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Effective Leadership of Pastoral Staff Teams 2011

By

Eric R. Molicki

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

What is a pastoral team and how do you lead it? What differences, if any, are there between teams and team work? What are the practices that pastors need to learn to be effective at leading a pastoral team? These were the questions that led to this research project.

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members utilizing a team approach describe effective leadership practices within a team. Many pastors have some exposure to leadership training, but they do not understand how teams are built on different relational dynamics that require them to adjust their leadership approach. This study sought to explore those dynamics in general, and then focused on three best leadership practices: common team vision, team accountability, and a common team culture.

This study used an interpretive comparative qualitative case study method that focused on two different well-regarded pastoral teams. Each team consisted of five teaching elders ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America. Each team member was interviewed using a semi-structured approach. A focus group was held at each team's home church following the interviews. The literature review and analysis of interviews centered on issues such as essential team dynamics, leadership concepts and principles, and the best practices to bring them together fruitfully.

The findings of this study showed a need for team leaders to have a clear understanding of the essential relational dynamics of teams, the irreducible complexity of those dynamics, and their biblical foundation from ecclesiology, Trinitarian theology, and pneumatology.

The study concluded with the best practices recommended for effective leadership in three of the essential relational dynamics of teams: vision building, accountability, and creating and nurturing a common team culture. It suggested that teams may be the most comprehensive and in-depth expression of what the church should look like in practice as it pursues its God-given mission by the power of the Spirit.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, both the opportunities you enjoyed and those you were denied have been used of God to instill in me a deep love of learning. This project is the fruit of the seeds you planted, cultivated, and fought for in my life. The joy that you exuded with each completed step was so encouraging. I love you both, and want to thank you for the abundance of opportunities you bestowed upon me.

Finally, to my bride, Alice, there is no more important "team" in my life than you and I, Boo. Without your patience and willing sacrifice as my greatest supporter and partner in ministry, this project would have ended before it started- not to mention crashed and burned a few times a long the way! I have said for years that this is a "mercy marriage." At least now you can point to this completed project as some tangible fruit of your mercy to me, your life-time mercy project!

It has been my deep passion through this project to both grow as a team leader and to contribute something to the church through which others can grow as well. I leave to others the measure of the value of this project for the church, but for me, I am convinced that I am a very different team leader, pastor, husband, father, and friend as a result of this dissertation. For that alone, I am speechless before the mighty mercy of the Triune God to this speck of dust. Soli Deo Gloria!

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Why can't leaders and the teams that they lead thrive together? On the surface, all

may seem well, as experts such as George Barna write books entitled *The Power of Team*

Leadership, and pastors like George Cladis write of their team leadership in *Leading the*

Team-Based-Church.[1] A quick search of the internet reveals a great quantity of new

titles, all focusing upon "leadership" and "teams" as keys to fruitful ministry for churches

in the postmodern age. However, a closer examination reveals disconcerting

discrepancies between approaches to leadership and our models of team dynamics.

Christian leadership guru John Maxwell acknowledges this confusion: "One of

the challenges of learning about teamwork is that even people who've taken a team to the

highest level in their field sometimes have a hard time identifying what separates a great

team from a collection of individuals who can't seem to get it together."[2] Maxwell's

statement reveals that even those who lead teams often do not have a good understanding

of what makes a team thrive. If leaders do not understand what makes a group of people

into a fruitful team, then how can they effectively lead them? Leaders will often speak of

teamwork, but what really is "teamwork?" Is teamwork found only in teams, or are the

dynamics of teams somewhat different than the general term "teamwork" suggests?

Again, Maxwell suggests they are different and that leaders need to deal with the

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[1] George Barna, *The Power of Team Leadership: Achieving Success through Shared Responsibility*, 1st ed. (Colorado Springs, CO.: WaterBrook Press, 2001); George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

[2] John C. Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork: Embrace Them and Empower Your Team* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), ix-x.

confusion: "Everyone knows that teamwork is a good thing; in fact, it's essential! But how does it really work? What makes a winning team? Why do some teams go straight to the top, seeing their vision become reality, while others seem to go nowhere?"[3]

The discrepancies between leadership models and team dynamics comes into sharper focus as specific leadership tasks are examined. For instance, experts tell us that leaders have vision. Kouzes and Posner write, "Leaders look forward to the future. They hold in their minds visions and ideals of what can be... They must get others to see the exciting future possibilities. Leaders breathe life into visions. They communicate their hopes and dreams so that others clearly understand and accept them as their own."[4] Andrew Grove, president and CEO of Intel, put the same dynamic into slightly different terms. When asked to describe his initial vision for Intel, he admitted that he hadn't had one, but that he did have a personal agenda.[5]

Such personal agendas, we are told, are a fast way to undermine teams. "There is no 'I' in team," goes the proverbial coach's mantra. The researcher's own personal experience supports the truth of this reality in everything from team sports to business, where an individual's personal agenda can be the undoing of a team's success. Teams must have their own vision rather than simply relying on that of the leader. Wayne Cordeiro, in *Doing Church as a Team*, asserts that leaders must not focus on their own dreams. Instead, they must try to see their role as enabling the people of God to pursue

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[3] Ibid., ix.

[4] James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, 2nd ed., The Jossey-Bass Management Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 79.

[5] Ibid., 84.

their own dreams for God's glory.[6] So is it the leader or the team from which vision must come, or is it some other combination?

Vision is not the only area of disagreement among current theories on leadership and teams. Problems also surface over the question of accountability. One of the keys to functioning as a team is a focus on group accountability for the results of the whole team rather than focusing on individual performance. Patrick Lencioni puts it in stark terms:

> A team that focuses on collective results minimizes individualistic behavior, enjoys success and suffers failure acutely; benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals/interest for the good of the team; and avoids distractions. Teams that are willing to commit to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate desire to achieve those results. Teams that say, "We'll do our best," are subtly, if not purposefully, preparing themselves for failure.[7]

Under this framework, teams do not function effectively if they base their accountability on individual rather than collective performance.

Leadership thinking runs a contrary course. When things go wrong in an organization, who typically takes the blame? The senior leader. The same work dynamic applies when an organization is successful. Its leader is often rewarded through various direct and indirect means appropriate to the organizational setting. This occurs because the organization holds the senior leader accountable for the success or failure of the entire organization. Jim Collins memorably describes this view of the leader as "the genius with a thousand helpers."[8]

Some scholars present this pattern as the Biblical norm. Christian leadership

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[6] Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team*, revised and expanded ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2004), 98-100.

[7] Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 218-219.

[8] James C. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperBusiness, 2001), 47.

authority Aubrey Malphurs references 1 Peter 5:1-5, 1 Timothy 5:17, and other parts of the biblical evidence that scripture teaches a model of pastoral leadership that requires pastors to look more like Collins' description of a leader than the biblical ones.[9] While scripture does teach pastoral leadership and authority over a congregation, that authority is set within a context of a plurality of elders and a plurality of congregational giftedness that is better described as a team. This setting requires an approach to that leadership that is more aptly described by words like "shepherd" and "servant" than "genius."

Experience alone should be sufficient to prove that a team environment does not eliminate the need for leadership. The landscape is littered with "teams" that lacked leadership and turned into what Katzenbach and Smith called "Pseudo-Teams."[10] However, even these discrepancies indicate that greater understanding is needed for how leadership should function in a team environment. What does effective leadership look like, and how does it function to support team dynamics? Can leadership and teams really work well together? This study will examine these questions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

This survey asks how leadership that is explicitly Christian in worldview functions effectively within an equally explicit Christian approach to teams. What does such effective leadership look like? What modifications, if any, will be necessary? These are the sorts of questions that lie at the heart of this study. Modern pastors are probably exposed to more leadership training than previous generations, but such training is

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[9] Aubrey Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership.*, Ministry Dynamics for a New Century (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 49-54.

[10] Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*, Collins Business Essentials ed. (New York: Collins Business Essentials, 2006), 91.

usually generalist in nature rather than team-specific. Thus, most pastors have probably not considered what changes, if any, they need to make regarding how they think about and practice leadership in a team environment.

Is there a difference between leading teams and leading individual direct-reports? Leadership in a team is unavoidable, but what kind of leadership in a team environment is beneficial to the effectiveness of the team? How should pastors adjust their leadership approaches if they want to be effective in team environments? Without careful consideration of these sorts of questions, pastors may find that their practice of leadership ultimately undermines any genuine team ministry efforts. This could lead to a range of negative outcomes, from leadership abdication to a leadership directorship that ultimately destroys fragile team dynamics. Even without such extremes, pastoral staff members will not maximize the effectiveness of both their leadership gifts and the gifts and strengths of their team members without a proper understanding of these dynamics. The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members working in a team approach describe effective leadership practices within a team. To explore this subject, the following research questions were used:

1. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing a team vision?

2. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing accountability among members of the team?

3. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing an accepted team culture among fellow team members?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has significance for two sets of "stakeholders" in team-based ministry. It addresses potential areas of growth for those pastors considering, or currently involved, in leading a pastoral team. It also has significance for helping team members to recognize and respond well to effective team leadership.

Significance for Current or Potential Team Leaders

Suppose you grew up loving football and playing "backyard ball" for years. Then, imagine that you get to see an NFL game live and suddenly discover a whole new way to play that is much more dynamic. However, when you return to your backyard, you have no idea how to implement those new dynamic plays and defenses. You try, but find that something is not right in your approach and that your team actually seems to perform worse than it did before. Now imagine having an NFL coach come and work with your backyard team to show you how to run those plays. In a nutshell, that analogy represents the goal of this study for those considering or currently involved in leading a team. Pastors may have an opportunity to see well-functioning ministry teams in action. However, translating what they witness into action in their own settings requires a deeper understanding of the dynamics of leadership in a team setting.

As an example, consider a hypothetical survey of church liturgies for Easter and Christmas Sunday. Such a survey would likely show a change in subject and approach to preaching on those particular days. Pastors realize that their normal audience usually changes significantly on those Sundays to a much more evangelistic setting, so their sermon content and approach reflect this. Pastors will often have received or sought some specific training or coaching to help them understand how their approach and content

should be adjusted to the new context.

Many pastors who understand this dynamic do not understand that this same process of adaptation and contextualization needs to be applied to their understanding of leadership as they move into a team setting. Perhaps they have witnessed some of the benefits of team ministry and want to begin leading such teams within their own church settings. While much literature is available on leadership and teams, there is a void in the literature in the area of the principles and truths that most impact pastoral leadership in teams. They are like the backyard football players who have seen an NFL team play, but lack the understanding necessary to implement the dynamic plays they witnessed. Pastors engaged in team ministry can benefit from this study's exploration of both a Biblically-based leadership model and an understanding of the best practices of that model to successfully implement a more dynamic team approach to ministry. These research findings can help pastors develop an approach to leadership that will not undermine the team approach they may have adopted to maximize the opportunity for Spirit-given effectiveness of congregational giftedness. Those findings can increase their understanding of the roles their leadership can and should play in fostering essential team dynamics.

The researcher's own ministry situation should benefit greatly from the results of this study. As a pastor who sees leadership as a top tier gift and strength, the researcher needs more direction on how to deploy that strength as his church transitions to a team-based approach to ministry. How should the researcher think and act differently to effectively lead this transition? What do team members need to understand about team dynamics and effective leadership of teams? What skills do team leaders need to be

trained on in order to increase their effectiveness in a team environment? Having a sound

biblical paradigm of team-based leadership may be crucial to the long-term success of

this transition in ministry approach.

Significance for Current or Potential Team Members

Leadership describes a certain type of relationship, and the shape of that

relationship is molded by the understanding and practices of all parties.[11] Just as leaders

of pastoral teams need to understand what effective team leadership looks like, so do

team members if their participation in the team is to bring maximum benefit to

themselves and the team. Sharon Parks asserts that perceptions of leadership necessarily

involve metaphors and myths that shape our participation in leading and following.[12] This

study should have significance for team members by reshaping their metaphors and

myths of team leadership, exposing them to what effective leadership looks like in

practice in a team setting. A greater understanding of the nature of teams and what's

involved in leading them could lead to their personal and corporate growth and

fruitfulness in ministry together. Stephen Macchia states,

> Christian ministry teams today have a lot to learn about maintaining focus on a
> commonly shared mission, message, and ministry. Far too often we are distracted
> from the central mission and find ourselves going off course and falling away
> from our priority message. As a result, we develop programs for the sake of
> activity rather than to accomplish ministry of fabulous proportions for God.[13]

It is important for members of teams to understand the dynamics of teams and

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[11] For more, see Jim Herrington, R. Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

[12] Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Pub., 2005), 201.

[13] Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team: Five Traits of Vital Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 39.

how effective leadership pursues them. This study has the potential to reshape their pictures of leadership to reflect the needs of a team environment, and so to enable team members to know greater effectiveness and growth in ministry together with their team and their leader.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of clarity, the following key terms will be used in this study.

Pastoral Staff Team – Those ordained church staff members responsible for leading, overseeing, and resourcing a church's programs or ministry that have specifically adopted a team approach to ministry.

Team – A manageable group of people who have developed a common group culture as they collaborate in a ministry focused on pursuing a common vision or purpose for which they share mutual accountability.

Team Leader – The individual that the group recognizes as the official authority figure of the team.

Team Dynamics- The relational and interpersonal behavioral forces that encourage and shape the connections of individuals towards collaborative work that produces results greater than the sum of individuals working alone on a common project.

Team Vision – The ideal picture owned by team members of what it would look like for the team to achieve the purpose for which it exists.

Accountability – The genuine promise and commitment made to be held responsible for one's actions according to certain agreed-upon standards.

Common Team Culture – A commonly accepted philosophy of ministry and standards of relating that each team member embraces and practices.

Leadership – The art and skill of creating shared urgency, ownership, and action among a set of relationships entrusted with certain resources to accomplish certain results.

Leadership Paradigm – The theological principles and models used to guide actual leadership practice.

PCA – This abbreviation refers to the biblically-rooted Presbyterian denomination founded in 1973 that exists today as the Presbyterian Church in America. It has developed a reputation for solid Calvinist beliefs and a commitment to missions and church-planting. Currently, it has approximately 1300 member churches.

Senior or Lead Pastor – Refers to the ordained pastor chosen by the church's elders as the senior leader of the paid staff.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members utilizing a team approach describe effective team leadership practices. How does leadership that is explicitly Christian in worldview function effectively within an equally explicit Christian approach to teams? The study focused on how leadership functions in a team environment to develop vision, accountability, and a common team culture.

Both biblical and secular literature on teams and leadership was surveyed to allow the researcher to understand current thinking on effective team leadership. Secular works were included due to the common grace insights that can be gained when they are viewed from a Christian perspective. The survey began with a study of Scripture passages that address leadership and teams. Next, works were examined with the intent of discovering the basic dynamics that transform a group of people into a team. Literature on leadership that addresses those dynamics was then considered, to help the researcher understand the specific role of a leader. Finally, literature that further examines the impact of leadership on team vision, accountability, and culture was reviewed.

Leading Teams in Scripture

No concordance search of the Bible will turn up the word "team." However, like the theological term "Trinity," it is not the presence of the word that is decisive, but whether the term accurately and helpfully describes a Biblical truth, practice, or pattern. From this perspective, Scripture has much to contribute to an examination of "leadership" and "teams," as several key passages demonstrate.

Exodus 18:13-27

In *Moses on Management: 50 Leadership Lessons from the Greatest Manager of All Time*, Rabbi David Baron finds in Moses the quintessential manager.[14] Moses becomes the model for everything from how to "Bring Your Staff Out of the Slave Mentality" to how to "Use Exile to Reinvent Yourself."[15] Yet, if one looks past the trite chapter titles, a picture of great leadership emerges in Moses. Rabbi Baron writes,

> Every aspect of modern life- from its ethical murkiness to its uncertainty and cynicism- existed tenfold in Moses' day. We may be unsure about our moral compass, but Moses had to invent a moral compass. We may face difficult management objectives, but Moses had to lead the sullen and helpless Israelites through an uncharted wilderness, urging them on to a "promised" land. His mission evolved along the way as he realized the breadth of his task: to transform a group of despairing ex-slaves into a nation of optimistic freedom fighters. Now that's a paradigm shift.[16]

Not only is that a paradigm shift, but it is also a portrait of leadership. This passage in Exodus narrates a conversation between Jethro and Moses that leads to the establishment of a team of judges for the nation of Israel. This conversation contains both descriptive and prescriptive elements that are relevant for those who lead teams of God's people today.

The first aspect of team leadership is the foundation of trust. If the work of rendering judgments for the nation is to be shared beyond Moses, then those who enter into this work must be trustworthy. Exodus states that these men were to be "able men from all the people."[17] That is, they were to be capable men from each of Israel's tribes

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[14] David P. Baron and Lynette Padwa, *Moses on Management: 50 Leadership Lessons from the Greatest Manager of All Time* (New York: Pocket, 1999).

[15] Ibid., 54-60, 193-199.

[16] Ibid., xii.

[17] Ex 18:21.

so that they were believed to be reliable or trustworthy. They were to "fear God," and so

be perceived to have unimpeachable character.[18] The potential judges were "trustworthy,"

or firm and reliable, as the sense of the Hebrew word conveys.[19] Finally, they were to be

"men who hate a bribe,"[20] unlikely to be corrupted and worthy of complete trust.

The four different descriptions given provide a parallelism that make

trustworthiness the central selection criteria for team members.[21] This trust flows from an

appropriate fear of God, resulting in the kind of character upon which Moses and others

can depend. It is the foundation of everything they will do, and it is essential for teams of

people working together throughout the Bible.

Trust is, then, married to genuine authority to carry out the team's work. Jethro's

speech to Moses not only exposes a problem in his ministry, but also his need for genuine

co-ministers to share the ministry with him. The conversational nature of this scene in the

narrative indicates that Jethro is engaging Moses over a problem that is not just a "tweak"

or "slight change." Moses must see his role differently and learn to do things differently

by genuinely empowering others to take action that does not first require permission from

Moses himself.

J.A. Motyer points out that the language of verse twenty comes from the realm of

learning or illumination rather than from the law.[22] Jethro urges Moses to instruct the

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[18] Ibid.

[19] *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1997), 1:427-428.

[20] Ex 18:21.

[21] John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus*, 2 vols., Evangelical Press Study Commentary. (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2000), 386.

[22] J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage.*, The Bible Speaks Today

men in the things of God so that they will "know the way in which they must walk and what they must do."[23] Moses and his team of judges were to do more than render decisions. Rather, Moses was to instruct his team, and together they were to instruct the people in the ways of God. This is an empowerment not merely to tasks, but to learning together the ways of God, growing in understanding and leading others into that same understanding. While no "appeals process" is mentioned, there is a hierarchy that would seem to imply accountability. Verse twenty-two commands that more difficult matters be brought to Moses. This is probably because he holds a unique redemptive historical role as mediator between God and His people, as mentioned by Jethro in verses nineteen and twenty. Team leaders, however, do not mediate between their teams and God! Nevertheless, the presence of accountability for the team of judges should not be entirely dismissed. The testimony of Scripture indicates that accountability has a regular and beneficial function in our lives.[24]

Two other aspects of team leadership are seen in Jethro's conclusion to his conversation with Moses. First, Moses and his team of judges were only able to fulfill their necessary ministry to the people of God in a sustainable fashion when they worked together. Managing the ministry of judging was essential if the people were to receive the conflict resolution that was necessary to maintain peace in the nation. Thus, the team had to manage the details of the ministry practically and in a mutually agreeable fashion.

Second, the team of judges had to see themselves as serving the people. Verse

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(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 174.

[23] Ex 18:20.

[24] See Mt 16:18-20, 18:15-20; Acts 15:23-29; 1 Cor 5:1-13, 16:15-16; Gal 6:1; Eph 5:18-21; Heb 3:12-13, 13:17.

twenty-three relates that the outcome of the judging ministry was that the people were served in a fashion that fulfilled the team function. There was peace in Israel as disputes were righteously and expeditiously settled.

Other Old Testament passages might be examined, but the Exodus account about Moses already reveals much. Trust, leaders that are learners, accountability, practical management of details, and an attitude of service are dynamics of teams and leadership that this passage puts forward for leaders of God's people to embrace.

Jesus and the Disciples

How do the gospels help pastoral team members understand what effective leadership looks like in a team context? Do they address the subject in any prescriptive or even descriptive fashion? While there is much debate on the specifics, Jesus' commission to the disciples in Matthew 10 shows him involving them in His ministry. It is important for this study to consider what that involvement might reveal about teams and leadership.

Yet, one would be wise to recognize that there are important redemptive historical and ontological differences that keep many of Jesus' actions in the descriptive rather than prescriptive realm. For instance, a passage such as John 3:27-35 might be studied to consider the relationship between Jesus and John. Yet, John's role in relationship to Jesus was unique in redemptive history and so provides a shaky foundation for any conclusions that one might draw concerning team leadership. Jesus is the God-man; John (like ourselves) is merely human. Jesus, John, and the Apostles all played unique and non-repeating roles in redemptive history. We are part of a long history of members of Christ's Kingdom that are building upon the foundation they laid.

However, this qualification does not eliminate the possibility of on-going prescriptive insights into the dynamics of ministering together, especially the leadership of group ministry within the church. To this end, one passage that should be considered is the disciples' commissioning for ministry as a group. Matthew 10 is the most thorough call and commissioning of the disciples, so our attention will focus there.

The passage begins with Jesus' selection of the twelve. Unlike the situation in Exodus, the apostles were not chosen due to their trustworthiness. In fact, the synoptic gospels generally portray them in a consistently ambivalent light at best! This may be due to the role they play in redemptive history. For following Pentecost, the disciples transform from timid and flighty followers of Christ to resolute men who are willing to suffer for the name of Jesus.[25]

This passage makes it evident that the disciples were empowered. The one who held all spiritual authority commanded them to exercise His authority on His behalf.[26] They were empowered as spiritual warriors on behalf of the Divine Warrior. Verse one, along with verses seven and eight, authorizes them to release the power of King Jesus against opposing spiritual forces and the decay that sin brought to the physical world. They are also commissioned to bear King Jesus' message to the Jews. Verse seven summarizes their task in this way, "And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"[27] Further, the term "apostle" used in verse two literally means "sent one," which Leon Morris uses to argue that they bear unique authority to bring the

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[25] Cf. Acts 4:13; Acts 5:41; 16:23-25; 1 Pt 2:20.

[26] D. A. Carson, *Matthew, Chapters 1 through 12.*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 236.

[27] Mt 10:7.

kingdom-creating message of the Messiah.[28]

It should be noted that nothing is said of them doing this together in Matthew 10, although Mark 6:7-13 does mention that detail when recounting this same incident. Still, Jesus directly empowers them to play a group role: to serve as His kingdom-building messengers and agents to the Jews. While the word "team" is not present, verse 5 declares that the commission was given to all of them together: "These twelve Jesus sent out."[29] This detail shows similarity with Exodus 18, where we see authority given to a group to perform a significant task. Considering both passages together, one sees a repetition of how leading a group involves real, tangible authority for ministry distributed among individuals serving a common purpose.

There is another common theme in these passages: that the work of both the judges and the apostles involved transforming the individuals to whom they ministered. Jesus is not authorizing the Apostles to help people reach their dreams, but to change their allegiance to the Kingdom of God. Ken Blanchard and John Maxwell speak of leadership that influences people towards reaching their goals and aspirations,[30] but this is leadership that involves far more. It is transformational for how the Israelites in both Moses' day and in Jesus' day thought, spoke, and acted.

Thus, the disciples were empowered, but the text also shows that they were accountable. Verse twenty-four declares, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a

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[28] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992), 242-243.

[29] Mt 10:5.

[30] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level: Blanchard on Leadership and Creating High Performance Organizations*, Rev. and expanded ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2009), xix.; John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, Rev. and updated 10th anniversary ed. (Nashville,TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), xix, 47-60.

servant above his master."[31] Verses twenty-five through twenty-eight then explain that statement by showing that the disciples must be faithful to the mission Jesus gave them, even amidst much opposition. In verses thirty-two and thirty-three, Jesus tells them that there will be a final reckoning based on people's responses to Jesus and His mission. He says, "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."[32] Jesus is telling them that they are accountable even in the face of opposition, and that accountability extends to a heavenly reward for faithfulness to Christ.

This accountability exists between the disciples and God, but not so much between each disciple and the team as a whole. There are clear lines of authority, even though the disciples share in responsibility for their common mission. Other Scripture passages, such as Galatians 6:1-2 and Hebrews 3:12-13, indicate the existence of a corporate accountability that we should exercise among our fellow Christians. However, Jesus' commissioning of the team of apostles places the emphasis upon their accountability to Him and His Kingdom. In light of the other passages that describe mutual or shared accountability, one wonders if Jesus' emphasis here is not due to His unique identity as God Himself in human form.

Another aspect of leadership in a team setting is found in Jesus' specific instructions for how they are to carry out their ministry. In verses five and six, Jesus

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[31] Mt 10:24.

[32] Mt 10:32-33.

commands them to only go to the Israelites.[33] He next instructs them on what to do and what not do when it comes to financial provision in their ministry.[34] Specific procedures for everything are not given, nor are the disciples to wait for such specifics every time a question arises. This is not to say that they are free to make their own decisions! John 14:12-26 proclaims that Jesus will be present with the disciples in their ministry through the person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will "bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."[35] However, it is clear that giving specific instructions is not incompatible with genuine empowerment.

It seems likely that some of these instructions are due to the unique redemptive historical circumstances of the pre-resurrection time period. Yet, Jesus clearly exercised leadership to enable the disciples to minister in their unique environment. Jesus' actions with His disciples suggest that leadership in a team context involves enabling the team members to effectively manage ministry on their own. This aspect of leadership will be discussed again in the Ephesians 4 passage considered later in this section.

One final aspect of leadership in Matthew 10 should not be overlooked. In the financial instructions given in verses eight to ten, Jesus describes their ministry in a way that is often today called "servant leadership." He sets a standard for the team of disciples to come not for personal financial gain, but as servants of Jesus and as servants of the ones to whom they are sent as ministers and messengers of the Kingdom. They are to be a living picture of Jesus' leadership style. Jesus elaborates on this:

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[33] Mt 10:5-6.

[34] Mt 10:8-10.

[35] Jn 14:26.

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.[36]

Matthew 10 shows that leadership in a team environment, as Jesus demonstrates here with His disciples, involves releasing them into ministry with His authority. However, that authority is guided by specific instructions and standards for the whole group that the ministry was to embrace and embody. The disciples were to collaborate to serve a purpose that was larger than their individual desires. This ministry was accountable to Jesus, and it was to reflect a posture of servanthood, like the Master whose authority it carried and whose purposes it served.

Acts 6:1-7

This post-Pentecost record of the early church opens with a ministry failure that turns into a team triumph. It relates the beginnings of division within the nascent church over mercy ministry to church widows.[37] John Stott points out that the apostles quickly realize that this problem goes beyond the technical question of who gets what:

> The issue was more, however, than one of cultural tension. The apostles discerned a deeper problem, namely that social administration (both organizing the distribution and settling the complaint) was threatening to occupy all their time and so inhibit them from the work which Christ had specifically entrusted to them, namely preaching and teaching.[38]

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[36] Mt 20:25-28.

[37] Acts 6:1.

[38] John R. W. Stott, *The Spirit, the Church, and the World: The Message of Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 121.

They really needed a new approach to care and mercy for the destitute in the church. So

they formed a team of seven men who became the first deacons.[39] Within this account,

we recognize a number of recurring themes for leading in a team environment.

The apostles begin by recognizing the need to empower others to participate in

this important ministry of mercy. This decision involves more than just relieving them of

the burden of waiting on tables. John Stott describes the principle taught here:

> A vital principle is illustrated in this incident, which is of urgent importance to the
> church today. It is that God calls all his people to ministry, that he calls different
> people to different ministries... All Christians without exception, being followers
> of him who came "not to be served but to serve," are themselves called to
> ministry, indeed to give their lives in ministry.[40]

Stott concludes that the creation and empowering of the team of deacons will allow the

ministry of mercy and the ministry of the Word to be more effective, and that this same

pattern is true in the church today.[41]

In verse two, the apostles call together "the full number of the disciples" to

discuss the situation.[42] The creation of this team did not occur merely by apostolic fiat.

Rather, they gathered the whole church to face and work on the problem together. This

suggests that leading in this particular team environment looked less like a military unit

than a town hall meeting for the purpose of finding a workable solution. The whole

church is pleased by the creation of this team, thus the whole church has become part of

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[39] Acts 6:3.

[40] Stott, 122.

[41] Ibid., 123.

[42] Acts 6:2.

the solution.[43] The apostles demonstrate team leadership that involves an empowering of others not merely by command, but by common ownership and submission.

The description of the new group indicates that they must be men of "good repute."[44] This description suggests that trust is a requirement for serving on this new team of deacons. Like the judges of Israel in the days of Moses, trust is the over-riding qualification for any that would effectively serve on this team. One can argue this was especially true due to the unique situation of distrust that was arising in the church.

The apostles specifically discussed their need to stay focused on the ministry of the Word.[45] Yet, managing the details of the distribution to poor widows was creating dissension. This new group of "deacons" were to manage those details on their own so as to allow the Apostles to stay focused on the ministry of the Word and prayer.[46] This multiplication of ministry and division of labor brought great fruitfulness to the church.[47] In this situation, leadership in a team environment focused on helping the team to effectively manage the ministry.

These events give us another example of a New Testament team adopting the posture of servants. The diaconal team created here existed to serve the whole body of the church, and to do it together. This team existed for something beyond itself. Here, a purpose existed beyond the team that called the team together in service. The passage also relates how the new team was to serve out of a deep experience of the gospel, noting

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[43] Acts 6:5.

[44] Acts 6:3

[45] Acts 6:2.

[46] Acts 6:3b-4.

[47] Acts 6:7.

that members were to be men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom."[48] These were men in

whom the Spirit clearly dwelt, and their service was to be continually empowered by the

gracious experience of His presence through His Spirit.

Acts 6 relates how the nascent church faced a significant ministry struggle by

finding a solution that involved ministering as a group. It echoes as well as develops the

characteristics of team leadership encountered in previous passages. Jaroslav Pelikan

asserts that the men were set apart with authority to minister to the whole community.[49]

This example of what could be called a team approach illustrates the pattern of

empowerment for ministry, where wise division of labor between the apostles and the

new deacons enables the ministry to grow. The account emphasizes an approach that

involved many in the decisions and execution of practical ministry in the church. The

men serving in this new group were to be men of trust who adopted a posture of service

to others in an endeavor far larger than themselves. These are ideas further developed in

passages such as Ephesians 4:11-16.

Ephesians 4:11-16

When we turn to the letters of Paul, we find explicit principled instruction for

leadership in a team environment. In the first major gospel praxis section of Paul's letter

to the Ephesians, he commands a form and function for church leadership roles and

ministry that outline the basic shape of what today could be called teams.

> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and
> teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of
> Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son

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[48] Acts 6:3.

[49] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts.*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 94-95.

of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*[50]

Recent scholarship has made a compelling exegetical case for understanding the prepositional phrases of verse twelve to be linked in a progressive sequence.[51] This places the leadership given to the church in a position of equipping or preparing the people of God to put their gifts to use. Modern team language could call that "leadership that empowers."

Ephesians 4:11-16 emphasizes that the ministry of the church has an important and compelling purpose. This ministry is variously described as "mature manhood"[52] or "... to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."[53] As Christians are equipped, and as they exercise their ministry gifts, the church grows in size and depth. This suggests that a compelling purpose that could not be achieved through individual effort plays a role in team ministry. Verse sixteen beautifully describes the blending of gifts together to reach that purpose and so to create something greater than the sum of the parts: "from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it

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[50] Eph 4:11-16.

[51] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians.*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1984), 349; Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 547-551; Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians.*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999), 301-303; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians: God's New Society.*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 166-167.

[52] Eph 4:13.

[53] Eph 4:15.

is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."[54]

Verses thirteen and fifteen describe the ways in which such purposeful ministry changes people. As Christians minister together, they collectively undergo a progressive change into a common culture and community that increasingly resembles Jesus' character and passions. Stephen Macchia describes a similar dynamic in teams that he terms "assimilation."[55]

Central to the current understanding of team dynamics is the notion that teams perform at a higher level than individuals who merely contribute their individual product to the whole. Katzenbach writes, "In the final analysis, performance is both the cause and effect of teams. Real teams almost always outperform similarly situated and challenged individuals acting as individuals."[56] This synergistic dynamic appears through the organic metaphor of "the body" that Paul uses in verses twelve through sixteen. As the body is more than the sum of its parts, so is the church, as each member lives and serves together. This metaphor that Paul applies to the church is a consistent fit for the current understanding of team dynamics today.

George Cladis, in describing a team-based approach to ministry, describes how these dynamics drive team ministry in the church:

> Collaborative ministry teams that have a clear purpose and rigorous discipline are a highly effective way of creating spiritually-fulfilling work and moving toward a Christ-centered goal. Team ministry has a solid biblical and theological foundation that, in most cases, sets it above Lone Ranger heroics as the most

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[54] Eph 4:16.

[55] Macchia, 97.

[56] Katzenbach and Smith, 107.

meaningful way to serve in the church. A team that learns how to discern the spiritual gifts of the individual team members and how to have members work together, pray hard, and share information and energy in order to move toward a sharply defined mission, vision, or cause, is an extremely powerful unit of ministry. When members of leadership teams collaborate in order to accomplish what they discern is God's will, they experience the beauty of Spirit-given synergy.[57]

The theology of Ephesians 4:11-16 blends beautifully within Cladis' description of team-based ministry. As leaders equip, the saints minister together in genuine collaboration. The passage suggests that leading in a team environment involves enabling a level of genuine ownership by all that resembles the inter-connectedness of the human body. Such ministry seems to require a compelling purpose that all believe, embrace, and towards which each must contribute. Over time, such ministry changes the participants into a new common culture where they increasingly resemble the character of Christ. This blending of Scriptural teaching and team thinking continues in the body metaphor of 1 Corinthians 12.

1 Corinthians 12

The pervasive presence of teaching related to the Spirit, as well as this teaching's potential implications for teams, leads Stephen Macchia to root his model of team dynamics in the latter half of the twelfth chapter of this book. Indeed, a close study of the entire chapter provides rich theological ground for considering team-based ministry. In verses four through eleven, Paul opens by emphasizing the broad range of spiritual gifts given through the Holy Spirit, as well as their source in the grace given to us in the gospel. He intentionally uses a different word in verse four onward, *ca¿risma*, as compared to the term the Corinthians had used in their letter, which Paul repeats in verse

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[57] Cladis, 88.

one, *pneumatiko*.[58] The word shift intends to convey that every Christian has received

"grace-gifts" from Christ through the Spirit. Every Christian has a necessary place for

which they are gifted. This echoes the team dynamic of collaborative use of God-given

abilities. Verses seven, twelve, and thirteen of the twelfth chapter make explicit that these

spiritual talents are given for collaboration, resulting in unity within the body:

> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good…For just as
> the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though
> many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized
> into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one
> Spirit.[59]

Macchia argues that verse twelve, in particular, describes the diversity of parts and unity

of the whole that today is called a team. Paul then goes on in verse thirteen to speak of

the empowerment of all God's people by the one Spirit of Christ given to all.[60] Thus,

while the terms are absent, the team dynamic certainly seems to be present in this

passage.

The evidence for this mounts as one surveys the "body" imagery that Paul

employs in verses fourteen through twenty-six. A detailed study of these images makes

clear that Christians in a local church are both diverse and dependent upon each other's

grace-gifts in their ministries.[61] Life in the body does not eliminate the individual, rather

it unites them relationally and ministerially so as to place a higher value on group versus

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[58] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 574-576; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 901.

[59] 1 Cor 12:7, 12-13.

[60] Macchia, 31.

[61] Fee, 608; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians.*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 588-589; Thiselton, 1002.

individual accountability: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together."[62] Thus, there is an emphasis upon "the collective whole" that shouts the kind of inter-dependence reflective of a team approach.

Intriguingly, the chapter ends with an assertion of the need for leadership within this interdependent body:

> Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.[63]

Here, Paul communicates that the value and interdependence of gifts does not eliminate a structure to the gifts that requires some form of leadership.

Whereas Ephesians builds a possible theological grounding for teams through the lens of ecclesiology, 1 Corinthians builds such a framework from the perspective of pneumatology. The passage describes the church as comprised of many parts that are yet to be pulling in one common direction. The "body" imagery suggests a level of inter-dependence that creates accountability among the members of the group: one part of the body relies upon the others and acutely feels the loss of those parts. Yet, a commonly shared purpose and accountability to the whole group do not eliminate the need for genuine leadership within the body. Far from a picture of pure democracy, the passage declares that real leadership is an on-going need even in such inter-dependent groups.

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[62] 1 Cor 12:26.

[63] 1 Cor 12:27-31a.

Summary

While a rich picture of leadership in a group or team setting emerges from these passages, this survey of selected scriptures has shown a number of recurring themes across the passages. Leadership of a group starts with trust. From the judges of Exodus to the deacons of Acts, trust is a repeated theme of leadership in team settings. Trust is then used to empower the team in a ministry with a shared purpose. Leaders do not impose purpose on the group, but they are observed in various ways leading the group to embrace and work towards a common end.

With ownership also comes accountability. Sometimes that accountability is mentioned as being directed towards Christ, while other passages picture it as including other people. In both cases, a shared purpose or vision leads to a measure of responsibility for the group members. Leadership's role in this accountability does not appear to be too heavy-handed. Rather, it involves keeping the group focused on its purpose and standards, whether they are God's statutes taught by Moses or the mutual need of other "body parts" in 1 Corinthians.

This survey has also revealed that leading a collaborative group involves enabling the group to independently and competently manage the ministry entrusted to it. Leadership has involved instruction and guidance of groups. However, the aim of such instruction has been for the groups to operate competently in their areas of strength whether those areas be judging, gospel proclamation, ministries of mercy, or any other ministry aimed at building up the body of Christ.

This literature review has repeatedly encountered the key attitude of servanthood necessary for collaborative group work to flourish. This includes the leaders themselves,

whether they are the judges of Israel or the disciples of Jesus. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."[64] The Bible has made plain that the master has come to serve and expects leaders to do likewise: "It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."[65] The attitude of a leader *is to be that of* the master: servanthood. This survey has demonstrated that collaborative group efforts in gospel ministry are characterized by what could be called a culture of servanthood in the image of the Master.

Understanding Teams

What is a team? Is it a committee with a different name? Is every group of people working together in a single ministry automatically a "team?" Is a "team" the same thing as "teamwork?" To gain a better understanding of what effective leadership looks like in a team context, one must first come to a clear understanding of what a "team" is.

"Teams" have been used in the corporate world for quite some time, as related in the highly influential work *The Wisdom of Teams*. In this landmark study, the authors define a team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."[66] This definition is somewhat different than the one used by long-time church consultant E. Stanley Ott to define what a team is in the church:

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[64] Mt 10:24.

[65] Mt 20:26-28

[66] Katzenbach and Smith, 45.

Conceptually, the ministry team is somewhat more complex than the committee. The designation "committee" originally meant those persons to whom a trust or charge was committed. In current usage, a committee is a group of people who are responsible for taking action on a particular matter. In a similar way, a ministry team is committed to take action on the vision entrusted to it. But a ministry team also develops its experience of Christian fellowship (*koinonia* fellowship) as well as the discipleship of its members. A committee rarely makes these matters of deliberate concern.[67]

While these definitions share the belief that a common vision is a component of a team, they differ significantly on other dynamics that make a group into a team. Both definitions assert that not every group gathered together for a common task is actually a team.

So what makes a group into a team? In this section, both Christian and secular literature was selected that focused on the nature and dynamics of what makes a group into a team. This survey will examine a number of significant works that meet the criteria, with a focus upon recognizing both commonalities and significant areas of difference in their understanding of what makes a group into a team. These central works will be augmented by others that support, develop, or oppose the concepts they discuss.

Leading the Team-Based Church, George Cladis:

A book referenced by many others in the field is *Leading the Team-Based Church* by George Cladis.[68] This is more than a book about teams; it is a book about the church and the role teams play in its life. Cladis approaches his subject intending to develop a Biblical and theological model of the church that is founded upon teams. Following this,

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[67] E. Stanley Ott, *Transform Your Church with Ministry Teams* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2004), 7.

[68] See Barna.; Macchia.; E. Stanley Ott, *Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002).;Owen L. Tarantino, "Motivating Staff to Mission: An Analysis of Church Staff Team Leadership" (D. Min. Diss., Covenant Theological Seminary, 2009).

he presents practical expressions of how that model needs to be reflected in the shape and practice of team-based ministry.[69]

The Church as Picture of the Trinity

Cladis asserts that the nature of Trinitarian fellowship as a *perichoresis* is to be a normative model for the kinds of relationships we experience in the church. Looking to 1 Corinthians 12-14, he asserts that the diversity of spiritual gifts and roles that are to be united in the church are intended by God to "image" the *perichoretic* fellowship among the three persons of the one Triune God.[70] While not making the explicit argument, he implies that a team approach to ministry is the best way to accomplish this.

Evaluating Cladis' Claims

With this assertion in place, he feels free to reject a hierarchical approach to church leadership and even asserts that the roots of such an approach lie in the medieval church's borrowing "its leadership structures from the leadership structures of the empire...."[71] While Cladis' argument for this is weak, his assertion may nonetheless be warranted. There seems to be little connection between the hierarchical approach to church leadership and the unity and humility amidst diversity of gifts that is present in 1 Corinthians 12-14. Cladis argues for a standard of collaboration rather than hierarchy.

Cladis' assertion that church life and structures should be reflective of the Trinitarian nature of God are central to his understanding of teams. One might look to Ephesians 2:19-22 in support of this conclusion. In this passage, Paul describes the

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[69] Cladis, xi.

[70] Ibid., 4-5.

[71] Ibid., 5.

uniting of Jews and Gentiles as one "household of God"[72] through the ministry of Jesus

Christ. As the description of the church unfolds, Paul mentions the role of each member

of the Trinity in the life of the united church. Verse twenty-two concludes by asserting

that the Spirit is at work in the church to make us a fit dwelling place for God. This seems

to indicate that the church is to be the place where the world experiences what God is like

and how He deals with humanity. This would certainly provide significant support to

Cladis' assertion.

Matthew 28:19 is another passage that supports this argument. Believers are

commanded to enter the church through baptism into the Triune name of God. Name here

would indicate more than just title, and the fact that believers are brought into a

community meant to be identified with the very character of the Triune God. This

understanding seems to be supported from passages like Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one

body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—

one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through

all and in all." Paul teaches here that all believers are to show unity that is reflective of

their one Triune God and His gracious call upon their lives. These and other supporting

passages support Cladis' assertion that church life and structure should reflect the

Trinitarian nature of God.

Even if that premise is accepted, it remains to be shown whether team-based

ministry is an approach to church life and ministry that is consistent with these

requirements. Cladis does not attempt to prove this assertion. He simply assumes it and

derives seven attributes from the nature and function of the Trinity that he uses as models

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[72] Eph 4:19.

for what ministry teams in the church. In this way, he makes the Trinity normative, and then seeks to create a shape for church structure and ministry that express these principles faithfully. What remains unspoken but assumed throughout these descriptions is that team dynamics are reflective of each of these characteristics.

The Seven Trinitarian Attributes for Teams

The Covenanting Team

Cladis views the Trinity's relational involvement with humanity through the lens of covenant-making.[73] Through His covenant, God defines the terms of relationship between Himself and His people and commits Himself to them in covenantal love. Each member of the Trinity is involved in realizing this covenant commitment in the life of God's chosen people.[74]

Cladis goes on to assert that teams should be shaped by such covenants and that they should engage in making covenants, just like our Trinitarian God. He teaches that teams should be a community of firmly committed relationships, and that there should be agreed upon standards of behavior and responsibilities, or culture, in order to "give order to passion, to set forth respectful and honorable ways of living forth one's heartfelt love."[75] In order to accomplish this, he believes team members should work together to develop a covenant that explicitly communicates essential elements of the team's culture.[76] Such activity would be both reflective of the Trinity as well as guided by the Trinitarian model.

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[73] Cladis, 10-11, 33-47.

[74] Ibid., 35.

[75] Ibid., 38.

[76] Ibid., 42-47.

The Visionary Team

Like the Trinity's involvement with humanity, Cladis argues that teams must also

be vision-driven.[77] He cites Jesus' baptism from Matthew 3 to support his assertion that

each member of the Trinity was purposefully involved in the Trinity's vision to redeem a

chosen people.[78] As he describes it, "vision" essentially means "mission" when speaking

of the actions of the Trinity itself. However, when this is applied to teams in the church,

the two terms have some subtle differences that are important to note.

Each church is established with essentially the same "mission," that is to fulfill

the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. He argues that "vision" is the particular

form that mission takes based on the unique strengths and weakness of each church.[79]

Teams, he argues, are uniquely powerful tools for pursuing a church's vision. He also

claims that teams require such a vision to exist. He gives a number of arguments to

support this.

Like the Trinity, teams are to be purposeful. Cladis sees the effective team as one

whose purpose is defined by the larger vision of the church.[80] Each team's activity is

guided and controlled by its desire to help the broader church accomplish its vision. In

this way, teams mimic the way each member of the Trinity does a unique part in fulfilling

the common goal of achieving the redemption of God's chosen people. Practically

speaking, this implies that teams differ from typical church committees in that they serve

the larger purpose, rather than merely their own self-driven interests. Genuinely

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[77] Ibid., 11-12, 48-65.

[78] Ibid., 12.

[79] Ibid., 47.

[80] Ibid., 48.

Trinitarian-resembling teams focus upon the whole church team, not merely their

individual "territory." In this way, teams are both reflective of the Trinity, and effective

in their labors together as they are guided by the way each of the persons of the Trinity

collaborate to pursue their common objective.

The Culture-Shaping Team

The Trinity is out to re-shape fallen human culture into a culture of love

resembling itself by establishing and growing the Kingdom of God.[81] Cladis lays this

foundation and uses it to build a case for teams as culture-shapers. He argues that the

church is, in essence, the chosen agent of God to accomplish this task, and that ministry

teams are to be tools within the church to accomplish this.[82] He puts it this way:

> The ministry team that covenants to be together in love and unity and to lead on
> the basis of a God-given vision then sets to work creating a culture of *perichoretic*
> love. The postmodern world is full of culture creators. Ministry teams endeavor to
> create the culture of the *perichorectic* fellowship of God. In so doing, they and
> thus their churches offer an alternative to the destructive and dysfunctional
> cultures around us.[83]

While one might wish for a more direct exegetical case, nevertheless, his

theological reasoning should not be dismissed. Teams should reflect the alternative

culture of the Kingdom of God. They should be structured in their relationships and

practices to reinforce the Trinity-reflecting values of that new society. The ministry team

is to be an example to people in the church and in the world of the new Kingdom values.

This has a great deal to do with how team members conduct their relationships, but

Cladis also points out that teams should be intentional in developing Kingdom-culture-

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[81] Ibid., 12.

[82] Ibid., 13.

[83] Ibid.

shaping symbols and themes.[84] Teams should become vehicles to eliminate competing

cultures, modeling Kingdom culture, and celebrating examples of Kingdom culture, all in

order to re-shape the culture of a given church to become the culture of Kingdom of the

Triune God.[85] While not directly stated, Cladis seems to assume that each of these

attributes of a Trinitarian-resembling team is interdependent. For instance, if teams are

guided by a specific vision of how a particular church is to fulfill its universal mission,

then that vision will shape the specific Kingdom culture that church will need to develop.

The Collaborative Team

There is no competition among the persons of the Trinity; each glorifies the others

and has infinite delight in them. They don't have weaknesses, but they do each have

"economic" roles in carrying out the redemptive plan of God. This, Cladis argues, should

be the model for the way teams function as well. He describes it this way, "Collaboration

is not uniformity. Collaboration is coming to the table with spiritual gifts to be used in

ministry. When the gifts are freely offered for ministry, God blesses and creates the

spiritual synergy resulting from the team members' collaboration."[86]

As part of this attribute, Cladis talks about two concepts that connect with the

thinking of other authors in this study. First, he talks about how important it is to find the

right people who will fit the culture of the team and not merely into the available roles.[87]

This helps one to understand what Jim Collins is asserting in his principle that it's

important to get "the right people on the bus," even before you figure out where your

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[84] Ibid., 68.

[85] Ibid., 76-80.

[86] Ibid., 14.

[87] Ibid., 102.

organization needs to go.[88] "The right people" is partially defined by the need to find

people whose gifts and personalities will collaborate with others on the team.

Another important aspect of the collaborative team is that they must share the

same philosophy of ministry.[89] This was an aspect of team ministry discussed in many

different works in this study. Often, it was found under the heading of "ministry core

values," as Wayne Cordeiro describes it in *Doing Church as a Team*.[90] However it is

labeled, the idea remains the same: just as the activities of the Trinity are all performed in

accordance with the truth, so individual members of church-based teams must all share a

common understanding of the truths that guide and control their efforts as a team.

The Trusting Team

In addition to the lack of competition in the Trinity, there is also an utter and

complete trust between the three persons of the Godhead. Cladis writes,

> This mutuality, sharing, giving, intimacy, and love of God exhibits to us
> possibilities for our community of authentic honesty... The degree to which
> honesty is broached in human community is the degree to which we tend to
> experience the ability of the Spirit of God to forgive and transcend our
> brokenness, in process of repair, and weave us into intimate fellowship.[91]

The theme of trust as a fundamental component of teams and leadership is not new. A

landmark work in organizational leadership in the 1990's, *The Leadership Challenge*,

pointed out the essential nature of such trust between leaders and team members.[92] The

authors described how a lack of trust practically destroys teamwork:

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[88] Collins, 62.

[89] Cladis, 99.

[90] Cordeiro, 155-165.

[91] Cladis, 114.

[92] Kouzes and Posner, 146-152.

What happens when people do not trust each other? They will ignore, disguise, and distort facts, ideas, conclusions, and feelings that they believe will increase their vulnerability to others. Not surprisingly, the likelihood of misunderstanding and misinterpretation will increase. When you don't trust someone, you resist letting them influence you. You are suspicious and unreceptive to their proposals and goals, suggestions for reaching those goals, and their definition of criteria and methods for evaluating progress. When we encounter low-trust behavior from others, we in turn are generally hesitant to reveal information to them and reject their attempts to influence us. This feedback only reinforces the originator's low trust.[93]

Cladis argues that such trust is integral to the ability to make all the other attributes of Trinity-resembling teams function.[94] In *The Wisdom of Teams*, the authors also recognize the central role of trust in teamwork.[95] They expand on why collaboration is impossible without trust by highlighting the role of trust in shifting from individual to mutual accountability:

> Of the risks required, the most formidable involve building the trust and interdependence necessary to move from individual accountability to mutual accountability. People on real teams must trust and depend on one another- not totally or forever- but certainly with respect to the team's purpose, performance goals, and approach. For most of us such trust and interdependence do not come easily; it must be earned and demonstrated repeatedly if it is to change behavior. Our natural instincts, family upbringing, formal education, and employment experience all stress the primary importance of individual responsibility as measured by our own standards and those to whom we report. We are more comfortable doing our own jobs and having our performance measured by our boss than we are working and being assessed jointly as peers. Consequently, team performance demands that most of us adjust our attitudes as well as our normal behavior.[96]

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[93] Ibid., 147.

[94] Cladis, 107.

[95] Katzenbach and Smith.

[96] Ibid., 109-110.

Clearly, these same sentiments are wide-spread and reflective of the fundamental

theological reality that Cladis is arguing: that our relationships (and not only in ministry

teams) are meant to imitate the relationships of the Trinity itself.

The Empowering Team

An essential team dynamic for Cladis is that team members must focus on

empowering one another rather than accumulating power and control. This models how

each member of the Trinity not only collaborates, but works together to empower the

work of the whole.[97] This becomes a practical expression of Miroslav Volf's assertion

that Scripture teaches that such correspondence between the church and the Trinity is

intentional and normative:

> The symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the Trinitarian persons finds its
> correspondence in the image of the church in which all members serve one
> another with their specific gifts of the Spirit in imitation of the Lord and through
> the power of the Father. Like the divine person, they all stand in a relation of
> mutual giving and receiving.[98]

This approach to ministry is also taught from passages such as Ephesians 4:11-12,

where the function of what is today called "professional clergy" is to equip the saints for

ministry; not to control ministry by themselves. This attribute of the empowering team is

a significant departure from the traditional parish model of ministry, where pastors

perform most of the essential functions of ministry. In the empowering team approach,

Cladis suggests that pastors "function as coaches, giving advice to, equipping, training,

and encouraging those in the front lines of ministry: the people."[99]

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[97] Cladis, 131.

[98] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity.*, Sacra Doctrina (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 219.

[99] Cladis, 124.

The Learning Team

Cladis argues that teams are no different than individual Christians: communion with God requires life-long learning from His Word. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 commands that we be taught to obey "all that I have commanded you."[100] This individual principle of discipleship is also an indispensible attribute of teams that imitate the Trinity. As Cladis puts it, "Ministry teams must be growing, learning teams. They are growing communities that are shaped by the Spirit more and more in the image of God."[101]

The insights that Cladis has offered in this book are fundamental in terms of identifying essential team dynamics. Cladis grounds teams in the Trinity itself as collaborative groups that trust one another, are empowered to ministry, are accountable to one another, create and nurture a common culture, and learn and grow together over time.

The Power of Team Leadership, George Barna

The Power of Team Leadership[102] is one of the most helpful books on the field of pastoral team leadership, as well as one of the most frustrating. It is one of the few books in the field that is specifically focused on the shape of leadership in the context of teams. Barna offers fresh insight on a wide range of subjects, from why churches struggle with establishing teams to critical leadership factors and practices for team success. This is a unique contribution, as most works focus on either the team or the leader, but not both.

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[100] Matt 28:20.

[101] Cladis, 16.

[102] Barna.

Yet, for all of its insight, this book lacks an over-all paradigm or aid to putting the many pieces together. Barna fails to weave a comprehensive picture of the relationship, and at times seems to contradict his own assertions. This section will briefly examine his contributions and possible areas of conflict for understanding teams, but the survey will return to Barna later to consider his work again as it specifically addresses leadership.

Barna's work confirms much of what this study has already seen concerning teams, and it also contributes some new insights. Barna speaks alternately throughout the work of church leadership teams that comprise staff and elders, and of layman-led teams that carry out the church's ministry activities. While he does not define the word "team," his definition of a church leadership team highlights key components that seem to be more or less true for both types of teams: "A leadership team... is a small group of leaders who possess complementary gifts and skills. They are committed to one another's growth and success and hold themselves mutually accountable. Together they lead a larger group of people toward a common vision, specific performance goals, and a plan of action."[103]

There are a number of elements in Barna's definition that are common to team definitions throughout the literature: a small group, complementary gifts and skills, personal commitment to one another, a common vision, goals and plans, and mutual accountability. Barna ties teams to vision in a similar fashion to what leadership experts such as Stephen Covey, Andy Stanley, and Reggie McNeal describe: leadership today is expressed in and through vision that moves groups of people in the same direction.[104] It is

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[103] Ibid., 24.

[104] See Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, revised ed. (New York: Free Press, 2004), 97-99, .; Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner, and Lane Jones,

a corporately owned vision that becomes a sort of "keel" that keeps the efforts of

individual teams and whole churches heading in the same direction.

Barna asserts that a team consists of a small number of people that are

"committed to one another's growth and success in ministry.[105] E. Stanley Ott describes

the small group dynamic for team effectiveness:

> Ministry teams combine the best of the small-group concept with the best of
> committee life. Such teams, like small groups and committees, typically involve
> less than a dozen people. By spending time in 'Word-Share-Prayer,' sharing
> meals together on a regular basis, and other means of intentionally developing
> their Christian community, the ministry team fosters some key experiences
> usually not encountered in committee life – deliberate encouragement of personal
> discipleship, growth of new personal friendships among team members, and
> increased passion to accomplish the ministry vision of the team.... The
> consequence of all this is that ministry teams develop people both as disciples and
> as leaders at the same time they accomplish their ministry vision."[106]

Thus, according to both Barna and Ott, one thing that distinguishes a team from a simple

group is that members of a team share a relational commitment to one another that goes

beyond tasks. They see the success of their ministry as including the benefit of their

fellow team members.

A team's need for accountability, performance goals, and specific plans are major

themes of such diverse works as *Execution*, *The Present Future*, and *Simple Church*.[107] In

Simple Church, for instance, accountability for teams is indispensible for creating

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7 Practices of Effective Ministry (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004), 69-86.;Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 126.

[105] Barna, 25.

[106] Ott, 70.

[107]See Larry Bossidy, Ram Charan, and Charles Burck, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Business, 2002), 141-177.;McNeal, 67.; Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 2006).

alignment of ministries towards the overall vision and ministry strategy of the church.

This accountability is accomplished through "ministry action plans" where yearly goals,

objectives, and plans are established for each team.[108] As these examples demonstrate,

Barna's insistence on these team characteristics illustrate commonly accepted team

dynamics.

Another important aspect of Barna's study of pastoral leadership teams (as

opposed to lay-led ministry teams) is that in actual practice, they tend to function as work

groups rather than teams. Barna describes work groups as groups of "gifted people

serving under the direction of a gifted leader" whereas teams are "teams of leaders

working together."[109] This description is a helpful starting point for understanding the

differences, but seems to necessitate a satisfying explanation of the difference between

"gifted people" and "teams of leaders." Unfortunately, Barna does not supply such an

explanation.

Barna carefully points to Biblical foundations for the practice of such teams in the

church and to current trends that encourage these practices. His Biblical justification

covers similar ground to what others have already mentioned, but he does add that Paul's

mission efforts in the book of Acts were team-based.[110] People could disagree on whether

this was intended as a normative principle, or if it was merely descriptive of their

practice. Yet, with Paul's explanation of the role of pastors and teachers in Ephesians

4:11 as equipping the rest of the church to minister together,[111] along with the

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[108] Rainer and Geiger, 177.

[109] Barna, 81.

[110] Ibid., 33-34.

[111] This perspective is well supported in a broad range of commentaries on Ephesians such as

corresponding description of the inter-connectedness of the body as it properly uses its

spiritual gifts, it becomes hard to conclude that the descriptions of Paul's team-based

mission efforts have no implications for the church today. Current scholarship on 1

Corinthians 12, such as the writings of Thiselton, Fee, and Garland, never use the word

"team" to describe what Paul is teaching. However, their descriptions of the communal

life actually lead to many of the foundational principles of teams that Barna has

described.[112]

Barna nearly misses this supporting Biblical evidence. He asserts that "God's

Word does not make a big deal about the importance of leaders serving in teams. Most of

the wisdom gleaned regarding teams must be drawn from passages or stories in which the

key principles relate to other aspects of life and ministry."[113] Thus, he seems to allow that

the absence of the word "team" indicates that the scriptures have very little of a

prescriptive nature to contribute.

Barna leaves no such ambiguity in the reader's mind when it comes to the current

trends and practical reasons for churches to embrace pastoral teams. He claims that his

research shows more pastors moving away from what Eddie Gibbs dubs "being an

evangelical superstar"[114] to being leader-trainers whose ministries are geared toward

equipping and releasing the people of God to the kind of incarnational ministry that Jim

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Hoehner, O'Brien, Bruce and Stott. Hoehner. O'Brien. Bruce. Stott.

[112] Thiselton. Fee. Garland.

[113] Barna, 31.

[114] Eddie Gibbs, *Churchnext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 121.

Peterson addressed years ago in *Church Without Walls*.[115] Peterson argued that Biblically

faithful ministry in a post-modern world would release God's people to serve and

demonstrate Christ to the world only as a Christians are prepared and encouraged to use

their spiritual gifts for the glory of God.[116] Barna's research shows that this is the

growing demand of God's people: to be able to participate, developing and shaping the

church's ministry and using their spiritual gifts.[117]

These and other current trends lead Barna to conclude that the church must

change to adapt to this new context, and the change that is needed is to adopt team-based

leadership and organizational structures.[118] He argues for such a change on the basis of

what we have already examined, adding a number of other important practical reasons

that summarize some of the thinking by other researchers.

Barna argues that true Biblically-mandated community is best experienced

through teams. This survey has already considered George Cladis' study of how team

dynamics depend upon community.[119] There is a clear recognition throughout the

literature that teams depend on community in order to function. Cladis is not alone in

seeing a Trinitarian foundation to this dynamic. Gilbert Bilezikian writes, "Since God is

Trinity, He is plurality in oneness. Therefore, the creation in His image required the

creation of a plurality of persons. God's supreme achievement was not the creation of a

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[115] Jim Petersen, *Church without Walls* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992).

[116] Ibid., 54-59.

[117] Barna, 14-15.

[118] Ibid., 63-82.

[119] Cladis, 88-123.

solitary man, but the creation of human community."[120] Such community requires the

gifts, talents, and even weaknesses of all of its members in order to lead to genuine

Christian community and fellowship.[121]

Barna's argument would support this, but comes from a slightly different angle.

He states that pastoral leadership teams are uniquely able (due to team dynamics) to teach

and demonstrate true Christian community to the church in a postmodern age. He asserts

that real community is shaped by a pastoral leadership team demonstrating genuine

community amongst themselves.[122] As previously mentioned, postmodern Christians

desire genuine community and involvement with one another. Barna goes one step

further by saying that a right understanding of the theology of teams leads one to see

them as powerful tools for achieving such community.

Another reason supporting Barna's point is that changing the culture of a church

to reflect our current post-modern context will not happen without genuine leadership

support.[123] In *Culture Shift*, Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro explain their perspective

on the importance of such a culture shift and how leadership's ownership of it is

indispensible.[124] Leaders must begin the work of reshaping the culture of their churches,

not through programs, but through themselves. Barna argues that teams are a powerful

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[120] Gilbert G. Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1997), 19.

[121] Dietrich Bonhoeffer and John W. Doberstein, *Life Together* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 94.

[122] Barna, 76.

[123] Ibid., 42.

[124] Robert Lewis and others, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the inside Out*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 56-60.

way to change the culture of a church and so enable it to adapt to the postmodern hunger for community.

Beyond community, Barna asserts that the teams "generate results far greater than the sum of the parts could have achieved."[125] He cites this as another reason why churches should begin to make regular use of teams. This theme is not new to the business world. Marcus Buckingham has compiled a significant amount of evidence that effective leaders and managers build synergy amongst employees by using the kinds of teams Barna describes.[126] Barna's research suggests this to be one of the ways that a right understanding of teams has a dramatic impact upon leadership and ministry. As one study participant put it, "Our teams don't just increase the impact of the leaders, they multiply them several times over."[127] Yet, such results from adopting a team approach do not come easily or quickly. Barna cautions that it will take substantial time and effort to properly implement a team approach to ministry.[128]

Barna's work resonates with a number of similar themes to the work of Cladis on the nature of teams: small in size, intimate collaboration, spiritual fellowship, vision, accountability, and more. His work helps refine the team concept by showing that teams produce and achieve results synergistically, and that teams recognize each member as not merely following the leader's directions, but leading in their own right through proper use of their spiritual gifts.

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[125] Barna, 78.

[126] Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 148-150, 164-176. Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 155.

[127] Barna, 78.

[128] Ibid., 172-173.

Becoming a Healthy Team, Stephen Macchia:

Stephen Macchia's *Becoming a Healthy Team*[129] is simple without being simplistic and practical without neglecting theory. He has synthesized much of the literature on teams into useful paradigms upon which churches can build pastoral team ministries. Whereas Barna's work lacked a paradigm, but provided a great deal of detail, Macchia's works tends to be the opposite, although there is still sufficient practical detail to make this one of the most helpful books on teams.

While providing much of the common biblical and practical argument for teams, Macchia provides a unique caution for those attempting to build a model for team ministry. Macchia points out that many of the fields from which we typically draw our understanding of teams have an inherent element of competition in them: athletics, business, socioeconomics, and politics.[130] He argues that this element of competition is unbiblical, leading us away from the unity of the body that we see in Scripture. Even a cursory glance at the church today would affirm that there is too much focus on what the other churches are doing as opposed to what might be the present church's unique role in making disciples in the community of the lost.[131]

After turning to Scriptures like 1 Corinthians 12 to build a Biblical basis for teams, as well as following George Cladis in seeing a Trinitarian foundation for teams, Macchia then provides a well-considered, yet practically oriented, team definition: "A Christian ministry team is a manageable group of diversely gifted people who hold one

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[129] Macchia.

[130] Ibid., 21-22.

[131] Ibid., 21.

another accountable to serve joyfully together for the glory of God by: sharing a common mission, embodying the loving message of Christ, accomplishing a meaningful ministry, anticipating transformative results."[132]

This definition reflects common themes in the literature of teams, such as a focus on vision ("mission"), small group size ("manageable"), the integration of gifts ("diversely gifted people"), a results orientation that stretches the group ("meaningful ministry"), and other such items. What is most beneficial about this definition is what it adds to the theology of teams. Macchia's reference to a team's "anticipating transformative results" adds a differentiation between what a team can accomplish together versus what it must rely upon God to sovereignly produce through its labors. Many Christian authors miss this distinction, perhaps because they're thinking on teams has been influenced by the fields that Macchia warns against blindly emulating. Teams need a performance orientation, but Macchia's definition asks teams and team leaders to humbly recognize that the real fruit of their labors ultimately lies outside of their ability to accomplish, for it is in God's hands. This insight pervades Macchia's suggestions on how to be goal-oriented, yet God-dependent. This is a welcome and freeing construction for teams.

Equally important is his theological focus upon the gospel as both empowering to teams and as the focus of the team's relational dynamics. The literature generally agrees that teams need healthy, functional relationships. Macchia's definition recognizes that such relationships are dependent on a practical personal encounter with Christ, such that team members are enabled to "embody" that love and grace, rather than merely tolerance,

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[132] Ibid., 41.

for the sake of the larger team goal. The practical functioning of the team relies on this gospel embodiment foundation.

The heart of Macchia's theology of teams is summed up by the T.E.A.M.S. acronym. These dynamics differentiate teams from mere working groups in Macchia's understanding.[133] "T" is for *trust* in both God and one another as team members, and this trust develops through community, celebration, communication, and conflict.[134] There are definite echoes here of both Wayne Cordiero's and George Cladis' reflections on the role and development if trust in a team setting.

The "E," which represents *empowerment*, begins with the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer and His giving of spiritual gifts. Believers are to use those gifts in connection with others on their team in such close collaboration that we demonstrate the Biblical picture of unity amidst diversity.[135] Macchia's development of the concept in light of Biblical principles suggests that such empowerment is an essential team dynamic if true trust resulting in mutual accountability is to develop.

Healthy teams must empower members by clearly defining members' roles and responsibilities within the team, providing needed instruction and resources for the use of their gifts, and delegating them authority under accountability.[136] This description calls for more than collaboration. It seems to highlight a functional parallel to mutual accountability: how can a team member take ownership of the team's performance if they have not been empowered with genuine authority to "own it?" Macchia states it this way:

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[133] Ibid., 49.

[134] Ibid., 62-70.

[135] Ibid., 77-79.

[136] Ibid., 82-88.

> When team members are asked to fulfill a role and a defined duty and are trusted to complete their work without others looking over their shoulder or micromanaging their daily routines, they are empowered. Team leaders and mutually accountable members should be entrusted with much more than a title; they should have meaningful tasks to complete. One tasks are delegated, every team member needs to know that he or she will be held accountable to complete the agreed upon assignment. When healthy accountability is in place, team members become exponentially more effective in the full utilization of their gifts, abilities, passions, and calling.[137]

Therefore, empowerment seems to be a team dynamic that adds a necessary counter-balance to mutual accountability.

Teams must also *assimilate* new team members to the team culture. As new converts must be assimilated into the body of Christ, Macchia suggests that teams are to be a microcosm of the church in this regard. Cladis has written of how pastoral teams are to be "culture-creators" for the church, but Macchia focuses on how teams must first re-shape team the member's identity and values to fit into the relational web and ministerial approach of the team.[138] Interestingly, he ties assimilation to the team to vision and goals. This dynamic resembles the one discussed by Katzenberg and Smith, that team members really come together only when there is a larger shared vision and goals that stretch them. They write, "Most teams trace their advancement to key performance-oriented events that forge them together... Whether quantitatively or qualitatively assessable, the performance goals must include a clear 'stretch' component."[139]

Teams must also *manage* ministry together. They must work together to establish goals, plans, sensible execution of those plans, and systematic joint evaluations of

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[137] Ibid., 88.

[138] Ibid., 94.

[139] Katzenbach and Smith, 124; ibid.

ministry results.[140] Macchia speaks of a need for teams to focus especially upon

managing the collective results of their ministry as opposed to individual performance.

Here, he takes a page from the work of Patrick Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of a Team.*

Lencioni writes of the benefits and pitfalls of being accountable as a team and not just as

individuals:

> A team that focuses on collective results minimizes individualistic behavior;
> enjoys success and suffers failure acutely; benefits from individuals who
> subjugate their own goals/interest for the good of the team; and avoids
> distractions. Teams that are willing to commit to specific results are more likely to
> work with a passionate desire to achieve those results. Teams that say, "We'll do
> our best," are subtly, if not purposefully, preparing themselves for failure.[141]

While not directly stated, Macchia seems to hold the team leader responsible for the

team's focus on managing collective results.

Perhaps one of the most important dynamics of teams that Macchia contributes

comes in his "S"- *serve.* Unlike much Christian leadership that does mention this in

relation to a leader's need to roll up one's sleeves and get busy serving others, Macchia's

most important contribution in this area is really upon ministry flowing from a gospel

motive of love. He writes, "Healthy teams serve others not merely for the fruit of our

labors of love on their behalf but primarily because of our willingness to lay down our

lives for others- whatever it takes to reach out in love. God will bring along any increase

as he sees fit. Our role is merely to serve others in His name."[142]

He grounds this motive biblically in 1 Corinthians 13. Interestingly, as often as

writers in the field of teams mention 1 Corinthians 12, this work stands out for seeing the

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[140] Macchia, 115-124.

[141] Lencioni, 218-219.

[142] Macchia, 129.

integral connection between the two chapters and their joint application to teams.

Macchia argues that if teams are to create relationships that are genuine and Christ-like,

then this kind of gospel love must be the engine that creates such authentic community.[143]

This is not an insight unique to team dynamics; it is true of community in all its

expression in the church. This chapter has already referenced Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life*

Together, and it is fitting that Macchia himself recognizes that he is describing a spiritual

dynamic of community that Bonhoeffer applied to the entire church:

> Human love lives by uncontrolled and uncontrollable dark desires; spiritual love
> lives in the clear light of service ordered by the truth. Human love produces
> human subjection, dependence, constraint; spiritual love creates freedom of the
> brethren under the Word. Human love breeds hothouse flowers; spiritual love
> creates the fruits that grow healthily in accord with God's good will in the rain
> and storm and sunshine of God's outdoors. Life together under the Word will
> remain sound and healthy only where it understands itself as being a part of the
> one, holy, catholic, Christian Church, where it shares actively and passively in the
> sufferings and struggles and promises of the whole church.[144]

Trust, empowerment, assimilation, management, and service – these are Macchia's

helpful summary of the basics of team theology.

Macchia continues to sound similar notes as other key works on the basic

dynamics of teams, but he provides a more memorable pneumonic for those themes:

Trust, Empower, Assimilate, Manage, Serve. Teams are distinguished by the presence of

such characteristics. Macchia adds an element distinct to a Christian worldview: that

teams anticipate transformative results. For a group to become a team, they must take

ownership of the ministry, including a vision that calls for the personal submission of

each member to the larger goal. Yet, their sacrifice alone will not produce spiritual fruit.

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[143] Ibid., 131-132.

[144] Bonhoeffer and Doberstein, 37.

Distinctively Christian teams labor in humble reliance upon God's blessings and

recognize that their sacrifice, relationships, and ministry all must flow from each

member's on-going personal encounter with Christ in the gospel.

The Wisdom of Teams- Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith:

A seminal work on teams in the business world is *The Wisdom of Teams:*

Creating the High-Performance Organization.[145] This landmark study provides some

invaluable understanding of what Biblical truths enacted in secular organizations look

like in practice. While neither the authors nor the participants are explicitly Christian, the

empirical findings of the study reveal common grace insights that both reflect and explain

key Biblical insights and principles related to teams.

The authors' definition of a team, for instance, echoes much of what this study

found in Scripture and in explicitly Christian explanations of Scripture as applied to the

field of teams. The authors define a team this way: "A team is a small number of people

with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals,

and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."[146] As the authors

explain "complementary skills," it begins to sound strikingly similar to the way spiritual

gifts are to function within the church body. Each team member's strengths are pooled

and partnered with others to achieve more together than they could working separately.

The authors also emphasize the need for teams to have a common purpose to

function effectively.[147] This is reflective of the Biblical teaching in Ephesians 4:11-16

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[145] Katzenbach and Smith.

[146] Ibid., 45.

[147] Ibid., 49-50.

where every Christian engages in works of ministry to achieve the larger purpose of building up Christ's church. While the Ephesians passage speaks of the church as a whole, its principles would certainly apply to Christians within a local church serving together on a team. 1 Corinthians 12 indicates that we are to be faithful stewards of the gifts and talents God has entrusted to us in service to the whole body.[148] This requirement bears some similarity to Katzenbach and Smith's insistence that teams need performance goals in order to function effectively. Such goals on a corporate level reflect the Biblical reality spelled out in the parable of the talents.[149]

The authors' definition also speaks of teams needing a common approach.[150] In their foundational works on team ministry, George Cladis and Wayne Cordeiro speak of the need for teams to share a common approach or philosophy of ministry if they are to be effective.[151] Katzenbach and Smith give examples of how effective teams cannot function without a clear, committed, common approach to their work.[152] This paints a practical picture of scriptures such as Ephesians 4:1-6 and Romans 1:1-17, which describe and command a common approach to ministry in the church based on the truths of scripture.

Beyond the aforementioned connections, Katzenbach and Smith's work contributes several key insights for this study. Paramount in their findings is the observation that actual performance challenges are essential to the development of a

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[148] 1 Cor 12:7.

[149] Cf. Mt 25:14-29.

[150] Katzenbach and Smith, 56.

[151] Cladis, 76-80; Cordeiro, 155.

[152] Katzenbach and Smith, 56-57.

functioning team. They write, "Significant performance challenges do more than anything else to foster teams."[153] Merely desiring to be a team was not enough; the team members needed a goal or vision larger than themselves that they needed to work together to practically achieve.[154] The authors write,

> Moreover, those who describe teams as vehicles primarily to make people feel good or get along better not only confuse teamwork with teams, but also miss the most fundamental characteristic that distinguishes real teams from non-teams- a relentless focus on performance. Teams thrive on performance challenges; they flounder without them. Teams cannot exist for long without a performance-driven purpose to both nourish and justify the team's continuing existence.[155]

This insight from practical experience needs to be adjusted by the theological truth of God's sovereignty over the results that Macchia's definition addressed.[156] As Macchia's definition pointed out, while many things lie out of control in the realm of concerns upon which teams seek God's blessing, there is still much in ministry that lies in the realm of human responsibility.

Katzenbach and Smith's emphasis on performance as essential to teams brings a fuller picture to previous discussions on the need for teams to have a vision bigger than themselves. As the authors put it, "Without a performance imperative, little else matters. Trying to become a team- that is, explicitly or implicitly making 'being a team' the primary objective- remains the least likely way to deliver team performance. Teams are much more about discipline than togetherness."[157]

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[153] Ibid., 175.

[154] Ibid., xiv.

[155] Ibid., 21.

[156] Macchia, 42.

[157] Katzenbach and Smith, xviii.

Yet the authors cite "togetherness" as another key dynamic to teams that truly

perform! In commenting on the rarity of high performance teams, they point out that it is

probably "because a high degree of personal commitment to one another differentiates

people on high-performance teams from people on other teams. This kind of commitment

cannot be managed..."[158] There are echoes here of the relational dynamics being taught

in Ephesians 4:1-16. As this survey demonstrated, if solid, Christ-like relationships are

not present,[159] then the ministry of the church as described in the rest of the passage will

not occur.

This also highlights a major theme in George Cladis' work: that our relationships

in the church are intended by God to imitate those of the persons of the Trinity.[160] Such

an insight does not eliminate hierarchy, but rather places it in a relational context where

all are equally valued and their gifts "lead" at various times as needed. This

interdependence is also expressed in the trust present in those relationships, which are of

critical importance to teams.[161]

This relational interdependence is also matched by a work or task

interdependence. This is one of the key differences between a team and a work group in

Katzenbach and Smith's understanding. As the authors explain, "A working group relies

primarily on the individual contributions of its members for group performance, whereas

a team strives for a magnified impact that is incremental to what its members could

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[158] Ibid., 4-5.

[159] Eph 4:1-6.

[160] Cladis, 4-5.

[161] Katzenbach and Smith, 109.

achieve in their individual roles."[162] In such a team, they are not just committed relationally, but committed to working together in such a fashion that the results they pursue are greater than the sum of their individual contributions.

Katzenbach and Smith's work is helpful to this survey both for what it repeats and for what it produces. Teams must collaborate, but the authors make clear that this requires a small group with both complementary skills and a common and committed team vision. Without one or the other, collaboration does not occur. *The Wisdom of Teams* also emphasizes accountability and a common culture, but adds the qualification that this is accountability exists within the community, rather than between each member and the team leader. The community must enforce the culture and hold members to account rather than relying on only the leader to do so. *The Wisdom of Teams* also adds to this survey's understanding of teams by describing the paradox that team relationships only thrive when team performance is the focus, but performance then requires strong team relationships! One takes precedence (performance) even while being unable to occur without the other (relationships). These are the essential dynamics of teams as Katzenbach and Smith understand them.

Some Supporting Works on Teams

This literature survey examined a number of works that also dealt with church-based team dynamics that were less thorough in their discussion of those dynamics. Several are included here that either develop themes already discussed, or provide new insight on pastoral team dynamics.

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[162] Ibid., 88-89.

Doing Church as a Team, Wayne Cordeiro:

Wayne Cordeiro sees teams as the best way for church members to express their

eternal purpose as they strive together to fulfill the Great Commission.[163] While a the

book doesn't put forth a carefully woven argument for teams, nevertheless, the totality of

the picture of the church that is structured and functions as a team is attractive and

compelling. Cordeiro's thinking reflects many themes found in other team related works

and fields. Its connection with such works as *The Purpose Driven Church*[164] and *The 8th*

Habit[165] are especially evident in areas such as the emphasis placed on both an

individual's and a church's God-given need to be devoted to purposes that are larger than

themselves. These include the need to understand one's gifts, develop them, and learn to

use them in concert with others.

If this is to happen, then churches and their leaders must be committed to what

Greg Ogden calls "The New Reformation."[166] This refers to the people of God owning

the ministry of the church as their responsibility, with pastors serving as coaches or

equippers.[167] This moves the church from the mode of "Cruise Liner" to that of

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[163] Cordeiro, 26-29.

[164] Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

[165] Stephen R. Covey, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

[166] Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).

[167] Cordeiro, 35.

"Battleship" says Cordeiro,[168] or from mere institution under pastoral leadership to organism, with pastoral ministry serving to enable and empower lay ministry.[169]

If the "battleship" of the church is to stay afloat, then it must align all of its parts with a clear, God-given vision that reflects the Great Commission.[170] This is also a very common and highly regarded principle for the healthy function of teams. Cordeiro adds that such a vision must also be accompanied by clearly defined and widely embraced core values for ministry.[171] This might be called a church's "philosophy of ministry." Together, vision and values create a culture where teams can thrive in a church and where the teams then, in turn, reinforce and deepen that culture. Cordeiro writes,

> Alignment is crucial to our finishing the race well. If you are a leader, make sure you catch God's vision for you and communicate it clearly to your people, that they might also run the race to win. Create an environment for effective ministry by setting the church's sights toward a common finish line and setting the church's heartbeat to a common culture through expressed values. When you do, you will find your people sharing a vibrant heart and a passion that fuels every step and every breath of every endeavor.[172]

Katzenbach and Smith also pointed out how essential a well-defined goal-orientation is for teams to work in the marketplace.[173]

Along with alignment and vision, teams must also place a high priority on relating to each other in Christ-like fashion. Nothing Cordeiro writes is new or revolutionary concerning these relationships: teaching, accountability, and encouragement. These are

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[168] Ibid., 44-45.

[169] Ogden, 56-58.

[170] Cordeiro, 137-139, 149.

[171] Ibid., 155.

[172] Ibid., 170.

[173] Katzenbach and Smith, 49.

all core Biblical values for Christian relationships. Cordeiro's point is that teams both foster and rely upon such relationships.[174] He speaks of teams organized along these lines as being "fractal," noting that such teams should ultimately become part of the very identity of the church: "With the fractal design, our church becomes not a church with small groups, but a church of small groups. Here, people in a small group are accountable to their leader, and that leader is accountable to another leader. Each person disciples others as well as gets discipled."[175] This team identity must become an essential part of the church's culture. It does seem that the church often launches many new programs but ignores its need to change its culture – what it values and loves. Cordeiro rightly sees that teams are not a program; teams are to be an organized expression of identity.[176]

Overall, the work is aimed at a popular level and is often light on both the theology of teams and on specific practical suggestions. Cordeiro's strength, however, lies in the encouraging vision he paints of the team-based church. His passion is evident as he sums up how he views his own ministry in relationship to his pastoral team:

> If the four on my fractal team succeed, then so do I. If they fail or stumble, then so do I. If they hurt, I hurt. When they rejoice, I rejoice. When they fire on all cylinders, I can see the congregation zooming down the highway in a nifty red convertible, laughing, and getting to where they want to be. I feel a fresh breeze blowing and gulp in the delightful scent of vibrancy and excitement- and it thrills my soul. But if they feel discouraged or overloaded with unresolved struggles, in no time at all I see the congregation bumping along in an old jalopy, their faces covered in gloom and breathing in the noxious fumes of a jammed-up highway made worse by a windless, humid day. We live to make each other successful![177]

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[174] Cordeiro, 176-177, 181.

[175] Ibid., 181.

[176] Ibid., 208-209.

[177] Ibid., 219.

Church is a Team Sport, Jim Putman

Pastors are really coaches at heart, and churches are like sports teams, not competing with each other, but working together to make disciples for the King. This is the essential and refreshing message of Putman's work that focuses not on teams within the church, but on the church itself as a team. His passion for this approach is evident as he summarizes his definition for the essential nature of a church:

> As I am sure you have noticed already, I believe that the church is supposed to be a collection of transformed individuals molded by God into a team. I see teams and teamwork everywhere in Scripture. In fact, I don't believe a person is a mature Christian unless they are a part of Christ's mission to reach the world through His team- the church. I don't care how much Scripture they know or how many seminary degrees they have, they are not in the will of God, thus not a mature believer, unless they are a part of His team- the church. The Christian life is a team sport.[178]

What has often been called "the equipping process" pictured in Ephesians 4:11-13, Putman calls "coaching."[179] This book describes how the church he pastors has been structured to promote "the entire team participating instead of just watching a single paid player."[180] Much of the content is focused upon the culture, paradigms, and practices necessary to achieve this.

While the specifics offered are at times helpful, the real contribution of the book is found in its encouragement of an overall view of the church *as a whole* as a team that is on a common mission to "win." By addressing the missional nature of the church,

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[178] Jim Putman, *Church Is a Team Sport: A Championship Strategy for Doing Ministry Together* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 66.Jim Putman, *Church Is a Team Sport : A Championship Strategy for Doing Ministry Together*(Grand Rapids, Mich.: BakerBooks, 2008), 66.

[179] Ibid., 89.

[180] Ibid.

Putman inadvertently highlights a reason why secular works on teams find measurable

performance goals to be important for effective teams

Summary of Teams

This section has considered literature that focuses on developing an understanding

of team dynamics, especially as they occur within the context of pastoral ministry teams.

While divergence and diversity of descriptions abound, a number of ideas have

repeatedly occurred. Each of the major works surveyed made the point that teams are

small in number and high in collaboration. They blend the spiritual gifts of members to

produce results that are far greater than the sum of their parts. Different authors have

asserted the need for an "equipping model of pastoral leadership" as an essential

component of this dynamic.[181] Trust and strong relationships were also widely identified

as an essential dynamic of teams that truly collaborate.

The literature repeatedly asserts that teams require a level of empowerment to

reach for a significant vision. Teams strive for something that moves them and draws

them together, but only if they are given the genuine authority and freedom to allow each

member to contribute their gifts towards that effort. According to the literature, such

empowerment does not remove accountability. On the contrary, one of the marks of a

team is the presence of accountability to the whole group that leads to a level of personal

sacrifice for the sake of the team. This encourages synergistic results that distinguish a

team from a mere group of individuals working on a common project.

Groups that have become teams experience a common culture. Cladis, Barna, and

Macchia all argue that teams not only require such a common culture to thrive, but also

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[181] See Macchia, 80.; Cordeiro, 45-47.; Barna, 34; Putman, 87.

that they also serve a means of creating that common culture.[182] In this same vein, a

number of authors discussed the importance of spiritual relationships that reflect the

gospel as they serve and learn together.[183]

Each of these qualities was repeatedly encountered in the literature on team

dynamics. The literature promotes these characteristics as essential components in the

process of turning a mere group of individuals into a team.

Leadership Theory

Having surveyed the literature on team dynamics, the focus of this literature

review now turns to understanding leadership itself, especially within the context of

teams. Leadership theory has been evolving for some time. Terry Timm succinctly

summarizes how leadership theory has changed over the last generation:

> The evolution of leadership theory could be briefly summarized by the following
> five categories: the trait approach (the superhero or great person view); the
> situationalist approach (the times produce the person, not vice versa); the
> contingency approach (different situations call for different leadership styles); the
> transactional approach (leadership consists of reciprocal relationships between
> leaders and followers); the transformational approach (leaders motivate people to
> aspire to higher level concerns associated with the common good).[184]

Even a generation ago, Tom Peters, in his business class *In Search of Excellence*,

spoke of how leadership at outstanding companies was shifting to the transformational

approach.[185] Today, the transformational approach to leadership seems to dominate the

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[182] Barna, 94; Cladis, 66-87; Macchia, 91-105; Putman, 177-184.

[183] Cordeiro, 74-86; Macchia, 126-141.

[184] Terry R. Timm, "Leaders Empowering Leaders Developing a Model of Leadership for the Staff
Leadership Team of the Beverly Heights Church" (D. Min. Diss., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary,
2005), 3.

[185] Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's
Best-Run Companies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 82-83.

landscape. Leadership is no longer about power and control, but about vision and empowerment. This bodes well for teams, given their required dynamics. Yet, is the transformational approach to leadership in need of some further transformation to be able to fit the team context?

In *Reviewing Leadership*, Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter provide a brief survey of contemporary leadership theory. Their survey hints at potential conflict between a transformational theory of leadership and what the literature has presented on the nature of team dynamics. Their definition of leadership is clearly transformational in understanding: "In sum, then, leadership involves a person, group, or organization who shows the way in an area of life- whether in the short- or the long-term- and in doing so both influences and empowers enough people to bring about change in that area."[186] On the surface, this seems to support team dynamics such as vision and empowerment.

However, they go on to describe such a leader's actual practice in ways that seem contradictory to team dynamics. They write,

> Leading organizational change begins with setting a direction and a strategy-
> developing a vision for the future along with strategies for accomplishing that
> vision. Leaders set a direction by collecting information and data both within and
> outside the organization, looking for patterns, relationships, and links. Leaders
> watch the big picture and monitor factors such as market changes, key trends,
> competitors, and market share. Leaders watch internal indicators such as
> performance, the growth or decline of a product or service, and costs. Leaders
> also pay attention to organizational processes such as innovation and the morale
> of people in the organization.[187]

This describes leaders who are distinct from their followers, compared to the literature on teams, which places a clear priority on genuine empowerment and

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[186] Robert J. Banks and Bernice M. Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 16-17.

[187] Ibid., 17.

ownership by a team. According to Banks and Ledbetter, one would have to ask whose

vision is being pursued: the team's vision or the leader's vision? Further, the leader they

describe seems omni-competent to the extent that the leadership trait approach no longer

influences the authors' paradigm.

Such potential contradictions between transformational leadership and team

dynamics are even present in what seems like irrefutable laws of leadership. John

Maxwell asserts that transformational leadership practices the law of respect in all

environments: that people will inevitably follow stronger leaders than themselves.[188]

While this "law" may be irrefutable, it does seem to rebuff what previous authors have

identified as essential elements for actual teams to function. He writes,

> When people get together for the first time in a group, take a look at what
> happens. As they start interacting, the leaders in the group immediately take
> charge. They think in terms of the direction they desire to go and who they want
> to take with them. At first, people may make tentative moves in many different
> directions, but after the people get to know one another, it doesn't take long for
> them to recognize the strongest leaders and to start following them.[189]

While such a phenomenon may be true in many cases, the previous literature

would argue that it can be precluded in a team environment if a team is to have sufficient

ownership of its vision that people will be accountable as a group and not just for their

individual contribution. If the team leader uses that respect in the fashion Maxwell

describes, a separation between the leadership and the rest of the team may develop that

prevents trust and joint ownership of the team's mission.

Perhaps closer to the mark of leadership that supports essential team dynamics is

Ken Blanchard's approach to transformational leadership. John Maxwell has asserted as

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[188] Maxwell, 73.

[189] Ibid., 76-77.

irrefutable that "the true measure of leadership is influence- nothing more, nothing

less."[190] Blanchard, like Maxwell, defines leadership as fundamentally involving

influence. But he takes this one crucial step further:

> What is leadership? For years we defined leadership as an influence process. We
> believe that anytime you tried to influence the thoughts and actions of others
> toward goal accomplishment in either your personal or professional life, you were
> engaging in leadership. In recent years, we have taken the emphasis away from
> goal accomplishment and have defined leadership as the capacity to influence
> others by unleashing their power and potential to impact the greater good.[191]

The crucial step is that Blanchard's approach to transformational leadership is

explicitly group-oriented rather than leader-oriented. For instance, the development of a

higher vision and purpose to which a leader calls people is not leader-centric; it is group-

centric, even if it is leader-driven.[192]

This is a potential dynamic of leading in a team environment that many, such as

Maxwell, miss even as they discuss a transformational leadership approach that has the

potential to fit within team dynamics. How does transformational leadership that is

explicitly Christian in worldview fit within an equally explicit Christian approach to

teams? What does secular leadership theory that is oriented to a transformational team

environment add to this understanding? These sorts of questions lie at the heart of this

study, and they must be considered as we survey the literature on leadership. This survey

will first examine works specifically on leadership set in a team environment. Following

this grounding in the field, a number of works on leadership in general will be examined

for what they contribute to the discussion. Finally, we will consider works that contribute

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[190] Ibid., 11.

[191] Blanchard, xvi-xvii.

[192] Ibid., 17-30.

further to understanding team leadership in relationship to each of this study's research questions.

Works on Leadership Oriented to a Team Environment

Though limited in number, a few works deal with team dynamics and the practice of leadership within that environment. Significant assertions and potential models are presented by those works concerning the unique role of leadership in a team environment. This survey will examine three that meet these criteria, along with other supporting literature.

The Power of Team Leadership, George Barna

One of the unique aspects of Barna's work is his focus on leadership's changed roles and practices within a team setting. This is an underdeveloped area of the literature, and even Barna's contributions can only be described as a beginning. Yet, one must begin somewhere, and Barna provides some helpful starting points.

He begins by asserting that the team leader is central in creating and nurturing an environment of trust on the team, as well as in fostering commitment and collaboration. He recognizes that the leader's role of creating commitment to one another's success is a long recognized tenet of secular management studies. In 1987, Kouzes and Posner wrote, "mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary group efforts. Leaders create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They nurture self-esteem in others. They make others feel strong and capable.[193]

According to Barna, one such starting point for leaders is in their unique role in shaping vision. Teams need a vision larger than themselves. Consequently, effective team

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[193] Kouzes and Posner, 131.

leadership must help the team clarify its vision, and then leadership must help it to stay

focused upon fulfilling that vision personally and corporately.[194] Team leadership also

requires leaders not only to articulate vision, but also to "operationalize" it by leading a

team towards specific goals that move them towards that vision.[195]

This leads to another broader shift in pastoral leadership in a team setting. Peter

Wagner suggests that one of the mistakes of current approaches to pastoral leadership is

the move away from the traditional pastoral identity of "shepherd" toward a more

corporate model that focuses on producing religious products that church members

"consume."[196] The solution to this common criticism put forth by such diverse authors as

Bill Hull and Bill Lawrence is to return to a focus upon an identity of a shepherd whose

ministry equips the flock to become disciples who make other disciples.[197]

But what does this look like in a team setting? Barna provides the answer: "In a

team environment, the leadership role for the pastor shifts from that of leading the entire

congregation to being a leader of leaders... The pastor may instead pour whatever he or

she has to offer into a relative handful of fellow leaders, who in turn provide the breadth

and depth of leadership that the church requires."[198] Thus, shepherding and disciple-

making by the pastor reaches the outer limits of the congregation, not so much by direct

interaction as through the entire pastoral leadership team. Teaching, reshaping structures

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[194] Barna, 42-43.

[195] Ibid., 43.

[196] E. Glenn Wagner, *Escape from Church, Inc* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 21-22.

[197] Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Old Tappan, NJ: F.H. Revell Co., 1990), 170-186; William Lawrence, Charles R. Swindoll, and Roy B. Zuck, *Effective Pastoring: Giving Vision, Direction, and Care to Your Church*, Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville: Word Pub., 1999), 76-78.

[198] Barna, 71.

and policies to empower others, and modeling genuine team ministry at the staff level become means of creating a culture of team-based disciple-making that reaches all parts of the church body. No longer is the pastor the "dominant spiritual leader in the life of every congregant,"[199] rather, it is the entire pastoral leadership team that extends and conveys the pastor's influence and ministry.

Both Barna's team definition and his description of team leadership in a church context add something new to the discussion. Barna focuses particularly upon what he calls a church's "leadership team."[200] These are the most senior leaders of the church, whom he defined as "a collection of leaders- not warm bodies willing to help out, not people with titles, but individuals who possess the calling, character, and competencies that qualify them as leaders."[201] This team is what in Presbyterian polity would ideally be the teaching and ruling elders of the church. Much of the literature misses this focus. Barna intends the characteristics of teams he has discussed so far to describe lay ministry teams as well as pastoral teams and sessions of churches. This description of their life together bears an interesting relationship to the traditional reformed understanding of leadership dynamics.

Works like Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor*, Bannerman's *The Church of Christ*, Bridges' *The Christian Ministry*, and Patrick Fairbairn's *Pastoral Theology* share a common theme of a right and high view of the work of ordained pastoral staff.[202]

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[199] Ibid., 134.

[200] Ibid., 24.

[201] Ibid.

[202] James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ: A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinances, Discipline, and Government of the Christian Church*, Numbered collectors ed. (Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), 201-213; Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Edinburgh: The Banner of

Fairbairn's comments reflect this traditional view of "the Christian ministry:"

> It ought to be so, in a very special manner, with respect to the Christian pastorate, to which belongs for all ordinary ministrations and results the highest place.... It is *their* part to stand and minister in His name; to give themselves to the defense and the propagation of His gospel; to cause His voice, in a manner, to be perpetually heard and His authority respected; in a word, to direct the operations and ply the agencies which are fitted to bring those that are far off near to Christ, and to carry forward their advancements in the life of faith and holiness. Whatever private members of the Church may, and also should, do towards the same end,.... those who are formally set as pastors and teachers in the various Christian communities must, from the very nature of their position and calling, have the chief responsibility resting on them of doing what is needed to enlighten, and edify, and comfort the souls of men.[203]

Barna subtly suggests that this "high view" of the ministry has often been the undoing of efforts to create effective teams in the church.[204] The emphasis on professionalism[205] and leadership of our culture has often turned the pastor's high calling into that of a religious CEO.[206]

Barna's cultural paradigm obscures for him the ease with which traditional reformed ecclesiology can speak of both the high calling of pastoral staff *and the unity and partnership* that is fleshed out in Barna's definition. Richard Baxter reflects the often overlooked reformed emphasis when he writes, "... we must be very studious of union and communion among ourselves, and of the unity and peace of the churches that we

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Truth Trust, 1974); Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry, with an Inquiry into the Causes of Its Inefficiency* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 8-10; Patrick Fairbairn and James Dodds, *Pastoral Theology: A Treatise on the Office and Duties of the Christian Pastor*, Old Paths ed. (Audubon, NJ: Old Paths Publications, 1992).

[203] Fairbairn and Dodds, 4-5.

[204] Barna, 1-18.

[205] John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 1-4.

[206] Marva J. Dawn, Eugene H. Peterson, and Peter Santucci, *The Unnecessary Pastor: Rediscovering the Call* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 3-4.

oversee. We must be sensible how needful this is to the prosperity of the whole, the

strengthening of our common cause, the good of the particular members of our flock, and

the further enlargement of the kingdom of Christ."[207] Thus, traditional Reformed

ecclesiology theoretically offers full support for Barna's description of team practices

amongst church pastoral staff. However, this is quite different from the perception and

practice of clericalism that Barna perceives in the church today.

Barna's attempt to Integrate Teams and Leadership

Barna brings his understanding of teams and leadership together when he urges

teams to be intentionally comprised of different leaders with what he calls the four

leadership aptitudes: directing, strategic, interpersonal, and systems aptitude.[208] Barna

does not believe that one leader can embody all these different aptitudes, so team

leadership must be organized to take advantage of each leader's different aptitudes at the

point where they are most needed by the team. He writes:

> The upshot of this realization is that the ideal team is comprised of four leaders,
> each representing a different aptitude. In fact, we have seen time after time that
> the absence of any one of the four aptitudes renders the ministry vulnerable and
> unstable. A team that blends these four aptitudes has the potential to accomplish
> great things for the Kingdom with excellence, efficacy, and efficiency.[209]

Barna moves past paradigms to discuss specific leadership practices that are key

for team leaders. These practices cover several areas. First, team leadership requires

strategies that form workable leadership partnerships.[210] Since team leadership seeks to

empower members to genuine ownership, leadership must focus on promoting

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[207] Baxter, 123.

[208] Barna, 100.

[209] Ibid., 101.

[210] Ibid., 117-120.

collaboration, commitment, and managing basic team dynamics (e.g. team size).[211] Thus, leadership is exercised not through command from superior knowledge or position, but through strategies that pay attention to process in addition to destination.

Team leadership must also create both a culture and mechanisms on a team that promote relationships of commitment among team members and accountability for ministry responsibilities.[212] A number of best practices are mentioned, but what is unmentioned seems to be the most significant – namely, the shift from a situation where the leader holds individuals accountable to a place where the leader guides the team to mutual accountability and ownership.

Given the rest of the literature on this subject, it is striking that Barna does not emphasize the need for leaders to refocus on the development of the necessary church culture as the prerequisite for any fruitful move to a pastoral team approach. Works such as *Culture Shift* and *Leading Congregational Change* both indicate that sustained and substantial change in a church requires sustained and substantial attention to transforming the values, hopes, and mental models that form the backbone of a church's culture.[213] Barna does recognize the need for pastoral team leadership to address church core values,[214] yet, his approach does not give much attention to addressing these as a prerequisite to actually implementing any pastoral team ministry structure.

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[211] Ibid., 110-111.

[212] Ibid., 121-128.

[213] Jim Herrington and others, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000).

[214] Barna, 158-160.

While there are areas of his argument that seem unsubstantiated or undeveloped, Barna does give a thorough starting point for understanding teams, leadership, and the integration of the two. The lack of an over-all paradigm of pastoral team leadership should not lessen the tremendous value of this work.

Becoming a Healthy Team, Stephen Macchia

Macchia's theology of leadership is not as well developed as his thinking on teams. Nevertheless, he still provides helpful insights. Macchia's theology of leadership is perhaps clearest in his section on the need for teams to manage ministry. He writes, "We manage things, but we lead people... People don't like to be managed, like an inanimate object, but they will respond to being led toward greater influence and effectiveness."[215] Macchia is short on practical specifics, but his focus on character is better explained in the book *Ascent of a Leader*, by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and Ken McElrath.[216] Here, he explains the need for Christian leaders in a team environment to focus on personal character development as a key to maximizing one's influence.

Leadership of teams uses influence through character

Ascent of a Leader argues for the leader's need to show character, the environment necessary for good leadership to develop, and a plan for becoming such a leader. Like Macchia, *Ascent of a Leader* defines leadership in terms of influence. The authors argue that leaders may leave positions or roles, but their leadership continues to influence their followers. They write, "So even denying a role or walking away from one has an effect on outcomes and therefore exercises a form of influence. Although we may

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[215] Macchia, 108.

[216] Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and Ken McElrath, *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999).

miss out on leading *well*, clearly none of us can avoid leadership altogether. We all

influence others. We can't escape it."[217] The key question for the purpose of this study is:

How does a leader in a team setting exercise that influence differently from a leader in a

non-team setting?

The book does not adequately answer that question, but it does assert a necessary

prerequisite if one is to lead any group effectively: character must be a leader's priority,

even over growth, in leadership capacity or skills, whether in a team setting or not. The

authors cite several research studies emphasizing that Christian leadership is not holding

up over time because of a lack of character, not because of a lack of skill.[218]

Using the image of a ladder, they describe how even Christian leadership focuses

on skill development like climbing the rungs of a ladder: discovering skills and talents,

developing them, getting into position to use them, and thereby attaining our leadership

potential.[219] This sounds like a distinct echo of secular writers like Marcus Buckingham,

who emphasize the importance of finding and developing a leader's strengths. This is not

wrong according to the authors' premise, however it is inadequate without the necessary

character to maintain positive influence on followers. They write:

> Even at the top of the capacity ladder, leaders may not have begun to address the
> disconnect between the development of their character and the development of
> their capacities. This character gap creates big leaders on short ladders- when
> undeveloped, immature motives and values negatively affect even the best of
> capacities. The guide wires of privilege and power cannot steady the relational
> problems this circumstance causes.[220]

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[217] Ibid., 10-11.

[218] Ibid., 14.

[219] Ibid., 18.

[220] Ibid., 21.

The solution is not to abandon development of our strengths, but to set that development in a larger framework that includes character development. Leaders must pursue individual relationships of grace with those around them, as well as a culture of grace in the places where they lead as the guides for their growth as leaders. This functions like the outer rails of a ladder.[221] Such a framework sets the stage for them to develop their capacity as leaders, and it encourages the corresponding character necessary to have a positive influence for Christ.

The authors describe the resulting ladder as having the following "steps" (pictured in Figure 1) that a leader must develop in the specified order:

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[221] Ibid., 32.

Discover my destiny

Attain God-designed potential

Pay the price

Acquire positions that match who I am

Align with truth

Develop my true capacities in team

Choose vulnerability

Discover what I can do with God and others

Trust God and others with me

ENVIRONMENTS OF GRACE

RELATIONSHIPS OF GRACE
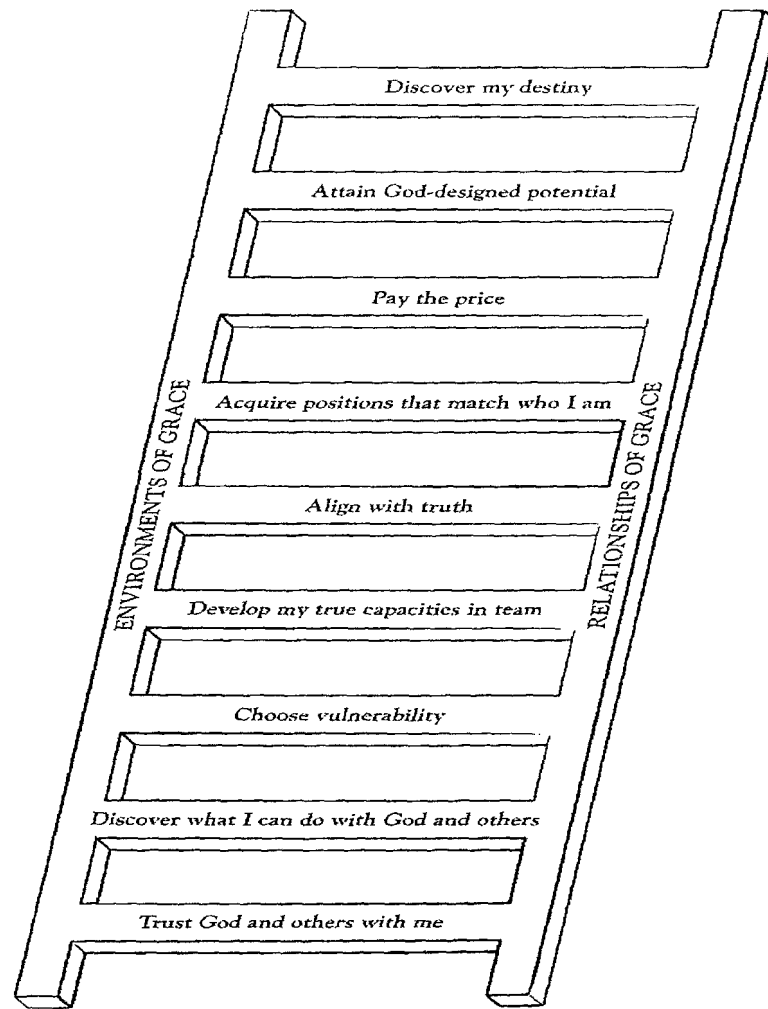
Figure 1. The Character Capacity Leadership Ladder[222]

Gospel-driven humility, accountability, submission, faithfulness, and self-sacrifice are all necessary character elements for a leader in this model. A number of other works in this survey have discussed similar themes, such as accountability and service. *Ascent of a Leader* argues that leadership of a group is not dependent upon the right techniques applied in the right setting, but upon becoming a person of influence,

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[222] Ibid., 144.

regardless of leadership technique or setting. This is how people are "not managed," but "influenced to effectiveness" as Macchia's model for leading teams asserts.

The Team Leader and Accountability

In addition to this broad conceptual focus on leadership, Macchia discusses specific leadership practices in relationship to each of the dynamics of a team. For instance, it is up to leadership to influence and persuade the team to define team members' responsibilities sufficiently to empower them to real ownership of the team.[223] Leaders must also be the primary source of accountability that teams need to effectively function.[224] Note that this would seem to put him in conflict with others such as Barna, who suggest that accountability should be primarily team member to team member, as opposed to Macchia's suggested format of leader to member.

One further significant difference with Barna should be noted. Barna suggested that leadership should be differentiated on the basis of different aptitudes, and that one leader couldn't possess all the leadership aptitudes that a team needs. Macchia's theology of leadership seems not to recognize this dynamic. Macchia's many practical suggestions for team leadership assume a single team leader executing them, as opposed to a shifting of leaders based on the leadership function most needed at a given moment. This may also echo what others such as Cladis and Putman have asserted, namely, that genuine collaboration will change the leadership role of a team leader to a much more mutually shared approach.

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[223] Macchia, 82.

[224] Ibid., 88.

Towards a Working Definition of Team Leadership

Macchia takes an initial helpful stab at defining leadership specifically within a team setting: "A Christian ministry team leader is a person involved in a process of leading a group of people toward the fulfillment of a purpose under the power of the Holy Spirit."[225] This may be an occasion where the desire for accessibility to a broader audience has limited the effectiveness of the actual definition. This is because he fails to practically define the "process" of leading. He quotes writers such as Barna, as well as Katzenbach and Smith, to try explain team leadership. However, he seems to add very little specific substantive thought to the subject beyond general Christian leadership models such as servant, steward, and shepherd.[226]

Greater understanding of the integration of the two can be found in some of his specific suggestions on the theology of teams. One of the more significant shifts for pastoral leadership is the shift for pastors from leading ministries to influencing people to lead ministries.[227] This echoes the "equipping pastor" model from Ephesians 4:11ff, but adds the dimension of using leadership to empower team members to use their giftedness to come up with "a better way to do it" than the pastor himself might have used. This is a subtle, but important difference from the way the equipping model is sometimes implemented. It further helps to remove the possibility of the team leader being "the genius with 1000 helpers" that Jim Collins introduces us to in *Good to Great*.[228] Overall, Macchia's most helpful contribution is in helping leaders implement the specific team

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[225] Ibid., 160.

[226] Ibid., 149-151.

[227] Ibid., 108-109.

[228] Collins.

theology he has presented, but he does not present an over-arching paradigm of team leadership.

Leaders Empowering Leaders- Developing a Model of Leadership for the Staff Leadership Team of the Beverly Heights Church, Terry Timm:

How does a traditional church staff become transformational leaders in a team setting? That is the driving issue behind this study, which provides this literature review with an alternate paradigm for what effective leadership in a team environment might entail. Terry Timm describes transformational leaders as those who help people follow a commonly owned vision rather than following a commonly recognized leader.[229] Recognizing many of the essential team dynamics surveyed previously, Timm provides one of the most helpful summaries of what leadership is and how it should function within a team.

Timm emphasizes that teams still need leadership; not just permission.[230] However, his understanding of teams prioritizes empowerment of the entire team. He describes it this way:

> Empowerment is about shared leadership. It has at its center a deep conviction that God has empowered all of God's people to be engaged in the work of God. Empowerment provides the motivation, the skills, and the knowledge necessary to accomplish one's mission and see one's vision fulfilled. Empowerment, in short, is a dynamic means by which the people of God can and will accomplish the work that god has set before them. I define empowerment with these words: Empowerment is the decentralizing of authority, power, and responsibility for ministry to those called and gifted to accomplish the work of God.[231]

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[229]Timm, 3-5., 3-5.

[230] Ibid., 63.

[231]Ibid., 59-60., 59-60.

This echoes themes such as that of Greg Ogden in *The New Reformation:*

Returning the Ministry to the People of God, which has also shaped Timm's thinking.

Ogden picks up on something of the Trinitarian nature of ministry in describing how

every Christian is empowered in different ways by the members of the Trinity:

> The Church is to be fundamentally a charismatic community, for the charismata (grace gifts) have been distributed and assigned to all in Christ (1 Cor. 12:11, 18). This makes each person an initiating center for ministry. All are directly connected to Jesus, the head of the body. The signals for ministry are sent directly from the head to the parts. Initiative for ministry can be taken by any responsible person, whether or not they hold an office.[232]

Therefore, Timm's assertion that leadership that empowers team members to follow a

God-given vision and direction seems a necessary consequence of seeing the Trinity's

direct role in equipping, leading, and calling God's people to serve together in ministry.

This Trinitarian framework of empowerment to God's people led Timm to search for a

workable understanding of what leadership should look like in a team setting. His study

identifies six leadership roles, along with three competencies for each role, as the model

for leadership in a team setting.

Role One: The Spiritual Director

In this role, a leader "guides the People of God toward the inner and personal

spiritual resources necessary to accomplish the work of God."[233] This role involves

competently modeling Christ-like living, listening with discernment, and instructing

people in the tenets of scripture.[234] Timm justifies this role in the model by arguing that it

is essential to the empowerment of God's people. He does not address whether this role is

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[232] Ogden, 75.

[233] Timm, 65., 65.

[234] Ibid., 67., p 67.

limited to teams, but this role and competencies certainly reflect an understanding of team dynamics.

Role Two: The Equipper

Here the leader develops people's knowledge, motivations, and behavior to accomplish God's work.[235] While Timm never delves into specific differences from the previous role, he uses Ephesians 4 and the giftedness of the body of Christ as expressed in Corinthians to give this role a more corporate focus. Whereas the leader as spiritual director is focused upon an individual believer's growth in Christ, here the leader works to enable the individual to function more effectively with other Christians in the work of ministry.

The three core competencies seem to confirm this as they focus upon the leader's equipping the saints through team building, coaching, and delegation.[236] Timm's writings on team building fails to recognize key team dynamics discussed previously, and instead can best be described as "teamwork" values such as mutual support, sharing, and encouraging. His description of the delegation competency seems to confirm this as he still holds leader accountable for team performance even as he speaks of sharing responsibility.[237] It seems the leader fills a role something like a slightly more egalitarian version of Collins' "leader with a thousand helpers."[238]

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[235] Ibid., 69.

[236] Ibid., 72.

[237] Ibid., 75.

[238] Collins, 45-46.

Role Three: The Resourcer

This may be a case of an acronym bringing confusion rather than understanding. Timm describes this role as the leader "discovering and meeting personal and ministry team needs."[239] This description doesn't really distinguish this role from the previous two. However, the core concentrations he attaches to this role seem to speak more of administration. He lists the core competencies of this role as taking inventory (of needed resources and direction), providing resources (prioritizing needs, establishing budgets, and securing needed resources), and removing obstacles (problem solving and conflict resolution).[240] Other authors such as Macchia also seem to place these responsibilities on the team leader.[241]

Role Four: The Visionary

As a visionary, a leader "discerns a God honoring future state that motivates and mobilizes the People of God toward the accomplishment of the work of God."[242] In this role, the leader moves the team. Rick Warren calls this being "purpose-driven,"[243] while Kouzes and Posner speak of it as leading people to embrace "an ideal and unique image of the future."[244] Timm's visionary leader has future orientation, vision casting, and enlistment as core competencies in this role. The first competency places the leader in the position of looking "ahead of the team" to discern direction and to focus the team in that

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[239] Timm, 76.

[240] Ibid., 76-77.

[241] Macchia, 115-124.

[242] Timm, 80.

[243] Warren.

[244] Kouzes and Posner, 85.

direction. Leighton Ford addresses this competency when he writes, "vision is like a magnifying glass which creates focus, a bridge which takes us from the present to the future, a target that beckons."[245] Leaders must then communicate this preferred state with passion and compulsion. This must be matched by an ability to "complete the sale" with followers, as demonstrated by their buying-in to the vision that the leader casts.

This role raises a question: is this description of leader as visionary, which seems so common in the literature, compatible with the equally commonly accepted team principle of a team-owned (even designed) vision or mission? Central works on teams such as the writings of Cladis, Barna, Macchia, and Kouzes and Posner all emphasize the importance of teams needing a shared vision. Yet, Timm and other works on leadership seem to place the leader and the team members in a somewhat different relationship to that vision. *The Leadership Challenge* describes it this way:

> Leaders breathe life into visions. They communicate their hopes and dreams so that others clearly understand and accept them as their own. They show others how their values and interests will be served by the long-term vision of the future. Leaders are expressive, and they attract followers through warmth and friendship. With strong appeals and quiet persuasion, they develop enthusiastic supporters.[246]

In this traditional understanding of leadership, the leader sets the vision and gains buy-in, which seems to be what Timm suggests in this role.

Role Five: The Encourager

In this role, the leader focuses on the interpersonal dynamics of the team. We have seen that teams are not merely a different way for people to accomplish tasks, but a different way for them to work and relate to one another. Here, the leader seeks to nurture

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[245] Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership: Jesus' Way of Creating Vision, Shaping Values & Empowering Change* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 100.

[246] Kouzes and Posner, 79.

people in those relationships by "acknowledging, affirming, and celebrating the

accomplishment of the work of God."[247] In this role, a leader must be competent at

acknowledging others' contributions, building trust, and celebrating individual and group

accomplishments.[248]

The literature on teams emphasizes the necessity of building trust. Kenneth

Gangel writes of how indispensible trust is to teams when they make decisions together:

> Partnering deeply implies an intense trust, a willingness to dispense with
> authoritarian rule so that all can function freely. Cooperation, not competition,
> becomes the key word in board and committee rooms. A cooperative environment
> encourages the whole body to move forward, not just one part to dominate the rest
> by claiming special insights about a decision affecting the entire group.[249]

Such trust is fostered by authentic expressions of value to team members for what they

bring to the team.

But Timm again diverges from the common thinking on team dynamics by

placing the leader in the role of leading the team in celebrating and acknowledging

individual achievements. Yet, works such as *The Wisdom of Teams* indicate that teams

function best when they celebrate group accomplishment over individual

accomplishment.[250] George Cladis has given a description of what he calls the

collaborative team, where the team leader's function is to bring together and celebrate

how each individual member brings strengths to the team that make the weakness of

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[247] Timm, 86.

[248] Ibid., 87.

[249] Kenneth O. Gangel, *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts to Build a Unified Vision*, revised ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 134-135.

[250] Katzenbach and Smith, 3.

other team members irrelevant.[251] There is some disagreement, it seems, between Timm's

opinion and other sections of the literature surveyed.

Role Six: The Strategist

In this role, Timm sees the team leader working "to align current activities and

discover new opportunities that will contribute to the accomplishment of [the] work."[252]

The team leader has moved into the role of battlefield general, seeking to move a ministry

forward in the most effective fashion. This involves strategic thinking, planning and

organizing, and innovation.[253]

Timm describes the strategist as being able to asses all the factors and then "make

decisions and implement plans based upon logical assumptions, facts, available

resources, and vision."[254] This makes the leader more than just a first among equals; it

makes him into what John Maxwell terms "the navigator:"

> Former General Electric chairman Jack Welch asserts, "A good leader remains
> focused… Controlling your direction is better than being controlled by it." Welch
> is right, but leaders who navigate do even more than control the direction in
> which they and their people travel. They see the whole trip in their minds before
> they leave the dock. They have vision for getting to their destination, they
> understand what it will take to get there, they know who they'll need on the team
> to be successful, and they recognize the obstacles long before they appear on the
> horizon.[255]

This competency naturally leads to the need to break down the steps necessary to reach a

destination into manageable and orderly assignments that team members can accomplish.

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[251] Cladis, 88-106.

[252] Timm, 91.

[253] Ibid., 93.

[254] Ibid.

[255] Maxwell, 38.

This is a commonly accepted version of leadership. But what about leadership in a team environment? How is the team empowered to own both the outcome and the process if they do not have a meaningful role in "navigating" where they need to go and how they get there? Patrick Lencioni has made a compelling case for a team's need to feel ownership over both.[256] Steven Macchia has ably demonstrated that for a true team to function, they must manage the ministry goals, plans, execution, and evaluation of their ministry. Timm's and Maxwell's descriptions of leadership oppose that team dynamic as the other authors understand it. According to Macchia and Lencioni, the leader should function more like an actual navigator and less like the more authoritative leader described here, who seems to resemble the ship's captain more than the navigator. Their specialized knowledge and ability to facilitate interaction that draws out the helpful contributions of every team member seems a more fitting competency for the leader's role as strategist within a team environment.

Timm's memorable paradigm for team leadership is helpful, but has significant areas of conflict with other literature on the dynamics of teams. Perhaps this is related to the method he chose for his study: the praxis model that relied heavily on finding "best practices" from current approaches to leadership.[257] These "best practices" are based on paradigms of leadership that do not specifically consider the unique nature of team dynamics.

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[256] Lencioni, 218-219.

[257] Timm, 99.

Summary

While there was broad agreement in the literature on the essential dynamics of teams, the same is not true when it comes to the actual practice of leadership in a team setting. Several different models have been surveyed with some widely varying components. Though divergent, a few commonalities can be identified. This survey has demonstrated that each author approached team leadership not through the lens of positional authority, but as an act and ministry of transformation. Leaders of teams use their skills, authority, or influence to empower team members to pursue goals that change both themselves and those they serve. Commensurate with this perspective is the emphasis on a leader's role in the spiritual development of the members of the team. A particular emphasis was the need for leaders to gain and use influence with team members by the growth of the leader's own Christ-like character.

Another significant area of agreement in the literature is that authors generally see the team leader as an "equipper" or "resourcer" of the rest of the team. Whether the leader is a pastor or not, the literature suggests that team leadership involves providing training, skills, or other resources needed by team members as they carry out their ministry.

A team leader also plays a unique role in vision formation for the team. Each source cited this as a key role for a team leader, but there was significant divergence as to the form this role should take. Some asserted that the leader should be a vision-caster, while others might be more comfortable with describing the leader as a catalyst to vision. Yet, while there is divergence on the specifics, there is still agreement on the general

reality that effective leadership in a team environment requires leaders to be uniquely involved in the formation of the team's vision.

General Works on Leadership with Broad Implications for a Team Environment

The literature on leadership is vast and varied. Within this realm, a number of works were chosen because they shared a number of criteria. First, works were selected whose leadership paradigm was transformational rather than positional. From these, the field was further narrowed by selecting works whose understanding of leadership demonstrated significant, though not explicit, familiarity with essential team dynamics. The final selection criteria for inclusion was that the works had to add, elaborate, or refine the understanding of team leadership as previously presented in works with an explicit focus on teams. Several works met these criteria.

Good to Great, Jim Collins

One of the most revered recent books on leadership is Jim Collins' *Good to Great*. Within Collins' insights into what moves companies from merely good to greatness, there are substantial contributions to understanding leadership in a team environment. Collins identified "Level 5 Leadership" as essential to such a move.[258] Such leaders were concerned first for the organization, even to such an extent that "Level 5 leaders want to see the company even more successful in the next generation, comfortable with the idea that most people won't even know that the roots of the success trace back to their efforts."[259] The Level 5 leader seems to exhibit the servant attitude discussed in the team dynamics section of this survey.

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[258] Collins, 17-40.

[259] Ibid., 26.

The priority of the team is also evident in Collins' finding that getting the right people "on the bus" is essential before you try and figure out where "to drive the bus."[260] Essentially, creating a solid group with complementary skills was the first step, before questions of vision and strategy needed to be addressed.[261] The right team was a necessary driving factor in discerning the right strategy or vision. Collins contrasted such a "Level 5 management team" with a comparison approach named "a Genius with a Thousand Helpers."[262] This approach is driven by a single leader, with the team only secondarily necessary to implement the leader's vision and strategies. This is in contrast to the Scriptural teaching on shared leadership.[263]

Such shared leadership is also reflected in the commitment of great teams to "a culture wherein people have a tremendous opportunity to be heard and, ultimately, for the truth to be heard."[264] Thus, Collins' research suggests a couple of leadership practices that are important for a team environment. First,the connections between relational health and task effectiveness. Solid teams recognize this and conduct themselves accordingly. Collins' work echoes Paul's admonition about valuing the contributions of all members of the body and how essential that is to the healthy function of the whole.[265] Second, Collins stresses the principle that the team is not intended to be run on the charisma of its

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[260] Ibid., 63.

[261] See Katzenbach and Smith, 47-48.

[262] Collins, 47.

[263] See Acts 6:1ff; 1 Cor 12:1ff.

[264] Collins, 88.

[265] Ibid., 47. See Rom 12:1-8; 1 Cor 12.

senior leadership.[266] Paul rebukes the Corinthians for such misplaced allegiances.[267] He

points out that leaders who encourage such allegiance over the priority of the team risk

deterring people "from bringing you the brutal facts"[268] necessary for solid decision-

making.

Collins' Level 5 leaders are not focused on controlling everything in a

hierarchical sort of accountability, but they are committed to a culture of discipline:

"Whereas the good-to-great companies had Level 5 leaders who built an enduring culture

of discipline, the un-sustained comparisons had Level 4 leaders who personally

disciplined the organization through sheer force."[269] Collins makes a very helpful

distinction concerning the kind of leadership that is necessary in a non-profit

organization. Business leaders often wield executive leadership, where they are given

sufficient power and resources to simply make the right decisions and implement them.

However, Collins describes leadership in a church context as being primarily

"legislative." He describes such leadership as relying "more upon persuasion, political

currency, and shared interests to create the conditions for the right decisions to

happen."[270] Such language describes a leadership style for positional leaders in the

church that reflects a team orientation.

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[266] Ibid., 27.

[267] 1 Cor 1:10-17.

[268] Collins, 89.

[269] Ibid., 130.

[270] Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: Why Business Thinking Is Not the Answer* (Boulder, Colo.: Jim Collins, 2005), 11.

Collins' model of the Level 5 leader presents a number of characteristics of

leadership that are oriented to a team environment. They reflect a transformational

approach to leadership and include characteristics that range from character development

(such as humility) to skills and approach.

Credibility- Kouzes and Posner:

This survey has found that for a group to become a team, trust must be present. In

Credibility, Kouzes and Posner assert that such trust first requires leadership credibility-

not as defined by the leader, but as defined by the constituents.[271] This is an important

shift away from the notion that leaders are self-assured independent operators able to take

on all comers. Leaders only gain their constituents' trust as team members recognize both

credible skills and credible character.

Within that message are some critical shifts in thinking related to teams. First,

leadership is again defined and understood through the vehicle of relationship rather than

position. As the authors put it,

> Should modern-day managers expect quality to emerge from people treated as
> inferiors? Quite the contrary. We believe that the old organizational hierarchy is
> hollow. And enlightened managers know that serving and supporting unleashes
> much more energy, talent, and commitment than commanding and controlling."[272]

That relationship requires leaders to develop credibility in the eyes of those whom they

lead. While the authors are not specifically concerned with teams, their assertion echoes

themes of how essential trust is within a team framework.

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[271] James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain It and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, 1st ed., The Jossey-Bass Business & Management Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

[272] Ibid., 8.

Credibility becomes the foundation of the leadership relationship. The authors'

research demonstrates that honesty, competence, and inspiration are at the top of people's

wish lists for leadership. They write,

> We want to believe in our leaders. We want to have faith and confidence in them
> as people. We want to believe that their word can be trusted, that they have the
> knowledge and skill to lead, and that they are personally excited and enthusiastic
> about the direction in which we are headed. Credibility is the foundation of
> leadership.[273]

Defining the foundation of the leadership relationship this way has significant impact in a

team environment where trust and service to others on the team are a fundamental

relational reality.[274]

Such a leadership relationship requires the leader to "embrace" the aspirations of

the constituents, which sounds similar to team dynamics of empowerment. A leader gains

credibility and therefore greater leadership the more he or she genuinely "owns" the

outlook of those they lead:

> A firm credibility foundation can be established only when the leader truly
> understands and appreciates, even embraces, the aspirations of his or her
> constituents. Leaders must be clear about placing a value on others. Appreciating
> and paying attention are signals that leaders send about how important their
> constituents are to them and that constituents' input and ideas are important. It
> isn't enough for constituents to know what their leaders stand for and to recognize
> that they are competent. Constituents want to be appreciated.[275]

Thus, credibility as a foundation of a leadership relationship may be a crucial aspect of

any paradigm for leading within a team setting.

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[273] Ibid., 22.

[274] Macchia, 129.

[275] Kouzes and Posner, 91.

Leadership On the Line- Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky

Leadership is dangerous. Well, maybe not all leadership, but adaptive leadership is dangerous according to Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. "To lead is to live dangerously because when leadership counts, when you lead people through difficult change, you challenge what people hold dear- their daily habits, tools, loyalties, and ways of thinking- with nothing more to offer perhaps than a possibility."[276] Leadership that is dangerous isn't merely leadership that seeks change; it is leadership that people perceive as causing them loss.[277] This lies at the core of adaptive leadership.

We have already discussed a number of kinds of leadership: leadership by position, leadership by force of personality, leadership that offers followers a positive transaction, and leadership that calls followers to personal transformation to better reach their desires and goals. Adaptive leadership is different. The authors define it by contrasting it with technical leadership. In technical leadership, leaders seek a solution to a problem from existing resources, competencies, and values. Adaptive leadership seeks a solution that requires the organization to change in fundamental ways. In *Leadership Can be Taught*, Sharon Parks succinctly sums up the differences this way:

> *Technical problems* (even though they may be complex) can be solved with knowledge and procedures already in hand. In contrast, *adaptive challenges* require new learning, innovation, and new patterns of behavior. In this view, leadership is the activity of mobilizing people to address adaptive challenges-those challenges that cannot be resolved by expert knowledge and routine management alone.[278]

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[276] Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 3.

[277] Ibid., 11.

[278] Parks, 10.

For instance, technical leadership is visible when a church tries to grow by improving its current music program, or small groups, or youth program. Adaptive leadership, in contrast, asks the church to give up its youth program to invest in a brand new outreach to skateboarders in its area. This latter kind of change requires loss to existing stakeholders and real risk to the leader. "In fact, there's a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change: the deeper the change and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be and, thus, the greater the danger to those who lead."[279]

Adaptive leadership promotes change that bring perceived loss as values, beliefs, and practices are transformed or replaced throughout a group or community. As discussed previously, team dynamics require individuals to adapt to a commonly constructed team culture. This process can involve significant "loss" for individuals in order to realize the greater benefit of genuine acceptance and "ownership" of the team. Therefore, developing a working approach to adaptive leadership would be critical for leading in a team environment. The authors do not disappoint in providing a practical paradigm.

Adaptive leadership begins by learning to "get on the balcony:"

> Achieving a balcony perspective means taking yourself out of the dance, in your mind, even if only for a moment. The only way you can gain both a clearer view of reality and some perspective on the bigger picture is by distancing yourself from the fray. Otherwise, you are likely to misperceive the situation and make the wrong diagnosis, leading you to misguided decisions about whether and how to intervene.[280]

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[279] Heifetz and Linsky, 14.

[280] Ibid., 53.

This is a crucial skill for a leader of teams to master. The benefits range from being able to provide accountability through necessary intervention to the opposite end of promoting team ownership by seeing that leader intervention isn't necessary given what the leader observes from the "balcony perspective." The leader that is developing this skill will be engaged in four tasks that help them "get on the balcony."

First, they will learn to distinguish technical challenges from adaptive challenges. Are people's hearts and minds in need of change? Will new practices be needed that force a choice between core values? If so, then the challenge is adaptive.[281] An adaptive leader will also be trying to understand people's perceptions of the current situation. What are their fears, perceived risks and benefits, and level of comfort?[282] A leader that "gets on the balcony" will not only watch surface level communication, but also what really drives someone to communicate or act in a certain way. What is the "song beneath the words?"[283] The final task is to pay close attention to the authority figures involved. Their reactions are a good indicator of the response of the community they represent.[284]

This adaptive leadership skill must then be matched with an ability to think politically.[285] Here the leader is called to think relationally – something we've already seen as paramount in a team environment. Sharon Parks' study of Heifetz's teaching of adaptive leadership helps leaders see that adaptive leadership is less concerned with the use of power and more concerned with enabling the group together to make progress on

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[281] Ibid., 60.

[282] Ibid., 63.

[283] Ibid., 65.

[284] Ibid., 68.

[285] Ibid., 75.

the issue.[286] The adaptive leader needs to think about conducting relationships with three

very different groups of people.

The first group includes the people who are with you, your partners. The

description of this groups makes a partner sound like a solid teammate:

> Partners provide protection, and they create alliances for you with factions other
> than your own. They strengthen both you and your initiatives. With partners, you
> are not simply relying on the logical power of your arguments and evidence, you
> are building political power as well. Furthermore, the content of your ideas will
> improve if you take into account the validity of other viewpoints- especially if
> you can incorporate the views of those who differ markedly from you. This is
> especially critical when you are advancing a difficult issue or confronting a
> conflict of values.[287]

The authors discuss the challenges involved in the process of finding partners: trust, loss

of personal autonomy to the partnership, working through conflict, and more.[288] All of

these are part of some of the foundational dynamics of functioning teams.

Adaptive leaders must also cultivate relationships with people who oppose them.

They understand that the practice of adaptive leadership requires them to see authority as

only one tool of the leader to help them in the activity of leadership, mobilizing the group

to make progress on its toughest problems.[289] Leaders need to learn to keep in close

contact with them and seek to understand their perception of loss while demonstrating

compassion.[290] In a team environment, the leader should not assume that opposition will

only come from outside the team. There will be times when a team leader will likely need

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[286] Parks, 10-11.

[287] Heifetz and Linsky, 78.

[288] Ibid.

[289] Parks, 9.

[290] Heifetz and Linsky, 89.

to apply this approach to certain team members who may be struggling through issues that conflict with the larger team vision or culture.

The third category is relationships with people who are uncommitted and whom the leader seeks to influence.[291] These could be people outside the team or teammates. In fact, influencing uncommitted teammates is likely a significant aspect of a team leader's role given both team dynamics and our sinful human nature. A number of the different strategies are already familiar to us: taking responsibility, serving as a model, and recognizing that change will incur costs.[292] One new strategy is to intentionally acknowledge the loss that the particular change will entail:

> But beyond clarifying the values at stake and the greater purposes worth the pain, you also need to name and acknowledge the loss itself. It's not enough to point to a hopeful future. People need to know that you know what you are asking them to give up on the way to creating a better future. Make explicit your realization that the change you are asking them to make is difficult, and that what you are asking them to give up has real value. Grieve with them, and memorialize the loss.[293]

Engaging in this strategy will serve to strengthen the trust between team leader and the team members in question while it also serves to remove emotional hindrances to the team members' ownership of the team vision and culture that is in dispute.

Along with thinking politically, the adaptive leader will need to "orchestrate the conflict."[294] This skill is about making conflict productive, not destructive. A leader in a team environment will need to master this in order to help a team "work with differences, passion, and conflicts in a way that diminishes their destructive potential and

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[291] Ibid., 90.

[292] Ibid., 90-100.

[293] Ibid., 94.

[294] Ibid., 101.

constructively harnesses their energy."[295] The authors present three main components to this skill.

An adaptive leader needs to "create a holding environment" that manages relationships, communication, and accountability to direct passions toward constructively solving problems and challenges.[296] The leader also needs to be able to "control the temperature" of conflict so that it stays in a productive range. There must be enough pressure to motivate real change, but not so much that relationships fray and demand a return to safety.[297] This sounds strikingly similar to what other leadership authors have variously described as "vision-casting," where compelling reasons to change are urged while not discouraging followers by painting too great a gap between vision and reality.[298] Finally, orchestrating the conflict will require the leader to "pace the work" so that people can emotionally adjust to the changes you are asking of them.[299]

A leader involved in adaptive change will also need to know when to "give the work back." "To meet adaptive challenges, people must change their hearts as well as their behaviors...The issues have to be internalized, owned, and ultimately resolved by the relevant parties to achieve enduring progress."[300] The authors counsel doing this by keeping your leadership interventions short and simple: "Exercising leadership

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[295] Ibid., 102.

[296] Ibid., 102-107.

[297] Ibid., 108.

[298] See Stanley, Joiner, and Jones, 69-99.; Andy Stanley, *Visioneering: God's Blueprint for Developing and Maintaining Personal Vision* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1999), 17-19.

[299] Heifetz and Linsky, 116-117.

[300] Ibid., 127.

necessarily involves interventions...generally, short and straightforward interventions are more likely to be heard and to be accepted without causing dangerous resistance."[301] Mastering this skill would likely help a team leader to enable the development of a team vision that is not overly influenced by the leader's own agenda.

The final skill set is a leader's ability to hold steady under the inevitable heat and opposition that will arise:

> Learning to take the heat and receive people's anger in a way that does not undermine your initiative is one of the toughest tasks of leadership. When you ask people to make changes and even sacrifices, it's almost inevitable that you will frustrate some of your closest colleagues and supporters, not to mention those outside your faction. Your allies want you to calm things down, at least for them, rather than stir things up. As they put pressure on you to back away, drop the issue, or change the behavior that upsets them, you will feel the heat, uncomfortably. In this sense, exercising leadership might be understood as disappointing people at a rate they can absorb.[302]

Two strategies are necessary to master this art of "redemptively disappointing people." First, leaders will sometimes need to hold back on bringing issues forward until there is an urgency and readiness to address them.[303] This will require patience on the part of the leader, who typically is forward-thinking. The second strategy requires that once an issue is being addressed, a leader keeps the attention on that issue and doesn't allow it to get pushed aside.[304] Sharon Parks points out that this requires a leader to be able to "hold steady" in the storm that erupts by remaining present, calm, and engaged despite the opposition.[305]

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[301] Ibid., 134.

[302] Ibid., 142.

[303] Ibid., 146.

[304] Ibid., 154.

[305] Parks, 113.

The authors speak of managing your hungers, anchoring yourself, understanding what's on the line, and the sacred heart of a leader.[306] When a Biblical worldview is applied, these begin to sound a bit more familiar. When speaking of how to manage hungers, they warn leaders against what amounts to pride and a lack of humility:

> Grandiosity sets you up for failure because it isolates you from reality. In particular, you forget the creative role that doubt plays in getting your organization or community to improve. Doubt reveals the parts of reality that you missed. Once you lose your ability to doubt, you see only that which confirms your own competence.[307]

This is the fruit of the Spirit set in the context of leadership.[308] It appears again when they warn that leaders need to be anchored so that they will respond to attacks against them with what amounts to patience and gentleness appropriate to the situation.[309] In the chapter on "What's On the Line," they are speaking, at core, about a leader needing both purpose and love: again, marks of true sanctification in Christ by the Spirit.[310]

They also describe what amounts to a leader's need for what we might call the communion of the saints. In speaking about being anchored sufficiently to expect your ideas to be challenged, one hears the distant echo of Proverbs 19:20, which says, "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future." In describing the difference between allies and confidants, we again hear the wisdom of Scripture. Allies are those who support and are involved in the adaptive changes you are pursuing, but it is necessary for a leader involved in adaptive change to have those outside their

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[306] Heifetz and Linsky, 164-236.

[307] Ibid., 173.

[308] See Gal 5:23ff.

[309] Heifetz and Linsky, 195.

[310] Ibid., 207.

situation to provide counsel, encouragement, and correction. The echoes of Scripture again resound as we remember Paul's mentoring relationship with Timothy, and other Biblical instruction such as Proverbs 15:21: "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed." This is the communion of saints aiding and enabling the work of adaptive leadership.

Leadership on the Line offers the leader in a team setting a great deal of theoretical and practical material. Even if the team is not facing significant adaptive challenges, it seems the very nature of teams will always require on-going adaptive changes from team members in order to remain a vital owner of the team's mission and vision. Therefore, adaptive leadership must always be at the top of a leader's toolset.

The Intersect Forum Notebook- Bob Burns and others

The Intersect Forum describes itself as a catalyst between grace and leadership. Over the course of the conference and the materials presented, many strands of leadership thinking were connected into a more workable paradigm for leadership. The concepts of adaptive leadership, systems leadership, strengths-based leadership, servant leadership, and kingdom leadership were woven together. The results provide two of the most critical paradigmatic insights for our discussion of leading within a team.

The first of these insights concerns the relational aspects of leadership that are critical to a healthy team. The Intersect Forum faculty debunked the common view of the leader as the "hero" who takes control and quickly moves an organization from "A to B."[311] They argue that most leadership issues involve the aforementioned adaptive leadership, which Heifetz defines as, "... the practice of mobilizing people to tackle

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[311] Bob Burns and others, "Intersect Forum: A Catalyst between Grace and Leadership," ed. Kristen Sagar (St. Louis: Covenant Seminary, 2010), 32.

tough challenges and thrive… Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future."[312] Adaptive leadership rejects the hero model in favor of leadership that helps people face problems and accept loss on the road to becoming something better for the future.

This differs from the view that leadership means authority or influence. The authors make this clear when they write, "People have long confused the notion of leadership with authority, power, and influence. We find it extremely useful to see leadership as a practice, an activity that some people do some of the time. We view leadership as a verb, not a job. Authority, power, and influence are critical tools, but they do not define leadership."[313] An individual might carry authority and influence with them constantly but not make use of it. Learning to see leadership as an activity helps a team leader grasp that their mere presence does not equate to leading. Something more is required.

Intersect Forum discussions highlighted how Heifetz rightly points out that the practice of leadership is not so much an event as an on-going process:

> Adaptive leadership is an iterative process involving three key activities: (1) observing events and patterns around you; (2) interpreting what you are observing (developing multiple hypotheses about what is really going on); and (3) designing interventions based on the observations and interpretations to address the adaptive challenge you have identified.[314]

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[312] Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14.

[313] Ibid., 24.

[314] Ibid., 32.

The practice of leadership is just that -- an on-going practice. Authority and influence are certainly tools in the leader's toolbox, but they are only interventions that must be used in the on-going process of leadership.

This understanding of leadership is defined in the Intersect Forum Notebook. They write, "Grace based leadership is the art of creating shared urgency from a framework of Gospel humility and conviction: humility based on the mercy of God and conviction based on Kingdom values."[315] Leading in all contexts is discussed as an "art" and not a "science." This fits with Heifetz's understanding that leading any significant change will be an iterative process requiring constant reevaluation and adjustments. "Shared urgency" highlights how leadership is group work and not merely issuing orders out of authority or influence. This understanding of leadership is crucial for a team leader's efforts to nurture healthy team functioning and corporate ownership of vision.

The Intersect Forum's definition of leadership seems to embrace many of the dynamics of healthy teams previously encountered in this survey. The emphasis upon "grace-based" leading is explained as a gospel humility of life and leadership approach that flows from a deep and on-going experience of the mercy of God.[316] This gospel humility creates the character of a trustworthy servant to the team that is necessary for effective promotion of healthy team dynamics and ministry. Grace-based leadership makes a team leader into a steward of the team and its vision, rather than a hero charging out in front and dragging the team in his wake.

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[315] Burns and others, 6.

[316] Ibid., 49-53.

Creating shared urgency is a helpful description of the team leader's role in helping the team to form a commonly owned vision. As discussed elsewhere, for a genuinely healthy team to form, there must be a commonly owned purpose or vision for which members willingly sacrifice. It must be the team's vision, and it must be urgent to the members of the team. The Intersect Forum staff offers wise counsel to any potential leader of teams when they write, "People do not join an organization to fulfill the vision of a leader unless it is their vision as well."[317] The hero leader model sees the leader as responsible for persuading people to follow their vision. However, Intersect is on the right track for team leadership when they insist that vision must be shared.

The Intersect Forum understanding of leadership also highlights another key element of team health for ministry teams: kingdom values. Teams require not only a shared vision but a shared culture. For Christians, that culture must reflect the distinctive values of the Kingdom of God as they are expressed in each individual team. The Intersect Forum offers important insight about culture and vision, an area in which much of the literature is silent, and that leaders would do well to remember. They write, "Shared urgency is a collaborative organizational review based on core values."[318] So for vision to be genuinely owned by a team, there must be a participatory process of shaping that vision, but this does not start from a blank slate! The starting ground of that participatory process is a common set of core values, which is the bedrock of what we call "culture."

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[317] Ibid., 95.

[318] Ibid.

Author Larry Osborne describes this in terms of a team's unity. He writes that there are three "bedrock" components of unity, or what the Intersect Forum has described as "shared urgency." He says healthy teams require doctrinal unity, respect and friendship, and philosophical unity.[319] As he explains each one, it becomes clear that these would serve as an excellent description of a culture that distinctly reflects kingdom values and convictions.[320] Therefore, team leaders must remember that a common team culture precedes a common team vision. Building a common team culture based on kingdom values becomes the foundation from which a shared team urgency over vision can then develop. This is a key insight into team dynamics that seems overlooked or even missed by the other literature on teams.

Even with the right approach, the role of the leader is clearly challenging. Positional leadership approaches have, perhaps, endured because they are much simpler to use, albeit ultimately ineffective in a team setting. For leaders to effectively create shared urgency, they will have to master two skills upon which the Intersect Forum focuses: differentiation and emotional intelligence, or "EQ."

Differentiation was a key concept discussed in this study's survey of *The Leader's Journey*. It is especially important for team leaders to master differentiation if they are going to effectively facilitate shared urgency over team vision. The authors of *The Leader's Journey* help us see the connection:

> Leadership requires differentiation from important others without attempting to control them, cutting off from them, or being determined by them... It is possible to lead without controlling. It is also possible to learn to resist the demands to

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[319] Larry W. Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 28.

[320] Ibid., 29-32.

surrender vision and principle without giving up our connection to those who exert the pressure.[321]

Differentiation for team leaders is really about understanding their own identity and value in Christ and the role He has given them in the team. This self-awareness will allow them to respond in a more collaborative rather than controlling manner with their teams.

But even a well-differentiated team leader may be unaware of how their own feelings, struggles, and demeanor can affect their efforts at leading a team towards common vision. "The ability to proactively manage your own emotions and appropriately respond to the emotions of others" is how the Intersect Forum defines the skill-set referred to as "emotional intelligence."[322] For the positional leader, emotional intelligence matters little. But for the team leader seeking to create a shared vision that carries real emotional urgency for others on the team, it is indispensible. It requires you to become skilled at understanding what you are feeling at any given moment and then managing your reaction in the most beneficial manner. That same process is applied to those around you. The Intersect Forum serves the team leader well in helping to identify and encourage development in this practical skill set.

Armed with a better understanding of the relational dynamics of leadership, Intersect goes on to provide a second crucial insight for the team leader: the "swamp metaphor."[323] This picture of how leadership works in practice helps the leader to understand where they are, what they are trying to do, and how to begin doing it. Far from putting the leader in the position of being the omniscient hero, the metaphor helps

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[321] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 47.

[322] Burns and others, 23.

[323] Ibid., 37.

the leader to see that they are "in the swamp" of the organization and its environment

along with the rest of the team. Intersect describes the leader's role in this fashion:

> Overarching in the metaphor is the understanding that effective leadership rejects
> the notion that the leader is a hero who has all the answers and leads by giving
> orders for efficient efforts that will lead to expected outcomes. Instead, the leader
> is one who uses emotional intelligence and communication skills to create
> urgency around shared vision and to facilitate teamwork to discover collaborative
> and creative solutions to the challenges faced by the organization.[324]

These "collaborative and creative solutions" are called "platforms" in the metaphor. The

leader does not build them, but exercises participatory leadership and relational authority

in helping the team to build them together.[325]

The Intersect Forum speaks of platform-building skills, but does not provide the

team leader with a clear definition or sufficient illustrations of just what these platforms

are. Nevertheless, the "platform" concept could be explained if connected with the

practical skills and exercises in Heifetz's *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* to provide

a working paradigm of what leadership looks like in actual practice. Sharon Parks also

provides some very practical pictures of platform work from her study of Heifetz's class

on adaptive leadership. A leader doing platform work will work to create a "holding

environment." This is a relational structure, such as meetings, provides relational safety

and keeps the group focused and accountable to address the challenges before it.[326]

Additionally, given the dynamics of teams, team leaders would be wise to introduce their

teams to this metaphor to provide a common language for collaboration and

understanding.

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[324] Ibid., 38.

[325] Ibid., 39.

[326] Parks, 57.

The emphasis on participatory leadership in this model does not eliminate the leader's role in exercising accountability, but shifts the relational emphasis from that of a superior to an inferior to focus on "peership:"

> Peership does not imply that lines of authority or role relationships are dismissed. Rather, it means that mutual respect and trust are reflected between persons regardless of their authority or position…Participatory leadership is much more of a process than an organizational governance issue. It does not mean leaders abdicate their decision-making responsibilities, or that the leader at the top hasn't established a vision. The standard for participatory leadership is that persons should have a say, either directly or through representation, in the decisions that directly impact their lives. It has to do with mutual respect, enlistment of everyone involved, and empowerment.[327]

For the team leader, the leadership function of providing accountability shifts in this model from "you didn't do what I asked you to" (positional leadership) to "you didn't do what all of us including yourself agreed you would do." This is a major shift for leaders, and it is crucial for team leaders if true collective ownership and accountability for the whole team's results (versus individual performance) is to become the norm for the team.

Sharon Parks adds to this understanding of accountability by identifying a number of activities adaptive leadership should use in their team's "platform" work. A leader fosters genuine team accountability by recognizing and surfacing factions that have developed within the group that could hinder progress. A team leader also tries to regulate the relational "heat" so that there is a helpful level of motivation to tackle the problem without allowing emotions to run so "hot" that the group begins avoiding the problem. The leader serves the group in platform work by identifying work avoidance strategies, and by providing avenues for the group to acknowledge the loss, grief, and

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[327] Burns and others, 91.

challenge that the problem presents.[328] All of these are platform-building strategies that specifically foster group accountability to make progress on their greatest problems.

The swamp metaphor also impacts how a leader walks a team through its own relational or organizational politics. It does so by providing an understanding of negotiating skills as part of a leader's toolkit for platform building. Team dynamics require each member be a genuine stakeholder in the team's vision, but this will create both consensus and conflict among team members. The Intersect Forum asks leaders to see their role as negotiating these interests through one of four different strategies. First, if there is consensus and power is equally shared, then the team works together by problem solving the best way forward to accomplish common interests.[329] Second, if there is consensus, but power or influence on the team is asymmetrical, then the team works together by networking to share information and give everyone a stake in the decision.[330] Greater knowledge, experience, and longer team tenure could all be factors that create asymmetrical power on the team. Third, if there are conflicting interests, but power or influence is equally shared, then the leader must help the team to bargain. Selected team members should be empowered to seek a compromise solution that maintains the team's major priorities.[331] Finally, if there are conflicting interests and power/influence is not equal, then the team leader must consider a range of possibilities for how they will support certain interests over other competing interests.[332] Leaders must

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[328] Parks, 61.

[329] Burns and others, 143.

[330] Ibid.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Ibid., 144.

recognize that to maintain essential team dynamics, they will need to lead the team out of this mode of negotiating and back towards either networking or bargaining. These strategies provide potential tools for team leaders to understand and utilize these dynamics for negotiating competing interests, helping their teams maintain unity and effectiveness.

The Intersect Forum has provided the beginnings of a broad, working paradigm for team leadership and a thorough, practical approach to the relational aspects of team leadership. Other works provide working models of teams, while still others speak of leadership models that ultimately do not account for most of the unique dynamics of teams. The Intersect Forum model is both broader and more tightly argued than other literature this survey has encountered.

The Leader's Journey- Herrington, Creech, and Taylor

Supplementing the material from the Intersect Forum, *The Leader's Journey* asks its readers to take a different perspective on leadership than the other works discussed. Rather than viewing leadership through the lens of activities, positions, and personalities, it asks readers to consider leadership in the church by viewing relationships as an entire linked system. The authors put it this way:

> As you likely know, most leadership development processes focus on "leadership techniques," to be used by the leader on those being led. In this book, we go in another direction: helping you understand that as a leader you are part of a living human system of engagement and relationship, and helping you learn to become aware of these systems and navigate them wisely. We offer a focus on managing yourself rather than managing others.[333]

In this approach, the team comprises a system of relationships that are networked in a fashion that recognizes the fact that what impacts a relationship between two people

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[333] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, xvi.

in that system will ripple out to a certain degree to impact the other relationships around

them in that system. Here, leaders must learn to place themselves in that system and see

leadership not so much as changing others, but as changing oneself and how one's

interactions impact the entire system. The authors describe this as "thinking systems,

watching process."[334]

Teams require the building and maintenance of a high level of relational trust. *The

Leader's Journey* suggests that by paying attention to the team as a relational system, the

leader can learn to maintain and build trust by recognizing and lowering trust-destroying

behavior through "de-triangling."[335] When two people enter into conflict and one seeks to

involve a third party in support of their position, the authors refer to this as

"triangling."[336] This is where the leader remains relationally and emotionally connected

to two different team members while being emotionally neutral over conflicts or

disagreements between them. The leader's calm yet engaged observations help both

parties move toward the kind of conflict resolution that preserves or strengthens trust in a

team environment.[337]

Central to a leader's ability to serve effectively in a relational system is their

differentiation of themselves. Here is how the authors describe differentiation:

> Differentiation deals with the effort to define oneself, to control oneself, to
> become a more responsible person, and to permit others to be themselves as well.
> Differentiation is the ability to remain connected in relationship to significant

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[334] Ibid., 49.

[335] Ibid., 55.

[336] Ibid., 146.

[337] Ibid., 55.

people in our lives and yet not have our reactions and behavior determined by them.[338]

This is a critical component of leading a team. Our previous discussion addressed how critical it is for an effective team to develop a shared vision. The authors describe how a differentiated leader is primed to enable this to occur in a relational system: "Effective leadership comes from someone with enough emotional maturity to call a congregation to discern and pursue a shared vision, to remain connected with those who differ with the leader or the majority, and to remain a calm presence when the anxiety rises."[339]

Differentiation allows a leader to understand who they are, their principles and values, and to resist the relational triangles that would co-opt them and compromise their principles. It allows them to recognize and resist trust-destroying anxiety in the team, but to remain a calming presence for the rest of the system.[340] The authors present a number of practical strategies for remaining calm and differentiated in the midst of actually leading, especially in conflict. They include growing in emotional self-awareness, watching the leader's thinking patterns, controlling one's feelings, and even slowing down the pace of discussions.[341] These are practical strategies to accomplish Heifetz's principle that leaders must be able to "get on the balcony."

The authors' perspective on leadership are fresh compared to other approaches surveyed. While there are echoes of Maxwell's mantra that "leadership is influence"[342]

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[338] Ibid., 18.

[339] Ibid., 46.

[340] Ibid., 146.

[341] Ibid., 71.

[342] Maxwell, 11.

and the major dictum from *The Ascent of a Leader* that the leader's character and

behavior is central to their effectiveness in leading,[343] *The Leader's Journey* brings these

and other concepts together into a more practical framework for understanding effective

team leadership.

Transforming Church- Kevin Ford

Kevin Ford's *Transforming Church* is like a "learning lab" on leading change in

the church.[344] It brings together a number of strands of leadership theory and practice

examined in other parts of this chapter and applies them to the author's particular concern

of leading a church through a process of change towards greater health. It focuses on the

application of theory to practice: hence, a "learning lab." In addition, there is a substantial

undercurrent of team dynamics that flows through the book. This may not be an explicit

intent of the author, but the echoes of team dynamics from previous literature are

recognizable within the work.

Ford is explicit from the beginning that leading change in the church is an

"adaptive leadership" challenge that requires leaders to engage the entire human system

of the church in an on-going process of change.[345] Ford identifies five "movements" or

adaptive-level changes that churches need to make.

> We were struck that each of the dysfunctions was in direct opposition to this
> description [of the church as a living community]. The common thread running
> through all five dysfunctions is the overriding tendency to shift the focus from the
> biblical "we" to a cultural "me." The real work of the church – what I will refer to

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[343] Thrall, McNicol, and McElrath, 21.

[344] Kevin Graham Ford, *Transforming Church: Bringing out the Good to Get to Great*, 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008).

[345] Ibid., 19.

as *adaptive change* – is largely a movement along each of the key indicators, from cultural dysfunction to biblical dynamic.[346]

These adaptive change movements begin in the individual but occur at the level of the whole community. This is because each individual in the church is part of a larger "human system" in which change takes place.

> Adaptive change – the journey from cultural dysfunction to biblical health – is never accomplished through technical fixes. An issue requiring adaptive change is much more complex, involving a set of interconnected problems, mutating over time, hidden within the human system of the church. The adaptive issue is usually outside of conscious awareness. It is the current state of unhealthy norms, behaviors, and attitudes. It resists adaptive change under the camouflage of the best of intentions.[347]

A leader who fails to recognize this will face the likelihood that while key individuals may demonstrate outward allegiance to a particular change, the community as a whole will not embrace change merely because "powerbrokers" have given acquiescence. This potentially clarifies what other literature has described as securing team ownership or "buy in."

This kind of adaptive change in the church system will require a leader to call the whole church system to sacrifice for the sake of moving towards greater health. Ford warns leaders and churches to count the cost and understand that leading such change will not come from mere positional authority, which Ford terms "leadership as a noun."[348] That type of leader acquires and uses power rather than creating any shared ownership or accountability.[349] Ford warns of the cost of abandoning "leadership as a

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[346] Ibid., 33-34.

[347] Ibid., 40.

[348] Ibid., 129.

[349] Ibid., 130.

noun" and leading adaptive level change:

> Underlying the concept of leadership as a noun are powerful cultural dysfunctions, such as the passive entitlement of consumerism, the arrogance and self-preoccupation of a leader with the answer, and the misdirected idea that a journey of significance can be achieved without loss and sacrifice. By endlessly focusing on the technical fix- solutions within the scope of a leader's skill- the most subtle and powerful illusion of change is created: the win-win scenario. Many of our churches have bought into the lie that change can occur without conflict. And, given the right leader, a technical fix or series of fixes can solve the problems without too much pain or too much change.[350]

Ford's approach requires not only sacrifice by the leader, but understanding that leadership is ministry to the team itself. The *Intersect Forum Notebook* asserted that a key task of leadership is creating shared urgency over a common vision. Ford sees that as essential ministry to the team by the leader.

> Similarly, the leader is one who, by using authority appropriately, invites others to share responsibility for ministry. She asks the right questions rather than providing all- or any- of the answers. Leadership, in a transforming church, is much less about who gets to make decisions and much more about how best to fulfill the church's mission in an ever-changing context. A transforming church develops a multiplying group of leaders who lead by serving in this way.[351]

Team dynamics cry out for this kind of shared leadership, which flows from an understanding that the leader's first ministry is to the team and not through the team.

This is a profound shift from positional leadership, which sees the team as an extension of the leader through which the leader extends their influence. Leadership as a ministry empowers team members to shape and own a common vision. Ford writes, "Instead of coming up with the right answers, the leader is the one who begins to frame the right questions and invites others to join the process."[352] Ford says that the true test of

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[350] Ibid., 134-135.

[351] Ibid., 35.

[352] Ibid., 76.

leadership as a ministry is the legacy left behind.[353] Leadership author John Maxwell

communicates this same truth under what he terms "the law of legacy."[354] He outlines a

leader's growth, ending in a legacy that sounds similar to leadership as ministry:

> There is often a natural progression to how leaders develop in the area of legacy, starting with the desire to achieve. Achievement comes when they do big things by themselves. Success comes when they empower followers to do big things for them. Significance comes when they develop leaders to do great things with them. Legacy comes when they put leaders in position to do great things without them.[355]

This is leadership as ministry. However, Ford's description is more practical as one

would expect in a "leadership learning lab."

Leadership as a ministry to the team does not mean, however, that the leader is to

seek a "win-win" scenario for everyone on the team. He argues that such a situation

would be anything but ministerial! Author Stephen Covey has popularized the idea that

leadership is to seek a win-win amongst competing values and choices. Covey writes,

"Win/Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human

interactions. Win/Win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial,

mutually satisfying. With a Win/Win solution, all parties feel good about the decision and

feel committed to the action plan."[356]

Kevin Ford argues that leadership as ministry takes a slightly different approach.

In order to create shared ownership of a common vision, Ford asserts that leaders must

gain skill at showing where values collide. He asserts that leaders facing adaptive

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[353] Ibid., 130.

[354] Maxwell, 257.

[355] Ibid., 260-261.

[356] Covey, 207.

changes that seek a Win-Win will ultimately fail to move a team through change:

> When adaptive issues are on the table, no one ever wins by trying to create a win-win situation. Win-win, in the end, always ends up lose-lose. A solution that doesn't step on anyone's toes or reveal the primary issue may be easy, but in the long run it is useless. Adaptive work is difficult on a number of levels for one primary reason: It involves closing the gap between circumstances and competing values...This is the prevailing cultural notion of leadership turned upside down. Transforming leadership is not the exercise of either authority or power. Rather, it is raising the right questions and making sure that competing values come to the surface and are dealt with.[357]

Therefore, for Ford, effective team leaders will see their role not as Rodney King: "Can't we all just get along?" Rather, they will play more the role of Martin Luther King, intentionally raising the awareness of the gap between espoused values and current circumstances, or of the clash between competing values. Ron Heifetz provides a wonderfully practical picture of what this might look like for the team leader:

> [In] the old definition of leadership the leader has the answer – the vision – and everything else is a sales job to persuade people to sign up for it. Leaders certainly provide direction but that often means posing well-structured questions rather than offering definitive answers. Imagine the differences in behavior between leaders who operate with the idea that "leadership means influencing the organization to follow the leader's vision" and those who operate with the idea that "leadership means influencing the organization to face its problems and to live into its opportunities." That second idea – mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges – is what defines the new job of the leader.[358]

Ford's paradigm of leadership is rich in practical strategies for leadership "interventions" by team leaders. This literature review has repeatedly found that team leadership empowers team members. Ford could not agree more: "Leadership shares power. It invites rather than coerces. It recognizes rather than manipulates. It engages rather than

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[357] Ford, 138.

[358] William C. Taylor, "The Leader of the Future," *Fast Company* (1999). http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/25/heifetz.html (accessed June 2010).

separates. It serves rather than rules. Leadership is active."[359] He then suggests six

practical activities that are the essential tools of the leader he describes: 1) build rapport,

2) distinguish between technical and adaptive change, 3) engage the issues, 4) manage

your red zone, 5) mobilize others for ministry, and 6) orchestrate the speed and stress of

conflict.[360] These activities or "leadership interventions" as Ron Heifetz calls them reveal

a remarkable undercurrent of team-dynamics.

As each one is explained a little further, their impact upon team dynamics

becomes clear. Building rapport is explained as building trust, and this is, perhaps, the

most fundamental aspect of team dynamics. Understanding whether a challenge is

technical or adaptive, engaging the issues, and orchestrating the speed and stress of

conflict allows teams to raise competing values, learn together, and so grow into the

common culture and approach to ministry that is also a fundamental dynamic of teams.

Managing your red zone requires a leader to exercise emotional and relational

intelligence. This helps the leader to remain focused on empowering the team rather than

using the team to the leader's own ends. Mobilizing others for ministry is crucial to

genuinely empowering the team to real ownership rather than just task

accomplishment.[361]

Trust, empowerment, shared vision, common culture, and leadership that serves

the team are all clear and well-developed themes running through *Transforming Church*.

They are also essential dynamics of healthy teams. Ford's leadership "learning lab"

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[359] Ford, 142.

[360] Ibid.

[361] Ibid., 143-154.

paradigm provides team leadership with further understanding of what the practice of leadership could look like.

Leadership Summary

This survey has demonstrated that even among sources that show a level of understanding team dynamics, paradigms and practices for effective leadership vary significantly. The literature, however, reflects agreement on certain characteristics necessary for effective team leaders to develop. From Collins' Level 5 Leaders to Intersect's "creating shared urgency," effective team leadership is not positional but relational at heart. Kouzes and Posner, Ford, and the authors of *The Leader's Journey* all agree that trust is built only as the leader invests in the relational systems within the team. Trust requires credibility, and credibility requires a leader to empower, foster collaboration, and rely on more than charisma, as Collins has warned. Heifetz, Intersect, and Ford all suggest important tools for leaders who seek to develop trust and create common ownership and vision within a team.

A number of works have put forward leadership paradigms, including those of Heifetz, the Intersect Forum, and Kevin Ford. They share much in common, such as an understanding of the difference between technical and adaptive leadership challenges and an emphasis upon leaders seeing themselves within the relational system. These paradigms tend to differ over which leadership skills they most prioritize, but there is significant overlap nonetheless.

More on Leadership's Role in Developing a Team Vision

This project is particularly concerned with how leadership impacts the development of team vision. Much material has already been presented on this subject,

but a few additional works bring important additional contributions. One is Putman's *Church as a Team Sport.*[362] On the question of leading a team towards vision, Putman's work suggests that effective leadership will help team members discover a purpose larger than themselves.[363] Scripture makes clear that our fundamental nature as human beings is that of being a "worshipper."[364] We were made to give ourselves wholly to God for His purposes and desires, and He especially intends for that to occur in community. All human beings were made for this, which is why even general management books on teams observe this dynamic of teams needing purpose.[365] Putman's call to "win" is really a call to recognize this need for a vision that reflects our identity as worshippers of God serving His purposes.

Another author whose work speaks to the development of vision is John Maxwell. Maxwell speaks of leadership in terms of "laws," which reflect principles of what this survey has previously recognized as a "transformational leadership" approach. Maxwell does not interact with any of Heifetz's material on adaptive leadership, which raises the question of how broadly applicable are his "laws."

For instance, in Maxwell's "The Law of Navigation," he teaches that while anyone can steer the ship, only a leader can create the vision, resources, personnel, and solutions to problems that are necessary to get the ship to the proper destination.[366] This is good transactional leadership, but it would be at odds with much of what our previous

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[362] Putman.

[363] Ibid., 140.

[364] Cf. Gn 1:26-28, 1 Cor 10:31.

[365] Katzenbach and Smith, 12.

[366] Maxwell, 35-45.

material has suggested is necessary for team leadership. Teams require a genuinely

shared vision to function. Maxwell calls for the leader to follow "the law of buy-in" by

being a worthy leader that promotes a worthy vision, but this is different from a vision

that is mutually developed and owned by a team as their own.[367]

By contrast, literature like *Transforming Church* suggests that teams need leaders

to use their influence to create a process where the team uses its gifts to "navigate" to a

mutually-owned vision.[368] This allows each team member to contribute to shaping the

vision through their unique insights and skills. The leader does not function merely as a

"moderator," but instead uses leadership skills to influence team members to deploy their

strengths and be influenced by the strengths of other team members.

Maxwell's "law of explosive growth" also addresses how a team leader should

approach the development of vision in the team. This law makes a helpful distinction

between attracting followers and developing leaders.[369] He argues that explosive growth

comes from the latter, and that is precisely the approach a leader should take in leading a

team toward a common vision. When each team member is regarded as a leader in the

area of their own gifts and contributions, team leadership can then maximize their impact

rather than monitoring their compliance, and a common vision results.

While Maxwell provides practical suggestions for how a team leader does this, he

recognizes that this first requires a fundamental shift in approach: "Becoming a leader

who develops leaders requires an entirely different focus and attitude from simply

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[367] Ibid., 169-178.

[368] See Ford, 76.

[369] Maxwell, 249-252.

attracting and leading followers. It takes a different mind-set."[370] This fundamental shift

in approach turns this law into a helpful principle for development of leadership that

supports team dynamics.

Thom Rainer adds to the field of development of vision in teams in his work

Breakout Churches.[371] This is a work modeled on Collins' *Good to Great*, but revised for

churches who made the transition from plateau or decline to sustained and

evangelistically strong growth. Rainer posits that "it is a sin to be good if God has called

us to be great."[372] More important than the biblical fidelity of that statement is how a

team approach to ministry is part of his vision of greatness in churches.

Following Collins' model, Rainer discovers that "Breakout Churches" learn "to

confront the brutal facts"[373] in what he calls an "ABC Moment."[374] This involves a

growing awareness of a church's failings, a belief that God wants to change the church,

and the resulting crisis that such change often causes in the hearts of those involved.[375]

Many churches experience ABC Moments when they realize their doctrinal ignorance,

for this shapes the function and fruitfulness (or lack thereof) of the church.[376] Many

authors make the case that teams require at least a basic theological and resulting

philosophical understanding in order to effectively function around a common vision.

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[370] Ibid., 248.

[371] Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

[372] Ibid., 34.

[373] Collins, 65-89.

[374] Rainer, 72.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Ibid., 73.

Otherwise, they end up functioning just like committees or work groups, who only focus on task and ignore the relational component necessary for healthy teams.

Rainer also writes of what he calls "the Vision Intersection Profile" or the "VIP factor."[377] This refers to the discovery of the intersection of the leadership's passion, the community's needs, and the passion and gifts of the congregation. Together, these help a church clearly define a vision that really controls all their ministry efforts and focus.[378] This factor is almost a "multiplier" for the effectiveness of teams. As previously shown, for teams to have both freedom and effectiveness, they need to have a commonly owned vision. Rainer's concept suggests a model for how that vision might actually be determined within the team.

Providing teams with this kind of laser-like focus also helps to foster another key ingredient in a breakout church. Rainer found that breakout churches achieved a culture of excellence in their ministry activities.[379] This was achieved by a culture of high expectation along with simultaneous high freedom for ministry practitioners.[380] Ministry leadership was expected to stay rooted in the vision and philosophy of the church in a way that exhibited fruitfulness, but they were given exceptional freedom to decide which ministry methods and strategies to use. This kind of approach is neither a top-down command and control model of ministry nor a lone-ranger ministry star approach. It is a team approach where everyone sees themselves as part of a larger effort, with their ministry contributing to the whole.

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[377] Ibid., 119.

[378] Ibid., 118-119.

[379] Ibid., 129-146.

[380] Ibid., 138-139.

The literature suggests that team leaders help the team to develop vision as they understand their identity as worshippers serving God's purposes. While transformational leadership approaches such as Maxwell's have value in this regard, authors such as Kevin Ford have suggested that this approach needs to be modified to call team members to pursue a vision for transformation that is group-generated rather than individual-focused. The literature suggests that the team leader is to serve as a moderator that helps the team "confront the brutal facts" in order to discover their common vision by an intersection of passion, needs, and team gifts.[381]

More on Leadership's Role in Developing Team Accountability

While accountability has already been addressed in this survey, Jim Collins adds an important component in his work *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, which is his application of *Good to Great* to non-profit organizations such as churches. Collins addresses how economic issues are a key difference for non-profits, but points out that measurement of performance should not be.[382] Collins highlights how critical it is for leaders to still whether such "fruit" is being produced. *Good to Great* emphasized the need to "confront the brutal facts,"[383] which is something that churches often struggle to do when it comes to their own performance.[384] Church-based teams require leadership that develops accountability by helping the team to "confront the brutal facts" with both a measure of freedom and with responsibility within a culture of discipline.

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[381] Ibid., 119.

[382] Collins, 6.

[383] Collins, 65-89.

[384] Rainer, 72.

In a similar vein, Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan bring a simple and important

idea to the discussion on accountability in their book *Execution*. They write:

> No company can deliver on its commitments or adapt well to change unless all
> leaders practice the discipline of execution at all levels. Execution has to be a part
> of a company's strategy and its goals. It is the missing link between aspirations
> and results. As such, it is a major– indeed, the major—job of a business leader. If
> you don't know how to execute, the whole of your efforts as a leader will always
> be less than the sum of its parts.[385]

Leadership that doesn't result in execution is a failure. This is the major thrust of Bossidy

and Charan.

They make clear that execution is not "micromanagement," but it does require

leaders to do more than simply preside over an organization under the banner of

"empowerment." Instead, leaders who execute are exercising accountability over

performance, solving problems, and creating an organizational culture and processes that

lead to execution.[386] This requires leaders to learn seven essential leadership practices: 1)

know your people and your business, 2) insist on realism, 3) set clear goals and priorities,

4) follow through, 5) reward the doers, 6) expand people's capabilities, 7) know

yourself.[387] These practices enable the leader to shape an organization's culture and

personnel, putting in place all the necessary pieces to be an organization that executes.[388]

Bossidy and Charan's work points out a significant theme in leadership studies –

the notion that leadership is more than just a concept. Instead, it is a practical discipline

that reveals itself through the leader and the organization. Marcus Buckingham echoes

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[385] Bossidy, Charan, and Burck, 19-20.

[386] Ibid., 27-28.

[387] Ibid., 57-84.

[388] Ibid., 85-140.

and confirms this commonality in leadership:

> The manager's most basic responsibility is not to help each person grow. It is not to provide an environment in which each person feels significant and special. These are worthy methods, but they are not the point. The point is to focus people toward performance. The manager is, and should be, totally responsible for this. This explains why great managers are skeptical about handing all authority down to their people. Allowing each person to make all of his own decisions may well result in a team of fully self-actualized employees, but it may not be a very productive team.[389]

The authors argue that teams must be accountable for their performance. This seems to reflect the performance dynamic present in such works as *The Wisdom of Teams*.[390]

Taken together, these works emphasize that a team leader has an active role in promoting accountability. Whether the leader forces the team to rigorously measure their performance, or reminds them that they exist for a purpose beyond themselves, these works suggest that team leaders must develop the necessary skills in order to foster team accountability.

More on Leadership's Role in Developing a Team Culture

This survey has seen that teams both require and create their own culture. George Cladis' work is relevant, as it speaks to how leadership plays a role in the culture. Cladis writes that leadership needs to work at developing a culture of empowering team members, rather than accumulating power and control.[391] This models how the members of the Trinity collaborate, working together to empower the work of the whole. This becomes a practical expression of Miroslav Volf's assertion that Scripture teaches that such correspondence between church and Trinity is intentional and normative. He

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[389] Buckingham and Coffman, 110.

[390] Katzenbach and Smith, 12.

[391] Cladis, 123-140.

explains:

> The symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the Trinitarian persons finds its correspondence in the image of the church in which all members serve one another with their specific gifts of the Spirit in imitation of the Lord and through the power of the Father. Like the divine person, they all stand in a relation of mutual giving and receiving.[392]

Cladis offers specific suggestions for how team leaders can practice this. He suggests reorganizing church leadership structures, meetings, and even seating arrangements to reflect this commitment to give responsibility away to other team members rather than hoarding power.[393]

Wayne Cordeiro also provides information on how team leaders might play a role in developing a team's culture. He first suggests that leaders learn to identify that culture by recognizing its "totems," which he defines as "the guiding spiritual values that birth the unique culture of a church."[394] Cordeiro asserts that once these are identified, a leader cannot change the culture single handedly. Real culture shift is "a process of incarnating the kingdom of God" in that particular group.[395] He then gives a number of helpful suggestions for pursuing the work of God in changing a particular culture that may be helpful to the team leader.[396]

An unlikely source of insight on team culture building is found in the work *Moses on Management.*[397] Cordeiro spoke of "totems," while Rabbi Baron used the word

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[392] Volf, 219.

[393] Cladis, 127.

[394] Lewis and others, 43.

[395] Ibid., 54.

[396] Ibid., 59-67.

[397] Baron and Padwa.

"rituals," but regardless of the term, Baron asserts that it is crucial for those who would

lead in a team environment to make active use of them to shape a team:

> Why are there so many rituals in the Bible? Because if people had just made up
> the practices as they went along, they would have missed countless opportunities
> for what today we call team building. From the simplest to the most complex,
> rituals are a way for men and women to demonstrate key values and affirm their
> sense of belonging to a group.[398]

Baron gives an illustration from a company called Sapient that has extensive

experience with forming and using teams throughout their business. He describes how

they actively use rituals such as cheers, meeting layouts, and awards to shape employees

into a common team culture.[399] He encourages those in leadership to actively create

rituals for a team to proactively foster that culture: "Whatever rituals you choose to

institute, be sure to link them to your core values…Use rituals to demonstrate to your

employees what you consider to be important and to give them a tangible way of

knowing they belong."[400]

Baron, Cordeiro and Cladis all agree that team leaders need to have an active role

in developing a common team culture. They are to do this by first recognizing the current

team culture, and then shaping activities that enable team members to embrace a common

set of values that team members, themselves, help to choose and develop.

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[398] Ibid., 156.

[399] Ibid., 157-158.

[400] Ibid., 159.

Summary of Literature Survey Findings on Teams and Leadership

Survey Findings on Team Dynamics

From both scripture and selected literature, this survey has identified a number of dynamics that distinguish a team from a mere group working on a common task. There is broad agreement in the literature that a high level of relational trust is foundational to the formation of a team. Groups that become teams develop relational trust into a collaboration of spiritual gifts and skills that empower team members to own and act upon a commonly agreed upon team vision. Accountability is an integral part of this collaboration. However, in teams it takes the shape of accountability to the group rather than to the leader. It is also distinguished by being enforced not merely from leader to members, but from member to member.

The literature shows that teams develop a common culture of values and perspectives for both their relationships and ministry activities. Teams rely less on copious amounts of specific instructions and more on each member applying the group's values and beliefs in shaping ministry activities. Teams are distinguished by synergy in their activities, allowing their common culture to blend their diverse gifts in a powerful and productive way.

Many of the sources in this survey, from scripture through the secondary literature, asserted that teams require both leaders and members to embody the biblical attitude of servanthood. This was even present in secular literature such as Collins' *Good to Great*, although admittedly without the Biblical terminology. For a group to become a team, the literature asserts that the members must be willing to embrace the notion of

serving others before oneself, serving purposes that may require significant sacrifice on the part of the individual for the sake of the team.

Survey Findings on Team Leadership

No single paradigm for leading a team was found that was widely agreed upon by the literature. In fact, there was significant divergence within the survey on what was and was not involved in leading teams. Some writers seemed unaware of some of the essentials of team dynamics that the survey discovered. Others seemed more aware of these dynamics, but became more general in suggested approaches to leading a team.

There were a number of consistent themes that did emerge. Throughout this literature survey, authors have made the point that leadership that is most effective with groups today is transformational in approach, as opposed to relying on the authority of a hierarchical position. The literature has declared repeatedly that leaders of teams should use their skills, authority, or influence to empower team members to pursue goals that change both them and those they serve. This is transformational leadership. Other authors have added that leaders gain influence with team members by demonstrating credibility of character. This was uniquely true for leaders of teams in an explicitly Christian environment. Effective team leaders do not seek to gain influence by power that comes through position. Rather, they demonstrate and encourage Christ-like character that gives them credibility with team members, and this credibility increases their ability to influence teams.

Another consistent theme in the literature concerned the focus of the team leader. Different terms were used to describe this focus, including servant, moderator, and resourcer. However, the most prominent term was that of "equipper." The majority of the

literature did not describe leaders as hero-like figures who single-handedly rally the team. Instead, different authors called for an "equipping model of pastoral leadership" as an essential component of team leadership.[401] There was some divergence on what the necessary task and skills of leaders were within this role, but most agreed that team leadership involves promoting the spiritual development of team members through the gospel towards distinctly kingdom values and behaviors.

With the landscape surveyed, this study then addressed the role of leadership in developing team vision, accountability, and a common culture. The literature showed some variation on the leader's role in regards to team vision. Some saw leaders in the role of a "vision-castor" who rallies the team behind a leader-created vision. More authors describe the leader's role along the lines of the "vision catalyst," who moderates, encourages, and even cajoles the team towards purposes that stretch them and force them into collaboration. All agreed that there was some sort of active role needed from the leader for group vision to emerge. The literature recognized that team leaders have an active role in promoting accountability within the team. Whether the leader forces the team to rigorously measure their performance, or reminds them that they exist for a purpose beyond themselves, these works suggest that team leaders must develop the skills discussed in order to better foster team accountability.

The team leader's role in creating a common team culture began with learning to see the team as a relational system, of which leader is an integral part. A significant part of the literature asserted that this systems perspective allowed leaders to then distinguish between minor challenges, called "technical problems," and more complex "adaptive"

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[401] See Macchia, 80.; Cordeiro, 45-47.; Barna, 34; Putman, 87.

challenges.

Adaptive challenges involve significant development of team culture, including learning new ways of understanding, thinking, and prioritizing. Team leadership must gain skill in recognizing those challenges, and they must see their role as enabling the group to work together to define, embrace, and apply their values. This was differentiated from other leadership approaches that rely on imposition of cultural changes from an assumed positional authority. At core, the survey found that team leaders play an active role in developing a common team culture. They do this by first recognizing the current team culture, and then actively shaping activities that enable team members to embrace a common set of values that they have helped to choose and develop.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members utilizing a

team approach describe effective team leadership practices. The study assumed that most

pastors have received general leadership training, but little training on the nature of teams

and the practice of team leadership. Therefore, a qualitative study was proposed to

examine what pastoral staff members working as teams perceive to be effective

leadership practices. The study's purpose was explored through the following three

research questions:

1. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing a
   team vision?
2. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing
   accountability among members of the team?
3. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing an
   accepted team culture among fellow team members?

This chapter surveys the methodology that was used to examine these questions.

Design of the Study

In order to explore the experience of effective leadership in teams, an interpretive

comparative qualitative case study method was employed. In *Qualitative Research and*

Case Study Applications in Education, Sharan Merriam asserts that "qualitative research

focuses on process, meaning, and understanding, the product of a qualitative study is

richly descriptive."[402] In qualitative research, "the researcher is the primary instrument

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[402] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 8.

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for data collection and analysis."[403] The data for this rich description of effective

leadership in teams was gathered as the researcher observed the study participants' words

and manner of interaction. This data was then examined to gain understanding of the

participants' viewpoints. This project sought a thick description of both the practices and

perceptions of leadership in a team environment. Therefore, a case study approach was

followed in order "to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for

those involved."[404] Given the small size of effective teams, multiple teams were

observed, and their experiences were analyzed by the researcher.

This method required the researcher to act as both the primary data gatherer and

the interpreter of participants' experiences of leadership in teams. This process allowed

the researcher to develop a better understanding of teams, leadership, and the best

practices as experienced by the study participants. In addition to best practices, it allowed

the researcher to investigate team dynamics in practice and to examine the participants'

leadership frameworks. This approach provided a framework of principles that may be

transferable to other pastoral teams based on their similarities with the participants

observed.

The approach taken by this project was designed to reflect the five key

characteristics of qualitative research summarized by Sharan Merriam. First, qualitative

research focuses upon understanding the meaning of people's experiences within their

own setting. Second, the qualitative researcher is the primary tool for collecting and

analyzing data. Third, the qualitative approach involves fieldwork in order to gain an

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[403] Ibid., 7.

[404] Ibid., 19.

understanding of the people involved as well as their setting and activities. Fourth, the qualitative approach is inductive by nature. It allows the researcher to develop abstractions, concepts, and theories where they may not currently exist. Finally, the qualitative approach seeks to produce a "thick" description of process, meaning, and understanding of its subjects through words and pictures.[405]

The comparative approach of this study focused on collecting the data from two different case studies of ordained pastors who consciously engage in a team approach to ministry. The researcher analyzed that data separately, as well as comparing across both cases.[406] Using this approach, a sufficiently thick description of these cases was sought. This comparative description of similar cases was then analyzed with the goal of establishing possible models and best practices that would aid the interpretation of leadership within a team setting.[407]

The design of these case studies took a particularistic focus, as it is limited to leadership within the setting of a team environment.[408] One benefit of this approach was that it could help the researcher understand what to do or not do in an analogous situation. It could also help clarify approaches to a general problem that may re-occur within that particular setting. For this reason, the study used a typical sampling of church staff teams who are consciously engaged in a team approach to pastoral ministry.[409] As

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[405] Ibid., 6-8.

[406] Ibid., 40.

[407] Ibid., 38.

[408] Ibid., 29.

[409] Ibid., 62.

described, the design of this study was established to capture the type of rich descriptions of pastors leading in a team setting that could best answer the study's research questions.

Sample Selection

Case study participants were pastors from churches with five to seven pastors ordained by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), who were consciously practicing a team approach to their ministry with the other ordained pastors. The size of the teams was intended to reflect the literature's assertions for an ideal team size.[410] Limiting the sample selection to members of one denomination reduces variables in the sample such as ecclesiology, church government practices, denominational culture, and more. The researcher's own knowledge of the PCA context should also lead to bet a better understanding and analysis of the data. Each church team was selected because it was well regarded within the PCA for having an effective ministry and one that was explicitly committed to biblical leadership from within a team approach. This criteria was needed in order to gain an understanding of what best practices of effective team leadership might look like. Churches that met these criteria were determined by conversations with respected leaders within the PCA covering church health, ministry fruitfulness, and reputation for the pastors as a team within the PCA.

In addition, each team had been functioning together as a team for at least three years. This criteria was used because teams take time to form. In addition, the criteria allowed participants time to have experienced sufficient leadership events and impacts of leadership by others. Together, these criteria provided participants who had a rich level of experience leading and being led in teams.

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[410] See Macchia, 41.; Barna, 117.; Katzenbach and Smith, 45.

A number of potentially qualifying churches were contacted by the researcher initially via email, with a follow-up phone call. Discussions were held with the senior or lead pastor of each church to determine their fit with the study's selection criteria. The two churches that the researcher selected from these criteria to be case studies were in different parts of the country. They each had at least seven hundred members, since only larger churches could sustain a paid pastoral staff of the size necessary for this study. The senior or lead pastor then contacted their team to determine their willingness to participate in this project.

Once agreement was reached, the researcher contacted each of the individual participants via email. Each participant indicated an unwavering commitment to the authority of Scripture, as well as a commitment to Reformed theology. Each also expressed a distinctly biblical foundation for leadership and a conscious commitment to function as a team with their fellow pastors. After all were contacted, a site visit by the researcher was arranged so that individual interviews could be conducted on-site, with a focus group discussion following the completion of individual interviews.

Data Collection

First, demographic information was collected from each of the participants through an emailed data form. The written questionnaire was distributed and completed prior to the interviews for the purpose of gathering general information on the participant's background, and, in particular, any formal roles that participant held within the team. Background information that could give insight into the participants' understandings and interpretations of their team experiences was also gathered. This information was used by the researcher to create follow-up questions during focus group

discussions. Each participant was also asked to include any official team documentation they had received or created, such as a team covenant, purpose statement, job description, or philosophy of ministry summary.

Interview data was next collected by conducting on-site, one-on-one interviews using a semi-structured format. The interviews were each approximately one hour in length and were recorded using a digital voice recorder in a comfortable private setting at each church facility. This allowed the researcher to observe non-verbal communication and interaction.[411] At the start of each interview, the researcher informed each participant of the purpose and use of the research as required by the Doctor of Ministry Program at Covenant Theological Seminary.

Questioning then focused on the staff member's paradigm, practices, and experiences of leadership within their pastoral team. The order and flow of interview questions reflected the pattern laid out by Richard Krueger and Mary Anne Casey in *Focus Groups*.[412] This was done to encourage participants to progressively become more at ease and free in their answers in order to gain more rich and reliable data. Within the overall framework of the study's research questions, the conversation was allowed to move in directions that were beyond the scope of the direct questions asked, but were still useful for the study's purpose. After the completion of each on-site visit, the interviews were then transcribed for later analysis.

Immediately following the completion of all interviews at a particular site, a focus group was conducted with each of the pastoral team participants previously interviewed.

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[411] Merriam, 73.

[412] Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000).

The focus groups were conducted at the participating church's facility and lasted about an hour and a half. These groups were conducted using a semi-structured format involving four to six questions related to this study's research questions. Again, the questions followed the pattern suggested by Krueger and Casey. Descriptions and anecdotal stories of leadership within the team were given priority and developed with further follow-up questions. These focus groups provided the researcher with an additional layer of data as they promoted more natural and engaged interaction that added context to the interview data. Each focus group meeting was digitally recorded and later transcribed.

Interview and Focus Group Design

The following specific questions were used for the demographic questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups. Some questions were skipped in individual interviews due to various factors from time to content of previous answers. In addition, other lines of questioning were sometimes pursued to better develop data that answered this study's research questions.

In addition, each interview began with the researcher giving assurance to the participants that any specific information about themselves and their ministry would be held in confidence. This was intended to reassure the participants that their privacy would be respected, and that they could participate freely. With this in mind, the researcher used pseudonyms for the individual participants and for the churches they serve. By this approach, confidentiality was maintained, and participants were able to speak honestly about their specific ministry experiences. Upon completion of the project, all audio files and written transcripts were destroyed.

Proposed Demographic Data Questions

1.   Participant's age, marital status, and number and age of children.

2.   Participant's years of ministry experience, both in general and at their current call.

3.   Participant's years of experience working in a pastoral team approach.

4.   Participant's theological educational background, including the name of school and degree.

5.   Participant's official role in the church and length of service in that role.

6.   Participant's formal role in the team, if any.

7.   Is there a team covenant, purpose statement, or philosophy of ministry summary?

Proposed Interview Questions

Opening Questions:

8.   What do you find enjoyable about working with the team here and why?

Questions on Leadership in a Team:

9.   How would you describe the purpose or vision of your pastoral team to prospective church members?

10.   Tell me about a time when you saw good leadership being used to resolve conflict or friction over the team's purpose.

11.   Tell me about a time when God used you or another team member to refocus the team on either its vision or values?

12.   Describe the process of how your team culture and values were developed.

End Questions:

13.   We've talked about vision, accountability, and team culture. Which of these have you seen leadership having a profound impact on? How?

14. What do you think is the most important thing about leading in a team environment that we've discussed?

Proposed Focus Group Questions

Opening:

15. Describe a favorite character from sports, history, or politics that describes your special contribution to this team.

16. Tell me the story of how and why this team came into being.

Key Questions on Leadership in a Team:

17. Teams play to win (vision/purpose = how you win). Tell me about a time when what it means for this team to win or achieve its purpose really came into sharp focus.

18. Teams play by the rules (baseball analogy). Describe a time when you think you saw a leadership home run that helped the group stay focused on its vision and ministry?

19. Every team has a game plan (its philosophy and values) to achieve victory. Can you tell me how that game plan has been put together by this team?

20. Can you tell me about a time when a team member helped you get back on the game plan relationally or practically when you had gotten off track?

Ending Questions:

21. Suppose you had one minute to speak to all future pastors about leading in a team. Of all we've discussed, what would you want them to know?

22. Is there anything about leadership or teams that we should have talked about but did not?

Data Analysis

Transcripts and notes from the interviews and focus groups were analyzed by the researcher through constant comparative analysis for points of continuity and differences among the participants. Each interview was first compared to others from its own case, and then compared to those of the second case. Each interview was also compared to the focus group transcripts from its particular case, with any discrepancies or repeated emphasis noted. Finally, each focus group discussion was compared to the focus group in the second case study.

Sharan Merriam states that the overall goal of constant comparative analysis is "to seek patterns in the data."[413] Statements or signs of behavior that repeatedly arose during the interviews or focus groups were noted by the researcher. Statements or signs of behavior that were unique or "outliers" were also analyzed.[414] These data points were then noted, and initial categories and commonalities were recorded to aid in the interpretive work of recognizing best practices and "building a grounded theory" of effective leadership in a pastoral team.[415]

Researcher Position

The researcher has never served on a team in a role other than as team leader. Therefore, he was limited in his understanding of how leadership functions in the ministry of someone holding a different position, such as an Associate or Assistant Pastor on a team. His interpretation of the data may be limited by his own experience as a lead

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[413] Merriam, 18.

[414] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 221.

[415] Merriam, 18.

or senior pastor in a church or ministry context. The researcher is an Extroverted Intuition Thinking Judging (ENTJ) personality on the Myers-Briggs personality scale[416] and considers leadership to be one of his chief spiritual gifts. This creates a certain bias towards the importance of the *noetic* in leadership, as well as the importance of a recognized leadership figure for effectiveness. Therefore, the researcher may tend to give greater weight to data showing strong individual characteristics of leadership especially those characteristics that express logical reasoning and polemical expression.

Lastly, the researcher has served in team leadership for over a decade and has led his current church to embrace lay-led teams as the primary ministry structure of the church. He is, therefore, biased concerning the importance and practice of team ministry in the life of the local church. This creates a strong personal interest in the researcher to understand how all kinds of participants in a pastoral team experience and describe effective leadership.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study was to focus only on pastoral staff who have self-consciously embraced a team approach to pastoral ministry. There are many approaches to pastoral ministry and leadership in the church today. Some pastors consciously adopt a more traditional leadership approach that provides a clear hierarchical framework for staff relations. A more contemporary variation on this approach is found in some churches where the Senior Pastor resembles more of a CEO in leadership style and interaction, with direct reports. While a comparison of leadership with these other

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[416] "Mbti Basics", Myers & Briggs Foundation http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/ (accessed October, 2010).

approaches would have been valuable, the focus of this project was to analyze the experiences of pastoral staffs specifically committed to a team approach.

A second limitation of the study will be that only ordained, full-time pastoral staff in the Presbyterian Church in America were asked to participate. The results will therefore be limited to all PCA-ordained ministry staff whose team is immediately led by the Senior or Lead Pastor. This allowed the study to focus on those staff members who would be expected to have the most well-developed theology of leadership and teams. It also allowed a consistency to participants' ecclesiology and church government practices that limit those variables impact upon the data.

While including layperson-led teams would be valuable, there are important reasons for their exclusion. There is quite a difference in ministry environment between an ordained pastoral staff team and a lay-led team. They are similar, but ultimately distinct worlds due to training, setting, scope of ministry, authority, accountability, and other factors. Therefore, it will provide a more focused and potentially "thick" description by limiting the study to one of these worlds to the exclusion of the other. This will provide a more consistent subject sampling: PCA-ordained pastoral staff working with other PCA-ordained pastoral staff in a committed team approach.

This project was also limited to pastoral teams that were considered successful in both their general ministry and, specifically, their team approach. Their success was measured by both church statistics and the evaluation and reputation of those staff teams in the eyes of other denominational leaders. Only churches that were growing,[417] had a clear vision, and had earned a reputation over time for their pastoral team approach were

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[417] This growth was measured by a matrix of criteria that included: numerical growth, number of conversions, and reputation for the development and spiritual maturity of the congregation.

admitted to this study. Several churches met many of these criteria, but were recently experiencing difficulty in their pastoral staff team approach. Valuable information could be gained by studying such churches for what those difficulties and challenges teach about effective, or ineffective, leadership in a team environment.

A final limitation of this study will be its focus on leadership's impact on a limited number of fundamental team dynamics. Vision, accountability, and team culture are only a partial list of the characteristics that the literature identifies as essential for functional teams. The three chosen for this study have the widest acceptance throughout the literature as being indispensible for healthy team function. Each of the fundamental characteristics of a team is worthy of study in its own right, but they were excluded as focuses of consideration in this study in order to more fully answer the specific research questions.

Summary: Project Methodology

This chapter described the methodology that was used in this interpretive comparative qualitative case study approach of how pastoral staff members working in a team approach describe effective leadership practices within a team. The design of the study, including sample selection criteria, data collection methods, and interview and focus group questions, has been outlined. The transcripts of these interviews were analyzed by the researcher using the constant comparative method. Common themes, differences, and outliers were noted as helpful means to begin interpreting the data. The researcher's own biases and assumptions were outlined, and the limitations of the study have been described.

The next chapter will explore how pastoral staff members in the selected case sites describe effective leadership practices within a team. The interview and focus group data will be analyzed for information about the participants' understanding of effective team leadership. The analysis will be structured to provide the participants' answers to the research questions of chapter one.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members utilizing a team approach describe effective team leadership practices. In order to examine what pastoral staff members working on teams perceive to be effective leadership practices, ten interviews and two focus groups were conducted at churches that met the criteria laid out in Chapter Three.

The interviews and focus groups were conducted on-site at each church, with each session being recorded and lasting between forty-five to ninety minutes. All participants were eager to share, while expressing humility over their selection for this research project. The confidentiality of each participant will be guarded in this project by using pseudonyms rather than actual names and locations of service.

The study's purpose was explored through the following three research questions:

1. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing a team vision?
2. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing accountability among members of the team?
3. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing an accepted team culture among fellow team members?

In order to research best practices for these questions, team members were interviewed using a semi-structured interview process. Then, they participated together in a focus group with the other members of their particular pastoral team. The following findings were gathered from the transcripts of these interviews and focus groups.

Effective Leadership in Developing a Team Vision

All participants were questioned about their views on what effective leadership looked like in developing a team vision. The literature review revealed that teams need a common vision to thrive. Several interview and focus group questions asked participants to describe either directly or by anecdote their views and experiences regarding the effect that leadership has on the development of such a vision in a team. The findings revealed several common themes for how team members experienced effective leadership in the development of a team's vision.

Empowered to Share, Shape, and Communicate Vision

A major theme discussed by participants was that they were empowered to share, shape, and communicate a team-owned vision. They frequently commented or gave examples of how effective leadership develops team vision by initiating discussion on vision, encouraging team shaping of that vision, and giving team members a place to communicate that vision on behalf of the team.

Pastor "Neo" described in detail a long process of conversations among team members to narrow their vision to three priorities. This extended sharing process was initiated and guided by the team leader, "Pastor Morpheus," and was full of "give and take," as Neo described it. Neo describes the goal of the process as shaping the content, and even the language, of a vision that brings ownership by all team members. He stated:

> So we're hoping that in that process that we really build ownership, which it does. I mean, it's just natural. If you have to teach something, you're going to learn it and own it. It's not just dictated but it's actually something you've helped developed. Some of the phrases in that come from, you know, from various people, and whether it's an elder or director or a deacon or whatever as we talked through those vision and values....[Morpheus] has tried to orchestrate it in such a way that the process has not been a top down kind of thing, but it's been at grass roots [effort], kind of directed upwards, but definitely grass roots.

Pastor Neo's "grass roots" comment reflected his conclusion that the communication of the vision the team was now engaged in was deeply owned by the team because of the leader's process of engaging the team in sharing ideas for the vision, shaping the language of the vision, and now teaching or communicating it to others.

Pastor "Dozer" summarized his perception of this sharing and shaping process by stating, "I didn't want to execute. I want to be empowered." He contrasted their team's process of sharing, shaping, and communicating a common vision with what he perceived as many leaders' patterns of "not trusting the Spirit" by trying to control the process. He said, "One is 'I'm empowering you only to do this that I've already pre-outlined' versus 'I see a need here. How do we tackle it together?'"

Participants offered rich descriptions of being genuinely brought into group discussions where leadership was present, but the vision was a genuinely cumulative effort. Pastor "Mace Windu" described it this way:

> The idea – I mean the big scene of Star Trek: The Next Generation, Captain Picard sits around with his senior officers, and they analyze the problem, and they all have a different idea. Eventually someone comes up with the idea that he finally says, "Okay, make it so." But somebody has to be able to say, "Now this is what we're going to do." Yes, these are all their ideas and then everybody says, "Okay, let's try that." So here's what we're doing as a team. So everybody is pitching in on that approach.

Pastor Windu's analogy conveys his sense that the direction of the team was collaboratively established by give-and-take discussions in which the leader did not dictate a prescribed path and then seek to convince the team to walk it. Instead, he saw the team as a group that controlled its own path and destiny, with the leader's role being to bring the team into collaboration and then to facilitate moving the team forward when a good decision was reached. He further asserted the need for leadership for such a process to be effective:

> So I think in working together you're not just the one person who's trying to figure out what we should do, but here you have other pastors – they're analyzing a problem – and be able to speak into it with various experiences, various knowledge, interests that can speak into it. So then one person is just to say, "Okay, let's do that. Yes, let's try that that knowledge. Don't do that now, let's wait." I think that's the role of the senior pastor, to be able to bring in all that information, and it's here's where we're going to focus on it.

His description removes the leader from the position of "visionary" or "omni-competent expert," and instead puts the leader in the position of initiating and taking responsibility for a decision that is based on the team's collective expertise, drawn out through the collaborative sharing and shaping discussions.

This process of discussion, shaping, and communicating varied in details between the two churches involved in the study. In one church, the process involved a more informal process of a series of discussions leading to a created vision document that became a group editing project. Team members were then asked to take turns communicating the substance of that vision. The second church involved the team members in collaborative sharing and shaping of the vision after their elder team had laid out a general strategic direction. Staff then communicated that collective vision throughout their ministry areas. Regardless of the specifics of the process, the response of the team members was unanimous in their sense of joy and ownership. Pastor "Link" nearly rose from his chair with excitement as he said, "But I would say, part of what has been most enjoyable for me, aside from the general sense of camaraderie, which is very valuable, is that I really do feel involved and able to share what I have, because there's a degree of respect and inclusion to all of our conversations, to all of our interactions."

His mention of "respect" expressed a valuing not only of the process, but also of the way leaders conducted themselves during the process. His leader did not approach the team as the genius with the answer, but respected him and the team by engaging them in

a dialogical process. He elaborated on that during the focus group:

> As we've gone into the vision plus process, I know that we have to be led, and that's where [Pastor Morpheus] has done a lot of that work for us, but it's not autocratically coming down from the mountain saying, "Well here it is, implement it." He's invited us into a dialogical process, and it really has been – I mean, it's been very – it's been very good for me to feel like I do have something to contribute, I do bring something to the table. But it's also been interesting to see how, as we've all interacted with it, we've refined something better than just one guy going off and spending a couple of days alone could have come up with.

Team-Created Structures and Standards for Vision

Participants in the study repeatedly brought up leadership's role in working with

the team to enable their collective vision to become transferrable to future team

participants. They described how effective leadership asks the team itself to create verbal

and written structure and standards for their common vision so that the vision can more

easily be passed on. Participants gave multiple anecdotes emphasizing that good

leadership helps the team standardize the way they communicate their vision so that they

speak with one voice, even using similar terms and communication images, which

enables the team to pass the vision to others and to more easily raise up new leaders who

share the same vision as the original team. Typical of these comments was that of Pastor

Morpheus, who related how failure to pay attention to this aspect of leadership nearly

undid his team:

> We became so over worked that we just ended up outworking so many – then the church communities grow and then multiply that kind of frustration – so we're not standardizing enough, and the next generation just doesn't have the same, you know, they really didn't get it sometimes, and we were like, what's the matter with them, why don't they get it? And not really understanding how to codify [the vision], but we didn't want to make it too regimented to get it going beyond ourselves.

He went on to relate how he realized the team needed to take time together to

create "structures and standards" of agreed upon language and images that could become

a basis of developing a language and culture throughout the church that carried forward

the staff team's vision. Effective leadership did not lead the team to impose the vision on

others. Rather, it led the team to create more effective means of communicating that

vision and bringing a unity to it that was designed to build ownership. Pastor Neo saw the

fruit of this unified team voice with the same language and the same structure for the

vision as enabling other leaders in the church to more quickly gain their own "ownership"

of the team's vision:

> But then also, I think, [Pastor Morpheus] has especially helped us to try to make
> sure that the team member or the deacon or the elder actually has ownership in it,
> and then it's not going to be legislated or mandated, but there's actually a heartfelt
> development within that person to see it, to almost to win them over to [the
> vision.]

Buy-in from additional church leaders became more successful because the person in

question was hearing the vision described in the same way with the same language and

illustrations, but from multiple team members

Standardization of the vision did not remove personal ownership of the vision for

team participants. Though not widely discussed by participants, Pastor Morpheus

expressed concern that standardization and structures must not eliminate the key role he

saw for team leaders to incarnate the vision. He stated, "I think the leader, the good

leader, a great leader – a Good-To-Great leader – whatever, you want call that, has got to

incarnate that vision and live that out first and foremost." However, his comments, and

those of other participants, indicate that they still considered standards and verbal

structures for communication of the vision to be a key leadership skill in order to make

buy-in more readily accessible to those outside the original team members.

Strengths-Based Vision Creation

Participants saw an important role for leadership in recognizing spiritual gifts and strengths as a key factor to account for in vision development. Specifically, effective leadership encouraged the team to shape a vision that reflects the strengths of each team member. Numerous statements referred to principles surrounding spiritual gifts from 1 Corinthians as being pivotally important for team leaders to recognize and apply. One team leader, Pastor Luke Skywalker, boiled down vision formation to "Do we have the right people, skill sets, to see what's happening amongst the team, and kind of share their expertise?" Referring at times to management guru Marcus Buckingham, this pastor repeatedly returned to the central role of leadership in recognizing strengths and putting team members in a position to use them. In his mind, effective vision flows from this conviction.

Another member of his team, Pastor Chewbacca, went so far as to define effective team leadership by whether or not a leader was successful according to this strengths-based criteria, "I guess that's what I'm saying, watching each of these men find their place is what I would say, for me personally is a sign of team leadership, the success of the team leadership, that all four of them and myself included have found our place and seem to be working effectively." Another team member, Pastor Mace Windu, amplified that comment by using language common on their team concerning team vision flowing from members being in "their sweet spot" for ministry:

> He put these three different ideas together… he said you should be ministering in what he called your sweet spot, your giftedness, your abilities, and your passion. Those three circles, when they intersect together, that's your sweet spot when all three have come together. He said sixty percent of what your ministry ought to be is in that sweet spot. Well, again, if you're in a team, you have a better chance of accomplishing that than if you're not.

Effective team leadership focuses on helping a team develop a common vision that puts

them at the intersection of "giftedness, abilities, and passion." This kind of leadership

only develops from a posture of humility, born of failure, as Pastor Chewbacca asserts:

> I think everybody comes to a place of humility in their lives. I think that we've all
> been humbled and been knocked down, so no one's got the idea to "look at me,
> I've got it figured out." So we've all humbly come together as a team and realized
> that we need each other. And each one of us, I think, on the team, has gifts and
> strengths that the others might not have, so we become united…we help each
> other out.

Here, there is a bringing together of spiritual gifts and strengths to shape the direction of

the entire team's ministry. Failure becomes an opportunity to see the strengths of one's

teammates rise to the occasion. In the eyes of participants, it makes one's weaknesses

irrelevant to the overall success of the team's vision. Effective leadership puts team

members in a position to experience this sense of purpose and success.

Effective leadership also values unsolicited team member input towards vision

and direction that flows from the members' unique gifts and experiences. Pastor Seraph

shared an anecdote about how he took the initiative to raise a concern with his team

leader about their direction, given changing economic factors in their area. Rather than

rebuff the concern and assert a settled team vision, effective leadership was very

receptive to the concern, because it flowed from a recognized strength of experience and

gifts possessed by Pastor Seraph.

This does not, however, preclude team leaders from protecting the team from

diverting limited resources away from the strongest part of the team's common vision.

Pastor Neo shared how he and Pastor Morpheus recognized that their own strengths in

ministering to deeply broken people were actually being used to divert so much of the

entire team's resources that the team's overall vision suffered. Morpheus took the time to

address it directly with the team, confessing how it "can't be allowed to happen like this anymore," and then to asking the team for help to keep his and Neo's strengths from becoming the undoing of their entire team's ministry together.

Pastor Morpheus also shared how a larger pattern in his life also held the team back from fulfilling its vision. He began to recognize that he had allowed his founding role in the church and the length of his tenure to put him in the relational role of "parent" to any situation that arose. In that role, he had sought to make everything "easy for people," as his gifting often allowed him to do. But he realized that he needed to let the team "see the inside of what's really happening" both in the church and in himself. Unless he did, they would be unprepared for areas of resistance to the vision from which he was attempting to shield them through his "parent" role and gifts.

A more formal process of evaluating team member strengths and weaknesses and how they effect the team was suggested by a number of participants as a best practice of effective team leadership. Pastors Han Solo, Mace Windu, Link, and Dozer all commented during their interviews that a formal and regular review process was either helpful or was perceived to be helpful. They suggested that reviews that are redemptive and focused on developing the team members themselves are an excellent expression of this principle in leadership.

The Place of Biblical Theology

A prominent theme among participants was the importance of team leadership to give place to Biblical theology in team vision. The participants explained that effective leadership would influence the team to let Biblical theology have a controlling role in shaping the vision of the team. Team leader Pastor Luke Skywalker extensively discussed

both the doctrine of the Trinity and the Biblical themes of Prophet-Priest-King as controlling the team's understanding of itself and how it should function. According to Skywalker, a team's vision for ministry must flow from its understanding of these themes and from fundamental Biblical ecclesiology:

> I love the biblical side of ecclesiology that we know the church from the Scriptures, so that's what's driving our team. With the Bible, how is *Sola Scriptura*, or how is the Scripture central to how the church is run? How the team is run? So in ecclesiology, coming out of Scripture would then, we would believe runs literally everything that's in the church.

Fellow team member, Pastor Yoda, made the connection between team vision, ecclesiology, and the Trinity, noting that in team ministry, "you're just seeing the fullness of the Godhead even, I think, in the theology of Trinity. To me, it's a further discovery of the nature of the economic diversity and the ontological oneness of God...the economic diversity of the ontological equality of the Trinity in ministry." Trinitarian theology shaped both the form of the team and the direction or vision of the team for Pastor Luke Skywalker and for Pastor Yoda. In their understanding, teams were bound to shape and express the purpose and structure of ministry only in ways that reflected those Biblical realities.

Another major Biblical theme to which effective leadership pays close attention is the interconnectedness of the Body of .Christ. Service, partnership, and empowerment were all themes articulated by Pastor Skywalker as he sought to lead the team in both vision development and expression. At one point, he put it this way:

> I think for me... the way the scriptures, especially passages like 1 Corinthians 12, have to speak about the interdependentness and the interdependencies of the members of the body to be involved in the leadership culture where nobody is too big, nobody is too little, where genuinely, I think, especially for the last three years, we are tasting the value of every part and are seeing the gospel infused, the integrity of that and the joy of that is just so fun to watch something organically grow and nobody gives a flying Houdini who gets the credit. So there's that real

sense of watching. Increasingly our staff people move from the illusion of the omni-competent leader to the synergistic participant in what I think leadership is designed to be – according to scripture anyway.

The inter-dependence of the team in shaping vision was often practically expressed

through avoiding dictatorial behaviors in favor of discussion and group consensus-

building. Pastor Luke Skywalker put it simply by saying, "The way we do that is we sit at

the table together, talking with people who are making the decisions. So, these meetings

have become critical to see how we avoid the train wrecks. It's not me dictating it; it's

each committee head, so it takes some time to work through it, to get through it." A

commitment and pattern of engaging in collaborative discussions was repeatedly

described by other participants as naturally arising from the Biblical theological

convictions previously mentioned.

Effective leadership that paid attention to this Biblical theme of the body of Christ

was also very careful to shape a process that majored on the members' strengths, and then

to let the ends shake out according to that process. As Pastor Mace Windu put it, Biblical

theology shaping vision development allowed him to be who he was gifted to be and not

try to be someone else:

> I think that I appreciate it the most because Paul's emphasis when you read
> through 1 Corinthians or Romans is that he talks about that we're a body and a
> body of various parts, and how we work together with Christ as our head. When
> you have a team of 1 Corinthian ministry, even among pastors, certain pastors
> have different gifts, have different strengths. So to be to able to celebrate those
> instead of "I need to be the main guy, I don't do this as well but I have to do it,"
> but to say "I can do it if I have to." But why not utilize people that have those
> gifts and instead be who you are gifted to be?

Whether it is the doctrine of the Trinity, the covenantal mediator themes of prophet,

priest, and king, or ecclesiology flowing from spiritual gifts and connections, participants

repeatedly asserted this as a major component of effective leadership of team vision development.

Summary: Effective Leadership in Developing a Team Vision

The team leaders and team members who participated in this study asserted that effective leadership of a team's vision development embodied several different characteristics. Effective leadership develops team vision by initiating discussion on vision, encouraging team shaping of vision, and giving team members a place to communicate their vision to others. Such leadership also asks the team to create structure and standards for their vision so that it can be multi-generational and sustain expanded ministry burdens. Leadership that was valued by participants encouraged the team to shape a vision that reflects the strengths of each team member. Finally, team leadership should influence the team to let Biblical theology have a controlling role in shaping the vision of the team.

Effective Leadership in Developing Team Accountability

How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing accountability among members of the team? This was the second research question this study asked in seeking to understand effective leadership in teams. The literature review showed that effective team leaders developed a measureable accountability among team members. Participants in this study serving on well-developed and highly-functional teams had a very positive, well-developed, and practical posture towards accountability within their teams. Several specific themes fleshed this out.

Accountability Allows Failure, but Provides Support

Participants revealed positive and emotionally charged experiences of effective leadership exercising accountability that did not prevent them from failing, but that supported them, asked them to learn from the events, and so made the experiences redemptive. Pastor Seraph shared how this kind of accountability often reveals itself in the leader's response to perceived failure by the team. He shared a story of a dissatisfied parishioner who came to the team leader to discuss Pastor Seraph's ministry. When Pastor Seraph next encountered the team leader, the first thing the leader did was ask Pastor Seraph to give him a "high five." The leader's actions conveyed support to Pastor Seraph and a sense of freedom to pursue their team's vision, even in the face of people's "inevitable disappointment" that will come at times.

Another member of that team, Pastor Link, tied this kind of supportive accountability to leadership's role in helping the team clearly define and pursue its vision. He said, "I think even our intentionality of finding our vision and aligning each of our ministries for that vision has been born out of that of, you know, we need to be about something." Effective leadership in the area of accountability was described as keeping them focused on that vision as opposed to measuring the team's fruitfulness by the lack of complaints from church members. Pastor Link also shared examples of how their team learned through difficulty the importance of holding one another accountable to the team's vision. He stated that the failure to be diligent in doing so had allowed "ministry drift" that opened the door for painful "moral drift" by a team member. Effective leadership was seen as providing proactive refocusing of the team on their vision so that such drift would be prevented.

This type of leadership sought to create a culture within the team where accountability was seen and practiced as acts of love and humility. Pastor Neo stated, "I do think that there's a culture that you need to develop, a culture of, 'Hey, I love you. We all need to grow. We all have blind spots. We all are limited in certain ways. What can we learn? How can we grow better?' So that it's that culture of humility, I think, that's important [for accountability]." This requires a team leader to allow team members to fail, and then to "coach them along" through it. "Kind of allow them to own the ministry and allow them to – allow them to fail, allow them to feel some of the – some of the pressure," said Pastor Neo as he struggled to put into words the balance he felt was necessary between allowing team members the chance to try and fail and grow, compared to pre-emptive coaching that prevents failure. Regardless of the struggle, team leaders were seen to be committed to more than directing and delegating. Effective ones were those who learned to coach the team members in areas of weakness or need.

Participants also shared how leaders needed to create formal means of accountability that were still redemptive in nature. Many participants cited formal reviews by the team leader and session members as an excellent practice when done from a redemptive, "gospel-soaked" perspective. Effective team leaders were also described as working with the team to create common language to handle difficult subjects. Language was chosen and defined that emptied it of some of the "threat" and carried a common definition of meaning and intention for all.

In addition to formal review processes, both teams engaged in regular team-level guided reviews of their ministry together. Pastor Luke Skywalker spoke of how part of the key design of one of their team times was specifically, yet informally, to create a

redemptive, accountable, and supportive environment for all members:

> It's not a pretenders room. You will find that we're very honest, and to the degree that the gospel is running, they're going to be honest that they're fearful, because it is a job. You're always going to have that weird thing with your boss, but we do obtain some answers. They are far more secure than I think they ever thought they could be, in terms of the work they're doing. We assess each other's jobs, and do our evaluations, and job evaluations, and it's this [safe] bubble, and [it's in the context of] on-going relational development.

Effective leadership was seen as both setting the tone and creating the formal and relational structures to foster such an environment of team accountability that allowed for failure while providing support and coaching.

Accountability doesn't abdicate, but stewards delegated authority in the team

Participants spoke passionately at times about how effective leadership does not abdicate authority, but ensures that the delegated authority from the team to each team member is appropriately handled. Both team leaders and team members saw the importance of a leader not "abdicating," but bringing needed correction at times to team members in light of the team's vision. Pastor Luke Skywalker saw this role of a team leader as "a spiritually discerned thing that you take into every variable." At times, a leader needs to confront team members, but this confrontation does not flow from the leader's positional authority. Rather, it calls a team member to be responsible to the entire team. Pastor Skywalker summed it up in this fashion:

> I think that you do scrap in the midst of this thing, and I'm also paying attention to abdication versus delegation. I think teamwork is based on delegated authority, not on abdicated authority, and we do run into that wall, where "okay, are you telling me you are going to go do this anyway because you have the authority to do it?" In other words, are you saying you're not going to get engaged in this [team vision]?

Discerning the difference between abdicating authority, appropriate delegation of authority, and micromanaging of authority was described as "incredibly hard spiritual work" that was essential for a team leader to master.

Within this discussion of abdication versus delegation, participants brought up the common leadership language of "influence" along with "acquiescence." Participants saw "influence" differently than in the literature; it was more the example of gospel service and sacrifice that the leader gives to the team. This was described as building "credibility" as well as outright affection. Pastor Mace Windu stated, "So there's acknowledgement that somebody really does have to be the head. But even biblically, the sense of head is to be the chief servant, not necessarily the person ruling over the team." He went on to describe such influential leadership as being "the first among equals and the one who has won the right and responsibility to focus the decision-making of the team." Pastor Yoda stated that "the accountability is there through influence" but not through mandate. He gave the example of the difference between mandating a certain time for prayer compared to modeling it and encouraging it among the team.

While abdication was described in negative terms, effective leadership needs to learn to acquiesce at times, according to participants. Acquiescence is good leadership when the leader recognizes the skill and gifts of a team member even if they don't quite understand the conclusion or choice that team member is making. Pastor Han Solo described how effective leadership encourages team members with recognized skills or gifts to speak into other team members' ministry responsibilities. The team leader "acquiesces" to the wisdom of the team member with skills and gifts and encourages the other team member to listen and value the input they receive.

Accountability infuses the gospel into the relationship and the tasks

Participants spoke with great passion and emotion when they described how

effective leadership infuses the gospel into accountability over the team's relationships

and responsibilities. Pastor Morpheus was emphatic that the team leader must make

accountability a personal or relational concern and not merely a professional one. He

confessed that he learned this the hard way by watching a staff member's moral failure.

He realized that his relationship with that staff member had always been "very

professional, while the rest were always so personal." This concern for relational

accountability motivated him to restructure the way the team formally meets together:

"We're now- you know, we have a director's meetings twice a month, and we actually

are talking more about personal growth and mission issues [compared to professional

ones]." This is in addition to two other sets of formal meetings and many informal ones.

Both the personal and the professional level accountability must be thoroughly

infused with the gospel as both motivator and empowerment for ministry. Pastor Yoda

mentioned how accountability has increased as the gospel has infused their team's

evaluation efforts: "And now there's never been a higher degree of accountability, how

you stand, how you choose, how you invest your time whether just constantly, constantly,

constantly blasted with the gospel. Here's how the beauty of the love of Jesus propels us

to want to do a good job." He further described how their team leader has done an

excellent job of so infusing grace-based motivation into the team that "people are

responsible, and they want to excel. They don't think of excellences. The pragmatic

measuring rod of 'you are as good as you are as effective.'" Instead, effective leadership

is described as "shepherd leadership" by Pastor Yoda, who explains that it influences not

only motivations, but also the way the team evaluates and holds itself accountable for its

ministry. He put it this way:

> First of all, [our team leader focuses on being] accountable for believing the gospel… [Pastor Luke Skywalker] has a way because he's such a shepherd leader. [He] has a way of always infusing the environment – be it job reviews, be it showing up and responding to the events we've just had. He has a great way of infusing the gospel so that the issues of ministry…what would be the value judgments we need to put upon the effectiveness of the event or performance, we're more comfortable with doing that now than ever because we realized that is a part of the gospel.

Summary: Effective Leadership in Developing Team Accountability

The team leaders and team members who participated in this study asserted that effective leadership of a team's practice of accountability was crucial for its ability to function in a healthy manner. Such leadership fosters team-based accountability by not preventing failure, but by providing support and learning through failure. Those viewed as good team leaders by participants did not abdicate their authority. Rather, they worked with team members to faithfully steward the members' delegated authority received from the team to fulfill the team's vision in their area of responsibility. As leaders went about this work, they infused the gospel into the team's relationships and tasks so that ministry was carried out with high motivation and desire for impact.

Effective Leadership in Developing Team Culture

The final part of questions in the interviews and focus groups concerned the third research question's focus on how pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing an accepted team culture among team members. According to the literature survey, teams need a common set of standards and language to function effectively. Participants were asked to describe instances of good leadership and any best practices that they would identify as positively shaping the team's culture or the members' participation.

Culture Grows Through Intentional Development of Trust

Team culture requires intentional pursuit of relationships. This message was a repeated theme among the participants, and it often elicited great emotion. Their responses indicated that good team leadership develops team culture in an environment of valued relationships with a very high level of shared trust. These kinds of relationships were seen as hard to develop, as they required on-going focus and pursuit.

For such relationships even to be possible, Pastor Luke Skywalker recognized that, as team leader, he had to value not only the team's goals, but the path they would walk together to achieve those goals.

> First, you're not only getting things done, but you're actually developing people as you're doing it. If your priorities are both, then a team concept really works. If you're just somebody who wants... who is a pragmatist, is a driver, then at your end, the means justify ends, then you're going to be, you know, you're going to be frustrated, and you're going to dive in and you're going to grab things. [You must] really believe that the means and the ends are both justifiable.

Pastor Skywalker believed that short-term team results could be achieved without paying attention to culture, but the team itself would be destroyed in the process. Team leadership must value both the vision and the team culture if on-going fruitfulness in ministry is to be sustained.

Once that commitment to team culture is made, then participants had much to say in regards to how to go about fostering that culture. Perhaps most frequent was the assertion that leaders must build a culture of trust among team members. Pastor Neo used the analogy of warfare to describe the necessity of trust. He said that relationships must have grown in trust to the point that "once the shells start flying, you need to know that this person is not going to shoot you in the back." This kind of trust does not eliminate disagreement, but changes team members' attitudes towards one another in the midst of

challenge. Pastor Seraph said, "And so while there are challenges...in the team, while there are disagreements at times, I think there's a kind of a foundational knowledge and belief of 'we'll fight for one another,' and 'we're not alone.'"

To achieve this level of trust, one of the practices both team leaders employed was to layer formal and informal meetings together with a strong focus on relationship building and soul care of team members during those times together. The specific arrangement of those meetings varied for each team, but the same pattern of multiple layered team times was consistent across both teams. Those meetings included time to pray, process, communicate, and "just enjoy one another" according to multiple participants. Common among all the responses was that relationships among the team members were primary in importance over tasks, even when tasks were being discussed.

One team member, Pastor Link, who had worked in a different church with a non-team approach, spoke of how a good practice of his team leader was to give such trust to him right from the start:

> You know, I've been in environments where... it was within still a hierarchical structure, where if I offered my opinion or my input on something, it was usually at much greater organizational and relational risk... I haven't had to do [that here], this slow build of equity in relational capital. It's like I came in with it – and that's been tremendously refreshing.

He mentioned how the leader of his team had fostered this from the beginning by opening his home to the entire team and their families on a regular basis. This time together was mentioned by every single member of this team in a similarly positive fashion as being a key to communicating trust from the leader and building trust among themselves.

Pastor Yoda mentioned different avenues of such relational engagement, but still described them as his leader's personal, and not just professional, engagement with his team. He described his team leader's "passion" and "heart" for sharing life intentionally

to develop trust, and a commonly owned, informally shaped culture among all team members. Using the means of grace together in these settings was repeatedly described by many participants as powerful in their relationships and ministries together. Pastor Neo continued his warfare analogy when he stated, "you know it's really a spiritual battle that we're fighting." For him, this meant that extended team prayer times, speaking God's truth into each others' lives "openly, freely, and early," were essential practices for leaders to build a culture of trust. Team members were also described as being freed by good leaders to join in calling fellow team members to humility and commitment to Christ before team business.

Such a culture of intentional relational development and trust was perceived as something that good leaders worked hard to maintain through dialogue, engaging difficulties, and fostering understanding. They did not accomplish this by merely giving direction, but through much more of a dialogical approach aimed at understanding. Pastor Neo shared an anecdote about an elder undermining trust and empowerment by seeking to drill down into too many ministry details. The leader recognized the elder was "going down to the one hundred foot level versus staying at ten thousand foot level." This robbed the staff of trust and disrupted the team. Their approach to solving this was to invite another elder into the discussion on how to keep team roles, compared to the elders' roles, clear. Through a deliberate dialogical process led by the team leader, they worked together to better define the impact of such behavior, and then they held a retreat with all the elders to discuss it. The elder invited into the discussion was even empowered by the team leader to have a key role in leading the overall discussing and maintaining of the culture of elders' roles and staff roles. Team members recognized that the leader had

sought to maintain their culture and approach to ministry not through direction, but through extending the team's trust and culture to the elders through intentional relational engagement and trust building.

Culture Grows Through Incarnational Humility

The kind of trust relationships that participants described above were perceived as being incredibly dependent upon a leader's personal awareness and willingness to incarnate the team's culture in a posture of humility. Teams follow their leaders. This was clear from the participants' descriptions. Good leadership was, perhaps, most clearly distinguished from bad leadership in the minds of team members in this arena.

It begins with the leader becoming aware of themselves, their reactions, and those reactions' influence on the teams. Pastor Neo described a leadership "home run" as being when the team leader "stays calm in the midst of a very anxious system and trusts the Lord that the Lord will provide and the Lord will lead." He said that this was most clearly needed during times of difficulty, when the team's way of functioning (i.e. culture) is challenged. Good leaders, in his eyes, have developed high "emotional intelligence" and a passion to take ownership over themselves and to stay true to the values and culture of the team. This level of self-awareness on the part of the leader extended down to the smallest of details. Pastor Han Solo saw his leader's reactions as setting the cultural tone for whether or not he was genuinely free to participate in discussions. How the leader reacts through verbal and non-verbal cues powerfully incarnated an eagerness to hear from and value the input of the team. This was a key part of Pastor Solo's description of his team's culture. Even the leader's own schedule awareness had an incarnational

impact. Pastor Solo felt that if the leader was a workaholic who let everyone know it, then that action shaped a cultural expectation that the team would inevitably follow.

Pastor Mace Windu described the needed humility of a team leader as being seen through giving themselves away to serve the team in the manner of Christ himself. He used an extended illustration from the movie *Groundhog Day* to picture this. Like the main character in the movie, team leaders must learn not to focus upon their own needs, but the needs of the team. He said, "When you focus on your own needs, there's never enough to get back, but when you focus on God and others, give yourself a way, that's when life is meaningful." Good team leaders incarnate the team's culture by humbly giving themselves away for the team.

Such leadership is only possible if the leader is willing to sacrifice personal credit for the sake of the gospel. This was the passionately expressed conviction of numerous participants, none more so than Pastor Luke Skywalker:

> I think that the premise behind us has always been, you should care about correction, and you don't care about credit. First thing I'm going to say is this, if you really don't care about credit, you're not going to get any credit, so that's the first thing you've got to really live with. A lot of people say they don't care about credit, but when they don't get any, they really do care about credit! Okay, so I mean you really gotta say, "I don't care about credit. I don't have any ambition. I don't have any of the things that drive us to these [wrong] leadership paradigms."

As a team leader that was well loved and respected by his team members, he saw one of the main reasons for that being this principle. It was one of his passions, he said, to incarnate the gospel and to be an authentically humble "servant-leader." This commitment had grown in him over "long exposure to gospel-living and gospel-culture" that had been modeled for him by his teammates. This incarnated itself through a leadership style that was humble – not caring about credit and seeking the good of the team before personal gain. He saw even his rare use of authority as being chances to

bring gospel correction and re-direction for the benefit of others over his own personal benefit. This kind of humility and leadership by sacrificial example was repeatedly mentioned by participants on both teams as one of the great joys of working with their team leaders.

Culture Grows Through Team Member Selection

A final theme heard among the participants was that effective leadership works to protect the team's culture through the hiring process. The very nature of the team's values, practices, and paradigms played an active and important role in the leader's evaluation of any potential new team member. Pastor Dozer asserted that good leaders have a responsibility to protect the existing culture by seeking new team members that fit the culture, rather than requiring the culture to radically shift with each new team member.

Pastor Chewbacca saw good leadership demonstrated by intentionally selecting team members who are collaborative rather than competitive. He saw the team as being able to make up for any skill or knowledge deficiencies if a person was committed to collaboration. He had experienced that personally through Pastor Mace Windu's influence in his ministry. He summed up his experience, "That's the beauty of the teamwork, where we can talk about the issue and realize we need help and enable it. So [Pastor Mace Windu] says, 'You know what? Here's what I think…this is something I've done. It might be helpful to you.' So from our experiences, we help each other out."

Pastor Luke Skywalker's comments shed some light on how this practice had developed in their team over time. He said their church started with a "hero leader" mentality that shifted over time to a "genius with a thousand helpers" understanding.

Neither of those created or even allowed for a team approach, but those experiences later prepared them for their present approach of guarding the team through the hiring process. As their team developed, and as they collaboratively developed a common vision and plan for ministry, they noticed that many staff members could not seem to make the final adjustment to ownership and a team approach and culture. They recognized that they needed to search for team members who could adopt a team culture and distinguish it clearly from the other two approaches mentioned. Pastor Skywalker recognized that he needed to value a person's fit with the team and its culture as highly, if not more, than he valued their ministry skill set or experience. In this way, the selection process for team members became a crucial test of leadership's development or protection of team culture.

Summary: Effective Leadership in Developing Team Culture

Effective leaders of teams are skilled at developing and preserving a team's culture. That was the perspective shared by both team leaders and members. To do that, leaders intentionally developed team relationships that enjoyed a high degree of trust. Such relationships were fostered through the incarnational humility of the leaders, as they worked at being very aware of their own impact upon the relational system of the team. Leadership played a major role in protecting the team's culture by using the selection process of new team members to staff the team only with members who would be a good fit for the current culture of the existing team.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members working in a team approach describe effective leadership practices within a team. Two different sets of ordained pastors working as teams were interviewed individually, and then in two

different focus groups, with each focus group being comprised of members of the same team. The interviews and focus groups were conducted in a semi-structured format to consider the participants' descriptions of the best practices of leaders surrounding three different research questions:

1. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing a team vision?
2. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing accountability among members of the team?
3. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing an accepted team culture among fellow team members?

The findings in this chapter have presented the information gathered from those participants as recorded from transcripts of those interviews and focus groups. The next chapter discusses the results and best practices suggested from the literature review and the findings presented in this chapter. Some suggestions will also be offered on additional studies that may be helpful to further develop an understanding of effective leadership in a pastoral team setting.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members utilizing a team approach describe effective team leadership practices. The study's purpose was explored through the following three research questions:

1. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing a team vision?
2. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing accountability among members of the team?
3. How do pastoral team members describe effective leadership in developing an accepted team culture among fellow team members?

A survey of the literature related to the study's purpose was completed and summarized in chapter two. It focused upon two components of this study: the nature and practice of teams, and leadership theory and practice. Chapter three described the research methodology of this study, including how participants were selected, the data gathering process, and the approach taken for data analysis. Chapter four discussed the findings from the data gathered through the interviews and focus groups that were conducted. This chapter will discuss the synthesis of the data from the literature review and field work findings to draw conclusions and present recommendations.

The Conclusions of this Study

There are three major conclusions that I reached from this study. As mentioned in chapter three, part of the approach to this study was to take an interpretive comparative qualitative case study method.[418] One of my hopes in using this method was to possibly identify larger implications and patterns for effective team leadership. As I analyzed the

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[418]See Merriam, 8.

data, I realized that this hope had been realized, as my conclusions from this study are not limited to the specific research questions, but extend from the research questions into larger patterns.

As the research questions were considered in depth through field work, I was repeatedly struck by the inter-related nature of all the fundamental team dynamics discovered through the literature survey. Each research question focused upon only one team dynamic at a time. Yet effective leadership for each dynamic was only seen when the leader was also effective at promoting each of the other essential team dynamics. It seems clear to me that in practice, effective leadership cannot focus on only one or two team dynamics, but must becoming effective at leading a group to embody all of them.

This first conclusion helped me to gain clarity on the functional difference between "teamwork" and a "team approach." Each of the individual team dynamics discovered in the literature review can be seen in practice to some extent in organizations that do not utilize a team approach. Such organizations still speak of "teamwork," but they use the term only to describe their efforts to practice one particular dynamic, such as trust in relationships, or empowerment. A group moves from "team work" to a "team approach" when they commit to embody all the essential dynamics of a team.

A third significant conclusion reached through my analysis concerns the common theological foundation for teams. Despite different descriptive terminology, both the literature and the two teams studied exhibited a remarkable level of agreement concerning the biblical and theological roots of teams. While the term "team" is not found in the Bible, this project has convinced me that a team approach to ministry is a more consistent and thorough application of biblical and theological teaching than any

other approach with which I am familiar. The rest of this section will examine each of these three conclusions in greater detail.

Effective Leaders Understand the Shape of Team Dynamics

What exactly are "team dynamics?" The literature survey demonstrated that a number of key behavioral patterns and approaches are considered to be essential components of a team approach. There was diversity within the literature on the nature of those components. From collaborative and covenanting team dynamics to assimilating and ministry managing,[419] the range was broad. Yet, a number of themes were repeated.

During field work with both subject teams, I began to notice commonalities on these dynamics between both teams and the literature. Interestingly, neither team leader could articulate a concise definition or description of what constituted a "team approach." Neither team leader had developed a clearly articulated paradigm of team dynamics. Yet both teams and their leaders continually sounded the same themes concerning their relational practices, which they saw as indispensible to the operation of their team. Those themes were strikingly similar to many of the dynamics discussed in the literature. Thus, while a "team dynamic paradigm" could not be articulated, the team leaders had nonetheless come to understand certain relational dynamics they considered essential for their team.

From this interaction and agreement, I now believe the following six dynamics are essential to what makes a team into a team: trust, empowerment, accountability, multiplication, service, and a commonly owned vision.

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[419] See Cladis, 12-16; Macchia, 94, 115-124.;

Trust

The literature survey, combined with field study and personal experience, lead me

to believe that teams require a high degree of personal trust between members. This is the

foundation for all team dynamics. This trust goes beyond team tasks to the relationships

themselves. Pastor Seraph illustrated this sense of trust among members when he

described the support that he felt from his teammates when he was personally attacked.

He said without hesitation, "you know we'll fight for one another." His comments were

echoed in numerous ways by others who felt a great degree of personal safety when

attempting things that might fail, because they trust that the team is for them and not out

to get them.

This dynamic of trust was often repeated in the literature survey. In Moses'

selection of judges for Israel, the men's trustworthiness and reliability was central.[420]

When the first deacons were selected, they were to be "men of good reputation."[421] The

community had to trust them with the distribution of resources if the dissension was to be

eliminated. The literature on teams expanded on this dynamic of trust and its foundational

place in teams. George Cladis wrote, "Of the risks required, the most formidable involve

building the trust and interdependence necessary to move from individual accountability

to mutual accountability. People on real teams must trust and depend on one another- not

totally or forever- but certainly with respect to the team's purpose, performance goals,

and approach."[422] I believe that Cladis' understanding actually falls short. Team members

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[420] Ex 18:21.

[421] Acts 6:3

[422] Cladis, 109-110.

must not only trust one another when it comes to the team's ministry, but there must be a

high degree of relational trust if the other relational dynamics of teams are going to have

an opportunity to take root.

Empowerment

Upon the foundation of trust, the pillar of empowerment for ministry is the next

key team dynamic. Stephen Macchia describes this dynamic well:

> When team members are asked to fulfill a role and a defined duty and are trusted
> to complete their work without others looking over their shoulder or
> micromanaging their daily routines, they are empowered. Team leaders and
> mutually accountable members should be entrusted with much more than a title;
> they should have meaningful tasks to complete.[423]

This relational behavior was often described as "ownership" by team members in the

field. It describes both a belief and a practice that team members have real authority and

freedom to both shape the team's ministry vision and to carry it out in practice. Terry

Timm describes it this way: "I define empowerment with these words: Empowerment is

the decentralizing of authority, power, and responsibility for ministry to those called and

gifted to accomplish the work of God."[424] Pastor Dozer put it simply and bluntly: "I

didn't want to execute. I wanted to be empowered."

His statement reflects the fundamental desire of team members to have a voice in

shaping both the direction and the form of the team's ministry. Empowered team

members are not merely "hired hands," but owner-operators in attitude and action. They

may only use their gifts in one area of the team's ministry, but they desire and receive

real authority to help shape the entire team's ministry vision, direction, and shape. They

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[423] Macchia, 88.

[424] Timm, 59-60.

understand that the team as a whole, and not just the leader, has delegated the group's collective authority to them to carry out their part of the agreed upon vision of the team's ministry.

This behavioral practice of empowerment flows from the scriptural foundation of Jesus' entrusting his disciples to exercise authority in his name for his purposes. The literature survey demonstrated from passages like Exodus 18 that authority is often shared with others who are charged to serve in a particular ministry function. Matthew 10 also demonstrates that Jesus specifically gave real spiritual authority to the apostles to exercise in his name. I believe that teams express that spiritual authority well when members experience a joint ownership of the team's mission or purpose, and then take the initiative to work out those purposes in practical collaborative ministry.

Accountability

Teams that are empowered also believe that they are accountable. One of the distinguishing marks of a team is that members feel themselves accountable not merely for their own performance, but for the entire team's ministry. Macchia described a team's strong sense of accountability by noting, "Once tasks are delegated, every team member needs to know that he or she will be held accountable to complete the agreed upon assignment. When healthy accountability is in place, team members become exponentially more effective in the full utilization of their gifts, abilities, passions, and calling."[425] Accountability is an undeniable scriptural priority for our relationships.[426] Teams require that dynamic to be not only practiced individually, but extended so that

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[425] Macchia, 88.

[426] See Gal 6:1-2 and Heb 3:12-13.

team participants see themselves as wanting to perform the best they possibly can as a group and not just as individuals.

Effective leadership must thoroughly root such accountability in the gospel. Pastor Yoda wisely summarized it this way, "And now there's never been a higher degree of accountability, how you stand, how you choose, how you invest your time whether just constantly, constantly, constantly blasted with the gospel. Here's how the beauty of the love of Jesus propels us to want to do a good job." In investigating team culture, Pastor Neo saw this dynamic of gospel accountability as a critical part of their team culture. He stated, "I do think that there's a culture that you need to develop, a culture of, 'Hey, I love you. We all need to grow. We all have blind spots. We all are limited in certain ways. What can we learn? How can we grow better?'"

A critical insight into effectively leading a team toward this kind of accountability is to understand the distinction Pastor Skywalker first made when he alluded to the practices of abdication, micromanaging, and delegation. Without realizing it, he highlighted a key practice of accountability. He addressed the fact that a team is not a democracy; it needs a leader who will help keep it focused on the team's agreed upon vision, values, and practices. It is my conviction in light of this research that abdication occurs when a leader fails to hold the team to its own standards. Micromanaging occurs when the leader has gone beyond the level of trust established in the team and has taken away some of the delegated authority given to each member by the team. Effective leaders carefully use the authority delegated to them by the team to help team members use their gifts and abilities to faithfully follow through on the individual team members'

passions that are expressed in the ministry vision of the team that each individual helped to shape.

Multiplication

Teams require big goals and challenges. They are not suited to merely managing existing ministries. Instead, they are best suited for enabling members to produce results that far exceed the mere sum of the individual contributions. Therefore, healthy teams have the essential characteristic of multiplying ministry and ministry impact.

We have seen Barna assert that teams "generate results far greater than the sum of the parts could have achieved."[427] Multiplication of impact is one of the distinguishing marks of a team compared to committee. Speaking from a business context, Katzenbach and Smith write, "A working group relies primarily on the individual contributions of its members for group performance, whereas a team strives for a magnified impact that is incremental to what its members could achieve in their individual roles."[428] Teams are distinguished from work groups or committees by the way they generate a multiplied or synergistic effect from the collaborative efforts of team members. In the providential pattern of God, it seems that the impact teams have and the results they produce are greatly multiplied by their collaborative and integrated efforts.

This dynamic expresses certain Biblical dynamics for ministry. In Acts 6, the creation of the team of deacons multiplied the effectiveness of both the ministry of the word and the ministry of mercy.[429] Other passages discussed in the literature review

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[427] Barna, 78.

[428] Katzenbach and Smith, 88-89.

[429] Stott, 123.

suggest that the event of Acts 6 describes a normal pattern for ministry in the church: that believers are to collaborate and integrate their spiritual gifts and efforts to multiply their impact far beyond their individual contributions. Multiplication was a constant undercurrent in the interviews and focus groups. Pastor Dozer expressed his desire for empowerment over mere execution. He made that statement during a portion of our conversation where he expressed his frustration in other non-team settings with merely carrying out a "pre-outlined ministry," as compared to having a real chance to work together to pool gifts, talents, and experiences with other team members to create a greater ministry impact. He was expressing his experience of multiplication in a healthy team setting.

Service

Another critical pillar of team dynamics is that members and leaders of healthy teams view themselves as servants. They serve from the gospel, through their team, to the world around them to accomplish the team's vision. This is true of all team members, but the initiative for this starts with the team leader. This motivation or attitude is a distinction that separates ministry from the secular world, because healthy ministry teams are motivated differently from secular ones. Ministry teams only thrive as they seek to embody Jesus' command from Matthew 20:

> But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."[430]

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[430] Mt 20:25-28.

Team members from both teams described their leaders as models of servant-leadership who demonstrated a clear commitment to use leadership as a tool for service rather than power. Pastor Mace Windu expressed this dynamic of teams and team leadership:

> So there's acknowledgement that somebody really does have to be the head. But even biblically, the sense of head is to be the chief servant, to not necessarily be the person ruling over the team…[such influential leadership is] the first among equals, and the one who has won the right and responsibility to focus the decision-making of the team.

Team members who have served with Pastor Skywalker believe that one of his passions is to incarnate the gospel and to be an authentically humble "servant-leader." This posture of servant-hood grew in him over "long exposure to gospel-living and gospel-culture" that had been modeled for him by fellow teammates. This incarnated itself through a leadership style that was humble: not caring about credit and seeking the good of the team before himself. He saw even his rare uses of authority as chances to bring gospel correction and re-direction for the benefit of others over his own personal benefit.

So from the leader to the rest of the team, there was an unmistakable emphasis upon practically living together and serving each other for the sake of others. Macchia describes this dynamic: "Healthy teams serve others not merely for the fruit of our labors of love on their behalf but primarily because of our willingness to lay down our lives for others- whatever it takes to reach out in love. God will bring along any increase as he sees fit. Our role is merely to serve others in His name."[431]

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[431] Macchia, 129.

Vision

Merely desiring to be a team was not enough. The team members needed to work together to practically achieve a goal or vision larger than themselves.[432] Katzenbach and Smith put it clearly and directly:

> Moreover, those who describe teams as vehicles primarily to make people feel good or get along better not only confuse teamwork with teams, but also miss the most fundamental characteristic that distinguishes real teams from non-teams- a relentless focus on performance. Teams thrive on performance challenges; they flounder without them. Teams cannot exist for long without a performance-driven purpose to both nourish and justify the team's continuing existence.[433]

Participants expressed this through a repeated desire to be an integral part of shaping and pursuing a compelling vision. Pastor Link spoke with excitement of being invited by his team leader into a dialogical process to shape the team's vision.

It seems that the capstone of team vision really is essential to each of the other dynamics discussed. Teams are empowered to shape a vision and then use delegated authority to fulfill it. Team members are accountable to the whole team for how they use the authority they are given, and the chief standard of measure is how their efforts contribute to the team achieving its vision. Teams engage in multiplying ministry efforts because they are moving towards a destination: their vision. Finally, team members adopt the attitude of servanthood because they believe they are called by God to fulfill his purposes that are embodied in the team's vision.

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[432] Katzenbach and Smith, xiv.

[433] Ibid., 21.

Summary

These, then, are the essential team dynamics that effective leaders must develop:

trust, empowerment, accountability, multiplication, service, and vision. They can be

pictured as in figure two below:
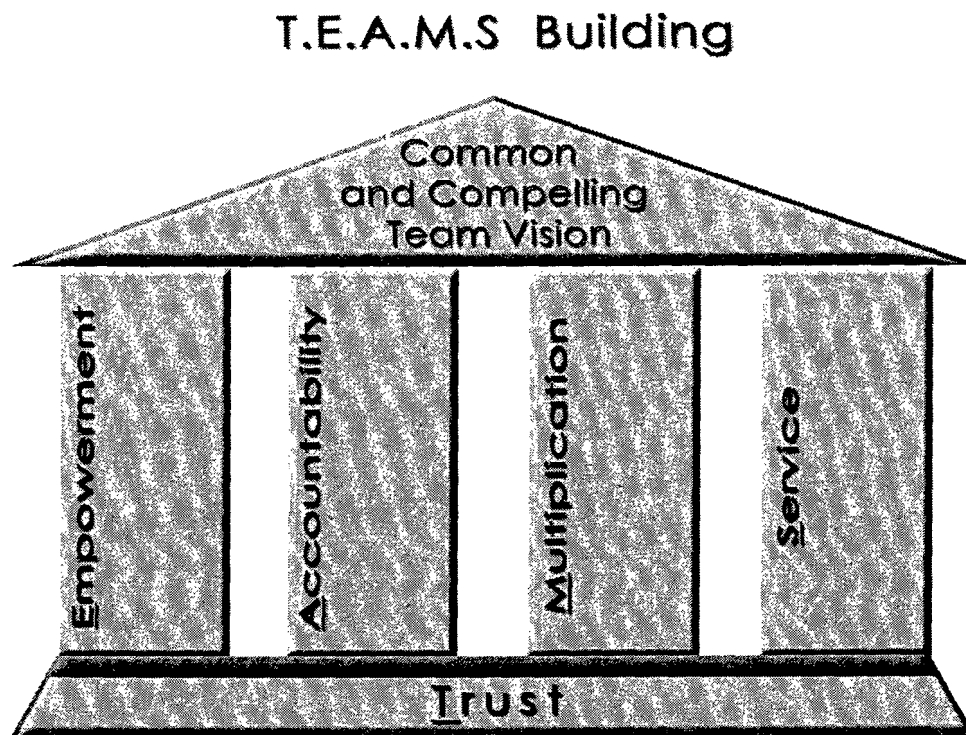
T.E.A.M.S Building

Figure 2.

The foundation of a team is a high level of trust among members, both personally and

ministerially. Upon this foundation of trust rest the four key "pillars." Each of these

essential relational dynamics of teams expresses that trust practically and allows a team

to build towards its vision. The vision of the team caps all other dynamics and provides a

compelling and commonly-owned direction and motivation that pulls all ministry efforts of the team together in a common direction and goal.

Effective leaders understand these dynamics. They very likely will not have a well-constructed paradigm or even be able to articulate these elements in any sort of connected fashion. Yet, highly effective leaders of ministry teams will still perceive these dynamics and intentionally develop them by gifting, experience, or training.

Effective Leaders Understand the Irreducible Complexity of Team Dynamics

One of the questions that arose during my research was the following: Can team vision, culture, and accountability be studied in isolation? It became clear to me through the research and fieldwork that they can be distinguished, but not separated. The literature spoke of these characteristics distinctly, but participants in this study had a very difficult time speaking of one of them without addressing the others. When asked questions about vision, participants would invariably also speak of the culture of their teams. When the subject was culture, without prompting they would discuss the efforts of their team leader to keep them accountable to their team's culture. I believe this same interconnectedness is true for all the essential team dynamics we have identified. They can be distinguished, but they cannot be separated.

This leads to a very important conclusion concerning the nature of a team and what makes it distinct from other group structure approaches. Various types of groups are often encouraged to develop each of the dynamics we have discussed. This is often referred to as "teamwork," where members of a group such as a committee are encouraged to grow in trust or to see themselves as empowered for their work. To a certain degree, these efforts to grow "teamwork" can show a measure of success, depending upon many factors.

What distinguishes a "team" from such attempts to develop "teamwork" is what I will call the irreducible complexity of teams. For purposes of illustration, imagine three lines drawn on a page. Each line is distinct and identifiable. These lines represent the team dynamics we have discussed. You can draw those lines on a page in many different configurations. You can make many different patterns with those three lines, but you can only form a triangle when you use those three lines together to make a closed figure consisting of all three line segments linked end-to-end. Teams are like that triangle. You can work on the individual dynamics (the lines) and increase a group's "teamwork." However, only when you put all the dynamics together as previously discussed do you have an actual "team," with all the included benefits and strengths.

This understanding can greatly aid team leaders in their practical attempts to lead. For instance, a team might be naturally oriented towards a high level of trust and have gifts and personalities that encourage them to take ownership of their area of ministry. Yet, if there is a lack of accountability, the team will eventually fail to collaborate and so multiply the effects of their individual contributions. Without accountability, the team will also likely begin to fail to address conflicts and move from a posture of servanthood to more of a "silo" mentality, where members protect their "turf" at the expense of the overall effectiveness of the entire team's ministry. Any commonly owned vision and sense of overall purpose will also dissipate as conflict, lack of collaboration, and mistrust ultimately fracture the team.

This is one example of the irreducible complexity of a team approach. Committees, workgroups, and hierarchical organizations can all achieve some measure of growth in "teamwork" by efforts aimed at growing in a particular relational dynamic we

have discussed. However, only when all the components we have identified are present

and functional in a particular group will they experience both the relational and the

performance benefits of a team.

For instance, E. Stanley Ott describes some of the unique benefits of an authentic

team approach when compared to other types of groups:

> The ministry team fosters some key experiences usually not encountered in
> committee life – deliberate encouragement of personal discipleship, growth of
> new personal friendships among team members, and increased passion to
> accomplish the ministry vision of the team.... The consequence of all this is that
> ministry teams develop people both as disciples and as leaders at the same time
> they accomplish their ministry vision.[434]

Only in the irreducible complexity of a full team approach will members richly

experience a group "committed to one another's growth and success in ministry."[435]

George Barna has asserted that pastoral leadership teams are uniquely able (due to the

team dynamics discussed) to teach and demonstrate true Christian community to the

church in a postmodern age. He asserts that real community is shaped by a pastoral

leadership team demonstrating genuine community amongst themselves.[436] Based on this

project, I believe that team relational experience is only possible as all the essential team

dynamics are present and practiced.

The performance benefits of teams also require the irreducible complexity of all

the team dynamics to be functional. Only then will the high performance difference of a

team emerge. As Katzenbach and Smith explain, "A working group relies primarily on

the individual contributions of its members for group performance, whereas a team

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[434] Ott, 70.

[435] Barna, 25.

[436] Ibid., 76.

strives for a magnified impact that is incremental to what its members could achieve in their individual roles."[437] On such a team, members are not just committed relationally. Rather, they are committed to working together in such a fashion that the results they pursue are greater than the sum of their individual contributions. This requires the irreducible complexity of a team.

Effective Leaders Understand the Why of Team Dynamics

The final major conclusion concerns the biblical basis for teams. While the research questions for this project focused on best practices for effective team leadership, it became apparent that effective leaders conceptualize and articulate a rich biblical framework for why they engage in a team approach to ministry. Thus, one of the best practices for effective team leadership is the ability to articulate a biblical rationale for why their ministry partners should work together to build a functioning team. From the literature and field work, three major biblical rationales from ecclesiology, trinitarian theology, and pneumatology seem central and compelling.

The Ecclesiological Foundation

Effective team leaders see the team approach as the best application of biblical principles for how the church is meant to function. Pastor Skywalker exuberantly declared, "I love the biblical side of ecclesiology that we know the church from the scriptures, so that's what's driving our team." He was not alone. The doctrine of the church in scripture was frequently mentioned in the literature. From George Cladis' collaborative aspects of teams to Stephen Macchia's assimilating culture of teams,

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[437] Katzenbach and Smith, 88-89.

authors repeatedly saw such team dynamics as practical application of scriptural commands for life and ministry in the church.[438]

One passage often referenced in the literature and by study participants was Ephesians 4. I do not believe the passage can be used to assert that teams are the only group structure or method for doing ministry. However, teams are the most consistent and thorough application of the ecclesiological theology of the passage that I have seen. The passage demonstrates a distinction of roles within God's people, coupled with a collaboration of efforts. Effective teams embody that principle through the dynamic of accountability that includes recognition of different roles and responsibilities. They also embody that dynamic through genuine empowerment of all members of the church to carry out truly collaborative ministry that multiplies the effectiveness of each person's contribution as the whole body builds together in love. Such ministry requires a compelling purpose to grow to the maturity described, and it requires that all members of the body embrace and contribute towards achieving that common vision. As the descriptions in verses thirteen and fifteen describe, over time such purposeful ministry changes people as they serve. They collectively undergo a progressive change into a common culture and community that increasingly resembles Jesus' character and passions. This resonates well with Cladis' description of collaborative ministry teams that are empowered and multiplying:

> Collaborative ministry teams that have a clear purpose and rigorous discipline are a highly effective way of creating spiritually-fulfilling work and moving toward a Christ-centered goal. Team ministry has a solid biblical and theological foundation that, in most cases, sets it above Lone Ranger heroics as the most meaningful way to serve in the church. A team that learns how to discern the spiritual gifts of the individual team members and how to have members work

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[438] See Cladis, 16; Macchia, 97.

together, pray hard, and share information and energy in order to move toward a sharply defined mission, vision, or cause, is an extremely powerful unit of ministry. When members of leadership teams collaborate in order to accomplish what they discern is God's will, they experience the beauty of Spirit-given synergy.[439]

Effective team leaders understand this ecclesiological foundation and see teams as a comprehensive and compelling application of these principles.

The Trinitarian Foundation

Effective team leaders see the doctrine of the Trinity as an imitative model that gives rise to teams in functional practice. The doctrine of the Trinity is more than an analogy for teams; it carries a measure of normative authority for current Christian living. As Cladis has pointed out, ministry teams are communities that are shaped more and more into the image of God.[440] Humanity is to reflect the true nature of God, and this nature is fundamentally trinitarian.

The literature survey examined key passages that support this, such as Ephesians 2:19-22, Matthew 28:19, and Ephesians 4:1-6. We saw that the church is to be a picture of what God is like, demonstrating for the world his unity amidst a diversity of persons, his character, manner, and passions. This is how we "image" God to the world. Effective team leaders believe that teams are a richly faithful expression of church life and structure that reflects the trinitarian nature of God.

Participants in this study were passionate in expressing the role trinitarian theology played in their teams. Pastor Yoda comments, "[In team ministry] you're just seeing the fullness of the Godhead even, I think, in the theology of Trinity. To me, it's a

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[439] Cladis, 88.

[440] Ibid., 16.

further discovery of the nature of the economic diversity and the ontological oneness of

God…the economic diversity of the ontological equality of the Trinity in ministry."

His comment is a concrete expression of Miroslav Volf's assertions that Scripture teaches

that there is an intentional and normative correspondence between church and Trinity:

> The symmetrical reciprocity of the relations of the Trinitarian persons finds its correspondence in the image of the church in which all members serve one another with their specific gifts of the Spirit in imitation of the Lord and through the power of the Father. Like the divine person, they all stand in a relation of mutual giving and receiving.[441]

George Cladis roots much of his model for teams on trinitarian doctrine. We have seen

in our survey that Cladis saw the trinitarian perichoresis as a normative model for the

kinds of relationships that we are to enjoy in the church. Our diversity of spiritual gifts

and roles are united, and so image to the world the perichoretic fellowship among the

three persons of the one Triune God.[442]

Effective team leaders understand and lead their teams as a conscious attempt to

reflect the trinitarian nature of their God. I believe that teams are uniquely able to express

and apply this normative pattern for relationships in the church. They reflect an essential

unity seen in the empowerment of all team members and the commonly owned vision of

a functional team, while still enjoying the diversity of roles based on gifting that enables

genuine accountability and collaboration of different gifts. They are also a powerful

means of building the kind of trust and posture of servant-hood that imitates the

Godhead's own unity and the joy of each person in the Godhead in each of the others.

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[441] Volf, 219.

[442] Cladis, 4-5.

The Pneumatological Foundation

Another major biblical basis for teams comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, forming them into the body of Christ by his gifts and graces. Team leaders should understand how these truths shape and encourage the very dynamics upon which teams thrive. The Holy Spirit unites Christians both spiritually and experientially. Team leaders recognize this spiritual truth as a basis for developing the foundation of trust, rather than relying on other less sure and more limiting foundations such as common background or interests. Team leaders also recognize that the Spirit gives the diversity of gifts that a team needs to truly see a multiplication of the team's ministry as those gifts are used collaboratively. These were significant themes running through the literature, as mentioned earlier in Macchia's work.[443] It is also the Spirit that drives believers to first trust the sovereign Lord of grace experienced through the gospel, which then compels us to a willing and joyful posture of servant-hood towards fellow team members and the team's vision.

1 Corinthians 12 was commonly referenced by both teams interviewed as providing guidance on how their team was shaped and how it functioned. Pastor Skywalker is representative of many:

> I think for me... the way the scriptures, especially passages like 1 Corinthians 12, have to speak about the interdependentness and the interdependencies of the members of the body to be involved in the leadership culture where nobody is too big, nobody is too little, where genuinely, I think especially for the last three years, we are tasting the value of every part and are seeing the gospel infused, the integrity of that and the joy of that is just so fun – to watch something organically grow and nobody gives a flying Houdini who gets the credit. So there's that real sense of watching increasingly our staff people move from the illusion of the omni-competent leader to the synergistic participant in what I think leadership is designed to be according to scripture anyway.

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[443] See Macchia, 31.

Pastor Skywalker's description of the "interdependentness and the interdependencies of the members of the body" aptly describes the dynamic of multiplication found in teams. Such a dynamic requires a servant-hood approach, according to Pastor Skywalker, where "nobody gives a flying Houdini who gets the credit." His reference to the shift in thinking about leadership reflects the team dynamic of empowerment that we have discussed.

I believe he is correct in seeing all of these as applications of the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12 concerning the work of the Spirit in shaping and empowering Christians to live as the body of Christ. Teams are certainly not the only expression of this, but I am convinced they are the richest and fullest expression that I have seen. Effective team leaders have their concept of team shaped and controlled by these truths.

Summary of Conclusions

An investigation of both the literature and the experiences of two high performing teams leads me to conclude that best practices for effective leadership in a team must begin with a solid conceptual foundation. Whether it be team vision, practices of accountability, or developing and maintaining a common culture, team leaders who desire to be effective must first understand certain realities concerning teams.

Effective leaders understand the essential relational dynamics that drive a team approach. They must come to understand that there is an irreducible complexity concerning those dynamics – that they are a "package deal" in which all the parts are distinguishable, but inseparable. They must then grasp something of the foundational biblical and theological convictions from which team dynamics arise and take shape.

Leaders then can use these concepts as diagnostic and directional tools for navigating the swamp of leadership. I believe that leaders must grasp these concepts in order to help their teams wrestle with the challenges they regularly face. Further, leaders

should become adept at communicating these concepts to team members as a means to strengthen team performance. As teams better understand why a leader is asking them to engage in certain relational dynamics, their foundational trust increases, and so does their ability to better engage in all the other team relational dynamics discussed. Finally, effective leaders will seek to develop specific strategies to grow a team according to these concepts. That is the subject of the next section.

The Recommendations For Best Practices From This Study

Once team leaders gain the fundamental understanding discussed in the previous section, how do they practically lead teams in the areas of vision, accountability, and culture? What are the best approaches and practices that team leaders should utilize? Which should be steadfastly avoided? We will examine each of this study's specific areas of research in turn.

Best Practices for Effective Leadership in the area of Team Vision

Team vision is the capstone of team relational dynamics. It must be a commonly owned vision rather than an imposed vision. How does a leader effectively lead a team in the area of vision? This study uncovered three significant best practices that leadership should embrace: group development of vision, group authority and communication of vision, and strengths-driven foundation for vision.

Effective Leadership Shares Development of Vision

Effective team leadership does not cast vision; it facilitates, motivates, and participates in a group developed vision. There is much written today on "casting vision" as a leader. However, team dynamics require the leader to serve less as "vision caster" and more as facilitator and motivator. They help the team tackle its ministry challenges directly and lead the group in discerning what real fruit and progress would look like in

their ministry. Pastor Neo spoke of his team leader, Pastor Morpheus, as just such a facilitator and motivator, "It's not just dictated but it's actually something you've helped developed... [Morpheus] has tried to orchestrate it in such a way that the process has not been a top down kind of thing, but it's been at grass roots [effort], kind of directed upwards, but definitely grass roots." The Intersect Forum spoke of the leadership role as being partly to "create shared urgency."[444] This is what a good team leader does for the team in the area of vision. The leader helps the team members to discover common passions and desires for ministry that form the basis for the team's vision.

This practice requires leaders to think differently about themselves and their roles. They must move away from seeing themselves as leading ministries and toward influencing people to lead ministries. This echoes the "equipping pastor" model from Ephesians 4:11ff, but adds the dimension of not merely teaching team members "how to do it," but using leadership to empower them to use their own giftedness to come up with "a better way to do it" than the leader might have used. This is a subtle but important shift. It helps the team leader to practically move away from "the genius with 1000 helpers" fallacy that Jim Collins introduces throughout *Good to Great*.[445]

Therefore, team leaders who desire to be effective must work on their own skills and abilities to improve in their role as facilitator and motivator of others. I do not believe this removes the leader from providing wise counsel or expert information gained from training and experience. It does, however, radically change the leader's expectation of the team's response, as well as the process through which the leader is willing to lead the

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[444] Burns and others, 6.

[445] Collins, 45.

team in order to help them process and thoroughly embrace what the leader is sharing. This is all part of the necessary practice of moving from vision caster to vision facilitator and motivator.

Effective Leadership Shares Authority and Communication of the Vision

A second best practice for effective team leadership is to develop the pattern of sharing genuine authority with team members to both communicate and carry out the team's vision. This practice moves from vision development to vision implementation. Here, the leader develops the attitude as well as the communication skills to empower team members in such a way that they genuinely believe they have a certain responsibility and authority over the execution of the team's vision.

We have previously discussed empowerment from Matthew 10, but Acts 6 is also relevant to this practice. Pelikan points out that the new deacons possessed real delegated authority from the apostles to carry out the ministry of mercy in the fledgling church.[446] This is descriptive of this practice for team leaders. Pastor Neo specifically mentioned that even the language chosen to express the team's vision was both shaped and communicated by all members of the team, and not just the leader. They had authority to both execute the vision and communicate that vision to people beyond the team on behalf of the team. This is what effective team leaders should seek to develop.

In his dissertation, Paul Ballard suggested a tool that can help teams to move in this direction.[447] He refers to Stephen Covey's three stages of relational progression:

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[446] Pelikan, 94-95.

[447] Paul H. Ballard, "Team Building Practices Employed by Senior Pastors to Build Healthy Ministry Teams" (D.Min. Diss, Columbia International University, 2004).

dependence, independence, and interdependence.[448] We have seen Ballard assert that teams require a level of interdependence analogous to that of a marriage, where the partners are complementary to each other even as they work together as one unit.[449] This level of interdependence is what the team leader should seek to develop. Effective team leadership does not give team members child-like authority, but spouse-like partnership in communicating and executing the team's vision.

Effective Leadership Focuses the Vision on Team Strengths

Effective team leaders must become relentless students and promoters of their team members' strengths and gifts. Their belief in the grace-gifts of the Spirit given to each team member becomes the basis for their passionate promotion of those gifts in shaping the team's vision. Pastor Skywalker spoke of his team leadership role as being continuously focused on recognizing the strengths of team members and putting them in a position to use those strengths in the team's ministry. For Pastor Skywalker, effective vision flows from this conviction. Pastor Chewbacca was even more direct. He defined successful team leadership as "watching each of these men find their place is what I would say, for me personally is a sign of team leadership, the success of the team leadership, that all four of them and myself included have found our place and seem to be working effectively."

A focus on team strengths shaping vision also applies to the team leaders themselves. Often in leadership, one feels pressure to be something different to meet the expectations of others. Good team leaders understand their own spiritual gifts and the

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[448] Covey, 183-203.

[449] Ballard, 10.

areas where they lack gifts. They have developed such a clear understanding and focus on those gifts and weaknesses that they are careful to let others carry greater "weight" in discussions where they are weak. Pastor Windu put it this way:

> When you have a team of 1 Corinthian ministry, even among pastors, certain pastors have different gifts, have different strengths. So to be to able to celebrate those instead of "I need to be the main guy, I don't do this as well but I have to do it," but to say "I can do it if I have to." But why not utilize people that have those gifts and instead be who you are gifted to be?

Cladis has asserted that this strength-based focus is essential for real team collaboration. He writes, "Collaboration is not uniformity. Collaboration is coming to the table with spiritual gifts to be used in ministry. When the gifts are freely offered for ministry, God blesses and creates the spiritual synergy resulting from the team members' collaboration."[450]

Team leaders must not only develop the practice of recognizing and promoting team members' grace gifts, but they must let the particular strengths and weaknesses of their team influence the process of selecting new team members. Leaders must develop the practice of seeking new team members whose gifts will complement the existing team. Their first goal should be to seek to make each team member's weaknesses irrelevant by the presence of team members with strengths where others are weak. Their second goal should be to not create needlessly heightened opportunity for conflict and mistrust by adding new team members who will likely compete rather than collaborate with the existing team members.

It is my conviction that this should have an equal if not greater stake than even training and experience. Teams can be undone by the acquisition of a new team member

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[450] Cladis, 14.

who may have an excellent resume for a particular ministry area but all the wrong strengths and weaknesses for the existing team. A team can quickly see conflict rise with a new team member whose strengths, personality, and gifting end up being so similar to those of another team member that the likelihood of competition rather than collaboration becomes the more likely outcome. This is not to say that team members can't have gifts in the same area, but if two team members have nearly identical gifts, weaknesses, and personalities, the team leader must be aware that greater conflict is likely and may hinder the team from focusing upon their common vision. They must then ask whether other factors outweigh this consideration, and if so, whether they should plan to actively address it with both parties and with the team as a whole. Team vision will only be realized when team leaders develop the practices necessary to be driven by the team's spiritual strengths and gifts.

Best Practices for Effective Leadership in the Area of Team Accountability

Accountability is crucial for a team's health, but it can be utterly destructive if not adapted to a team's unique dynamics. Leaders who wish to serve well will exercise accountability differently. Specifically, they will become great coaches and approach accountability redemptively.

Effective Leadership Learns to Coach; Not Just Delegate

Leadership that makes the mistake of the educational fallacy will not be effective. Often, we assume that if we tell something to someone, then they are well prepared to go and do what they have just been told. Good team leaders recognize that this is not necessarily true. They do not move from giving directions immediately to delegating tasks. Rather, they recognize and develop the practice of walking team members through ministry tasks or practices that may be new to them. This flows from a good team

leader's passion not only for tasks, but for the team members' process of learning to accomplish those tasks. Pastor Skywalker said, "First, you're not only getting things done, but you're actually developing people as you're doing it. If your priorities are both, then a team concept really works."

Team leaders must develop the heart and mindset of a coach that Jim Putnam spoke of in *Church is a Team Sport*, where the "equipping process" of Ephesians 4 is transformed into a coaching mindset and approach.[451] Leaders who want to thrive in a team context must prepare, encourage, deploy, supervise, and evaluate team members as they take on new ministry tasks. In other words, they should be doing everything a good coach would do, but in the context of ministry.

Effective Leadership Provides Redemptive Accountability

1 Corinthians 12 has shown us that even in a picture of interdependence, the need for leadership to exercise oversight remains.[452] Teams flourish not only where oversight or accountability is present, but where that accountability is redemptive rather than punitive. In our literature survey, sometimes the accountability was located with the leader,[453] while other times its source was described as the whole team.[454] Pastor Skywalker combined those approaches. His role as team leader required him to personally exercise accountability, but based on authority given to an individual by the whole team. This always seemed to channel his efforts at accountability into a positive perspective, for he saw his authority for accountability as coming not from his position

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[451] Putman, 89.

[452] 1 Cor 12:27-31a.

[453] See Macchia, 82-88.

[454] Barna, 24.

but from his relationship with the very people with whom he was interacting. Humility, gentleness, and a purposeful engagement with team members to help them pursue any needed change was the result.

The literature was disappointingly silent on the need for accountability to be redemptive. One would think that in order for teams to thrive, they would need only systematic and position-based accountability. However, that would be mistaken. Yes, good team leadership engages in both formal and informal accountability with team members. Yet, accountability in a team context must connect with the other central truths discussed: the gospel, relationships, delegated rather than positional authority, and the leader's own responsibility to serve the team. A leader who desires to be most effective will develop a heart, skills, and habits of accountability that are redemptive.

Best Practices for Effective Leadership in the Area of Team Culture

Culture was, by far, the most difficult area for participants in this study to discuss. Perhaps this was because culture permeates everything they do, in the way that air fills the spaces we inhabit. But with some reflection, a number of common healthy patterns can be identified from both the literature and fieldwork that would suggest a number of best practices for team leaders. These include time together focusing on people and tasks, the development of emotional intelligence, the priority of trust, and the necessity of incarnational leadership.

Effective Leaders Layer Meetings Together, Focusing on Both People and Tasks

A team approach is time intensive. It seems there are no short cuts here: good team leadership creates multiple opportunities for team members to be together. It is also crucial for those times to be designed by the leader to give authentic focus to both the

relationships within the team as well as the ministry tasks of the team.

There is no one recommended way to structure those meetings, and both teams involved in this project had very different meeting schedules and structures. What was common was that both teams used formal and informal times together during which a strong priority was put on team relationships and the soul care of team members. Meetings included time to pray, process, communicate, and "just enjoy one another" as Pastor Morpheus described it. During those meetings, the goal of shaping and maintaining each team's unique culture made it critical that the relationships among the team members were primary in importance over tasks, even when tasks were being discussed.

The literature survey also indicated the great importance of establishing a layered approach to time together as a team in which both relationships and tasks could be developed. E. Stanley Ott's description is representative of much of what we have seen:

> Ministry teams combine the best of the small-group concept with the best of committee life. Such teams, like small groups and committees, typically involve less than a dozen people. By spending time in "Word-Share-Prayer," sharing meals together on a regular basis, and other means of intentionally developing their Christian community, the ministry team fosters some key experiences usually not encountered in committee life – deliberate encouragement of personal discipleship, growth of new personal friendships among team members, and increased passion to accomplish the ministry vision of the team.... The consequence of all this is that ministry teams develop people both as disciples and as leaders at the same time they accomplish their ministry vision.[455]

Team leaders should consider the unique patterns within their own team and then establish a pattern of team meetings that allows leader and members to meet in different venues with different structures.

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[455] Ott, 70.

In fact, both teams studied met regularly without any structured agenda to promote freedom of discussion and genuine engagement with one another, and not merely a "to do" list for ministry. Again, there are no short cuts here: any imagined efficiency gained through technology or tricks will be quickly lost, since a common team culture unravels as members and leader grow apart through the business of ministry.

Effective Leaders Personally Pursue Emotional Intelligence

Good team leaders may not be aware of the term "emotional intelligence," but they will most certainly have a very high "EQ." Some leaders are born with it, while others must develop it. One of the best practices indicated by this study is to make that pursuit intentional and personal. The better team leaders understand themselves, others around them, and the over-all relational system, the greater their ability to choose appropriate leadership actions that promote team health.

In the literature survey, Macchia stated that "We manage things, but we lead people... People don't like to be managed, like an inanimate object, but they will respond to being led toward greater influence and effectiveness."[456] Macchia does not elaborate on how this happens, but his statement suggests a leader's need for emotional awareness, especially because of the manner in which leaders impact those around them. In *The Leader's Journey*, we learned about seeing ourselves within a relational system and gaining the skills to "differentiate" ourselves from those around us in the system.[457] This is the basis for emotional awareness and understanding of impact. Good leaders must

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[456] Macchia, 108.

[457] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 47.

pursue differentiation if they are to be emotionally capable of serving and loving the team.

Participants were keenly aware of the importance of emotional intelligence for the team leader. Pastor Neo described a leadership "home run" as when a leader "stay[s] calm in the midst of a very anxious system and trust[s] the Lord…to provide and lead." He said this was most clearly needed during times of difficulty and challenge to the team and its way of functioning (i.e. culture). Effective leaders developed high "emotional intelligence" and a passion to take ownership over themselves and to stay true to the values and culture of the team.

Participants saw the impact of this self-awareness as extending down to the smallest of details. Pastor Han Solo recalled his leader's reactions setting the cultural tone for whether or not he was genuinely free to participate in discussions. How the leader reacts through verbal and non-verbal cues powerfully incarnates an eagerness to hear from and value the input of the team. This was a key part of Pastor Solo's description of his team's culture. Even the leader's own schedule awareness had an incarnational impact. Pastor Solo felt that if the leader was a workaholic who let everyone know it, then that action shaped a cultural expectation that the team would need to follow.

Beyond differentiation, one of the most helpful practical skills for developing emotional intelligence was found in Heifetz and Linsky's work. They used the metaphor of "getting on the balcony" in order to see the relational picture and general situation more clearly. They describe it this way:

> Achieving a balcony perspective means taking yourself out of the dance, in your mind, even if only for a moment. The only way you can gain both a clearer view of reality and some perspective on the bigger picture is by distancing yourself from the fray. Otherwise, you are likely to misperceive the situation and make the

wrong diagnosis, leading you to misguided decisions about whether and how to intervene.[458]

This is a skill that leaders need to develop where they are able to mentally step back from the situation without removing themselves physically. In that moment, they consider their own emotional state as well as the state of others, and they begin to analyze the situation in their mind in order to be better prepared to make an appropriate leadership action. This is a critical practice for developing emotional intelligence, and developing emotional intelligence is a critical skill for team leaders to be able to develop, guide, and guard the team's common culture.

Effective Leaders Never Sacrifice Trust to Accomplish a Task

There is no quicker way for a leader to destroy a functioning team than to betray the team's trust. No task is worth that. Period. This is so axiomatic that it was never actually directly discussed in any of the interviews or focus groups. I believe that occurred because trust was so central to both teams' cultures that the thought of betraying trust simply never crossed their minds.

The literature review was more direct on the utter indispensability of trust. The description from the seminal *Leadership Challenge* is representative of the perspective we've seen throughout the literature:

> What happens when people do not trust each other? They will ignore, disguise, and distort facts, ideas, conclusions, and feelings that they believe will increase their vulnerability to others. Not surprisingly, the likelihood of misunderstanding and misinterpretation will increase. When you don't trust someone, you resist letting them influence you. You are suspicious and unreceptive to their proposals and goals, suggestions for reaching those goals, and their definition of criteria and methods for evaluating progress. When we encounter low-trust behavior from others, we in turn are generally hesitant to reveal information to them and reject

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[458] Heifetz and Linsky, 14.

their attempts to influence us. This feedback only reinforces the originator's low trust.[459]

Team leaders that sacrifice team relationships for the sake of accomplishing tasks will experience this mistrust in their team first-hand.

Very often this compromise comes not through big, planned moments, but through small patterns of neglect that creep in to a team's approach to life. Leaders must jealously guard relational time at meetings, even when tasks are pressing. Prayer consistently made in a perfunctory and task-oriented manner will yield relationships that are perfunctory and lacking in trust. Teams that thrive have leaders who have built into their leadership "DNA" the inability to sacrifice relationships in order to better accomplish ministry tasks.

Effective Leadership is Incarnational Leadership

The final best practice for guiding and guarding a team's culture is the life pattern of the leaders themselves. Do they embrace, embody, and evangelize for the team's values and passions? Can people outside the team look at the leader and have a pretty good idea how the rest of the team functions? Is their leadership incarnational?

Pastor Yoda described the various ways their team met, and then he described how each one of those meetings served as his leader's personal, and not just professional, engagement with his team. He described his team leader's "passion" and "heart" for sharing life intentionally. It was clear to me that he was describing a man who embodied for him the trust, values, and practices of a man living out their team's commonly owned culture.

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[459] Kouzes and Posner, 147.

It is helpful to recall at this point how deeply incarnational teams are meant to be.

George Cladis has rooted his understanding of teams deeply in the idea that they imitate

or incarnate the Trinity itself. In describing the practice of covenanting as a team, he

gives this description of incarnation:

> The ministry team that covenants to be together in love and unity and to lead on
> the basis of a God-given vision then sets to work creating a culture of *perichoretic*
> love. The postmodern world is full of culture creators. Ministry teams endeavor to
> create the culture of the *perichorectic* fellowship of God. In so doing, they and
> thus their churches offer an alternative to the destructive and dysfunctional
> cultures around us.[460]

One of the best practices suggested by this study is that team leaders must shape their

lives and ministries to be the best possible examples of what the teams should be in

practice.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore how pastoral staff members utilizing a

team approach describe effective team leadership practices. Several important areas for

further study remain to be explored.

During this study, both teams addressed essential team dynamics. But what

impact would greater understanding of those team dynamics have upon their teams? Most

participants could not clearly articulate the essential relational dynamics discussed in this

project. What would be the impact upon their teams if they could? Further, what do teams

that can articulate these dynamics look like? Are there substantial changes to their

ministries and relationships? This area remains to be investigated.

Both teams studied in this project had been together for some time. What is the

impact of such longevity of tenure upon the effectiveness of the team? What differences

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[460] Cladis, 13.

would be seen in teams that were just forming? How does effective team leadership change when one is forming a team rather than leading an established and effective team? These could be crucial questions for any ministry staff desiring to adopt a team approach.

A third area that deserves to be further explored is the impact of a leader's growth in emotional intelligence upon the team. This study identified emotional intelligence as an important best practice for team leaders. A related question worth exploring is whether a team can function effectively with a leader or members who have a substantially lower levels of emotional intelligence?

A further area for study suggested by this project would be to consider the impact of a high-functioning pastoral team on the lay ministries of their church when compared with a non-team pastoral staff in a similar church situation. Is there a noticeable impact upon lay ministry because of the existence of a team approach among the pastoral staff?

A final area worth exploring further would be to consider what might be the best practices for empowering a team to fulfill its vision. We have seen that empowerment is one of the pillars needed to support or pursue a team's vision, but what are the best practices leaders should use to actually empower the team?

Final Words

A healthy body has a healthy form. What is true in the physical realm is also true in the church: a healthy church that is focused on its biblical mission and Spirit-led vision for that mission will also have a form that reflects those spiritual priorities. Teams may be the most comprehensive and in-depth expression of what the church should look like in practice as it pursues its God-given mission by the power of the Spirit. It is my passionate desire to see this research aid the church in some small way to come to a fuller

experience of the value and better understanding of the practice of doing church as a team!

Soli Deo Gloria!

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