money, market share, and the potential for sustainable and important growth.<sup>57</sup> As a response to this kind of criticism, the economist John Elkington argued in 1994 for the triple bottom line, or the idea “that companies should be preparing three different (and quite separate) bottom lines. One in the traditional measure of

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<sup>53</sup> Rich Hughes, Robert Ginnett, & Gordy Curphy, *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2012), 171.

<sup>54</sup> Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organization* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2013), 350.

<sup>55</sup> Northouse, 234-235.

<sup>56</sup> David Gergen, “Bad News for Bullies,” *U. S. News and World Report*, no. 23(140) (June 19, 2006): 54.

<sup>57</sup> Yukl, 350.

corporate profit—the ‘bottom line’ of the profit and loss account. The second is the bottom line of a company’s ‘people account’—a measure . . . of how socially responsible an organization has been . . . The third is the bottom line of the company’s ‘planet’ account—a measure of how environmentally responsible it has been.”<sup>58</sup>

The three P’s of Elkington’s Triple Bottom Line look to the benefits of a balanced, all-encompassing definition of business success, which include not only profit, but also people, and the planet. Furthermore, over the millennia, servant leadership principles have held up well against the critics and their criticism. In that regard, the church is a primary example of organizational servant leadership success. Although some might point to the many failures of church leadership over the last two millennia, failures that hurt and even killed many people, the good far surpasses the bad when the growth and service the church has provided is fully considered. Ultimately, beyond church leadership, many individuals and organizations have had great success by displaying this humble and altruistic leadership style, both for profit and for non-profit motivations.

### **3. SERVANT LEADERSHIP – BIBLICAL STUDIES**

Although the concept of the leader as servant has been philosophized and written on for many centuries and has been defined and researched by scholars for at least the past five decades, Yukl pointed out that servant leadership as an “early conception of ethical leadership builds on examples found in the New Testament.”<sup>59</sup> As stated in the biblical texts, primarily as instructed by Jesus Christ, but also by other New Testament writers, servant leadership was introduced, taught, and then modeled over 2,000 years ago by the founder of Christianity, Jesus

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<sup>58</sup> The Economist Blog, *Triple Bottom Line* (Nov 17, 2009) Available from: <https://www.economist.com/news/2009/11/17/triple-bottom-line>.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 348.

Christ. Sendjaya and Sarros argued that Christ was the first teacher of servant leadership and was the first to introduce the idea of servant leadership to everyday human life.<sup>60</sup> Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy argued that “the idea of servant leadership, of course, has been around for thousands of years. It stems at least in part from the teachings of Jesus, who instructed his disciples that servanthood is the essence of worthy leadership.”<sup>61</sup> Additionally, Carl Koch asserted that servant leadership is grounded in the teaching and lifestyle of Jesus, as well as in the Gospel stories and the training given to the early church by such leaders as Peter and Paul.<sup>62</sup>

### **Jesus Teaching on Servant Leadership**

Jesus instructed his disciples in the New Testament that to be great, and to be a leader, they must serve first,<sup>63</sup> stating that “the greatest among you shall be your servant.”<sup>64</sup> Tellingly, this teaching is consistent with what Greenleaf described as servant leadership two millennia later. Christ reminded his disciples “that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.”<sup>65</sup> Gene Wilkes opined that “the essential lesson I learned from Jesus on leadership was that he taught and embodied leadership as service.”<sup>66</sup>

Jesus taught his disciples not to be surprised when they are treated like servants as they lead through service. He instructed them, saying:

Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table?' Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and

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<sup>60</sup> Sendjaya and Sarros, 58.

<sup>61</sup> Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 170-171.

<sup>62</sup> Carl Koch, “Servant Leadership,” *America*, no. 191(1) (July 5, 2004): 17.

<sup>63</sup> Luke 22:26.

<sup>64</sup> Matt 23:11.

<sup>65</sup> Mark 10:42-43.

<sup>66</sup> C. Gene Wilkes. *Jesus on Leadership*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998), 9.

drink, and afterward you will eat and drink?’ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’<sup>67</sup>

Christ’s teaching on servanthood, in this way, may be difficult to first accept, but is instead rather encouraging. We are to take care of the ones we are serving first and then not expect to receive thanks or appreciation. This is how a servant lives, and it is how Jesus lived his life. As servant leaders, we are to do our duty completely and yet expect to be treated as a servant, just as we attempt to become “servants to all.”<sup>68</sup>

Although this teaching may seem counterintuitive, Jesus equated greatness with servanthood and argued that service is equivalent to greatness. Jesus made it clear to both his followers who would lead the early church as well as those who would follow him throughout time that they were to be servants. As Sendjaya and Sarros maintained, “Contrary to the popular opinion of the day, Jesus taught that a leader’s greatness is measured by a total commitment to serve fellow human beings.”<sup>69</sup> Wilkes defined Jesus’ servant leadership as “serv[ing] the mission and lead[ing] by serving those on mission with Him.”<sup>70</sup>

Jesus’ example of service was most instructive and appropriate related to how he viewed leadership, how he desired his followers to lead, and how he ultimately viewed greatness. His life was one of giving to others, giving of his time and giftedness, his beliefs and teachings, and, in the end, his entire life. In this way, his servanthood could be understood as a model during his lifetime and in his martyrdom. He taught his disciples the night before he was killed, that he “came not to be served but to serve,”<sup>71</sup> and he then provided a definitive example to them by

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<sup>67</sup> Luke 17:7-10.

<sup>68</sup> Mark 9:35.

<sup>69</sup> Sendjaya and Sarros, 59.

<sup>70</sup> Wilkes, 18.

<sup>71</sup> Matt 20:28.

washing each disciple's feet. This task of foot washing was considered to be servant's work during the time of Christ and was therefore both humbling and demeaning in nature. Jesus told his disciples that "if I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."<sup>72</sup>

Although Jesus is the finest model of servant leadership provided in Scripture, there are numerous precursor examples of servanthood as related to leadership demonstrated by Old Testament leaders as well as several subsequent examples provided by servant leaders in the New Testament. Several Old Testament servant leaders include: Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Nehemiah, and many of the prophets. These men were useful examples of servant leadership by how they altruistically gave their lives for the children of God. Christ taught his disciples many centuries after the Old Testament accounts that people should follow his example of servanthood, yet he gave us a thread of servant leadership models in those he chose to include in the history and writings of the Old Testament.

These ancient examples are beneficial and instructive to those who are looking to replicate Christ's example of servanthood as each leader was actually a type of Christ's expected and modeled leadership. Although these men were imperfect, observing how they displayed servant leadership qualities serves as a helpful guide as it reflects what Jesus himself would demonstrate during his earthly ministry and the Scriptural instructions that he left for humankind. These Old Testament models are important to those who are interested in the complete picture of biblical servant leadership as they describe more deeply what Christ expects his disciples' servanthood to look like and actually be.

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<sup>72</sup> John 13:14-15.

## Joseph

Beginning in the Genesis account, Joseph is wrongfully treated by his brothers,<sup>73</sup> sold into slavery,<sup>74</sup> considered dead to the family,<sup>75</sup> treated poorly by his master and his wife and ultimately jailed in Pharaoh's prison.<sup>76</sup> However, God later used these difficult circumstances to allow Joseph to be in a favorable position that would greatly help his family, including those brothers that had so wronged him. While God was preparing Joseph for his future leadership opportunities, Joseph served his master in slavery, by providing great administration of his master's business matters<sup>77</sup> and not taking advantage of his master's wife or his assets.<sup>78</sup> In all of his actions toward his master Joseph did the right thing, and his master was blessed by Joseph's service. Because, "from the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field."<sup>79</sup>

Moreover, Joseph also served those he was in prison with, helping them with their dreams and enlightening them on what their future would be.<sup>80</sup> Joseph only asked to be remembered to the Pharaoh once the cupbearer was freed,<sup>81</sup> yet "the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him."<sup>82</sup> In this service to others, even while being mistreated, he was learning how to properly serve people in a Christ-like manner and, at the same time, being prepared for his future leadership opportunities for the Pharaoh of Egypt. In his servant

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<sup>73</sup> Gen 37:8, 18-24.

<sup>74</sup> Gen 37:27-28.

<sup>75</sup> Gen 37:33-34, 48:11.

<sup>76</sup> Gen 39:20.

<sup>77</sup> Gen 39:6

<sup>78</sup> Gen 39:8.

<sup>79</sup> Gen 39:5.

<sup>80</sup> Gen 40:8.

<sup>81</sup> Gen 40:14.

<sup>82</sup> Gen 40:23.

leadership, Joseph was not surprised to be treated as a servant and in this way was a type of Christ's servanthood and leadership.

God's provision in Joseph's harsh life experiences allowed his family to make it through an extremely severe famine<sup>83</sup> and then even to thrive in a new country<sup>84</sup> for many centuries to come.<sup>85</sup> Joseph acknowledged God's providence in this, saying to his brothers that "it was not you who sent me here, but God,"<sup>86</sup> and that "it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."<sup>87</sup> Joseph gave concrete examples of love, selflessness, and altruism in his servanthood, not harboring a grudge against his brothers who had so wronged him. In fact, Joseph showed love and service to not only his family, but also to the nation of Egypt and that nation's leader, the Pharaoh, whom Joseph served faithfully. Although the people sold all of their land, belongings, and selves to Pharaoh, Joseph saved the Egyptians' lives,<sup>88</sup> and ultimately they prospered in the subsequent years to come. In his life, Joseph was often treated as a servant, yet he overcame his many adversities to lead at the highest levels of government in Egypt. Joseph argued that God had "made [him] a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt,"<sup>89</sup> and, in this way, Joseph was the consummate servant leader.

### **Moses**

Another Old Testament example of true servant leadership was Moses as he prepared and then brought the children of Israel out of their captivity in Egypt over 400 years after Joseph had brought the people into Egypt.<sup>90</sup> Moses was preserved by God as a child when the Pharaoh of his

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<sup>83</sup> Gen 43:1.

<sup>84</sup> Gen 45:18-20.

<sup>85</sup> Gen 46:3, Ex 1:7.

<sup>86</sup> Gen 45:8.

<sup>87</sup> Gen 45:5.

<sup>88</sup> Gen 47:25.

<sup>89</sup> Gen 45:8.

<sup>90</sup> Ex 12:40.

era struck down the Israelites' male babies.<sup>91</sup> Not only was his life saved by God, but God then elevated Moses to a position where he would be raised in the royal palace.<sup>92</sup> Moses chose to give this royal life up for God's people,<sup>93</sup> and after a long period in his own desert experience,<sup>94</sup> he came back to lead the people to God's Promised Land.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, the author of Hebrews indicated that Moses viewed his choice to give up the "treasures of Egypt"<sup>96</sup> as a reward for suffering "the reproach of Christ."<sup>97</sup> In this way, Moses believed that his service to his people was a type of Christ's ultimate service to mankind.

Moses' role was a significantly difficult leadership position as the people of Israel did not support him during his long road to free them. They fought and complaining as Moses led them to the Promised Land,<sup>98</sup> ultimately longing to return to Egypt<sup>99</sup> even though God provided for them and saved them numerous times by his hand.<sup>100</sup> God's salvation included the crossing of the Red Sea when pursued by Pharaoh's army,<sup>101</sup> provision of food from heaven,<sup>102</sup> and the provision of water when needed for many millions of people.<sup>103</sup> In each of these situations, the people found reason to complain and blame Moses, yet he continued to serve them and strive to look out for their best interests.<sup>104</sup> Moses showed his servant leadership for his people, arguing

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<sup>91</sup> Ex 2:1-10.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Heb 11:24-25.

<sup>94</sup> Acts 7:29-30.

<sup>95</sup> Acts 7: 34-36.

<sup>96</sup> Heb 11:26.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Acts 7:39, Num 11:1-2, Deut 1:19-25.

<sup>99</sup> Num 11:4-5.

<sup>100</sup> Deut 1:26-32.

<sup>101</sup> Ex 14:30-31.

<sup>102</sup> Ex 16:4, Num 11:31-32

<sup>103</sup> Ex 12:37, 17:1-6.

<sup>104</sup> Deut 1:43

with God to protect them from punishment, allowing the children of Israel to gain another opportunity to serve God themselves.<sup>105</sup>

Sadly, when the people got to the Promised Land and everything was just as God said it would be through his servant leader Moses, the people rejected God and his plan. The peoples' rejection of God forced Moses to wander with these same complaining, uncaring, and wrong-headed people for forty more years in the desert.<sup>106</sup> In spite of God's constant provision for his people, "they did not believe the Lord your God, who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go."<sup>107</sup>

Ultimately, Moses would not make it into the Promised Land but would instead die and be buried in Moab, after the unbelieving generation of Israel passed away.<sup>108</sup> God viewed Moses as his servant in his leadership of Israel, noting that "Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord."<sup>109</sup> In this way, Moses gave his entire life serving those he led, and it was a difficult, dangerous, and largely unfulfilling experience, but one he counted as a reward consistent with his Savior's suffering.<sup>110</sup>

Moses could have led a life of freedom and luxury in Egypt, but he gave that up, so he could accomplish God's plan for his life and help his followers meet their highest and best life. Unfortunately, most of his followers did not end up where Moses wanted them to go and ultimately rejected his leadership, servanthood, and their God. They paid a very steep price for their unbelief, something that we again see in the spiritual leaders of Israel during Christ's

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<sup>105</sup> Ex 32:9-14.

<sup>106</sup> Deut 2:1.

<sup>107</sup> Deut 1:32-33.

<sup>108</sup> Deut 34:5-6.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Heb 11:26.

ministry here on earth. As Christ said of them, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and uncleanness.”<sup>111</sup> The people of Israel, and many of their leaders in both Moses’ time and in Christ’s time completely missed God’s will and purpose for their lives, even though they had the best examples of servant leadership in history.

### **Joshua**

Interestingly, Joshua, the leader who immediately followed Moses, was also a servant leader, prepared in his leadership by following Moses’ modeled servant leadership. Joshua not only saw this follower-first type of transformational leadership modeled by Moses but was encouraged in his own leadership to be a servant to his people. Moses “summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.’”<sup>112</sup>

Joshua successfully led the people into the Promised Land, and, upon conquering the land, Joshua exhorted the people to be careful to serve the Lord<sup>113</sup> as he and his house would. He stated, “Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”<sup>114</sup> This service would lead to prosperity and safety for the people if the people stayed true to their commitment and service.<sup>115</sup> Because of Joshua’s leadership in

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<sup>111</sup> Matt 23:27.

<sup>112</sup> Deut 31:7-8.

<sup>113</sup> Josh 23:6.

<sup>114</sup> Josh 24:15.

<sup>115</sup> Deut 30:1-6.

service to the children of Israel, they covenanted with Joshua at the end of his leadership tenure to serve only the Lord,<sup>116</sup> fully committing to “the Lord our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey.”<sup>117</sup> The children of Israel’s commitment and covenant to God affirmed Joshua in his life’s service to the people and to God the Father.

### **David**

Another imperfect Old Testament example of servant leadership was Israel’s greatest king, David, who came from humble beginnings, yet overcame his life situations to serve his people and to ultimately be called by God, “a man after my heart, who will do all my will.”<sup>118</sup> David was the youngest of his brothers, and served the family by shepherding his family’s flocks,<sup>119</sup> protecting their animals from lions and bears,<sup>120</sup> and in this way preparing for future warfare. David served King Saul as a counselor, musician,<sup>121</sup> soldier,<sup>122</sup> military leader,<sup>123</sup> son-in-law,<sup>124</sup> and a government representative,<sup>125</sup> all of which prepared David to serve Israel as king himself. David gave his entire life in service to his people, and thus fulfilled God’s plan for David and the children of Israel. This servanthood led David to become Israel’s greatest leader.

Notwithstanding, David suffered many difficult times in his service, yet even in the hard times he was greatly blessed by God.<sup>126</sup> Unfortunately, David was not perfect and, in his imperfection, he provided an example of mankind’s need for redemption. Although David’s heart was after God’s, his human desires and sinfulness led to his downfall with Bathsheba. This

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<sup>116</sup> Josh 24:21-25.

<sup>117</sup> Josh 24:24.

<sup>118</sup> Acts 13:22.

<sup>119</sup> I Sam 16:19, 17:15.

<sup>120</sup> I Sam 17:34.

<sup>121</sup> I Sam 16:23.

<sup>122</sup> I Sam 16:18.

<sup>123</sup> I Sam 18:5.

<sup>124</sup> I Sam 18:21, 27.

<sup>125</sup> I Sam 21:2.

<sup>126</sup> II Sam 12:7-8.

led to the murder of Bathsheba's first husband, Uriah,<sup>127</sup> and the death of Bathsheba's and David's first child.<sup>128</sup> Nathan rebuked David for this sin, stating from God, "you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun."<sup>129</sup> David humbled himself and fasted, wept, and prayed,<sup>130</sup> seeking "God on behalf of the child,"<sup>131</sup> believing in God's kindness and mercy, and saying, "who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?"<sup>132</sup> In all of these ways, David was practicing humble servant leadership, yet also modeling the need for a perfect servant leader, and redeemer, Christ Jesus.

### **Daniel**

Other Old Testament servant leaders included most of the prophets of God, almost all of whom gave their lives completely in daily service, and many in martyrdom. Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Habakkuk all gave their lives in service to God and the children of Israel that they were called to lead. Interestingly, Daniel served a number of pagan kings including: Nebuchadnezzar,<sup>133</sup> Belshazzar,<sup>134</sup> Darius,<sup>135</sup> and Cyrus.<sup>136</sup> Although the biblical account does not specify accounts of how Daniel led followers on a daily basis, he did provide an open model of service to God in his faithfulness in what he ate,<sup>137</sup> how he gave counsel and interpreted dreams,<sup>138</sup> and in his prayer life.<sup>139</sup> In his faithful service to God, he was observed by others to be outstanding, and in this way, he modeled Christ's teaching in Matthew,

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<sup>127</sup> II Sam 11:26.

<sup>128</sup> II Sam 12:18.

<sup>129</sup> II Sam 12:12.

<sup>130</sup> II Sam 12:21.

<sup>131</sup> II Sam 12:16.

<sup>132</sup> II Sam 12:22.

<sup>133</sup> Dan 1-4

<sup>134</sup> Dan 5

<sup>135</sup> Dan 6

<sup>136</sup> Dan 1:21.

<sup>137</sup> Dan 1:8-20.

<sup>138</sup> Dan 1:20, 2:31-45, 5:17-28, 6:1-2.

<sup>139</sup> Dan 6:10-13.

chapter 5, that we are to let our “light shine before others, so that they may see [our] good works and give glory to [our] Father who is in heaven.”<sup>140</sup> This is exactly what happened with the king, as “King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, . . . and said to Daniel, ‘Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of Kings.’”<sup>141</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar found Daniel to “in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of [him, be] . . . ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in the kingdom.”<sup>142</sup> Further, “the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.”<sup>143</sup> Later in Daniel’s life, Darius “set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account.”<sup>144</sup> In his servant leadership, Daniel proved his God-given ability and talent as “Daniel become distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him.”<sup>145</sup> In Daniel’s faithful service to these pagan kings he modeled the servanthood that Christ would require of his followers.

### **Nehemiah**

In another account of a Jewish exile who proved to be a great servant leader, Nehemiah served the King Artaxerxes as his cupbearer.<sup>146</sup> Upon hearing from his countrymen that the city of Jerusalem’s walls and gates were burned and broken down, Nehemiah immediately responded by “fasting and praying before the God of heaven,”<sup>147</sup> asking God for favor for the people of

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<sup>140</sup> Matt 5:16.

<sup>141</sup> Dan 2:46-47.

<sup>142</sup> Dan 1:20.

<sup>143</sup> Dan 2:48.

<sup>144</sup> Dan 6:1-2.

<sup>145</sup> Dan 6:3.

<sup>146</sup> Neh 2:1.

<sup>147</sup> Neh 1:4.

Israel and for Nehemiah as he spoke to this king about Jerusalem's future.<sup>148</sup> Nehemiah, in service to the children of Israel, asked the king to be allowed to go back to Jerusalem to build the walls,<sup>149</sup> actually went back and led the people in rebuilding the walls,<sup>150</sup> was required to defend the people as they built the walls,<sup>151</sup> and was protected from a conspiracy to be murdered.<sup>152</sup>

Nehemiah defended the poor and worked to stop oppression, focusing his attention on service to the people, stopping corruption and usury, and feeding many in need. This passage from Nehemiah 5 shows Nehemiah's servant heart and faithfulness in detail:

I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "you are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them and said to them, "we, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!" They were silent and could not find a word to say. So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunt of the nations our enemies? Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised. I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor. The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But, I did not do so, because of the fear of God. I also persevered in the work on this wall, and we acquired no land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials,

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<sup>148</sup> Neh 1:11.

<sup>149</sup> Neh 2:5.

<sup>150</sup> Neh 3.

<sup>151</sup> Neh 4.

<sup>152</sup> Neh 6.

besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds, and every ten days all kinds of wine in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the service was too heavy on this people. Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.<sup>153</sup>

All of Nehemiah's work was done in ministry for the people and to honor his God, and he was a very compelling example of the servanthood that Christ would teach. Interestingly, all of these Old Testament examples were largely consistent with Jesus' servant example as types of the coming Christ, yet each one also provided only an imperfect example, a human example, and therefore revealed the need for a perfect example of servanthood. That perfect example would be the coming servant King, Jesus Christ.

### **New Testament Church**

Jesus' example of humility and service fully exemplifies servant leadership, and therein aligns with Greenleaf's millennia-later definition of servant leadership, in which the leader focuses on each follower first. Christ looked to his followers' individual needs and then encouraged each of them to move beyond personally being served by others to actually becoming servants to others themselves and thus servant leaders as well,<sup>154</sup> connecting with Greenleaf's later, more fully detailed definition of servant leadership.<sup>155</sup> Jesus' followers were taught to be servant leaders by following his example, and in obedience to Christ's call and instruction this obedient following did occur over the subsequent years. As an example of this followership leading into service, several decades after Christ's martyrdom, Paul describes himself multiple times in his letters to the Romans, Galatians, Philippians, and to Titus as a

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<sup>153</sup> Neh 5:6-19.

<sup>154</sup> Greenleaf, 1970.

<sup>155</sup> Greenleaf, 1970.

servant of Jesus Christ, God, and the Church.<sup>156</sup> Peter also began his second letter as being “a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.”<sup>157</sup> Both men suffered for Christ’s cause and also for the people they were leading so that each could preach to the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles and serve them in every way and with their entire lives.

Furthermore, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, the Bible provides the story of Peter preaching at Pentecost and leading the early church. In Acts 2, through Peter’s servant leadership, the church is viewed in its earliest form, living out servanthood to all in this way:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.<sup>158</sup>

The church, led by its servant apostles, lived completely for others and did so with a humble, generous, and glad attitude of heart, serving not only with their time and efforts but also with their money and possessions, often eating together and serving together as they lived out the Christian life. Peter was admonished by the Lord to shepherd his flock<sup>159</sup> and to accept all things and people that God said to accept.<sup>160</sup> In John’s Gospel account, after the resurrection of Christ, Jesus exhorts Peter to follow him by caring for, tending, and serving his church:

Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter

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<sup>156</sup> Rom 1:1, Gal 1: 10, Phil 1:1, Titus 1:1.

<sup>157</sup> II Pet 1:1.

<sup>158</sup> Acts 2:42-47.

<sup>159</sup> John 21:15-19.

<sup>160</sup> Acts 10:9-16.

was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”<sup>161</sup>

Further, Peter is admonished by his Lord to accept all that God has declared clean, including bringing salvation to the Gentiles:

Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon that was called Peter was lodging there. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."<sup>162</sup>

In Peter's obedience, one understands that God shows no partiality and neither should the leaders of his church. All who God accepts are accepted and must be served and loved by those who lead his church. Peter provided a strong servant leadership example as he followed God and gave his life in service and martyrdom to God's sheep, the church,<sup>163</sup> even if it took him three times each time to understand God's instruction.

Additionally, the Apostle Paul continued Christ's teaching on servant leadership by encouraging the early church to “in humility count others more significant than [them]selves . . .

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<sup>161</sup> John 21:15-19.

<sup>162</sup> Acts 10:9-20.

<sup>163</sup> John 21:19.

look[ing] not only to [their] own interests, but also to the interests of others.”<sup>164</sup> This humble instruction from Paul is inserted just before his great exhortation for the church to be of Christ’s mind, who humbled himself and took the form of a servant, allowing himself to be martyred by those he had, in fact, created.<sup>165</sup> Paul expected his followers to become servant leaders just as Christ expected them to become servant leaders. This servanthood was to look like Christ’s and was to be lived out by giving their lives away for those who would follow each of them.

In this way, both Peter and Paul taught servant leadership, the servant leadership that they learned from Jesus Christ and from his Spirit. These apostles instructed and encouraged each follower to imitate the servanthood that each had learned in the modeled examples of Jesus, and ultimately Peter and Paul. Both of these teachers modeled servant leadership in humility and in complete service to others throughout their lives’ work and in their martyrdom as well. As Paul confessed to the Corinthian church, he and his brother-helpers were, in fact, themselves “servants for Jesus’ sake.”<sup>166</sup>

Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges argued more recently that “the fruit of great servant leadership is realized when a leader seeks to send the next generation of leaders to meet the challenges of their season with all wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual resources he or she can provide.”<sup>167</sup> Jesus, Peter, and Paul provided important servant leadership resourcing to the next generation of church leaders, including their direct instruction, life examples, and martyred deaths. The passing on of this teaching subsequently saw the minuscule group of believers that

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<sup>164</sup> Phil 2:3-4.

<sup>165</sup> Phil 2:5-8.

<sup>166</sup> II Cor 4:5.

<sup>167</sup> Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Times*, (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2005), 107.

began in Acts chapter one become the church which flourished and grew throughout time and then throughout the entire world.

As Jesus', Peter's, and Paul's ministry of service were coming to an end, each of these leaders demonstrated absolute servant leadership by the use of instruction, encouragement, modeling, and mentoring of the followers. Moreover, nearing the end of his ministry work, when he wrote both Timothy and Titus, Paul instructed those in church leadership, including the deacons and elders, to live moral lives that were above reproach, sober, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, gentle, non-quarreling, and not greedy, quick-tempered, or arrogant.<sup>168</sup> In this way, Paul called for church leadership to be of the highest character and to have these specific moral qualifications while they served those they led. In the same way, Paul also spoke to the followers in each church, encouraging them to aspire to become leaders themselves and to live the same moral lifestyle that was required of their leaders.

### **Barnabas**

Paul was assisted with his work in the early church by several other leaders who modeled servanthood as well. Particularly, Barnabas also served the early church, giving deeply to support it,<sup>169</sup> helping Paul connect with the Jerusalem church's leadership upon Saul's conversion to the Christian faith,<sup>170</sup> and going out on mission trips with Paul and John Mark.<sup>171</sup> One story of Barnabas' life at the new and growing church in Antioch is indicative of Barnabas' complete life of servanthood for others. The church in Jerusalem had heard reports of there being non-Jewish believers at Antioch:

And they sent Barnabas . . . when he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for

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<sup>168</sup> | Tim 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9.

<sup>169</sup> Acts 4:37.

<sup>170</sup> Acts 9:27.

<sup>171</sup> Acts 13:3, Acts 15:39.

he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.<sup>172</sup>

Barnabas was known as and called an encourager,<sup>173</sup> and it is clear in this passage that he gave his life for the encouragement and growth of the early church and to help Saul/Paul in his early ministry. Barnabas was glad for the conversion of others, even those people who were not like him. He was a good man, full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and he was willing to give at least a year of his life to instruct this new church in Antioch after seeking out Saul/Paul, who was in Tarsus, to help and to learn from as well. This early training with Barnabas ultimately allowed Paul to serve the broader church, raise up new leadership, and mentor younger men who would ultimately lead the church themselves, including Timothy, Titus, and even John Mark. The reproductive cycle of raising up new servant leaders from Barnabas to Saul/Paul to Timothy, Titus, and John Mark, to faithful people that followed each of these servant leaders is consistent with Greenleaf's servant leadership theory and Christ's teaching as well.

Christ's church could and did move forward confidently and boldly after Jesus' and Paul's deaths with members becoming effective servant leaders themselves because they had been trained, exhorted, encouraged, and persuaded that with the power of the Holy Spirit they were capable of living a life that mimicked and began to conform to that of Jesus Christ.<sup>174</sup> Jesus

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<sup>172</sup> Acts 11:22-30.

<sup>173</sup> Acts 4:36.

<sup>174</sup> Jim C. Denison, *Student Ordered to Leave Class for Reading Bible* (2017) Available from: <http://www.denisonforum.com>.

had made it possible for their faith to be successful, productive, and potent, a faith that bears fruit for the Kingdom of God and continues his mission through his work, as well as that of his closest disciples'. William Yount asserted that "the church is the social context, the Bible is the content, and the Spirit is the Enabler of supernatural change."<sup>175</sup> The followers in the Acts church and each successive generation thereafter, because of their leaders' servanthood, gained efficacy to become servant leaders themselves. They met Greenleaf's best test of servant leadership, and helping the church grow and mature throughout the subsequent ages, becoming a sustaining and vibrant means of God's work here on earth.

### **Support for Servant Leadership**

In fact, throughout the centuries, many organizations have implemented servant leadership principles successfully. Numerous non-profit organizations, particularly the church from its beginnings in the first century as well as for-profit corporations, practice servant leadership concepts that have proven to be successful and valuable to the company and its employees. Koch suggested that "the companies known for excellent service, great value, and loyal customers and employees replace the pyramidal paradigm with a circle."<sup>176</sup> The circle represents the team-first, others-focused nature of servant leadership in contrast to the hierarchical leader-first attitude of many other leadership styles.

Further, Patterson asserted that servant leadership stands alone in regard to follower focus.<sup>177</sup> This others-first focus and team-oriented servant leadership-driven type company has led many leaders in these organizations to a humble attitude of servanthood that produces

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<sup>175</sup> William R. Yount, *Created to Learn* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 230.

<sup>176</sup> Koch, 17.

<sup>177</sup> Patterson, 2003.

significant success for the organization.<sup>178</sup> This is the nature of servant leadership and the benefit to the organizations led by servant leaders.

### **Historical Use of Servant Leadership**

Although the concepts and ideals of servant leadership have been understood for several millennia, both by religious teachers as well as secular traditions and philosophies, it was not until the past half century that this construct was specifically named and then described in detail. As early as the fourth century BCE, Aristotle asserted in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that “moral goodness is concerned with feelings and actions,”<sup>179</sup> and further that the emotional action of “loving is more important than being loved . . . [it] consist[s] more in giving than in receiving.”<sup>180</sup> Although not focused on leadership, Aristotle did connect the altruistic servanthood virtue of loving others and thinking of their needs before one’s own needs. In this context, Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora observed that through the ages “the concept of service is taught by all major religions (e.g. Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism) and non-religious philosophies (moral philosophy, Siddha Yoga, Taoism).”<sup>181</sup> This understanding of servanthood by various religions and philosophies is an example of God’s work in the world through his common grace, providing blessing to many people through teaching, examples, and service that comes from believers and non-believers alike.

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<sup>178</sup> Yukl, 249.

<sup>179</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (J. A. Thomson, Trans.), (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2004 (Original work published 1953), 50.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, 213.

<sup>181</sup> Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 406.

Regarding this idea, Cornelius Van Til argued that many truths could be known and acknowledged by non-believers, basing their assertions of truth on what Van Til styled “borrowed capital.”<sup>182</sup> Van Til argued:

In Calvinism more than in any other form of Protestantism the message of Christianity is clearly presented as a challenge to the wisdom of the world. The natural man must not be encouraged to think that he can, in terms of his own adopted principles, find truth in any field. He must rather be told that, when he finds truth, even in the realm of the ‘phenomenal,’ he find it in terms of principles that he has ‘borrowed,’ wittingly or unwittingly, from Christianity. The fact of science and progress is inexplicable except upon the presupposition that the world is made and controlled by God through Christ and that man is made and renewed in the image of God through Christ.<sup>183</sup>

Thus, man can find truth and partial truth in other religions, sciences, entertainments, experiences, and life itself. Servanthood is a universal good that is often obvious to mankind through God’s common grace.

So, servant leadership is a consequential and important idea that has been taught for millennia but not specifically defined until the 20th-century. Ken Blanchard, author, speaker, and business consultant, opined of servant leadership, that it is, in fact, “the foundation for effective leadership.”<sup>184</sup> Given the above history, as well as two millennia of teaching by the church and church leaders on Christ’s instruction on servanthood and leadership, many followers of Christ and church leaders have taught on and thought about servant leadership as a leadership subject. Walter Rauschenbusch’s 1917 work, *The Social Principles of Jesus*, is an early example of this servant as leader instruction, which prescribed servanthood for all leaders, not just the clergy.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Cornelius Van Til, *The Case for Calvinism*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1979), 106-107.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ken Blanchard, *The Heart of Servant-Leadership*, In Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), ix.

<sup>185</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *The Social Principles of Jesus*, (New York, NY: The Woman’s Press, 1917), 108-112.

In this regard, it is clear that servant leadership is a meaningful and valuable method of leadership for organizations beyond Christianity.

### **Business Use of Servant Leadership**

In understanding business and for-profit use of servant leadership theory, it was earlier noted that servant leadership has been adopted as a guiding philosophy by many well-known and successful companies.<sup>186</sup> Max DePree, the former Chief Executive Officer of Herman Miller, explained his organization's commitment to servant leadership values, which are characterized by a Watercarrier sculpture located at the company's campus. DePree observed that in servanthood, "the tribal watercarrier in this corporation is a symbol of the essential nature of all jobs, our interdependence, the identity of ownership and participation, the servanthood of leadership, the authenticity of each individual."<sup>187</sup>

The benefit of a servant-led organization can also be observed in a non-profit context from the example of growth and wellbeing seen in the church from its small beginnings in the first century. Biblical principles and instruction can and will benefit all who utilize the teaching, just as common grace benefits both the believing and the unbelieving as well. These organizational examples substantiate servant leadership ideals, proving that companies can be effective, beneficial, and successful in their servant leadership, and that servanthood is a viable and relevant leadership model for modern organizations.

In its essence, servant leadership focuses on the improvement and benefit of each follower, anticipating followers' growth as individuals and working to serve each of these individual's needs completely. Furthermore, Steven McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinow assert that servant leaders have a natural desire to serve others and see them grow as the leader

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<sup>186</sup> Northouse, 223.

<sup>187</sup> Max DePree, *Leadership Jazz*, (New York, NY: Doubleday), 65.

develops relationships built on his or her personal humility, egalitarianism, acceptance of others, and ethical principles and practices.<sup>188</sup> Although most other theories of leadership tend to be defined by the action taken by the leader and his or her leadership activities and how the leader acts out his or her leadership, Laub noted that “servant leaders are defined by their character and by demonstrating their complete commitment to serve others.”<sup>189</sup> Summarizing servant leadership, Spears maintained that it is “a long-term, transformational approach to life and work—in essence, a way of being—that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society.”<sup>190</sup>

Ultimately, as Greenleaf asserted, servant leadership is not a management technique or the pursuit of personal position, significance, and importance, but is instead a way of life.<sup>191</sup> Christ called each of his followers to this lifestyle of servanthood and growth. Essentially, at its core, servant leadership is relational leadership, which focuses wholly on developing the lives of those who are being led. In this relational development, the servant leader attempts to meet the followers’ needs and to create a cycle of flourishing that is then reproduced by those same followers in others’ lives as well. In this way, the servant led follower will naturally become a servant leader him or herself, and this benefits the organization of which the follower and leader are members.

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<sup>188</sup> Steven L. McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinow, *Organizational Behavior: Emerging Knowledge, Global Reality* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.), (Singapore: McGraw Hill Education, 2015), 350-351.

<sup>189</sup> Laub, 23.

<sup>190</sup> Spears, 2004, 8.

<sup>191</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1977), 7.

#### 4. SERVANT LEADERSHIP – SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

##### God’s Plan of Servanthood

There have been many examples throughout history of servanthood and lives given to others and yet difficulty in understanding servanthood as an integral characteristic of leadership, as Christ taught. Authentic service does not show favoritism, treating people better or worse, based on who they are. Service and true leadership are not about pleasing people. In this regard, Paul questioned the Galatian church, “am I now seeking the approval of man or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”<sup>192</sup> Therefore, God’s plan for servant leadership is to serve others to please himself.

Herbert Prochnow gave several counterexamples of what true service is, first noting the story of the housewife who looked to hire a servant, asking if the potential employee could serve company. The man answered that he could, in “both ways . . . [either] so they’ll come again, or stay away.”<sup>193</sup> Prochnow went on to give the negative example of a newly married couple, saying that “the first morning after the honeymoon, the husband got up early, went down to the kitchen, and brought his wife her breakfast in bed. Naturally, she was delighted. Then her husband spoke: ‘Have you noticed just what I have done?’ [She responded,] ‘Of course dear; every single detail.’ [He then stated:] ‘Good, that is how I want my breakfast served every morning after this.’”<sup>194</sup> A final Prochnow counterexample related that, “Charles V admired and respected the great Titian. One day, when the brush dropped from Titian’s hand, Charles V picked it up for him, saying, ‘You deserve to be served by an emperor.’”<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Gal 1:10.

<sup>193</sup> Herbert V. Prochnow, *The Public Speaker’s Treasure Chest*, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), 87.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, 174.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 289.

These counterexamples of service are not true servanthood and are based instead in selfishness and pride, not in selflessness and altruism. They could not be considered characteristic of servant leadership or of Christ's teaching or expectation for the care of the follower. He taught that service could not be to two masters, but would be either to God or to one's self. Jesus said:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 'The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!' No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.<sup>196</sup>

In this teaching, Jesus indicated that he expected his followers to serve God, not money, or self, or anyone or anything else above God. Service is a requirement from God and will be a part of every human experience for good or for bad. Ultimately it is a question of who or what will be served. Christ instructed that all of mankind's service must be done for God. This is God's plan for mankind.

### **Christ's Example of Servant Leadership**

Christ's life of service was foretold by Isaiah the Prophet in chapter 53 of his prophecy, in this way:

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he

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<sup>196</sup> Matt 6:19-24.

was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.<sup>197</sup>

In this passage, Christ is described in servant's terms, as unbeautiful, without majesty, and with nothing in appearance that is desirable. In fact he was rejected, despised, not esteemed by men, oppressed, and afflicted, a man of sorrows and suffering. Yet, he took up mankind's infirmities and carried their sorrows, he was crushed, pierced, and punished for humanity. He did not open his mouth, nor was there any deceit in his mouth, but he bore the sin of many and interceded for sinners. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."<sup>198</sup>

One of the most iconic passages about Christ in general and his servanthood in particular is that of him washing his disciples' feet. This is clearly described in John's Gospel as follows:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel,

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<sup>197</sup> Is 53:1-12.

<sup>198</sup> Luke 19:10.

tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?' Jesus answered him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no share with me. Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, 'Not all of you are clean.' When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.'<sup>199</sup>

John points to several specific servanthood characteristics that Christ modeled in this wonderful passage, noting specifically the full extent of his love for his followers. Jesus knew he had all power and authority from God, yet he humbled himself and acted out his servant leadership by washing his disciples' feet, a very demeaning and servant-like action. This act of washing his disciples' feet identified them as his treasured followers, people that he actually led through his servanthood his entire ministry. He acted out his own instruction on leadership through this story in a way that was unfathomable to his followers, even stating to Peter that he would not understand at that time, but would come to an understanding later. Ultimately, Peter did understand this teaching, and he did give his life for the church as well.

Jesus reminded his disciples that he was their teacher and Lord, and because he, as their leader, had washed their feet, they too should wash the feet of those who followed each of them. They were to become servant leaders if they wanted to lead as Jesus led and if they wanted to

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<sup>199</sup> John 13:1-17.

become great. Jesus set a high standard in everything he taught, but in particular, his instruction to serve others and in calling his disciples and those who would follow them to follow him in this example of altruism and thinking of others. They were to lead by demeaning their own ego, by selflessness, by caring more for others than themselves. He then taught them that they would be greatly blessed in their lives if they did what he instructed them, in serving each follower. He expected them to follow him in this example as he was their master, and they would be serving him by serving others.

Jesus tells us through the writer of Hebrews that he is “the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”<sup>200</sup> He was highly exalted because he was God, but also because of his servanthood, and he is now ruling the universe at God the Father’s hand. In this regard, the Apostle Paul encouraged his followers and all who would follow them, that they should follow Jesus’ humble example:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>201</sup>

Peter also gave specific examples of Jesus’ life and what his servanthood looked like, noting:

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued

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<sup>200</sup> Heb 12:2.

<sup>201</sup> Phil 2:5-11.

entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.<sup>202</sup>

Thus, those who are his followers should follow this example and become dead to sin and alive in righteous living. Jesus is the great God, our Savior, mankind's Messiah, and Lord,<sup>203</sup> who did not strive to become a deity, because he already was God. Instead, he humbly set aside his position to become a man for mankind's salvation. Yet, not a wealthy or powerful man, but a servant who served, was treated poorly, was jailed, and then murdered. He has since been exalted by God the Father, and all mankind, both the living and the dead of all time, will also acknowledge this faithful, humble, servant leader as Lord, whether a believer or not.<sup>204</sup>

### **The Christian's Response**

Furthermore, Jesus taught his followers to become like him, to conforming to his example. They are to follow him in service and in care for others. Paul reminded his followers several times to imitate the example that Christ gave as they conform to his image.<sup>205</sup> Likewise, Peter also taught that "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."<sup>206</sup> Paul further expected his followers to become more and more like Christ, noting that those God called, he "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many

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<sup>202</sup> | Pet 2:22-25.

<sup>203</sup> | Jude 25.

<sup>204</sup> | Phil 2:9-11.

<sup>205</sup> | Phil 2:5, | Cor 11:1, | Thes 1:6.

<sup>206</sup> | Pet 2:21.

brothers.”<sup>207</sup> Paul expected Christ’s followers to become like Jesus in their everyday lives, and in particular in their servanthood.

These Christian followers are in fact being transformed into Christ’s servants. Paul argued that, “we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”<sup>208</sup> Further, Christ’s followers are being transformed, not to conform to the world order, but instead into people who can “discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”<sup>209</sup> This understanding and transformation represents the blessing that God promises his children, those who follow his son’s example of engaging the world and their communities through service and servant leadership.

Jesus himself taught that there is a good and a bad servant, instructing his followers in this way:

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.<sup>210</sup>

Christ encouraged his followers to focus on being wise servants. Servants who would be found doing the right things, faithful to their calling, and caring out the things that they were supposed to be caring out. This type of servant will be blessed with greater responsibility and

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<sup>207</sup> Rom 8:29.

<sup>208</sup> II Cor 3:18.

<sup>209</sup> Rom 12:2.

<sup>210</sup> Matt 24:45-51.

will receive his or her master's praise. Conversely, the evil servant will not be so rewarded, and when the unexpected master arrives, the evil servant will be severely punished for being selfish and doing what he or she preferred. Luke noted of this same teaching that "that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating."<sup>211</sup> Christ then exhorts his servants that "everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more."<sup>212</sup>

So, Christ taught that his followers should be servants, faithful to his teaching and loving others through their servanthood. Christ's calling to service would be hard service for most people. Paul, himself, struggled with his service, even though he argued that "we serve in the new way of the Spirit."<sup>213</sup> In chapter seven of Romans, Paul gave voice to his struggle to do right, stating:

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.<sup>214</sup>

Likewise Paul, this man considered by many to be a pillar of Christian service, struggled to do what he should do, what was right. However, in Christ's work Paul found that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"<sup>215</sup> and that he was a well-

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<sup>211</sup> Luke 12:47.

<sup>212</sup> Luke 12:48.

<sup>213</sup> Rom 7:6.

<sup>214</sup> Rom 7:15-21.

<sup>215</sup> Rom 8:1.

loved servant. It is evident that the good servant may struggle to serve, but is not condemned because of what Christ has done for the servant, while the bad servant will receive only punishment because of what he has done without Christ.

Through the ages, there have been many examples of great Christian work accomplished by humble servants who also struggled with their daily lives in service. A good example of this struggle is found in a Puritan minister's confession. He had the same struggle in his service to the church as Paul also conceded. This honorable Puritan confessed:

O God, I know that I often do thy work without thy power, and sin by my dead, heartless, blind service, my lack of inward light, love, delight, my mind, heart, tongue moving without thy help. I see sin in my heart in seeking the approbation of others; this is my vileness, to make men's opinion my rule, whereas I should see what good I have done, and give thee glory, consider what sin I have committed and mourn for that. It is my deceit to preach, and pray, and to stir up others' spiritual affections in order to beget commendations, whereas my rule should be daily to consider myself more vile than any man in my own eyes. But thou dost show thy power by my frailty, so that the more feeble I am, the more fit to be used, for thou dost pitch a tent of grace in my weakness. Help me to rejoice in my infirmities and give thee praise, to acknowledge by deficiencies before others and not be discouraged by them, that they may see thy glory more clearly. Teach me that I must act by a power supernatural, whereby I can attempt things above my strength, and bear evils beyond my strength, acting for Christ in all, and have his superior power to help me. Let me learn from Paul whose presence was mean, his weakness great, his utterance contemptible, yet thou didst account him faithful and blessed. Lord, let me lean on thee as he did, and find my ministry thine.<sup>216</sup>

This also should be the Christian's confession, to make his or her service honoring to God and not for self. Forsaking self is very hard for most followers to do except for God's supporting grace.

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<sup>216</sup> Arthur Bennett (Ed.), *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions*, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 340-341.

## 5. SERVANT LEADERSHIP – CHURCH HISTORY

### Common Grace

This same grace given to Christians so lavishly by God, is also often given to the unbelieving as they live out their daily lives. The grace of God that is common to all of humankind provides benefits that are experienced by the whole of humanity. This common grace is bestowed as grace by God, because it is undeserved by any man or woman. Christ spoke of this idea in his Sermon on the Mount where he said of God, “he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just an on the unjust.”<sup>217</sup> Louis Berkhof describes common grace as “curb[ing] the destructive power of sin, maintain[ing] in a measure the moral order of the universe, thus making an orderly life possible, distribut[ing] in varying degrees gifts and talents among men, promot[ing] the development of science and art, and shower[ing] untold blessings upon the children of men.”<sup>218</sup>

As an example of common grace, Paul taught that even unbelieving Gentiles “who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.”<sup>219</sup> Truth, right and wrong, nurture and care, are all hardwired into man’s consciousness, as man is born in “the image of God.”<sup>220</sup> Thus, good things and good ideas can be experienced and

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<sup>217</sup> Matt 5:45.

<sup>218</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4th ed.), (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 434.

<sup>219</sup> Rom 2:14-15.

<sup>220</sup> Gen 9:6, I Cor 11:7.

developed by believers and non-believers alike, through the general gift of God's common grace and providence.

Common grace is understood in God's ongoing care for what he created, allowing fallen mankind to maintain a basic sense of right and wrong, and, therefore the potential for great ideas, a safe and governable society, social and medical advancements, and other wonderful improvements. Many biblical ideas continue to percolate throughout time and from many differing sources. This concept of a biblical idea developed from common grace is evident in the theory of servant leadership. As Christ taught this idea two millennia ago, so others like Robert Greenleaf have now rediscovered and redeveloped the servant theory of leadership in a non-religious, academic, and business environment. The counterintuitive idea of servant leadership keeps popping up time and time again.

### **Christ's Church as Servant to Mankind**

It was Jonathan Edwards' idea that "passing affections easily produce works; and words are cheap; . . . Christian practice is a costly laborious thing. The self-denial that is required of Christians, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life, don't consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints."<sup>221</sup> The church, since the time of Jesus, has found it necessary and important to live out the Christian faith by accomplishing great things for humankind. The development of hospitals, schools and universities, aid and service to local, national, and international people in need, and many other humanitarian projects have been carried out by the church since the first century.

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<sup>221</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections* (1746), John E. Smith (Ed.), (New York, NY: Yale University Press, 1959), 411.

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. argued that “faith in Jesus Christ includes faith in his program.”<sup>222</sup> Plantinga goes on to develop this thought for Christ’s followers and therefore the church, noting:

The faithful person practices self-giving love and trusts that he won’t be a fool to do it. He practices humility and trusts that humility is actually a sign of strength. He takes on “the form of a servant” and trusts that this is the kind of life God will vindicate because servanthood is part of the life of heaven. A person who is in good spiritual shape might even undertake his service with a certain joy. As the Heidelberg Catechism puts it, in “the coming-to-life of the new self” we have “wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a delight to do every kind of good as God wants us to” (Question and Answer 90). “Every kind of good” points to the wide scope of God’s program of redemption, including the reconciliation of “all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (Col. 1:20).<sup>223</sup>

From its inception, the church has been actively involved in doing every kind of good, as servants to its members as well as the broader communities the believers were living in. Luke tells us what the servanthood of the church just after Pentecost looked like, as it was growing exponentially:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Engaging God’s World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 95.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Acts 2:42-47.

The Church looked to help those in need, providing physical and spiritual healings while also meeting each person's day to day and common needs. The Church praised God together, met together, ate together, lived life together, and served others together. This type of servant leadership led to the Church finding favor in their community and with God.

Luke again describes the church in action later in the book of Acts, noting that the church held each person's needs and concerns as its highest priority:

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.<sup>225</sup>

Here again is an example of continued service by those in the Church to the Church's members as well as the community in which it was located, with great blessing to all.

Interestingly, there were none that did not have his or her needs met. In this way, the church served as the servant to its people.

Luke provided several negative examples of those in the church not acting appropriately, but in each case it was quickly remedied by the leadership. Ananias and Sapphira took credit for selling land and giving the complete proceeds to help the needy, when in fact they had withheld a portion for themselves. In this way, they had "tested the Holy Spirit" and were punished immediately by their unexpected and untimely death.<sup>226</sup> The church members and the broader

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<sup>225</sup> Acts 4:32-35.

<sup>226</sup> Acts 5:1-10.

community learned not to test God in this way as “great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.”<sup>227</sup>

Likewise, certain Greek-speaking Jewish believers felt that their widows were not being cared for properly by those giving out the charity. Luke tells of the leadership’s quick response to this problem, specifically acknowledging their inability to serve well in this way, yet also acknowledging the real need for this type of service in the church body:

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.<sup>228</sup>

This passage provides a prime example of the Church and the broader community being blessed by the servanthood of the Church’s leadership. This is also a good example of the Church experiencing the development of new leadership as these deacons were chosen to serve the body in daily distribution to meet each person’s needs while also serving tables. Growth was a continued outcome of this work as well as continued favor from the Lord.

Roland Bainton noted of the early church that “there was a sharing of goods and a drastic philanthropy for the benefit not only of fellow Christians but also of the heathen, especially in

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<sup>227</sup> Acts 5:11.

<sup>228</sup> Acts 6:1-7.

times of calamity.”<sup>229</sup> In this same light, John Piper also noted the story of the growing early church that:

The Roman Emperor Julian, writing in the fourth century, regretted the progress of Christianity because it pulled people away from the Roman gods. He said, ‘Atheism [i.e. the Christian faith!] has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers, and through their care for the burial of the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar, and that the godless Galileans care not only for their own poor but for ours as well; while those who belong to us look in vain for the help that we should render them.’<sup>230</sup>

R. B. Kuiper argues that “it may even be said that by caring for the poor the church in some sense preaches the Gospel.”<sup>231</sup> Supporting this idea, Kuiper goes on to tell the story of Francis of Assisi who:

Invited a monk to assist him in bringing the gospel to a certain village. They spent the whole day in works of mercy and never got around to preaching. Toward evening his companion inquired of Francis when they were going to begin to preach. Francis replied that they had been preaching all day.<sup>232</sup>

In 1898, Abraham Kuyper lectured at Princeton Theological Seminary. In these lectures he told of two examples of church leadership serving their communities during the plagues of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Kuyper first told of Cardinal Borromeo of Milan who stayed in the city to feed and pray for those who were sick and dying. In like manner, Kuyper spoke of John Calvin, the prominent Protestant theologian, pastor, and reformer. Calvin, the great philosophic thinker, who made a powerful impact on Protestantism and its doctrines, worked to care for and serve those stuck in the plague-infested city of Geneva. Kuyper shared of Calvin:

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<sup>229</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Early Christianity*, (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1960), 56.

<sup>230</sup> John Piper, *A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2014), 165.

<sup>231</sup> R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ*, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), 168.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

During the plague, which in the 16<sup>th</sup> century tormented Geneva, Calvin acted better and more wisely, for he not only cared incessantly for the spiritual need of the sick, but at the same time introduced hitherto unsurpassed hygienic measure whereby the ravages of the plague were arrested.<sup>233</sup>

Howard F. Vos comments on the Puritans of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that “the whole of society was to be ordered for the glory of God and for human welfare; the individual was to be subordinated to the will and the betterment of the community.”<sup>234</sup> In this example, the church took their service to the community very seriously. Related to this influence on the broader community, Charles Colson and Ellen Vaughn exclaim, “No wonder much of the known world came to Christ in the early centuries. They could see how believers loved one another in true fellowship.”<sup>235</sup> Colson and Vaughn conclude, “When the church is being the church, reflecting the great kingdom to come, it inevitably changes the culture around it.”<sup>236</sup>

In his letter to the Philippian church, Paul sweetly communicates the church’s need to imitate Christ’s servanthood and what ultimately becomes the attitude Paul sees in this church, as follows:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Stone Foundation Lectures*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1943), 120.

<sup>234</sup> Howard F. Vos, *Exploring Church History*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994), 127.

<sup>235</sup> Charles Colson and Ellen Vaughn, *Being the Body*, (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2003), 108.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

<sup>237</sup> Phil 2:1-4.

This is the example that the church was given, and, in many ways, throughout its long history, this joyful, loving, servanthood is exactly what the church modeled and conveyed.

### **Church and Pastoral Servanthood**

John Newton, the former slave trader and pastor who also wrote the Christian hymn, *Amazing Grace*, stated that being a pastor was “the worst of all jobs and the best of all callings.”<sup>238</sup> The pastor’s role, as the primary leader of the church, is often a life of service and care for his or her congregation that can be difficult and filled with troubles, while often for low remuneration and little recognition. Yet this calling should be most rewarding, even though it can require almost everything from the servant. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote of this tension in his contrasting definitions of grace. He argued that “cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”<sup>239</sup> Conversely, Bonhoeffer encouraged instead a true understanding of the cost of grace, because “it cost God the life of His Son, . . . [and because] it cost a man His life”<sup>240</sup> in service to all of humankind.

Author Leo Tolstoy also commented on the tension and value that he saw in the life of servanthood, noting the incongruity between his protagonist and the servant hero of his novella, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. As J. M. Smith observed, Ilyich’s “shallowness is contrasted with that of the servant who attends to him on his deathbed”<sup>241</sup> as this servant leads a life of humility and

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<sup>238</sup> Jackson W. Carroll, *God’s Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 12.

<sup>239</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 45.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> J. M. Smith, “Redemption at the Very End,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 4-5, 2017, C14.

selflessness in a poverty-stricken state. This servant represents all that Ilyich is not, showing that in poverty, he can be spiritually wealthy while in contrast, Ilyich is rich yet spiritually impoverished. Ilyich finally comes to understand his weakness and the shortfall of a life poorly lived as he lay dying. This same lesson is understood in servant leadership, which is by definition a life of humility and selflessness that is often done without great personal wealth.

Furthermore, Henri Nouwen pointed to the church's servant leaders, arguing that each should attempt to find "new ways to let go of power and follow the humble way of Jesus."<sup>242</sup> Nouwen further asserted that Christian leadership "is not a leadership of power and control, but a leadership of powerlessness and humility."<sup>243</sup> In this way, Nouwen connected Christian leadership to servanthood and to servant leadership.<sup>244</sup> Likewise, Don N. Howell and Henry and Richard Blackaby all believed that the life of a church leader and pastor is the life of a servant. In Howell's work, *Servant of the Servant*, he defined biblical leadership as servant leadership,<sup>245</sup> while Blackaby and Blackaby defined spiritual leadership as a life of service and serving the congregation.<sup>246</sup>

Moreover, the pastoral servant leader has many jobs, responsibilities, and concerns in the modern church. Judith Carter argued that "in today's Christian community pastors are responsible for spiritual guidance and development, motivation, restoration, care, correction, protection, unity, and encouragement of parishioners."<sup>247</sup> Carter further opined that effective and beneficial church leadership moves beyond the normal preaching and shepherding tasks, which

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<sup>242</sup> Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 81.

<sup>243</sup> Nouwen, 82.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

<sup>245</sup> Don N. Howell, Jr., *Servants of the Servant*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003), 1-3.

<sup>246</sup> Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 168.

<sup>247</sup> Judith C. Carter, "Transformational Leadership and Pastoral Leader Effectiveness," *Pastoral Psychology*, no. 58 (March 11, 2009): 261.

are part of most pastors' roles, to also include development of followers into becoming leaders themselves.<sup>248</sup> Again, this reproducing of leaders from church parishioners is consistent not only with Greenleaf's best test of servant leadership<sup>249</sup> but also Jesus' teaching on his disciples following him in his modeled servanthood.<sup>250</sup> Paul also taught that effective church leaders were to equip "the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ . . . to mature manhood."<sup>251</sup>

Joseph Britton noted that pastoral and church leaders must encourage the entire church body to seriously contemplate the Scriptures and the core doctrines that are developed from the Bible.<sup>252</sup> Moreover, Britton argued that effective church leadership leads the church into social engagement with the broader community, which leads to opportunities for effectively sharing of the gospel message within each community as the churches each serve their various communities.<sup>253</sup> Further, Britton argued that while the primary focus of a pastor's leadership might largely lie in the duties and functions associated with "meditation and revelation," each pastor has the additional responsibility to lead others in service as well.<sup>254</sup> Mark Fischer also noted that the pastoral and church leader "becomes a leader to the extent that he serves the community."<sup>255</sup>

In focusing on pastoral church leadership and its service to the church, Jackson Carroll believed pastors to be producers of culture as "primary agents in constructing and forming their

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

<sup>250</sup> John 13:14-15.

<sup>251</sup> Eph 4:12-13.

<sup>252</sup> Joseph H. Britton, "Something to Say: Pastoral Leadership and the Word," *Anglican Theological Review*, no. 91 (January 1, 2009): 93.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>255</sup> Mark F. Fischer, "Preparing Seminarians for Pastoral Leadership," *Seminary Journal*, no. 16(3) (Winter 2010): 16.

congregation's culture, its beliefs, and practices."<sup>256</sup> Carroll further asserted that pastors completed this cultural construction by leading through service in "worship and ritual activities, such as baptism, confirmation rites, communion, weddings and funerals, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, counseling, visiting the sick, administration, planning, execution and community leadership."<sup>257</sup> In this then, Carroll envisioned pastoral leadership as an office,<sup>258</sup> as a profession,<sup>259</sup> and as a ministry,<sup>260</sup> all in service to his or her congregation.

Furthermore, Matsobane Manala also asserted that within a healthy church, each pastor shares the role of a leader, a manager, and a servant while also facilitating the growth of the other leaders and congregants of the ministry in these same roles.<sup>261</sup> Manala also opined that Christian leadership is the act of "influencing others so that believers will trust and respond to the Head of the church for themselves."<sup>262</sup> Additionally, regarding church management, Manala argued that management is stewardship, and, therefore, includes the normal roles of management, such as planning, organizing, evaluating, and facilitating the administration of the church organization.<sup>263</sup> However, most importantly, Manala noted that servant leadership is unique as a leadership style because its primary focus is defined by the leader's desire to serve and empower each follower.<sup>264</sup> In this way, Manala's argument is consistent with Greenleaf's original 1970 conclusion and Christ's as well.

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<sup>256</sup> Carroll, 2.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid, 16-19.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 19-22.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 22-25.

<sup>261</sup> Matsobane J. Manala, "A Triad of Pastoral Leadership for Congregational Health and Well-being: Leader, Manager, and Servant in a Shared and Equipping Ministry," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, no. 66(2) (October 13, 2010): 1.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 5.

Ultimately, Manala instructed, consistent with Christ’s teaching, that although the church leader was highly relational and task performance oriented, pastoral leadership was at its core not about gaining personal power but was instead about living out personal service. Manala further opined that the motivation of a true church leader was that of service to God and his interests alone and not about the leader’s personal gain or self-interests.<sup>265</sup> Fundamentally, Manala argued that pastoral church leadership, with all of its responsibilities and many requirements, was in reality servant leadership as taught by Christ. G. S. Morrison agreed with this conclusion in research he completed for Samford University stating “the underlying assumption in our research was that pastoral leadership is best defined as ‘servant leadership.’”<sup>266</sup> Therefore, the effective church and its varied members of leadership is called to a life of servanthood, following their leader, Jesus Christ.

## 6. APPLICATION

The writer of Hebrews gave direct instructions as to what a servant leader should focus on in the church. “Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.”<sup>267</sup> Each leader should serve his or her church community by loving and encouraging love, by showing hospitality to all and encouraging hospitality to all, by caring for those in prison and for those who are mistreated and encouraging this care in his or her followers.

Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy opined that:

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>266</sup> G. S. Morrison, “The Evolving Landscape of Pastoral Leadership,” *Christianity Today*, (n.d.): 2.

<sup>267</sup> Heb 13:1-3.

Servant leadership has since 1970 described a quite different approach to leadership than that derived from a bureaucratic and mechanistic view of organizations wherein workers are thought of as mere cogs in a machine. In the latter, the leader's primary role may be understood as doing whatever it takes to ensure that things run smoothly, tasks are preformed, and goals are met. This has commonly involved a hierarchical approach to leadership. From the contrasting perspective of servant leadership, the leader's role is literally to serve others.<sup>268</sup>

In their thinking, the servant leadership model is in direct contrast to other common leadership approaches. Ultimately, the servant leader is there to humbly serve. Service is the most basic application of servant leadership, and all servant leaders should serve, just as Christ taught his followers.<sup>269</sup>

Based on the foregoing research, it is understood that in any organization, leadership is one of the most important factors that indicates success or failure. Servant leadership focuses on the critical and most important relationship of a leader within the organization, the people.<sup>270</sup> In this regard, Carl Koch argued that "all leadership is about building relationships, and the key to all successful relationships is trust."<sup>271</sup> The relationship between the leader and the follower begins in mutual trust and is built on the foundation of that trust by the leader concentrating on his or her followers' needs and successes. This is a leader's acting out his or her servant leadership.

Supporting this idea, Koch noted a remark by Jack Lowe, the chairman of TDIndustries, a servant leader-driven construction company, stating about this connection, "trustworthiness, which requires character and competence, can only flourish with leadership that trusts, supports,

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<sup>268</sup> Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 170.

<sup>269</sup> Mark 9:35.

<sup>270</sup> Teresa Amabile and Steven J. Kramer, "Valuing Your Most Valuable Assets," *Harvard Business Review* (October 10, 2011) Retrieved from <http://www.hbr.org/2011/10/valuting-your-most-valuable>. 1.

<sup>271</sup> Koch, 17.

and encourages. At TDIndustries we call that servant leadership.”<sup>272</sup> Thus, the servant leader should work to build an environment of trust in the organization that encourages the followers to become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and ultimately more likely to become trusted servant leaders themselves.<sup>273</sup>

Furthermore, the environment of servant leadership benefits not only the follower and the servant leader, but the broader organization as well. As a current study of CEOs found, companies have a significantly enhanced return on their assets and perform at higher levels when their chief executives lead through servanthood.<sup>274</sup> This organizational strength and improvement in an environment of trust can best be accomplished by the self-reproducing approach of servant leadership. Servant leadership creates a cycle of personal and organizational success. In support of this idea, author Fred Gratzon stated that, “The more people you undertake to serve, the more effective you will be. Commit to serving everyone and become maximally effective.”<sup>275</sup> The servant led organization will be benefited as each leader becomes maximally effective.

Additionally, beliefs can change behavior, and beliefs about one’s ability to be successful can change personal efficacy. A servant leader will develop ways to enhance positive beliefs for each follower, enhancing their ability to succeed. Frank Pajares found in his work on beliefs, that “beliefs of personal competence ultimately become habits of thinking [for people], that serve throughout their lives.”<sup>276</sup> The servant leaders should work to develop this change in his or her

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>273</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

<sup>274</sup> Suzanne J. Peterson, Benjamin M. Galvin, and Donald Lange, “CEO Servant Leadership: Exploring Executive Characteristics and Firm Performance,” *Personnel Psychology*, no. 65 (Autumn, 2012).

<sup>275</sup> Rachel L. Huber, *Servant Leadership, Self-Efficacy, and Communities of Inquiry in Higher Education Online Learning*, (Doctoral dissertation, 2014): 161, Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3623182).

<sup>276</sup> Frank Pajares, “Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Motivation and Achievement in Writing: A Review of the Literature,” *Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties*, no. 19 (2003): 153.

followers, providing each a life habit that improves the follower's personal life situation and moves them toward serving others themselves. Servant leadership leads the follower toward fulfillment and satisfaction, which outcome should be a primary focus of the leader's attention and concentration. This movement of the follower toward deeper service and replication of servant leadership in each follower is servant leadership acted out. This type of leadership is healthy for the followers as well as the organization's wellbeing.

By fully resourcing and appropriately supporting his or her followers, the servant leader will naturally provide opportunities for personal growth by giving each of the followers an occasion to serve and to lead in this service, leading to the cycle of continuing success and ongoing hope. Hope is not only a factor in life satisfaction but an element of personal growth and the ability to grow. Servant leaders should develop hope in each follower through the implementation of servanthood characteristics and given service opportunities. In their study on hope, Wendy Duggleby, Dan Cooper, and Kelly Penz found that, "Respondents described their hope as future focused and a source of strength. Hope was associated with positive thinking (optimism, positive attitude), spirituality (my spiritual faith), social connectedness (having love and support from family and friends), and making a difference (hope I make a difference in their day)."<sup>277</sup> As described by Jesus and subsequently by Greenleaf, the description of hope parallels the description of how servant leadership manifests itself.

True servant leaders must work to develop hopefulness within their follower, thereby increasing success and servanthood in the individual follower to the benefit of the follower, the

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<sup>277</sup> Wendy Duggleby, Dan Cooper, and Kelly Penz, "Hope, Self-Efficacy, Spiritual Well-Being and Job Satisfaction," *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, no. 65(11) (May 29, 2009): 2380.

servant leader, and the organization.<sup>278</sup> One effective method to raise hopefulness in a follower is providing successful role models for the follower to emulate. This role modeling is an important method to improve success and, according to Doug Oman and Carl Thoresen, by reflecting on admired people's lives, individuals could gain wisdom, discernment, and personal growth themselves. They found that role models can inspire individuals powerfully, directing vicariously the observer-mentee toward a life of values, courage, conviction, and hope.<sup>279</sup>

Without doubt, the act of servanthood is the defining and important element of the servant leader and follower relationship. By the servant leader's successfully modeled service to others, the follower gains instruction in this regard and his or her life is enhanced due to the observation of the leader's life of servanthood. This enhancement of the follower must be of first priority to each servant leader and is an act of service in itself. Thus, the servant leader should provide positive models of service, including personal and peer modeling, which illustrates the desired results and provides encouragement to that end. The leader should persuade and even exhort the follower to emulate the observed service and the desired behaviors.

Ultimately, servant leaders should desire what is best for each follower, including replication of servanthood which should result in improved mood, attitude, emotional state, and finally hope. To see these characteristics in their followers' lives, servant leaders must work to fully develop them in their own lives. The servant leader must be a servant that leads through a growing and maturing life example. These servant leaders will provide followers with opportunities to be successful by allowing them to observe successful outcomes and by

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<sup>278</sup> Herbert Goodman, Jr. and Mark H. Stone, "The Efficacy of Adult Christian Support Groups in Coping with Death of a Significant Loved One," *Journal of Religion and Health*, no. 48(3) (September, 2009): 308.

<sup>279</sup> Doug Oman and Carl E. Thoresen, "Spiritual Modeling: A Key to Spiritual and Religious Growth?", *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, no. 13 (2003): 149.

persuading each follower to serve as well. An authentic servant leader will be a growing servant that generally raises the level of servanthood in the followers as well.

Related to the idea of the leader persuading the follower that they should serve and will be successful in that service, Marilyn Gist observed the Pygmalion effect. Gist argued that the Pygmalion effect would “enhance learning or performance resulting from the positive expectations of others . . . through the persuasive influence of others holding positive expectations.”<sup>280</sup> Servant leaders should thus use persuasion with each follower, helping to induce their belief that they can accomplish the desired service and thereby increase the likelihood of their ability to become successful servant leaders as well.

As Christ instructed and Greenleaf later theorized, servant leadership leads followers to become servant leaders themselves. As followers observe critical servant leadership characteristics in their leader and then are encouraged to act in the same way by that servant leader, the followers believe that they themselves are capable of the same servant leadership traits. The maturing followers look to reproduce the observed servanthood characteristics in their own lives and move toward becoming servants themselves. The servant leader that seeks to reproduce servant leaders from his or her followers should work to find specific ways to develop these followers and give them substantive service opportunities and additional ways to grow and serve as well.

In this regard, the servant leader should also encourage each follower to formulate beliefs about his or her ability to become a servant. This belief formulation must be augmented by the servant leader considering how his or her servanthood will be observed by the followers and that

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<sup>280</sup> Marilyn E. Gist, “Self-Efficacy: Implications for Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management,” *Academy of Management Review*, no. 12(3) (July 1, 1987): 477.

the follower will experience the outcomes of the successfully completed service to others. In this way, the servant leader strengthens and fortifies each follower's likelihood in becoming a servant leader by enhancing his or her belief in their likely success in service to others.

In addition, the leader should encourage the follower to set goals and plans to accomplish those goals. By helping the followers set and meet goals and allowing for adjustments based on progress and the changing environment, a servant leader will enhance the followers' motivation as well as their belief in the service they are completing. This positive belief, gained from met goals and increasing motivation, will naturally lead to successful and reproducing servanthood.

Ultimately, the most important help that a servant leader and his or her followers can practice is that of prayer and communion with God, by expecting him to accomplish in the followers and their service to others all that the followers and the servant leader has been called to accomplish. These noted applications of servant leadership replication and personal servanthood should be encouraged and put into practice by the servant leader, but the success will be through the power and plan of God. Moreover, the idea and implementation of servant leadership is Christ's, and he will bless those who practice his leadership model.<sup>281</sup>

Related to biblical leadership, Christ called for his followers to follow his example of servanthood and ultimately to become servants themselves. He expected his followers to grow in their relationship with him and to become more mature in their faith, often through their servanthood. A follower of Christ is empowered to be successful in his or her service by the indwelling power of God's Spirit and then through the modeling of faith and Christianity found in the servant leader's life. Each servant leader's life should be defined by altruistic service,

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<sup>281</sup> Matt 19:30.

humility, trust, empowerment, vision, and unselfish love that all leads to hope and success. The servant leader must not be self-seeking or self-focused, but will instead look for the betterment of each follower.<sup>282</sup> This is the primary concern of each servant leader for each of his or her followers.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Lance Morrow recently remarked that “in the ‘Lives,’ Plutarch (A.D. 47-120) would compare a famous Greek to a famous Roman—setting Alexander the Great, for example, next to Julius Caesar.”<sup>283</sup> Morrow observed that Plutarch believed that a trivial detail could reveal a man more profoundly than a great event. Morrow opined that “Plutarch . . . would likely have loved to write about Donald Trump and his headlong, unfiltered singularity . . . the Trumpian ego, [as] . . . his personality has taken him far in an unhappy, disrupted land.”<sup>284</sup> President Trump’s oversized ego is viewed by many as both good and bad, but certainly not developed in humility.

Similarly, in his work *Theory Z*, William Ouchi compared two Eastern philosophies related to leadership theory that were both written about 2,500 years ago, *The Art of War*, by Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu, and the *Bhagavad Gita*, the sacred text from Lord Krishna.<sup>285</sup> These two text, written around 500 years before Christ, give two very differing attitudes for good leadership. Sun Tzu argued that “people need extrinsic incentives to be motivated. Give your soldiers shares of the booty and conquered territory. Rule with iron discipline. Maintain your authority over them, knowing that too much kindness toward your followers could make them

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<sup>282</sup> Patterson, 2003.

<sup>283</sup> Lance Morrow, “Parallel Lives of Donald Trump,” *The Wall Street Journal*, (November 7, 2019): A17.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 173.

useless. [Finally,] winning requires cleverness and sometimes even deception.”<sup>286</sup> Conversely, Krishna argued, “Never act for material rewards only. Focus instead on doing well, and good things will follow. Enlightened leaders are selfless and compassionate toward others. Followers who are treated as equals are more motivated to enthusiastically support their leader. [Concluding,] success means satisfying multiple stakeholders.”<sup>287</sup>

Of these two philosophers, Krishna came closest to the idea of servanthood by noting the need for selflessness and compassion. However, Krishna did not move to the next level, by connecting leadership to serving the follower in this prescribed selflessness and compassion. Many hundreds of books and articles have been written on the subject of leadership since Sun Tzu and Krishna’s time, and many numbers of differing theories of leadership have been espoused, as represented by these two examples. Nevertheless, the follower focused, altruistic, humble nature of Christ’s servant leadership teaching speaks to the historic need for effective leadership, a leadership that produces a cycle of flourishing and reproducing service.

Humility is a key point undergirding Christ’s servant leadership. Christ took on servanthood and humbly became a human.<sup>288</sup> In this same passage of Scripture, Paul called for his followers to have the same humble attitude of service.<sup>289</sup> As previously noted, Nouwen asserted that Christ’s leadership “is not a leadership of power and control, but a leadership of powerlessness and humility,”<sup>290</sup> further stating that the servant leader should find “new ways to let go of power and follow the humble way of Jesus.”<sup>291</sup> Interestingly, Amy Y. Ou, David A.

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Phil 2:7-8.

<sup>289</sup> Phil 2:5.

<sup>290</sup> Nouwen, 82.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 81.

Waldman, and Suzanne J. Peterson recently found that “when a more humble CEO leads a firm, its top management team . . . is more likely to collaborate, share information, jointly make decisions, and possess a shared vision.”<sup>292</sup> The authors further found that a humble leader’s organization has lower employee turnover, greater staff satisfaction, and stronger company performance.<sup>293</sup>

Servant leaders humbly serve their followers and lead them to a more productive and beneficial work life that will produce a pattern of flourishing for the follower and a culture of thriving for the organization, and even the broader community. Greenleaf supported this conclusion in his best test, looking for follower flourishing in deeper health, wisdom, freedom, and autonomy, while also creating a cycle of new servant leaders from those who were served.<sup>294</sup> This simple leadership idea, the leader as servant, is the foundation on which Jesus Christ built his instruction on leadership. This simplicity is profound.

Timothy Keller observed of Christ’s leadership that, “Jesus’ kingship is not like human kingships, for it wins influence through suffering service, not coercive power.”<sup>295</sup> Jesus example was that of the creator who became like the ones he created, a suffering servant king, and a living cornerstone that was rejected by those that claimed to be his father’s followers. Christ taught that his real followers would serve, teaching them that “if anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servants be also.”<sup>296</sup> Christ’s leaders are servants<sup>297</sup> who serve “by the

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<sup>292</sup> Amy Y. Ou, David A. Waldman, and Suzanne J. Peterson, “Do Humble CEOs Matter? An Examination of CEO Humility and Firm Outcomes,” *Journal of Management*, no. 44(3) (March 2018): 1147.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Greenleaf, 1970, 6.

<sup>295</sup> Timothy Keller, “The Kingship of Jesus [Blog Post],” *Daily Keller*, (May 3, 2017) Retrieved from <http://www.dailykeller.com/the-kingship-of-jesus/>

<sup>296</sup> John 12:26.

<sup>297</sup> Luke 22:26.

strength that God supplies.”<sup>298</sup> It is understood then that servanthood is Christ’s concept of leadership, a humble, selfless leadership that produces flourishing and thriving not only for the follower, but also for the leader, and the organization that is being led. Servant leadership fulfills the biblical model of leadership because it is the leadership model that Christ taught.

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<sup>298</sup> | Pet 4:11.

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