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A COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR THE POSTMODERN
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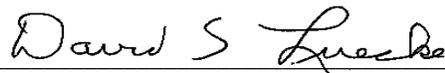
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A COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR THE POSTMODERN WORSHIPPING
COMMUNITY AT THE EXPERIENCE

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

MICHAEL E. PAULISON
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ABSTRACT

**A Communal Leadership Model for the Postmodern Worshipping
Community at The Experience**
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In order to sustain lasting leadership at "The Experience," this project will establish a new leadership paradigm that will be implemented through biblical education and by integrating a new communal leadership model. The Experience is a postmodern worshipping community that has grown out of the Lutheran tradition. Its ministry began in 2001 as an outreach community to the young adult culture in Aurora, Colorado. Over the last nine years of ministry the church has grown but has encountered challenges in finding a lasting leadership structure.

In order for The Experience to recalibrate its current and future ministries based upon a communal style of leadership, the first part of this paper will examine present cultural transitions and the challenges confronting leaders. It will consider the new emerging culture in Aurora and evaluate the issues that arise from it in light of how they affect the leadership of the worshipping community.

The second part of this paper will engage the biblical and theological data relevant to the specific ministry challenge at The Experience. The discussion will begin with a biblical survey of Jesus' leadership style and the writings of St. Paul. The theological inquiry will study the historical nature of leadership in the Lutheran tradition.

In order to integrate communal leadership into the life of the ministry at The Experience, a pilot project will be created. This will be the focus of the third part of the paper. The pilot initiative will serve as a test of the new model by allowing the governing body to explore community-driven leadership. Careful consideration will be given to the structure, timeline, personnel, and assessment of this new strategy.

Content Reader: David Luecke, PhD

Words: 273

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INTRODUCTION

It was the fall of 1999 when something began to stir in my heart. Up to this point

in my ministry, I had pastored a very stable Lutheran congregation in Sterling, Colorado.

The Sterling congregation was not stable when I arrived in 1990, but almost ten years later

it was. The church had almost tripled in weekly attendance.[1] It was paying all of its bills

and giving away 15 percent of its budgetary income to outside mission work. It had started

a very successful preschool and had advanced into two different styles of worship. Along

the way, it had established a successful in-house missions program. Over 50 percent of the

congregants participated in small group Bible studies. In the process, the church had

created a very flourishing and life-changing Alpha program. Finally, it was preparing to

build a million-dollar addition to its physical facility. To most church-growth experts it

would seem like everything was moving along great.

Church-growth principles seemed to work effectively in our location in Sterling,

but there was uneasiness inside my heart which had begun years before. The difference

now was that it was surfacing. I do not believe it happened as a result of my location;

rather, it had to do with what was going on in Christianity on a national level. The

American Church's advances for political power combined with the condemnation and

lack of love for so many ripped at my heart. I think it became evident one day when one

of my parishioners came in to talk about his homosexual sister. He had condemned her

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[1] Trinity Lutheran Church, *Official Attendance Records* (Sterling, CO: Trinity Lutheran Church, 1990- 2001).

and warned her of the consequences of hell. He beat her down with the law. The whole time he was telling me his story, my heart was breaking inside. Internally, I asked myself, "Has this been what I've taught these people?" Even if I did not teach it directly to them, I wondered if I had been unsuccessful in teaching them a different way. I knew Jesus did not treat sinners like this. "Where is the compassion and kindness of Christ?" I wondered.

During that discussion with my parishioner I realized that if we, as Christians, treated the homosexual community this way it would be impossible later to come back and convince them of God's love and kindness. "The kindness of God leads to repentance," says St. Paul in Romans 2:4.[2] I think it was the judgmental picketing by a Kansas church at the Matthew Shepherd funeral,[3] which really hurt. At that moment, I decided I would participate no longer in the war that many in the American Christian Church were waging against culture.

This cultural war, begun by Jerry Falwell and The Moral Majority in the late 1970s, seemed to have caused the Church to lose its heart and focus. The Body of Christ in America appeared to parallel the story of the tin man in the book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, by L. Frank Baum.[4] When Dorothy and the scarecrow encounter the tin man, he recounts to them his story.

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[2] All Scripture has been taken from *Holy Bible: New International Version* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), unless otherwise noted.

[3] Anti-Defamation League, "Extremism in America: Westboro Baptist Church," http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/WBC/default.asp?LEARN_Cat=Extremism&LEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_America&xpicked=3&item=WBC (accessed March 5, 2010).

[4] Liberty University, "Executive Biographies: Dr. Jerry Falwell," http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=6921 (accessed March 5, 2010).

He was a woodman, born the son of a woodman. One day he met a munchkin girl and fell in love. They promised to wed each other. A problem arose because the girl lived with an old woman who selfishly did not want her to marry. The old woman relied upon the girl to take care of her needs. In an attempt to stop the marriage, the old woman went to the Wicked Witch of the East and paid her to put a spell on his ax. On the woodman's unclear way home he slipped and fell, and the ax cut off his left leg. He knew that a woodman could not work without a leg so he went and had a tinsmith make him a leg. Little by little, through tragedy and unforeseen circumstance, the tinsmith eventually had to replace all the woodman's missing limbs, including his head and his heart. At first, it did not bother him that he now had no brain or heart. The tin man said, "My body shone so brightly in the sun that I felt very proud of it and now it did not matter if my axe slipped, for it could not cut me. There was only one danger—that my joints would not rust; but I kept an oil-can in my cottage and took care to oil myself whenever I needed it."[5]

The tin man was satisfied with whom he had become. His tin shone brightly. He worked effectively and efficiently, and he was proud of that. However, he had lost his heart and his ability to love but did not know it until one day he rusted and could not move. Only then did he realize how he had lost a very important part of himself. When asked by the scarecrow why he wanted a heart over brains his reply was simple. "I shall take the heart, for brains do not make one happy; and happiness is the best thing in the world."[6]

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[5] L. Frank Baum "The Rescue of the Tin Woodman," in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900; repr., Literature.org, http://www.literature.org/authors/baum-l-frank/the-wonderful-wizard-of-oz/chapter-05.html (accessed February 2, 2010).

[6] Ibid.

Like the tin man, the North American Church has become very efficient. The typical modern church has trained leadership, is well organized, has studied the demographics of its culture, and runs programs based upon revealed needs. Like the tin man, the North American Church seems to be working very effectively. A simple drive through any American city would reveal an abundance of congregations. A brief glance in any local newspaper would reveal numerous advertized church programs to meet various community needs. Sadly, just like the tin man, the American Church has lost its heart without even knowing it. The American Church has turned its focus to programs, politics, and shiny marketing.

In the year 2000 it was beginning to be more apparent to me that I was not fitting into the polished, slick worship that we had created. We had become the gleaming tin man, functioning well but lacking a heart. As I searched for answers, Leonard Sweet's book, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, intersected with my journey. The book spoke to me about the internal changes I was experiencing. In this book Sweet describes the major characteristics of postmodern culture. He writes: "*Postmodern Pilgrims* aims to demodernize the Christian consciousness and reshape its way of life according to the more biblical vision of life that is dawning with the coming of the postmodern era."[7] I started to research this more and discovered that it was not just the lack of my fitting into our local church. I was having a problem fitting into modern American Christianity. So, in 2001 I left my stable call in a traditional congregational model church and started "The Experience," a postmodern-minded missional worshipping community in Aurora, Colorado.

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[7] Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000), xvii.

Aurora is a suburb of Denver, Colorado. It is a city of sixty-three thousand souls, a racially and ethnically diverse city.[8] The most significant age group in terms of numbers and comparison to the national average is Survivors (ages twenty-seven to forty-seven). The second most significant age group is Millennials (ages seven to twenty-six).[9] It is a highly educated community, with 30 percent of the population having graduated from college while the national average hovers at 16 percent.[10] Overall, the likely level of faith involvement and Christian religious preference are very low compared to national averages.[11] It is into this community that Peace With Christ Lutheran Church called me to start the new worshipping community. The leaders of Peace With Christ had come to the realization that they were not drawing younger adults who had never attended church and so had the heart to begin a new fellowship with that focus. They provided the building and the funds for The Experience for the first five years, until it became its own self-sustaining church.

In the fall of 2001, The Experience began with a community of about twenty-five interested individuals. This was a very eclectic community, ranging from lifetime believers who were searching for something new to unbelievers who were on their search for faith. The one thing they all had in common was that they were between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five years of age and felt disconnected from the modern traditional church model. They felt the Church no longer spoke their language. They were spiritual

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[8] Percept Group, Inc., *First View 2008*: *Demographic Report for Aurora* (Rancho Santa Margarita, CA: Percept Group, Inc., 2008), 4.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 5.

[11] Ibid., 6.

misfits seeking a place to belong. Since that time The Experience has grown into a

community of approximately 150 worshipping in house churches and one larger

gathering on Tuesday nights.[12]

The Experience has no official connection to the emerging church movement that

is growing in America; however, it could be considered an emergent congregation.[13]

Congregants forming The Experience are emergent in the sense which Robert E.

Webber describes in his book, *The Younger Evangelicals*:

> They share common elements of the faith such as the authority of Scripture, the
> affirmation of the trinity, the deity of Jesus, the efficacy of Jesus' death and
> resurrection, and the affirmation of the church as the body of Christ. But they
> differ with both the traditionalists and the pragmatists on how Christianity is
> presented and practiced in the twenty-first-century culture.[14]

The Experience community holds the traditional belief system of the Lutheran Church

but differs in how that belief system is lived out in a twenty-first-century context. Webber

goes on further to describe communities like The Experience. He writes:

> Here, then, is how I am using the phrase younger evangelical. The younger
> evangelical is anyone, older or younger, who deals thoughtfully with the shift
> from twentieth to twenty-first-century culture. He or she is committed to construct
> a biblically rooted, historically informed, and culturally aware new evangelical
> witness in the twenty-first century. [15]

The Experience consists of mainly younger adults who are grappling with this cultural shift.

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[12] The Experience, *Official Attendance Records* (Aurora, CO: The Experience, 2010).

[13] "Emerging churches are missional communities arising from within postmodern culture and consisting of followers of Jesus who are seeking to be faithful in their time and place," according to Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 28.

[14] Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 41.

[15] Ibid., 16.

This journey together has led to many highs and lows, but the one constant struggle has been an attempt to find a leadership structure. Numerous leadership styles and structures have been attempted. There has been a common belief from the beginning that certain types of leadership would not work for The Experience. Committee leadership was too formal and too burdensome. A business leadership model with the pastor as chief executive officer was too top-down driven and domineering. A team style limited the use of leadership giftedness to only a few. It was clear from the beginning that we needed a new leadership model.

This ministry focus project is the culmination of five years of research into a more community-oriented leadership model in order to address this leadership tension that exists at The Experience. The goal of this study is to create and sustain a leadership style that flows from the heart of the community that is both biblical and culturally relevant. The first section of this project will study the current cultural context in which The Experience ministers and the components of a new communal leadership model. The second section offers a theological reflection on biblical leadership concepts and the theological implications of ministering in a Lutheran context. The final section details a strategy for integrating and evaluating the new leadership model. This new model must address the leadership issues that are unique to The Experience community and be sustainable for its future ministry.

PART ONE

CONTEXT FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 1

THE PRESENT CULTURAL SHIFT AND CURRENT CRISES
IN LEADERSHIP

In order to achieve the objective of a new model of leadership for The

Experience, this study will begin by examining the present ministry of The Experience to

clarify its present status and struggles. It will then continue with an analysis of the

current cultural climate and the rise of postmodernity in the western world. Also, it will

highlight those characteristics of western postmodernity that directly affect any new

leadership forms at The Experience. Consideration also will be given to the fact that

those forming The Experience live in a post-Christendom and post-structural culture.

This will set the foundation to understand the unique leadership challenges for this

worshipping community living amidst the current cultural chaos.

The Leadership Dilemma for The Experience Community

In order to fully understand the tension of leadership in The Experience

community its ten year history will be briefly analyzed. As stated in the previous chapter,

The Experience began as a church within a church under the direction of Peace With

Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora, CO. The goal was to create an alternative service that

would eventually become a self-sustaining congregation. By the end of the first five years, The Experience had achieved these goals. It became its own self-supporting congregation, but continued to use office space and the worship facilities of Peace With Christ. In the fifth year of ministry it created its own Constitution and By-laws and separated their budget from the mother church. Next they began the long journey of applying to the government to become their own 501(c)3 corporation. This was completed in their seventh year of ministry.

The tension to discover a leadership organizational style became apparent as early as year two. Up until the second year, the congregation was small enough to simply function with all the members participating in directing the community. It was at this point primarily a congregationally led congregation. The small community would gather on a regular basis in order to make decisions and vision. The only full time staff at this point was the pastor. There was two part time staff that included a children's ministry director and a band –worship leader. This small staff simply addressed all the issues that arose and guided the congregation under the direction of the pastor for these initial years. Also, as part of the ministry at Peace With Christ, direction and guidance was provided from the mother church.

By the second year of ministry, the congregation had matured to the point of needing to establish clearer lines of ministry direction, develop disciple making strategies, and establish areas of service in which the members could direct their energies. This included more formally structuring the youth and children's ministry, discipleship endeavors, outreach opportunities, worship service organization and structure, and

fellowship activities. Since Peace With Christ was at that time restructuring their church under the fractal system,[1] it was determined with their guidance that The Experience would try to adapt the same structure. The five areas previously listed became the center of that system.

The three staff members with two additional lay leaders became the inner fractal to this system. The entire church was organized around this system and each ministry area was addressed as the system grew and others began to participate in the ministry life of the church. This system was successful for almost three years. It provided structure and guidance to the ministry. It was a means of giving people direction, raising up individuals as disciples to use their gifts and talents, and establishing a structure that would help guide the congregation to expand its ministry. The system crashed in year three.

Up until this point, this fractal organizational structure was providing stability to this young institution, but the required commitment of time was too high for the part time staff and volunteers. The problem was that there was only one full time staff person. The learning curve was high for both the leaders and me. A major issue is that up to this point my ministry experience was in a turnaround congregation and for the last seven years I was senior pastor over a full time ministry staff. I was not equipped at the outset to build a church with no other full time staff. It would have been easier to simply let some ministries become part of the Peace With Christ mother church, but the long term goal

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[1] The fractal system created by Wayne Cordeiro in *Doing Church as a Team* will be examined in chapter two.

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was to create a separate congregation. The volunteer leaders started to resign and by the end of year four the children's ministry leader was gone. The expectations placed upon these individuals was clearly too large. Some of the leaders also made it clear that such a formal leadership structure is what they participated in at work and clearly wanted this new church not to follow old paradigms. They desired a system that was based more on relationships and not such a formal structure.

This collapse in leadership created a void that needed to be filled. A visionary leadership community was established to fill the gap. This had the added benefit of allowing more people to participate in the direction of the ministry. There was one main leadership team that provided direction and other teams arose around specific ministry areas. The teams multiplied and the ministries grew. At least one member of each team sat on the main visionary team. This main team of leaders addressed issues and provided direction for the church. This structure worked for some time, but over the years it became apparent that people desired more flexibility in moving in and out of teams, freedom to initiate ministries outside of the normal structures of the church, and a structure that was more relational. A major discussion arose as to creating a new leadership style that would be more adaptive to their lives as postmoderns. At this time the leadership team was highly educated and well acquainted with the cultural changes which were their day to day reality. On the leadership team throughout these middle years were two individuals with their PhDs, one was the Dean of Entrepreneurialism at Colorado Christian University, and the other was a research scientist. Also, in this group there were two psychologists who taught at Denver Seminary, two mangers in the retail

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realm and three individuals who owned their own businesses. Needless to say, this group

was well versed in leadership styles and was desiring to help create something that not

simply a replication of existing older styles, but did not allow the community to find

something that adapted to their changing world paradigm.

This team model was being rejected because it was another "modern" model of a

highly organized institution attempting to create a structure in which authority flowed

from the top down. What was becoming apparent was that these postmodern adults had

an aversion to the organized structures primarily used in modern churches. It was a not a

lack of commitment or a lack of desire to serve, but a rejection of highly organized

models of leadership. Bill Easum writes in *The Church of the Perfect Storm* concerning

the changing worldview of young adults,

> "For several centuries Newtonian physics determined the basis for all scientific
> investigation, which implied a mechanical view of existence. Then came along
> quantum physics and all the rules of scientific investigation were called into
> question, and a more organic worldview was discovered…We are now in between
> and the world is being viewed more organically than mechanically"[2]

It became clear that these postmoderns were not only reacting against a mechanical

worldview, but also against mechanical leadership methods. This tension continued to

grow as the years in ministry passed. A growing number of people began new ministries

that were outside the present structure and over time began to feel less associated with the

church. There was a rising concern of how do we provide guidance, direction, establish

spiritual maturity, disciple and equip our members, encourage them and connect these

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[2] Bill Easum, "Mid-storm Equations for the Emerging Church" in The Church of the Perfect
Storm, ed. Leonard Sweet et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 88-89

ministries in a way that releases them and does not control them. Another concern was how do we create some accountability to make sure our people are faithful to our belief system and goals and values.

It was in 2007 when the leadership team of The Experience received a copy of George Bullard's article "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities"[3]. The concept of communal leadership was intriguing to the present leadership team. There was the underlying question if this would be a structure that provided a healthy balance of boundaries and ability to release the people of God to serve as they are gifted and led. The author was contacted in order to seek further direction. In an email response the author communicated that this idea was not developed any further than what was written in the article. This began the journey of the communal leadership style being developed in this thesis. The goal was to provide direction, stability, connection, encouragement, freedom, flexibility and yet accountability in a new leadership structure for The Experience. There were numerous ministries, but they were slowly becoming disconnected. Plus, new ministries such as a food kitchen to feed the poor and the leading of other churches on national and international mission trips were growing and needed direction in how to expand. There was more structured needed, but it had to be one that would address the uniqueness of the community.

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[3] Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities" George Bullard's Journey, entry posted August 7, 2007, http://bullardjournal.blogs.com/bullardjournal/2007/04/abandon_committ.html#more (accessed April 22, 2011).

This study is the development of this communal style adapted to provide stability to a community that was moving in to many directions and lacking clarity of purpose and direction. The goal is to establish a guiding system of structure for the Experience for years to come that will enhance both the community and its ministries. In chapter six the desired outcome will be to provide the weary present leaders with some sense of direction and stability. This is the main goal as these present leaders must understand this system, accept it, and then adapt it into the life of our community. The hope is that it will provide clarity of vision, purpose, structure and meaningful relationships together that the ministry might be able to continue to expand. This will be the main thrust of the development of this model. The goal is in the first six months to take the principals that arise out of this study and teach them to these leaders. They will study them, evaluate them to identify changes that need to be made, and then begin to implement these changes. Then in the second sixth months the leaders will adjust these guidelines so that they might fit within The Experience community. If this is to become a lasting model it must in the long term be accepted by the entire community. This will be the focus of chapter seven. In this chapter a two year development and implementation phase will designed to educate and captivate the hearts of those in the community. In order to achieve these goals this study will begin by examining the unique cultural time in which The Experience exists and ministers to more fully understand the challenges that are before it.

The Characteristics of Postmodern Culture

In 2000 Sebastian Junger's book, *The Perfect Storm,* was adapted into a movie.[4]

Both record the chilling story of a sword-fishing boat called the Andrea Gail. On its way

back to shore, the boat was caught at the center of a meteorological phenomenon in

which two huge thunderstorms and a hurricane collided. Junger labels this "the perfect

storm," because there was no way out. It seems that today the Church is heading into the

perfect leadership storm. For many, the storm merely appears on the horizon. They can

feel its winds rising, but it is not yet a reality. However, the community of The

Experience finds itself in the middle of three colliding cultural fronts: postmodernity,

post-Christendom, and post-structural leadership. This study is an attempt to resolve part

of that tension for those in The Experience living in the midst of "the perfect storm."

In 1 Chronicles 12 there is a recounting of the mighty men who fought alongside

King David. They provided David with safety and protection while he was on the run from

King Saul. When the author lists the fighting men from the various tribes he identifies them

as warriors or experienced soldiers, but when he comes to the men of Issachar an entirely

different notation is added. These men were the relatives of Issachar, the son of Jacob. The

author describes them as the "men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what

Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 11:32). These men understood that they were living in an

important moment in history for the nation of Israel. King Saul and his eldest son,

Jonathan, had just died in battle. David was returning to Hebron to ascend to the throne as

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[4] Sebastian Junger, *The Perfect Storm* (New York: Norton, 1997).

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King of Israel. Next David would conquer Jerusalem and set up his capital there. The landscape of the Middle East was changing. There were major power shifts going on in Israel, which would lead—by the political wisdom of David—to a major power shift in the Middle East. The men of Issachar knew that these times were significant. They knew that they would not be returning to the ways of the past. Chuck Smith, Jr. in *The End of the World . . . As We Know It* identifies the uniqueness of these men:

> Their first skill was the ability to decipher the important political, economic, and spiritual currents of the time in which they lived. Their second skill was the ability to produce a strategy that made the best use of their time (or season). They hoped for a positive outcome in the future, but it depended on their insight, decisions, and actions within the present.[5]

The day and age in which Christians live in America calls for church leaders who have the heart, wisdom, and vision of the "men of Issachar." These men discerned how to lead in the midst of the cultural change. This discussion is a brief attempt to discern the postmodern cultural change in which a new model of leadership at The Experience must thrive.

Postmodernity is not easy to classify. Stanley J. Grenz in *A Primer on Postmodernism* explains that postmodernity "is an intellectual mood and array of cultural expressions that call into question the ideals, principles and values that lay at the heart of the modern mind-set."[6] The reason for this definition is that this historical shift only may truly be defined in retrospect. The prefix "post-" means "after" and indicates that many aspects of postmodernism only can be understood in contrast to the modern age.

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[5] Chuck Smith, Jr., *The End of World . . . As We Know It* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 42.

[6] Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 12.

The modern age began in the fifteenth century and continued into the first part of the twentieth century. It is a cultural shift that changed the landscape of the western world. A major shift in technology was one of those changes. The printing press transformed the world, as books now could be copied by machine.[7] It is argued by Neil Postman that this is one of the three great educational shifts in the history of western education. The first occurs in Greece during the fifth century BC when Athens transitioned from an oral culture to a written culture using the alphabet. The next crisis happens in sixteenth-century Europe with the invention of the printing press. Postman writes that presently western culture is in the midst of its third crisis, brought about by the electronic revolution.[8]

There were numerous other significant changes that occurred during the era of modernity. Martin Luther and the Reformation changed the Church and Christendom forever. His departure from the Catholic Church opened the door for the protest movement against the Catholic Church. Bruce L. Shelley writes in *Church History in Plain Language*: "Martin Luther was the father of the Reformation, which transformed not only Christianity but all of western civilization."[9] Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo Galilei both discovered a new design for the universe, which caused great upheaval in the

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[7] FECHA: First Electronic Church of America, "Johann Gutenberg: The Invention of the Printing Press," http://fecha.org/gutenbergbio.html (accessed March 10, 2010).

[8] Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 8.

[9] Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Dallas: Word Publishing 1995), 244.

Church and the scientific community.[10] Additionally, new weapons technology paved the way for a new type of warfare. There was the invention of guns, land mines, dynamite, submarines, and airplanes.[11] These weapons provided the means for mass destruction and war later led by air assaults. The world now moved from an agrarian socioeconomic society to an industrial society.

Modernity was an age defined by the Enlightenment. It was the age of science, the age of machine, and the age of analysis. It was characterized by the search for objective truth and understanding. The Enlightenment focused on individualism and was an era of conquest and control.[12] After five hundred years, science and reason had provided answers to many questions, but modernity had left its mark on mankind through the elevation of human knowledge.

It is this elevation of human knowledge that brought with it the hope that human reason could solve humanity's ills. This moved humankind and reason to the center of the world's view and pushed God to the edges. New Testament scholar N. T. Wright summarizes the result of this period of history:

> Modernity told an implicit narrative about the way the world was. It was essentially an eschatological story. World history had been steadily moving toward or at least eagerly awaiting the point where the industrial revolution and philosophical Enlightenment would burst upon the world, bringing a new era of blessing for all.

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[10] Henry Mulder, "Rebuilding the Universe: Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton," Science and You: The Foundation for Community Access to Science, http://www.scienceandyou.org/articles/ess_16.shtml (accessed August 24, 2010).

[11] Cristobal Alvarez, "A Summarized History of the Development of Military Technology," The War Scholar, http://www.warscholar.com/Year/TechnologyOutline.html (accessed March 10, 2010).

[12] Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 16-18.

This huge overarching story—overarching stories are known in this world as meta-narratives—has now been conclusively shown to be an oppressive, imperialist and self-serving story; it has brought untold misery to millions in the industrialized West and to billions in the rest of the world, where cheaper labor and raw materials have been ruthlessly exploited. It is a story that serves the interests of the Western world. Modernity stands condemned of building a new tower of Babel.[13]

Modernity was not able to fill all the hopes placed upon it. There were numerous unintended consequences. The result, according to Wright, was that it had created more suffering than could have been imagined.

The tension between the "old" world and this "new" world peaked at the time of World War II. Germany, under Adolph Hitler, attempted "to restore pride and an empire to post Versailles Germany."[14] Most of Germany supported Hitler's philosophy. The Church even was mesmerized by this charismatic leader. In the attempt to purify its country, the German leaders sought to exterminate the Jewish race. In the wake of this horrific nightmare, many realized that following leadership blindly could be disastrous and thus began a movement away from absolute acceptance of any one body of knowledge. This was not a movement to undermine all absolutes as much as a movement to destroy the belief that any one person is able to obtain absolute knowledge.

This struggle for "absolutes" has led many to disregard the postmodern shift, simply because it calls into question most aspects of life and faith. Chuck Colson has argued that in throwing out modernity, the postmodern era has gone to an excess and

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[13] N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 152.

[14] The Holocaust, Crimes, Heroes and Villains, "Adolf Hitler: The Holocaust," under "The Nazi Genocide," http://www.auschwitz.dk/hitler.htm (accessed June 18, 2010).

created a philosophy that "claims there is no transcendent truth."[15] A study of the

origination of modernity reveals that the modern cultural shift deconstructed the belief

system of its previous age and that postmodernity in its stage of infancy simply has been

performing this same task.[16]

At the time of the origination of the modern movement in the fifteenth century,

René Descartes led a philosophical movement that called into question all previously held

religious beliefs. Descartes did not set out to destroy the faith system of the Church. He

was a seminary student who had a series of disturbing dreams that he felt were divinely

sent.[17] His interpretation of his dreams was the inspiration to challenge previously held

beliefs through doubt. He reasoned that he must use doubt to defeat doubt. According to

Richard Hooker:

> At an age when most people graduate from college, he quietly and methodically
> went about tearing down all previous forms of knowledge and certainty and
> replaced them with a single truth: *Cogito, ergo sum*—"I think, therefore I am."
> From that point onwards in European culture, subjective truth would hold a higher
> and more important epistemological place than objective truth, skepticism would
> be built into every inquiry, method would hold a higher place than practice, and
> the mind would be separated from the body.[18]

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[15] Charles Colson. "The Postmodern Crackup," *Christianity Today*, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/december/24.72.html   (accessed August 24, 2010).

[16] The discussion that alluded to and birthed this idea came during Brian McLaren, "Ministry in the Post-Modern Matrix" (lecture, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA, October 18-29, 2004).

[17] Anthony Grafton, "Descartes the Dreamer," *The Wilson Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (September 22, 1996); repr., Access My Library, http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-18911963/descartes-dreamer-philosopher-rene.html (accessed August 24, 2010).

[18] Richard Hooker, "The European Enlightenment: Rene Descartes," Washington State University, http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/ENLIGHT/DESCARTE.HTM (accessed April 4, 2010); see also New Learning, "Descartes: "I Think Therefore I Am," http://newlearningonline.com/ new-learning/chapter-7-knowledge-and-learning/descartes-%E2%80%98i-think-therefore-i-am%E2%80%99/ (accessed June 18, 2010)

Descartes provided the opportunity for the modern shift to deconstruct previously held

beliefs. Deconstructionism challenges "the attempt to establish any ultimate or secure

meaning in a text. It bases itself in language analysis and seeks to identify the ideological

biases (gender, racial, economic, political, cultural) and traditional assumptions that

infect all histories as well as philosophical and religious 'truths.'"[19] Although the term

"deconstructionism" was not in use at the time, the activity of calling into question the

belief constructs of his day was the activity that Descartes was performing. When the

deconstruction was complete, modernity arose from the rubble.

The infant stages of postmodernity have followed this same pattern of

deconstructionism. Postmodern thought is not about abandoning reason but challenging

previously held beliefs. The Church's response does not need to be one of condemnation;

rather, it should see that these challenges provide the opportunity for the truth of the

Gospel again to shine. It is easy to get caught in the past instead of looking forward.

Carlo Carretto in *The Desert in the City*, although not addressing this problem, clearly

identifies the issue. He writes: "Churches have been taken by surprise and gripped by

panic and they often think that the way to save themselves is by looking to the past

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[19] Faith and Reason, "Deconstructionism," PBS, http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/ gengloss/decon-body.html (accessed April 4, 2010). The term "deconstruct" originally was used by Jacques Derrida in reference to finding the meaning of language, who writes: "Deconstruct does not consist in passing from one concept to another, but in overturning and displacing conceptual order, as well as nonconceptual order." Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context" in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass Chicago: University Press, 1982), 329. Since Derrida's chief writings on "deconstructionism" the term has been expanded to the more universal body of beliefs as described above in the text.

instead of marching towards the newness of God with the trust of children."[20] Instead of fearing the future, the Church can embrace it; the God of history once again can redeem the time. The call of St. Paul to make the most of "every opportunity" cannot be ignored (Ephesians 5:15).

The characteristics of a postmodern cultural shift are vast and varied. There are many that drastically affect the present life experience in the Church. A complete encyclopedia could be written, yet it still would be incomplete. The reason for this is that the cultural change cycle still is occurring, and many of these outcomes are yet to be fully realized. This discussion and its overview are not an attempt to consider all those characteristics but only some that directly affect the community at The Experience. This will bring a clearer understanding of the worshipping body and lay the foundation for the issues that must be addressed in any new leadership model. For this reason, the postmodern search for authentic spirituality, need for mystery, emphasis on community, value of participatory experience over head knowledge, and distrust of larger institutions will form the focus of this academic exploration.

<center>The Search for Authentic Spirituality</center>

The advent of postmodernity and its conclusion that the modern scientific method is inadequate to answer all questions have led to a rising interest in spirituality. Postmoderns today look for the sacredness in all of life. They do not separate their spirituality from the rest of the content of their lives. The tension for the Church is that it

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[20] Carlo Carretto, *The Desert in the City*, trans. Barbara Wall (New York: Collins, 1979), 88.

has created this false dichotomy between the secular and the sacred. Eddie Gibbs and

Ryan K. Bolger address this point in their book, *Emerging Churches.* They assert,

"Modern culture created secular space and chased all the spiritual aspects of life to the

margins of society, first relegating them to the church and religion and then to the

individual's heart."[21] This allowed the Church to become more institutionalized and begin

to label itself as the center of spiritual life. The result was that all spiritual aspects of life

were moved to one central core location. This reached its peak in modernity as activities

outside the four walls of a church were begun to be labeled "secular" and the activities

within the walls of a congregation's meeting place were considered "spiritual." The

pinnacle of this may have been reached in the latter part of the twentieth century. By the

1980s, the Church began to create its own mainstream music and radio stations. Christian

bookstores began to appear en masse across America.[22] Even Christian lines of apparel

were created with spiritual messages attached.[23] This continued as Christians produced

lines of jewelry and even movies.[24] Finally, the spiritual experience was reduced to the

individual experience as the focus turned to a "personal" relationship with Jesus.

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[21] Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 236.

[22] The Lighthouse Christian Bookstores in Los Angeles and Christian Family Bookstores located throughout the nation are just two examples.

[23] For example, Gospel Garments, http://www.gospelgarments.com (accessed September 20, 2010) and Christian T-Shirts, http://www.c28.com (accessed September 20, 2010) are two examples.

[24] One example of a Christian line of jewelry can be viewed on the website: A Different Direction Christian Apparel and Jewelry, http://www.adifferentdirection.com (accessed September 20, 2010) and the plethora of Christian movie titles can be viewed at Christian Cinema, http://www.christiancinema.com (accessed September 20, 2010).

Most young people today are not drawn to a spirituality that is so limited. When postmodern people enter a church they do not look for the best sermon, the best facilities, or even the most polished worship experience. George Cladis concurs and sets forth this agreement in *Leading the Team-Based Church*. He expounds, "Postmodern people do not tolerate such a sharp distinction between mundane activity. People today are looking for links to the divine in what they do."[25] By the Church limiting God to a specific location, it has failed to engage the culture in conversation unless the culture comes to it seeking what it has.

Emerging generations partake in a spirituality which invites them to experience soul satisfaction. They shy away from the Church because they do not like spending time extracting "church culture" from a spiritual experience of God. Martha Sherril, in an article written for Oprah Winfrey's popular *O Magazine*, describes the spiritual search in America today:

> America is in the midst of a spiritual revival, with millions of people in search of renewal and purpose. Nearly 100 million of us live without connection to a church, synagogue, or temple, according to the Barna Group, which specializes in surveys of Christian behavior and belief. But at the same time, a majority of these Americans without religious affiliation describe themselves as spiritual, some even deeply so.[26]

Sherril quotes experts to emphasize her point and reports Jerome P. Baggett, associate professor of religion and society at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, as saying

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[25] George Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 19.

[26] Martha Sherril, "The Spiritual Revolution," *O, The Oprah Magazine,* May 1, 2008, Oprah.com, http://www.oprah.com/spirit/Seeking-Spirituality-in-America (accessed July 6, 2010).

that "today, people equate spirituality with growth, discernment, experience, and authenticity." Essentially, "they want to have a connection to the sacred" but wish to do so on their "own terms" in some way to "honor" themselves "as a discerning, thoughtful agent" in daily life.[27] Traditional church contexts do consist of genuine spiritual experiences, but today they are mingled with a culture that very often finds itself at odds with the culture around it. This limited view of spiritual life fails to recognize the sacred in all of life. This has resulted in one of every four young Americans through the ages of eighteen to twenty-nine to disassociate themselves from any particular religious tradition or to identify themselves as part of a Christian denomination.[28] The thirst for spirituality among young adults is growing, but involvement in a church is declining.[29]

The implication for a new leadership model at The Experience is that any new leadership must recognize the sacredness in all of life. This means that spirituality cannot be limited to church activities. Those who are part of the leadership in The Experience community must be trained to expand their view of serving God to all aspects of their life and not just simply to activities sanctioned by the church. Leaders not only must be able to lead those who are engaged in the ministry presently but be able to recognize that part of the ministry is for many who never attend a church activity.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Troy Anderson, "Millennial Seekers," To the Source: Challenging Hardcore Secularism with Principled Pluralism, http://www.tothesource.org/3_10_2010/3_10_2010.htm (accessed April 29, 2010).

[29] Ibid. T. Anderson reports studies revealing that Millennials are significantly more unaffiliated than members of Generation X were at a comparable point in their life cycle (20 percent) and twice as unaffiliated as Baby Boomers were as young adults (13 percent). About two-thirds of young people (68 percent) say they are members of a Christian denomination, compared with 81 percent of adults ages thirty and older.

The Need for Mystery

In this spiritual pursuit of emergent generations, there is a movement to rediscover the mystery of faith. The scientific method dominated modernity with its attempt to eliminate mystery and answer all questions. The result has not been the elimination of mystery but rather a rise in mysticism, personal moments of encountering the sacred.[30] These younger adults desire a faith that does not rationalize away all of its basic truth tenets but one that embraces the mystical part of the Christian faith. Postmoderns do not want predetermined answers to every question nor are they impressed with the modern version of preaching that creates a tension and then attempts to resolve it in thirty minutes or less. They search for the mystical and the power to engage it when they find it.

The postmodern-minded attendees of The Experience are drawn especially to the power and mystery of the sacraments. Andy Crouch et al. explain why in *The Church in Emerging Culture*. He writes:

> The sacraments answer the postmodern hunger for a true story after modernity's impoverished recital of facts and figures. Week after week, they allow us to revisit the story of the Christian gospel—another's death for the sake of our life. But they do so in a uniquely comprehensive way, bringing us the words, images, sounds, tastes, and smells of that story—the splashing of water, the sound of a breaking loaf of matzo, the pouring or wine.[31]

These sacramental events provide the place where the mysterious is captured in a particular experience. The present leadership of The Experience must grapple with the tension that

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[30] Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 62.

[31] Andy Crouch et al., *The Church in Emerging Culture*, ed. Leonard Sweet (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 85.

people today do not want all the mystery taken from their faith. Church leadership cannot

be just about bylaws and meetings. Postmoderns are drawn to those who are attempting to

live authentically from their own spiritual encounters with God.

<center>Community is Everything</center>

A characteristic of postmodernity that lies at the heart of this shift and must be

foundational in any new leadership structure is the centrality of community. While the

pre-modern epistemological worldview was God-centered, the modern view was man-

centered. Today, the postmodern epistemological worldview is community-centered.[32]

Due to the western world's focus on individualism, people today hunger for community.

There is a common search to fit in and to belong. One man, who was not a follower of

Jesus at the time and who had frequented The Experience for a while, expresses it well.

When asked why he attended, he simply said, "I come because you don't give me BS and

for the community."[33]

Community is a central theme for those in this emerging culture. Today's

American culture has become so fractured that many seek numerous avenues to be

engaged in relationships. A simple search today on Google under the word "community"

returns 1.45 billion results. The popularity of community-oriented websites such as

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[32] This tri-fold thought regarding shifting worldviews is inferred from Dan Kimball, *Emerging Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2003) , 44-62.

[33] Newcomer**,** interview by author, Aurora, CO, June 2003.

Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, and Second Life also attest to this.[34] The desire for community and connection does not even end there. People now can have instant access to one another through cell phones, tweeting, and text messaging. However, there is still a need for physical contact. In a conversation with Edward M. Hallowell, Louise Conant—an associate pastor at Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts—has observed that in the past "people came together in church on Sunday mornings to celebrate the community that they had the rest of the week," but now people "come to church on Sunday morning to find the community they didn't have the rest of the week."[35] In this world of virtual relationships, the Church can become the place where people can have deep interactions with actual human beings.

This issue is so prevalent among emerging cultures today that any church leadership style cannot overlook it. A leadership style that emphasizes activity over relationships will be short-lived. A lasting leadership style in this culture must be based on the centrality of creating and nurturing relationships both within the leadership structure as well as amongst the members of that community in order to satisfy the basic human need for true, life-giving contact: to intimately know and be known by others.

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[34] Popular social-networking sites are Facebook, http://www.facebook.com and MySpace, http://www.myspace.com. Bebo, http://www.bebo.com combines social networking with virtual reality. Second Life, http://www.secondlife.com is a virtual-reality community.

[35] Louise Conant, interview with Edward M. Hallowell, *Connect* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1999), 15.

Experiential

One of the most significant characteristics about younger adults today is that they value personal life experiences and do not want to live through the experiences of others. There is a deep hunger to be part of the process of living and engaging with God. They are not satisfied simply with knowing someone else's testimony but instead hunger to create their own. Reggie McNeal in a CNN satellite presentation said that if a postmodern attends church and does not experience God the first time he or she will not return.[36] The size of the building, the beauty of the facilities, and adequate-sized classrooms are important for ministry events but are not enough to keep people returning. Sweet had it right almost ten years ago when he wrote:

> Moderns want to figure out what life's about. Postmoderns want to experience what life is, especially experience life for themselves. Postmoderns are not willing to live at even an arms'-length distance from experience. They want life to explode all around them. Postmoderns don't want their information straight. They want it laced with experience (hence edutainment).[37]

Postmoderns want to come to a place where they can see, smell, feel, and experience faith. The desire is to be engaged and not just be spectators.

Leadership in this culture must provide the opportunity for all to engage in it and not be limited to a select few. This means that a more open leadership style must be adapted. This new style still must provide guidance while at the same time remain flexible enough for people to move in and out of structure for the purpose of experience.

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[36] Reggie McNeal, "Present Future Faith" (speech delivered to CNN Satellite, 2004).

[37] Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 33.

Participatory

Patricia McLagan and Christo Nel, both management consultants, have named this era "The Age of Participation."[38] It is a time when people do not want to sit on the sidelines of life while others participate. They want to be an active part of the process. One example of this in the lives of young people today is the popularity of voluntourism, a trip that combines a vacation with a part-time commitment to serve as a volunteer.[39] It is a fast-growing part of the travel industry, because people can get a vacation while at the same time involving themselves in the needs of the culture in which they are visiting.

This trend is becoming part of the emerging church culture. In some ways, this is already present in liturgical churches where the attendees are invited to participate throughout the liturgy of the service. It is evidenced at The Experience where young adults do not desire to be recipients of a lecture. They want to be engaged in a conversation. The learning experience is shared mutually between teacher and participants. There is common understanding that everyone has something to add to the conversation.

This has tremendous implications for leadership. Modern styles of leadership, designed like a flow chart from the top down, are no longer viable because they limit the decision-making process to a select few. Even team leadership, which involves more than a select few, does not open the organizational leadership structure to enough participation. Sweet asserts in *Postmodern Pilgrims* that a new type of participatory

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[38] Patricia McLagan and Christo Nel, *The New Age of Participation: New Governance for the Workplace and the World* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 1995).

[39] VolunTourism.org, "History of VolunTourism," http://www.voluntourism.org/inside-history.html (accessed September 29, 2010).

leadership is needed. He interprets how this participatory principle of leadership may be

considered in today's culture, in that people want to make their own decisions and have

multiple choices.[40] They desire leadership that emboldens and empowers others to lead.

Individuals are willing to make sacrifices for the whole of the community. Sweet points

out that today leaders need to understand human systems as self-organizing; people can

be trusted to invest wisely of their resources and time.[41] Today many search to belong to

an organization that allows them to participate in the leadership process and not only act

as spectators.

Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom also write about participatory leadership in

The Starfish and the Spider. In their book they compare the companies of the past and the

companies of the future by using the metaphors of starfish and spiders. They write:

> With a spider, what you see is pretty much what you get. A body's a body, a
> head's a head, and a leg's a leg. But starfish are very different. The starfish
> doesn't have a head. Its central body isn't even in charge. In fact, the major
> organs are replicated throughout each and every arm. If you cut the starfish in
> half, you'll be in for a surprise: the animal won't die, and pretty soon you will
> have two starfish to deal with. . . . They can achieve this magical regeneration
> because in reality, a starfish is neural network—basically a network of cells.[42]

The authors use the spider as a metaphor for the centralized leadership structures of the

past, while the starfish is a metaphor for the decentralized leadership structures that just

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[40] Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, 60.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider* (Strand, London: Penguin Books, 2006), 35.

now are beginning to be developed. Brafman and Beckstrom clarify this distinction

between the two later in the book:

> In spider companies, power and knowledge are concentrated at the top. The
> person in charge is assumed to be the most knowledgeable and has the power to
> make key decisions. . . . In starfish organizations, power is spread throughout.
> Each member is assumed to be equally knowledgeable and has power equal to
> that of any other member. [43]

This will be difficult in the future for a church culture that only has known a spider style

of leadership structure. The leadership model designed in this study for The Experience

will have to be more of a starfish organization that allows people the ability to flow in

and out of some of the leadership roles.

Distrust of Larger Institutions

In the last ten years American society has witnessed a plethora of corporate

corruption. Many lost money in the AIG scandal[44] and the ponzi scheme led by Bernie

Madoff. [45] Untold millions were affected by bad mortgages. Even in 2011, after a national

financial crisis many in society remain offended by the enormous bonuses still distributed in

corporate America. This corruption has partially led to a distrust of larger organizations.

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[43] Ibid., 49.

[44] Mark Galli, "The Scandal of the AIG Bonuses," *Christianity Today*, March 19, 2009,
http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/marchweb-only/111-41.0.html (accessed May 20,2010).

[45] Robert Lenznerbid, "Bernie Madoff's $50 Billion Ponzi Scheme," *Forbes*, December 12, 2008,
http://www.forbes.com/2008/12/12/madoff-ponzi-hedge-pf-ii-in_rl_1212croesus_inl.html (accessed May
20, 2010).

The ramifications of this have been felt in the Church, but the Church has not been without its own faults. The 1990s witnessed the fall of Jim Bakker[46] due to greed and Jimmy Swaggert[47] due to lust. The Catholic Church is still in the midst of its own scandal with the rise of accusations of child molestation.[48] All of these events, both in the business realm and in the church culture, have negatively affected people's ability to trust leadership in larger organizations. As The Experience develops a new form of leadership, it must offer a model that is transparent and does not feed into these fears. Those in leadership will have to work hard at reestablishing the integrity of the Church in America.

There are numerous other characteristics of postmodern culture that could be examined, but this study has been limited to those that most directly affect The Experience community. Any new leadership model must be sensitive to these issues. A failure to accommodate and make allowances for these present cultural characteristics could be fatal to a body attempting to minister primarily to those with a postmodern mindset. In any final analysis, the success or failure of this new leadership model could hinge upon whether or not it recognizes and acknowledges these characteristics.

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[46] Richard Ostling and Joseph Kane, "Religion: Jim Bakker's Crumbling World," *Time*, December 19, 1988, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,956551,00.html (accessed May 23, 2010).

[47] Joanne Kaufman, "The Fall of Jimmy Swaggert," *People*, March 7, 1988, http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20098413,00.html (accessed May 2010).

[48] Dekerivers, "Pope Benedict Blames Catholic church for Child Molestation By Priests," Caffeinated Politics, blog entry posted May 11, 2010, http://dekerivers.wordpress.com/2010/05/11/pope-benedict-blames-catholic-church-for-child-molestation-by-priests (accessed May 23, 2010)

The Characteristics of a Post-Christendom Culture

The dawning of a new era has arrived for the Christian Church in the western

world. Since the inception of the United States, the Church has had the favor of

American society, but this is no longer the case. Today's citizens now reside in a post-

Christendom world. This culture is defined by Christianity having been moved from the

center of society back to the edges. This is a return to the location the Church occupied in

the world prior to the fourth century. It is significant because the western Church in

America never has experienced this and now must discern how to minister within a new

framework. The only experience the Church has had living at the edges of culture was at

its inception. This is the second part of the cultural storm The Experience must recognize

as it seeks to create a leadership model that is effective and lasting.

The early Church in the first three centuries was a marginal movement.[49] In the

midst of a pagan and Jewish world it had to learn to survive on the fringes of society. The

Christians were persecuted and considered social outcasts. The overt persecution dates

back to 64 AD when Emperor Nero blamed the fire in Rome on Christians.[50] This

persecution continued in the years that followed, but it was not the only event that led to

their marginalization. "In short, the early Christian was almost bound to divorce himself

from the social and economic life of his time if he wanted to remain to be true to the

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[49] Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 58.

[50] Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 41.

Lord. This meant that everywhere the Christian turned, his life and faith were on display

because the gospel introduced a revolutionary new attitude toward human life."[51]

Churches, such as Ephesus, managed not only to exist but to thrive. Since

Ephesus was known as a cultural center for the worship of Artemis,[52] it was a difficult

task for Jesus followers to be open about their faith. Their very conversions affected an

economy that was built on pagan rituals. This was not an easy life, but it was the only one

known by the first-century Church. It learned how to operate and be influential from the

edges of culture. The result was not a weak and beaten community but a Body of Christ

that found creative ways to affect the world around them. The Church may not have had

political favor, but the integrity of their lives and witness were effective because they

were offering the world an alternative to their present belief systems. This alternative

built upon the mercy and favor of God provided a clearer hope than the oppressive

religions of the day. This divide made it easier to see the distinction between what

paganism and Christianity had to offer. This all began to change in the fourth century. In

311 A.D the Roman Emperor Galerius (305-311 AD) signed the Edict of Toleration.[53]

The Edict basically stated that for the first time the Empire now would tolerate this sect

of Christians. Galerius wrote:

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[51] Ibid., 40.

[52] Ephesus, "Temple of Artemis," http://www.ephesus.us/ephesus/templeofartemis.htm (accessed May 23, 2010).

[53] Paul Ed Halsall, "The Medieval Sourcebook: Galerius and Constantine: Edicts of Toleration 311/313," January 1996, Fordham University, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/edict-milan.html (accessed October 2, 2009).

[This is] so that they again may be Christians and may hold to their conventicles, provided they do nothing contrary to good order. But we shall tell the magistrates in another letter what they ought to do. Wherefore, for this our indulgence, they ought to pray to their God for our safety, for that of the republic, and for their own, that the republic may continue uninjured on every side, and that they may be able to live securely in their homes.[54]

This did not cause a worldwide cultural shift, but it did begin to change life dramatically for Jesus followers. The Edict did not sanction the Christian religion as an official religion of the state, but it allowed for the people to practice their faith without fear. This took even a more dramatic shift under the next emperor.

Galerius' son, Constantine, became Emperor in 311 AD. He continued the policies of his father, including the Edict of Toleration. Then in 312 while at war with his brother-in-law, Maxentius, Constantine prayed for success and had a vision.[55] This led to his much debated conversion experience. Whether that conversion was authentic or not is beyond the scope of this study, but in 313 AD it did lead to the writing of the Edict of Milan.[56] The Roman Emperors Constantine I, who ruled the western parts of the Empire, and Lincinius who ruled the eastern parts, signed this edict. It began by legitimizing Christianity in the empire:

Therefore, your Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians and now any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. We

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Charles Herberman, and Georg Grupp, "Constantine the Great," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908; repr. New Advent, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04295c.htm (accessed July 28, 2010).

[56] Halsall, "The Medieval Sourcebook."

thought it fit to commend these things most fully to your care that you may know that we have given to those Christians free and unrestricted opportunity of religious worship. [57]

No longer would believers have to worship in caves or in hiding. They were not the only religion of the Empire, but for the first time they could worship publically. The Edict did not stop there but also restored to them all that was taken.

> Moreover, in the case of the Christians especially we esteemed it best to order that if it happens anyone heretofore has bought from our treasury from anyone whatsoever, those places where they were previously accustomed to assemble, concerning which a certain decree had been made and a letter sent to you officially, the same shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception, Those, moreover, who have obtained the same by gift, are likewise to return them at once to the Christians.[58]

This was a watershed moment in the history of Christianity. With the conversion of the emperor, the Church moved from the edges of society to the middle of culture and gained favor. Constantine "declared Christianity to be the official state religion, thereby eventually delegitimizing all others."[59] This was the time of the birth of Christendom.[60]

This created a connection between Christianity and politics. Based on research notes admittedly provided to him by Stuart Murray, Alan Hirsch in *The Forgotten Ways* writes:

> The foundation of the Christendom system was a close, though sometimes fraught, partnership between church and state, the two main pillars of society. Through the centuries, power struggles between popes and emperors resulted in one or the other holding sway for a time. But the Christendom system assumed that the church was associated with a status quo that was understood as Christian and had vested interest

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[57] Ibid.**.**

[58] Ibid.

[59] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 58.

[60] Ibid.

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in its maintenance. The church provided religious legitimation for state activities, and the state provided secular force to back up ecclesiastical decisions.[61]

The connection grew historically between the Church and the state with the Church losing some of its unique identity. The implication of this shift according to Murray in *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* was that Christianity was adopted as the official religion of the state. The Church moved from the margins of society to its center. This was the time of the creation and progressive development of a Christian culture or civilization. Also, this was a time when "orthodoxy" was defined as the common belief shared by all. This "orthodoxy" was determined by powerful church leaders and supported by the state. It was a time when supposedly Christian morality was imposed on the entire society. In terms of leadership, this was a time when a hierarchical ecclesiastical system, which was analogous to the state hierarchy, was formed and was buttressed by state support.[62] This relationship fluctuated over the years but primarily stayed intact, even to the present day, and became ever more pronounced as western culture intersected with the history of North America.

The United States was founded as a nation with religious freedom and deep political connection between the Church and state. This began even before the nation was founded. Colonial forefathers sought religious freedom here in this country, but they could not stop the connection they were creating between the institutions they were founding and their own

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[61] Ibid., 59.

[62] Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 76-78.

religious ties. "In all European settlements in North and in South America, the interests of state and church melded together in a strong and seemingly indissoluble bond."[63] This meant that the Christian Church from the beginning was an influential part of culture.

It is not the task of this study to debate the founding of America as a "Christian nation," nor the faith of the founding fathers, but instead to show that with the founding of the United States the influence of Christendom extended to the new world. The first state leader, President George Washington, understood the connection of faith to the founding of the nation when he proclaimed this in his first inaugural address:

> No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the Affairs of men more than the People of the United States. Every step, by which they had advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.[64]

Likewise, many of the states in their own state constitutions incorporated scriptural references. In 1776 Delaware required its public officials to take the following oath according to their constitutional provision: "I do profess faith in God the father, in Jesus Christ His only son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God."[65] This Christian fervor in connection with politics has fluctuated over the years but has continued; however, it is only recently that society has witnessed a decline of the influence of Christianity in the United States.

The Church no longer lies at the center of culture in America. Its influence has declined steadily since the mid-twentieth century. Cultural researcher Wade Clark Roof

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[63] Edwin Gaustad, *Faith of Our Fathers* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Row Publishers, 1987), 12.

[64] Ibid., 79.

[65] Ibid., 114.

reports, "Mainline Protestant churches began to experience a noticeable downturn in membership and influence, beginning in the mid 1960s and continuing to the present."[66] This examination is supported by James Emery White in *Rethinking Church*: "A twenty-year study of membership between 1965 and 1985 revealed that virtually every mainline denomination was in decline, including United Methodists (-16 percent), Episcopal (-20 percent), Presbyterian (-24 percent), and Disciples of Christ (-42 percent)."[67] Although the clear downward trend began in the 1960s, the years after 1985 these trends did not reverse. White goes on to describe the numbers lost between the years 1990 and 2000:

> More recent figures have not altered this portrait, with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) losing close to 100,000 members in 1995 alone, and the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) combining for another 500,000 members lost. . . . From 1990 to 2000, the United Church of Christ lost almost 15 percent of its members, the Presbyterian church (U.S.A.) 11.6 percent, the United Methodist church 6.7 percent, the Episcopal Church 5.3 percent, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2.2 percent- all while the U.S. population increased by 13 percent.[68]

Essentially, the American Church has not been able to keep up with the population growth. While the country continues to expand, the American Church retracts.

Although this study does not refer to the largest Christian body in America, which is the Southern Baptist Convention, a careful study of this outreach-oriented church body reveals that the downward trend does not change even with them. In the 1990s the

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[66] Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 51.

[67] James Emery White, *Rethinking the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 19.

[68] Ibid.

Southern Baptists blossomed to over twenty million members.[69] White's research reveals that although these numbers are impressive they cannot be substantiated. Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth refutes the Southern Baptist growth claims. He notes that of the twenty million, four million never joined the church and another eight million are nowhere to be found. The truth is that only about eight million of the twenty million are actually in church in any given week.[70] The result is that although the Southern Baptists claimed to have impacted millions at the end of the century, this impact is minimized due to the lack of many of those people staying connected and integrating themselves into the active life of the Body of Christ.

These statistics do not identically hold up in the denomination from which The Experience originated, but there is a clear downward trend in the last twenty years. In 1971 the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) was at its statistical peak when it reached 2,887,207 members.[71] This national trend was not able to be sustained moving forward and since has been in decline. By 1980 the numbers had decreased to 2,719,319.[72] This is a net loss of over one hundred thousand people in a span of ten years.

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 19nn; see also Mark A. Kellner, "Flock Strays from U. S. Churches," October 18, 2002, *The Washington Times*, http://www.washtimes.com and http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives? p_product=WT&p_theme=wt&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&p_text_search-0=churches&s_ dispstring=churches%20AND%20date(10/18/2002%20to%2010/18/2002)&p_field_date-0=YMD_ date&p_params_date-0=date:B,E&p_text_date-0=10/18/2002%20to%2010/18/2002)&p_perpage= 10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no.

[71] Office of Statistics of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, *LCMS at a Glance* (St. Louis, MO: Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, May 2009).

[72] Ibid.

This loss continued through the next twenty years when the membership decreased to in 2000 to 2,553,971.[73] This is an overall loss of about sixty thousand people.

The decline in membership is even clearer in the new millennium. In 2001, the statistical membership number for the LCMS was at 2,540,045. This is down almost 200,000 people from its high in 1985. The following years reveal a loss of almost thirty thousand people per year.[74] At the present rate of decline by the year 2050 the Synod will not disappear but will become unsustainable. The LCMS is not the only denomination hit with this reality. Gibbs writes: "In the face of such statistics some researchers are predicting that if present trends continue, 60% of all existing Christian congregations in America will disappear before the year 2050."[75] This statement predicts a radical shift in modern American Christianity if these downward trends continue. The decreasing numbers will make it difficult for many congregations to remain financially viable. Also, the loss of human capital will make it difficult to sustain the present congregational models.

The recent decline of Christian influence is revealed further in a recent study by Trinity College. This study completed in 2009 reveals that Americans who claim to have no religious identity is now at 15 percent, which is doubled since the year 1990. It also reveals that the number of agnostics and atheists has increased fourfold since 1990 from 1 million to

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid. In 2002, the numbers stood at 2,512,714; in 2003, they dropped to 2,488,936; in 2004, there was further decrease to 2,463,747. In 2005, numbers dropped again to 2,440,864; in 2006, they slipped to 2,417,997; and , in 2007, they bottomed at 2,383,084.

[75] Eddie Gibbs, *ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 20nn; see also Gustave Rath and Norman Shawchuck, *Benchmarks of Quality in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994) 12.

about 3.6 million. This shows the decline of the influence of Christianity and all major religions in America as well as the growing influence of the nonreligious. Christianity in particular has witnessed a 10 percent decrease in its adherents over the last eighteen years. In 1990, 86 percent of American adults identified themselves as Christians; but, that number decreased to 76 percent in 2008.[76] With a decrease in the number of adherents, there naturally follows a decrease in the influence of the faith. The North America that was founded upon the influence of Christianity slowly has pushed faith again to the fringes of culture, similar to the first century. The Church still maintains some influence due to the large number of professing believers, but its impact diminishes each year.

This is a prominent concern for The Experience ministering in a culture with a diminishing influence of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Most American ministry models have been designed to minister in a predominantly Christian culture, but now there is a new reality. American Christians have awakened to a world that no longer holds the premise of Christianity as true or that even believes they have valid answers to the spiritual questions of the day. This means that any new leadership model at The Experience must be birthed into this new reality and designed to enter back into culture, much in the same way foreign missionaries must enter the culture of the foreign countries to which they minister.

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[76] Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey* (Hartford CT: Trinity College, March 2009).

The Challenges for Post-Structural Leadership

The third element of the "perfect storm" that seems to be colliding to form the present cultural crisis is a style of leadership that is not as structured as previous church models. Post-structural leadership recognizes that young adults in this new culture desire to participate in their community's direction and not to be distant by-standers. In *The New Apostolic Churches*, C. Peter Wagner discusses nine characteristics of these future churches. Of the nine features he describes, one identifies the clearly post-structural future form of Church. Wagner writes: "We are seeing a transition from bureaucratic authority to personal authority, from legal structure to relational structure, from control to coordination and from relational structure to charismatic structure."[77] These new models will have to be open to a more collaborative style of leadership. They cannot be top-down driven but can be driven by giftedness and be able to adapt more rapidly to the chaotic nature of the present culture.

The styles of leadership that have been handed down traditionally in the Christian Church have been very ordered. By the third century, Clement of Alexandria described an early hierarchy in which priests controlled the teaching and management of the Church. This represented a shift from a functional notion of leadership in which an individual's gifted abilities were employed dynamically among the people of God to a distinct and separate clergy office entrusted with the knowledge required for the proper life of the Church.[78]

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[77] C. Peter Wagner, ed., *The New Apostolic Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1998), 18-25.

[78] Alan J. Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership: Equipping God's People for Mission," in *Missional Church*, ed. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 190.

This style of leadership became entrenched further as Constantine aided the Church in forming a new relationship with the state. Now that the Christian Church had moved from the edges of culture to the center, "priest and cleric now served as spiritual guides to the huge empire."[79] This meant that the leadership of the Church not only influenced the culture of the Body of Christ but began to take on the role of influencing and providing leadership for the wider culture at large. This may have provided the Kingdom of God with an acceptable way of influencing culture, but culture returned the favor by influencing the organizational structures of the Church.

> Following the protocols of Roman organization and codification, an administrative hierarchy received greater distinction. As state regulators, bishops accredited those coming in the priesthood. The emergence of celibacy among the clergy further accentuated the division between leader and the people. No longer based upon function, ordination was state sanctioned and an institutionalized office gained through rank and study. Clerical embodiment of the means of grace and office defined the church. The governing principle became "No clergy, no church." [80]

Christianity had settled into a static form of leadership where the priestly group functioned as a separate order. This changed the nature of the Church. "Leadership had settled and a pastoral identity was created. The apostolic, as in missional, nature of the leadership evaporated under these conditions."[81] Apostolic leadership no longer described the life of the people of God in missional engagement, but now church leadership meant the

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[79] Ibid., 191.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Wilbert Shenk, *Write the Vision: The Church Renewed* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 35.

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succession of priestly authority.[82] The result is that the Church became institutionalized, leading to the creation of a hierarchical leadership structure. By the time of the rise of modernity during the Reformation, this structure had become so entrenched that lay people were considered nothing more than sheep to be herded and tended.

The Protestant Reformation did nothing to change the developing form of leadership in the Church. Since the main thrust of the Reformation was a search for doctrinal truth, this became the main activity of church leadership. "Teaching and preaching, oversight of right doctrine, and proper administration of the sacraments became the normative forms of Protestant leadership."[83] The rise of the scientific method in modernity only seemed to entrench the Church further in its leadership practices. In the modern era, knowledge was like a wall. Fundamental beliefs were established by research and empirical investigation and then built upon through deductive reasoning. This became the main activity of church leaders as they attempted to codify their belief systems.

<center>The Struggle of Modern-Ordered Forms of Leadership Structure</center>

The present state of the culture has caused modern forms of leadership to be questioned in this time of liminality. "Liminality" is a term that describes the transition process accompanying a change of state or social position. A group moves through what is described as a "tunnel" experience when it is shifted into a marginal position within

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[82] Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership," 193.

[83] Ibid.

culture.[84] This concept offers a way of understanding the current experience of cultural change. Victor Turner first addressed liminality by developing the idea through a study of rites of passages in cultures.[85] The discovery was that when individuals went through these rites, they become detached from their normal role in society and when they return it is to a new place and status in relationship with culture as the result of having been inwardly transformed and outwardly changed.[86]

During this experience, a significant change happens in a person's life; and, when they return to society they have to determine how to live this new life. The present cultural transition from modernity to postmodernity has provided western society at large with such a liminal experience. This time it is characterized by a sense that life has changed without a full understanding of what life will be. It is a difficult time, because it is full of a chaos that disrupts the present ordered forms of leadership. However, it also holds within it the opportunity of something new, fresh, and creative. This includes the opening for fresh forms of leadership that emerge in this emerging reality.

The Challenges of Continuous Change versus Discontinuous Change

For the past five hundred years or more, leadership has been predictable and controlled. Incremental continuous change could be managed, because the essential and underlying status quo remained unaltered, and thus a dominant organizational structure

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[84] Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 232.

[85] Ibid. 232.

[86] Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.1997), 24**.**

could place parameters on that change. This allowed its leaders to maintain a high level

of control. Alan J. Roxburgh and Frank Romanuk describe this incremental change in

The Missional Leader:

> Change is what happens to us from forces outside ourselves over which we have
> no control. Most of us deal fairly well with continuous change, which is ongoing,
> gradual, and expected. Leaders developed a variety of skills and competencies to
> deal with constant change in a way that would return a state of normalcy and
> predictability. Over time people developed an expectation that whenever
> disruptive change occurred they should, could, and would return to normal.[87]

This type of change can be mapped out and managed. The disruption it causes within an

institution typically is temporary, expected, and even supervised.

Discontinuous change is different. It is characterized by chaos and cannot be

controlled. It never settles into a new reality that can be managed. Discontinuous change

is living in the uncomfortable state between what has been and what will be. It is living in

the new state of liminality that was previously described. This sort of change is disruptive

and unanticipated; it creates situations that challenge previously held assumptions.[88]

Roxburgh and Romanuk write that during this type of change working harder with one's

habitual skills and ways of working will not address the new challenges being faced. The

reasons for this is that one labors within an unpredictable environment, where new and

unknown skills are needed and there is no going back to what once was considered

normal.[89] The challenge for leadership in such an environment is that there is no time for

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[87] Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 57.

[88] Ibid., 7.

[89] Ibid.

the change to settle and to be processed into the life of an organization. Gibbs analyzes

this discontinuous change further when he writes:

> In traditional and "modern" contexts it was possible to engage in long-term strategic planning, either because society was stable, or because change was predictable and evolutionary. In the culture of postmodernity, however, change is discontinuous rather than incremental. It comes rapidly and without warning.[90]

Essentially, it can come and shift directions much like a hurricane or sea storm. Leaders

living through this type of change must learn to cultivate new skills and capabilities for

engaging this new context.

A challenge for leaders of the future is to create fluid institutions that can respond

rapidly to the changes that occur around them. Roxburgh writes in *The Sky is Falling*:

> Therefore leaders who want to cultivate missional communities in transition must set aside goal-setting and strategic planning as their primary model. Leadership in this context is not about forecasting, but about the formation of networks of discourse among people. It's about the capacity to engage the realities of people's lives and contexts in dialogue with Scripture. It is about building new connections. The Spirit of God will be in the midst of such dialogues, forming new patterns of communication, relationship, and action as God's people. But it can't be predicted and controlled from this side; the future emerges as people live in the ambiguities of transition.[91]

This is the new reality in which the American Christian Church now lives. Leadership of

the future cannot simply manage change but must be able to respond as change occurs

around and within them. In the past, modern forms of leadership were static but

metamorphosed as necessary to adapt to continuous and manageable change. Leadership

in the future must be fluid and be able to adapt as the landscape continuously reinvents

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[90] Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 36.

[91] Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Sky is Falling* (Eagle, ID: ACI Publishing, 2005), 89.

itself. This becomes a major challenge to the church organization that tends to be full of slow adapters.

Similar storms previously occurred at major change moments in history and transformed life into the future. Roxburgh and Romanuk write: "Discontinuous change is dominant in periods of history that transform a culture forever, tipping it over into something new."[92] The postmodern, post-Christendom and post-structural culture in which people today live has created this perfect storm of ongoing change. This new reality will affect all aspects of life including contemporary principles of leadership. This work is not an attempt to resolve all those issues but seeks to address them and bring them together in a form that makes sense for the ministry of The Experience.

Challenges for Leadership in the Context of Discontinuous Change

This study is not an attempt to dismantle all aspects of leadership of the past but rather an attempt to consider their strengths and weaknesses and explore how they might remain fluid in today's current cultural climate. Discontinuous change by its very nature can mean that many rules and assumptions about leadership need to be reexamined and rewritten. This does not make those who have led in the past wrong; it simply means leaders today function in a different sea of contextual conditions. This is similar to how a missionary who moves from North America to another culture must unlearn a number of habits and skills in order to embrace effective ways to achieve results in a new context.

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[92] Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 7.

The challenges for church leadership in this present cultural climate are numerous. Two unique challenges from this context have arisen for The Experience and will be explored in the next chapter. The first challenge is how to create a leadership style that is broad and fluid enough to acknowledge that the lives of those in The Experience have been deeply affected by these cultural changes and this in turn effects how they lead and desire to be led. This challenge includes the need to respect an individual's search for authentic spirituality, the need to honor the tension between what is known and the mystery of the faith, the need to understand society's growing distrust of larger organizations, and the need to comprehend the deeper hunger for relationship and communal involvement in today's culture. This is a challenge because those who have participated in leadership over the history of the Experience have struggled in highly organized models of leadership.

A second challenge is creating a leadership form that is missional in nature and responds to the present, post-Christendom culture. This includes the need to recognize that the Church has shifted from the center of society to the margins and now has to learn to minister from the margins. This expands leadership beyond church related activities to a more holistic view of life as ministry. The Experience needs to capture a view of leadership which encourages the use of time and talent beyond church related events to the entirety of people's lives.

Finally, in the midst of a culture characterized by liminality and discontinuous change, The Experience must create a leadership form that remains fluid but honors faith and the traditions of the past. This includes the need to be fluid enough to continually

change in a discontinuous changing culture and allow for new realities to be adapted into

the system.

CHAPTER 2

THE PRESENT CULTURAL SHIFT AND THE NEED FOR
A NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL AT THE EXPERIENCE

In a 2005, satellite presentation by Church Communication Network, George

Barna defined church leadership as "motivating, mobilizing, resourcing, and directing

people toward a vision they share from God that produces life transformation and

advances His kingdom."[1] He went on to say that this form of leadership remains constant

through cultural shifts.[2] There are aspects of this statement that are true; however, Rex

Miller, in the same presentation, quoting the head of ship building for Mobil Oil said,

"The sea you are building in determines how you build the ship."[3] Contemporary models

for present leadership have been built for calm ports of call, but the Church today

navigates in rougher waters and faces unique challenges.

Consequently, this chapter will address the specific leadership challenges that

have arisen in The Experience community. It will expand on the overview of the models

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[1] George Barna, "Developing Leaders in a Postmodern Culture" (speech delivered to Church Communication Network via satellite feed, January 13, 2005).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Rex Miller, "Developing Leaders in a Postmodern Culture" (speech delivered to Church Communication Network via satellite feed, January 13, 2005).

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briefly discussed in chapter one that have been implemented during its history. A study of the strengths and weaknesses of those models will determine which aspects need to be included in a new model and which characteristics can be excluded. This study will clarify the need to create a new communal style of leadership.

The Unique Challenges that Face The Experience Community

The Experience is a worshipping community that has arisen as the landscape of leadership has been changing during the current cultural shift. This has caused a struggle within the community to find a lasting leadership style. Leadership styles of the past have been found to be either too rigid or too demanding on the organization. Gibbs writes in *LeadershipNext* about the consequences of this dynamic: "The turfism of hierarchical organizations can especially frustrate younger people."[4] Younger leaders are searching for leadership styles that are not so hierarchically driven and operate with a flatter organizational structure. This is supported by Gifford Pinchot, who writes that young leaders are sensitive to the fact that "the system of measurement and control . . . impede[s] cooperation and the free flow in information that is necessary to achieve productivity in the information age."[5]

There have been a variety of leadership styles attempted at The Experience since its inception in 2001, but in the end all have failed to meet the present need with the unique

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[4] Eddie Gibbs, *LeadershipNext* (Downers Grove, IL; Intervarsity Press, 2005), 96.

[5] Gifford Pinchot, "Building Community in the Workplace," in *The Community of the Future,* ed. Frances Hesselbein et al. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 129.

challenges presented in Chapter 1. These challenges arise from both the postmodern world and post-Christendom world in which The Experience resides. The first challenge is the necessity to create an atmosphere of community. This is more than simply creating a gathering place; rather, it is one where people authentically can express their joys and sorrows and be challenged to live out their faith journey. The desire of the present leadership at Experience is to create a community where people's lives are fully invested in one another. A second challenge is to provide a place where people are inspired to become engaged in living out the values of their faith. The challenge of The Experience is to move past the consumer mentality where church is the place to simply pick and choose religious goods and instead becomes the place that propels them to be fully engaged in their faith journey. This participatory nature of The Experience will become more difficult as the congregation grows larger, since there is a pervading distrust of larger institutions among postmoderns. This will need to be addressed as the ministry expands.

It was clear from its inception that the younger leaders at The Experience wanted an organizational leadership style where authority was not limited to just a few. In the beginning, a small community gathered together to study culture and vision from their shared experiences. The task of a leader at this time was to guide and harness the dreams and hopes of others in a common direction. This was successful for almost the first two years of ministry at The Experience. As the community began to grow and the ministry began to morph into more than one worshipping community, it was clear there needed to be a more formal leadership structure. The tension arose when trying to adapt existing leadership models.

Resistance toward Existing Church Leadership Models

Modern leadership structures have met with resistance those who comprise The

Experience. These highly organized and structured models simply are to complex and

domineering. Over their nine-year existence as a community, members of The

Experience have struggled with how to find a more relational model that is not so rigid.

The struggle with modern leadership styles is clearly observable in the discussion

among young adults occurring on "The Ooze." The Ooze is a website developed by

Spenser Burke to create a space for open faith dialogue about the American Church

among younger believers. One contributor writes:

> The last few months I've been a part of a team that meets as a leadership for our
> community. We share a meal together and chat about what God is doing in our
> lives. Lately I'm wondering what the leadership structure of the emerging culture
> would look like. One of my conclusions is that the modern church placed huge
> emphasis on the gift of leadership and spent a huge amount of time defining that
> gift through a CEO/Stephan Covey, et al., lens. This effectively squashed all the
> other gifts and what we bring to the party. I believe that we should have a
> balanced view of leadership shepherding leaders, teaching leaders, apostolic
> leaders, messed up leaders . . . NO ONE MAN [sic] SHOWS.[6]

The one-man show is most common with chief executive officers (CEO). The goal in the

CEO leadership style in the American Church, prevalent during the 1980s and 1990s, was

to streamline leadership and make the church more effective at decision-making. This

clearly followed the business agenda for corporate leadership. It is easier to have one

person, or a select few with a vision, running the organization. This style is epitomized in

modern leadership books. For example, Jim Collins writes in *Good to Great:* "In a good-

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[6] Spenser Burke and Colleen Pepper, *Making Sense of Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 55.

to-great transformation, people are not your most important asset. The right people are."[7]

This approach tends to reflect previous hierarchical structures. There is some truth in

Collins' assertion. Moses' father in law, Jethro, gave Moses similar advice during the

wilderness wanderings. When confronted with too many tribal and personal issues for

one man to decide, Jethro advised Moses to raise up leaders according to their giftedness.

> Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you and you cannot handle it. Listen to me and I will give you some advice. . . . Select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens." (Exodus 18:17-21)

Jethro was advising Moses to utilize people according to their leadership giftedness. This

leadership principle is timeless and must be maintained; however, Collins' comment of

people not being the "most important asset" in the ears of a postmodern hearer would be

rejected. In a postmodern community, people are the most valuable asset. Any leadership

style hinting that people are a commodity to be used rather than relationships to be fostered

would be disdained. This does not mean that an organization cannot recognize that some of

its members have greater leadership ability than others. The leadership style under

consideration in this study recognizes both the value of each person in the community and

the unique ability of leadership with which some have been blessed.

The CEO style of leadership seemed to become particularly popular in the

American Church in the 1990s. This style narrowed the concentration of power to a few

charismatic people with select knowledge, ability to vision, and capacity to dream. This is

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[7] Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Business, 2001), 51.

evident in the explosion of megachurches in America in the 1990s. Two more well-known examples of this are Willow Creek, with Bill Hybels as its central leader and visionary, and Saddleback Community Church, where Rick Warren is the main figurehead.[8] Both of these ministries have grown to become very large churches and prove that an individual with a vision and a dream can be a very powerful thing.

One danger of the CEO leadership style is the narrowing of power and authority to a minimal number of people. Hirsch writes in *The Forgotten Ways*: "The problem with CEO-type leadership is that it tends to disempower others, and when, for various reasons, that leader should leave the group the organization tends to be weak and underdeveloped."[9] Centralized authority in one person places a lot of responsibility on one individual; and when that individual leaves the organization, the void can be large. The comparison can be made to the muscular system of the human body. If a person simply exercises one muscle group in the body, it will overdevelop that muscle group and leave the others underdeveloped. This creates an imbalance in the musculoskeletal system, and the body does not function as designed. "Instead of muscles working together to perform a specified function, they work against each other, causing the body to exert more energy to perform the same task that previously was perceived by the body as 'simple.'"[10] It is likewise in

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[8] A more complete analysis of these two ministry models can be found in Joel Comiskey, "Willow Creek, Saddleback and the Metachurch Model," http://www.disciplewalk.com/files/Willow_Creek_Saddleback_and_the_Metachurch_Model_by_Joel_Comiskey.pdf (accessed September 29, 2011).

[9] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways,* 163.

[10] Jeff Anliker, "Muscle Imbalance and Chronic Injuries" http://ezinearticles.com/?Muscle-Imbalance-and-Chronic-Injuries&id=145301 (accessed September 29, 2011).

leadership. If churches only develop the top leaders in a system, when they are removed the congregational body struggles just to exist.

A weakness of the CEO style of leadership is that inevitably the giftedness of some individuals is neglected. Sally Helgesen in her article, "Leading from the Grass Roots," writes: "Top-down leaders, by withholding power from those in the ranks, deprive them of the ability to use the expertise and information vested in them to respond directly and with speed to the needs of customers."[11] Often leadership at the top can be consumed with larger organizational issues and neglect to create a system that responds effectively and quickly to issues important to the base of the organization.

Leadership from a distance is rejected by the younger generation. This is a hands-on generation. Any leadership approach where authority flows from the top down is still their experience in many places of employment, so they reject having this mirrored in their worshipping community. Early in the existence of The Experience, leaders let it be known that just being taught more leadership business principles was not their desire for their faith community.

A second glaring weakness of this leadership style is that it demands conformity. According to leadership guru Peter M. Senge, "Hierarchical authority, as it has been traditionally used in Western management, tends to evoke compliance, not foster

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[11] Sally Helgesen, "Leading from the Grass Roots," in *The Leader of the Future*, ed. Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass, 1996), 22.

commitment."[12] In a postmodern world where community is highly valued, any leadership style that does not enhance the commitment to the group will not have lasting adherents. A hierarchical structure often places those at the top as off limits to most in the organization. In this business realm, this means that the people in the mailroom have little to no connection at all with those in the top-tier positions. In a church, it means that those in the pews have little to no input or relationship with the leadership. In a postmodern world this lack of connection is devastating, because young adults will not remain where they are not invested emotionally.

A second contributor in the discussion on The Ooze notes the difficulty there is in establishing a new model of leadership. The Experience will have to be careful to find a middle ground and not exhibit an extreme approach. The contributor comments:

> Our big challenge regarding leadership in the emerging church is going to be letting go of control, but not giving up the idea of leadership all together. Many have just jettisoned that idea of no leadership. Nope. Others have put far too much emphasis on "the dude" as the only conduit through which God can build or strengthen the church. Nope. Getting our balance will be difficult.[13]

There is tension about what to maintain and what to release from modern leadership structures. In creating a new structure, The Experience has to be careful not to reject leadership principles simply because they were discovered or abused in a modern setting. Leadership in this new context will have to be flexible, fluid, and still maintain some organizational structure.

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[12] Peter M. Senge, "Leading Learning Organizations," *The Leader of the Future*, eds. Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 43.

[13] Burke and Pepper, *Making Sense of Church*, 55.

A Postmodern Worshipping Community's Expectations
of Its Leadership

When determining a leadership structure that will fit into the lives of emerging generations, the expectations of the group must be considered. Any new structures that are created must honor these expectations if they are to last. Oscar Feucht agrees. In his book, *Everyone a Minister,* he writes: "The church that lives only in the traditions of the past without recovering this Biblical concept for each new generation of its members will stultify."[14] As a church moves forward, its leadership cannot become crippled by what it once was nor be frozen in time. Feucht says, "Each generation has the stupendous task of continuous reorientation of ministry to its present culture."[15] The challenge is to adapt the congregational leadership style to the times in which God has placed the Church. The world in which God has placed The Experience is a postmodern, post- Christendom world and it must adapt to its present reality.

The CEO leadership model often fosters exclusivity instead of openness. In a postmodern world where relationships are paramount a leadership style that stresses exclusivity will not be accepted. Bill Easum makes the following critique: "The day of the heroic leader is under severe attack and is coming to an end as we spiral to the Other Side. Charismatic, lone wolf leadership is too one-dimensional to be effective in a world of speed, blur, and flux."[16] Leadership of the future will find strength in the power of

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[14] Oscar Feucht, *Everyone A Minister* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 31.

[15] Ibid., 32.

[16] Bill Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 131.

relationships. However, in the attempt to create a communal system, there must be the acknowledgement that for many LCMS churches, as well as American churches as a whole, their present forms of community are artificial. Dries Lombard in *The Church of the Perfect Storm* writes that this is a tremendous challenge for today's American Church, because so many motives for community have been murky for so long.

> Our murky motives have desensitized us to the real power of Christian community. The first church never *did* community; they *were* community. Just listen to the small-group language we use in church today: "We must *get* everyone in small groups." "Let people do life together." Then, we call the outcome community.[17]

The challenge in leadership for this culture will be how to allow relationships to grow and foster more naturally and not fit into the American Church's artificial systems. This includes a leadership that is accessible to the people.

A second expectation that postmodern worshipping communities have is for leadership to be participatory in nature. The day of the laity as just a list of talents to be exploited is over. Emerging adults today want an active role in leadership. I have observed this firsthand over the past decade while informally interviewing people at The Experience. One common response in these interviews is that they do not want to be "passive pew sitters." They want to have their dreams and visions matter even if they do not serve in any formal leadership capacity. They may not always desire a role with a title designated for a specific period of time; but they want their hearts, dreams, and desires to

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[17] Dries Lombard, "Exposing Our Murky Motives" in *The Church of the Perfect Storm,* ed. Leonard Sweet et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 63.

matter.[18] They want to be engaged, challenged, and valued. This cannot be leadership

from a distance.

This is the problem in clergy-dominated systems. For all the modern research and

writing about "the priesthood of all believers,"[19] most Lutheran church systems still are

over-balanced on the clergy side. Christian Smith writes that this is a fundamentally self-

defeating system:

> Its stated purpose is to nurture spiritual maturity in the church—a valuable goal. In actuality, however, it accomplishes the opposite but nurturing a permanent dependence of the laity on the clergy. Clergy become to their congregations like parents whose children never grow up, like therapists whose clients never become healed, like teachers whose students never graduate. The existence of a full-time, professional minister makes it too easy for church members not to take responsibility for the ongoing life of the church. And why should they? That's the job of the pastor.[20]

This is not an attempt to advocate, as C. Smith does in his article, for the dissolution of

the clergy; rather, his comment reveals the need for a greater partnership in sharing the

ministry experience. Leadership of the future needs to release people into leadership and

encourage a sense of freedom to use their gifts in order to advance the ministry of the

local church.

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[18] One such example at The Experience is Brian Bognar. In his professional life, he is a program manager. He has been asked before to serve in a more official leadership position, but he does not desire to hold an office. This does not mean that he is not involved or invested in the ministry. He helps lead outreach ministries to the poor. He has stated that he does not desire a leadership position but still wants his dreams and visions to have input into the community. Brian Bognar, interview by author, Aurora, CO, November 2009.

[19] Robert A. Muthiah. *The Priesthood of All Believers in the Twenty-First Century: Living Faithfully as the Whole People of God in a Postmodern Context* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009); see also Oscar Feucht, *Everyone a Minister* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1974) and Frank Tillpaugh, *Unleashing the Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1982).

[20] Christian Smith, "Church without Clergy," A Wilderness Voice in Search of a City, http://awildernessvoice.com/ChurchWithoutClergy.html (accessed January 15, 2011).

A third expectation of postmodern worshipping communities is that leadership needs to permission-giving. This style of leadership spreads decisions throughout the organization so that all can use their gifts without seeking approval first—as long as they enhance the mission, vision, and values of the organization.[21] This means that the whole of members are valued for the unique gifts they bring toward the leadership of an establishment. This is a struggle in clergy-dominated Lutheran institutions; however, it is a struggle that is reflected across larger organizations in culture. Perry Pascarella says, "A quiet revolution is taking place. . . . Management is heading toward a new state of mind—a new perception of its own role and that of organization. It is slowly moving from seeking power to empowering others, from controlling people to enabling them to be creative."[22] The advent of this revolution spans across culture as the focus moves from limiting power to a few to empowering people on a much broader scale.

An endless number of people empowered with knowledge are one result of the advent of the internet. Prior to the expansion of the internet as a worldwide structure in the 1980s,[23] knowledge was limited to a few people who had access to the information. Now it is freely accessible and examined by all. This has created a greater need for a more open-ended leadership structure. Easum says that the internet teaches six things about permission-giving organizations of the future:

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[21] Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side*, 134.

[22] Perry Pascarella, , *The New Achievers* (Monroe, LA: Free Press, 1984) 110, 169.

[23] Barry M. Leiner et al., "A Brief History of the Internet," Internet Society, http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.shtml (accessed September 29, 2011).

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(1) The worst thing to do with an organization in a fast moving world is to try to control what is happening. (2) The role of the middle manager is being replaced by disconnected individuals who know how to use the system. (3) The healthy organization is flexible and does not have a central point of authority (keep in mind that this organization has its mission, vision, and values firmly in place). (4) The system functions as long as those who use it are trustworthy. Viruses can destroy the whole fabric of this emerging society, just like nuclear bombs could destroy the world. (5) The larger the organization the less it depends on its macro aspects and the more it depends on the micro aspects. Individuals and teams are more important than massive organizational and hierarchical charts boasting lines and boxes. (6) In such an organization no one person is in charge since it is too complex a task. Trinitarian-like teams of complementary leaders will guide this organization into the future. The role of the "senior pastor" will be less and less evident.[24]

Easum is writing that leadership in the North American Church will look drastically different in the years to come. It will be an open-ended system, which enables individuals across the organization to flow more freely in and out.

Finally, postmodern worshipping communities expect components of organizational leadership in the midst of this chaos. People simply do not want to be like sheep without a shepherd. There is still the need for direction and guidance. Postmoderns hunger for leadership to embody the biblical characteristics of shepherds, such as King David and Jesus, and not CEOs.[25] Kent R. Hughes in his commentary on the Gospel of John writes: "Our twentieth-century image is very far from the first century picture of sheep. In that age shepherding was an intimate occupation. The Palestinian shepherd did

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[24] Easum,, *Leadership on the Other Side*, 138-139.

[25] Specific examples of shepherd leadership relevant to this study will be addressed in Chapter 4.

not drive his sheep—he went before them, he led his sheep."[26] Young leaders today seek

the wisdom of older leaders; they want to be led and not driven.

The tension in which the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and all American

churches now live is one that must find a healthy balance between components of modern

leadership that can be maintained and newer elements that reflect the changes in this

rising culture. This tension is birthed in a period of chaos; but, it needs to be embraced

and not feared. Chaos is not always negative. Chaos theory states that instead of the

enemy of order and beauty, chaos is an essential early element in the birthing of

everything new.[27] It is out of these times of chaos that beauty emerges. It is in the midst

of this time of chaos that The Experience seeks to birth a new leadership style.

Analysis of Previous Leadership Models That Have Been Implemented at The Experience

The Experience has attempted to implement a variety of leadership structures

since its inception. This has included leader-driven models, Wayne Cordeiro's fractal

system, teaming, and small group models. Each of these models has value in the right

setting but was not appropriate for the unique ministry of The Experience. This section

evaluates these models in light of the need to create a unique model for a postmodern-

minded worshipping community, such as The Experience.

The first style that was attempted was the fractal system as taught by Cordeiro in

*Doing Church as a Team***.** This system is designed to expand the base of church

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[26] Kent R. Hughes, *John* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 264.

[27] Easum, *Leadership on the Other Side*, 53.

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leadership. In order to understand this version of leadership, Cordeiro uses the illustration of a pile of sand upon a base of cardboard. As one pours the sand upon the cardboard, a pyramid will form and eventually excess sand will roll off the cardboard. This question then arises: "How do I pile more sand?" The answer is to expand the base.[28] It is from this foundational concept that Cordeiro creates a multiplying system of leadership called "fractals."[29]

The fractal model is based upon the concept that no one person can minister effectually to more than eight individuals at one time.[30] The entire church's ministry is broken up into a system of fractals. Each fractal is a quadrant comprised of four ministries that are interconnected. Each quadrant can be expanded to a new fractal comprised of four quadrants that continually sub-divide for each new ministry. In this system, any one person would be directly ministering to a total of eight people at the most. This would include each of the four leaders in any given fractal, which would include the spouses of those leaders who are married.

The system divides the ministry in an organized fashion. It begins with teams of four and makes it permanent throughout the organization. This system is open in that it invites numerous people throughout the organization to participate in some leadership role in a specific area of ministry. What originally drove The Experience community to

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[28] Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 93.

[29] "A fractal is a rough or fragmented geometric shape that can be subdivided in parts, each of which is (at least approximately) a reduced-size copy of the whole." Suzanne Alejandre, "Fractals," The Math Forum @ Drexel, http://mathforum.org/alejandre/workshops/fractal/fractal3.html (accessed December 1, 2010).

[30] Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team*, 184.

this approach was that ministry decisions were not made at the top but instead the decisions were made at the level where the ministry was taking place.

The problem with this approach is that it still limits major decisions to a small team, and the main visionary leadership still is held within the first fractal of four. This did not create a visionary community; rather, it limited the driving vision to the main leadership core. The Experience community leaders who were experienced in present business leadership models felt this model was well entrenched in their business lives, and they did not want it in their church. The model was too structured and organized. It did not allow a free flow of people participating in all levels. The true failure of this model for The Experience community was the numerous responsibilities and demands for time placed upon the first fractal of four. These portions of responsibility were large. All the outer fractals relied upon this one unit, especially as the fractals branched out; the responsibility levels lowered and became more defined. In these first fractals, the responsibilities were overwhelming. This became evident beginning in the second year of the implementation of this model. First, one of the four first fractal leaders resigned because she was a new mom and did not feel she could not fill the role adequately. It became even more evident when it was impossible to encourage someone to step up and fill the position. Then by the third year the entire system unraveled as one staff member and another volunteer leader resigned from their positions. They did not leave the church and still wanted to be involved in the ministries of the church, but not in leadership under this model. It was too complex and burdensome. This was also evident at Peace With Christ which also stopped using this leadership model in year four. This may work well in some larger churches where the first

team is comprised of full-time workers, but it was too much of a commitment for unpaid staff.

The next style attempted was a type of teaming led by a visionary leadership core. In this approach, the ministry organized many ministry teams and attempted to implement the communal vision. "Teaming" is a popular leadership style used today both in churches and the business community. Cladis describes it well in *Leading the Team Based Church*: "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."[31] This approach honors the value of collective wisdom and at first seemed to address some of the unique concerns of postmodernity. Cladis writes that he believes the characteristics of the postmodern world support a team-based ministry.[32] Here are the nine postmodern characteristics that he understands as supporting this model:

> Creation is an organism rather than a machine. Hierarchical structures are reduced. Authority is based upon trust. Effective leadership is visionary. Life and work are spiritually rooted. Structures are smaller; networks are bigger. Innovation is rewarded. Work follows gifts, and gifts are used collaboratively. Mainline church denomination has ended.[33]

These characteristics do support Cladis' view that teaming would be appropriate in many churches ministering in the postmodern paradigm; however, over time this method failed to address all the unique leadership issues at The Experience. In the beginning, this

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[31] Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church*, 94-95.

[32] Ibid., 17.

[33] Ibid., 19.

approach was appreciated, because it created small gatherings of people—larger than fractals—and it enhanced relationships. Ministry was progressing forward, and tasks were being completed.

However, there were three weaknesses to this approach that were discovered in the life of the community. The first weakness was teaming at first placed too much emphasis on a work project with little emphasis on community relationships. Working among young adults where relationships are everything, this approach is deadly. Teaming usually is designed around effective work groups,[34] who are focused on a specific project. Since young adults excitedly gather for anything having to do with relationships but rarely show up if it is for "business," The Experience found its business meeting groups sparsely attended. The primary focus of the gathering could not simply be business oriented. Michael Slaughter, in *Unlearning Church,* recognizes this. He says, "Leaders in the next-generation churches are learning how to minimize church meetings and to maximize life."[35] A way had to be created that primarily focused on relationships and secondarily completed a task. The task cannot be the main issue.

The second weakness is that most forms of teaming are closed-ended. There may be input solicited from the organization as a whole, but the work team remains its own individually selective unit in the decision-making process. The struggle with this at The Experience is that it again set up barriers and restrictions as to who was involved in the

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[34] Ibid., 21.

[35] Michael Slaughter, *Unlearning Church* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2002), 110.

decision-making process. This did not allow for the ebb and flow of a changing community.

The Experience leaders did not want to limit a work group to a select number of individuals for a set amount of time. Teams mainly only included its members in the decision making process. In this way, the leadership style is not open-ended enough for people to flow in and out. An effective style of leadership for The Experience needed to allow for more give and take in the decision-making process. There needed to be a new model that would allow for people to flow in and out in different roles in order to add to the depth and potential of the team. The Experience needed a more open-ended system with the ability to release people into their giftedness and recognize the value and dreams of all members of the community.

Finally, teams do not always take into account the gifts and passions of those outside the team who may not fit into the system. A new design had to be created that released people to create and establish unconventional ministries. At The Experience individuals began to create ministries as inroads into communities of people not typically reached by the church. The struggle was that these new ministries did not fit into a preordained system. One such example was when a Color Guard was created to reach a large unchurched portion of the population. The Experience was the only ministry in the state of Colorado that sponsored a group with Christian values and emphasis. There was no place for ministries like this to fit in the present system as to provide leadership, accountably and encouragement. A second example was for business leaders who desired that the church recognize what they were doing in their professional lives as ministry.

These were no simply way to try and squeeze these ministries into the structure that existed. They did not want to be part of a formal structure, but they did want to be recognized and encouraged. The Experience needed a new way to encourage and direct these ministries, but not control them.

The Need for a New Leadership Style

Currently, The Experience community navigates in an ever-changing world and needs to adopt a system that provides some structure yet remains fluid enough to adapt to future changes. The models addressed in this brief analysis were designed for a world that is not in a constant state of flux. The Experience cannot abandon its journey with so many people on board the ship but must continue to find a structure that provides stability yet remains flexible. It is in need of a flatter leadership structure that allows for a more unhindered flow of information and provides the opportunity for decisions to be made more efficiently. This is an experiment in what might become the new "normal." This new leadership style arising in today's postmodern context must be fluid to represent the shifting paradigm in which participants in The Experience live. In his book, *Liquid Church,* Peter Ward describes in this way: "If the Modern Era was a rage for order, regulation, stability, singularity, and fixity, the Postmodern Era is a rage for chaos, uncertainty, otherness, openness, multiplicity, and change. Postmodern surfaces are not the landscapes but the wavescapes, with the waters always changing and the surfaces

never the same. The sea knows no boundaries."[36] This means a leadership style must be created that is fluid and not rigid, adaptable and not static.

Brian D. McLaren postulates about this changing style of leadership in an article comparing leadership transformation to the classic movie, *Wizard of Oz.* He writes:

> At first glance, Dorothy is all wrong as a model of leadership. She is the wrong gender (female) and the wrong age (young). Rather than being a person with all the answers, who knows what's up and where to go and what's what, she is herself lost, a seeker, often bewildered, and vulnerable. These characteristics would disqualify her from modern leadership. But they serve as her best credentials for postmodern leadership. [37]

This brief illustration helps churches today to understand that emerging leadership styles may break some molds of the past in their attempt to birth something new. The journey for The Experience leadership has been long and sometimes frustrating; but the end result has been years of research, trial and error, and anticipation of what can be. Chapter 3 is an attempt to draw all these insights together to form conclusions regarding the need for a communal leadership style appropriate for The Experience.

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[36] Pete Ward, *Liquid Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 15.

[37] Brian D. McLaren, "Dorothy on Leadership," *Rev. Magazine,* November/December 2000; repr., Brian D. McLaren, http://www.brianmclaren.net/emc/archives/imported/dorothy-on-leadership.html. (accessed November 1, 2004.)

CHAPTER 3

A NEW COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR
THE EXPERIENCE

The present cultural crises and the inability of past organizational structures to

address the needs of The Experience worshipping community have led to the need for a

new model. This new model must address the unique dynamics of The Experience. It

must combine effective elements of previous structures attempted as well as create a new

culture. David J. Bosch touches on this topic in *Transforming Mission*. He says,

"Sociologists have pointed out that any social organization, in order to persist, must have

boundaries, must maintain structural stability as well as flexibility, and must create a

unique culture."[1] A new distinctive leadership culture needs to be discovered for this

diverse community. The Experience's new communal leadership model needs to address

all three aspects of the "perfect storm" in which it now resides. It must consider the

postmodern characteristics of the current culture, which is a post-Christendom era. It

must retain the lessons learned in previous structures and be able to adapt to future

changes. It must be missional in nature and provide a flatter system. Finally, it must result

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[1] David J. Bosch. *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 165.

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in growth and ministry opportunities for the community that expand its base and connect people to the system. The evaluation as to the success of this system will be discussed in chapter 6.

In 2007, church-leadership consultant George Bullard presented some intriguing insights regarding leadership in the local church. He said he believes churches are always one step behind on leadership trends. In "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities,"[2] he makes the following comment:

> Does it seem to you that congregations are late adapters to some trends? It does to me. It appears at times that congregations are just getting around to adapting to certain trends as the next trend is emerging. For example, organizing congregations according to teams rather than committees is still in its ascendancy, just as at the grassroots of relationships teams are fading in favor of communities. It is a positive step that congregations are abandoning committees for teams, but what if congregations were to skip the team phase and embrace communities? Too radical? Too cutting edge? Hardly![3]

Bullard goes on to list seven differences that distinguish committees, teams, and communities. These differences in organizational style include formation, focus, membership, outside assistance, recruitment, benefits, and style of work. Each description includes a brief paragraph into what community-driven leadership might look like. Bullard believes that a new leadership principle of community leadership is on the horizon in the future and churches should move to begin to think in that direction.[4] However, the concept

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[2] George Bullard, "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities" George Bullard's Journey, entry posted August 7, 2007, http://bullardjournal.blogs.com/bullardjournal/2007/04/abandon_committt.html#more (accessed April 22, 2011).

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

of community-driven leadership never is developed fully. Two years later, when I contacted Bullard via email, he expressed that he had not developed the concept any further.[5] Building on Bullard's concepts for communal leadership, the next chapter will explore what this possible model might look like at The Experience. Bullard's concepts will be used as the foundation to describe eight foundational principles of a community-driven leadership style that construct upon the conclusions of Part One's examination of the present cultural shift and current crises in leadership.

Eight Foundational Principles of Communal Leadership

There are eight foundational principles for communal leadership that are established in this section, based upon Bullard's insights. In themselves, they do not form the complete description for communal leadership, but they do begin to create a foundation on which to build. Each principle will be introduced and briefly described. This will provide the foundation on which the remaining part of The Experience's new leadership approach will be based.

The first foundational principle of a communal style is found in the formation of its leadership structure. This is because "communities are voluntarily connected in search of genuine meaningful experiences."[6] This is a shift from previous styles where committees were elected and teams were recruited for a specific task for a given time frame. In this method, individuals voluntarily commit to journey together. Community is

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[5] George Bullard, email to author, May 2009.

[6] Bullard, "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities."

everything to a postmodern-minded person, and The Experience's new model needs to reflect this mindset. The genuine meaningful experiences must be a combination of those in the church community and outside that community. Philip Jenkins identifies this among the young people of the emerging churches of Brazil, when he writes in *The Next Christendom*: "Their main appeal is that they represent a God that you can use. People today are looking for solutions not for eternity."[7] Young people today want experiences that will connect them in a meaningful way to one another and the social injustices in this world. They desire to make a difference in this life.

The second principle is that leadership must focus on the value and importance of relationships in today's culture. Bullard writes: "Communities add qualitative relationships, meaning, and experiences to the organizations, organisms, or movements to which they are connected."[8] The goal is not simply to accomplish a task but to develop relationships as well. Committees typically are decision-making bodies, whereas the goal of a team is to become a high-performance entity. A high-performance team is one that has become fine-tuned as a small group or work team. Neither committees nor teams have relationships as a goal. Relationships may occur in these other approaches due to common working goals, but only under community leadership are relationships nurtured as a stated objective.

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[7] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 77.

[8] Bullard, "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities."

The third foundational principle involves forming a more open-ended membership in the leadership structure. Committees have a fixed term of service, while teams tend to serve until a task is completed.[9] In contrast, communities have no bounded membership; and, people tend to come and go based on their continuing interest in the journey.[10] The tension at this point is the need for some consistency in leadership. A communal leadership style must ebb and flow more but maintain a common commitment to serve. It may not be that people serve for a specific amount of time, as if elected to a board. In this model, people are encouraged to serve in the areas of their passions as a lifestyle. Leadership needs to flow from the community embracing the identity of being people on mission. Therefore, a time of service might be longer or shorter based upon a person's gifts. At The Experience there are no lengths of service in leadership roles. The end result is that people serve for longer periods of time with a sense of calling and purpose. They experience the freedom of moving from one leadership community to another, as their own spiritual journeys change. The community style allows people to surface to the crest of the fluid leadership as the need arises; however, careful attention must be paid to the reality that breaks in service and times of refreshment are needed.

The fourth foundational principle is empowerment of leadership. Community leadership not only allows people to rise to leadership, it empowers them when their passions or gifts stir their hearts. Committees release authority to other committees to

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

fulfill their mandated directions, whereas teams only authorize a fixed number of participants. In contrast, the community-driven style empowers all the disciples of Jesus to become ministers involved in the direction of the community. They are no longer just considered the volunteer base. Cladis concurs and observes, "The volunteers of the past were 'helpers.' Our volunteers now are 'colleagues.' In fact, we shouldn't even talk of 'volunteers' anymore; they are really 'unpaid staff'"[11] The recognized leader's responsibility in this model is to give responsibility away to other leaders. It is leaders empowering leaders.

The fifth principle is based on how future leaders are trained and developed. Bullard writes that "communities align with champions or advocates who come alongside them in long-term relationships."[12] This statement may reflect Bullard's bias as a church consultant. Postmoderns are searching for significant relationships but not "champions." In fact, postmoderns today are leery of proclaimed "champions" who want to make an organization great. However, Bullard does capture the postmodern's genuine interest in partnering with qualified people to make a difference through "long-term relationships." This style differs from committees in that committee members often seek outside events or consultants to correct the direction of the organization through a specific time-framed event. Teams partner with practitioners or coaches who give guidance and advice for correction or direction over a specific time period. In contrast, communities of the future

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[11] Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church*, 151.

[12] Bullard, "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities."

do not focus just on solving problems but on journeying together. In this way, the "being" becomes more important than the "doing."

The sixth foundational principle is how to recruit for leadership involvement. "Communities look for people of passion who want to have fun helping to bring exciting experiences to congregational participants, and a spiritual strategic journey to the congregation."[13] In the past, committees and teams have looked primarily at the gifts of individuals for recruitment purposes. In a community-driven model, a person's gift mix is still important, but it is not the primary tool used to recruit for leadership. The primary focus is on determining one's lifelong passion. In *Good to Great*, Collins emphasizes this need for passion: "You can't manufacture passion or 'motivate' people to feel passionate. You can only discover what ignites your passion and the passions of those around you."[14] Once these passions are discovered, it will be the task of the leaders to aid in releasing these inner igniters into service.

The seventh foundational principle is that a community-driven leadership style benefits the entire community. "Communities benefit congregations by providing more enthusiasm and meaningful relationships within congregations."[15] Spiritual journeyers who visit congregations today seek fellow journeyers with which to have community. They commit based upon relationships. The relationships are what draw them in and keep

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Collins*, Good to Great*, 109.

[15] Bullard, "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities."

them engaged. It is also a main factor in their involvement in the community. For this

reason, each area of leadership in a communal model must have the building of

relationships as a key. It is based on people with a common heart and passion drawing

together to experience life and ministry on a common journey. This differs from

committees in the sense that a committee's job is to build loyalty to the mission of the

church. While the benefit of a team has been to provide more effective action faster than

a committee, a communal style draws everyone into involvement regarding the direction

of the organization through a web of relationships.

The eighth foundational principal is that leadership decisions are made through

cooperative dialogue and interaction. "Communities dialogue, engage in discernment

activities, and arrive at the best solutions for a particular opportunity or challenge."[16]

Committees of the past have focused on making binding and lasting decisions. This is

difficult to do in today's shifting society. Teams debate the strengths and weaknesses of

various choices to make the best decisions. Communities, however, are avenues of

communication where direction and answers stem from a common journey together.

Ten Characteristics of a Communal Leadership Style

This new world in which The Experience worshipping community lives is both a

combination of the old and the new. This new leadership structure will have to reflect this

as it is constructed. James K. A. Smith in *Who's Afraid of PostModernism?* describes the

present era in the following way:

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[16] Ibid.

> Our time is a little bit like downtown Los Angeles, whose architecture reflects both epochs. It is not that the postmodern has come in and flattened the modern; rather, the curvaceous lines and eclectic ensembles of Frank Gehry's postmodern architecture assert themselves alongside the modernist glass boxes and crumbling "projects" inspired by Le Corbusier.[17]

A new model for The Experience needs to reflect many postmodern characteristics but simultaneously combine parts of modern models that still are needed in its ever-changing paradigm. Any new leadership model that arises must reflect these foundational changes. It also must follow the trends that are already evident in the culture. The following is a list of characteristics which need to be adapted into a new communal approach.

Relationally Based

The most prominent characteristic of the postmodern culture is that it is relational. A relationally based quality means an inviting style that enhances people's lives through personal connections. With relationally based leadership, the goal is to engage people and not to propagate programs.

Since relationships are paramount to young adults today, a new leadership form must address the concern for leadership to flow from mutual relationships and not from a superior position. In the future, any successful method at The Experience will have relationships as its foundation. This is because people who identify closely with today's postmodern culture distrust larger organizations and desire accessibility and openness.

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[17] James K. A. Smith, "*Who's Afraid of PostModernism*? (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 2006), 63.

A Collaborative Approach

A second characteristic is that the leadership base is wider and not limited to a minority. Spenser Burke and Colleen Pepper in *Making Sense of Church,* call this style a "collaborative leadership model."[18] It reflects the idea that one person does not have all the answers and that everyone has something to contribute. They write: "The metaphor is that of a traveler—someone who is 'on the way' journeying with us."[19] The focus here is on the journey and not simple the destination. Since the destination will affect everyone, the journey must involve more of those directly affected.

In *Leading the Team Based Church*, Cladis calls this "Participatory Leadership."[20] He uses the dynamic relationship between the triune Godhead to illustrate this. He writes: "[The] image of the Trinity is that of the three persons of God in constant movement in a circle that implies intimacy, equality, unity yet distinction, and love."[21] Cladis highlights that all three persons of the Godhead are in movement and in constant with to one another. Participatory leadership reflects this as it draws upon the members to be part of the leadership process. This style is more driven by community than hierarchy. Young people today have an aversion to a dictatorial style of leadership. They want to be involved in the decision-making process. The whole idea that one individual has the entire vision is seen as another way of exercising dominance and may be identified as one

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[18] Spenser and Burke, *Making Sense of Church*, 37.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Cladis, *Leading the Team Based Church*, 1.

[21] Ibid., 4.

man pushing people around with his ideas.[22] Anyone in leadership must be fully engaged

with the people that he or she leads. Sweet in *Summoned to Lead* points out the reason:

> Leadership involves an unspoken contract: Leadership is not about the leader.
> Leadership also includes those who are led. It is the followers who place one of
> their own in a position of leadership, even if they do so only by agreeing to
> follow. A leader with no followers is no leader.[23]

Sweet affirms that disconnected leadership is not truly leadership at all. True leaders stay

in relationship with the people who have entrusted them with a position of authority. This

approach to leadership needs to flow from the base up instead of the top down. It needs to

stem from the strengths of all those in the community and not just from the giftedness of

a select few. It must honor those it serves and not lord power over them.

Distributed Leadership

The third characteristic is "distributed leadership,"[24] which is a natural extension

of the collaborative aspect. Distributed leadership is the collective interactions among

leaders, followers, and their particular situations.[25] This means that distributed leadership

is not just delegated; rather, it flows from the interactions with others in the community.

The leadership base not only must be wider but needs to allow for people throughout the

organization to invest in the leadership process. Pinchot in his essay, "Creating

Organizations with Many Leaders," begins to hint at this concept. He writes: "We are

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[22] Leonard Sweet, *Summoned to Lead* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 1.

[23] Ibid., 169.

[24] James P. Spillane, *Distributed Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 3.

[25] Ibid., 4.

reaching a time when all employees will have to take turns leading, when they see they

must influence others in order to realize their vision."[26] This provides a more open-ended

style of leadership where people engage and disengage based upon their visions and

giftedness.

Additionally, Pinchot highlights the importance of the interactions of the

community. He continues, "In the times to come, leaders must find ways to replace

hierarchy with indirect methods of leadership that allow for greater freedom."[27] What

Pinchot describes is a much more open and interconnected leadership model. This

leadership network may look more like a spider web than a flow chart. A spider web has

multiple points of contact and connectivity. Leadership then becomes a possession of the

entire community. It flows from freedom and not from a legalistic, hierarchal structure.

<center>Fluid</center>

The fourth characteristic is the ability for a leadership structure to remain fluid.

The fluidity of the postmodern era requires a leadership style which adapts to the times. It

may be that a new leadership method constantly will need to be in a state of flux, due to

the overarching Lutheran debate that exists regarding engaging in mission versus

preservation of doctrinal truth.

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[26] Gifford Pinchot, "Creating Organizations with Many Leaders," in *Leader of the Future*, eds. Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckard (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 28-29.

[27] Ibid., 29.

This may be difficult to sort out at times. Since The Experience worshipping

community lives in a world with a mixture of the modern and postmodern, this may mean

that while some structure always will be necessary, it may need to remain flexible. This

also means that previous leadership experience may be a hindrance more than a benefit.

A person who is committed to a specific leadership style may find that style a deterrent in

the future. Sweet notes:

> One of the harsher realities for church leaders is that experience is no longer an
> asset. And that idea runs counter to everything you have been taught about
> leadership. The "seasoned" leader, the myth goes, is more capable of leading
> effectively than the inexperienced. But experience actually handicaps you. No
> "experience" can prepare you for the challenges ahead. In fact, "experience" often
> leaves you in the dark. Too many church leaders are relying on strategies,
> methods, information, and systems that are so outdated as to be barriers to
> leadership. The tried and true was true when it was tried. It may be false today.[28]

This style can seem chaotic to many Lutherans, and it will take time for existing leaders

to gather their bearings. For a while, The Experience may feel a bit unstable until these

principles and characteristics become established in the life of the community.

Servant Leadership

The fifth important trait is the servant-like nature that forms postmodern

leadership. Followers today want leaders who are committed to them and not just

attempting to further their personal agenda or simply achieving some subjective goal of

what they define as "success." In the Enron scandal of 2002, a few leaders benefitted at

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[28] Sweet, *Summoned to Lead*, 162.

the expense of others.[29] Those in leadership chose to falsify information for their benefit, which later left other employees without a job and investors without their funds. Such leadership grants preferential treatment to high-level leaders, at times leading to disastrous results. A postmodern community needs to know that the leader has a heart for the people who comprise it. This leader has to know the heart of the people and how to "fan into flame" (cf. 2 Timothy 1:6) the potential inside each person. William Pollard comments on this in his essay, "The Leader Who Serves." He asserts, "First, we seek to recognize the dignity and worth of all people because they have been created in God's image. Thus, our role as leaders involves more than just what people do on their job. We also must be involved in what they are becoming as whole people and how the work environment is contributing to the whole process."[30] This is a more holistic approach to leadership, designed to see the individuals of each community in their own unique light and not just as participants with gifts to be exploited. It recognizes that all individuals are in a process of development and what they are becoming affects the entire community.

This "new" revolutionary principle is really two thousand years old and is best reflected in the character of Christ. Richard J. Foster identifies the importance of this trait in *Celebration of Discipline*:

> It is impossible to overstate the revolutionary character of Jesus' life and teaching at this point. It did away with all the claims to privileged position and status. It called into being a whole new order of leadership. The cross-life of Jesus

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[29] Cathy Booth Thomas. "Called to Account," *Time Magazine*, June 18, 2002, http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,263006,00.html (accessed May 20 2011).

[30] C. William Pollard, "The Leader Who Serves," in *Leader of the Future*, eds. Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, Richard Beckard (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 244.

undermined all social orders based on power and self-interest. This new approach reflects Jesus' heart of placing others above him. This may sound soft to the goal oriented type, however, "By removing obstacles to their focus, you enable your followers to concentrate on their given tasks. As strange as it may seem, the surest way for a leader to succeed is to put others first, including the families of those he leads."[31]

Christ must continue to be the primary example for leaders in the Church. Leaders do not lead from a position of privilege but from a position of servants. This new relational style may require a different set of relational skills than those required of leaders in the past. This may be a detriment to those who are already thoroughly trained in modern leadership principles, because the future will require new gifts and attitudes.

Incarnational Leadership

The sixth characteristic is the ability to remain incarnational. This form of leadership is connected to the very lives of the people. It is leadership manifested in the midst of the community interconnected with the lives that make up the community. This will be difficult in larger churches, but The Experience purposely has attempted to create smaller worshipping communities to achieve this goal.

This deals with the accessibility of the leader. Gone are the days that leaders lead from a distance with limited accessibility to their constituents. Young people today seek leaders who engage in the lives of those in their community. In this new matrix, people desire leaders who are real, authentic, and with whom they can have a relationship.

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[31] Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (San Francisco, CA: Harper-Collins, 1978), 116.

Cultivating a Visionary Environment

The seventh characteristic of community-driven leadership is the ability to release vision into the hearts of those in the community. The value of a strong visionary leader or team was highly valued in the last twenty years. These strong visionary skills are still important for those who lead in the postmodern era, because there still will be a need for leaders of leaders who anticipate future needs and help provide direction to the community. A new skill set in the future that will need developing is the skill of learning how to release visions in others in order to create a visionary environment.

One example is Erwin McManus. He had a clear view of leadership in this emerging matrix when he described the difference between a visionary leader and a visionary environment. In the recent past, a single dynamic and incredibly visionary leader compelled people toward a God-given vision that guided a church. The new shift now is toward visionary environments, in which a leader assists the individuals in their community to release their unique dreams and visions while guiding all in a common direction.[32] This is the transformation to becoming a visionary community. A single pastor may be the one who presents the initial vision; however, the community adapts this vision and helps define it according to the God-given vision released in their individual hearts.

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[32] Erwin McManus, interview by George Barna, "Developing Leaders in a Postmodern Culture." Speech delivered to Church Communication Network via satellite feed, January 13, 2005.

Empowering

The eighth trait is the ability to empower leaders. Empowering believers in the

Church involves giving authority away to them and providing avenues by which to

develop their gifts and passions for ministry. Postmodern leadership is less about

employing people than about empowering people. It recognizes that the community is

invested in this journey together; and instead of controlling the use of individual's gifts,

local churches must release people to live out their lives of faith.

Max Depree, in *Leadership is an Art*, recognizes that good leaders give people the

space to flourish and grow. He offers the following advice: "We need to give each other

the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other

space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness,

dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion."[33] Depree encourages leaders to allow people to

develop and grow in their uniqueness. This means that in the future leadership needs to

take on a larger role as coaches and mentors, investing in people's lives and allowing them

space to express their joy of faith in service. He calls it endorsing "a concept of

persons."[34] This recognizes the uniqueness of each person. Children of God come with

their own unique gifts, visions, and passions. Church leaders of the future will spend more

time assisting people in discovering and developing these areas of their faith lives. Depree

goes on to say that "understanding and accepting diversity enables us to see that each of us

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[33] Max Depree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), 17.

[34] Ibid.

is needed. It also enables us to begin to think about being abandoned to the strengths of others, of admitting that we cannot know or do everything."[35] This will be a much more interdependent ministry structure. Whereas leadership teams in the past opened the door to a select number of individuals to be involved, a communal style seeks to empower people throughout the organization to serve in leadership in their areas of passions and in their life as a missional lifestyle.[36] This will be difficult for many present leaders because in the past leadership attempted to simply develop the gifts they needed to advance the ministry. In this future form of leadership, ministries will have to be less static and adapt as people discover new ways to use their gifts and serve in their faith life. The future could bring new ways of serving God that have not yet even been discovered by the Church.

Edgar H. Schein in his essay, "Leadership and Organizational Culture," recognizes that postmodern leaders release people so that they might thrive. He writes: "In the future, appointed leaders will not play key leadership roles but will be perpetual diagnosticians who will be able to empower different people at different times and let emergent leadership flourish."[37] This means that leadership of the future will be even more focused on empowering people. This ability to release people will honor God's calling in their lives and is a necessity in a post-Christendom world, where ministry extends beyond the walls of a given church.

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[35] Ibid., 9.

[36] A "missional lifestyle" will be addressed later in this same chapter. This point of this teaching is to assist the people of God to actively in their daily lives to become involved in the activity of God.

[37] Edgar H. Schein, "Leadership and Organizational Culture," in *The Leader of the Future*, eds. Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and Richard Beckhard, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass, 1996), 68.

Missional

The ninth characteristic of this new communal style of leadership is its missional

nature. This is a state of being in which believers participate with the action of God in the

world. As a contemporary missiologist, Bosch writes:

> Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is
> a missionary God. . . . it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill
> in the world; it is the mission of the Son and Spirit through the Father that
> includes the church. Mission is thereby seen as a movement of God to the world;
> the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission.[38]

The existence of the Church in the world is to extend the work of God. Missional

leadership attempts to flesh this out in the real world. It encourages all members of a

church to embrace the lifestyle of missionaries. Bosch continues, "Missionary activity is

not so much the work of the church as simply the church at work."[39] Being missional is

not another church program but a lifestyle to be lived out by a community of believers.

A missional approach to ministry acknowledges that today's world has changed

and that the Church has to return to building upon the foundation of God's mission in the

world. Hirsch gives a clearer definition of the "missional" characteristic of a community

in *The Forgotten Ways*:

> So a working definition of missional church is a community of God's people that
> defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of
> God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic
> organizing principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true

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[38] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390.

[39] Ibid., 372.

church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible.[40]

This means that participating in God's mission to the world is the central dynamic of the Church in the world. Therefore, all future church structures for The Experience must be developed around this dynamic.

A missional leadership structure recognizes that all systems must support its individual members in living out this mission and not just the activities that are offered at a defined church location. Far too often, churches limit themselves to simply being another social agency competing for the time of its people. Loren Mead writes: "All too often our congregations have become another part of the problem—just one more organization competing for the attention of people."[41] In this pattern the local church often is reduced to just another task to be fulfilled in a person's life. A communal leadership model embraces a missional lifestyle which acknowledges that ministry often times occurs apart from a physical church location.

A communal leadership style must consider a much more holistic approach understanding that a person's gifts and talents are employed both inside and outside of a church building. Mead goes on by calling this an apostolic model which means that "every member of the church is engaged in mission all the time and everywhere."[42] This signifies that church members must grasp that as believers they are to live as a

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[40] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 82.

[41] Loren Mead, *Five Challenges of the Once and Future Church* (Herdon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1998), 61.

[42] Ibid., 80.

representation of God's love. Even those who are not called to a major leadership role in the church are leaders, for disciples of Christ are to influence others.[43]

A missional model extends leadership beyond the bricks and mortar of a church and recognizes that a congregation is always an organization in mission. It always joins with God and participates in His mission in the world. This means that a new leadership model must be dynamic and less static. In the recent past in the North American Church, structures became institutionalized. Bosch identifies this tension between being missional and institutional when writing about the Church:

> It ceased to be a movement and turned into an institution. There are essential differences between an institution and a movement. . . . the one is conservative, the other progressive; the one is more or less passive, yielding to influences from outside, the other is active, influencing rather than being influenced; the one looks to the past, the other to the future.[44]

Leadership models in the Church should be centered on God's mission in the world and not simply replicating leadership models found outside the Church. McNeal goes so far as to say that the North American Church suffers from "severe mission amnesia" and that it has forgotten why it exists.[45] The Church in North America needs to be reawakened to its call to mission in the midst of its own communities and not just as a missionary agency sending missionaries to other parts of the world.

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[43] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 54.

[44] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 51.

[45] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 15.

This is not the discovery of a new concept of the Church, but it is rediscovering in

Lutheranism the nature of the life of the Church in the world (cf. Matthew 28:19). It

begins with the reminder that the Church has been released by Jesus to engage those in

the world and not simply just to disengage from the culture (cf. Acts 1:8). Hirsch argues

for this rediscovery in the leadership of the Church. He explains:

> Missional church requires a missional ministry and leadership system. For the most part, the Christendom church obscured the need for a full-fledged missional leadership system, because the self-understanding of the church became fundamentally nonmissional. Because all citizens were deemed to be Christians, all that was really needed were the pastoral and teaching ministries to care for and teach the congregation. These were eventually instituted as offices in the church and became the principal metaphors for church leadership. The net effect is that the whole system weighted itself in favor of maintenance and pastoral care and that these became hegemonic in practice, and therefore both fragmented and distorted the total mission and ministry of the church in favor of only part of its calling.[46]

In Hirsch's description, church leadership has reduced itself to a role of tending to the

flock of believers. A missional approach realigns the church to minister in a culture that

is no longer predominately Christian.

One important aspect of a missional church leadership style is to diminish the

secular–sacred dichotomy that the Lutheran Church has created. In North America church

activities often are deemed sacred because they fall under the influence and occur on the

premises of a church structure, whereas activities outside the church are labeled as

secular because they are seemingly beyond the influence of organized church activities.

McNeal writes:

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[46] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 169.

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> Postmodernism refuses to be forced into the synthesis of the Hegelian dialectic. It allows for ambiguity; it countenances opposing notions at the same time (quantum physics, foundational to the postmodern world, asserts that light is both a particle and a wave); it intensely refuses a sacred-secular dichotomous view of life. Everything is sacred; nothing is sacred—both are expressed in postmodern thought.[47]

Postmodern thought does not limit life to such narrow systemic thinking. Modernity argues for a structured way of life and organization. Postmodern thought does not limit itself in the same way. It allows for a lack of clarity to exist at times. This is hard for a highly organized North American church to grasp. The Experience seeks to release people to active ministry leadership roles within the congregation and beyond the organizational structure of its local congregation into the world. Determining ways to encourage and track this will be difficult moving into the future.

A Flatter Structure

The final dynamic flows from the third part of this present "perfect storm" and confronts how The Experience exists within a post-structural world. The term "post' does not mean "against" but rather "after in time."[48] This does not signify that all structure is decimated; rather, this is a recognition that leadership theory has moved beyond the highly structured organizations of the past.

Therefore, the eighth trait of postmodern leadership is its flatter and more decentralized nature. A flatter system moves along a flow chart laterally instead of

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[47] Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future*, 56.

[48] *Dictionary,* http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/post (accessed October 3, 2011), s.v. "post."

vertically and is more interconnected in relationships and authority than a hierarchical

system. Decisions do not resonate at the top. Instead, decisional authority flows

throughout the system in both directions. This takes into account the interconnectedness

of the parts.

The hierarchal system of the past is too rigid and domineering to be highly

effective in the future. Hierarchal systems tend to be domineered by the leadership at the

top. This is a not a system that inspires young people even in the work place today.

Organizational business theorist Senge says, "Hierarchical authority, as it has been used

traditionally in Western management, tends to evoke compliance, not foster

commitment."[49] A style that demands compliance will not work in a postmodern world

built upon common relationships. A leadership style of the future must foster a common

commitment and not simply attempt to control the actions of others. Senge explains that

hierarchal leadership is not only domineering; it is less effective going into the future.

About the past, he writes:

> CEO proclamations and programs rolled out from corporate headquarters are a
> good way to undermine deeper changes. Top-management "buy-in" is a poor
> substitute for genuine commitment at many levels in an organization, and in fact,
> if management authority is used unwisely, it can make such commitment less
> rather than more likely.[50]

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[49] Senge, "Leading Learning Organizations," 43.

[50] Ibid., 48.

A leadership style that is flatter embodies the value that all the individuals contribute significantly to the overall system. It fosters a common commitment which can propel the organization forward.

A communal leadership is not only less domineering; it is less centralized. In a centralized organization, leadership is concentrated in one location. Brafman and Beckstrom describe this dynamic: "You have a clear leader who's in charge, and there's a specific place where decisions are made (the boardroom, the corporate headquarters, city hall)."[51] In this style of leadership structure decisions are made at the top and then funnel throughout the organization. On the other hand, effective leadership in a postmodern age is more dispersed. In this structure decisions are made on different levels throughout the organization and the boundaries are not so clearly defined. Brafman and Beckstrom describe these organizational principles when they write:

> In a decentralized organization, there's no clear leader, no hierarchy, and no headquarters. . . . The best that person can do to influence people is to lead by example. Nevins calls this an open system, because everyone is entitled to make his or her own decisions. This doesn't mean that a decentralized system is the same as anarchy. There are rules and norms, but these aren't enforced by any one person. Rather, the power is distributed among all the people and across geographic regions.[52]

This may seem more confusing and complex than a concrete structure, and in many ways it is. The goal is to empower people on every level of the organization and not simply centralize all decisions to a select entity or individual. A communal system with a

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[51] Brafman and Beckstrom. *The Starfish and the Spider*, 19.

[52] Ibid., 19-21.

missional component admits that ministry cannot be controlled from one central location,

so it must allow for more flexibility. This style of leadership does not go so far as to

eliminate all structure; but with leadership more decentralized, leaders can rise

throughout the organization and not just through a pre-determined or rigid pathway.

A flatter leadership structure is an interconnected system. The leadership of the

organization does not need to flow down from higher levels, but the community works

collectively and joins in responsibly to guide one another in their leadership journey. This

style is based upon the collective strength of the community. Steven Johnson in

Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software illustrates this

dynamic by observing the communal work style of ants. He describes how ants without

any recognized leader organize themselves into highly complex communities that adapt

to the environment as a single entity. They alter the size of their community and behavior

to adapt to their conditions exhibiting collective intelligence. He describes these as

"complex adaptive systems that display emergent behavior."[53] Communal leadership

recognizes that there is little chance that humans can stay as focused on a task as intently

as ants over the long term but acknowledges the value of these interdependent

relationships. This leadership style draws on the gifts and talents of those throughout the

system to be used in leadership capacities.

At The Experience, this style of leadership can function more like a network or web

of relationships than a vertical flow chart. Gibbs describes this well in *LeadershipNext*:

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[53] Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software* (New York: Penguin, 2001) ,18.

Networks may branch out from a common center (which provides inspiration and resources but avoids control) or have no center at all. In the latter case their identity represents the sum of the parts. Rather than developing and replicating an organizational machine by way of an expanded bureaucratic hierarchy, network expansion is more akin to the growth of an organism. In this regard leaders have been likened to gardeners who plant, prune, fertilize, cultivate and harvest. The leader does not control but cultivates. Leadership in such an environment of complexity and chaos. . . . These leaders build dispersed and diverse leadership, distributing leadership to the outermost edges of the circle to unleash the power of shared responsibility. . . . That is one of the reasons why churches may be more effective if they move beyond the concept of a single leader to one in which leadership is exercised by a team with one individual serving as primus interpares-first among equals.[54]

A communal leadership style involves members being a "first among equals." It is not domineering but exhibits a way to release the potential found throughout the organization and not just in a few select gifted individuals. It is a flatter style that offers more authority throughout the system. It empowers individuals more than it dominates them. This organizational structure builds and expands from the bottom up and not the top down. This allows space for new organic leadership forms to emerge from the giftedness of those in the community. McLaren adds to this discussion in an article comparing coming leadership changes contrasting Dorothy and the Wizard in the movie classic *Wizard of Oz*. He writes:

When you think about Dorothy, the picture is so different. Basically, instead of sitting pretty in a control booth, she's stuck in a predicament—still a little dizzy from the tornado, lost, far from home, needing to find the way. As she sets out on her journey, she finds other needy people (actually not people exactly, but you get the point), one in need of courage, another in need of intelligence, another in need of a heart. She believes that their varying needs can be fulfilled on a common quest, and her earnestness, her compassion, her determination, and her youthful

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[54] Gibbs, *LeadershipNext*, 63-64.

spunk galvanize them into a foursome (five, with Toto) singing down the yellow brick road together."[55]

The strength of this example is found in the mutual journey the participants share. Dorothy is a little dazed and confused due to the dramatic change in her life as a result of the storm. Together the participants recognize their individual weaknesses and then journey toward a common goal. The result is that along the way they discover the value in one another despite their weaknesses. Leadership of the future will be a similar journey that is taken together and not a road map with precise directions as to the destination. Everyone involved may seem a little confused at times, but this just creates space for their development together.

Living in a state of transition might mean that this style remains in a state of flux for some time. It is a model that has to remain fluid and not static. Ward expresses the need for a new church concept to replace the old in his book *Liquid Church*. "In its place we need to develop a notion of Christian community, worship, mission, and organization that is more flexible and responsive to change. The idea of flow is central in this shift emphasis. Liquid church would work to express itself as a series of movements or flows."[56] A static church tends to be inflexible and rigid. A fluid church structure simply recognizes that it ministers in the midst of a cultural storm, and constant change is the norm and not the exception. Ward continues, "What is needed is a more flexible church, one that is able to respond to

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[55] McLaren, "Dorothy on Leadership."

[56] Ward, *Liquid Church*, 41.

the changing needs of people." Water may be an appropriate illustration to use for this type of model. Water is both a solid and is fluid.[57]

A future leadership model must exhibit components of both. Communal leadership attempts to maintain a balance of both new and old structures. For this reason, there always must be a careful balance between innovation and tradition. Church leadership moving into the future must maintain effective elements of previous structures but be able to adapt in its rapidly changing environment. How this style of leadership will be applied in The Experience community will be addressed in Part Three of this discussion. However, first biblical foundations must be laid in order to establish it firmly. In addition, there will be a brief examination of the teachings and traditions of leadership in the Lutheran Church.

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[57] Water holds a unique position among the substances found on earth. It is found in three of the four states of matter: solid, liquid and gas. The fourth state of matter, plasma, is more of a energy state than a physical one, and as such water is not normally found as plasma on earth, according to pharmacological expert Karen E. Smith, interview by author, Aurora, CO, May 30, 2011.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 4

AN EXAMINATION OF NEW TESTAMENT GUIDELINES FOR
CHURCH LEADERSHIP: PROVIDING FOUNDATIONS

This chapter will cover a brief analysis of leadership principles from the New

Testament. It will examine the unique nature of the style of Jesus' leadership. Although

Jesus never systematically taught leadership, His ministry reveals the development of His

pattern to train and equip people and then release them to serve. The first section of this

chapter offers an overview of His leadership techniques. Then a brief section will

research leadership structures set up by St. Paul in some first-century congregations and

address whether these were prescriptive and meant for all time or whether it was more

situational in nature and simply provided a foundation on which to build. Then, these

lessons will be applied as foundational to the communal style of leadership being formed

for The Experience. In its search for a new system, The Experience must not lose its

connection to the historical church and it biblical foundation.

Examination of Jesus' Leadership Style

Many great men and women have changed the world through outstanding

leadership, but none have left such an indelible impression as Jesus Christ. In the short

span of only four years of active ministry, He called twelve disciples (Luke 6:12ff), mobilized at least seventy-two (Luke 10:1-12), and changed the world forever. After His death, the Good News reached out across the Roman Empire. Within a handful of generations, the number of Jesus followers numbered into the millions, and today more than a billion take the name of Christian.[1] Given this far-reaching impact, Jesus was the quintessential leader.

There are a plethora of leadership books written today on the leadership style of Jesus. There is everything from Jesus as CEO to Jesus as a servant leader.[2] Although there is no direct teaching by Jesus on leadership, He was the ultimate leader, people-developer, motivator, and encourager. There is no way that a thorough analysis of His style can be covered adequately in the space of this chapter. What will be accomplished is an overview of His leadership style focusing on His unique characteristics that are pertinent to this study. This will include a deeper analysis on the way He rejected the domineering leadership structures of His day and empowered people to serve and lead based upon their giftedness.

The Transitional Cultural Time in which Jesus Lived

There are two unique aspects of Jesus' leadership that make Him stand out as a leader for this study. The first was the age in which He lived, which was an age of change

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[1] Bob Briner and Ray Pritchard, *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 1997), 1-2.

[2] Some examples are Laurie Beth Jones, Jesus, *CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary* Leadership (New York: Hyperion, 1995); Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The Servant Leader* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2003); C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1998); Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead like Jesus* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2005).

and transformation much like today. The second was that the Church affirms that He was God and not just man. This makes His leadership style unique and important to any biblical study on leadership.

Around the time of Jesus, the Jewish people were in the midst of their own cultural storm. They were living as a conquered portion of the Holy Roman Empire. The Roman general Pompey subdued Judaea in 63 BCE (after which it became a client kingdom).[3] Consequently, it was a difficult time for the Jewish people. They had mixed loyalties to both Rome and Judaism. This mixed loyalty and Roman control made leadership among the Jewish people complicated and difficult. It was hard to have a united nation when the people were divided in its loyalty.

In addition, the advances made by Rome with respect to technology created a new chaos. Rome was highly advanced in its weaponry. "When the Roman army invaded Britain in force in the spring of AD 43, they brought with them technology that must have astonished the native Celts. To begin with, the Roman weapons were far better—they had good swords, spears, and several machines to throw missiles."[4] These new military advances meant significant change for the world as Rome exceeded the military technology of the day and would have forced cultures to try and keep pace. However, these were not their only technological advances. The Roman road system was unique for

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[3] Jona Lendering, "Wars Between the Jews and Romans: The Destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE)," Livius: Articles on Ancient History, http://www.livius.org/ja-jn/jewish_wars/jwar04.html (accessed June 16, 2011).

[4] Adam Hart-Davis. "Discovering Roman Technology," under "Ancient History," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/tech_01.shtml (accessed June 16, 2011).

its day and allowed people to travel much farther and easier.[5] This connected the world

and surrounding cultures like never before. This new interaction among cultures

challenged every culture to keep up with these advances. There were even advances in

the plumbing of the day. There are still the remains of the first flushing lavatory system

and bath houses with lead pipes.[6] This may not be significant in itself, but it was simply

another sign that life as first-century people knew it was changing.

The technological advances of the day meant that the people of the first century

were living in a time of continuous change. This upheaval would have made leadership

difficult, because leadership requires commitment and focus by its adherents. A society

enduring such rapid advances becomes problematic, because culture is in transition and

everyone is just trying to keep up with adjusting to a new way of life. Individually these

advances may not have caused too much disruption, but combined they provided the type

of change where society had to realign itself by adjusting to the change. This did not make

leadership impossible, but it made it more difficult and complicated because life for

people was already in a constant change mode. This time was similar to the modern age

when global society once again had to adjust rapidly to significant technological advances.

The second unique part of Jesus' leadership is that the Church considers Him to

be God in the flesh. In his Gospel, John writes that Jesus was the Word made flesh (John

1:1, 14). This signifies that Jesus was the embodiment of the glory of the Father. John is

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

writing that Jesus was God manifested in human form. This is later affirmed by the

apostle Paul when he writes that Jesus was equal to the Father (Philippians 2:5). In this

letter St. Paul confirms that Jesus was God. The Christian Church formally recognized

this as its official teaching at the Council of Nicaea in 325 when it affirmed the divinity

of Christ. [7] This is vital with respect to Jesus' leadership because then his life and actions

are considered divine and even more important to His followers. This means that Jesus'

teachings and life, as the embodiment of God, reveals to His followers the attitudes and

actions that are important in life and leadership to God. As such, the lifestyle Jesus leads

and the actions He takes in leadership express God's heart in this realm and are worthy

for consideration.

Leadership Characteristics of Jesus

Jesus' leadership was built on His sacrificial love and commitment to the people

whom God loved. The way He lived His life respecting, honoring, and empowering

people is a worthy example to follow. In this section, leadership characteristics of the life

of Jesus shall be examined to provide a firm biblical foundation for Christian leadership.

A Humble Leader

When considering the leadership qualities of Christ, the one quality that stands out

the most is humility. Perhaps no leader in history leads from a more humble position. As the

ultimate leader and God, Jesus emptied Himself as a mere mortal while on this earth

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[7] Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* vol. 1-2 (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990; repr., "The Council of Nicaea—325 AD," Piarist Rend, http://www.piar.hu/councils/ecum01.htm [accessed July 5, 2011]).

(Philippians 2:1-11). Jesus was God incarnate in flesh for a lifetime. The Son of Man gave up all the glory of heaven to share the love of His Father. Concerning Jesus' leadership, author and consultant Leighton Ford writes: "The most spectacular cross-cultural leadership in the history of humanity took place when the Son of God became a first-century Galilean Jew."[8] Jesus set aside all the privilege and rights of His position to become incarnate in the flesh in order to connect intimately with human community.

Jesus led from the position of first being a servant. He states, "The son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). One example of Jesus' heart as a servant is revealed in His willingness to wash the feet of the disciples (John 131-20). Although foot washing was a task for lowliest of household servants, Jesus took the task upon Himself during His last Passover meal. Jesus affirms this leadership from a position of servitude when He corrects the false notion of some the disciples as they attempt to gain positions of authority. Jesus states, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:25-26). Jesus lived and taught that not even the lowliest servant role was beneath the Son of Man.

A Compassionate Leader

A second major characteristic of Jesus' leadership style was His compassion. He had empathy for those He led and did not lead from a disconnected position of power (cf.

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[8] Leighton Ford, *Transforming Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL, Intervarsity Press, 1991), 32-33.

Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:1-11; John 8:1-8). The life experiences of those whom he led were addressed as He invited them to follow Him (Luke 19:2-10). While the Pharisees led by forcing their interpretation of the law on the people (cf. Matthew 12:1-14), Jesus' style of leadership included compassionately loving the people and leading by example.

He was a compassionate servant who took the time to truly see people. In John 4, there is the story recorded how he stops to talk to a Samaritan woman whom others would have considered an outcast. Unlike the Jewish leadership of His day, Jesus took time to understand her situation and recognize her needs. He did not impose His will, but took into consideration her present life experiences and then took time to address her questions. This provided the opportunity for the woman to come to an awareness of her own needs and accept Jesus' claims to be the Messiah. The result is that the woman went out and shared her newfound faith with many Samaritans (John 4:39).

This empathetic care and concern for those He led prompted far more than a mandated obedience to law. His life, call, and ministry created an inner response from those He asked to follow Him. When Jesus simply requested that Levi follow Him, the man got up, left everything, and followed (Mark 2:14). Peter and Andrew, as well as James and John, walked away from lucrative businesses and left it all behind to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22). Jesus' genuine concern for those He called and the invitation to be part of something not of this world caused people to joyfully sacrifice to follow Him. Essentially, through compassion, Jesus breathed into them a greater sense of purpose and destiny.

A Shepherd Leader

Jesus was a leader who emulated the characteristics of the shepherds of His day. Similar to a shepherd in ancient Israel, Jesus was a protector, provider, and leader for His followers. He puts their needs before His own and lovingly guided them in His ways.

In John 10 Jesus declares Himself to be "the good shepherd." This is in contrast to the Pharisees that attempted to lead by coercion and force and to the hired shepherds of the day. Hired shepherds worked for a living but did not have the same commitment to the protection and preservation of the sheep as the owner and primary shepherd. Michael Youssef in *The Leadership Style of Jesus* describes the tender relationship between sheep and their shepherd. He writes:

> Growing up in the Middle East, I was able to observe first-hand the tender relationship between the sheep and the shepherd. . . . For the shepherd, the reward comes in seeing that his sheep are contented, well fed, safe and flourishing, His energies are spent not just to make a reputation for himself, but rather to supply the sheep with the finest grazing in the lushest pasture.[9]

The well-being of the sheep was the shepherd's highest priority. Jesus calls Himself "the good shepherd," because He is the absolute example of the perfect shepherd. He can be trusted (cf. John 10:14). He is committed (cf. John 10:11). He knows the terrain and will lead His sheep to safety (cf. John 10:9). He pursues them, protects them from enemies, and knows them intimately (John 10:11-14). Jesus displays all the characteristics of a shepherd leader.

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[9] Michael Youssef, *The Leadership Style of Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 35-36.

A Prepared Leader

Jesus' leadership style was not situationally determined but was planned out and purposeful. Individual situations did not determine for Him His purpose and outcome. He was sent by the Father to redeem the world (cf. John 4:34); and although different teachable moments would arise on this journey with His followers, Jesus maintained His clear purpose and focus. He enlisted the twelve (cf. Matthew 10:1-4), mentored the seventy-two (cf. Luke 10:1-20), and then commissioned all of His followers to expand the Kingdom (cf. Acts 1:8).

In essence, Jesus was about His Father's business (cf. Luke 2:49; John 15:15) with precision. Bob Briner and Ray Prichard write:

> Jesus' master plan is the most brilliant, awe-inspiring one ever conceived. He repeatedly demonstrated his leadership abilities through the precision of his planning. In the seemingly small things—from the colt that was made ready for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, to the upper room that was made ready for the Last Supper-he made things happen by planning.[10]

Jesus had a planned direction for His life and His followers and did not let anyone derail Him from His course. In the desert, Satan attempted to distract Jesus from the Father's will and tempted Him to throw Himself down from the Temple to reveal His authority before it was time (cf. Luke 4:9-12). Jesus' brothers tried to disrupt Jesus' plans by encouraging Him to go and display His power in public (cf. John 7:1-9). Even the apostle Peter gets rebuked for attempting to interfere with the plans of Jesus and the path of the Father to the cross (cf. Matthew 16:23). Jesus was determined and focused on the will of

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[10] Briner and Pritchard, *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus*, 34.

His Father. He calls it His food and clarifies what He means by explaining, "My food . . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work" (cf. John 4:33-35). From the smallest of details to the larger picture of His passion, Jesus had a plan that complimented His leadership style.[11]

<div align="center">An Empowering Leader</div>

Jesus was a leader who trained, equipped, and empowered His followers for the task at hand. He focused on preparing them for the present journey and the journey that lay ahead after He was gone. He did this by teaching (cf. Matthew 13:24-30), explaining His teachings (cf. Mathew 13:36-43), preparing His followers to serve (cf. Luke 10:1-12), and then analyzing their service after their experiences (cf. Luke 10:17-20).

The world was a classroom for Jesus. Unlike the rabbis of His day, who spent countless hours in the academia of theology, Jesus never was schooled formally and His ministry featured the application of the nature of God. Over and over again, Jesus taught with parables, informing His listeners that the Kingdom of heaven was like the growing seed (Mark 4:26-29), yeast (Matthew 13:33), hidden treasure (Matthew 13:44), a woman who lost a coin (Luke 15:8-10), a shepherd in search of his lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7), and many other illustrations that common people would understand. Jesus recognized the value of providing His followers with the resources and training they needed to fulfill their calling in terminology they could comprehend easily and readily apply.

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[11] Ibid.

Jesus trained His followers much as He may have learned Joseph's trade in woodworking. In the traditional style of a master teaching an apprentice, Joseph would have shown Jesus how to do something, and then Joseph would have watched Jesus do it. Then Joseph would have let Jesus do it and simply would have checked in from time to time to answer questions or deal with difficulties as they might have arisen.[12] Jesus had a hands-on leadership style. He taught and lived out Kingdom principles. Then He gave His followers a chance to apply them (Luke 10:1-16; John 13:1-17). In the case of the sending of the seventy-two, He even gave them a chance to debrief on their experiences while providing direction and insight (Luke 10:17-24). Jesus empowered His followers not to remain followers forever but to become leaders and carry on His life and teachings for future generations (cf. Matthew 28:18-20).

Conclusion

Jesus was the perfect leadership example. He loved His followers with a sacrificial love that took them from where they were emotionally, spiritually, and physically to a place of engaged disciples ready to advance the Kingdom of God. He trained them in the teaching of God and then equipped them with the needed training and abilities to continue on even when He was no longer present. The fact the Church continues to exist to this day built upon the teachings of the prophets and apostles (cf. Ephesians 2:20) is a testament to His leadership style. It must be noted; however, that Jesus was a leader of a movement and not institution. He never organized His ministry

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[12] Ford, *Transforming Leadership*, 180.

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into an organized church. This is why this study of leadership begins with Jesus, but must be continued with St. Paul as his writings help establish this movement into an organized institution. These studies are important for the leadership of The Experience as they also transition from a start-up ministry into a lasting church.

Examination of St. Paul's Leadership Principles

In his letters, St. Paul addresses numerous leadership issues in the churches that he founded. In this section, some of these principles that are pertinent to the examination of communal leadership will be studied. They will be analyzed in order to provide a biblical foundation for The Experience's new leadership structure.

St. Paul was converted early in the life of the Christian Church (Acts 9:1-19). He immediately began to rise to leadership in his missionary journeys throughout Asia Minor (cf. Acts 13:13-52; 18:1-17; Galatians 2:11-21). His first missionary trips were taken with his partner Barnabus (cf. Acts 13:1-3). As they initially began their trips together, Barnabus is the recognized leader and his name appears listed in the scriptural stories (Acts 13:4-8). He was the mature believer and the church at Antioch knew his reputation. Along the way, Barnabus notices the significant calling on St. Paul's life and his unique mix of talents. After St. Paul's speech at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41), Barnabus quietly steps back and allows his partner to shine. After this event, whenever their names are listed together a silent shift occurs. From Acts 13:42 forward, St. Paul's name is listed first. Barnabus allowed his understudy to lead in his giftedness

As St. Paul ministered at various cities throughout Asia Minor, converts began to gather together to celebrate and worship (cf. Acts 17:1-4; 18:1-8; 19:1-10). The task of St. Paul was not to remain and become the pastor of any one congregation, so in his letters he wrote some initial thoughts on organizational leadership for these congregations. He instituted offices such as elders, deacons, and overseers (1Timothy 3:8-13; 5:17-25). St. Paul gave this direction to help these new churches create some structure on which to build. Within these letters, he also listed the qualifications for the offices and their primary functions. This brief study is not intended to be a detailed examination of St. Paul's organizational structure; rather, it is an exploration of whether these were timeless principles written by him as authoritative or simply a description of a beneficial way of how organizing a church can be accomplished. Also, some consideration will be given to the value that parts of these structures still hold for the North American Church today.

Leadership in the Early Church

In the early Christian Church, the Jerusalem council (cf. Acts 15:3-21) was organized with the leadership of the apostles offering guidance on a more global scale; however, there seems to be no preferred method of leadership that is identified or required in local congregations. Edmond Pressense writes: "The further we go back in the history of the Church, the more indefinite in character are all ecclesiastical offices. Their limits are not clearly or precisely laid down."[13] This is because the Church at its point of inception organized itself to meet its present needs, based on its knowledge of the prevalent

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[13] Edmond Pressense. *The Early Years of Christianity* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1879), 56.

leadership structures of the era. In Acts 6 there are seven men chosen to direct almsgiving and who were set aside for their zeal in their faith. This was an organized way of meeting a present need more than setting up a definitive leadership structure.

Pressense continues, "In the primitive Church all speak and act as they are moved by the Holy Ghost—there are no hierarchical distinctions."[14] The churches in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:3-21,) and in Antioch did have some authority and were respected, but this authority is theological in nature in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 21:17-26) and a means of support of encouragement in Antioch (cf. Acts 13:1-3). In the Jerusalem council some apostles— for example, James—did maintain some leadership functions (cf. Acts 21:17-26). They still had the significant distinction having been called and commissioned by Christ himself (cf. Matthew 10:1-4; 5-15), but they never created a local church leadership organizational structure. The church in Antioch recognized teachers and prophets (cf. Acts 13:1) but never set up a structure that was designed as authoritative throughout the churches that were organized under the influence of their ministry.

Paul's Prescription to Address Specific Leadership Issues

St. Paul helped to establish numerous congregations on his missionary travels and later assisted them in organizing their leadership structure. In his epistles, he provides guidance for the establishment of various offices within the local church setting.

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[14] Ibid.

Elders are mentioned three times (1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5), overseers twice (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9), and deacons are mentioned only once (1 Timothy 3:8-13).[15] These offices seem to deal more with function among the early believers than with offices that were first created and then established with a detailed job description. They seemed to have met the needs of the newly established Christian Church in the first century. It is not until later centuries when they became more formalized and official offices were established and organized.

With respect to The Experience, this ongoing discussion will examine the office of elder since it is used the most often in the Pauline epistles and still is advocated for today as a primary leadership office in the Church.[16] The institution of the office of elder began early in St. Paul's journeys. It seems as early as the first mission trip recorded in Acts 14 that it became the tradition of St. Paul and Barnabus to establish elders in the various congregations they helped create. Acts 14:23 reads: "And when they appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed." The text does not state why St. Paul used this model or that he was instituting it as divine. It seems simply to be a model that St. Paul had experience with as being effective. He seems to institute it to give these new worshipping communities some organizational structure.

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[15] Roger Gehing, *House Church and Mission* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2004), 268.

[16] Eldership as a primary leadership structure is advocated by Peter L. Toon, Roy Taylor, Paige Patterson, and Samuel E. Waldron, *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government*, ed. Steven B. Cowan and Paul E. Engle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004); Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* (Littleton: Lewis and Roth, 1995); Richard H. Swartley, *Eldership in Action* (Dubuque, IA: ECS Ministries, 2005); and Gene Getz, *Elders and Leaders* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003).

The use of the office of elder appears to be recognized at this time by the Jerusalem council as well. The first time any form of leadership is challenged in the first-century Church occurred at the Jerusalem church. A crisis arises in the Book of Acts concerning the need for new Gentile believers to be circumcised or not. This crisis is addressed by the Jerusalem council in Acts 15:6, which reads: "The apostles and the elders were gathered to consider the matter." The body making the decision seemed to be a combination of apostles and other leaders designated as elders. The office of elder is not a new creation of this new Jewish sect. It is found already in numerous Jewish synagogues in which the Jews met on Sabbath to read Scripture.[17] These were men who were revered due to their age and place in society.

The history of the office of the elder goes back to Jewish culture. Roger Gehing in his study on the early Church writes that the elder began not as an office but as an honor. He notes: "In the government of the contemporary Jewish community and synagogue, there was no office of elder but only the honorific title 'elder'"[18] This seems to be the case for the origination of the office. This may have been the origination of the elder, and then over time it became more than just a role of age and honor but an office of the Church. Gehing continues, "It could be, for instance, that early Christians, first in Jerusalem then perhaps in the Pauline mission as well, used the term 'elder' as a designation of age or honor much the

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[17] Ibid., 83.

[18] Gehing, *House Church and Mission*, 278.

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way it was used in the surrounding environment. Then over a period of time it became progressively more and more a designation of office."[19]

The designation of elder is not exclusive to the Jews. It was used as well as a title of respect among the Gentiles.[20] As a result, it would have been understood by both cultures. The author Pressense says that among the Gentiles the term "bishops and elders" were interchangeable and that among Gentiles the term "bishop" was used most often.[21] He asserts, "The name of bishop was more frequently used in the Churches founded among the pagans, because the ancient Greek were accustomed to designate the magistrates, whose functions in the State had some analogy with those of the elders in the Church, since it was their office to exercise vigilance over the interest of the republic."[22] This brief analysis reveals that the designation was a common term of the day used to designate those who have positions of authority in the Jewish community and the culture at large.

Later, the group of elders came to be commonly understood as the group that gives a church direction.[23] It was not the only position in the Church but seemed to serve as a guiding council for its work and ministry. Pressense bases his conclusions on Greek

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[19] Ibid., 279.

[20] R. Alabaster Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority Within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T and T Clark, 1994), 160.

[21] Pressense. *The Early Years of Christianity,* 348.

[22] Ibid., 349.

[23] Ibid., 279.

sources of the early church fathers, that churches were governed by a board of elders.[24] It does not seem like a complex system established by the Church and St. Paul but simply one that would work at this time of inception. The function of the elders is not clear from history, but they are a general guiding body for a church, Pressense continues, "It is difficult to determine their primary function. They formed a council which occupied itself with the general interests of the Church; its authority was limited, and always exercised with a practical recognition of the universal priesthood."[25] The elders seem to have been a body of respected leaders who provided guidance to the Church, as it moved forward into an unknown future.

One conclusion from this brief analysis is that St. Paul does not create a new office; rather, he mirrors what has been done in the Judaism and allows it to develop over time. This means that this style of leadership emerged and was not written as a pronouncement of St. Paul to the Church for all time. Pressense comes to this same conclusion in *The Early Years of Christianity* when he writes that such offices "were not directly and authoritatively instituted by God, but were created one by one as the necessity for them arose in the Church."[26] The early Church was at a time of crises in its birth stage and needed some structure, so it would natural for St. Paul, a former Pharisee,

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[24] Ibid., 348.

[25] Ibid., 279.

[26] Ibid., 359.

to draw upon his knowledge and experience to create a leadership structure that had been successful to maintain Judaism for some time.

Leadership by Giftedness

The leadership structure that originally was established by St. Paul for the first-century Church seems to be situational in nature and not written as authoritative for all time. He prescribed it for existing congregations to help them deal effectively with the leadership issues they were facing on the local level. It does not seem to be declared as a required structure for all generations.

For example, St. Paul wrote to a first-century church that was experiencing birth pangs (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 14:26-40; 1 Timothy 6:3-10). The birth of any organization comes with it unique challenges and possibilities. A first-century congregation was no different. Members were rejected by the existing Jewish community and experienced their own internal battles over theological issues. They had to find their footing in the midst of cultural change and persecution as well. It seems that since its inception, beginning with the Jerusalem council, elders were combined with the apostles to make official decisions and provide direction to this young movement. As time developed, elders moved from a position which designated respect to a body providing direction to the church but not in an authoritative manner.

The argument that elder leadership designation can be transformed into other forms of leadership structure in the Church today is not an accepted principle by everyone. Peter Toon et al. argue in *Who Runs the Church?* that a strict adherence to the

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first-century elder leadership model should be maintained. They write that St. Paul's organizational structure should be upheld, because it was "developed in the providential guidance of God from the apostolic age through the first few centuries of the Christian church."[27] History is always a powerful argument in theological circles; however, under the scrutiny of the previous study, one must exegete the practical means of organizational structure from what has been divinely ordained in Scripture. This does not mean that all the concepts must be deconstructed, but a church must not feel obligated to exactly replicate the model as written by St. Paul. For example, adhering to Toon et al.'s advice, today women would have to sit in church with their mouths closed (cf. 1 Timothy 2:12) and their heads covered (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:5); and, if they did not cover their hair, their heads would have to be shaved (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:6).

In fact, theologian Pressense recognizes that the early Church is led by the giftedness of its members more than an ordained structure. He writes: "All Christians were required to contribute of their zeal and piety to the general good. There are special offices, but these are very far from absorbing the whole activity of the church."[28] St. Paul in his letter to the church at Corinth encouraged everyone to serve out of their giftedness (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-30).There are designated leaders, such as elders, but they are more representatives of the body than rulers.[29] The early Church did have a guiding

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[27] Peter L. Toon, Roy Taylor, Paige Paterson and Samuel Waldron, *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government*, eds. Steven B. Cowan and Paul E. Engle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 24.

[28] Pressense, *The Early Years of Christianity*, 338-339.

[29] Ibid., 346.

council and they were called elders; however, they did not exercise an authoritative dictatorship. All Christians were expected to come and bring their leadership gifts, talents and zeal to be part of the work and ministry of the Kingdom (cf. Romans 12:6-8). It is true that the church of the future will need to maintain some directive body as leaders among leaders. Paul does lay a structural foundation for this, but how this develops does not need to look identical to a first-century church.

A Summary of Leadership Lessons of Jesus and St. Paul

The main argument of this thesis is that in this new millennium there will be significant changes made to leadership style and formation; however, this chapter argues for flexibility with some stability. The leadership style of Jesus cannot be improved upon and reveals timeless truths. Any good church leader must follow the life and example of "the good shepherd," as He instituted the Body of Christ (cf. Matthew 16:18). The five characteristics of being a humble, compassionate, prepared, empowering, shepherd leader are timeless traits. Modern-day church leaders must start here in their leadership preparation.

The second part of this chapter analyzed St. Paul's leadership principles that he established for the first-century Church. This organizational style was nothing new in that it reflected the leadership organization already exemplified in the Jewish and Roman culture at large. St. Paul relied upon his reservoir of training and knowledge to draw upon an organizational style that already worked. He did not seem to be establishing the structure by divine revelation but more as a situational leadership structure, useful in a

particular time and place. The truth that there needs to be some structure in place is timeless, whether it be a flatter structure or a more hierarchal structure. This study argues that in today's postmodern context, a flatter structure is more efficient. Neil Cole, in *Organic Leadership,* argues that the New Testament calls for a very simple structure of church. He says, "Only because of who God is are we, his body, able to function with order in a flat structure."[30] Even in a community leadership style there must be leaders among leaders. This would be a gathering of those individuals who by maturity and giftedness, and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, give guidance to the faith community at large.

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[30] Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 88.

CHAPTER 5

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EXPERIENCE
COMMUNITY SERVING IN A LUTHERAN CONTEXT

The Experience began its ministry as a "church within a church" through the

ministry of Peace With Christ Lutheran Church in Aurora, Colorado. As its sole pastor, I

have been a pastor in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod for twenty years, so the

theological perspective for this worshipping community is decidedly Lutheran. This

chapter will develop the theological implications for doing ministry in a Lutheran

context. It will consider the leadership of Luther in the midst of his own cultural

situation. Although Luther never wrote a document on leadership, his views will be

examined by assessing his writings and his own leadership action. His challenge to the

papal hierarchical authority of the pope and his writings relating to the priesthood of all

believers will be reviewed. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an examination of

Christian community as developed in *Life Together* written by the Lutheran theologian

Dietrich Bonheoffer.[1]

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[1] Dietrich Bonheoffer, *Life Together* (New York; Harper and Row Publishers, 1954).

Luther's Leadership Style

Luther lived and ministered in a world that was caught in its own chaotic storm. The shift to modernity brought as much disruption to the world as today's era and its present shift from modernity to postmodernity. By Luther's time the Renaissance was sweeping Europe.[2] It was a time of transition. Paul F. Grendler makes the following comment regarding the history of the Renaissance: "The approach here is that the Renaissance began in Italy about 1350 and in the rest of Europe after 1450 and that it lasted until about 1620. It was a historical era with distinctive themes in learning, politics, literature, art, religion, social life, and music. The changes from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance were significant."[3]

No one invention of this era, however, had more effect on Luther's role in this cultural upheaval than the printing press. For the first time in history, this allowed the copying of pieces of literature by mechanical means instead of by written hand. This encouraged the mass distribution of Luther's writings. In fact, the printing press might have provided the means for the expansion of the entire Reformation, making it a national movement and not just a regional disturbance.

Luther did not start out as a leader desiring to create a disruption in the Church nor did he seek to launch a worldwide movement. He began as a professor at Wittenberg

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[2] Steven Kreis, "The Printing Press: Lectures on Modern European Intellectual History," The History Guide, http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/paess.html (accessed May 14, 2011).

[3] Paul F. Grendler, *Europe, 1450 to 1789: Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group Inc, 2004; repr., http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Renaissance.aspx [accessed May 14, 2011]), s.v. "Renaissance."

University seeking to debate theological topics. His renowned nailing of the ninety-five theses to the door at Castle church on October 31, 1517 was not the act of one disgruntled monk;[4] rather, it was an invitation to debate, supported by the whole of the university facility.[5] E. G. Schwiebert writes in *Luther and His Times*: "The act was, therefore, not a step taken by a single individual, but the concerted action of the entire institution in opposition to the disgraceful indulgence traffic of the Dominican monk John Tetzel."[6] In previous times, these theses would have been debated but would not have gained much traction outside Wittenberg. However, the printing press allowed for the distribution of these theses. Historian Harold J. Grimm agrees and says, "The importance of printing in the spread of the reformation can scarcely be exaggerated."[7] The printing of Luther's writings provided the opportunity for the expansion of his thoughts, and it encouraged others to begin to question the religious power structures of his day.

Although Luther never writes specifically on the topic of leadership, due to his position as reformer he is thrust into the role of a leader. This lack of written literature does not mean that Luther did not have a leadership style. He acts as a definitive spiritual leader when he challenges the doctrinal issues of the Catholic Church. Also, he functions as an organizational leader as he leads a movement and challenges existing church structures.

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[4] Harold J. Grimm, *The Reformation Era* (New York: Macmillian Publishing Co. Inc., 1973), 91.

[5] E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 300.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Grimm, *The Reformation Era*, 130.

Luther Challenges the Papacy

Luther was a man of conviction who allowed his beliefs to lead his actions in challenging papal authority. His challenge of the authority of the papacy began with the writing of the ninety-five theses. Originally, he may not have meant to change the leadership structure of the Church. However, his actions would contest the boundaries of the pope. This would have far reaching implications as it questioned the grip of control the Roman Church had over much of Christendom.

The ninety-five theses were written in response to the sale of indulgences. Indulgences originally were granted by the priest of a congregation to commute the satisfaction of the penance of a sinner.[8] This power began to be abused by local clergy, so the power was assumed by bishops. The abuse of indulgences continued, which led to only popes reserving the right to grant them.[9] Then, in the thirteenth century, theologians established a storehouse of the "treasure of merits," which was a reserve of the good works of Christ.[10] This treasury allowed others to draw upon the abundant good works of Christ toward their own needed requirement of good works. By Luther's day, this action was so abused that the sale of indulgences had been granted so that the proceeds could be used to construct St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.[11]

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[8] Ibid., 38.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Martin Luther, "Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences," in *Works of Martin Luther*, trans. and eds. Adolph Spaeth, L. D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs

It was in writing his twenty-first thesis that Luther began to question the far-reaching authority of the pope. Luther asserted, "Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved."[12] In this thesis, he disputed whether the pope could pronounce forgiveness of sins through the sales of indulgences. Luther's challenge continued in thesis forty-nine. He wrote: "Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but altogether harmful, if through them they lose their fear of God."[13] Luther hints in this thesis that the sale of indulgences might be damaging to people's faith.

In thesis eighty-two Luther goes the farthest in challenging this accepted papal practice. He said, "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."[14] In this thesis, a priest of the church is challenging the pope's heart in issuing indulgences. Luther may have written this thesis for debate, but they were challenges to the office and authority of the pope and the leadership structure of the Church.

(Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915; repr., Internet Christian Library, http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/web/ninetyfive.html [accessed May 17, 2011]).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

Luther was a leader who led by conviction. He could not allow a practice that undermined his faith to go unchallenged. He was bound and directed by his conscience and convictions. He felt compelled to challenge the existing church structure. It must be noted that there is no evidence that Luther challenged the authority of the pope in order to establish a new church or a new church structure, but his questioning of the present leadership structure yielded that same end result.

Luther's greatest challenge to the papal structure of the Catholic Church is written later in his life. This time Luther was exerting his leadership authority by writing on his convictions that would lay a foundation for others who followed him. The treatise on the "Power and Primacy of the Pope" is composed by Luther and other Lutheran theologians in Smalcald in 1537.[15] By this time, the Reformation was in full swing, so Luther no longer softened his view of the pope and his authority. In this writing, Luther attacks the primary hierarchal leadership structure in the Catholic Church. Luther and the other theologians at Smalcald write:

> The Roman bishop arrogates to himself the claim that he is by divine right above all bishops and pastors. Then he adds that by divine right he possesses both swords, that is, the authority to bestow and transfer kingdoms. Finally, he declares that it is necessary for salvation to believe those things, and for such reasons the bishop of Rome calls himself the vicar of Christ on Earth. . . . These three articles we acknowledge and hold to be false, impious, tyrannical, and injurious to the church.[16]

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[15] Martin Luther, "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope," in *The Book of Concord,* trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 319.

[16] Ibid., 320.

These authors plainly claim that the pope as possessor of such power by divine right was false. This writing undermined the papal structure setup in that day. Luther's leadership wisdom in this paved the way for a new church structure. He needed to clarify what was wrong with the existing structure to allow for something new to flourish. Luther was decisive as a leader and provided direction for the Reformation movement. This eventually would lead to an entirely different church structure in the Lutheran Church.

A second example of Luther's leadership qualities is that he provided direction and vision when the Reformation was in crisis. This is witnessed in his decision to return to lead after being hidden away at the Wartburg Castle in 1521.[17] During his stay at Wartburg, Luther came to a new realization. Schwiebert explains it here:

> His new realization that a Reformation of the Christian church demanded a complete break with the outward Roman church caused him to reluctantly to accept the role of leader in building anew on the foundations which he had been discovering ever since he had accepted the professorship in the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg nearly a decade ago.[18]

This new realization changed Luther's leadership in the movement from being simply spiritual to being organizational as well. He realized that he could not simply write and challenge the teachings of the Church, but he needed to provide direction on how this transformation in Christendom took place.

The greatest example of Luther's courage and conviction as a leader comes when Luther decides he must leave the safety of the castle to reengage in the fight for the

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[17] Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, 516.

[18] Ibid., 520.

movement. He could not allow the movement to be derailed due to a lack of direction and leadership in doctrinal challenges and practice. He leaves the Wartburg castle in order to provide direction, vision, and inspiration for the Reformation movement.

There were two reasons for his exit from Wartburg. First, Luther had to be a strong leader who stood by his convictions to confront doctrinal challenges by Andreas Carlstadt and others of the Wittenberg faculty. The movement needed more of an inspirational leader and Luther had to become that leader. As a historian Grimm writes: "The situation at Wittenberg called for Luther's vigorous leadership."[19] Luther had to become a vigorous leader in order to provide inspiration and direction that were needed. He became that leader and led the way for the continued success of the Reformation.

The second reason for Luther's departure from the castle was due to further issues of violence and confusion. Without Luther's presence and leadership, some of the movement had degenerated into violence. Luther needed to come forth publicly to provide insight to a movement that was slowly losing its focus. As Luther reengaged with what was going on throughout Europe, he provided motivational leadership and guidance amidst confusion.

These events and others allowed Luther to begin to be recognized as more than just a theological leader in the Reformation movement. Luther was now a hands-on leader that offered focus and courage. He continued in the years to come to develop and direct the growth of new leaders. One of the ways he did this was through his table talks

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[19] Grimm, *The Reformation Era*, 121.

and discussions. These informal times provided a way for Luther to mentor and raise up future leaders. These table talks often were graced with the presence of many guests ranging from poor students to important officials of the church and state.[20] These talks provided the forum for communal inspiration and dialogue.

Luther led with conviction and determination. In more modern terms, it could be said that Luther had a vision for what the Church could and should be, and he was willing to stand for it. He came to the realization that he needed to lead and guide the people of Germany through this time of theological crisis. In a similar vein, The Experience must be willing to do the same as it continues through the cultural storms of today.

Luther's View on the Priesthood of All Believers

The primary teaching of Luther that impacts this present study on communal leadership is his writing regarding the priesthood of believers. In his writings, Luther distinguished between the ministry of the baptized and the office of the ministry. For him the office of the ministry was reserved for those who had been ordained, but Luther placed a new emphasis on those in the Body of Christ by calling them "the priesthood of all believers." His original intent for writing on the priesthood of all believers was to expose the fallacy that human beings needed another mediator before God than Christ (cf. Hebrews 9:15). Theologian Norman Nagel points out that Luther was not writing against the Roman priests to get rid of them in order to put "the priesthood of all believers" in

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[20] Ibid., 186.

their place.[21] Instead Luther wrote to clarify the distinction between the priesthood of every believer and the office of public ministry. Nagel translates Luther's teaching, originally in German, in this way: "There are indeed priests whom we call ministers. They are chosen from among us, and who do everything in our name. That is a priesthood which is nothing else than the ministry."[22] There are a select number of persons within the priesthood who are chosen to serve in the office of public ministry on behalf of the others, but all believers serve as priests who have access directly to Christ as the mediator between God and humanity (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5).

What exactly the role of the priesthood of all believers is in the Church has been a topic debated throughout the history of Lutheranism. In fact it is a present controversy in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. There are those who argue for a narrow definition which would conclude that the priesthood is only found among the ordained clergy and others who argue for a broader definition that this priesthood includes all believers.

While Lutherans understand Luther to teach that all baptized Christians are part of the spiritual priesthood, there is no complete understanding of the priesthood. One example of this confusion can be found in the debate over the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the public ministry, written in Kurt Marquart's

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[21] Norman Nagel, "Lutheran and the Priesthood of All Believers," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (October 1997): 281, http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/nagelnlutherpriesthood allbelievers.pdf (accessed May 16, 2011).

[22] Ibid.

Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics.[23] Marquart is a Lutheran seminary professor and

theologian who narrowly limits the "priesthood" to the office of the clergy. In this writing

he describes with great detail what the spiritual priesthood is not but does little to

describe what the priesthood is.[24] Dale Kleimola commenting on this text writes:

> Obviously more can be said of the role of the priesthood of all believers in
> relationship to the ministry of the church. However, one can be left with the
> impression in reading the theological debate that the theologian's main concern is
> to protect the Office of the Public Ministry from the intrusion of the priesthood of
> all believers into its private domain, "saving souls."[25]

This confusion on Luther's writings has led to a variety of views among Lutherans about

this topic.

James Pragman in *Traditions of Ministry* examines this issue in the writings of

C.F.W. Walther who was the first president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

Walter elaborated on his views in his ten theses on the ministry in his German work, *Die

Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt.*[26] In thesis one Pragman writes

that Walter asserts that the office of preaching must be distinguished from the office of

the priesthood.[27] He goes on to assert that Walther would not limit the priesthood only to

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[23] Kurt Marquart, *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics,* vol. 6 of *The Church* (Fort Wayne, IN: Fort Wayne Seminary Press, 1990), 103-111.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Kleimola, "The Relationship between the Office of The Public Ministry and the Priesthood of all Believers," 11.

[26] Pragman notes in his endnotes that this book is to be seen as the "position of the Missouri Synod and not merely as a theological treatise by Walter"

[27] James H. Pragman, Traditions of Ministry (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 143.

those who serve in the office of the clergy. For Walter, the term was much more inclusive than just limited to ordained pastors. This is supported in Thesis VII in which Walther writes, "God has established the congregation as the processor of the priesthood and all church power."[28] Pragman in his analysis asserts that Walter insisted there was only one public office of the ministry, but that this one office is exercised by a variety of offices.[29] Thus, individuals serving in other capacities in the congregation could be participating in the ministry.

A primary focus of this controversy is over the disagreement in Article V of the Augsburg Confession. It states in article V, "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments."[30] The debate is over whether this only refers to the clergy or it is a broader view of the priesthood. Translator and Editor Theodore Tappert in his edition of the Book of Concord confirms Walter's view when he notes in the footnote to this article, "This title would be misleading if it were not observed (as the text of the article makes clear) that the Reformers thought of "the office of the ministry" in terms other than clerical."[31] The leadership of The Experience affirms that Walter and Tappert clearly believed this phrase was broader in scope and not narrowly defined to the office of the clergy.

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[28] Ibid. 145.

[29] Ibid.

[30] The Book of Concord. Theodore G. Tappert. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) 31

[31] Ibid.

A study of Lutheran teaching seems to suggest at least five roles of the baptized laity serving as the priesthood of believers. The primary role according to St. Peter is that they "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness" (1 Peter 2:9). The primary function of all priests is to be proclaimers of the mutual grace that humanity has received in Jesus Christ.

Second, Luther understood that one of the functions of the priesthood of believers was to choose among themselves who would serve in the specific office of the public ministry. This never was meant to make a "two-level church" but to clarify who is serving on the behalf of the children of God. Nagel continues, "There is no 'two-level' church, with clergy above and laity below, or laity above (who hires and fires) and clergy below, or two churches, one visible and the other invisible. There are no levels."[32] Both those serving in the priesthood among the baptized children of God and those serving in the office of the public ministry should be working side by side.

A third function of the laity to address and judge matters of faith is targeted by Luther in his address, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" in 1520.[33] James H. Pragman reports in *Traditions of Ministry* that Luther points this way: "Because all Christians are priests and of the spiritual estate, they have the authority to test and judge

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[32] Nagel, "Lutheran and the Priesthood of All Believers," 286.

[33] Kleimola "The Relationship between the Office of The Public Ministry and the Priesthood of all Believers," 12.

in matters of faith."[34] The priesthood always needs to examine the teaching of those serving in the role of public ministry to make sure it is consistent with the Word of God.

A fourth function of the priesthood for the laity is to serve their neighbor. Nagel continues in his journal article by pointing out:

> What is confessed in the Small Catechism's Table of Duties (better Haustafel), and in the whole Doctrine of Vocation, is done without mention of priests, Yet it is priestly as toward the Lord—priestly because of the sacrifice of the lives of the baptized to the Lord as they serve their neighbor in his need, there where the Lord puts himself to receive our service.[35]

The baptized children of God are called to live out their lives in priestly function to their neighbor. As the priest represented God in the Old Testament, New Testament believers are to be the fragrance of Christ in the world (2 Corinthians 2:14-16) sharing His love.

A fifth function is noted by David Luecke in *New Designs for Church Leadership*. He asserts that God gave the leaders to equip the priesthood for works of service. He goes on to say, "God gave church leaders to get fellow members into place for the work of service to build fellowship in the body of Christ."[36] This is supported by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians when he writes: "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" (Ephesians 4:11-12). One main task of those who serve as

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[34] James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry*, 14.

[35] Ibid., 291.

[36] David Luecke, *New Designs for Church Leadership* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1990), 144.

pastors in the office of public ministry is to equip the other priests so that their gifts might be fanned into flame (cf. 2 Timothy 1:6).

Luther's intent in writing on the priesthood of all believers may have been to distinguish between the priesthood and the divine office of the ministry, but his writings did open the door for a more expansive view of the laity. This provided the foundation for the five historical views listed above. Ultimately, the priesthood of all believers is to "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you [human beings] out of darkness," (cf. 1 Peter 2:9), select those who serve in the office of public ministry, address and judge matters of faith, serve their neighbor, and embody lives of service. Luther may have not stated all of these functions specifically, but his revolutionary teaching that all believers are priests became the foundation for this movement. Luther's view was radical for his day. As a historian, Schwiebert writes: "In his statement of 'the priesthood of believers,' Luther destroyed the whole medieval concept of the divisions of society."[37] His writings liberated average people from simply relying upon their priests for their faith. They were now an active participant in their faith life.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Unique View of Christian Community

One significant writing that addresses the idea of community which adds further to this study is Lutheran theologian Bonhoeffer's classic work, *Life Together.* This book studies the concept of what it means for Christians to live in community together. Also, it

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[37] Schwiebert. *Luther and His Times*, 5.

evaluates the distinctness of Christian community as compared to other forms of community outside the Church.

Bonhoeffer was a German theologian writing at a time of tremendous cultural upheaval. He lived in Germany leading up to the time of World War II. He recognized early on that Hitler was dangerous for his country. As early as 1933, Bonhoeffer warned his country of this "leader' who would become a "misleader."[38] This led to the theologian having to leave his country and pastor for some time in London. Later, he returned to the country he loved but was executed for his role in trying to save it.[39] It was in the midst of these cultural crises and from a heart of love for his people that Bonhoeffer wrote his incredible work on the Christian community, *Life Together*.

The author uses a number of Scripture verses to point to the fact that community is vital to the followers of Jesus. He begins by referencing Psalm 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). This is a Psalm of ascents. This means that it is written for the people of God traveling on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship together during the times of festival.[40] It highlights the complexity of the unity provided by the faith. Derek Kinder writes that "all Israelites, including even debtors, slaves and offenders . . . were brothers in God's sight. The psalm

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[38] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 10.

[39] Ibid., 7.

[40] Arthur E. Cundall, "Book of Psalms," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 2, ed. Walter A. Elweell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988) 1803.

is surely singing . . . of living up to this ideal, giving depth and reality to the emphasized word, 'together.'"[41]

Unity is a key component to Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*, because the Gospel of Christ secures such a fellowship. He asserts, "Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is a rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate."[42] This is what makes this community unique. Bonhoeffer recognizes that the center of all Christian community is found in Jesus Christ. There is agreement among the brethren found in the common belief that all are sinners forgiven by the grace of God.

A major distinction that Bonhoeffer makes between community in a church and other organizations is found in his contrast of spiritual love to human love. Bonhoeffer writes: "Human love is directed to the other person for his own sake, spiritual love loves him for Christ's sake."[43] Human love for the author is purely subjective and seeks simply to bind another person to oneself. In contrast, spiritual love flows from the object of Christ's sacrificial love and is therefore much deeper. Christ stands between these relationships and not merely human affection. Bonhoeffer goes on to say that "human love can never understand spiritual love, for spiritual love is from above; it is something completely strange, new and incomprehensible to all earthly love."[44] The Bible asserts

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[41] Derek Kinder, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Psalms 73-150* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 452.

[42] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 30.

[43] Ibid., 34.

[44] Ibid., 35.

that this spiritual love is distinct from the love of this earth (cf. 1 Corinthians 13). The

reason for this is that this form of love flows from the very character of God (cf. 1 John

4:8). It is a love experienced between believers from a common experience of the

sacrificial love revealed in and through the Messiah Jesus. Christian community for

Bonhoeffer is based solely on a common faith in Christ.

Bonhoeffer emphasizes the diverse components of Christian community and the

value of it. He recognizes that the Church is a gathering of diverse people from different

backgrounds that have a commonality of faith. It is a fellowship in which encouragement,

joy, mutual strength, and support are provided for all participants.[45] Christian community

provides a place of refuge and celebration. The church is a community that celebrates a

common grace and faith.

A second important aspect is that Christian community is a place of mutual

encouragement. Bonhoeffer writes that believers need one another:

> We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ. What does this mean?
> It means, first, that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ, It means,
> second, that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ, It means, third,
> that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and
> united eternally.[46]

Members of the faith need one another as a source of strength and encouragement. A

person's spiritual journey was never meant to be a solitary experience. Also, Bonhoeffer

writes that Christ followers have need of one another as bearers and proclaimers of the

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[45] Ibid., 19.

[46] Ibid., 23.

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word of salvation.[47] The Church exists to build up believers. St. Paul writes: "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" (Hebrews 3:13). The Christian community provides a place where one can borrow the faith of another. There are times in life when one's faith is weaker than one's brothers or sisters in Christ. During these times, Christ followers can look to their brother or sister's faith to strengthen their own. Bonhoeffer goes on to say of the individual disciple, "He needs his brother solely because of Jesus Christ. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure."[48] The Christian community is the place where people are encouraged and find support.

This is a not a fantasy-laden view of community. It is a community founded in a common faith (cf. 1 Corinthians 12). The community of believers struggles and has crises just like any other community, but the foundation of Christ's sacrificial love keeps it together. Bonheoffer does not encourage the misconception that this is a perfect community. In fact, he desires that dreamers of a perfect community lose their false notions. He cautions, "Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. He who loves his dream of community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter."[49] In this way, the Christian community is not an ideal or perfect reality. It is a community where people struggle to

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 27.

stay close with one another and inevitably experience conflict as a result. Although it is

not a perfect community, it is divine nevertheless. This is because it is built upon a

common faith and held together by God and the supporting faith relationships (cf.

Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:19).

A Summary of Theological Insights Emerging from the
Lutheran Context

Historically, there was not much written until recently concerning leadership from

a Lutheran perspective. What is learned from Luther is that the Church is not to be a

domineering structure. The abuse of power exemplified in the papacy of the sixteenth

century is to be rejected; however, strong leadership qualities such as decisiveness,

discernment, and standing for the truth are important in every generation. Movements

benefit by having people guiding it and keeping it accountable.

Luther also challenges the domination of the laity as established by the Catholic

Church of his day. Luther may not have formulated the more modern "priesthood of all

believers" doctrine that recognizes and accepts the use of the laity's gifts in almost all

dimensions of ministry, but he did open the door for this concept by challenging the

exclusiveness of the clergy in his day. Luther taught that the laity was distinct from the

office of pastoral ministry, but both together served as priests before God.

Bonhoeffer adds greatly to the discussion of a communal leadership style in the

Church with his writing on the distinctiveness of Christian community. The unity

experienced by the body of believers connected in Jesus Christ is unlike any organization

in the world. It is not perfect and conflict will arise, but this sense of unity can provide

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the very foundation on which a communal style of leadership can grow. The Church is a community of people based not simply upon a belief system but a gathering of people rooted in Jesus the Christ.

PART THREE

A STRATEGY FOR EDUCATING AND INTEGRATING A
COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE AT THE EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 6

PILOT LEADERSHIP PROJECT TO EXPLORE A NEW COMMUNAL
LEADERSHIP PARADIGM FOR THE EXPERIENCE

This chapter will set the foundation for the development of a new communal

leadership model at The Experience worshipping community. The pilot project begins with

educating the existing primary leadership body, which is the board of ministers and other

key leaders. The content of this training will address the following dynamics: The

Experience's current cultural climate, the eight foundational principles of communal

leadership, the ten characteristics of communal leadership, the style of Jesus' leadership,

St. Paul's organizational leadership, the uniqueness of the Body of Christ, and the need for

strong visionary leadership that is fluid enough to allow new styles of leadership to emerge.

The intended result is that the present leaders will feel empowered to release others into

ministry and feel equipped to give support and direction. This should result in renewed

creativity in the types of new ministries that are begun by members of the body, a

noticeable increase in the percentage of people involved in these activities, people feeling

empowered and encouraged to serve, and a measureable increase in the number of

missional ministries of the church. Another end result is that the ministries such as the

present outreach to the homeless take the next step in expansion. This is a large step as it would include acquiring a building.

The first objective is gain the support of the leadership. They must be educated and support the new model before the remainder of the community can be lead using this model. The first six months will be focused on gaining their support, wisdom and insight. They will then begin fleshing this structure out for our community by connecting the supporting ministries to where they will fit into this system. This training will begin with the leadership; however, if this structure is to be lasting it must be supported by the entire community (Chapter 7). The balance of the two year time table will be spent on leading the community in restructuring, adapting and flourishing in this new model.

Strategic Goals and Objective: Transitioning from the Present Leadership System into a Communal Leadership Structure

The initial goal is to have the present leadership on board during the first six months. The second goal is to have the community involved in the process by the end of the first year. This will be discussed in Chapter 7. Then the second and third years will be used to permeate the change throughout the entire organization. Evaluation and adaptations will be made through this process. The long-term objective is for the entire community to be redesigned under this new structure by the third year so that by then the focus will be again primarily on advancing the Kingdom of God. The new leadership paradigm simply will become part of the life of The Experience worshipping community.

In order to fulfill this objective, the first principle that must be taught to the entire community beginning with the present leadership members is a definition of communal

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leadership. This style of leadership is a flatter system that seeks to empower all members of the community to discover their gifts and then use them by leading others in their unique area of giftedness. It is as a flow chart that flows sideways with authority dispersed throughout the system and not residing in just one central location. It is open enough for many to participate and lead without official titles or roles established by some prearranged guidelines. It is assumed that some predetermined roles must remain for the sake of simple clarity and function. For this reason, there will remain the offices of treasurer, financial secretary, and other ministries that are vital to the ministry of the church such as children's and teen ministries. Also, this system recognizes that some individuals never will desire to participate in any leadership capacity or develop any leadership gifts. It allows for the percentage of The Experience's membership that may desire to sit on the sidelines and not participate.

The initial idea stemmed from the article written by leadership consultant Bullard.[1] The second chapter of this project used it to create the eight foundational principles of communal leadership. Bullard in this article recognized that the local church follows leadership trends; however, he suggests that the church lead into what he has determined is a possible new leadership structure in the future.[2] This project is an attempt to create such a communal structure for The Experience.

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[1] Bullard, "Abandon Committees, Skip Teams and Embrace Communities."

[2] Ibid.

The Experience's communal style of leadership will seek to help individuals discover their God-given dreams and visions for their lives and then assist to empower them to serve in those areas. This style recognizes that one tension with leaders growing up in a postmodern world is burnout from the leadership structures used in their daily lives in the business realm. In leadership meetings, present leaders in The Experience on occasion have stated that they are burned out on the modern forms of over-structured leadership and it is not what they desire in their church setting.[3] As stated in Chapter 1 of this discussion, postmodern- minded people are distrustful of larger organizations and express the need for a church structure that releases them into a lifestyle of service and does not force them into a fixed, prearranged system.

The way that this structure already exists in the life of The Experience community was a recent topic of discussion at the leaders' retreat for 2011.[4] In a discussion on defining the uniqueness of our body, one key point was made that the strength of The Experience community is the way we release people with their gifts to create unique and creative opportunities for their lives and for The Experience community. One leader stated that the power of our body was that we did not have predetermined roles that we seek to get people to squeeze into in order to fulfill our designed ministry. Instead, we help people discover their giftedness and ministry visions and then empower them to use

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[3] This was stated by several leaders in a leadership meeting during the foundational years of The Experience. Founding leaders of The Experience, leadership meeting, Aurora, CO, May 2003.

[4] Leadership Retreat, held at Concordia Lutheran Church, Steamboat Springs, CO, in October 2011.

these skills in leading others in ministry that advances the Kingdom of God. This style of leadership has created unique ministry opportunities through The Experience.[5]

One ministry example is "pisteuo," which is The Experience's Color Guard ministry. A color guard is a sporting competition that combines artistic skills with athletic skills in a presentation combining the use of flags, sabers, and wooden rifles. This may seem like an odd ministry for a church, but it began in the heart of a person who had competed in these competitions while in high school. This person noticed that this was an area that was experiencing no Christian influence in Colorado and had many participants who were not connected to any church due to their lifestyles. She believed that The Experience could become a major influence in this community. In 2004 The Experience began this ministry and invited participants from the local high schools to participate. Since that time, this ministry has been recognized for serving this community, has noted leaders on the state board, and even has helped other church begin ministries that reach into this community.

A second example is the world mission influence that is being led by individuals, except for one, who previously never served in leadership positions in the church. The Experience for numerous years has participated in mission trips both in the United States and in other countries. After numerous trips and interactions with other people who were involved in mission trips with other organizations, some Experience members noticed that many people participate in mission trips but are not dramatically changed by this

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[5] Ibid.

experience. During The Experience mission trips they participated, significant numbers of people were having life-altering faith experiences. These leaders decided to develop a system to lead other believers and non-believers on mission trips that were work trips designed with a retreat style setting. These were designed as mission trips where people are challenged to work in places that can use their help. At the same time, these participants have significant opportunity to discover and grow their own faith journey or, for some, begin a Christian faith journey.

The result has been a unique mission trip structure that leads people from numerous churches to rediscover their own faith while serving God in various parts of the world. This led to the discovery that the postmodern young adults The Experience works with prefer to actively participate in helping others and not just support organizations that do so. These leaders discovered their leadership gifts in the present leadership system of The Experience, which already has begun to adapt to this communal method of leadership which assists individuals in discovering their leadership abilities.

The communal structure that The Experience will adapt recognizes Jesus' unique ability to lead others and will help them to discover the way God has designed them for ministry. In Chapter 4, this study examined how Jesus lived at a time of transitional culture and how He was a humble leader who empowered others. For this reason, the communal leadership structure deliberately will embody His characteristics: humility that does not dominate others, shepherding that gently guides instead of drives, and empowering in a way that releases people into self-discovery.

The Experience's new communal style also recognizes the value in St. Paul's leadership directions. For this reason, it will be a system that embraces both the freedom they allow and builds upon scriptural truths that are timeless. Chapter 4 argued that St. Paul designed his leadership structures based upon his experience and the needs of the churches he was mentoring but that these designs were essentially situational in nature. The Experience's communal leadership will celebrate St. Paul's examples and the freedom to adapt leadership to a community's present circumstances and at the same time hold to some principles that are applicable in any culture. St. Paul in Romans 12:8 lists the gifts present in the Body of Christ and labels leadership as a separate unique gift. The Experience's new structure still honors this concept. There are those who have the specific ability to be in roles that require a unique niche in decision making, visioning, and planning that are not a common gift to all in the body of believers. In The Experience's communal leadership role, these individuals will be considered leaders among leaders.

This communal organization of leadership is not entirely new for The Experience, since it has been emerging naturally amidst the fire of ministry over the course of its history. In Chapter 2, this study addressed The Experience's history of attempting to adapt to other previously created structures which had no lasting impact. The result has been a journey to discover the uniqueness of this body of postmodern Jesus followers. The Experience has traveled a road into discovering the heart of the community, and the leadership style that flows from it more fits the community than does a predetermined structure imposed from outside. This new structure slowly has been developing as a part

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of The Experience's journey in attempting to find its own inner voice for ministry. In this light, the organizational and communal style of leadership contained within this strategy is not completely new but rather an organic reflection of the changing nature of The Experience worshipping community.

A Pilot Leadership Project for the Present Leaders

This pilot process began in October 2011 with a retreat event for the twelve present members of the leadership team and continues through a series of teaching times combined with periods of self-discovery. The initial retreat was held at Concordia Lutheran Church in Steamboat Springs, Colorado and was led by me as the founding pastor. This initial retreat served as a time of self-reflection and analysis of The Experience's present ministry. This weekend retreat began with a study of the postmodern culture to refresh the leaders on what they had studied in the past. A discussion followed based upon how this culture has shaped and molded all of their lifestyles and the ministry of The Experience. This was one of the moments of self-discovery.

The self-discovery moments were times scheduled into the leaders' gatherings for the free flow of discussion and learning from their mutual experiences. This time allowed for the free flow of discussion so that one another's experiences could add to the conversation. The goal of these times was for all to discover together how The Experience has arrived at its present situation.

The retreat continued with a study of the history of the community and its attempts to engage different leadership's styles. Stephen R. Covey calls this "getting our frame of

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reference."[6] He writes: "None of us see the world as it is but as we are, as our frames of reference, or 'maps,' define the territory."[7] Those in leadership first had to gain an understanding of how they have arrived where they are in order to determine their future together. This included a self-discovery time with open sharing among the leaders. This allowed everyone to draw upon their mutual experiences to determine the lessons they had learned together over the years of the ministry of The Experience. The attempted leadership styles that were examined included the following: a large (twenty to thirty people) initial visionary community, fractal leadership, a visionary leadership team approach, and teaming. This self-discovery included an evaluation regarding which part of each structure had worked for the community and which failed to meet its unique needs. This provided a "frame of reference" for the remaining training times spent together.

Content of the Training Events

The retreat has been followed by several training events to continue occurring over a six-month timeframe designed to move The Experience's present leadership ahead in instituting a communal style of leadership. These events are on a variety of topics ranging from the present cultural turmoil to the foundational principles and characteristics of communal leadership. They are held at the Peace with Christ Lutheran church facility in Aurora, Colorado. Each training event is approximately two hours in length and also is led by me as pastor. Each event combines times of teaching and

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[6] Stephen R. Covey, *Principle-Centered Leadership* (New York: Fireside Books/Simon and Schuster, 1992), 109.

[7] Ibid.

interaction among the participants to discuss the components of the study and to address how each section connects to and affects The Experience community currently.

The Dynamics of Ministry in an Age of Cultural Turmoil

One of the initial training events is a study on the information addressed in Chapter 1 of this paper regarding the characteristics of this present era's cultural storm. This provides time for analysis and discussion on postmodernity, living, and ministering in a post-Christendom world, and developing a leadership structure in a post-structural context. The leaders of The Experience have grappled with the content of this study for over five years now, so only minimal time is needed to refresh their frames of reference. The leaders cannot shrink back due to these challenges but must allow the Spirit of God to direct them in the midst of the cultural crises in which they live and minister. The leaders need to recognize that a time of crisis provides the space for unique opportunities. Bosch writes that it is "important for people to know that to encounter crisis is to encounter the possibility of truly being the church . . . crisis is therefore not the end of opportunity but in reality only its beginning."[8]

In this way, the present cultural storm can offer the opportunity for the birth of new orders that will direct future growth for The Experience. This does not provide an easy framework in which to create a leadership and perform ministry, but it is the one in which The Experience serves. The leaders must look for leadership patterns amidst the storm. Gibbs aptly describes this challenge for modern-day leaders: "The church needs to

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[8] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 3.

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be led by those who can live with untidiness but can see organizational patterns in the midst of chaos. Leaders need to be familiar with the recurring and widespread themes in our culture."[9] This learning task for leadership growth will be The Experience's attempt at finding an organizational pattern in the midst of chaos.

This examination occurs during the open times of discussion as the present leaders evaluate both the past leadership structures that have been attempted and the present characteristics of The Experience community. In the examination of the past leadership structures, the leaders discuss why each structure did not fit The Experience community. This provides insight into why this postmodern-minded community is unique. This group also discusses recurring themes they recognize in the life of the community that will affect a new organizational structure.

<div align="center">Teaching the Components of Communal Leadership</div>

Once the culture and history of The Experience has been examined, there will be numerous teaching events on communal leadership. The focus of these events will begin with teaching the eight principles and the ten characteristics of communal leadership. Additionally, time will be spent on the present leaders' role in this new structure and the importance of maintaining a missional culture through the organizational system. This will create the foundation on which to expand this organizational structure to the remaining members of the community.

This will begin by teaching the value of maintaining some structure. Mead in *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church* writes: "The forms and structures of our

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[9] Gibbs, *LeadershipNext*, 105.

churches have served well to bring the truths of the faith to this generation, but they have also become so calcified and rigid that they block communication of the insights of the faith."[10] Participants in the pilot process will learn that members of the new generation need modern forms of communication and structures that it can grasp in its own context. They will learn that a new communal style of leadership does not mean abandoning all structures. "Sociologists have pointed out that any social organization, in order to persist, must have boundaries, must maintain structural stability as well as flexibility, and must create a unique culture."[11] This new structure will not abandon all aspects of the past leadership configuration but rather will seek build upon them.

Trainees will come to understand that a communal leadership method does not abandon structure but springboards from the existing structure to create a new culture. This communal style will need to be designed in a way that it can be adapted to the organization's present culture. The eight principles and the ten characteristics are not a new leadership formula; rather, they serve as a launching point.

The key to leadership in this new context is "not replication, but innovation" and involves "imagination" rather than "implementation." The purpose is not to "follow the procedures" but to "imagine and create."[12] The foundational principles and characteristics of communal leadership described in Chapter 2 of this discussion are designed in such a way to leave room for imagination and creativity in an organization's specific context.

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[10] Mead, *Five Challenges for the Once and Future Church*, 17.

[11] Bosch. *Transforming Mission*, 165.

[12] Leonard Sweet, *Aquachurch* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 1999), 210.

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For this reason, training sessions for both the present leaders will be developed to analyze these eight foundational principles of communal leadership and the ten characteristics of communal leadership. During the times of training, each component will be discussed and analyzed; then, it will be determined how each is already present in The Experience worshipping community and what needs to happen so that each can be developed further.

A New Testament Ministry

The Experience is first and foremost a Christian worshipping community following the path blazed by its founder and Messiah, Jesus. The example of Jesus' life and ministry as examined in Chapter 4 will be another teaching component of the leaders' time together. The leaders will spend time examining the characteristics of Jesus' leadership. The goal will be to make sure that this new structure does not stray from the heart and message of its founder. This will include a study of Jesus' traits as a humble and compassionate shepherd leader as well as His example as a prepared and empowering leader.

As leadership of The Experience moves into the future, it must have some structure with significant flexibility while not forsaking its biblical or historical foundation. This is a challenge for all younger churches as identified by Ward in his book, *Liquid Church.* He writes: "What is needed is a more flexible church, one that is able to respond to the changing needs of people. The challenge for the liquid church is

how it can do this without losing its theological heart."[13] Jesus' example and message need to remain foundational for The Experience community.

The pilot leadership participants then will study the organizational structure described by St. Paul as addressed in Chapter 4 of this paper and the theological perspectives of Lutheranism as addressed in Chapter 5. The primary focus on St. Paul's writings will be both on the situational nature of his leadership descriptions and the importance of having a gathering of leaders with some authority and directional capability. Time will be allotted to do further analysis on the role of "elders" as used by St. Paul, as examined in Chapter 4. The present leaders will fulfill some of the same functions that the elders later came to satisfy in the early Church. Like the early elders, they will be commonly understood as a body of respected leaders who provide guidance to the church as it moves forward into an unknown future. They will form the group that gives the church a common direction. The unique history and the teachings of the Lutheran Church will be examined as well to give guidance and direction to this communal organizational structure. The historical development in the Lutheran Church regarding the concept of the "priesthood of all believers" will be emphasized.

<center>Leaders among Leaders</center>

Since The Experience community is a gathering of postmodern-minded individuals who prefer to be actively involved in the direction and vision for the community, and St. Paul's principles allow for situational leadership structures, the

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[13] Ward, *Liquid Church*, 64.

present leaders will be trained to be leaders among leaders. The present leaders will be taught the wisdom of not being a domineering team but one that seeks to empower and release others into their giftedness. They will be taught how to help individuals discover their own ministry visions and how to equip others to live out their lives of faith. They will start by spending time with members and listening to their unique story, paying particular attention to the parts of their story that resonate with the member as an individual. They will help to identify the themes and passions that come across in that story. Then they will assist the members in the process of how their unique gifts and talents can be used in missional living. They will practice this by beginning to listen to one another's story to determine if where they are serving resonates with their own life experiences and passions.

The leadership participants will learn that leading means not serving from a top-down position but from a position of walking beside others to motivate them. There are four key characteristics that will be taught to this gathering of leaders to guide them into the future: discernment, being inspirational, becoming transformational, and being an agent of empowerment. These are foundational in the attempts to guide others to live out of their giftedness.

First, it is important for key leaders to be discerning, because they need to grasp key components of each person's life and story. Today's Church lives in the information age. Leaders among leaders will have to deal with information on a much more global scale to make it manageable and discernible for others. Gibbs agrees and recognizes the need for this trait among future leaders when he writes:

The arrival of the information age has had a profound effect on leadership, with information assimilation replacing positional authority. Leaders must learn to integrate information and insights from multiple sources and interpret them in the light of scripture. One vital component that requires time and attention, both individually and collectively, is hearing directly from God. Prophets are people who have learned to listen attentively.[14]

The members of The Experience are very globally aware and technologically savvy. The present leadership will have to assist people in sifting through all of this information to understand how this helps individuals live out their Christian faith.

A second characteristic leaders of leaders at The Experience must learn to perform is how to be inspirational to other leaders. Every individual in this postmodern world is bombarded with thousands of images on a daily basis. The participants at The Experience need an image of what life as a Jesus follower might look like in their present context. The leaders among leaders need to provide that image in a way that appeals and encourages others on their faith journey. Gibbs explains, "Inspirational leaders motivate others through their own modeling of commitment and confidence."[15] This gathering must accept the mantle of leadership that blazes a path for other leaders to follow. Their lives are on display in order to encourage others to live out their lives for Christ. The writer of Hebrews states it this way, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). This group is to be the ones that have the task of spurring others on in their faith.

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[14] Gibbs, *LeadershipNext*, 159-160.

[15] Ibid., 157.

These initial leaders will have to inspire both with their lives and with their words. This inspiration will occur in the one-on-one interviews discussed in Chapter 7 of this ongoing discussion. Leaders will need to learn to take responsibility for verbally inspiring the other members of the community along their faith journey. Hirsch further describes the concept:

> Inspirational leadership involves a relationship between leaders and followers in which each influences the other to pursue common objectives, with the aim of transforming followers into leaders in their own right. It does this by appealing to values and calling without offering material incentives. It is based largely on moral power and is therefore primarily internal.[16]

This mutual encouragement will need to be modeled by the existing leadership in order to inspire others to participate in this leadership model. They will use their experiences with how the present staff has encouraged and inspired them as well as each spending time individually with the pastor during these first six months to see this modeled out more in their own lives. Then they will become the examples over the two-year implementation process. In the midst of a "perfect storm," there need to be a few who fulfill the role of a captain, helping others steer directly toward the lighthouse. This will be one role of these initial leaders.

The third characteristic involves being transformational. This means the key leaders must provide a place for others in the community to explore and embody their God-given visions and dreams in a way that transforms their lives. The *Transformational Leadership Report* states that transformational leaders raise the bar by appealing to higher

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[16] Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 117.

ideals and values of followers.[17] In this session, leaders will be challenged to support

others by assisting them in identifying and then living out their dreams and values. Gibbs

further elaborates on transformational leaders by contrasting them to connective leaders:

> Connective leaders are more than transactional leaders. The latter are skilled at
> negotiating differences and creating short-term alliances based on consensus and
> compromise. While they may be skilled at negotiating, their approach is not as
> good at producing synergy as that of the connective leader. Transformational
> leaders connect and combine rather than divide and conquer. They join their
> vision with the dreams of others. Instead of a focus on common enemies,
> transformational leaders strive to overcome mutual problems. And in the end they
> create communities that do not merely clone the like-minded but embrace
> diversity— provided there is prior agreement on mission, vision and values.[18]

Pilot participants will be taught to become transformational leaders by embracing the

dreams of others and combining them with their own to create a new future. This will

foster a visionary environment in which all members are encouraged and valued.

This leads to the fourth characteristic of this team of leaders among leaders, which

is to be empowering. Empowering leaders not only assist individuals in grasping their

dreams and values; they assist in helping them obtain the needed abilities and resources

to release those into reality. This combines equipping them with the right resources and

connecting them to avenues for training. This means that the community as a whole must

maintain the commitment to providing the resources for this to occur. Although, this

characteristic will be part of the training sessions, it will take time for the present leaders

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[17] Richard Cox, *The Transformational Leadership Report*, 2007, Transformational Leadership, http://www.transformationalleadership.net/products/TransformationalLeadershipReport.pdf (accessed October 19, 2011), 4.

[18] Gibbs, *LeadershipNext,* 158.

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to have knowledge of all the resources. In the beginning, as pastor, I will need to provide these resources to the leaders.

Empowerment first is embodied in the relationships within the community setting. The ministers at The Experience will be taught to comprehend that their role always is set in the context of relationships. Since The Experience embodies a postmodern culture, the role of community within its new leadership structure is paramount. The Experience community itself rises and falls on the quality of those relationships. There are not many things worth dying for in today's context, but as a leadership guru Depree understands that in today's context relationships are one of those things. He writes:

> I believe that our urge for community is worth dying for—community as a society, a community as towns and cities, communities as companies and colleges and churches. . . . To me, as a leader, community is a magical word. Communities are a basic need for almost all of us. They form us, and they become our places of realized potential. Since it is easier to be technically proficient than relationship proficient, leaders who commit to helping people develop always do so in community.[19]

In the same way, The Experience community will provide the context for the present leaders to engage in relationships where they can unleash the gifts and callings of others in the Body of Christ. The church provides a place of unique relationships where people from diverse backgrounds come together as members of the family of faith. This is the uniqueness of the Body of Christ among all other organizations, as described by Bonheoffer in *Life Together.* He emphasizes that the Body of Christ is a gathering of diverse people from different backgrounds that have a commonality of faith. Leaders of

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[19] Depree, *Does Leadership Have a Future?* 11.

the future need to commit to developing the people that God has provided in their local church setting.

Maintaining a Missional Church Culture

A missional church culture is one that releases people to expand their view of service beyond simply being church-related ministry roles. Maintaining a missional church culture in this post-Christendom world already has been described as one of the ten characteristics of future communal leadership;[20] however, there is this unique challenge of translating that into the lives of The Experience members and not just into more ministry roles adapted by the church. The Lutheran Church in the past has created ministry positions and then attempted to fit the members into these ministries. Missional leadership is about releasing people into a lifestyle of service and not just into pre-organized, functional roles at a designated church location.

Mellani Day, dean of Entrepreneurism at Colorado Christian University, is attempting to address this unique issue from the perspective of her business students. She relates that many Christian leaders in business today already live with the concept of being missionaries to their culture through their business. The part they find restrictive is that church leaders do not recognize their service in their business lives as ministries of the church.[21] The problem, already addressed in this study, is that most church leaders

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[20] See Chapter 3 for further details regarding this portion of the discussion.

[21] Mellani Day, dean of Entrepreneurism at Colorado Christian University, interview by author, Denver, CO, July 8, 2011.

only tend to authenticate ministries that can be placed under the umbrella of their church activities.

In this pilot leadership project The Experience leaders, as well as missional leaders of the future, will learn to journey together to discover ways to authenticate the use of people's time and talents in ministry that go beyond traditionally held views as to what are religious activities. This means that leaders will need to affirm aspects of ministry that are occurring outside the traditional church setting. One example is a member at The Experience who works for Office Depot. He is a store manager who also volunteers in assisting the company in using its capital to make a difference in the community. He views this role as part of his ministry. It provides financial resources to make a difference, and he believes his faith can influence company decisions and fellow workers as they give back to their communities. A second example is a high school teacher who views his occupation as a vehicle for ministry. Although he cannot teach his faith in a public school setting, he can influence the lives of others and respond to an individual's questions when students ask him about his faith experiences. Ultimately, it is hoped that The Experience can raise up leaders whose roles are to authenticate and encourage the use of gifts and talents of those in the community that stretch beyond church activities into everyday life.

Allowing Space for New Organic Forms of Leadership to Emerge

The training events for the present leadership of The Experience also include reading books on being a fluid church, discussions on fluid leadership, and trips to Denver

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churches who are creatively dealing with some of the similar issues. This has begun with the reading of two books that go into more detail in these futuristic components of leadership. The participants have been asked to read Ward's *Liquid Church* and Gibbs' book, *LeadershipNext*. These two resources address the need for ever-changing leadership moving into the future. These readings will lead into deeper discussion amongst the participants on how all forms of leadership in the future need to allow for the growth of emerging forms that respond with ever-presenting challenges.

Next experiential learning experiences will be created by meeting as a group with other churches on the same journey in the greater Denver area.[22] This was done when the founding members were deciding what type of church they wanted to create in The Experience. These trips and learning experiences were invaluable in forming the present Experience community and will continue to serve as a resource for remaining relevant in today's society.

The Experience initial leaders will have to take into account the fluid nature of leadership as it formulates its new patterns. Like the issue of missional living for business leaders, new problems are going to arise in this time of transition. If a structure is too rigid, it will not allow for the ability to address these emerging issues. Sweet writes that leadership is like a dance. "Part of interpersonal relationships is learning the different steps and rhythms of people. When two people feel each other's beat, they learn when to

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[22] Examples of these churches are The Next Level Church, The Scum of the Earth Church, and Pathways Church which are located in the greater Denver area.

lead, when to follow, and when to stand and enjoy the music."[23] The constant nature of change in this present culture in which The Experience ministers requires that leadership of the future be able to adapt to the continuous change that it is facing.

The process explained in this chapter beginning with the present leaders is an attempt to further initiate communal leadership into The Experience community. The goal is that by the end of this first six months the present leaders will have gained an understanding as to the boundaries of this structure and be ready to address how the present ministries will fit into it and how future ministries will connect. Also, they must feel equipped enough to be ready to move the other members of the body along in this transformation process. Their knowledge and enthusiasm will be key for the success of a leadership transformation that will gain support throughout the community. There will be a final evaluation time with these leaders to make sure they are discipled in this model and feel ready to lead others into it. The development of the present leaders throughout this entire process will be the main focus of the pastor; however, since no leadership change is thoroughly complete without the support of the entire community Chapter 7 will discuss how this structure will start to take shape in the life of the entire community.

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[23] Sweet, *Summoned to Lead*, 106.

CHAPTER 7

INTEGRATING A COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP MODEL AT
THE EXPERIENCE

The next step in moving The Experience community into a communal style of

leadership is integrating the new yet flexible framework into the life of the entire

community. This new style of communal leadership cannot be complete without the

equipping and training of the entire community. The initial goal is to equip the present

leaders, but the final outcome is that the entire community supports this system and feels

empowered to lead and create new ministries. Once the initial participants have gone

through their six months of training and analysis, then the members of the entire

community will be given the opportunity to participate in this system. There are no

leadership books on which to build this model, so the process will need to include periods

for self-discovery and evaluation along the way. This will require times of teaching that

allow for processing and change. A desire to simply find a solution and apply it must be

avoided. This needs to be a process of discovery and adaptation, because it will be a

learning journey for all participants at every level. In *The Missional Leader,* change

leaders are compared to midwives: "The leader is like a midwife assisting a birth process

that must follow its own mysterious way."[1] The end result may not be exactly like the system described throughout this study, but different formations of communal leadership will have the opportunity to emerge.

There may not be any books specifically written yet on the communal style of leadership; however, there are some organizations that The Experience can consider who are adopting part of this model. This organizational structure is not completely foreign to all modern leadership practices. There are corporations in the for-profit sector who are experimenting with similar concepts. A brief analysis for the community of one of these organizations will be beneficial for the whole community. Therefore, this journey will begin as members of the community are invited to a two-hour discussion time about leadership and the future.

One such company that can be analyzed is Namaste Solar located in Boulder, Colorado. In fact, since this company is located so close to The Experience, an invitation to one of their leaders to come and discuss the company with The Experience community will be initiated. One of Namaste's core values is democracy in its leadership.[2] As the company grew over time, it became apparent to the owner and other leaders that for this company leadership had to be open to the gifts of all those in the company. Namaste Solar now is an employee-owned cooperative in which 70 percent of the workers hold

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[1] Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 94.

[2] "Core Value: Democracy," *Inc. Magazine*, June 2011, 64-65.

one share of stock and thus can have a vote.[3] There were some committees formed to decide narrower questions, but these are not limited work teams. Membership is open to all no matter their role in the company. For the rare times when decisions need to be made more quickly, there is still a small team empowered as leaders among leaders.[4] At initial glance, this leadership style can seem to look cumbersome, and it might be for a larger company, but for this company it has been successful even through attempted buy-outs by other companies.

The success of Namaste is not proof that this will work in the non-profit realm or in a larger organization, but an evaluation of a company such as this provides the starting point for the discussion for The Experience community. It will help to begin the discussion on a leadership structure that is not directly related to The Experience. This will open the conversation for the community to new forms of leadership without it being threatening to anyone in the community.

The democracy in leadership at this company is impressive, but even here there must be careful evaluation for The Experience worshipping community. This evaluation time will allow The Experience to begin to think critically about leadership in another organization. Any system that completely requires everyone to make all decisions will simply return a church like The Experience to a past leadership style that is not effective among its community. All members must be empowered and engaged through this new communal structure, but it cannot become a system in which decision making becomes

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

too complicated or burdensome. The present cultural storms and the resulting complications are difficult enough without an increase of internal storms.

After this initial meeting, the 2 year integration process will begin. The goal is to draw people into the process in the first six months by providing times of training. Then over the remainder of the two years the goal is to begin to implement this organizational model through training, empowering, and releasing people while providing time of evaluation, feedback, and adjustment. The final goal is to have this style fully integrated into the culture of The Experience community at the end of three years.

The present leaders will play a vital role in encouraging people to participate in the discussions and training, obtaining feedback, and helping the community to adjust to the model into the future. This means that the work with the present leaders described in Chapter 6 must be thorough and complete. The present leaders must accept the new system before it can be incorporated into the life of the community. This model will not work if the present leadership team is not strong, mature, and non-controlling. If the present board is not assured of its own calling and the dynamics of its unique role in this structure, then these leaders either will hold on too loosely or too tightly which will be destructive to this model. The teaching modules for the entire community will be based on similar components used for the present leaders. The one difference will be that the entire community will not perform an in-depth analysis of the previous leadership styles of The Experience. The participants involved in the initial trainings will simply share their perspective and observations.

Training Events

After the initial gathering, there will be a larger training event designed for the entire community. This will begin at The Experience's annual retreat in November 2012. There is no expectation that all will participate in the initial training. Nevertheless, it will be open to everyone. The annual retreat is selected, because it is already an event that draws high participation. It will be a three-day event using the YMCA facilities in Winter Park, Colorado. This has been the location for The Experience's winter retreat for the last five years. Since this is a weekend event, it will provide significant time for questions and a deeper analysis on the aspects of the perfect storm.

The content of the education and the discussion will be on the aspects of the cultural storm evaluated in Chapter 1. This will include the components of postmodernism that directly affect The Experience community such as the search for authentic spirituality, the need for mystery, the central role of community, and the need to remain experiential as well as participatory. Each of these components will be described, and its effects on the American culture as a whole will be discussed. In addition, there will be time for the group to evaluate together how each component has affected our life together as a community. The study will continue with a brief study of the history of characteristics of a post-Christendom world. Then this weekend will conclude with a study on the modern move toward post-structural leadership with a focus of its challenges listed in Chapter 1.

The community already is acquainted with the characteristics of the present storm, so this portion of the teaching process does not need to be a lengthy one. This storm is already part of their daily lives, with its stresses and joys. In addition, parts of this

conversation have been going on since the inception of The Experience. Previously, there has been a family retreat to discuss and evaluate the current cultural climate and numerous community discussions about our context in a post-Christendom America. The majority of the time at the retreat will be used to evaluate the implications of the storm on The Experience's present community. This will lay the foundation for later gatherings.

The next six months of monthly gatherings will be designed to educate and establish the foundation needed for the implementation of a communal leadership model. Like those in the pilot leadership project, these will be two-hour gatherings at the Peace with Christ Lutheran church facility in Aurora, Colorado. The content of these meetings will be a combination of teaching times interspersed with group discussion in order to process the topics. These will begin with an overview of the history of the leadership at The Experience. The pilot team will have completed an in-depth study during their time together and will provide an assessment of each model. The results of their study will be an overview on the strengths and weaknesses of each model as related to The Experience community. This will create the foundation on which the future model can be established.

The content of each of these training events will be the sections studied and evaluated in this thesis. In the first session together, a brief overview of communal leadership will be taught as well as the eight foundational principles of communal leadership. During the second month, the topic will be the ten characteristics of a communal leadership style. The third month will focus on what a visionary community is and how the present leaders will cultivate this in the lives of those in the community. The fourth gathering will be an evaluation of Jesus' leadership techniques and style. During

the fifth month the topic will be St. Paul's leadership principles with an emphasis on his

teaching regarding the function of elders in the church. The final gathering will be a study

of Luther's leadership with a focus on the historical development in the Lutheran Church

and the prevailing concept of the priesthood of all believers. This session will include a

discussion on Bonhoeffer's book *Life Together*. Each participant will be asked to read the

book in advance.

A key component of these training events will be to make them practical by

allowing the participants to experience other leadership styles implemented at other

churches. A trip with all of these participants is unrealistic, so leaders of other churches will

be invited to address The Experience community. Different leaders each month from an area

church will come and explain their leadership style and the purpose of their structure. The

presenters will be from a combination of churches similar to The Experience and those that

have a more traditional model of leadership. The churches invited will include Pathways,

The Next Level Church, Scum of the Earth, Eastern Hills Community Church, Peace with

Christ Lutheran, and Colorado Community Church.

Integrating Communal Leadership

Following the training will be the implementation of the new leadership model

into the life of The Experience community. There is enough flexibility in this timetable to

expand the teaching component longer, if all the topics have not been addressed

adequately. This next section focuses on the two-year time span allotted for The

Experience to move into this new communal model of leadership.

Missional Leadership at The Experience

Chapter 4 of this discussion established that leadership of the future must be missional in nature. It must engage culture in this post-Christendom world from the fringes of society instead of from its center. The Experience over the last five years has been built upon this concept. The members have been taught and equipped to live their lives as missionaries from the stations of life in which they live. The view that the members' lives are a short-term mission trip is prevalent in this society. It is fleshed out in the community's interactions with others on a daily basis as well as in how members provide food boxes and meals for the poor of Aurora and participate as leaders in numerous national and international mission trips. In order not to fall back into a structure that merely supports itself, attention will be given to how this missional culture is maintained through the new organizational structure.

This evaluation during this two-year time span will include ongoing community discussions on the nature and quality of The Experience's members missional lives together. This will be accomplished in one-on-one settings between the initial leader participants and community members, in small group gatherings, and through the sermon series. The purpose of this is to maintain the community's focus on being missional as well as provide the foundation to discern how God might be using the unique gifts of those in the community. Members of The Experience must be given time to evaluate how their ministry has been effective in the past and then determine what areas of ministry are

presently the most effective. In the long run, the result might be some change in ministry focus.

Roxburgh and Romanuk in *The Missional Leader* relate key principles that are basic for any community desiring to build leadership with a missional focus. Four of these principles will guide the transformation process for The Experience community. The first is that a cultural transformation is needed. Leadership must first concentrate on the culture and not the organization.[5] They explain, "The culture of a congregation is how it views itself in relationship to the community, the values that shape how it does things, expectations of one another and of its leaders, unspoken codes about why it exists and whom it serves how it reads Scripture, and how it forms a community."[6]

The congregation first must begin by understanding the context of its own ministry. At The Experience, this will begin with the study of the present cultural storm already addressed, but it must continue further into the evaluation of what The Experience values with respect to ministry and engaging in that ministry together. This will give time for everyone to feel like they are part of the process and part of building something new. The Experience has done a good job of not putting self-imposed boundaries on its ministry in the past, and it must continue exercising this discretion into the future. The community has appreciated the freedom to create and develop new ministries and worship styles

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[5] Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 63.

[6] Ibid.

instead of replicating other church models. This freedom and joy combined with its entrepreneurial community spirit will continue to serve it well through this process.

The second principle Roxburgh and Romanuk share is that focusing on culture does not change culture.[7] This means that just because a church has studied the culture in which it ministers or the culture in which it has been birthed does not mean that it has made any adaptive changes. There are action steps that need to be completed after a thorough study has been accomplished. The authors write about this step: "Instead of seeing these places and relationships as potential for church growth, they come to be seen as the places where God's Spirit is present and calling us to enter with listening love. This shift sees God at work in one's context and seeks to name what God might be up to."[8] This is an important discerning stage. It will require additional monthly gatherings over the next six months with the time focused on prayer and discussion on how God uniquely has gifted the Experience community. Roxburgh and Romanuk understand this step as a vital part in the shaping of a missional community. They write: "Missional leadership is about shaping cultural imagination with a congregation wherein people discern what God might be doing among them and in their community."[9]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 64.

[9] Ibid., 17.

Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King expound on this discerning stage in

Experiencing God. They describe this step as finding out where God already is acting and

then joining Him in that activity. They express it in this way:

> God hasn't told us to go away and do something for Him. He has told us that He
> is already at work trying to bring a lost world to Himself. If we adjust our lives to
> Him in a love relationship, He will show us where He is at work. That revelation
> is His invitation to us to get involved in His work. Then, when we join Him, He
> completes His work through us.[10]

This principle requires time for introspection and for the community to evaluate how the

ministry has been effective and what opportunities lay before it as it moves into the future.

A key component at this stage is listening. Change always creates upheaval in

people. For this reason, those at The Experience must be given time to process the

coming changes. This is the reason for the two-year implementation time period.

Roxburgh and Romanuk write: "Leaders must create a listening space to allow people to

become aware of what is happening within and among them. Such awareness requires

cultivating an environment in which people discover the language for talking about what

they are experiencing."[11] This requires both arranging for time to be set aside for the

purpose of people expressing their concerns as well as assisting the congregation in being

able to express what it feels collectively. Although a spirit of openness already has been

developed between the leadership at The Experience and members, quarterly gatherings

through this two-year phase will provide additional times of attentive listening. During

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[10] Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville: Lifeway Press.1990), 67.

[11] Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader,* 86.

these times, the initial leaders and pastor will lead open-forum discussions on how this new leadership model affects the existing community and allow open discussion on the implications of these changes in people's lives. The goals of these sessions will be that the members feel their concerns have been heard and for additional direction and guidance to be provided by the existing leaders.

The third principle is that change takes time and small steps are required.[12] This perfect storm has come about over a matter of decades. It has caused many organizations to have their compasses thrown askew as to the direction they are heading. Regaining one's bearings takes some time, and attention must be given to make sure a community is headed in the right direction. Roxburgh and Romanuk explain, "But if we get caught up in the rush to resolve anxiety by moving quickly to solutions, we are likely to do more of what we've already been doing with the same outcomes. Missional transformation occurs in a series of small movements, actions, and behaviors among God's people."[13] This process cannot be rushed. The initial sixth months of training and the additional two years of quarterly meetings and implementation are designed to move the process along but not at a rate that does not allow the transformation to sink into the culture of the community.

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[12] Ibid., 64.

[13] Ibid.

The fourth change principle is that an organization does not begin to align itself

with being a missional culture by first redesigning its ministry strategies.[14] It begins and

continues in a common journey together. This makes the entire process one of discovery

and not just implementation. The argument for this step is this: "Some strategic planning

processes preach about alignment or lining up all the congregation's strategy, structure,

staff, skills, systems, style, people, resources, and shared values around a common goal or

vision. Alignment does not take place at the front end of a transformation; it emerges from

experiments, dialogue, and engagements together."[15] The experiments in the two-year

process will be the incremental changes in the leadership structure as aspects of the

present structure are phased out or fine-tuned. The quarterly meetings will provide

feedback on these changes. The dialogue will be accomplished through the quarterly

meetings and the one-on-one interviews taking place between the initially trained leaders

and members of the community. Every six months there will be larger open-discussion

forums created, so the entire process can be evaluated as to its effectiveness and

redesigned if necessary.

A Visionary Community

The next aspect of implementing communal leadership is in developing a

visionary community culture. Creating a visionary culture is different from the modern-

day concept of one visionary leader or the concept of a visionary leadership team with

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

which The Experience originated. This is cultivating an environment in which the people

of God at The Experience can "imagine together a new future rather than one already

determined by the leader."[16] This already will have been addressed as one part of the

teaching components in the initial six-month training sessions. The goal now will be to

empower people in this process.

Time and value must be placed on the importance of this process in order to fully

invigorate the heart of the people. Business leaders Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner

emphasize the importance of this:

> What people really want to hear is not the leader's vision. They want to hear about
> their own aspirations. They want to hear how their dreams will come true and their
> hopes fulfilled. They want to see themselves in the picture of the future that the
> leader is painting. The very best leaders understand that it's about inspiring a shared
> vision, not about selling their own idiosyncratic view of the world.[17]

Likewise, the members of The Experience community first have to believe that their

hopes and dreams have value. Then they must learn how to develop them into a concept.

It must be noted that there are different levels of giftedness when it comes to being

dreamers or visionaries, but everyone has passions. The goal is to help people tap into

those God given passions and make them a reality.

In this new model the initially trained leaders will be fanning life into the visions

of the people. During this phase of integration, the present leaders must spend time

assisting those in the community to discover and bring value to their own visions for

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[16] Ibid., 42.

[17] Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, "It's Not Just the Leader's Vision," *The Leader of the Future2*,
eds. Frances Hesselbein and Marshall Goldsmith (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 208.

ministry. This will be accomplished through one-on-one interviews. The names of the worshippers in the community will be divided among those initial leaders and individual appoint times will be set. Since this has been part of the culture at The Experience for some time, many of its members already can verbalize their ministry visions and aspirations. Those who cannot will be given more attention and time in order to identify their unique gifts and discover how they could be used to advance the Kingdom of God. For those who already can, this time will be mainly spent on fine-tuning their existing ministries whether at The Experience community or in other areas of their lives where they are actively living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is about empowering and releasing people and not getting them to fit into a predetermined ministry role. One desired outcome is to bridge the gap between the church's activities and ministries while helping individuals to feel empowered in their ministry lives that are not connected to the church. A second desired outcome is to help the members discover their visions so that they can participate in the future direction of the community. This will assist in connecting the participants into this communal leadership structure.

Evaluation and Feedback

Evaluation and feedback through the implementing process is important so that adjustments can be made and people can be lovingly shepherded forward in the process. This communal style of leadership is a living organism and due to its fluidity adjustments will have to be made in its development. This will require open-discussion evaluations periodically with the initial leaders and a written evaluation plan provided for the entire

community over the two-year time frame. The initial leaders also will initiate feedback in their one-on-one interviews.

The first evaluation will begin with the initial leaders after the first three months of preparation. This will give the leaders a chance to process their thoughts on this new structure and formulate questions. This will be conducted in a group meeting time. A second examination during a gathering time with the present leaders will be completed in the six months right before this structure is presented to the entire community.

The evaluation plan for the entire community will be used yearly to provide evidence as to where the community is in the process. This evaluation plan will be a written document that states the objectives of the evaluation, the questions that will be answered, and when collection of information will begin and end.[18] The objective of the evaluation plan will be to gain feedback as to how the community views how the implementation process is progressing and to gain knowledge on how people are experiencing connection or disconnection to the process. The questions asked will include but will be not be limited to these questions: "Do you think this journey to a new leadership structure has been beneficial for our community? Why or why not?" "In a brief sentence or two can you describe aspects of the communal style of leadership that you witness as being effective in our community? Are there aspects that are not as effective?" "Do you feel like you are part of the process and that your dreams and visions

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[18] KRA Corporation, "Chapter 5: Developing an Evaluation Plan," in *A Guide to Evaluating Crime Control of Programs in Public Housing* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development/Office of Policy and Development Research, April1997), 1-5, 15, Office of Justice Programs, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/guide/documents/developing_an_evalu.htm (accessed October 20, 2011).

matter to the community?" "Is this style of leadership enhancing our missional lives together?" The collection of this information will take place at the one-year and two-year marks in this process. The responses will be evaluated by me and the initial phase leaders and the results will be used to make needed adjustments or changes in direction. In the final analysis, the success or failure of this structure will be determined by whether or not there are statistically more people empowered and engaging in ministry; by individuals experiencing empowerment to begin new creative ministry endeavors; by the community expanding numerically; and whether or not the ministries, such as the outreach to the homeless and the training of short term missionaries, experience the support they need in order to take the next step in expanding their ministries.

<center>Adjustments</center>

A part of any new endeavor is to allow space for adjustments and change. Gibbs says that "an innovator's vision is constantly unfolding and evolving. It becomes clearer as he or she alternates between conceptualization and actualization."[19] Conceptualization, in this case, is the combined components of the communal view of leadership. Actualization is taking those components and making them into a living leadership organism. Every time a concept turns into reality, transformation will occur in the process. There needs to be space allowed for this type of transformation to happen in the communal leadership structure.

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[19] Gibbs, *LeadershipNext*, 167.

A communal leadership style currently at The Experience is fluctuating between conceptualization and actualization. The Experience has initiated multiple leadership styles in the past, but none has brought about the desired result of a unified functioning leadership structure. It presently is experimenting with various aspects of the components of communal leadership. The goal is that by the end of the implementation period that The Experience will embody a more communal style of organizational leadership.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In November 1998 Honduras was ravaged by one of the worst hurricanes ever

recorded. "Mitch" was a "category 5" hurricane which hit the country on October 27,

1998 with winds peaking at 180 miles per hour.[1] A simple pass of this storm would have

created immense damage, but this storm did not simply pass by this small Central

American country. Due to the slow movement of this storm, the total rainfall in certain

locations was reported as high as 75 inches for the entire storm.[2] The NOAA Satellite and

Information Service reported, "The resulting floods and mud slides virtually destroyed the

entire infrastructure of Honduras."[3] The death toll was reported at eleven thousand with

thousands of others missing.[4] This hurricane was not the result of a perfect storm with

three colliding atmospheric fronts, but it does show the devastation a single, long-lasting

storm can have and the way it can change the landscape. The postmodern cultural storm

has been a slow-moving one, and the long-term effects may not be realized for some time;

however, there already have been landscape changes to the American Church's culture.

A metaphor for leadership in this new culture parallels how the Choluteca Bridge

became obsolete as a result of Hurricane Mitch. Associated Press writer Peter Muello

reports:

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[1] NOAA Satellite and Information Service, "Mitch: The Deadliest Atlantic Hurricane Since 1780," http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/mitch/mitch.html (accessed October 21, 2011).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

> The graceful arches of the New Choluteca Bridge stand abandoned, a white concrete sculpture far from shore, linking nothing to nowhere. . . . The Choluteca bridge itself is perfect, said the Japanese engineers who finished the bridge in May except that it now straddles dry land. Mitch changed the course of the Choluteca River, and there is water where the access roads used to be.[5]

Prior to Hurricane Mitch, this bridge was a modern marvel and the Japanese engineers that constructed it said that it was perfect.[6] As a result of this storm, this modern "marvel" became a discarded relic.

Hurricane Mitch simply changed the course of the Choluteca River, and it no longer flowed under the Choluteca Bridge. The new landscape made this beautifully constructed bridge nothing more than a museum piece. In the same vein, the perfect storm that has been discussed in this study has had a similar effect on many aspects of American culture—in particular, leadership within the Church. There is no longer the question of whether or not the modern models of leadership are adequate structures; rather, the cultural storm has made many of them obsolete or at least many aspects of them unable to be used.

At The Experience, this seems to be the case. This study has examined some of the effects of the landscape changes as they have affected The Experience community. It has addressed the failure of some modern leadership styles to meet the needs of this postmodern worshipping community. These modern leadership structures, like the Choluteca Bridge, worked well for the purpose in which they were built; however, the

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Peter Muello, "Honduras Faces Critical Job Rebuilding 94 Bridges," *The Indiana Gazette,* November 16, 1998, 3.

current cultural crises has left these structures as monuments to the past for The Experience community. Just as Honduras had to address the need for a new bridge over the Choluteca river after Hurricane Mitch, The Experience has had to address the current need for a new leadership structure. The communal style of leadership described in this study was created to address that need.

The communal style of leadership recognizes that St. Paul, by his addressing leadership issues in the first-century churches, understood the need for an organizational structure within the church context. While the communal style of leadership does not mirror the structure that Paul initiated, it respects his need for institutional structure and adapts it to its present situation. Also, communal leadership employs the empowering nature of Jesus' leadership with the goal of releasing people into a lifestyle of service.

The result of this study has been an attempt to create this new communal leadership structure for The Experience community. This new communal model of leadership has been designed to give The Experience worshipping community the ability to have some organizational structure moving into the future. It has been proposed through the analysis of the present cultural changes occurring in America. This new style is meant to honor the works of others, consider the lessons learned on the basis of previous trial and error in leadership structures, build upon a scriptural study of the leadership styles and teachings of Jesus and St. Paul, and take in to consideration the history and writings of Lutherans. It has been formulated as well within the fire of ministry through the nine-year existence of The Experience community. The goal has not been to create a new leadership style that can be emulated in a variety of ministry

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settings, but one that will provide the foundation to propel the ministry of The Experience forward as it lives to advance the Kingdom of God.

This communal model of leadership is a unique model designed to help The Experience worshipping community through this time in its history. The Experience is about to celebrate its tenth anniversary and needs to move into an organizational model that fits its particular personality. It would be hard to incorporate this communal leadership model into a larger church, but it fits well with a ministry consisting of smaller worshipping communities.

This structure will keep evolving as the ministry grows and the community continues to deal with the discontinuous change surrounding it. One difficult aspect of building something lasting in the present perfect storm is how the landscape is continuously changing. Another leadership model that has the goal of permanency may simply become, like the Choluteca Bridge, another museum piece and an exercise in futility. This new structure must be able to adapt to changes that are still on the horizon. Gibbs writes:

> In the first place, creativity blossoms in an atmosphere of flexibility and freedom. It requires an environment where precedents and assumptions can be set aside and where there is a willingness to allow fresh thoughts. Second, a creative mind is one that is insatiably curious, being prepared to question and reexamine anything and everything without feeling threatened. Indeed, curiosity often helps a leader to see links between isolated pieces of information, and those links are the wellsprings of creativity.[7]

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[7] Gibbs, *LeadershipNext*, 134-135.

The communal leadership model is not meant to be stagnant; rather, it is a living model that adapts as necessary to the continued changes in landscapes that are bound to come from the storm in which we live.

This means the communal model of leadership must continue to develop in new ways in the future. This is the nature of new endeavors. It is like venturing into new territory that has yet to be discovered which comes with its own unique challenges. "Venturing into unknown territory launches us on a steep learning curve. In the process, mistakes will be made, and alternative approaches will be developed and used or discarded. This process requires nerve, resolve and an irrepressible sense of humor. Innovative leaders cannot afford to take themselves too seriously."[8] The members of the community will need to remain flexible, and appropriate time must be allowed for them to adjust. This is the reason for the long implementation period.

The Experience will need to continue to be a courageous community as it advances into the future as the winds of change continue to blow. It will need to maintain the type of courageous leadership described by Gibbs in *LeadershipNext:*

> Courageous leaders stand up for their beliefs, challenge others, admit mistakes and even change behavior when necessary. They demonstrate resolve as they battle inner turmoil, inertia and external opposition. A person who has courage is also composed and demonstrates consistent and appropriate emotional reactions, particularly in tough crisis situations. Courageous leaders are committed regardless of external circumstances indeed, if leaders expect courage from others, their own commitment to it is essential[9]

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[8] Ibid., 167.

[9] Ibid., 136.

There will be times when course corrections will need to be made, but all the members must have courage to face the difficult times as well as the good.

The further reaching implications of this leadership style upon leadership in the Church are hard to quantify. In the content of the research analyzed in this study, it has been revealed that multiple leadership experts recognize that the narrow leadership styles of the past must be adjusted moving into the future. Two books, *Leader of the Future* and *Leadership of the Future 2*, are full of essays challenging the modern forms of leadership to become more inclusive. In particular, essays such as "Leading the De-jobbed Organization" by William Bridges and "Creating Organization with Many Leaders" by Pinchot are examples of the hope for success that this leadership style can inspire in other worshipping communities, who respond to the challenges of this culture in a way that is appropriate for their ministry context.[10] The fruit that this strategy bears has the potential to serve as a model for other Lutheran churches desiring to navigate this present storm in a flexible, theologically grounded way.

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[10] William Bridges, "Leading the De-jobbed Organization," in *Leader of the Future* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass, 1996), 11-19; Pinchot, "Creating Organization with Many Leaders," 25-40.

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