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Essential Characteristics of Leadership : a Leadership Framework & Study of Ancient and Contemporary Leaders

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ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP:
A LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK &
STUDY OF ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY LEADERS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Luther Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

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THESIS ADVISERS: DR. MARY SUE DREIER, DR. TERRI ELTON

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2012

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since I was little, I always dreamed of winning some kind of an award like an Oscar or a Tony. I would get up on the stage and accept my award, and read the most touching “Thank You” speech since Sally Field’s “You really like me!” moment. While that dream may never die, these acknowledgements pages might be the closest I ever get to my incredibly emotional “Thank You” speech, so I’ve promised myself it has to be good.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK: ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERS	6
Passion	6
Initiative	8
Creativity	10
Courage	12
Humility	14
Conclusion	17
3. ANCIENT LEADERS	19
MOSES	20
Passion	21
Initiative	25
Creativity	27
Courage	28
Humility	30
Conclusion	31
RUTH	32
Passion	32
Initiative	35
Creativity	37
Courage	37
Humility	38
Conclusion	39
JOHN THE BAPTIST	40
Passion	40
Initiative	42
Creativity	43
Courage	43
Humility	44
Conclusion	45
Ancient Leaders: Conclusion	46
4. CONTEMPORARY LEADERS	48
Contemporary Leaders: Context	50
Chris	51

Passion.....	52
Initiative	54
Courage	57
Creativity.....	59
Humility	61
Conclusion.....	63
Liz.....	63
Passion.....	64
Initiative	65
Courage	67
Creativity.....	69
Humility	70
Conclusion.....	71
Laurel.....	72
Passion.....	73
Initiative	74
Courage	75
Creativity.....	77
Humility	79
Conclusion.....	80
5. CONCLUSION.....	81
APPENDIX A.....	86
Annotated Bibliography	86
APPENDIX B.....	92
Interview Consent Form: “Survey of Modern Leaders” interview, conducted by Brigitte Leininger, M.A. CML Candidate	92
APPENDIX C.....	94
Interview Questions.....	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	95

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The world is constantly changing. Changes within society and culture are taking place, but also natural changes, climate changes, and evolutionary changes. Because of a world that is constantly transforming, humans are being forced to change with it, and adapt to newness. While it seems that nothing ever stays the same, there are few constants, and some of those constants are what lie in the hearts and souls of humans.

The world has seen leaders of all shapes, sizes, races, and creeds since its origin. Some have left lasting impressions on the world and some have had a much smaller, although no less meaningful impact on their surrounding community. If the world is constantly changing and transforming, some may claim that humanity changes also. While this may be true, I'd like to explore the core of leadership, and why I believe leadership hasn't changed. The gift of effective and quality leaders is that they are able to lead from within a certain context, changing and adapting to their surroundings. This doesn't mean that the definition of leadership changes, nor does it mean that the tools leadership requires change. It means that leaders are able to adapt and apply their gifts as they see necessary.

In an attempt to define what makes a leader effective, I have developed a basic framework for what lies at the core of leadership. I have come to understand that leadership is comprised of five essential elements. These are: passion, initiative, creativity, courage, and humility. When these five characteristics come together in an

individual, a leader emerges. This leader is someone who has the capacity to take what they know, develop ideas, and use applicable inspiration, that is, allowing situation and context to work with, not against, the progression of thought.

During the course of my research, I realized that passion was the catalyst for the rest of these essential characteristics I had named. Doing the research of different leaders, I noticed that they would act in manners that showed their courage or humility, but to simplify it even more was to acknowledge that passion was the catalyst for everything. I began to wonder what was special about passion, and why this seemed to be the cornerstone of leadership as a whole.

In my depiction and definition of passion in relation to leadership, I liken it to a fire that burns deep within a person. This is the driving force of their action, what makes them feel need or emotion. I realized the importance of introducing the Holy Spirit into the conversation, and how this might relate to vocation. The Holy Spirit works as sanctifier, setting us apart, and giving us gifts of purpose to be used for the Kingdom of God. I believe the Holy Spirit gives everyone a fire within himself or herself that encourages them to use their gifts for the good of the Kingdom. Some people may not be able to name the fire they feel, but I believe that this is a way God uses those who don't know him. This is proof to me that God is not constrained to using only those who do work in his name. God is bigger than that, and the Holy Spirit's fire is God's instrument.

When a person has found their fire or their passion, they start to act accordingly. In this paper, people whose stories are in the Bible and people whose stories are only known to a few have used this fire in order to fulfill a bigger purpose, or their calling. Each story is very different, but each person possesses passion that helps him or her live

into how they contribute to the Kingdom of God. In today's missionally minded church, it is important for people to recognize the fire in themselves and others. When each person has an understanding of their passion or fire, God can use them to their full capacity in and outside the church.

This illustrates the three theological commitments that have guided my research. First, because God is all-knowing and all-powerful, God's mission in the world will always prevail. The Holy Spirit continues to set apart leaders who will assist in God's will, gifting individuals with specific gifts and talents that are used for the sake of God's kingdom on earth. The ability of active leadership is the Holy Spirit's invitation to participate in God's mission through the gifts he has given to individuals.

Second, the Holy Spirit makes herself known, and it is the responsibility of the individual to recognize when they are being called to a particular office. Some may not understand the idea of being called, or even the concept of who the Holy Spirit is, however this is not a reason to discount the Spirit's activity in and with people who do not know God. By restricting God's work to only those who believe in God is to constrain and restrict God's action in the world. Though, when a person is able to recognize gifts and capacities they possess, they are better able to live into the person God created them to be.

The final theological commitment that has guided my study of individual leadership is the idea of God using leadership as human agency. Leadership is one of the many ways that God continues to co-create the world with us. God continues to use us as active agents in the world, working with and for him for the sake of the Kingdom.

Leadership is our way of participating in God's mission by using our gifts and passion in response to God's gifts and in support of his mission.

This paper is separated into three distinct sections. The first section is the leadership framework on which the rest of the paper is based. This section will detail the five essential characteristics each leader possesses. To determine the five essential characteristics, I reviewed approximately twenty books written about leadership from both secular and faith-based perspectives. After reading these materials, I compiled and categorized the themes into the final five essential characteristics of effective and quality leaders. In order to further explore my idea that leadership doesn't change, I researched ancient biblical leaders and contemporary leaders from a current ministry context. These two studies make up the last two sections of this paper. They each study the leaders in the light of the five characteristics that are detailed in the first section. This systematic and simplified study of each leader, ancient and contemporary, demonstrates solid support for the leadership framework presented in section one.

By concluding my research with a study of contemporary leaders, I hope to support my theory that what lies at the core of effective and quality leadership has not and will not change, but instead it is our context that changes and leaders find new ways to apply the five traits. While this study is important on a personal and individual level for leaders, a lot can be taken away, especially for work in the church. By naming the essential pieces of leadership, with passion as a catalyst, churches and their members can begin to expand how they view parishioner involvement in a congregation's mission. Having a clear picture of what a community's passions and strengths are cannot only better answer the question, "What is God up to?," but also explain how members can be

an active part of finding out that answer. Many churches today, especially larger churches, have a “default” type of volunteer or involvement system. For example, if a Sunday school program is looking for teachers, many times they will go to parents of current Sunday school participants for volunteers, because that group of people is the most accessible and makes the most sense. What that church is missing out on are any of the people in the congregation they are unaware of that have a passion for teaching children. By finding a way to get a larger picture of members’ passions, a church has a more complete and meaningful way to utilize members in ways that are both helpful for the church and meaningful for the people.

The goal of developing a leadership framework in this way was not to simplify leadership as a concept, but to better understand what leadership looks like at its core. Understanding that there are many kinds of leaders in the world sheds a broader light on reading the leadership. There are many very positive leaders in the world, both working for the church and working outside of the church. There are also many leaders throughout history that have had very negative impacts on their communities. While these are not ideal leaders that the world wants to model its new leaders after, they are leaders, nonetheless. This framework is not a solid, stand-alone tool for developing leaders. Instead, it is a way to understand how leaders lead, and what drives them to make decisions. Being defined by the leadership framework doesn’t create effective leadership, leadership is better understood by understanding how one leads.

CHAPTER TWO
LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK:
ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERS

Passion

When it comes to leadership, I believe that passion is the most essential trait a person can have. It is out of passion that a leader conducts himself or herself, and makes their most important decisions. Passion can be hard to define, except to say it is the fire burning within someone that urges them to take initiative, be creative, have courage, and act with humility. Without passion, there is little drive, motivation, or purpose behind an idea. All of these things are born out of a genuine passion for an idea or goal.

Passion manifests itself differently in people, so it is crucial to not judge one person's appearance of passion compared to your own. However, when it is a passion that is used in a profound way, it can be hard to miss. Passion can help lead to big change and great accomplishments. These achievements can range from something simple like a raise in salary to something that affects a larger, greater good.

Passion can manifest itself in everything from joy to suffering. A leader who can recognize this passion is motivated, and helps motivate those around them. John Dickson, in his book *Humilitas*, defines leadership as “the art of inspiring.”¹ If someone is truly passionate about something, this will be obvious to those around them, and will inspire

¹ John Dickson, *Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership (Audiobook)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

them to make strides toward their goal. In 1972, the Miami Dolphins did something that had never been accomplished in the National Football League to date—they finished the regular and post seasons with a perfect record of 17-0, including an impressive win at Super Bowl VII.² Head coach Don Shula led this triumphant feat with an impressive coaching staff working under him. Coach Shula, in order to coast through the season without a loss, had a perfect storm of gifts and talents in his midst to be sure. But one thing that Coach Shula could do better than any other coach in the NFL that year was inspire his forty-nine-man roster and his coaching staff to play and coach to the best of their ability. Without knowing it, he embraced John Dickson's definition of what leadership is, and ingrained a winning mentality into his players and staff, so much so that his players were inspired to overcome all odds, injuries, and setbacks, and finish the football season undefeated.

Coach Shula had many other factors contributing to that 17-0 record, but passion lay at the core of his motivation. When a leader can share a love and care for something so deeply that it is feeding those around them with the same fire for success, the sky is the limit of what can be accomplished. This is what burns at the heart of Dickson's definition of leadership.

Using the New Testament example of Paul, many of the letters he had written to numerous and diverse communities were filled with this passion for the Gospel. For example, 1 Corinthians addresses issues surrounding immorality, and Paul's desire to have the church live according to Jesus and his teachings. In Ephesians, Paul addresses living a fruitful life, despite persecution. In his letter to the Romans, Paul talks about

² "1972 Miami Dolphins: The Perfect Season", <http://www.72dolphins.com/default.php> (April 2012)

salvation through living a faithful life. He wrote to encourage and strengthen the communities that were seeking quality leadership in times of need. People translated his passion into applicable inspiration, and worked to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many people have different words for this passion that we experience. I use a communal “we” because I believe everyone is passionate about something. Depending on whom you talk to, this passion could be discussed in terms of fire or spirit. Many Christians may claim that their passion comes from the Holy Spirit, who gives them strength, and guides them towards vocations that they are gifted for. Many non-Christians may claim that things in their past, family history, or other external factors trigger their passions. Being the person I am, and coming from a Christian perspective, I believe the Holy Spirit is in everyone, whether they are able to name it or not. While the “Holy Spirit” and “passion” are not synonymous, the Holy Spirit fans the flame of passion in us, and by using that fire to guide us, we are doing what God has called us to, and be who God has called us to be. It is when we are able to embrace this passion, and use it to inspire those around us that, together we are capable of doing great things.

Initiative

“Great artists ship.” This quote by late Apple founder, and CEO, Steve Jobs has become a building block for many entrepreneurs, and used fiercely by Seth Godin in *Poke the Box*.³ People of any shape, size, age, or capacity are capable of coming up with ideas, but it is those who take the initiative to ship their ideas who truly mark themselves as an effective leader. Initiative isn’t born out of passion, but instead uses that passion to

³ Seth Godin, *Poke the Box: When was the last time you did something for the first time?* (Audiobook) (United States of America: Do you Zoom, Inc., 2011).

move forward and make something happen. Sometimes, the simple act of taking initiative to move an idea forward is all you need to start a revolution, whether you intend it or not.

A little initiative can go a long way. In his book *Axiom*, Bill Hybels emphasizes the importance of two things: first, having the right people around the table. Second, “hiring 10’s.” (Note: Both of these ideas will be covered more in-depth in the “Humility” section of this paper.)⁴ Being a productive and effective leader is not something one person can do on their own. They must be able to surround themselves with a diverse group of people with different talents, gifts, and skills. At the same time, this group of people must be dedicated to their craft to the extent that they will be an asset to the table, and not a distraction. By doing these two things, making you sure you have the best group of diversified talent, you’re setting yourself up for success. Effective leaders are able to do this at the start of a project to encourage progress.

One person who shows the characteristic of initiative in scripture is Jairus, who we know as the synagogue leader whose daughter is gravely ill. Knowing his daughter hasn’t much time; he journeys to find Jesus, and begs him to come heal his daughter. The fact that we are told that Jairus is a leader in the Jewish community is very important to realizing the power of initiative. Knowing Jairus as a church leader who actively seeks out Jesus helps us create a lens through which to read this story. Is it easier to read the story knowing Jairus is a leader, and seeing his initiative playing out, or would it be more effective to watch Jairus take steps towards getting his daughter healed, and then finding out he’s an established leader? Both of these points are irrelevant to this fact: Jairus is a prominent community member, who has been appointed to a leadership position. Because

⁴ Bill Hybels, *Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

of this small step in the direction of solving a problem, he is able to reach Jesus, and his daughter is healed.

Initiative doesn't always come directly from the will of the person who is acting as the agent. Initiative can also be the effect of God speaking to someone. For instance, the prophets were called to go to God's people and share a message with them. This happened at the urgency and direct word of God, like in 1 Kings 21:28, "And the word of the Lord came to Elijah...." The same can be said for those who are working in transforming congregations. By undergoing a discernment process, and being open and listening to where God is leading the church, it is safe to assume that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide, shape, and form church leaders into whom the church and God need them to be.

Having initiative doesn't always mean that one person is going to take the reins of a project, but it shows they have the means to get it started, and that they value their own input enough to know they are valuable. Good artists create, but as our friend Steve Jobs said, "Great artists ship."

Creativity

So far, passion and initiative have been examined as the first two crucial elements of leadership. Although a fairly subjective term, creativity is the third characteristic that effective leaders possess. Creativity doesn't come in just one form. Many times, we think creativity is only something artistic, and we quickly count ourselves out. In reality, creativity is something that is seen in everything from God's act of creation to developing a strategic plan for a business or church in decline. In this framework of leadership I define creativity as the ability to use your passion, the tools you have and the information

you know to implement something that will give you a desired outcome. Creativity isn't always easy, but it is always a necessity.

Let's say that you have been in your place of work for three years. You enjoy your job, and are constantly looking for ways to become more involved in some of the changes going on. You've heard water-cooler chat about the fact that the smoking area outside of the building is troublesome for the people in your company. But that's it—you've heard complaining, and no action is being taken. This issue of second hand smoke is very close to you because your brother was recently diagnosed with lung cancer, after being a bartender for twenty-five years in an establishment that allowed smoking; he has never smoked a cigarette. You now use this passion on the subject to think of ways you can help a change be made. Once you come up with an ideal plan of forging ahead, you now take the initiative to create a "Workplace Environment Committee" made up of your co-workers to tackle issues such as this one. What happens next? You and your team need to be creative in thinking of ways to implement your plan. This is where the gift of creativity will benefit you, and everyone you are in contact with. Most of all, your gift of creativity will affect the hundreds, maybe thousands of people you work with.

Creativity can sometimes experience pushback from the practical people we encounter. The thing about creativity is that it colors outside of the lines in shades of red, green, orange, blue while many times, practicality is about black and white, and remaining in the boundaries that have already been established. Creativity isn't there to break the rules, but test those boundaries.

When God embarked on the miracle of creation, the first boundary God met was the existence of nothingness. Talk about a boundary! But God tested that boundary, and

chaos of nothingness, and the first step He took was to create something. He created light out of darkness, land and water, fish and land creatures, male and female. God's creativity kept coloring outside of the lines that had been placed by none other than God Himself. Then God did the unthinkable—he let us be creators with him. The beauty of this is that God had given us something to work with, but has let us continue to push those boundaries. God will let us know when we've pushed too far.

Nadia Bolz-Webber, the pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver, Colorado, once preached a sermon at Luther Seminary where she said that God created something out of nothing, so we need to allow ourselves to be nothing in order to let God do something. If we continue to allow God to create something in us out of our nothingness, we will be able to use his something to create more somethings. The one requirement is that we open ourselves up to as much chaotic beauty as possible in order to let ourselves create in the ways God has equipped us.

Courage

Courage is something that doesn't come easily. For example, if I were to trade places with an avid rock climber, and that avid rock climber would have to go sing in front of 500 people at King of Kings Lutheran Church for a Sunday morning worship service, each of us would tell the other, "Don't worry about it! It's so easy!" However, I guarantee that neither of us would feel that way when the time came to execute each of the projects we'd been given. What this illustration is meant to portray is that courage is going to look different to everyone. However, when put into a situation where you've been given leadership of a project, if the task is to play out to its fullest potential, chances will have to be taken, risks will have to be made, and risk taking requires courage.

Out of personal experience, I know that what lies at the core of my fear when embarking on a new adventure is the fear of failure. The reality of failure hangs in the air, and sometimes the fear of failure can be crippling to us in whatever it is we're doing. In *Poke the Box* by Seth Godin, he makes the claim that most initiatives fail.⁵ If they didn't, the world would be a chaotic mess of options, programs, skydivers, and a new "World's Largest Ball of Twine" every other week. Accepting failure as a possible result, and in most cases a reality, is not being pessimistic, but instead encountering the possibilities. Fearing failure, instead, is counterproductive. Imagine what we wouldn't have if Bill Gates was afraid Microsoft was going to fail. What would we do on Sundays in the fall and winter if Robert Goodell, the NFL Commissioner, was afraid people would stop watching football. Instead, the world has been given one of its richest men and a sports league worth nearly \$30 billion.⁶

Moses was given an immeasurable, seemingly impossible task from God. God said, "Go get the people out of there!" Moses said, "Yeah, I'm tired today. Can I think about it in a week, or ...never?" (Please note the paraphraser's artistic license). Moses was afraid at multiple points during this adventure of freeing God's people from Egypt. Being courageous does not mean you're not afraid. It means you're willing to overcome that fear for the good of a greater purpose. Moses was afraid the first time God spoke to him in the bush. I'm sure he was afraid the first time he had an encounter with Pharaoh. I'm sure he was scared witless when he came to the Red Sea, only to see that a large army was close behind.

⁵ Godin, *Poke the Box* (Audiobook)

⁶ *The NFL's Most Valuable Teams*. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2011/09/07/the-nfls-most-valuable-teams/> (accessed July 2, 2012).

God gave Moses explicit instructions for this task: “Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Ex. 3: 10), “Lift up your rod...” (Ex. 14:6). God’s promise was faithfulness to Moses though he was fearful. Courage doesn’t come for free. Courage comes with faith, experience, and a belief that what you’re going to do is better than what you’re already doing.

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.”⁷ This quote from Ambrose Redmoon is the quintessential summary of what courage looks like for someone who is a leader. It’s hard to foster passion, initiative, or creativity unless you see that there is something better than the reality of right now. The will to overcome the self and stare the better in the eye with a realization that failure could be immanent is what courage of a leader looks like.

Humility

When John Dickson opened up his keynote speech at the Willow Creek Association 2011 Global Leadership Summit, he explained that he had been chosen to speak on humility. Next, he explained that usually the person chosen to speak on humility is the one who is the least qualified. Everyone had a good laugh, but he had a powerful point. Although after hearing him speak, and reading his book, I could think of no one else to attack this topic with more humility, patience, and grace.

In his book *Humilitas*, Dickson defines humility as, “the choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself.”⁸ In an effort to clarify—humility does not mean humiliation, or becoming a

⁷ Ambrose Redmoon, “No Peaceful Warriors!,” *Gnosis*, Fall 1991, 40.

⁸ Dickson, *Humilitas (Audiobook)*

doormat for people to treat you however they please, or use you for their own advancement. Humiliation involves lowering yourself, dehumanizing yourself, and underestimating your gifts, talents and contributions. Humility, instead, involves the lifting up of a person's gifts, and using those gifts to empower those around you.

Bill Hybels touches on a couple key ways effective leaders allow this to manifest in his leadership book *Axiom*. Bill is the senior pastor at Willow Creek Community church near Chicago, Illinois, and chairman of the board at the Willow Creek Association. Hybels says that a good leader will get the right people around the table. What he means is to be sure that when you are in a leadership role, that you have not only a diverse group of people in your circle, but also that you're entrusting tasks to people with gifts that will benefit your cause. For example, if you're looking to jumpstart an ailing children's ministry program, make sure you have someone knowledgeable in children's ministry, and all ages that entails. Be sure you have someone who can manage that group and handle administrative issues. Make sure you've gotten someone who is good at rallying volunteers for teaching. Then make sure that your teachers are well equipped. If instead you use the same group of people that you'd see on an adult education, or music ministry team, these people may not have the right gifts for the task at hand. That's not to say these people are not gifted, it means that their gifts lie somewhere elsewhere, and it is there they can be used.⁹

The counterpart to this idea of having the right people is to, in Hybels's words, "hire 10's".¹⁰ The concept of hiring tens is simple—if you're going to hire an accountant,

⁹ Hybels, *Axiom*, 91-93

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 38-40.

make sure he or she is the best accountant you can find. If you're going to hire a barista for your church's cafe, make sure it's the best barista you can find. Many people are good at many things, but not many people are *great* at many things. An effective leader finds out who you have that is great, and that they are being placed where they can be doing great work. One of the most humble steps you'll ever take is to realize that you're not great at everything, but everyone is great at something, and you're taking the initiative to find those who can do certain things, and getting them plugged into where they are needed. Ability demands respect. Although you might be sitting at the head of the table, to recognize that you have a table full of ability and to honor that is a trademark of a remarkable leader.

Isaac Newton wrote in a letter to Robert Hooke in February of 1676, "If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."¹¹ No one can do an entire job alone. Looking at Jesus' ministry, even he didn't rely on himself to get everything done. He surrounded himself with a very unlikely, but qualified (or so he thought) team. Each of the twelve disciples was equipped with different tools and gifts that Jesus needed in order to make his ministry complete. Granted, Jesus is a special case, being the Son of God, and in all reality could have done it alone if he wanted to. But Christ called numerous men and women into community with him in order to minister to the public for three years. Then, Jesus did what many of us would be afraid to do, and left the work up to this relatively unfit group to go out into all the world and make disciples of all men. That call still stands for the church today, so they must have done something right.

¹¹ As transcribed in Jean-Pierre Maury, *Newton: Understanding the Cosmos, New Horizons*, (London: Tames and Hudson, 1992).

Conclusion

It would be irresponsible to claim that effective leadership is synonymous to positive or morally upstanding leadership. Looking at examples of negative leadership, I would claim that these same five foundational ideas lie at the core of any leader's ability. Leadership will continue to change from situation to situation. A president will lead differently than the chair of a hospitality committee at the small rural church. A high school band director will lead differently than the conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra. But what lies at the core of each of these people are passion, initiative, creativity, courage, and humility.

For leaders who recognize their place in the *missio Dei*, continuing to seek out God and his will is crucial to the overall potency of their individual leadership and mission within the larger picture of God's mission. If they choose to claim God's mission as their own, it is imperative that they consciously and actively pursue God's wisdom and his will for the earthly kingdom. By understanding where they belong in God's masterpiece, they will better understand what their gifts are, and how they are to shape what the larger picture looks like.

Along with pursuing God, a leader will continue be open to the Holy Spirit's work in his or her life. By recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit, a leader who is intuitive, and seeking God's will, will have broader understanding of how their gifts and passions can be used. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are key to encouraging the growth or progress of God's mission on earth. By understanding those gifts, leaders are able to live more fully into who God intends them to be.

Humility can best be understood in recognizing that the work a leader does on earth is not of his or her own doing. God's gifts, God's will, and God's purpose will allow a leader a better understanding of what their work is meant to do. Understanding that it is not the work of us but the work of God not only shows humility, but also allows humans to learn how to trust God's wisdom. When an individual understands that they are the hands doing the work of God, it forces them to a humble attitude, and also encourages a reliance on God's abilities, not their own.

God sent the Holy Spirit to work among us, develop us, and teach us how to use our gifts. While we use these gifts to embark on a journey to find where we are called to serve and to lead, being able to name those things we first feel passionate about, and then wish to take courageous and creative initiative with, the Holy Spirit works in us and moves us to that place of humility.

No leadership quality is more important than the others, but it is when they meld together that it creates the essence of what true and quality leadership stands for. They will always manifest differently, but it is when God has moved us to the place we can finally let ourselves be the people He has created that they shine brighter than ever before.

CHAPTER THREE

ANCIENT LEADERS

Nelson Mandela. Adolph Hitler. Martin Luther King, Jr. Jesus Christ. All of these names belong to men who could not be more different. However, they all fall into one category—leader. Each one of these men led movements, or contributed to the birth of ideas that changed the tapestry of world. They all developed enough of a following that they have gone down famously (or infamously) in history, and they did this by possessing and using their leadership skills. Not all effective leaders have positive motives or beneficial outcomes, but I don't believe this is the determining factor of a leader's effectiveness. Rather, effectiveness can be seen in light of the leadership framework discussed above.

Each character in this section of my study was specifically chosen for this project based on their place or significance to the story of the church. Moses was a liberator who had to utilize his gifts in a way that would protect and free God's people. He has been a major example of leadership for the Christian and Jewish faiths. Ruth's story was chosen because of the definite presence of passion, and how it served as a catalyst for the other leadership traits to fall into place. John the Baptist was chosen for his prominent yet short story in the New Testament, and the impact he had on the people preparing for the coming Messiah.

Through looking at a variety of ancient leaders, from both the Old and New Testaments, some male and some female, this discussion will support the idea that

although leadership looks different depending on context, leaders possess specific characteristics that contribute to their success.

Applicable inspiration is one way to survey how these leaders use the essential elements of leadership. This is the ability to apply a general idea, theory, or concept to their particular situation. For example, in this survey of biblical characters, each person will apply passion to their life, situation, or specific calling from God to accomplish a task. In this way, they are each applying the same element, but doing it differently, and experiencing different outcomes. I am employing the leadership framework presented in section one above, to their stories and explaining their outcomes using ideas or language they would not necessarily use but which help us understand their leadership.

MOSES

The first notable ancient leader I'd like to explore is Moses. Moses first appears in the book of Exodus, the second book in the Old Testament. Though recognized as a primary fixture in the Jewish tradition, Christians still use the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt as an example of God's mercy and faithfulness. The story of an entire nation fleeing oppression in Egypt is an example of what God can do, but God did not accomplish it alone. He worked through Moses.

The theme of Moses' story in Exodus is one of faithfulness and persistence. From birth, Moses had the cards stacked against him. At the time he was born, there was a command from the king that all male newborns were to be thrown into the Nile. Instead, his mother put him in a papyrus basket and sent him down the river, later to be found by Pharaoh's daughter. It would seem from this that God had a special plan for Moses, and indeed he did.

Exodus doesn't discuss Moses' childhood much beyond his discovery in the basket. In fact, it skips from his discovery in the river to "One day, after Moses had grown up..." (Exodus 2:10-11). Although we are not explicitly told about Moses' childhood, it is safe to assume that Moses was brought up as a Prince living among the royalty. The story of adult Moses starts in verse 11 of the second chapter, and so begins his journey into leadership.

Passion

Every element in the leadership framework begins with passion. Passion acts as a foundation upon which leaders begin their work. Passion leads to motivation, which leads to productivity. This type of passion can be considered a fire, or a desire inside someone that moves them to action. It is with this fire that we are first introduced to adult Moses.

Verse 11 tells us a lot about Moses in his adulthood, and what he knows about his identity. Exodus 2:11, "One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their forced labor." The way this verse is formatted would imply that Moses knew about his dual-identity of being a Hebrew, living under an Egyptian façade. This is the assumption Norman Cohen makes when he discusses the event that changed the course of Moses's life: "Though they live in different worlds—he a prince, with rights and privileges of the palace; and they, hungry, persecuted slaves—he feels compelled to join them... Moses is not blinded by the wealth and power of his surroundings."¹² This desire to be close to his kinsmen leads him to the defining moment of his adulthood.

¹² Norman J. Cohen, *Moses and the Journey to Leadership: Timeless leadership Lessons of effective management from the Bible and today's leaders*. (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006), 9.

Moses sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave, and feeling a love for this person who was his brother, he killed the Egyptian.

The desire to protect what was close to him drove him to defend the honor of his people to measures as drastic as murder. This display of passion defined him as both a leader and a Hebrew, and led him down an unexpected road.

This passion followed him into the next stage of his life through his journey to Midian. His vigor for care of the disenfranchised presents itself again when he arrives at a well and sees the daughters of the Midian priest, Jethro, being driven off from gathering water in order to care for their father's flock. He steps up to their defense, and waters the flock (Exodus 2:16). It is in the nature of his newfound being to defend those in his path. Cohen says, "The odd choice of words in the Exodus narrative highlights not only Moses's courage and his willingness to act on behalf of those in need, but the role he is destined to play on behalf of his own people: He will redeem them from Egypt."¹³

After some time, Moses finds himself married to the priest's daughter, and caring for his new father-in-law's flock. While on Mount Horeb, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a bush enveloped in flames. In this encounter, Moses is challenged with a task of liberating an entire nation. Even though God came to him in this way, Moses could have declined. He had a choice of whether or not to accept this task. He hesitated, noting his speech impediment, but ultimately accepted the assignment. Erwin McManus sums up this move to accept this call to Moses in the book, *Chasing Daylight*: "The security that we often seek is not necessary to living life to the fullest. Sometimes it can actually

¹³ Cohen, *Moses and the Journey to Leadership*, 13.

become the greatest deterrent to seizing divine moments.”¹⁴ From his time spent in Egypt, Moses knew that state of the Hebrew slaves, and took the opportunity, despite his disadvantages, to allow God to use him as a tool of liberation.

His journey to get the Israelites liberated was met with severe pushback from Pharaoh. But Moses believed so strongly in his mission given to him by God that he persisted. Every time he was met with a challenge, Moses used the tools God gave him to carry out the exodus. Moses’s passion was for the freeing of his kinsmen and carrying out the task God entrusted to him. The challenge Moses takes on with God’s help can be described by saying, “Leaders must recognize that they are not alone in fulfilling the mission of the group of the people whom they lead.”¹⁵

Moses was relentless and Pharaoh was stubborn, but after plagues and loss Pharaoh gave Moses what he had come for, the freedom of the Hebrew slaves. Moses, together with God’s guidance, led the people out of Egypt, through the miracle of the separating of the Red Sea, and into the wilderness. This would be a new leadership challenge for Moses to face. While journeying through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the reality that Moses got the people out of oppression but then they had expectations which became overwhelming and a theme for the next era in the Israelites’ story.

This group of wanderers was now under the care of Moses, whom they would follow as long as they thought he had their best interest in mind.¹⁶ Moses went from a liberator to a leader of an entire nation. During this time, he acted as lawgiver, navigator,

¹⁴ Erwin Ralph McManus, *Chasing Daylight: Seize the Power of Every Moment*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, INC, 2002), 65.

¹⁵ Cohen, *Moses and the Journey to Leadership*, 11

¹⁶ Mordecai and Miriam Roshwald, *Moses: Leader, Prophet, Man: The Story of Moses and his Image Through the Ages*. (New York, NY: T. Yoseloff, 1969), 72.

and overall symbol of life for his community. However, Moses's true act of passion was present in his identity as pastor. This was apparent through the devotion he showed to the care and maintenance of his people. Exodus 18:13 says, "The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening." This was the job to which God called Moses. The entire liberation story, including wandering in the wilderness to find the Promised Land would be Moses' undertaking to see through to its conclusion. He owned it and was so passionate about it that he did what a lot of professionals do today—he almost burned himself out.

Moses was someone who was willing to take responsibility of the situation he found himself in. In this case, he was almost overzealous about the function of judge for the people he had following him. He made it his responsibility to ensure that the people were following God's order and commands, and took it upon himself to devote himself to the task of justice. The passion he had for God's task encouraged him to follow this divine order, and continue leading people on a path that was pleasing to God.¹⁷

The passion that Moses had inside of him could be one of the first examples of the *missio Dei* (the mission of God).¹⁸ *Missio Dei* is what is recognized as God's work in the world. It allows us to ask questions like, "What is God up to in the world?" forcing humans to recognize God's work instead of their own. From the exodus from Egypt to wandering in the wilderness, Moses trusted the direction God was leading him and the people. God's mission of liberation was being played out on the earth through the trust and confidence of one man who served as the instrument. Even though *missio Dei*

¹⁷ Roshwald, *Moses: Leader, Prophet, Man*, 94

¹⁸ Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 18.

encompasses God's work in the world, it doesn't dismiss the idea that God is using humans as agents in that work.

Initiative

According to the leadership framework, passion serves as the catalyst for the behaviors that follow it. Everything someone does in a leadership role can be inspired by passion for a cause. What comes next is the initiative to gain momentum. Some initiative can be developed in a person's own being; however in Moses's case, his ideas and spark of thought came from the direct line of communication he had with God.

Some may argue that this doesn't set Moses up as the leader for this movement, but instead God who is the actual initiator. However, Moses was given a task, and he chose to see it through. The initiative he maintained through the project was achieved by taking advantage of a situation God asked him to be in. He had a choice to say no, but instead he trusted in the God he knew, and moved forward with the job at hand.

Just as Moses had a choice of whether or not to accept the task, he also had a choice of whether or not to do it as God instructed. Knowing that he had these two options, he chose to stay close to God, trusting in something much greater than himself, and the wisdom God possessed. Because of this relationship, God was able to present Moses with a vision for the people, and Moses used that to execute God's mission.

To stand up against Pharaoh's hardness of heart, God sent a series of ten plagues to come over Egypt (Exodus 7-12). Each time, Moses would greet Pharaoh with a chance to let the Hebrew people go. Pharaoh's heart continued to remain hardened, and he would not let them go (Exodus 7:13, 7:22, 8:15, 8:19, 8:32, 9:7, 9:12, 9:35, 10:27). Moses's authority during this time didn't manifest itself in the direct execution of the plagues.

Instead, Moses's identified himself as a messenger, and giving Pharaoh each warning and informing him of what would be at stake if he did not let the Israelites go. In this way, Moses was sure to take the initiative with God, to remain communicative, and prayerfully consider the actions being taken. Though Moses had little to do with what God was bringing to Egypt, he did have control over how involved he was, even with things were unpleasant and frightening.

Moses shows strength and confidence in God's faithfulness again is in chapter 14 of Exodus, during the crossing of the Red Sea. By raising his staff over the water, Moses trusted what God promised would actually happen. In reality, it was the thing least likely that could happen. No one trusted him as they saw Pharaoh's armies gaining on them, and as soon as Moses saw this, he cried out to God for help (Exodus 14:10-14). The Erwin McManus idea about seizing a divine moment can be echoed here, in a different situation, but with a very similar anxiety. Moses, at this time, could have given up, but instead he cries out to God, God commands him to stretch his rod out over the sea, and once again, Moses acts as an agent of liberation for these people. By taking the initiative to tap into the humility he possesses and knowing he cannot control a situation himself, he uses the tools he knows he has.

Fast forward to the wilderness. The people have become antsy, and are beginning to take their well-being into their own hands. It is at this time that Moses sees that something must be done. He is only one man, and he cannot control or rule over this group of people. Instead of letting the Israelites do whatever they please, he seeks divine intervention. He travels up Mount Sinai to meet with God. Here, God gifts him with the Ten Commandments, resulting in another example of Moses not acting as ruler over the

people but as a messenger of God. However, neither Moses nor the Israelites would know what those expectations were, had Moses not seen a need and found a way to meet it.

By doing this, Moses had something with which to hold people accountable with. Moses was obviously very willing to sit as judge for the people. Exodus 18:15 involves a conversation between Moses and Jethro:

“When Moses’s father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, ‘What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?’ Moses said to his father-in-law, ‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God.’”

Moses was taking the first step to having a just society, and doing well with it, But now that he had gone up and sought direction from God himself, they all have standards that they were to be living up to now. Without Moses taking this action to set rules, they entire group of Israelites would have started living according to their own standards of idolatry and sin, which at the time was not getting them to where they needed to be with each other or with God.

Creativity

The leadership element of creativity in Moses’s story is a difficult one to discuss with respect to Moses because he was simply a messenger and instrument used by God. However, it has been discussed that simply because the actions come from a person and are initiated by God does not mean that the person lacks the creativity to carry out a certain mission or the role of leader.

An example of this in Moses’s story would be the plagues. Because of Moses’s involvement in the process of liberation of the Israelites, he was the one who carried out God’s commands. He was in charge of making sure the physical aspects of the exodus

were executed in an orderly and timely fashion as the slaves continued to suffer. Though God was the actor, Moses was the rhetor. Moses had to somehow explain to Pharaoh what kind of battle he was up against if he chose to continue to ignore God's wishes.

The same argument of "Is it Moses or God?" can be made when discussing the lack of water and food in the wilderness. God may have had a command for Moses, and a way to provide, but Moses acted as an agent of change and progress. This proves that God is, in fact, creative in God's self. However, Moses was constantly up against a group of people who continued to show distrust. Moses and God, together, had to show the people that they were being cared for, and that their constant questioning was only a burden to themselves, and that their lack of trust was a sign of insecurity.

Courage

If there was one area where Moses excelled, it would be courage. From the beginning Moses had the freedom to decline and let God find someone else. Obviously, that was never in the plan. But besides a little hesitation at the start, Moses took on his task with great courage.

The first thing Moses did to show a great amount of courage was speaking to God in the burning bush. Not forgetting that Moses, like us, was human, it can only be assumed that he was experiencing fear to have the angel of the Lord speak to him directly. It is important to note here that courage is not a lack of fear, and Moses had his fears and doubts. After given his assignment, Moses questioned whether he has what it takes to do what God has asked, noting his inadequacies. God's simple reply, "I will be with you," (Exodus 3:11) wouldn't be enough for some people. God's presence here

seems so intangible, especially when comparing it to our divine experiences today. However, Moses trusts God's authority in this matter, and he accepts his task.

Shortly after his encounter with God in the burning bush, he heads to Egypt for the first time since he fled after the death of the Egyptian. To go back to Egypt knowing the task at hand was a major feat for Moses to agree to. Essentially, he had no idea what was going to happen to him, and had to trust God when God said to trust him.

This was a major risk for Moses to take. Would he be killed? Would he be successful? It didn't matter because he was going to agree to something that would make him visible. He had been living a life of invisibility in Midian, and now he was being asked to step out of his comfort zone and do something that seemed impossible. Erwin McManus says, "The most important decision of our lives will require us to forsake invisibility and risk becoming visible. Whenever you choose to seize divine moments, you move from invisibility to visibility."¹⁹ In order for Moses to agree to the terms God was offering, he had to become completely vulnerable to opening himself up to failure. This risk becomes apparent for him even more clearly when he begins to question God and voice his concerns about his inadequacy. Moses found the courage to step up and accept the challenge given to him, trusting that God was not going to forsake him, and remaining faithful to him, his task, and the Israelites. In McManus's terms, God was calling Moses to go from being invisible to very visible, and to give up invulnerability that being invisible offered. God was offering Moses a divine moment to seize.

¹⁹ McManus, *Chasing Daylight*, 137.

Humility

In my earlier discussion, I mentioned that Moses took initiative when it came to leading the people of Israel in situation that had never before been explored, including being outside of Egypt and wandering through the wilderness. It was during this time that Moses found himself needing to act as pastor, judge, comforter, and whatever other function was needed by a leader in this situation. As previously mentioned, Moses would sit all day offering direction based on the expectations God had for them as a society. Jethro saw this, and although it would be difficult for Moses to do, Jethro told him to delegate his responsibilities because he knew that he would be easily burned out, not unlike many pastors and other professionals today. Though it was difficult for him, he eventually handed out these tasks to people whom he trusted, and knew would follow the call and guidance of God (Exodus 18:24). This act showed himself and Jethro that he was able to give up some of his power, and enable those around him to be leaders in that way. Roshwald says,

“Reality imposes its limitation and the physical strain must have been beyond endurance. It is typical of the realistic approach of the biblical narrator that he does not consider it irrelevant to indicate the limitation of the noble ideal, nor think it beneath Moses’s dignity to accept the practical advice of a lesser man. For when Jethro suggests that his son-in-law retain the role of the teacher or law and the judge in ‘ever great matter,’ but relegate small matters to lesser judges chose form among the able and the just, Moses follows his advice.”²⁰

This step that Moses was taking was to figure out who “he had around the table,” to put it in terms used by today’s mega-church pastor and leadership expert, Bill Hybels.²¹ In order to be able to move forward, using your specific skills to lead, you must also know

²⁰ Roshwald, *Moses: Leader, Prophet, Man*, 80.

²¹ Hybels, *Axiom*, 91.

what skillset you have in your midst, and by accepting Jethro's advice to begin delegating tasks, Moses was starting to feel out his surroundings, and by allowing others to lead, allowed himself time to consult with others to become the best he could be as well.

Conclusion

Cohen says, "Success derives from a combination of the leader's ability to lead, her followers' ability to hear and internalize the leaders' message, and their decision ultimately to act on it."²² Moses and his successors had some struggles, but wandering with a freshly liberated group of people itching for freedom was never going to be an easy task. Ultimately, Moses did what he was supposed to do, to the best of his ability, constantly seeking God's wisdom and direction. By using his gifts of passion, initiative, creativity, courage, and humility, he led his people out of Egypt, and they eventually arrived in the land God had promised them—a feat that, without the strength and willingness of Moses, may have never been possible.

Moses has a big story with many themes. Moses's story is accessible to many people because of the special way God called him to a great task despite his lack of self-confidence. Because of the "under-dog" tone to it, many people find Moses's story easy to relate to. With strength and courage, Moses accepted God's task of freeing God's people from Egypt, embodying every characteristic of a leader. With the help of God, he led the Israelites out of Egypt and into God's hands. Moses's story illustrates that although we may see ourselves as inadequate or weak, God can use us for his purpose.

²² Cohen, *Moses and the Journey to Leadership*, 35.

RUTH

Not many women have a book in the Bible dedicated solely to their story. Ruth is an exception. Not only is the book dedicated to her story and how she helped redeem her mother-in-law, Naomi, but the book is also named after her. What lies within the story is a powerful depiction of what courage and humility can do to help save another person, while she continued to demonstrate passion, initiative, and creativity.

Passion

The story of Ruth is filled with various kinds of passion—from sadness to joy to desire. Passion is this woman’s story. We’re introduced to Ruth as the Moabite daughter-in-law of Naomi. Shortly after the introduction, Naomi’s husband and sons are killed. Naomi and her family had been living in Moab because of the lack of food in Bethlehem, so after the death of the men Naomi tells her sons’ wives to go back to their families so that they can live with them. The two girls despaired as they “wept aloud” (Ruth 1:9), and although Orpah chose to return to her family, Ruth insisted she stay with Naomi and travel back to Bethlehem.

Ruth didn’t have to travel back with Naomi, but she chose to stay by her side, and make sure she was taken care of. Ruth 1:16-17 says, “But Ruth said, ‘Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you.’” Ruth’s speech shows the amount of dedication Ruth had to the well-being of her mother-in-law. In Iain Duguid’s *Esther and Ruth* commentary, he writes in response to Ruth’s passionate exclamation of dedication, “Each of these

statements ratchets up the level of her commitment a notch higher. Ruth was not merely relocating her home to go somewhere geographically less pleasant... That would be noble self-sacrifice; this is far more. She is committing her life to Naomi, body and soul...²³ What could also be considered an act of humility is an action that portrays a sincere willingness to dedicate her life to her mother-in-law, and ensure that she can be taken care of.

Bill Hybels, in his book *Axiom*, discusses the importance of “bold moves” in leadership. Bold moves not only show initiative, but they also show that a leader is passionate enough about something to take a big leap. Without bold moves, you cannot take big steps forward. The last sentence in the “Bold Moves” chapter of the book says, “Make a few bold moves, or you’ll breathe your last leadership breath far too soon.”²⁴ This is true of Ruth as well as leaders today. Ruth saw herself as having a mission—making sure Naomi was going to be cared for. In order for this need to be met, Ruth was going to have to make a bold move in order to see it through, and that’s what she did when she insisted she travel back to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Ruth’s example continues when we find her gleaning the fields in Bethlehem in order to feed herself and Naomi. This was allowed as a type of welfare system the government allowed. And although gleaning was very difficult work, Ruth was not willing to let that get in the way of keeping Naomi fed and cared for.²⁵ Because she

²³ Iain M. Duguid, *Esther and Ruth: Reformed Expository Commentary* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 142.

²⁴ Hybels, *Axiom*, 33.

²⁵ Duguid, *Esther and Ruth: Reformed Expository Commentary*, 157.

wanted to take care of herself and her mother-in-law, and because she was prepared to work, she worked a lot to promise they had what they needed to survive.

The courage it took to glean in the fields will be incorporated in a later portion of this paper. However, it should be noted that gleaning was not an easy task, and not always safe. To ensure her ongoing state of living, she did it despite those things, and it paid off. In chapter two of Ruth, Boaz is introduced as the God-fearing owner of the field that Ruth is working in. Through introductions, Boaz finds favor with Ruth and invites her to work amongst the other women in the field, instead of just on the outskirts, as was the practice for the poor who gleaned in the fields.

After some time, Boaz and Ruth have an interesting professional relationship—Boaz wants Ruth to be looked after, while Ruth is busy working on behalf of Naomi. Boaz is an obvious advocate of Ruth, inviting her to feast with him and his field workers, and allowing her to pick from within the field. It is at this point in the story that Naomi finds out who Ruth has been working for, and they create a plan. Since Boaz is considered a kinsman of Elimelech, Naomi's late husband, he is in line to marry Ruth and secure a future for them all. It is at this point that Ruth is thrown into a situation that forces her to ignite the passion and dedication to solidify a prosperous future for herself and Naomi. She quickly accelerates her relationship with Boaz, and he agrees to marry her.

This part of Ruth's story has many different elements of leadership, including initiative and courage, which will be discussed later, but the key to understanding this story in light of the leadership framework is remembering that all actions taken as a leader come out of the passion a leader has. According the leadership framework in the

first section of this paper, passion acts as a catalyst from which all other leadership elements derive. For Ruth, that passion was the wellbeing of Naomi.

Initiative

Unlike Moses's story, where nearly all initiative is spurred by the direct word of God, Ruth focuses a little more of the inner workings of her thoughts, while the readers see it as actively living out God's will for both Ruth and Naomi. Many of the examples of Ruth's gift of initiative have already been discussed, but this is also an example of how tightly passion is tied to each other element of leadership in the Leadership Framework.

When Ruth was given the command to go back to her family, she refused and swore to stay with and care for Naomi. In this case, she was not given an option, but a command. But Ruth, in her stubborn dedication to her mother-in-law, refused, and traveled back to Bethlehem knowing that she would be able to care for her in some way or another. She was right. She went out to look for work in the field at her own insistence. "And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone in whose sight I may find favor'" (Ruth 2:2). This commitment to care for Naomi fostered a dedicated and loving relationship between the two women. How could it not? How could you not love someone you're committed to, and vice versa?²⁶

One of the greatest moments of initiative comes in chapter three during the story on the threshing floor. This would be an instance when the idea for a plan came from an outside source, in this case, Naomi. But just as Moses had the option to decline, Ruth did

²⁶ Keith Moore. *Servant Leadership in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Morgan James Publishing, 2005), 7.

as well. Still, she made the decision to go to Boaz that night—a decision that would be instrumental in creating her future. In order to ensure the security of their future, and knowing what was at stake, Naomi encourages Ruth to clean up, and go to Boaz as he slept on the threshing floor. The purpose behind this was to propose marriage to him, in light of his kinship.

In the middle of the night, Ruth goes to Boaz as he slept, and when he woke, she essentially asked for him to act as a redeemer (Ruth 3:9). By doing this, he'd take her to be his wife, and in the event of offspring, the entire family, Naomi included, would have security for the rest of their lives. Whether or not Naomi thought this through, Ruth had to act in a way that was going to maintain her as honorable. Instead of just asking him to marry her, she invited him into a redemptive relationship, where he would also be able to claim a sense of honor and admiration for his actions.

“When quiet leaders take action on a difficult problem, they pay close attention to how much of it they are risking and likely returns on their investment.”²⁷ Although this is a fairly blatant business and management quote, it says a lot about the actions Ruth took in order to maintain a secure lifestyle. Ruth saw a problem, took action to fix it, and fill a need. Although the Bible doesn't explicitly tell us that she weighed all options, it does tell us that she was aware of what she was doing, and that she could take responsibility for herself. By taking initiative, she was able to successfully see to the need she set out to fill in the first place.

²⁷ Joseph L. Badaracco, Jr.. *Leading Quietly: An Unorthodox Guide to Doing the Right Thing* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 72.

Creativity

Though it might not be an obvious trait she possesses, Ruth is a very creative woman, adding to her effectiveness as a leader. Without a sense of creativity, she may not have been able to accomplish the things she set out to do, including keeping her mother-in-law fed.

She successfully read her surroundings and used information and her intelligence to keep Naomi's wellbeing in check. First of all, she knew she wanted to work in the field, but her intuition told her to find a field to work in where she would be found with favor. Whether it was luck or fate, she ended up in Boaz's field, where she was allowed to work—encouraged and invited, even. Once she started working the field, she was very successful, so much so that she brought home an ephah worth of food. In today's culture, it could be compared to a colossal sized bag of dog food.²⁸ Her desire and creativity to provide for Naomi was paying off.

She also used her gift of creativity to help accelerate her relationship with Boaz. From the first encounter in the fields, to the scene on the threshing floor, she was constantly trying to think of ways to keep her family fed. Eventually, this need for security would lead to a lifelong promise of prosperous living for Naomi and Ruth.

Courage

The entire story of Ruth is based on her courage. She could not have done any of the things she accomplished without being able to take risks, and knowing the outcomes. When she first left Moab with Naomi, not only was she going to a new place where she would be the outcast, but she was also going with a woman who had seemingly given up

²⁸ Duguid, *Esther and Ruth*, 161.

on life, begging to be called ‘Mara,’ because the Lord had dealt bitterly with her (Ruth 1:20), and going to a place where neither one of them knew if they’d be able to survive.

By gleaning in the fields, Ruth would not know if she would be safe. Some field owners frowned upon having outsiders glean in their fields. This was a risk she had to take, though, in order to make sure Naomi was taken care of. In *Poke the Box*, by Seth Godin, he describes risk as involving winning and losing—the possibility to pay off, or not pay off.²⁹ Ruth didn’t know if this was an opportunity that was going to be fruitful for her, but she had to do it in case it was. She was so focused on living life on Naomi’s behalf; she was willing to risk everything to see that Naomi could survive.

Ruth’s time spent with Boaz on the threshing floor did not only take initiative and creativity, but courage. Ruth took this opportunity to give Boaz a chance to act as a redeemer, and this was important for Naomi and Ruth. The first step included breaking in during the night, and joining him in a situation that was characteristic of Moabites, but highly frowned upon. Because of translation and interpretation, no one can make a full argument for what actually happened there, sexual or otherwise. What we do know is that Ruth was there for a reason, and that reason was to propose marriage to Boaz. It could have gone terribly. She could have been banned from working in his fields, or he could have simply said no. But she was willing to risk those things for a chance at a lifetime of security for her and Naomi.

Humility

A quote by Erwin McManus can best describe Ruth’s journey: “Our influence is not limited to our present condition. It is expanded by our intended destination when we

²⁹ Godin, *Poke the Box* (Audiobook).

are committed to the journey.”³⁰ I think this best describes Ruth’s story told in the Bible. When she made the decision to leave with Naomi, her entire journey was changing, and she was starting on a new one. Her life took on a new purpose, and new identity. She knew she had to be a leader for Naomi, and her whole personhood was changing because of that.

John Dickson defines humility as, “The noble choice to forego your status, deploy your resources, or use your influence for the good of others before yourself.”³¹ In every way, Ruth embodied this. Foregoing a comfortable lifestyle, risking everything, and showing dedication to another person. Her story is not about what she did for herself, but what she was willing to do for the sake of other people she loved.

Conclusion

The theme of Ruth’s story is passion. Ruth acts out of passion, mainly for the sake of Naomi’s wellbeing. Ruth teaches us the importance of selflessness and humility, and how when it seems that there may be no answer to a problem in sight, God remains faithful. Ruth’s leadership lies in her ability to turn her passion into action out of necessity. Without an awareness of someone other than herself, Naomi may have withered away. Ruth shows that a woman can utilize her gifts of caring for others, and save lives.

³⁰ McManus, *Chasing Daylight*, 125.

³¹ Dickson, *Humilitas (Audiobook)*.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist had a very particular mission and ministry during his abbreviated life. He was here to act as a messenger for the coming Messiah, giving him the title of the “Last Prophet.” John acted as a leader during the time of preparation for the Lord’s coming, made clear by his most obvious trait, passion.

During the time leading up to Jesus’s arrival at the Jordan, John was immersed in a lifestyle pleasing and dedicated to God, and through this lifestyle, came to his calling as the forerunner of Christ.

Passion

Like all leaders, John possessed each of the traits talked about in the leadership framework. His actions stemmed from a passion that ignited change and progress, but I would argue that John’s one defining characteristic was this essential element. John’s life’s work was based solely on passion for God and his son.

From birth, John had an excitement about Jesus. Even in the womb, he was jumping for joy (Luke 1:41). He was destined to do great things from conception, promised by God to be born to two people that should not have been able to conceive. God’s plan for John was special and influential in the lives of God’s people.

Though not much is told about John’s childhood, we do know that he most likely left his father’s house at about the age of twelve to go live an impoverished, detached, and secluded life.³² This lifestyle was about devotion only to God, to live and learn and listen to what God was going to use him for. Living in a cave, eating locusts and wild

³² Alexander J. Burke, *John the Baptist: Prophet and Disciple* (Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 2006), 207.

honey, he dressed himself in camel's hair and lived off the land, separate from people, devoted to God.³³

This passionate display of devotion also carries with it an incredible amount of discipline. Discipline is an important piece of leadership, a lesson of setting an example of what you want from your followers.³⁴ Though John knew what his job would be, he first needed to remain disciplined and focused on what his mission was and how to make sure he would do it with Godly intent.

During his ministry, his message of was forgiveness and repentance. He spoke of salvation by baptism and would preach from the Jordan River, baptizing people who came to hear him. Not only did he preach this message of the coming savior of the world, he took an active part in preparing people for his arrival. Part of his ministry was baptism, which he did very publicly. In his preaching, he was fulfilling the Isaiah prophecy of the lone voice in the wilderness crying, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" (Luke 3:4). With phrases like, "You brood of vipers!" (Luke 3:7), and "Bear fruits worthy of repentance!" (Luke 3:8), John was using a leadership tool Billy Hybels discusses in the book *Axiom*, in a chapter called "Just Say It." In this chapter, Hybels says, "Refuse to tolerate mushy communication."³⁵ John was immensely passionate about his ministry of baptism and inviting people into repentance; he would not settle for a half-hearted or lukewarm message to the people. Instead, he got down to business, and in the vernacular of today,

³³ James Elder Cumming, *John: The Baptist Forerunner and martyr* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010), 29.

³⁴ Bob Briner, Ray Pritchard, *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus: A Timeless Model for Today's Leaders* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2008), 29.

³⁵ Hybels, *Axiom*, 104.

“told them what was up.” This was his mission, and with passion, he forged through a path for Christ to come in his redemptive glory.

Initiative

Although he has been dubbed as “The Last Prophet,” John did something that no one had done before. He taught repentance and forgiveness in light of the Kingdom of God being at hand, whereas Old Testament prophets would prophesy without the Kingdom language. He also recognized that though he baptized with water, someone greater than he would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16). This was something people had never heard before. The Jewish church had been teaching of a coming Messiah, but never in this way. Living into the words of Isaiah’s prophecy, John’s voice was alone in the announcing of the coming Christ.

This new message brought a lot of questions from the church, and a lot of interest from the people. If John was good at one thing, it was being public and making a statement. He didn’t let word travel by itself, and he didn’t let God handle it. Instead, he took the initiative to embody his ministry and made it as public as possible, no matter the consequences.

His message of “repent” was a message that was unfamiliar to many people. The word calls for a complete change of someone’s thoughts on their sin, and renouncing it.³⁶ Saying things such as, “The Kingdom is at hand” gave people urgency about repentance and denouncing their sin. During this message of the promise of new life that baptism was thought to bring, he assured his followers that he was not the one who would offer the salvation that repentance brings, but he was simply that person’s forerunner.

³⁶ Cumming, *John: The Baptist Forerunner and Martyr*, 37.

Creativity

John's creativity and initiative can be closely linked through many of his breakthrough ideas. It might even be argued that John's creativity was given to him through a message from God as Moses's initiative was given to him through the burning bush. John did many of the things he did out of necessity to fulfill God's vision.

John did not live in the wilderness because he had a desire to live in solitude away from people on a personal level. John felt a call to separate himself from the masses, and to live a life in which he could be fully dedicated to God. After he emerged from the wilderness, he lived a life dedicated to the preaching of repentance and the coming Kingdom of God.

Like Moses, he was working as God's instrument or tool, embracing the *missio Dei*, God's work on earth, submitting to what God had wanted for him to take up during his ministry. He lived this completely, baptizing people with water, including Jesus himself, until he was thrown in prison, and later beheaded.

Courage

Living at this time, with this particular message, was not easy. People began asking questions of this man who knew of the coming Messiah. John's ministry ended when Jesus came on the scene, shortly after his baptism at the river. In fact, his ministry only lasted six months.³⁷ It was then that Herod called John to his palace in order to meet the man he had heard so much about. Herod, at that time, considered him little threat, but was insistent upon meeting him. He did not let being in the presence of Herod stop him from proclaiming his message. He confronted Herod and his brother's wife for living in

³⁷ Ibid., 71.

sin. Sometime later, Herodias, Herod's former sister-in-law, now his wife, asked for John the Baptist's head on a platter.

Even though John knew the outcome of this could be tragic, his message never stopped. He continued with courage and conviction, making sin known to sinners, and the message of redemption accessible. This is how his ministry was run. He knew that he was on a very public platform, but his message was important, and still is today. We've been given the extra message of grace through Jesus Christ, but there is no reason for grace if we do not know our sin. In this way, John the Baptist's message can be understood well in the light of the Lutheran emphases of law and promise.

Though people questioned if he was the Messiah, he humbly denied that claim every time it was asked of him, constantly pointing towards someone greater. Jesus brought the gospel, but John prepared a way for him by announcing him as "The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Humility

John's passion is closely linked with John's humility. His passion and dedication to the word of God and preparation for Christ's arrival led to him to lead a very humble and detached life. Though he spoke the truth with a largeness that is hard to understand, his notice of his own unworthiness is very visible in his discussions with people who asked him if he was the Messiah. "He was not content to say, 'He must increase,' but added, 'I must decrease.'"³⁸ This lay at the core of John's ministry.

John recognized that the purpose of his ministry was to prepare people for the ministry of Jesus. "John answered all of them saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one

³⁸ Ibid., 99.

who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untied the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16). John knew what power Jesus would be bringing, even announced him as the coming of the Kingdom of God.

John never claimed to be anything more than a messenger. This was his task, and his God given mission on earth. And though he considered himself lowly, he humbly did God’s work, and believed in the message he was sharing. And although his humility is a gift, James Elder Cumming states it powerfully in his book, *John: The Baptist Forerunner and Martyr*, upon discussion of John’s beheading, “There was not much more time than just to look death in the face; a few minutes measured at once the shock of surprise and the pain of the keen cutting sword; and he who had been schooling his heart to say, ‘Even so,’ to God’s will, knelt among the angels, who welcomed one greater than themselves. The passage was short, if dark, and it opened like a door into that heavenly glory for which the earthly sunset was exchanged.”³⁹

Conclusion

As with Ruth’s story, John’s leadership strengths are a reaction to the passion he had for his vocation as a messenger, preparing the way for Jesus’s coming. John served as a leader to all who heard his message of repentance, and even was given the opportunity to fill this role when Jesus asked to be baptized. John had a message that carried with it consequence. But his courage and passion proved to be what the world needed in order to prepare for Jesus.

³⁹ Ibid., 95.

Ancient Leaders: Conclusion

Leadership is rarely easy, and decisions are not always clear. Leaders are gifted with the strength to work through the stories they're given and work towards a solution. I believe that all people are children of God, and God gives them gifts and talents to be used in particular ways. Leaders who are able to recognize these traits are those that we see active in the world, changing it for the better, or making it challenging.

Though God may not dictate everyone's every move, God's gifts are not minimalized because of risk of failure. However, those who are faithfully seeking God's work in the world may have an easier time encountering God's mission for them. Moses, for example, reluctantly accepted God's task for him, even though he may have had the choice of turning away. Ruth was commanded to go back to her family where she would be taken care of, but something inside her told her to go with Naomi to Bethlehem, and fulfil her duty to care for her mother in law.

As leaders, we may never full grasp why we are called to do something, or embark on a certain trail. However, remaining faithful to a God that has given us gifts and talents of leadership, we may just find that our purpose is bigger than we could have expected.

Externally, leaders look very different. However, internally, they are all using the same tools for their own situation. This shows us that though context may change, what lies at the core of quality and effective leadership has remained the same for thousands of years, though not always resulting in positive outcomes, sometimes even tragic.

Applicable inspiration explains that ideas that are developed outside of a time or place can be applied to situations that would not necessarily utilize them knowingly.

Moses and Ruth both utilized a passion within themselves that they may not have been aware that they even possessed. But by being able to dissect their actions, we can see that each piece of their separate stories boiled down to very basic ideas—passion, initiative, creativity, courage and humility.

Moving forward, leaders who know their own characteristics can continue to grow into them, and develop the ones that they are weak in, helping them become better leaders. By knowing what you're made of you can continue to develop and grow as a leader, and know of the struggles and successes of the leaders that have gone before you.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEMPORARY LEADERS

For every new movement, new idea, or new goal, a leader emerges. These leaders come in various shapes, sizes, religions, and races. Some are very public leaders who impact history, like Martin Luther King, Jr. Others create great change on a much smaller scale. The leadership framework of essential characteristic, employed throughout this thesis, lies at the core of every leader, local or global, past or future.

To help support my theory that effective leadership qualities do not, and have not changed, I surveyed two sets of leaders—past and present. Upon the conclusion of the survey of biblical characters, I studied a group of contemporary leaders as my second focus group. The subjects used in this paper are all from the same ministry context, however they hold very different leadership positions and come from very different backgrounds. The actual positions they hold are not relevant to their overall leadership capabilities as revealed through the leadership framework, therefore only their first names will be used in this paper and no other specifics of their particular positions will be described and analyzed.

The goal for this final section of this paper is to use the theories and ideas in my framework of essential leadership characteristics to assess the leadership capabilities of contemporary leaders. By using the characteristics found in the framework, I will be utilizing the same rubric that was used to survey biblical characters. In this way, I will

demonstrate that what lies at the core of leadership does not change, but instead, the changing factors are our context and opportunities.

Finally, this section will explore what having these traits as a leader means for the missional church, and why the church needs to foster its relationships with these leaders. As the church transforms, new leaders will emerge in particular congregations, and throughout the global church community. One question the missional church finds itself asking is, “What is God up to, here?” By identifying leaders with the core traits and utilizing them in ways that encourage the church to transform, both lay and ordained leaders might gain greater clarity about where God is leading them.

The difference in these subject groups, one historical and one contemporary, opened up opportunities for various research methods. While researching historical figures, I had to interpret and use information given by the bible and supplemental materials; while for the study of contemporary leaders, I was able to obtain information through one-on-one interviews.

Three individuals were chosen for the study of contemporary leaders. The three subjects were chosen from the same ministry context in order to have at least one constant variable within the focus group. By using people from the same context, it was easier to see how their different backgrounds and personal nuances affected their common leadership capabilities within the leadership framework.

Each of the subjects was interviewed in a sit-down, one-on-one interview. Each was asked a series of five questions (Appendix C) based on themes from the leadership framework I employed throughout this project. Each participant was tape recorded to

ensure that I could collect and refer to accurate and solid information as my research unfolded.

During each interview I asked the five questions based on my previous study, with a few follow-up questions added in order to get a broader picture of the themes I wanted to explore. Each question was open-ended, mostly asking for further explanations of situations or events they had encountered during their time in their current leadership position. Interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour. As interviewer, I attempted not to stray from the questions I'd developed in order to help maintain the integrity of each interview.

I've known each of the interviewees in this study from three to six years, each having served different amounts of time in their respective roles. Having a personal connection with each person allowed an opportunity for transparency on the part of the interviewee that I may not have gotten from strangers. While this transparency was a positive outcome of interviewing people with whom I have a previous connection, there was also a risk of bias on my part. Knowing certain details of each person's story may have had an effect on my interpretation of the information they gave me.

Contemporary Leaders: Context

Each person who was interviewed for the research required for this project comes from the same ministry context. Their place of work and ministry (Church A) is a large, suburban, ELCA church in Minnesota with a congregation membership of roughly 2,500. This church has a 2012 annual budget of \$1.78 million,⁴⁰ with two full-time pastors, four

⁴⁰ King of Kings Lutheran Church, *Income Balance Sheet, June 30th*, http://www.kingofkingswoodbury.org/uploads/3/0/8/2/3082042/2012.06.30_income_statement.pdf (October 22nd, 2012).

additional full-time leadership staff, seven part-time ministerial and administrative support staff, one part-time café staff member, a three-member custodial staff, and a fully staffed pre-school program.

This worshipping community has a strong emphasis on children's and high school ministries, while post-high school and college-aged ministries have failed to be overly successful. The music ministry has grown exponentially over the past six years, and continues to grow each year. This community has an active retired men's ministry, as well as a vibrant citywide women's ministry. While each type of ministry in which this community engages its members is an exciting part of its mission, there are still areas struggling to grow and get people actively engaged.

While each interviewee is now in a leadership position at the same place, each person comes with varying backgrounds, knowledge, and education. By using a common denominator of their current community, I was able to involve individuals with wide ranges of experiences. This demonstrated the applicability of my leadership framework to diverse leaders.

Chris⁴¹

Chris has been an employee with this congregation since 2004, when he started in a part-time position. He quickly moved into a full-time position after it was realized how many gifts and strengths he had that would benefit the community. His different ministries at this church are thriving, and he is very well rounded and highly respected among the staff and congregation.

⁴¹ "Chris," based on an interview held in a private meeting, Woodbury, MN, October 17, 2012.

Passion

When Chris arrived at Church A, the congregation was thriving. Ministries were growing, and the congregation was seemingly healthy. The intern pastor serving at that time invited Chris in, and encouraged the staff to consider him for the position that was open. Chris started out in his part time position, but as his vision for Church A grew, so did his responsibility, and eventually he worked his way into a full-time position.

Chris's position in the church escalated quickly and he began taking on a lot of responsibility both within his position and in other areas of Church A. After a few years he redeveloped his position and presented it to the church council as a promotion opportunity. They accepted it, and he was given a new title. Under his new title he began to bring more ideas about new projects Church A could try. In 2010, his new idea was for a church-wide musical and dramatic Christmas program. This Christmas program not only included every musical group Church A had to offer, but it also involved people that weren't normally involved or participated in any of the ministries in the church. This was something that Chris was extremely excited about—having the chance to work with new people, and help them be involved in something large.

Chris has been passionate about this type of programming at Church A since his arrival. He has constantly tried to think of new ideas, new opportunities to worship differently, and let the congregation experience something new, as well as being able to showcase the talent at Church A. During the planning process of the 2010 Christmas program, Chris, himself, had the opportunity to showcase his own talents of leadership and organization, something he'd felt he hadn't had the opportunity to do at an advanced level since he'd been hired.

The bulk of Chris's motivation to have a successful Christmas program came from the fact that he had an opportunity to identify gifts and talents of people he knew, and people he didn't know. Along with identifying those gifts, he also was able to equip people to be a contributing factor to the overall success of the Christmas program, and Church A as a congregation. Although he was stretched in many ways, and pulled outside of his own comfort zone at times, the passion he had for this project, and the overall community of Church A encouraged him, and drove him to desire success.

The success of the program was typically at the forefront of Chris's mind, but looking back he recognizes the undertaking of such a large project as a growth opportunity. He worked hard to delegate tasks to people who had good ideas, and he forced his self-admitted "Type-A" personality to take a break and let it be an educational opportunity for not only the people he was leading through this endeavor, but himself as well.

This Christmas program is just one example of ways passion is manifested in leaders' day-to-day projects. For Chris, this program was a way he could use his gifts of passion to lead a congregation through a healthy, community-wide, multifaceted event. At the same time, Chris's love for the arts was a driving force behind the success. Chris's passion for the community of Church A and their ability to pull together a great program helped motivate him, even on the tough days.

I've mentioned in previous work that passion acts as a catalyst for leaders in that the passion they have for an idea, movement, or project helps fuel their initiative, courage, creativity, and humility. When Chris began to feel his excitement grow, his passion for the project became evident, but his passion for the people of Church A grew

even stronger. His passion began manifesting itself in the teaching and equipping the people involved, and him allowing them to take ownership of this new endeavor.

Obviously, this project did not come without its fair share of headaches. Frustration was always near the point of boiling over. It can be obvious for individuals who are especially passionate about something. For example, the coach of a sports team can usually be seen throwing things, and ripping their headsets off, or challenging the referees. This type of behavior does not usually accompany a nonchalant attitude about the conflict at hand. However, those coaches who don't understand how to channel that anger or frustration into healthy leadership tactics are usually the ones ejected from the game. So, while hearing Chris talk about the challenges he faced, and continues to face in his ministry, and knowing how he deals with the frustrations that challenge him, I would consider him very passionate about his ministry and the people who help him in it.

Chris possesses the type of passion that is easily transferable from him to those that he leads. During his time at Church A, his ministry has grown in size, and taken on new endeavors like the Christmas program. In turn, the members of Church A have become equipped to branch out and become leaders in their own right within Chris's ministry, and other ministries Church A has to offer.

Initiative

As previously mentioned post-high school and college-aged ministry at Church A are unfortunately lacking. The main reason behind this is the demographics of the community Church A calls home. The closest colleges are 30 minutes away, and many of the high school students go even farther away than that. In the fall of 2010, Chris saw that this was a need, and took it upon himself to fill that void.

He had met his wife at a young adults' ministry at a church in a neighboring city, and figured if it could work there, it would be able to work at Church A. Engaging multiple young adults in the congregation, Chris started a 20 to 30's ministry group called Focus. Focus met every Monday night in Church A's youth room.

Focus survived for a couple of months and then began dwindling in the spring. The next year, there was a newer, larger kick-off in the fall, and near Christmas it began to dwindle again. The group was not taking off as they had hoped, keeping a steady attendance of five to seven people each week. Eventually, Focus as a ministry of Church A had to come to a close.

Focus is just one of the many initiatives that Chris has had a hand in during his time at Church A. However, unlike the Christmas program which was a huge success, Focus's time was short but nevertheless an example of Chris's ability to see and need and take the initiative to fill it. This is especially true since the original ministry he and his wife had been a part of was at a church no more than 10 minutes from Church A. It could have been easy to collaborate and become a part of that ministry, or even just come together at times for service projects or other fellowship events, but Chris wanted a ministry specific to Church A's community, and something the people there could own.

What I find admirable about Chris's attempt to start this ministry is that he knew the kind of young-adult population he was dealing with, but he didn't let that scare him. It may have been relatively small considering the size of the congregation, but he wasn't going to let that stop him, and he would do what he could to get people involved.

What separates Chris from the others at Church A was that not only did he have a desire, but he also had a vision. He knew what he wanted this ministry to look like, and

wasn't afraid to take the risk and go for it. He made sure to connect with the other staff, including the youth director, and he also consulted with his wife, and with others he knew in the congregation. He utilized the tools he had, and created something great.

Focus's success is still something he struggles with today. He says that it may not have lasted long, but it did accomplish what he was sought out to do. He may attempt it again, but for now, he has a hard time calling it a failure. Getting Focus started was a personal commitment on his plate since it was outside the realm of his full time ministry, but it was something close to his heart. Not only did he take time to analyze it as something the church needed, but also something he wanted to be a part of.

This is only one example of the many ways Chris has initiated change or something new for the Church A community to enjoy or be a part of. This doesn't always come from seeing a need, though. Sometimes it comes from hearing the voices of the church members, and wanting to give them opportunities to be involved. There are times it comes from just wanting to try something new, which in his ministry, could come every other week. Not only does he find needs to fill, but ways to change and be different—ways to stay out of a rut. This isn't always easy in a congregation as large as Church A, but the opportunities are still there, and he finds them.

This kind of initiative is important in leadership positions of all kinds, but especially in ministry. It's true that many congregations, especially with older members, value and trust the traditions of their communities that maybe have been around for 100 years, but in order to help the church transform, and keep moving forward, the church needs leaders that are able to find those tiny opportunities, and take risks. Without taking

the initiative to invoke change, the church would be stagnant, not much different than what many mainline churches are experiencing now.

Taking initiative also involves being open and listening to what those around you are saying. What would they like to do? What isn't working? A leader will take those thoughts and do something about them, because the job of a leader is to care for the greater good of their community. The wider church of today is beginning to understand why this is important and individual communities are working on ways to transform into the future. Individuals, both clergy and lay, who understand how to spot the opportunities will be instrumental in God's work in transforming the church.

Courage

Chris has a very public leadership role at Church A. Because of the type of position he has, people are able to contact him directly, which many of them do, since the decisions he makes regarding worship are very public. People contact him with both praises and criticisms, usually through email, about decisions usually made in, for, or about a worship service. For many, especially the older members, decisions made having to do with worship can be very important to the overall experience for many members, and they let him know if they love something, or don't particularly care for something. This causes Chris's decisions to be deliberate, meaningful, and necessary.

Chris's position requires him to be heavily involved in each worship service at Church A. He and the two other full-time staff members make all the decisions for the different worship services. This includes, but is not limited to, hymns, prayers, special music, communion music, and any other aspect of worship you can imagine. Along with decisions about worship, Chris decided to get the music ministry's at Church A to put out

a 30th anniversary cd to celebrate Church A's 30 years of ministry. Knowing that the church had put out a 20th anniversary CD under a different leader who is no longer with the church, Chris decided to go ahead with the 30th anniversary project with a bit of a different dream for what it could be.

Throughout the project, Chris ran into trials he fully expected to face. People had other expectations for the CD, but Chris stayed strong with his vision. People didn't like how certain aspects of the project were being handled, but Christ kept moving forward. Chris was very aware that he was going to run into resistance when it came to this project, but knew that the CD was important not only to the ministry of the church, but the integrity of the programs he was directing.

During the months of preparation, he ran into lack of commitment, lack of support, lack of personal preparation, and even some who were over-committed, and wanted too much control. And although some of the tensions were unexpected, Chris knew that once he leapt into the project, he would have to be committed to its successful completion. At times, this was his only source of motivation. Through his years at Church A, he has realized that he cannot commit to something without being 100% in it, and this was one of those times.

Making a big decision, especially when it involves many people and puts your ministry in a public area can be scary. But the courage it takes to make those decisions is many times paired with wisdom to consult your support system, and make the decisions in an educated and well thought out manner. The courage in thoughtfulness and discernment in decision-making makes him a great leader for the congregation he belongs to.

The opportunity for courage comes with the opportunity for risk. And many times, leaders are faced with a variety of possible decision, each with their own different level of risk. Some decisions they have to make are easier than others, but never does that mean that a single decision they make could cause something to fall completely apart, or ultimately fail. Like Chris's decision to start a young adults' ministry, some ideas do come to an end, but a person will never know what the outcome might be if they don't build up the courage to take the risk and try it.

Every decision Chris makes for or about his ministry has the opportunity to be scrutinized. It has the same opportunity to be received well, and even acknowledged. As with any congregation, some members make themselves heard and their opinions voiced more than others. Being in full-time ministry comes with learning how to effectively receive criticism of all kinds with a mindful heart and a thick skin.

Creativity

Within the Church A organization and amongst the Church A staff, Chris is given the bulk of the creative responsibility, especially when it comes to worship. This does not just mean obvious artistic creativity, but also creativity when it comes to logistics and organization. His creative license informs the entire staff of how certain aspects of worship, programming, or ministry will be conducted.

One of the projects he has taken on in the last two years was rebuilding and updating the church website. Church A's website had been the same for about four years before the staff decided it was time to do something new. Since there was no one on staff specifically trained in web development or website design, Chris, being the creative (and

meticulous) person he is, volunteered for the job after another's attempt fell short of the congregations expectations and needs.

Chris eventually spent two years learning and teaching himself web design, and the end product is now a very useful tool used by multiple ministries at Church A. With that being said, his desire for a new and improved website was not only just for the benefit of Church A as an entire congregation, but also for his specific ministry. He needed a portal that those involved in his specific ministry could not only find useful, but also navigate, and be engaged by. This desire for something that was meaningful for him helped motivate him to get it done.

The creativity that Chris possesses comes with another trait that is also important to leadership and one that goes hand-in-hand with every essential characteristic. That is patience. Leaders like Chris are able to know when they will be faced with certain trials and criticisms, but effective and quality leaders use those opportunities to show that they are patient. This patience leads to a better understanding of the voices that are expressing their thoughts, and help make leaders better effective and received amongst their peers.

Looking at the projects mentioned that Chris has taken on, creativity has played a big part in their development and success. Creativity comes into play when there is an obvious problem and the problem needs to be solved. For instance, Chris wanted to develop something that would not only be a showcase for the ministries at Church A, but also be a unifying event, along with a learning and growing opportunity for the congregation. That's how the Christmas program was born. Chris wanted to develop a young adults' ministry that was exclusive to the Church A community. That's how he created Focus. Chris wanted a way to carry on an old tradition while starting a new one

that showcased the musical and technical talent of Church A's congregation, so he pushed forward with his vision for the 30th anniversary CD. In order to problem solve in a way that will leave a lasting mark, creativity is an essential element, and one of the reason any project even gets off the ground. Creativity is what helps make something tangible out of what used to be an idea.

Humility

The majority of people involved in ministry did not end up there because they knew that their needs would always be taken care of. With ministry comes a loss of entitlement to a life lived in accordance to what you want when you want it. However, while humility might seem like an expense of being in ministry, it actually acts in a function of benefit or gift of being in a ministerial position.

For Chris, this concept of humility is not foreign. John Dickson, in his book *Humilitas*, defines humility as, “the choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself.”⁴² While engaging in a discussion about humility, it's important to realize the difference between humility and humiliation. Humility is not about becoming a doormat, or having no regard for yourself, but recognizing the needs of others, and putting them before your own.

In Chris's particular leadership role, he interacts and engages with more people on a weekly basis compared to almost any other full-time member on staff, and those that he engages with, he engages very closely, and personally. This means that Chris's job is at risk of having to cater to and please many people besides the rest of the Church A staff.

⁴² Dickson, John. *Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

The people he leads are they by choice and in a volunteer capacity, so Chris must be sure not to ask too much, but still strive to hold them to a high standard.

Finding a happy medium between expectation and freedom can be difficult at times. Many of the people Chris deals with closely can tend to be high-maintenance, or have little respect for Chris and his ministry. It is these situations that Chris's sense of humility must be strong so that he can help his volunteers make decisions that will have positive outcomes for everyone involved.

During our conversation, Chris shared a story of something that had happened recently that involved one of the members of his team. There is a particular individual that Chris has worked closely with over the years, and this person tends to be a bit "high maintenance." After a really difficult and challenging worship service, Chris went home to watch the football game with his wife. During the football game, Chris received an email from this individual expressing concerns and issues that had risen out of the earlier worship service. Chris expressed that he knew if he didn't spend the time to email this individual back right away, it was going to bother both him, and the other person.

Responding to this person's email took nearly 45 minutes out of what was supposed to be his "personal" time, but he did it out of the love and care he has for the people he works with. There are other times that Chris has gone back and for to the church from home on a Sunday afternoon because he knows his help is needed. He does this for the good of both his ministry, and his volunteers.

While Chris has a difficult time explicitly calling himself "the leader," he knows that he has always been called to some kind of leadership. And it is in these sacrificial moments that he feels most fulfilled and supported in his leadership role. He does not

practice humility out of selfish gain, however. He understands what it means to have someone sacrifice time, energy, or personal gain because his volunteers do it for him all the time. At the same time, knowing that his sense of humility and effective and quality leadership is continuing to comfort his team members is a reward for him.

Conclusion

When I asked Chris if he's always known he was going to be a leader, he was very honest when he answered yes. He said, "If I'm not the leader, I'm not happy." He continuously strives to climb to the top of the ladder, but he does it with grace, and effectiveness. If Chris were a poor leader, he would not have the type of involvement he has from the congregation members. Chris has a calm demeanor that expresses a desire for collaborative relationships, but at the same time demands respect.

Chris has been a vital part of the Church A staff, using his passion, initiative, courage, creativity, and humility to pursue new endeavors, and better the ones already in place. Though he might respond that he's successful because he's doing what he loves, that already puts him in position to be an excellent leader that will keep taking his ministry to new heights.

Liz⁴³

Liz has been on staff at Church A full-time since 2009. She lived and studied in Minnesota before taking a job in Rhode Island where she held a senior leadership position. After being there for some time, she found herself back in Minnesota, and how now been on staff at Church A for three years.

⁴³ "Liz", based on an interview conducted in a private meeting, Woodbury, MN, October 17, 2012.

She has several different types of ministries under her umbrella of leadership, and leads a large portion of the outreach and fellowship ministries Church A has to offer. Liz is now in her late 30's, and very well-liked and respected throughout the congregation, as well as surrounding community.

Passion

Liz first experienced her passion for ministry during her sophomore year in college. Growing up, she had been a part of Young Life, and youth ministry program that engages youth outside of church, and more amongst communities. While in college, she realized that she missed that part of her life, and also missed hanging around high school students. So she initiated the start-up of a Young Life program at Northfield High School, not far from where she was going to college.

Liz first noticed that she was excited about the prospect of getting a Young Life group going when she started to experience pangs of wanting to give back. She enjoyed being able to organize and lead the movement that was her idea into different phases of its existence.

With the growth of the growth of the Northfield Young Life chapter came these opportunities to transform lives and see the newness that this kind of ministry could bring. This inspired Liz as the program grew. Her energy to get things done and try new things and reach out to new people was a tell-tale sign that she enjoyed leading in this way, and being a part of this ministry. As she told me during our interview, she wasn't excited to be in chemistry lab, but she was excited to do Young Life. She didn't do well in chemistry lab because she wasn't excited about it. This is when she knew that her passion lay in ministry.

Liz's excitement about her Young Life group is the kind of signal that is easiest to see in leaders when they are truly passionate about something. That passion fuels their excitement, and their excitement leads to a dedication and a willingness to do whatever it takes to keep an idea moving forward. Liz's passion for Young Life fed right into her initiative to create the group in the first place, and get it jumpstarted. In this case, Liz used her passion not only to lead Young Life, but also to be a part of a ministry that she knew could be and would be effective.

Since passion acts as a catalyst for the four other traits that leaders possess, it's almost impossible to talk about passion without bringing other traits into the discussion. In Liz's case, the initiative she took to get Young Life started in Northfield was directly related to her passion for the project in the first place. Humility is another example of something that derived from the onset of passion—she had been blessed by the ministry of Young Life and wanted to be able to share those experiences with others, making sure their emotional and spiritual needs were being met. I've defined passion as that fire within you—some call it the Holy Spirit—that burns deep enough to make you want to take risks, and create something worthwhile. Liz's passion eventually served as a blessing to everyone involved in the Northfield Young Life program.

Initiative

Right away during this portion of our interview, Liz informed me that one of her StrengthFinders strengths was *Ideation*⁴⁴. As it was touched on during the discussion about passion, Liz likes to dream, and think of possibilities. Seeing her in action on staff

⁴⁴ Tom Roth, *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, (New York, NY: Gallup Press, 2007), 113.

at Church A has been a great example of her gift of developing and executing ideas and dreams.

Two programs she has started since being at Church A are Befrienders and LifeKeys. Both programs are pre-established programs used by many different churches, but each fill a void that was once there in the Church A community. By introducing these two programs, the church has greatly increased the kinds of ways congregation members can find to be engaged in fellowship and outreach.

Befrienders is a program that allows congregation members to own a certain piece of the outreach ministry at Church A. They are trained to seek out the new members and visitors, making sure they feel welcomed, and act as an outlet for those who are new to ask questions or stay informed. Before the Befrienders program, a lot of this responsibility landed on the shoulders of the pastors, and the fellowship committee, but Liz, along with the committee and other members considered starting Befrienders as a way to help alleviate some of the pressure from the pastoral staff, and to allow the congregation to be responsible for part of the outreach ministry.

LifeKeys is a leadership development program that has been used in several churches across the Twin Cities. Liz knew about the program when she started at Church A, and noticed that the leadership development opportunities at Church A were lacking and introduced it as a way to not only help congregation members name their strengths, but also to help place them in ministries that they maybe didn't realize they could be used before going through the program. The Befrienders program actually came as an idea out of one of the LifeKeys courses.

Liz took advantage of a void she saw in the ministry of Church A. She saw a need, and knew what it would take to fill the void it was creating, and in turn, create a vibrant, parishioner-led outreach ministry. Luckily, engaging parishioners wasn't a struggle. Liz first tried the LifeKeys program on a pilot group before introducing it to the rest of the congregation. By doing this, she was able to create a solid base group that was passionate about the program who could promote it to others, and she also was able to experience how it was going to work. She took initiative to make sure this was going to be an effective program for the unique Church A community.

As with her involvement at Young Life, Liz was able to see a need, and then took the initiative to fill it instead of allowing it to fall on someone else's shoulders. As her position deals with much of the outreach and fellowship ministries of Church A, it would have fallen on her shoulders anyway, but before it could be a burden, she got the right people involved, and made a simple idea a reality. And after it became a reality, she kept people involved and passionate about the program. Church A has now had over 100 members go through the LifeKeys program.

As a leader, Liz does a good job of setting an example for the congregation when it comes to initiative and ideation. Many people, especially in such a large congregation, may feel that it's just too big for them to start anything, or might not know who to go to for help. Liz offers a calm and inviting presence that allows parishioners to dream with her, instead of doing the dreaming for them.

Courage

Knowing Liz personally, I would not necessarily call her an "attention seeker," nor would I say she really enjoys being in the spotlight. She is a very even-tempered

individual who would prefer a crowd over an audience. However, in her current leadership role, she is frequently faced with large audiences for teaching opportunities.

Large audiences are something she had to work at getting used to. The content of her messages along with the setting and environment of her teaching was a combination that any leader in her position eases themselves into, instead of being ready to go their first time around. However, the “easing” into it was not as simple as that. Actually, it was simpler. I asked her what her tipping point of mustering up the courage going through with it was, and she said, “I had a deadline.” This was a really interesting response to that question. Obviously, her tipping point wasn’t an internal struggle, or even an emotional triumph—it was the fact that she was going to have to get up in front of an audience on a specific date and a specific time because her supervisor said so, and that’s just the way it was going to be.

Many people dub this kind of learning “baptism by fire,” which in this case, may be a relevant term. She wasn’t given the opportunity to be afraid or timid about what she needed to do because the fact was, she was going to have to do it anyway. A lot of times, this kind of training or learning, or conquering of fear can be the most frightening kind. There isn’t a lot of time to prepare for the worst, or think of all the possible outcomes. A true leader will know that they are as prepared as they’re going to be, and they will have to depend on themselves to keep it together.

Liz is good at finding support and consultation now that she has had a few years of practice. When she runs into something she is unfamiliar with, or unsure about, she has a network of people who can help or encourage her through something. This is also a sign of a humble leader—allowing others to care for you, and knowing that their gift or

purpose in that moment is to help build you up and encourage you to be the strongest leader you can be. She is smart in that she has a large enough network, each person with different strengths, and that she knows who to reach out to in certain times. She also reaches out to those people when seeking new ideas to try, or dreams to encounter.

Creativity

Being the leader in a parish is not always as smooth as they might teach you in seminary. In fact, pastors run into issues on a daily basis that only experience will teach them how to overcome. During her tenure in Rhode Island, Liz ran into such a situation. There was a situation with the church finances, and the problems were being traced back to the church treasurer. Little did Liz know, this problem had been going on for a very long time.

Liz was quick to identify the problem, and why the problem was occurring. She realized that there were few to no checks and balances happening with the accounting team. There were no appropriate policies in order to keep situations like this from happening, and no measures were being taken to ensure the safety of every party involved.

Once the problem was identified, Liz had to act quickly in order to appropriately address the issue with both the individual and the governing body of the congregation. After that, they needed to expedite the problem solving process. This consisted of gathering a group of people who all had the strengths it would take in order to both address the problem, and start to fix it. Bill Hybels, senior pastor at Willow Creek Community Church, calls this “getting the right people around the table.” After putting a

system in place to move forward, the only thing left was to take the first step towards healing.

Liz insisted that her team be as transparent as possible with the rest of the congregation. She was sure this would be the key to healthily healing as a congregation, instead of sparing the feelings or emotions of others. Liz also knew that this was not going to be her area of expertise, but she knew how to oversee the process so she placed herself in a position of overseer instead of problem solver. She knew what the end goal was, but not exactly how to get there and instead utilized the strengths of those who did.

This process worked for the congregation. Within a month, the problem had been identified, a plan put in place, and the healing process had begun. Out of the creativity of this problem solving team came the trust of the congregation. After having a large portion of their budget stripped away, they ran an incredibly successful Capital Appeal campaign only nine months later.

Liz had to creatively and systematically develop a plan for the congregation to get through this situation. Instead of jumping to any conclusions or trying to regain any sense of lost control, she assembled a team that was both trustworthy and effective, and the congregation came out of the turmoil in one piece. The other option would have been to make knee-jerk decisions, and move forward with unnecessary intensity, but Liz had the wisdom to realize an approach of that manner would only hurt the congregation more than what it was already experiencing.

Humility

Being a public leader in a large congregation comes with a lot of positive experiences, but also a lot of situations that are highly inconveniencing to the leader, or

the leader's family and friends. When I first asked Liz if she could think of a specific time when she had put someone's needs above her own, she looked at me and said, "I have kids!" Although this is a legitimate answer, and anyone who is or is not a parent knows that, I wanted her to think about anything specific to her ministry role.

I asked her the same question, and her answer was just what I thought it would be—midnight runs to the hospital. She said, more often than not, her first thought is, "Oh crap...", but that feeling lasts for only a short time and then you get up and go because "it's just what you do." There is nothing more humbling than being with individuals in a crisis during their time of need. In fact, most pastors and CPE students I've known in my time at Luther Seminary consider it a great blessing to be able to bring peace to those situations that seem so dark.

As anyone can imagine, the response is always an attitude of thankfulness and appreciation. Those on the receiving end are overwhelmed by the actionable grace the person coming to them brings. As I listened to Liz tell me about her midnight visits to the hospital, it seemed as though she did not think it was an act of humility, just apart of her job description. As I've thought this through, though, it seems that situations like this is where the most humble leaders we know will hang their hats. They do something that might be inconveniencing to them, or out of their comfort zone because it is a part of their role as a leader, yet they continue to serve in that role, knowing the importance of their actions in the lives of those they are serving.

Conclusion

Liz is the oldest of four siblings. She blames this for her tendency towards leadership positions, and claims that it has never been a conscious decision to lead. But it

is her self-awareness that has led her to be an effective and equipped leader to serve in her current position. Throughout her life, she has taken new and different steps into leadership roles without ever truly realizing where she would land. Because of her role as the oldest sibling, she's always been comfortable in leadership positions and that has helped her grow in many ways, and be willing to take on new responsibilities.

Liz's passion, initiative, courage, creativity, and humility have served her very differently in her many leadership roles, but they all support the idea that she is an effective and well equipped leader who is wise and daring to take risks where risks are needed.

Laurel⁴⁵

I met Laurel for the first time during the Summer of 2007. I was drawn to her because she reminded me of a mentor I had during my high school years. We immediately hit it off, and we continue to be very good friends. Laurel has recently resigned from her position at Church A in order to stay home with her youngest child while he gets ready to go off to college in a few years. However, the position she just left is one of the highest-impact positions at Church A. Her last position was a full-time position that had her interacting with a very large number of people on a weekly basis. She was (and still is) a highly respected leader in the Church A community among various groups of people who came to know her during her tenure there.

⁴⁵ "Laurel," based on an interview conducted in a private meeting, Woodbury, MN, October 17, 2012.

Passion

If there is one word I could use to describe Laurel and how she feels about her ministry at Church A, “passionate” would be it. She speaks about her experiences with conviction, noting her successes, and her trials, and understanding that every day in ministry is going to bring both. Having an education degree and corporate experience, Laurel brought a lot of well-rounded ideas to her ministry, and the ministry she was a part of is still thriving today.

One of Laurel’s many passions at Church A is the children and the ministries in which they are able to take part. Some of these ministries include trips all over the country, and all over the world. One of the advantages of Church A being so large is that they are able to plan large trips to places like Jamaica, and Honduras. However, one of the disadvantages is that these trips cost money, and there used to be few opportunities for youth to raise the money to go on these trips, or even some of the domestic trips.

Laurel saw this need and wanted to be able to give the youth opportunities to raise the money it would cost to go on these trips and participate in the wider ministry areas Church A has to offer. So to help the youth get a start, Laurel began a conversation about different types of fundraisers that could be held at the church in order to help the youth. Out of this, many new projects were born, but one in particular that continues to be a success is the garage sale that is put on every summer.

Laurel’s mission was to enhance the experience for everyone in the church, and get as many people involved as possible. The garage sale opened up opportunities for intergenerational ministry, youth team building, self-growth, but most importantly, youth ownership of their ministry. Through learning how to host something as large as a garage

sale, and having the motivation be ministry outside of the world they saw every day, children and youth became invested quickly, and it's a project that is still a huge success every year.

For Laurel, this was a simple solution to an important problem, but one she knew she had the capacity to take on and help move forward. For her, the goal was not to raise the money, the goal was to teach the youth how to take responsibility for something like large-scale ministry, but have fun, and learn while doing it. The garage sale is an event the youth look forward to every summer, and when they come back from their trips, it's clear to the congregation that it was worth it.

This was a great example, again, of how passion can be a building block for the rest of the leadership traits effective leaders possess. In this case, Laurel's passion was evident in the humility she expressed during the course of overseeing the garage sales, and other fundraising events. She had the needs of the youth at the forefront of her priorities, and her love of those children is what drove her to making the garage sale such a success for everyone involved.

Initiative

Being the most experienced of the leaders I interviewed, her skill of seeing a need and working to fill it was obvious and not surprising. This was especially evident when we moved into talking about initiative in her ministry. And the example she shared with me was another showcase of her love and passion for the children of Church A.

Early in her tenure, she noticed that the children were getting little to no time with any of the pastoral staff. This was difficult for her to watch because children's relationships with church leadership, especially the pastors, can be high effective in the

long run of those children's experiences in ministry with the church. Not only was there no relationship to the pastoral staff, but also the teaching staff showed little to no consistency in teaching styles or even day-to-day operations of the childhood education department.

Laurel saw a need for a consistency with the children, knowing it would be good to set up expectations for them, and help them know other members of the leadership staff at Church A. To do this, she initiated a large group time at the beginning of every session. This gave the children something to look forward to, and it helped guide the teachers into teaching in more consistent patterns. Because of this new style of learning, Laurel was able to meet and be in contact with the children in a consistent pattern, and the children benefited greatly from this. This new pattern enhanced the cohesion amongst the teaching staff, helping them better ground their material and teaching styles. But what Laurel thinks is the key outcome is that the children's ministry became very visible, and children were being invited into worship to do things like Christmas programs, or musical programs. The children were re-introduced into the congregation as members of significance.

Because of Laurel's simple action then, children make up a major part of the ministry of Church A. While Laurel was simply attempting to put in place a more concrete and consistent pattern for them, her simple act and initiative changed the culture of the congregation.

Courage

Usually when there is a discussion about courage, it is a discussion about the courage to do something. Courage is usually paired with a fear of some kind—sometimes

the fear is as simple as failure, and sometimes this fear is because of something much more tangible (i.e. skydiving, or spiders). And though Laurel could have thought of many times she'd been afraid to do something, instead, she told me a story about a time she need courage to *not* do something.

Midway through the last leadership position she held at Church A, Laurel faced a major roadblock. Without her knowledge, she and her department were being asked to produce outcomes by a strategic planning committee that came to these conclusions without consulting them about realistic expectations. Laurel's team was essentially given a certain set of numbers that would be a goal for them to reach, but her team realized that these outcomes that were being asked of them were unrealistic.

This strategic planning committee was a part of the larger church administration, but no one directly from Laurel's department was asked to serve on it. When they came to Laurel with a list of expectations, she was surprised, but took it to her team to discuss what was being asked of them. After conversation, deliberation, and expressed worry by members of her team, they decided that what was being asked of them was simply unrealistic. Not only was it beyond the scope of what they could consider challenging, historically, the expectations were not viable. Never before had these types of outcomes been asked of this particular department, nor did anyone on the strategic planning team know what was historically considered successful.

Laurel had only one choice—she had to confront the strategic planning team and tell them that what they asked for was not going to be a possibility for her team. While the planning team did not accept this answer as legitimate, Laurel stood in defense of those who worked with her, and plead their case. She was able to do this successfully

because of her own self-confidence, but the confidence she had in those surrounding her. Laurel knew what achievements were and were not realistic for her department, given the current church culture, and specific congregational nuances, two things the strategic planning team failed to take into consideration.

Laurel had more than just herself at stake when she stood up to the people who were trying to control the people she led. She had an entire team of employees, but also a large number of congregation members that were actively a part of the ministry department she oversaw. This is another way we've been able to see how the characteristics of effective leaders don't act exclusively, but are intertwined in the actions of the leaders that possess them. Humbled by the work she knew her team could succeed at, she took the confidence of their gifts and talents to those who were attempting to control her, told them exactly what she needed to in order to keep helping her team succeed in the ways they could.

Creativity

One thing that is new to Church A's ministries is special needs ministry. However, it's only on the radar since Laurel put it there when she saw a sharp rise in interest. Until Laurel took steps to actively promote a special needs ministry, Church A was sending anyone who asked if there was programming available to other churches in the community. When this was no longer an acceptable option to those being directed away and Laurel, she took major steps to see that there would be ministry options for all of Church A's members, not just those without special needs.

Until one of Laurel's team members was hired in 2007, there were no staff members at Church A that had any education or specialization in working with

individuals with special needs. Laurel's desire was to make Church A a more welcoming place for everyone, not just people who didn't have special needs, but also not ignoring those without to cater to those who did have special needs. There needed to be a change in the congregational culture around how to welcome in peoples with special needs because that had never been seen as a need before.

In asking how this was going to happen, Laurel also wanted to engage the question, "How can we play to individual strengths?" knowing that some people were stronger, relationally, with these new members of the Church A community. This is what sparked an interest in hiring her team member who also had formal education in special education, knowing that she would prove to be an asset not only to the department, but also to the entire congregation.

The largest hurdle Laurel faced while implementing new ideas for a more welcoming community was the entire culture shift that needed to take place. She took it upon herself to come up with ways to engage church members, volunteers, and pastoral staff. At the same time, keeping a level of comfort for everyone involved was going to need some creativity, and the recognition that it could become a source of tension within the congregation.

After some time, Church A has a very welcoming community, bringing in multiple new families with every new member class, and a very involved community of individuals with special needs, each finding their place and where they're able to thrive within the growing congregation.

Humility

Fall of 2011, or as Laurel has affectionately dubbed it, “The Coup,” Laurel and her personal mission and ministry was faced with the biggest hurdle she claims to have ever faced during her time at Church A. Some families started chatting behind the backs of the leadership in Laurel’s department, complaining about certain aspects of the ministry she was in charge of and how the department wasn’t really living up to the expectations of the congregation members who were closely involved.

Between meetings, both secret and publically known, and the shady conversations going on without Laurel’s knowledge, eventually she knew she was going to have to get involved and face the issues straight on. Those who were involved in the complaints and secret meetings were open to the idea of having the entire department involved as long as the problems they were seeing would eventually be solved.

For nearly a year, Laurel and her leadership skills were scrutinized, criticized, and attacked. She sat in meetings, sometimes on a weekly basis, with the people who were biggest critics in order to sort things out and begin to build towards some answers. Not only was her entire team involved, but the pastoral leadership was also involved, though easily frustrated with the entire process.

This could have been an opportunity for Laurel to put her foot down, claim her territory as the one in charge, and essentially say, “Tough luck. This is how it’s going to be,” but she didn’t. She knew that her particular leadership role would not be effective or successful unless she listened to the criticisms and worked with those involved in order to make the department something that people wanted to be a part of. This process wasn’t easy for her, physical, or emotionally (during that time she also lost both of her parents,

and underwent a hip replacement, along with sending her oldest child off to college). But she knew that in order for her team to succeed, and for her own leadership to be one that excelled at its purpose, this engagement was a necessity.

Many of the ideas to come out of the meetings they held over the year have sparked huge changes within the department's programming, and mostly for the better. Though it was difficult and she often times wondered if it was worth it, her department is now thriving, and excelling. She knew the importance her involvement, as undesirable as it was, was going to be the key to making the department as good as the next stage of its ministry was going to need it to be.

Conclusion

Laurel, personally and professionally, embodies the five core characteristics, but she is one of those people who transcend them, even in their most complicated state. She has life experiences, both positive and negative, that she brings into each conversation, offering new and intriguing bits of wisdom with every sentence she speaks. She is wise beyond her years, yet humbly seeks ways to encourage others to be the leaders they're created to be. Church A will miss her leadership on their staff, but she has engaged and equipped a large group of diverse people through them with her knowledge of how to be a leader that deserves respect.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Narrowing down the definition of leadership to only five things has proven to be a difficult but helpful task in defining the core of leadership. Being able to name effective leadership traits will help those who are already leaders become better leaders, and those who are finding their identity as a leader will be able to better hone in on their leadership capacities. Having the characteristics highlighted in the leadership framework as a rubric, they provide an opportunity for people to optimize their leadership capabilities for the greater good.

After the research I've conducted, I've been able to confidently come to the conclusion that passion acts as a backbone for leaders in any situation. Passion is evident in every leader's story in this study. Passion manifested itself differently among all the individuals studied, whether it was a general excitement about something new or a desire for liberation. In each story a leader's passion dictated how they went forward with living into their role as a leader. While each trait in the framework can be linked together, passion lies at the heart of every leader's story.

Initiative and courage are closely linked to passion. Throughout the stories presented here, a person's initiative was fed by passion for movement or change. Multiple times in the stories of those who were studied, a leader's initiative came out of them seeing a need and acting to fill it. A leader possessing initiative values the passion that they feel enough to make a difference. I believe that initiative is another trademark

characteristics that, when called to the right role, a leader will fully live into, and do so out of passion.

The greatest insight to come out of researching the courage of ancient and contemporary leaders was the realization that courage and lack of fear are not synonymous. In each story, there was some kind of hesitation on the part of the individual. This hesitation came out of fear. Instead of letting the fear take over, passion fueled courage, and the recognition that there was something greater than fear at stake eventually won out. While fear may never fully disappear, courage is the result of knowing there is something greater to be accomplished.

Creativity has shown itself in a variety of different ways through the stories of the leaders I've studied. Creativity means the ability to create something out of what you know you have, and what you know you could have. I like to think of creativity being the place where passion, initiative, and courage all come together. I also would argue that creativity could be the most underrated of the leadership traits in the framework, but I believe this is because the definition of creativity, as we know it, is too narrow.

Humility is the final leadership trait in this study, but just as important as those that precede it. When you find yourself in a clearly defined leadership role, it is because your followers have put you there, one way or another. This means that to be truly effective in the office to which you've been called, you must constantly keep the needs of those people a priority. Respecting your role means respecting the needs of those who have called you to it.

A theological framework of three ideas heavily guided this study. First, the *missio Dei* will continue to prevail. God's power will always win over the will of man. The goal

for leaders is to seek to understand what God's will looks like, and then to decide how their gifts and passions feed into that larger picture.

Next, the Holy Spirit continues to spread gifts of passion and wisdom to everyone. This passion the Holy Spirit gives to us is what causes us to act. By being open to the gifts of the Spirit, we can continue to live into the *missio Dei*, as well as live into who God intends for us to be in his larger masterpiece of the earthly kingdom.

Last, understanding that what we do on earth is not our own work, but the work of God. God uses us as co-creators, and has a purpose for each person for his will and his mission. By understanding that what we do is not just our work, we build the ability to trust something larger than ourselves, and work for something larger than what we know to be our own individual reality.

The three people highlighted in the final section of this project embrace the movement of the transforming church in the world. If Missiology is the study of God's work in the world, each of these people practice applicable inspiration, the way in which God's people are using their own gifts to take part in that work. The idea of applicable inspiration is a way to survey how leaders use the five core traits of leadership. Applicable inspiration is the human element of missiology. Missiology is what God is doing in the world, but applicable inspiration is how the Holy Spirit is equipping us, the inhabitants of the earth, to be co-creators with God in that work.

God has always been at work in the world through the work of the Holy Spirit, and we as co-creators have always had an opportunity to be a part of that. In section two of this paper, Bible leaders Moses, Ruth, and John the Baptist were discussed. The time span between each of these people was great, showing that God continues to work over

time, but God's work is still relevant. The study of contemporary leaders in section three uses the same leadership traits in their practices today adds an even larger expanse of time. In *Leadership and The New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Margaret Wheatley claims that the art of leadership changes because time and organizations are always in motion, always changing.⁴⁶ While I believe that we are always changing as God's work in the world moves us forward, this project demonstrates that what lies at the core of leadership does not. Each person I've studied or interviewed has been a leader—very public and well known throughout history or on a smaller scale, known to a couple thousand people at a suburban church in Minnesota. But each of these people had traces of the same characteristics that were instrumental to their behaviors and ideologies as leaders in their relative contexts.

This study is important for the church going forward because the church desires to stay relevant in a quickly transforming culture. Though the gospel doesn't change, the way the church brings the gospel to the world has to change in order for the world to be receptive to its message. In order to do this, the church needs to require its leaders to examine who they are in their role as leaders, and not continue to work according to the status quo. By allowing leaders to discover who they are, and why they feel God has called them to a certain position, individual congregations can be sure they have the most passionate and effective people where they are bound to be the most successful. Not only does this study work on an individual level for congregation members, but it can also be used to help congregations develop an identity and a place within the larger church.

When a congregation has a clear picture of what God is doing in their community, they

⁴⁶ Wheatley, Margaret J. *Leadership and the New Science* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006).

can uncover where their passion lies, and develop ways to contribute to the missio Dei with the world-wide church as a whole.

The world is changing and the church must change with it. Contexts will continue to change until the world ceases to exist and God's work on earth is complete. If the missional church is to continue to embrace the Spirit's calling, and send people out into the world,⁴⁷ then the church needs to continue recognizing the leadership capabilities that people possess, and find ways to optimize them for the work of the church in the world.

⁴⁷ Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, 84.

APPENDIX A

Annotated Bibliography

Chandler, John P. *Courageous Church Leadership: Conversations with Effective Practitioners*. Atlanta, GA: Chalice Press, 2007.

Courageous Church Leadership is a resource that compiles reflections and discussions with current church leaders on how to be a church in a changing culture. Coming from a missiological perspective, the contributors look at church leadership with a focus on “courage”, and what part courage must play in both sustaining and growing churches today.

The book looks at issues such as courageous span, conversing, repositioning, intelligence, awakening, alliances, diversity, teamwork, and vision. All of these topics are wildly anticipated and approached in today’s congregations, and this book is a single resource that addresses these topics with the help of some of today’s greatest missiological thinkers.

Cloud, Dr. Henry. *9 Things a Leader Must Do*. Franklin, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006.

Dr. Henry Cloud is a renowned author and speaker dealing with all issues leadership. In his book, *9 Things a Leader Must Do*, Dr. Cloud covers nine essential actions one must do in order to become the most effective and productive leaders they can be.

Some of the main points Dr. Cloud covers have a lot to do with the leaders own stability and identity than how to deal with those they are leading. This is a common theme that runs throughout Dr. Cloud’s writings and speaking engagements- be an effective leader by taking care of yourself.

This is a useful resource, covering many topics effective leaders have lost sight of, or need help improving in order to create a healthy environment for those they lead

— *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals About Personal Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

A large part of being an effective and productive leader is having a keen sense of self. In *How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth*, the authors Dr. Henry Cloud, and Dr. John Townsend explore the process of personal growth, and how that journey is important to finding a one’s calling.

From discovering ways to see the bigger picture to learning the importance of ‘pruning’, *How People Grow* explores the importance of putting oneself in the right situations for the healthiest and most effective growth. This book will uncover the differences between those who have developed a healthy sense of self, and those who are struggling with finding their place, and why the two are so drastically different and important to living in community with others on the same journey.

—. ***Integrity: The Courage to Meet the Demands of Reality*** . New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006.

Having character is a major part of success in today's culture. Whether it be in a corporate setting, private setting, or even in personal relationships. In *Integrity*, Dr. Henry Cloud discusses the importance of character and integrity in relationships both professional and personal. A major component of integrity is the ability to trust and be trusted, and this is a key idea that Dr. Cloud uses as a framework for his writing.

From building trust, and maintaining connection through those relationships, Dr. Cloud discusses how integrity can make or break your as a professional, and person. Without forgetting to embrace reality, *Integrity* offers insight to the importance of the lost art of conducting oneself with character and building a trusting relationship.

—. ***Necessary Endings***. New York, NY: HarperCollins Books, 2010.

Endings are the door to new beginnings. In everything from business to love, endings are necessary for reaching an ultimate goal or outcome. The book *Necessary Endings* addresses these situations and the purpose for not only successful endings, but meaningful endings as well. Though any ending can be difficult or awkward, most are absolutely necessary, and this book explains why.

Without endings, there cannot be new beginnings. Without new beginnings, one cannot move forward, and if one is not moving forward, they are going backwards. *Necessary Endings* covers what kinds of situations require endings, what kinds of endings are appropriate, and how to execute a successful ending (whether it be a personal relationship or business endeavor) keeping in mind that an ending does not mean failure. Dr. Henry Cloud is a psychologist, author, and lecturer on leadership and relationships.

Collins, James. *Good to Great: Why some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers Inc. , 2001.

Good to Great is a book that tackles a major issue in today's free market economy. Without mincing words, Jim Collins takes on the exciting but challenging task of helping institutions go from good to great. In a society weighed down by being good and getting by, Collins offers a recipe baked by research to help companies strive to be better than good.

Taking everything from leadership dilemmas to discipline head on, *Good to Great* offers a burst of energy for those currently in leadership positions that not only offers ideas and methods of reflection, but also gives them reasons not to settle for good when they can be great. Jim Collins is an American business consultant, author, and lecturer on business sustainability and leadership.

Dickson, John. *Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Humilitas is a book that takes an in-depth look at the importance of humility in today's culture. While looking at relevant situational humility, Dickson also takes his reader on a tour of humility in history, dating back to antiquity. Along with a survey of what it means to be humble today, he offers insight into the call for Christians to be humble beginning with Jesus Christ.

Because of the in-depth look at humility in history, *Humilitas* introduces Christians to a new meaning of servant-like humility, and why it is important for them to embrace that as a part of their Christian identity and live it out fully. John Dickson is an

ancient history scholar, as well as a pastor at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Roseville, Australia.

Dweck, Dr. Carol. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success-How we can Learn to Fulfill our Potential*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc. , 2006.

Mindset is a book concerned with personal attitudes and how they affect multiple areas of one's life. The book begins with discussing how people differ, and how different mindsets affect different types of people. It also discusses the different types of mindsets, and what they can mean for the people around them.

Mindset focuses a lot on how relationships in business, family, and other areas are affected by your mindset, and how your own mindset can either be helpful or damaging to your relationships. Finally, Dr. Dweck takes on the idea of changing your mindset, and how that can be a powerful turning point for you and those around you. Carol S. Dweck is a leading researcher of personality, social psychology, and developmental psychology.

Godin, Seth. *Poke the Box: When was the last time you did something for the first time?* United States of America: Do you Zoom, Inc., 2011.

Seth Godin's book, *Poke the Box* is an interesting and lighthearted approach to taking initiative and embarking on new adventures. In his book, Godin spends a lot of time discussing the importance of the three main steps of achieving a goal: Go, Start, and Ship.

The title "Poke the Box" comes from a story Godin tells in the book about a toddler playing with a buzzer box, and figuring out how it works. "If I push this, this will happen." This helps emphasize Godin's idea that you can't be afraid to fail, and that sometimes you have to play and try different things to get the best outcome possible. Seth Godin is an author, innovator, and lecturer on leadership, and entrepreneurship.

Goleman, Daniel. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Dell, 1998.

Getting ahead in the workplace has gone beyond knowing hard skills. Because of the heightened expectations, the standard has been increased, and employers are looking for skills beyond being able to do the job well. The new standard is being able to do the job, and have a sense of self, skills, and emotional intelligence.

Goleman's book covers the changes happening within the corporate environment in terms of standards being raised, but also goes into detail discussing how to develop and maintain a healthy emotional intelligence. By learning how our own minds operate, we can be better assets to our relationships, our companies, and ourselves.

Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977.

Servant leadership is the practice for taking on new characteristics in your leadership style. The book titled *Servant Leadership* studies what it means to become servant like in your leadership style. There are multiple parts to tapping into the servant leader characteristic including finding initiative and naming a goal, both of these things named in the first chapter.

Much of the book is focused around defining servant hood, and learning about oneself. *Servant Leadership* gives a reader way to look at leadership in a responsible, careful manner while conducting themselves in a manner that they can proudly own.

Hybels, Bill. *Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Bill Hybles is the senior pastor of Willow Creek Church in Barrington, IL. He is the author of multiple books on leadership and theology, with a large focus on building up leaders in the church.

Axiom is a collection of short snippets or rules from Bill Hybels' leadership style (he calls them "proverbs"). They are no longer than two or three pages per proverb, and each are tied directly to leadership or church leadership. This book is an excellent resource for leaders in any sector with words of wisdom that can be applied universally.

— ***Courageous Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.**

in *Courageous Leadership*, Bill Hybles empowers leaders to take risks, and develop visions. Encouraging readers to tap into their own leadership capabilities, and using God as a support system, Hybles spells out the steps to becoming a courageous leader.

Focusing on ideas such as the stakes of leadership, having a vision, and learning to know yourself as a leader, this book looks at new ways to approach risky situations from a theological driving force. This book discovers the courage it takes to take risky steps, and maintain a sense of confidence and strength through those times.

Jackson, John, and Lorraine Bosse-Smith. *Leveraging Your Leadership Style: Maximize Your Influence by Discovering the Leader Within*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007.

This book offers much insight into different leadership styles, and how each of them relate to each other. First, it offers a self-assessment of discovering your own leadership style. After the assessment is complete, it goes into detail about what each leadership style is, how it functions, and what its strengths are, focusing on how you can use your leadership style to be the most productive and effective leaders possible.

This book is good for those going through a re-discovery of the self, or to help with leadership development seminars, classes, etc. It could also be a helpful team-building resource.

Jaworski, Joseph. *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1996.

In *Synchronicity*, the author, Joseph Jaworski invites the readers to analyze and dissect themselves in a leadership light. While unpacking what it means to be a good leader, and the preparation it takes, Jaworski focuses on how being able to recognize one's strengths and weaknesses can help develop a leader, and a mindset that would be most effective for the culture.

Synchronicity challenges a reader to be involved in self-reflection and inner dialogue in order to let what happens outwardly be of the best outcome possible. From learning how to recognize a situation in need to figuring out how an individual can best serve that situation, this is a book that offers a new way to look at how a leader relates to those in a positive manner.

Keifer, Charles F., Leonard A. Schlesinger, and Paul B. Brown. *Action Trumps Everything: Creating What you Want in an Uncertain World*. Duxbury, MA: Black Ink Press, 2010.

In *Action Trumps Everything*, the authors tackle the subject of initiative and how to effectively get what you want. Because the authors are all out of the business realm, this book is geared towards young entrepreneurs, and those in position to make big decisions and take big steps.

This book is very business oriented, but the ideas can be translated to fit almost any scenario in life. The basis of the book is fairly yet effectively creating outcomes that are positive, and ideal for you, and your situation. Written so that anyone can understand, this book is easy for anyone from a CEO to an average Joe to understand.

Lencioni, Patrick. *Getting Naked: A Business Fable About Shedding The Three Fears That Sabotage Client Loyalty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Books, 2012.

Patrick Lencioni is an experienced business man, and consultant. Focusing on vulnerability, and the means to which one must gain the trust of those they work with, *Getting Naked* offers a real, and challenging illustration of how vulnerability can greatly improve a business.

With a focus on the definition of vulnerability and what that looks like in the corporate world, Lencioni emphasizes the importance of being vulnerable, building trust, and shedding fears of rejection. This book is useful for those who are starting new endeavors, even though the framework is very clearly ‘corporate’. Lencioni writes on ideas that can be easily transformed to any situation.

—. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A leadership Fable*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Patrick Lencioni uses this book to discover what makes a teamwork, and what has the potential to destroy one. Effective teamwork is the backbone of any organization or institution. This book uncovers the elements that make an effective teamwork properly, and how to implement those elements.

A major focus on the book is not on the leader himself, but how the leader is a part of the team, and how each person can successfully fill their role. Although the books title is *The Five Dysfunction*, the book focuses on more on what a healthy team looks like rather than what a dysfunctional team looks like.

MacArthur, John. *The Book on Leadership*. Orlando, FL: Wolgemuth and Associates, 2004.

The Book On Leadership does exactly what you think it would do- it covers everything leadership using Paul as an illustration. MacArthur’s book covers issues such as trust, initiative, courage, and taking charge, then applies it to Paul’s experiences, particularly his experience in Corinth.

This is an excellent resource for those in leadership positions in the church, since those leaders would better relate to Paul, since many of them would know the story. Although this book has elements that would translate to the corporate world, many secular leaders might be lost in the language surrounding Paul’s ministry, and the stories used to illustrate leadership in this way.

McManus, Erwin Ralph. *Chasing Daylight: Seize the Power of Every Moment*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, INC, 2002.

Erwin McManus is the pastor of one of the largest and most cutting edge churches in Los Angeles, and also a powerful lecturer on everything from evangelism to leadership. In his book, *Chasing Daylight*, McManus discusses the art of taking advantage of situations, and getting the outcome you want. Although this book has similar content to *Action Trumps Everything*, this book is based around a spiritual framework, rather than the corporate realm.

McManus covers topics such as initiative, uncertainty, influence, risk, and advance, and then spends the latter part of the book discussing what happens if and when you're successful, and what to do if something fails. This is a great book for those in leadership positions in faith based organizations since it is heavily rooted in theology, and those leaders could easily relate to the ideas.

Scott J. Allen, Mitchell Kusy. *The Little book of Leadership Development: 50 Ways to bring out the Leader in Every Employee*. New York, NY: American Management Association, 2011.

This book lives up to its title. It is a book with 50 chapters, discussing the 50 ways you can empower employees to be not only leaders in general, but the types of leaders your business needs while acknowledging their strengths and gifts.

The book is broken up into five parts: Development by Modeling Effective Leadership, which focuses on your own job as the leader or boss, Development through Skill Building, which focuses on team building, and skill training, Development Through Conceptual Understanding, which deals with intellect, and how to find solutions through problem solving, Development through Personal Growth, which encourages personal growth of employees, and finally Development Through Feedback, which again focuses on the leaders job of feedback and.

All of these ideas make up a toolbox for any organization to develop and foster leadership emergence in any organization. This book is published through the American Management Association, meant to be used in corporate settings, but this book is a powerful tool for any organization looking to embrace the leadership capabilities in their staff members.

APPENDIX B

Interview Consent Form: “Survey of Modern Leaders” interview, conducted by Brigitte Leininger, M.A. CML Candidate

You are invited to be in a research study of Leadership Characteristics. You were selected as a possible participant because you hold a position of leadership in a Christian community. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by me as part of my master’s capstone project in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary.
My advisor is Dr. Mary Sue Dreier.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to relate contemporary leaders currently in church leadership to the Leadership Framework I’ve written as another component of this study.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things.
-Participate in a 30-45 minute private interview conducted by myself.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has no risk.

The direct benefits of participation are: None
There are no direct benefits to any participants.

Indirect benefits to yourself/or the general public of participation are a better understanding of yourself, as the participant, as a leader in your current, future, or any past leadership roles.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept confidential. If I publish any type of report, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All data will be kept in a locked file on my computer, accessible only by password; only my advisor, Dr. Dreier, and I will have access to the data and any tape recording. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed. While I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality, anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Each interview will be recorded with an audio recording device. After interviews are listened to and recorded/reported on, recordings will be discarded by November 1st, 2012.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Luther Seminary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Brigitte Leininger. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at
bleininger001@luthersem.edu

Phone: 763-370-0177.

Advisor: Dr. Mary Sue Dreier, phone: 651-641-3456

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of parent or guardian _____ Date _____

Signature of minor subject's assent _____ Date _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____

(If audiotaping or videotaping is used, add:)

I consent to be audiotaped (or videotaped):

Signature _____ Date _____

(For surveys which are to be anonymous, these signatures of subjects are not required.)

(If direct quotations will be used in reports of study, add:)

I consent to allow use of my direct quotations in the published thesis document.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Research Question:

How do current church leaders see their leadership capabilities relative to “The Essential Characteristics of Effective leadership: A Leadership Framework”?

1. Passion

Tell me about a time when you were excited about something that resulted in you leading a group of people.

- a. What was particularly exciting about this issue/event/cause?
- b. What were your cues that you were excited enough about this issue/event/cause to take action?

2. Initiative

Tell me about a time when you created or started a group or movement based on one of your own ideas.

- a. How did you engage or get people involved?
- b. How did you know you wanted to start your own group or movement instead of finding one in existence to join?

3. Courage

Tell me about a time when you were hesitant or reluctant to do something publically.

- a. What was the tipping point that made you decide to do what it was you were nervous about?
- b. Do you tend to consult many people when considering taking on a new challenge or something you're hesitant to do?

4. Creativity

Tell me about a time when you've either solved or contributed to solving a problem.

- a. How long had this “problem” been present?
- b. How long did it take to eventually solve the problem? How many ‘tries’?

5. Humility

Tell me about a significant time when you noticeably put someone else's needs before your own.

- a. How did it make you feel to prioritize this person's needs in front of yours?
- b. What was the reaction of the person whose needs you made sure were met?

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