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DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS FOR NEW HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

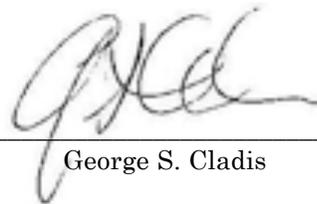
Written by

DOUG PFEIFFER

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:



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Kurt Fredrickson

Date Received: August 7, 2014

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL LEADERS FOR NEW HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

A DOCTORAL PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

DOUG PFEIFFER
JUNE 24, 2014

ABSTRACT
Developing Spiritual Leaders for New Hope Christian Church
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2014

The purpose of the ministry focus paper is to develop spiritual leaders at New Hope Church of Papillion, Nebraska who effectively lead teams by providing biblical principles and metaphors for leadership, offering church and business leadership wisdom, and training in effective team leadership and spiritual practices.

New Hope Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (hereafter, New Hope Church) is located in Papillion, Nebraska—a community in flux. There is a crying need for true Christ-led community—a sense of belonging that meets needs. Leaders grounded in spiritual disciplines can lead teams to help people live together well in community-building ways. The proposed project will present a strategy, accompanying resources, and training events for developing such spiritual leadership for the community. The focus of the project will be to help spiritual leaders learn how to effectively lead teams.

Part One of this paper will examine the surrounding community and New Hope's mission. The community will be studied through demographic data analysis and interviews within the community. New Hope Church's mission will be examined through its history, spiritual practices, governance, and reflections by church members.

Part Two establishes the theological and biblical foundations for the project. An understanding of team ministry will be examined through the biblical images of the trinity and of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). The underpinnings of good spiritual leadership will be presented through an examination of biblical characters and narratives, varieties of Disciples of Christ leadership, other theological traditions, ecclesiology, and recent church and business leadership resources.

Part Three focuses on the specific plan for this project, including how its goals, content, target population, and leadership flow from the previous theological and organizational resources. The implementation plan will include specific timelines, assignments, resources, and assessment.

Theological Mentor: Kurt Frederickson, PhD

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I am grateful for the disciples of New Hope Christian Church who constantly offer me inspiring examples of excellent spiritual leadership. Their Christ-led lives are a testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit working to grow a church and uplift a community. They follow God's call daily. They offer the best of what it means to be called a Disciple of Christ. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT	
Chapter 1. COMMUNITY CONTEXT	9
Chapter 2. NEW HOPE CHURCH AS MINISTRY CONTEXT	26
PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Chapter 3. LITERATURE REVIEW	42
Chapter 4. ECCLESIOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	59
Chapter 5. A THEOLOGY OF TEAM LEADERSHIP	81
PART THREE: MINISTRY STRATEGY	
Chapter 6. MINISTRY PLAN WITH GOALS	105
Chapter 7. MINISTRY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	121
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	136
BIBLIOGRAPHY	141

INTRODUCTION

“What we need in this church is leadership training!” said an elder of a previous church to me, time after time, year after year. She was right. There were many good church members in that congregation. However, not many seemed to want to lead or facilitate a team or a committee. Some tried to effectively lead groups but failed. The elder’s desire for better leadership training—with which I agreed—implied that improved training would result in better equipped leadership. The equipped leaders would translate into more effective teams. The improved leadership and teamwork would encourage others to accept calls to lead.

At that time, I had a passion for leadership training. However, I did not have the tools for such training. I wanted to seek and use such tools. For over twenty-five years, I have believed fervently that the Church can offer excellent leadership training. This training includes the best of good historic spiritual principles and practices combined with new insights in good contemporary organizational leadership. This project is a culmination of my thinking about, praying for, and reading about good leadership training for churches. The result is titled “spiritual leadership training.” It is a training plan that provides tools for good spiritual leadership. This project and the resultant plan together are my efforts at responding to the imperative that the aforementioned elder and I felt nearly twenty years ago.

The purpose of the present doctoral project is to develop spiritual leaders in my present context—New Hope Church of Papillion, Nebraska. Through training in

teamwork that includes biblical principles and metaphors, contemporary business leadership resources, and spiritual practices, these spiritual leaders will then effectively lead teams. The previous two sentences summarize the thesis of this project and generally describe its scope, purpose, nature, and content. New Hope Church is a new church plant of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Papillion, Nebraska. While many in this church have had leadership roles in previous churches, most have never been through a spiritual leadership training program. Some disciples of this church have had little good leadership experience and will surely benefit from spiritual leadership training.

Offering such leadership training is challenging because there have not always been good models of spiritual leadership. Some disciples are therefore leery of anything associated with an experience of leadership. Societal influences such as media often portray a picture of a leader as a strong-willed, “go-it-alone” dictator or hero who barks orders and expects others to simply obey because of the hero’s charisma. Such “leaders” have led groups in which the followers suffer a sense of autocracy and even oppression. Such leadership often leads to a deep suspicion and loathing of any kind of leadership offered. Other experiences of leadership include those of a direction-less, “go with the flow,” “enabling” leader who simply leaves a group frustrated and wanting some direction for the group. At times, there seems to be an absence of experience with a good spiritual leader who can gather a team, offer guidelines for the gathering, let the unique talents and gifts of the team members be expressed, and then suggest directions for the team that are open to a Spirit-led consensus.

The best group leadership is therefore shared leadership. In this project, I show how good spiritual leaders do not exhibit the aforementioned unhelpful models of leadership, but rather lead in the helpful way described in the previous two sentences. They do not lead autocratically or weakly but rather submit their leadership to the ultimate leadership of the Holy Spirit, experienced through prayerful consensus with others. Given the lack of recognition of this kind of leadership in today's society, a clear process is needed to focus on spiritual training of leaders for today's faith communities.

The training will include best practices of organizational leadership as well as spiritual disciplines that guide the leader-in-training to follow more closely the Ultimate Leader—God as known in Jesus Christ. Organizational leadership practices will include training in teamwork—how to effectively lead or facilitate a team. The training will also introduce such spiritual practices as how to converse with God through a variety of prayer practices. This training will offer Scripture verses that are helpful to the leadership task. Mentors will be assigned to the trainees and be directed to meet with them on a regular basis. This leadership training will not only happen in a course, but also in the practice of leadership as trainees are expected to use their skills in teams. They will reflect on the use of these practices, talk with a mentor about their action and reflection, and then continue to lead and reflect, hopefully honing their spiritual leadership skills.

Toward the goal of developing this training, this doctoral project will follow a well-designed path. Part One is a careful and thoughtful study of the context for the project or training. Chapter 1 offers a study of the target area of the church or community

context. This study includes data, information from interviews of community leaders and residents, and my observations and conclusions from the gathered information. Chapter 2 offers a description of the faith community, New Hope Church, which includes its unique history, its spiritual practices, its service, and its singular governance structure. This chapter concludes with an analysis of hindrances to and assets for leadership training.

Part Two (Chapters 3, 4, and 5) is an in-depth study of the principles and theology that undergird and guide the church, its activity, its worship, its service, its faith development, and its leadership training. Chapter 3 reviews the organizational and church-related literature that provides much of the wisdom and theology for this project. Chapter 4 examines the ecclesiology of the Disciples of Christ of which New Hope Church is a new church plant. The church's theological principles are noted. Disciples of Christ theological strengths and weaknesses are discussed. Chapter 4 also explores theological resources from alternative theological traditions that are helpful for this project. Chapter 5 offers a theology of spiritual leadership. This chapter first focuses on the theology of team leadership (leadership that is shared within a team). Next, Chapter 5 examines specific biblical examples of good leaders to shed light on how they effectively and spiritually led a community. Finally, this chapter examines how good spiritual leadership leads good team meetings.

Part Three (Chapters 6 and 7) draws from the previous study and reflection in order to offer a ministry strategy for spiritual leadership training. Chapter 6 shows how the wisdom from the previous theological study provides the basis for the training of

spiritual leaders that can nurture good church teamwork. Chapter 6 also presents goals for the training process. The content of the training events is also presented. Finally, this chapter describes the target population as well as the specific leaders for this training. Chapter 7 describes how this training is specifically implemented. A timeline is offered. This chapter describes leader development for this training. Supportive personnel from outside the congregation are identified. This chapter presents an assessment plan, including reporting on the results of this project. This doctoral project closes with a summary and conclusion that offer observations, wisdom from the project, and implications for future leadership training.

New Hope Church needs such leadership training. As the church launched in September of 2013, this author has been struck by how many of our current leaders have been affected by particular family issues, concerns, and activities that have taken them away from church leadership duties. Two of our original families have not been attending regularly due to family issues. There is a leadership “gap” currently at New Hope Church—a distance between leadership needs and available leaders to fill them. At the same time, new and younger families show an interest in New Hope Church services and events. The parents of these families have shown great promise in terms of leadership. They are yet unproven in leadership with New Hope Church.

The church “DNA” (which will be explored in Chapters 2 and 4 below) inspires present church leadership to be graciously permission giving in encouraging new leaders and would-be leaders to provide leadership in whatever area of service, worship, and

discipleship they (the new leaders) feel called to offer. Yet, over the years I have experienced that many newer participants in churches are reluctant to offer such leadership because they feel that they do not have the necessary skills, that they do not know the church well enough, or that they are unqualified for other reasons. Leadership training provides a way to not only train new leaders but also to help them feel comfortable enough with the church milieu that they will take on leadership tasks to which they are fitted. Offering and promoting such training will also help recruit new leaders whom current leadership may not have already identified. Such training will help bridge the leadership gap. Ongoing training will sow the seeds for new leadership needed for new ministries of New Hope Church.

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Papillion, Nebraska is a stable and growing community that is flourishing. This community has regularly been ranked among the “best places to live” in numerous polls and reviews over the last several years.¹ Its summer festival, Papillion Days, was ranked ninth best in 2013 among the nation’s top summer festivals.² This big “small town” has relatively high median family income, high job growth, and a low crime rate.³

Papillion has a rich pioneering heritage saturated with religious and spiritual activity. This history begins with its name. French fur traders happened upon the valley in which Papillion is nestled in 1739. They were so moved by the beauty of the native grasses filled with butterflies that one exclaimed “papillion!”—the French word meaning

¹ It is ranked eighth in CNNMoney, “Best Places to Live, 2013,” http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/best-places/2013/full_list/ (accessed September 25, 2013). It is ranked first among small towns in Livability.com’s latest review. See Livability, “Livability Top 10 Small Towns, 2012,” <http://livability.com/top-10/top-10-small-towns-2012/papillion/ne> (accessed September 25, 2013).

² See Livability, “Livability’s Top 10 Summer Festivals, 2013,” <http://livability.com/top-10/top-10-summer-festivals-2013/papillion/ne> (accessed September 25, 2013).

³ According to CNNMoney, “Best Places to Live, 2013” http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/best-places/2013/snapshots/PL3138295.html?iid=BPL_fl_list, (accessed September 25, 2013).

“butterfly.”⁴ The name and the sense of its beauty or importance prevailed in Papillion’s history. The city was built near the Union Pacific’s railroad line in 1866.⁵ Incorporated in 1870, hardy pioneers who initially focused on farming and milling soon began to fill the new town.⁶ Not without its challenges, Papillion has regularly been threatened by the flooding of nearby Papio Creek and has faced other issues and problems.⁷ Nearly from its beginning, the city has had houses of worship, religious leadership, and faith-based groups. By 1879, this community had five churches.⁸ Even a Reverend E. Pfeiffer⁹ started a Friedens Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1908.¹⁰ Churches have historically provided good community service; for example, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and other women’s groups worked to stop the sins of excessive alcohol in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹

Today, Papillion is a vital and healthy community of the greater Omaha, Nebraska area. Located south of Omaha, Papillion resides in Sarpy County. For about fifty years now it has been known as the crossroads of Sarpy County, a vital hub for community

⁴ Deb Grayson, *Papillion: A City on Track, Vol. I: 1870-1910*. (Bellevue, NE: Suburban Newspapers, Inc., 2005), 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 23, 47.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹ Relation to this author unknown.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

commerce, traffic, arts, and interests.¹² In a 2011 Community Health Needs assessment, Sarpy County compared favorably to surrounding communities, scoring comparable or better in over 130 health categories. These categories include access to health care, routine health examinations, number of visits to the emergency room, cancer, diabetes, heart health, educational programs, incidents of violence, incidents of depression, proper nutrition, obesity, physical activity, oral health, and sexual activity.¹³ Thus, Papillion and Sarpy County have overall comparatively healthy populations.¹⁴ In interviews with over ten community officials (such as the mayor, police chief, county sheriff, and public works director) in the spring of 2012, these leaders spoke multiple times about how this healthy community has relatively little crime and nurtures a vital and vibrant population.

The population of Sarpy County has grown and continues to grow, with high incomes and standards of living. Sarpy County Sheriff Jeff Davis, in a 2012 interview, said, “It is the fastest growing county in Nebraska and one of the fastest in the nation.” Statistics support this statement. According to the latest statistics from MissionInsite, a business that provides recent statistics from a variety of sources for faith community use, Papillion’s population is projected to grow nearly 15 percent by 2018. The ranges of

¹² Deb Grayson, *Papillion: A City on Track, Vol. III: 1960-2005* (Bellevue, NE: Suburban Newspapers, Inc., 2005), 4.

¹³ However, Sarpy County scored comparably lower on the number of people who sought help for alcohol and drug problems. This study also indicated that there was a higher percentage of the population that has asthma or has had pneumonia than people in surrounding communities.

¹⁴ Sarpy/Cass Department of Health and Wellness, “2011 Community Health Needs Assessment,” http://www.SarpyCassHealthDepartment.org/departments2011CHNASummaryOmahaMetroArea_Douglas_Sarpy_Cass_PottawattamieCounties.pdf (accessed September 25, 2013).

lifespan whose populations are projected to increase in the next ten years are those ages eighteen to twenty-four (increase of 2.6 percent) and those who are fifty-five years of age and older (increase of 3 percent). These statistics indicate increasing young adult and older adult populations. Papillion's population is generally more educated than that of the rest of Nebraska, having more people with some higher education training (2 percent higher), a bachelor's degree (5 percent higher), and a graduate or professional degree (3 percent higher). This statistic about education offers a good match for Disciples of Christ churches like New Hope that tend to attract more highly educated people. Average household income is projected to increase by over 10 percent in the next five years. Papillion is a fairly homogeneous area, having over 86 percent of its population classified as White (non-Hispanic).¹⁵

Papillion is an affluent suburb-like area of the greater Omaha metropolitan area. This community's top composite socio-cultural-educational-economic group (a "mosaic group," using MissionInsite definitions and formulations) is called "Babies and Bliss," which is predominant contrasted with other groups (its members ranked above the number of members in the nearest mosaic group by 10 percentage points). The "Babies and Bliss" mosaic group is comprised of families of young adults (between the ages of thirty-six and forty-five) with preschool children. These families tend to have high incomes, comfortable suburban lifestyles, and many leisure activities and entertainments.

¹⁵ MissionInsite, www.missioninsite.com (accessed September 25, 2013).

They are interested in newer media and are engaged online frequently.¹⁶ Members of this mosaic group typically resonate with Disciples of Christ churches like New Hope Church. The current unemployment rate of Papillion is 2.4 percent. White-collar workers outnumber blue-collar workers by nearly a three to one margin (73 to 27 percent). The top four vocational areas of Papillion are managerial/executive, office administration, professional specialty, and sales. Over 21 percent of this population is employed in the educational field.¹⁷ Disciples of Christ churches are generally attractive in such a context.

Still, there are needs in this area. The local food pantry, Tri-City (regularly supported by New Hope Church and other faith-based and community-based groups), reported in 2013 that it serves an average of seventy to seventy-five families per month. MissionInsite reports that 6.4 percent of the family households live under the poverty line (as compared to 9.6 percent in the state of Nebraska). These statistics provide a unique opportunity for a faith community such as New Hope that is mission oriented—an opportunity to care for the “least of these” (Matthew 25). This opportunity is further magnified by an observation of Police Chief Len Houloose in the spring of 2012 when he indicated that currently no Papillion service groups serve the needy in Papillion. Other community leaders identified where such needs may exist, for example within the apartment-dwellers of Papillion.

¹⁶ See more detailed descriptions, see MissionInsite, “Mosaic USA Group and Segment Descriptions from Experian Marketing Services,” http://missioninsite.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Mosaic_Descriptions_GroupSegments_USAFinal_081312.pdf (accessed September 25, 2013).

¹⁷ Preceding statistics provided by MissionInsite.

More statistics provided by MissionInsite highlight other needs in the community. Of those surveyed in this area, only 45 percent identified themselves as a spiritual person while 19 percent commented that it is important to attend worship services and 13.5 percent indicated that their faith was important to them. As New Hope Church believes that the regular practice of faith is important to everyone; therefore, there are clearly spiritual and religious needs to be met. A faith community that addresses these needs through offering spiritual resources in easy-to-grasp, contemporary ways can connect to this population. New Hope strives to be such a community. Police Chief Houloose indicated in the same 2012 interview that a church plant that began over fifteen years ago had reached a plateau in its attendance and in community interest a few years into its start. It began to grow again as it intentionally made efforts to reach the community through personal evangelism, community service, and other ways. These activities are precisely those being offered now by New Hope Church as it truly lives its mission statement: “Loving God, Growing Faith, Serving Others.”

Papillion is also somewhat of a transient community. Mayor Black, in a 2012 interview, stated that a unique characteristic of Papillion is that it has many families with members who are employed by the military—especially since Offutt Air Force Base is only ten miles from the town center. He indicated that his church, which was a new church start many years ago, had to get used to the experience of families’ entering the church, becoming close to the core group, participating for a few years, and then leaving because a military family member had been re-assigned to another community. This was

difficult at first for the mayor's church. Church members from this stable community who have been accustomed to becoming emotionally close to lifelong residents grieved the departure of these families. Then, they reframed how they thought about and acted toward these residents. They began to view themselves as a community service group with a calling to view these transitions as assets. They helped to train these more transient people in the faith. As a result, when it was time for these families to leave, they saw themselves as sending forth better-trained believers to continue the work of the faith in another "vineyard of the Lord." This reframing helped the mayor's church to not get stuck in the hurt of the loss of the transition, but to thrive with the transitions. They viewed their role as being that of offering a ministry to the wider Christian community through their efforts of training and sending believers. This view is helpful to a young church like New Hope that will face such transitions.

This feeling of transience among many residents is related to a sense of lack of community. In the summer of 2013, New Hope disciples rang doorbells and visited over 1,400 homes in Papillion neighborhoods. They asked two questions: "What do you look for in a church home, spiritual community, place of worship, place of fellowship, etc.?" and "Do you have a church home now?" A wide diversity of answers and attitudes were offered in response to these questions. A preponderance of answers revealed a basic theme about a need for community. This theme was stated in numerous answers such as, "a place where we feel welcome," "a place where I feel comfortable," "a place in which I feel at home," "a place that feels like family," or "a place where I walk in and feel relaxed

and at peace.” The common thread of meaning underlying these answers is that people are looking for (or have found, in many of these instances) a community that nurtures and sustains them through connection to others.

One such visit turned into a twenty-minute conversation on a homeowner’s front porch—a unique occurrence. (Out of 1,400 visits, this kind of conversation only happened three times.) In this conversation, the homeowner shared how transient and disconnected many “military” families feel.¹⁸ She spoke eloquently of the need for community. She spoke movingly of the need for a church to help families connect with the greater Papillion community. Hence, she summarized and elucidated the need for community and connection within such a transient population as Papillion’s. In so doing, she echoed the solution that Mayor Black’s church offered to the experience of transience. Four months later when she was explaining more of her intense feelings during this time, she confessed that she felt that God had been “screaming” at her to find connection in a church home. A New Hope disciple opened the door to this connection through ringing her doorbell and having a conversation with her.

Another common response in these front porch and doorway conversations in the summer of 2013 was that people are seeking deep and resonant meaning through a church home or spiritual community. Such a desire was expressed in numerous ways, such as “I want a message that hits home,” “I want a strong message from the Bible,” “I want a sermon that speaks truth,” or “I want something I can hold on to and that helps me

¹⁸ Interview with a homeowner, May 8, 2013.

through the rest of the week.” Such yearnings for deep meaning were stated in nearly half of these New Hope Church conversations. These Papillion residents seem to want help in making sense of life. When these residents spoke appreciatively of their own church homes, they spoke often about how their pastors or worship leaders offered strong, easily understandable, and helpful messages.

In the MissionInsite data mentioned earlier, 86.5 percent of those responding did not indicate that faith was important. Therefore, a significant portion of this population is missing the experience of faith. In this data, 55 percent of this population did not identify themselves as spiritual people. Over half of the responses to the visits by New Hope disciples, who were easily identified as representing a church because of their attire, resulted in a resident not opening the door, a “no soliciting” sign, or a resident saying, “Not interested.” In other words, over half did not want to talk with a “church person.” One wonders from these visits and from the MissionInsite data how many of those not responding to a faith invitation were hearing God “scream at” or even “whisper to” them to enhance their faith development. Given the Christian belief that faith is important to everyone, the foregoing analysis suggests a deep need for meaning that is currently unmet in this community.

Much was written above regarding the affluence and health of the Papillion area. After walking the streets of Papillion for many months in 2013, one would observe that “babies and bliss” is a good phrase to describe this population. In these evenings of visits, hundreds of families were enjoying their lives full of possessions (such as motorcycles,

boats, multiple cars, and children's toys), beautiful homes, and seemingly healthy young children. This enjoyment came in a relatively crime-free environment. Such an environment was experienced in the trust of the residents who welcomed complete strangers—the identified “church people” or New Hope Church disciples”—onto their porches or in their doorways and talked with them seemingly without fear. Yet, in all of this comfort and affluence, one wonders how the lack of meaning among so many may be affecting these lives and this community. Meaning is found in many ways, including worship, study, reflection, reading, Bible-reading, and prayer. Existing churches have many such opportunities. Yet, over half of this population seems not to be reached by these efforts. Gospel-centered meaning can be offered to Papillion residents in other ways.

Meaning is also found in service. When people are shown that those who bear the name “Jesus’ disciples” actually try to help others and improve their community, they tend to give meaning to such action. Papillion Police Chief Houloose said that the service organizations in Papillion are not serving the needy in the community. New Hope Church has the opportunity to serve those in need with the likely result that they feel touched in a real and meaningful way (as in, “Someone really cares about me or about others. Not for their own gain. That is unusual. That is great! That is meaningful to me!”). In the answers to their questions of Papillion residents, New Hope Church disciples did not initially hear many comments regarding a need for community service in Papillion. Yet in many of their longer conversations with residents, New Hope Church disciples observed how

deeply people were affected when they spoke of this church's service to the community. Of course, many residents let this comment pass as if to say, "Of course you do. You're a church. But, I'm not interested." Yet, most conversation partners reacted with strong emotion to this comment either by enthusiastically shaking their heads or by verbally responding with strong agreement. In other words, through this strong reaction great meaning was seemingly attached to such a community service-oriented church. The need for such service appears to convey great meaning to many in this community.

According to interviews with community leaders in 2012, there are many other needs. For example, they spoke of the needs of community children and youth. A church could serve in a "troubled youth" house. The need for parenting classes—teaching life skills and financial management as examples—was highlighted. This need was underscored in the responses to a Facebook poll offered by the Sarpy Community YMCA (a regular partner with New Hope Church in its work) in the fall of 2012. Mentioned several times was the need for helping lower income families with building community and financial capacity in an apartment complex. Additionally, community officials mentioned that a church could offer help for those who need mental health services. Helping with the elderly in the community—particularly with transportation, winter snow removal, and common household chores—was another area of need. The Sarpy County Community Service Director urged a church to go directly to homes and apartments and become acquainted with the needs therein. Such needs often are in isolation and are "hidden" in such an affluent community as Papillion. Yet as New Hope

Church offers more help to its community and expands its outreach, more people will be impacted and share the “good news” of what God is doing through these missions.

New Hope Church brings a unique mission among churches in the Papillion area. There are good faith communities of various sizes in Papillion. According to their participants—whom New Hope Church disciples engaged in conversation when they visited their homes last summer—Papillion churches are generally providing good worship, ministry, and some outreach for their participants and the community. However the author has observed from conversations with leaders of these congregations that there are not many church projects oriented toward serving people outside the walls of the churches. There are many good programs and events within the churches. Yet, such programs tend to discourage those who are not comfortable in church buildings from participating. These programs have a more “traditional” feel—as if the churches are saying, “Come to our church and we will offer you what we think you need here in our building.” There are youth clubs that various churches sponsor and support in the local schools (“Jesus and Me” clubs and Youth For Christ groups). Still, there are not a lot of mission-oriented and neighborhood-oriented church activities that encourage participants to help others outside the church.

New Hope Church provides this kind of outwardly focused mission for the Papillion area. The church meets in a YMCA and not a church building. New Hope Church disciples regularly interact with the YMCA staff and members. New Hope Church plans to serve in the community in various ways during the coming years. In the

recent past, this church freely distributed ice-cold bottled water and other snacks to participants in two Papillion community events during which the heat index was over one hundred degrees. New Hope Church disciples regularly serve in the local food pantry and quarterly offer a food drive to which members of the YMCA contribute. New Hope Church currently offers a monthly mission-oriented activity. Church leadership also plans to include an encouragement for newly formed groups of the church to offer mission, as they feel called. New Hope Church has helped several families with financial needs in its two years of existence.¹⁹

This outward-oriented mission focus was well elucidated and eloquently summarized in a moving testimony given by a New Hope Church elder during the church's launch in September. She said that she had served in traditional churches for years, but she had never served outside the walls of a church like she had served at New Hope Church. She concluded by saying that she had been changed from an "inside" Christian, one who focuses personal energies and gifts on the church, its structure, and its activities, to an "outside" Christian, one who focuses personal energies and gifts on those in need outside the church. New Hope Church has helped and plans to help others in need, thus following Jesus' directive in stories about the need to seek the lost (particularly the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin in Luke 15:1-10). New Hope Church thereby has given and will give meaning to their lives.

¹⁹ The church was meeting on a regular basis before its official launch on September 22, 2013.

Another area of community need is a deep need for inclusiveness. The military background of many of the residents of Papillion often leads to a somewhat conservative or traditional stance on social issues on the part of many in this area. Such stances are deeply respected in the Midwest. Some at New Hope Church share these points of view. New Hope Church is unique, however, in that it has distinguished itself as an “open and welcoming” congregation. It opens its participation to all and welcomes all, regardless of race, age, gender, marital preference, and a host of other categories that can divide the faithful instead of unite them in Christ. New Hope Church is the only Christian congregation that has taken such a public stand in the Papillion area. This openness has been welcomed in many of the home visits mentioned above. In many of the 1,400 visits, New Hope Church disciples have heard such responses as these to their question about what residents seek in a church home: “someplace where the people are open to different ideas and different lifestyles” and “a place in which people can be who they are without prejudice from others.” There seems to be a unique niche that New Hope Church can offer to people who do not feel welcome in traditional churches that have a particular stance or ethos against certain groups in the culture.

There is a final community need to be explored that is near to the heart of a Disciple of Christ church: community-wide, church-cooperative service. As will be explored in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4 below, the Disciples of Christ originated with the dream that all Christians would join together and would worship, fellowship, grow, and serve as one. This dream has seldom come to fruition (in fact, this movement,

which began with Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell, has split twice so that there are presently three manifestations of the original movement). Yet, hundreds of churches demonstrate every day around the world that they can join together in efforts to serve their local communities. There are a few such efforts among local churches in Papillion currently. The outstanding one is the Tri-City Food Pantry, which was begun and funded by local churches to serve three cities in close proximity—Papillion, Ralston, and La Vista. As noted above, this pantry serves hundreds of people every month. Another example is a yearly Advent worship experience in which local churches of this Tri-City area gather to offer the larger community a worship experience mainly through music. Still, there are no other major efforts at service such as the food pantry.

A vision God has given the author for months now is to begin a community-based service in which participants in churches can offer their unique skills and gifts to well-matched local mission and service projects. The author has done some community-based matching of church participants' skills/interests to mission with Hunger Free Heartland, a non-profit organization (based in Nebraska and Iowa) that partners with many organizations to end childhood hunger. Still, God seems to be nudging the author to partner with others in creating such a “mission matchmaking service” for Papillion and perhaps the greater Omaha area.

The beginning outline of such a local service may include the following components. A list of community needs in Papillion or Sarpy County can be compiled from various agencies, institutions and organizations. The needs could include the

descriptions of the tasks needed, the skills and time needed for these tasks, possible assistance available for completion of the tasks, and statements as to why these tasks matter. Personal testimonies of past recipients of the task would enhance the service experience and give meaning to the one who offers the task or servant. These needs could then be communicated to churches either through e-mail, Facebook, a website, or other venue. Faith communities could direct their participants to these lists. Possible participants can contact the organization in which they are interested in serving. Similarly, possible participants in this service (“servants”) could offer some form of servant resume—complete with such items as skills, experience, interests, talents, weekly availability—on a Linked-In page or website. Organizations who are recruiting these servants can view this servant information and contact them for possible service. However the matching occurs, the organizations would then contact potential servants, vet their fitness for participation, and then train the servants for the tasks.

Special features could also be added to this mission matchmaking service. The latest request for a new volunteer opportunity or for a special project involving a larger group could be proclaimed through Twitter, using the hash-tag feature. Success stories of the servants could also be broadcast through Twitter or YouTube videos. Such videos can be shown during community gathering time in local faith communities so that the blessings, benefits, and life-changing impact of service can be highlighted. Such stories may inspire more in the faith communities to give of their time, talents, and treasure to help address needs for which they have particular interest or skill.

Thus, a community-wide movement of service can be born through such a mission matchmaking service. If such a movement would grow, many would be helped, many lives would be changed, and the good news of Jesus Christ would be experienced so that an entire community could be transformed. New Hope Church may be the catalyst and leader for such a movement. Such work calls for the development of good leadership for the congregation and for the community.

CHAPTER 2

NEW HOPE CHURCH AS MINISTRY CONTEXT

New Hope Church is the context for this leadership training project and has a unique set of characteristics and practices. The church emphasizes the development of deep spirituality for its disciples; therefore, its mission statement indicates that the church is “loving God” and “growing faith.” New Hope disciples also practice their faith; hence, their church’s mission statement indicates that they are “serving others.” As stated above, New Hope Church works in teams to accomplish these parts of its mission. This work has some challenges and assets unique to this context.

New Hope Disciples’ Spiritual Development

From its beginning as a new church start, New Hope Church focused on developing spiritual disciplines. Many New Hope Church disciples agreed to regularly practice seven spiritual disciplines: daily prayer, daily Bible reading, weekly worship, tithing, participation in group within the church, participation in ministry within the church, and participation in mission beyond the church. Daily prayer includes a regular

time of prayer as well as talking with God throughout the day. New Hope Church disciples also incorporate their own unique daily practices, such as reading a suitable daily on-line devotional. They also agree to read their Bibles daily. Again, they may use a favorite online devotional or a devotional book so that they can receive God's Word on a regular basis. The church also encourages worshipping regularly. The Sunday morning gatherings of the church have a high percentage of participation, based on the ratio of worshippers to members: about 70 percent. New Hope Church also encourages its disciples to give 10 percent of their income. If a family or person ("giving unit") does not believe that it can give this much, then these disciples give as much as they can. New Hope Church leaders encourage them to give at least a one percent increase per year.

Other New Hope Church spiritual disciplines include participation in various team efforts on a regular basis. Most New Hope Church disciples participate in some kind of spiritual growth or discipleship group on a regular basis. A women's discipleship group meets monthly for Bible study and personal sharing. An adult group meets weekly to explore how they can deepen their discipleship practices. Another discipline for New Hope Church disciples is participation in some kind of ministry for the church. Most participate in some kind of manner, whether it be helping to set up for worship, providing coffee and bagels each Sunday, leading a team, or greeting newcomers. The final discipline for these disciples is participation in a mission beyond the church. Currently, the church engages in at least one mission project per month in which it serves its local

community. In 2014, the church plans to offer community seminars through the YMCA where it meets in order to serve the community with helpful information and expertise.

Through its worship, New Hope Church regularly develops a spiritual connection with God that has communal, individual, contemporary and traditional elements woven into a meaningful experience. New Hope Church worship enables worshipers to participate individually through personal prayer time during the main prayer and during communion meditation, through comments during the messages, through text messages occasionally offered on the screen during sermons, and through the worship leadership of the various disciples (such as offering communion prayers and reflections). New Hope Church worship enables worshipers to experience worship in a communal setting, such as singing together, praying the Lord's Prayer together, focusing on the message and scripture together (such as saying the Bible verses in unison), and sharing in Communion or Lord's Supper together. The church offers a contemporary style of worship, enabling it to speak to people in today's idioms. Its opening and closing music reflects today's Christian popular songs. Its "sermons" use movie clips and other video segments to offer a message through present-day means. The messages also encourage group participation at times, such as a "Question and Answer" segment in some sermons. New Hope Church therefore seeks to communicate spirituality through today's language. The church's worship also draws upon the rich traditions of the faith, such as its history, hymns, stories, Lord's Prayer, and Bible as resources of deep wisdom and spiritual power.

An important part of New Hope Church's spirituality is its regular practice of listening to God. The church offers a variety of ways in which its disciples practice this discipline. First, this practice is encouraged during disciples' daily prayer time. Second, New Hope Church practices silence and listening to God during times of spiritual reflection at elders' and other meetings of the church. Its elder meetings (leaders of the church who constitute the church's board of directors) typically begin with a reading of a Bible passage, followed by a time of silent reflection, then a one-sentence sharing by elders of where they heard God in the passage, followed by another minute of silence, and then ending with a prayer by a leader. Third, during worship there are many moments of silence during the main prayer time: at the beginning in which joys are mentioned, in the middle after the leader prays for forgiveness of sins, and near the end in which individuals are encouraged to pray their own prayers. As mentioned previously, there are moments of silence during the Communion meditation. New Hope Church disciples regularly experience worship emphases in which they are encouraged to listen to God through silence and contemplative prayer.

New Hope Disciples' Service

The next aspect of New Hope Church's context is its emphasis on service or mission. From its beginnings in 2012, New Hope Church disciples have been committed to regularly serving its community. Once a month starting in early 2012, the church went somewhere to serve as its worship, using its worship day and time in order to worship God through serving others. These disciples have served in a multitude of projects on an

average of once a month over the last two years. These projects are numerous: greeting and offering bottled water to others at the summer celebration called Papillion Days, clearing trash at a local recreation area, helping clear tables at the local Firefighter's Community Appreciation Breakfast, assisting clients at the local food pantry, and helping provide a local family with basic needs during the Christmas holiday.

In 2013, the elders decided on a focused set of mission project areas that directs the church to address particular community needs. The first of these is the Sarpy Community YMCA—the building in which the church is nested. There has already been much service New Hope Church has offered to the YMCA, such as a fall clean-up morning, offering bottled water to YMCA clients on Sunday mornings and occasional evenings, and offering chili one Sunday in the winter. The second mission area is offering service to different community events and organizations. Two of these have already been mentioned: Papillion Days and Firefighters' Breakfast. The church is also a regular supporter of the Tri-City food pantry. One of our families regularly serves at the pantry—stocking its shelves and helping its clients. New Hope Church quarterly offers a box at the YMCA for food donations for the pantry (for four to six weeks at a time).

New Hope Church is focused on two other sets of service areas. A third set of mission projects centers on serving local schools. As previously mentioned, the church helped two families with donations worth hundreds of dollars during the Christmas season, and the names for these families were from the local community school system. Also, New Hope Church offered a meal for pre-school teachers during their conference

meetings in February of 2014. A fourth set of mission projects are mission trips and projects that meet felt needs. For example, New Hope Church disciples offered another community meal (as it has done previously) for the Hospice House of Omaha in May of 2014. These events are opportunities for the spiritual light of Jesus Christ to shine through the actions and words of New Hope disciples.

New Hope Church serves its communities as it discerns God's will for such mission. New Hope Church disciples seek to offer service in all of its activities. In worship, the church regularly incorporates reaching out to others. For example, in a recent New Year's worship experience, participants walked through the hallways of the YMCA in teams and prayed for the different rooms and accoutrements of the building. They asked God to use the room in particular ways so that health, good relationships, blessings, and connection to God abound there. The church always donates their bagels to YMCA patrons on Sunday mornings. At Papillion Days and Papio Bay Doggie Day (another summer community event), New Hope disciples distribute bottled water which is an incredibly popular item on these typically hot days. The church also seeks to offer a regular presence of Christ during the various community events of Papillion and Sarpy County. As an example, New Hope disciples have regularly participated in several community runs. They meet new people and talk with them about their runs, their lives, their faith and New Hope Church. The church helped to transport special food donations to the food pantry during Papillion Days last year. In these and other ways, New Hope disciples offer itself as regular servants to its community.

Another way that New Hope Church offers mission to its community is through regular neighborhood visits during the warmer months. As previously mentioned New Hope Church disciples have visited over 1400 homes in Papillion neighborhoods. These disciples have cared for the residents of these homes by engaging them in conversation about their faith, their churches, and their families. In these visits, many homeowners and the New Hope Church evangelists have shared deeply of their lives. Laughter, tears, joy, and pain have all flowed from these conversations. New Hope Church disciples who have never shared door-to-door in this way before commented on how uplifted they felt that in these visits they were serving others through their listening, caring and sharing of faith. Though some homeowners did not like or appreciate these visits, dozens of residents made comments like, "This is so wonderful that you are out here like this." Others commented on how much courage it took for New Hope Church disciples to engage strangers in this way. Still others made similar comments like, "Our church should be doing things like this." On one occasion, the New Hope Church visitor stumbled upon a verbal fight between a mother and a teen-aged daughter. The family had not been to church in years. After several minutes of listening, the disciple offered prayer. Then, a previously tense household experienced a moment of peace and tranquility as the prayer soaked into the souls present. Both mother and daughter offered thanks to the visitor. These visits seemed to have deep impact on many who were visited.

New Hope's Team-Based Governance

Another aspect of the identity of New Hope Church is its team-based governance. First, it is vital to consider the history of this approach to church governance structure. The church arises from the group of churches known as “mainline.” These churches adopted the “functional committee” governance system in the 1930s-1950s and refined it even further into the latter half of the twentieth century. In such a system, most decisions are made by committees and a general board or governing council. Therefore, much time is taken for small groups of people to meet and make decisions for the church. This system worked well in the days in which much of the potential workforce (women) was unemployed and the remainder of the workforce (men) had leisure time to devote to civic organizations such as church. As the culture changed to include nearly all people in the paid workforce and to decrease significantly the amount of leisure time for church activities (with other activities like youth sports competing for this time), fewer people had time for such a system.

All of New Hope Church's disciples have experienced the frustration of trying to work within this committee system. Many of these disciples spent hours in committee meetings whose purpose was to simply discuss the business of the church instead of growing their members spiritually and inspiring them to actually do ministry. Most were part of an effort in a previous church to change the church culture so that the committee system was transformed into a team-based governance model that focused more on decisions made in spiritually based smaller teams that then acted on these decisions to

render ministry to those in need. This transformation effort was largely successful. It was also taxing on these disciples because many others fought the change in the previous congregation.

As New Hope Church began, its first organizational meeting focused on spiritually oriented, mission-focused teams. Because the church is currently small, the few teams of the church focus on the three main areas previously mentioned—worship, discipleship, and mission—and are led by elders who also constitute the governing board of the church. Therefore, those who are making the “major” decisions of the church, the elders, can make more informed decisions because they are deeply engaged in the church’s ministry. Moreover, from its beginning the church has emphasized that most of the decisions of the church, big and small, are made by small teams or individuals who are given authority in their respective areas of responsibility. For example, the worship team decides times for worship—after consulting others in the congregation for their input—rather than an entire governing board deciding on this issue.

Leaders of New Hope Church regularly consult with others in the congregation or the entire gathered congregation (while the church is still small) because of the “team” nature of the church. This team approach is markedly different from that of the old committee system. Part of the frustration with the old committee system was that it was so cumbersome and time-consuming that issues seemed to be “talked to death.” Hence, strong leaders tended to arise and dominate the decision-making process because it simply took too long for decisions to be made through the committee process. The

“team” approach is different in that a team strives for true collaboration as leaders and team members attempt to listen deeply to and respect one another in decision-making processes. It is also different in that these teams attempt to incorporate prayerful attitudes in this approach. The small team led by the Holy Spirit strives to make appropriate decisions in their area of responsibility.

To offer an example of the team approach, many teams help to offer worship during a Sunday morning. A different church family a week arrives early to set up the worship space at the YMCA. Members of this family also help to set up a welcome area and greet YMCA patrons and visitors at the worship service, offering hospitality (including a bottle of water with the church contact information) to them. The hospitality elder sets up a hospitality table near the worship space for pastries, coffee, and orange juice. Others who have arrived early help this elder as needed.

When the worship begins, other teams lead and perform tasks. The pastor advances the slides and generally leads the service. Another New Hope disciple offers music during prayer and Communion times. The worship elder recruits another team to lead Communion—one person to offer the prayer and the other to offer the meditation. At the end of the service, the hospitality elder welcomes participants to the hospitality table where they enjoy refreshments. The discipleship elder gives instructions as to what courses or groups will be offered next. The team that has set up is joined by those who stay behind in putting away the items used for worship (such as tables, chairs, a screen, and sheets used to cover exercise equipment) as well as the outside church sign.

Similarly, different teams are organized to take leadership responsibility of the many mission projects of the church. Ordinarily, most of the decisions as to how the church functions in each of these areas are made by the different people engaged in these team efforts.

Once a month, the elders meet to coordinate the work of these teams and to set the overall direction of the church. The elders first participate in aforementioned prayer exercise that focuses them spiritually for the meeting. New Hope Church elders discuss the collaboration between teams. These elders also, with the input of other New Hope Church disciples, make most of the major decisions of the church. For example, they consider a budget presented by the administrative team and adopt it for the upcoming year. They consider the decisions made by teams in the church (such as worship times) and collaboratively discuss solutions if there are possible conflicts among teams. New Hope Church continually emphasizes the importance of each individual and each team—how their opinions, thoughts, and actions are respected because they are created and blessed by God who calls them into servanthood (one of the mission priorities of the church).

Hindrances to and Assets for Team Leadership Training

As New Hope Church embarks upon the creation of training for team leaders, there are numerous hindrances to as well as assets for this training. The leaders of the church will prayerfully consider the potential problems with such a program and try to negotiate

solutions for such issues. They will also draw upon the many assets that God has provided for training leaders.

Some possible obstacles might impede the implementation of a training program for church leaders. First, the size of the church is a potential deterrent to developing such a program. A small group of people who are busy in other parts of their lives (with family and work, for example) only has so many hours to give to the work of a church. Many of New Hope Church's disciples serve in a number of ways already. Adding a leadership training program would be an additional responsibility that some would have to share. Second, the location of the church and its programs likewise presents challenges. Some people do not want to go to a YMCA, associating it with a certain segment of the community that might be different from the one they assume is their segment. Additionally, the YMCA is currently limited in offering space for programs of New Hope Church and other outside groups due to the increased programming that the YMCA offers.

Other obstacles may impede participation in this leadership training. Third, many people in the community who might be potential participants in this training do not see the need for leadership training. Those who do not want to be leaders are not interested. Many of those who are leaders may not understand that they can be helped by such training. Some leaders believe that they have everything already "figured out" when it comes to leadership. As previously mentioned, the church is nested in a community that has many military families. Those already in the military have had much leadership

training. Fourth, even if people see a need for further leadership training, given the other priorities in their lives (such as raising families and working at demanding jobs) they may not rank receiving leadership training as a priority.

The assets for a leadership training program are numerous. First, New Hope Church disciples are mostly faithful, hard-working servant-leaders who find time for what is important to them. They are strong assets for such a program. If leadership training is a priority, then, given past experiences with participation in other programs, they will find time, energy, and resources to support it. Second, the Sarpy YMCA is a well-kept facility that has recently been renovated. Its staff is excellent, offering good hospitality to whoever enters the building. The YMCA leadership has made numerous attempts to accommodate New Hope programs in the past. New Hope leadership deems the Sarpy YMCA as a wonderful asset to any program it might offer. Third, a training program that emphasizes the best wisdom from the spiritual and the business world can be attractive to many who have not received instruction in such a program. Fourth, though some people may not view New Hope Church's leadership training as a priority, nevertheless, they may become more interested if they see its benefits. As this training is offered and people receive its benefits, they may tell their friends. These friends may become interested in the training after they hear of its merits. Moreover, leadership development is in such demand today that people may be interested in programs of which they were previously unaware.

There are many other assets for a leadership training program. New Hope Church is meeting and contacting more people every week. As New Hope Church disciples engage in conversation with these new people, they can be welcomed as potential recipients of the leadership training. This leadership training program will be a “living” program, welcoming the input and ideas of new people. It will not be a program cut in stone and forever unchanged. Therefore, new people who enter the church or the church’s leadership program can help shape it and make it better and stronger. Hence, new participants are an asset for this program.

Likewise, new contacts with other agencies and churches in Sarpy County and the greater Omaha area are assets for such a program. New Hope Church makes such new contacts often. For example, for many of its programs the church has partnered with Panera Bread, Chick-Fil-A, the Papillion Fire Department, the Papillion mayor’s office, the Papillion Recreation Department, the Tri-City Food Pantry, the Tri-City Ministerial Association, the Omaha Hospice House and many other organizations. Many of these organizations have assets that can be shared with New Hope Church’s training program. For example, many of these groups have their own training programs. New Hope leaders can talk with these partners to ascertain how their programs may be different and similar. The church and these partners can therefore share mutual wisdom and may even co-sponsor training events for the community. Such partnerships can be a great asset to New Hope Church’s leadership training.

New Hope Church's reputation in the community is also a strong asset. The church has repeatedly offered assistance and aid through its mission projects to others. The community sense or "feel" of the church as a good group that can be counted on as giving helpful service will encourage participation in a leadership training program that New Hope Church disciples can offer to this community. Through its regular monthly service to the community, New Hope Church can share with others whom they serve about their leadership training. Because of the good relationships built in these contacts, more people may be interested in this training.

New Hope Church's zeal for service and leadership is a strong asset. This congregation is like not established or traditional churches with many of their long-standing issues, such as unresolved conflict, within a fellowship. The church likewise does not have a history of conflict with other churches in the community. Moreover, New Hope Church disciples are not overly concerned with the normal "turf" issues that accompany having a building. For example, some established churches are so concerned about their buildings' use that they are not welcoming of non-church people for programs such as leadership training. New Hope Church does not carry the "baggage" of these issues. The church has been free to experience the mission-oriented calling of Jesus Christ to serve others and baptize them into a life with God (see Matthew 28:19). The church, unencumbered by the conflicts and issues heretofore mentioned, can move out (or be "on the move," as its motto indicates) into the community in all of its zeal to help others by offering programs like leadership training.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the preceding contextual analysis, a review of the literature for this project follows. An in-depth examination of ecclesiology, leadership, and good team qualities will shape the leadership training program of New Hope Church. Appropriate literature focusing on these essential components of leadership training will be examined.

Ecclesiology

First, this ecclesiological investigation will include the theology of the Disciples of Christ as explored through a review of Mark Toulouse’s historical reflections in *Joined in Discipleship* and of Dick Hamm’s more contemporary view of the Disciples of Christ, including a vision for leadership, in *Recreating the Church*. The Disciples of Christ ecclesiology roughly fits within the realm of “free church” ecclesiologies. These churches tend to have a congregationalist constitution. Their organization dictates that the members of the congregation have the ultimate power.¹

¹ Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 8, 13.

Toulouse is a renowned Disciples of Christ historian with a keen interest in the theology of this church movement. Toulouse summarizes the essential ecclesiological principles within the Disciples of Christ in *Joined in Discipleship*. He writes that the Disciples of Christ were born on American soil, especially out of the Second Great Awakening of the eighteenth century. The early founders stressed the autonomy of individuals and congregations in their faith and faith practices.² Toulouse then offers the first ecclesiological principle of the Disciples of Christ: the Interpretation Principle. This principle included religious freedom so that ecclesiastical power was given to all people to interpret the Bible (authoritative for believers, especially the New Testament) and to practice their faith as they believed. Diversity therefore flourished in this movement.³ He next describes the Restoration Principle, which emphasizes that Christians of all types can be joined together as one when the early Christian biblical faith (known in the New Testament) is restored.⁴ The Ecumenical Principle affirms Christian unity and is demanded by apostolic witness. After describing this principle, which is the “polar star” of this church, Toulouse traces its deep history in the Disciples of Christ.⁵ The Eschatological Principle, especially as promoted by founder Alexander Campbell, states

² Mark Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), 20. This background is covered more extensively in Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1975), 19-60. McAllister and Tucker stress how this movement emphasized the transition from state churches and autocratic leaders to separate churches who had shared leadership.

³ *Ibid.*, 37-40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 73-97.

that God has been working in history, continues to work in the world in the present time, and will ultimately reign in all of the world at the end of time.⁶

Toulouse offers other aspects of the Disciples of Christ movement. The sacraments practiced by Disciples of Christ are baptism by immersion and weekly Lord's Supper or Communion. Given that their ecumenical life has caused them to dialogue with those of other Christian religions, Disciples of Christ welcome those who have been baptized—by immersion or sprinkled as infants—by other Christian churches into membership and at the Lord's Supper.⁷ Toulouse notes how Disciples of Christ leadership evolved from an anti-clerical focus that included the three offices of bishop (or elder), deacon, and evangelist to a more professional and educated clergy. Today, the pendulum is swinging back to a less educated yet licensed ministry that serves small churches.⁸ There has been a long history of Disciples of Christ engagement in mission—local and overseas.⁹ Toulouse traces the history of the current structure of the church in its three manifestations: congregational, regional, and general.¹⁰

Finally, Toulouse answers the question posed in the title of his last chapter, “What Is the Role of a Denomination in a Post-Denominational Age?” by arguing for a renewed

⁶ Ibid., 102.

⁷ Ibid., 146, 153.

⁸ Ibid., 164-165, 168, 172, 184.

⁹ Ibid., 191, 193, 210-212.

¹⁰ Ibid., 236-240.

sense of its historical identity within its current ecumenical operation.¹¹ Though extremely helpful in reviewing the historical arc of the theology, organization, and leadership of the Disciples of Christ, Toulouse's prescription for the future seems to be "more of the same," that is re-discovering its history in relation to its well-worn pattern of ecumenical dialogue and work. Many current thinkers and leaders of this postmodern age instead see the need for a distinctive shift or transformation in which churches take the best and most fitting theology and practice of its history and transform them to address the current era.¹² Nevertheless, Toulouse's encouragement can spur church leaders to guide their communities toward creatively forming alternative communities that have distinct identities rooted in Jesus Christ. Barry A. Harvey suggests such a leadership response to the challenges of the postmodern world.¹³

Hamm, in his book *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age*, offers an analysis of the leadership and understandings needed for Disciples of Christ and other "mainline" (traditionally, the eight churches that have cooperated ecumenically in the last century) church leaders in post-modernity. Hamm, former General Minister and President of the Disciples of Christ, sketches the need for adaptive change (verses

¹¹ Ibid., 266-267.

¹² See especially Phylis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 16-17.

¹³ Barry A. Harvey, *Another City* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 15-18. Karkkainen underscores Harvey's notion, emphasizing that the church is living in another kingdom, an age to come. The church needs this "ecclesial eschatology" today. See Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 223-224.

technical change) for churches and their leaders in this current postmodern age.¹⁴ He describes the “perfect storm” for these churches as the dramatic shift in the culture from the modern to the postmodern era, their obsolete modern organizational forms, and the fear that has turned them inward to maintenance and survival rather than mission.¹⁵ Hamm offers the three most important questions for church leaders to ask themselves in order to properly orient themselves in this perfect storm: “what time is it?” (what year or era does the current structure and behavior reflect), “where am I?” (within what kind of structure does the leader currently work), and “what am I doing here?” (what is God’s particular calling for the leader). As leaders answer these questions then they gain some clarity for their leadership task.¹⁶

Hamm then examines other aspects of today’s church milieu such as generational differences. Many congregations have as many as six generations represented, each with its own theology and practice of church and Christian life.¹⁷ Growing out of these generational differences, there is a crisis in the governance of churches because people of different generations want a church to be governed in different ways. People of older generations prefer a system (a committee system—described in more detail in Chapter 2 above) in which everyone has a voice and a vote—direct democracy—whereas people of

¹⁴ Dick Hamm, *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007), 8-9. Here, Hamm is using the schema adapted from Ronald Heifetz’ *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, which will be reviewed below.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

younger generations prefer more participation in smaller teams and a board that has representatives of different church ministries.¹⁸ In this part, Hamm finally describes different polarities within churches today that represent modern versus postmodern emphases, among them are maintenance versus mission (perhaps, he writes, this polarity is the most fundamental), withholding authority versus granting authority, management versus vision, membership versus discipleship, control versus empowerment, and democracy versus discernment.¹⁹

Finally, Hamm seeks to answer the question of how one leads adaptive change in an organization. First, Hamm urges the transformative leader to be humble and to “know thyself” in her “era” (modern or postmodern) as well as in theological, spiritual, physical and emotional aspects.²⁰ Next, Hamm offers a seven-step process for leading change in an organization. These steps include such practices as understanding the context of the institution, relationship and trust-building, helping the group to understand its core values, leading the development of a vision, and nurturing the adaptive change that will bring the vision to reality.²¹ Hamm also offers a sweeping analysis of the current Disciples of Christ (and related churches) milieu that is helpful to leadership development. Using anecdotes and specific examples, Hamm puts “flesh” on the “bones” of his arguments. Hamm probably could have spent more time investigating and writing

¹⁸ Ibid., 58-60.

¹⁹ Ibid., 63-72.

²⁰ Ibid., 77-85.

²¹ Ibid., 94-112.

about the millennial generation and their particular postmodern interests and practices that set the stage for today's leadership. Nevertheless, for a general volume on Disciples of Christ leadership for this age, Hamm offers an invaluable resource for leaders and for their development as leaders.

Leadership

The second part of this literature review includes contemporary views of leadership from the world of business as examined through Jim Collins' *Good to Great*, Ronald Heifetz' *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, and Scott Cormode's *Making Spiritual Sense*. Cormode's work additionally includes ecclesiological and theological observations.

Collins offers a well-researched argument as well as a pathway for organizations to move from being good to being great. Collins presents that pathway as three broad stages that each contain two key concepts. The first stage, Disciplined People, includes Level 5 Leadership and the concept of "First Who . . . Then What." "Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—*but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves,*" writes Collins. Collins indicates that leadership does not completely define the success or failure of a company, but it sets the stage for greatness.²² Collins' "First

²² Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 21-22, 30.

Who . . . Then What” concept refers to the importance of tailoring tasks to leaders and not the reverse. He emphasizes that Level 5 leaders first do not try to drive a “bus”—that is, the business—with a certain vision and then recruit people to drive with them. Rather, these leaders first get the right people in the right seats to help drive the bus and get the wrong people off the bus.²³

The second stage of a company’s move from “good to great” is Disciplined Thought which includes confronting brutal facts and the hedgehog concept. After recruiting disciplined leaders, Collins indicates that improving companies foster a work environment in which truth is heard and brutal facts confronted. They generally lead with questions, not answers, and they engage in dialogue, not coercion.²⁴ The hedgehog concept states that businesses have a single focus that follows from the confluence of three areas or circles: what the company can be the best at, what drives its economic engine, and what it is deeply passionate about.²⁵

The third stage of Collins’ good to great movement is Disciplined Action, which includes a culture of discipline and technology accelerators. A company achieves a culture of discipline whenever it first includes the ideas of freedom and responsibility within a framework. A leader, who does not become a tyrant, then fills the work culture with self-disciplined people who make extra efforts to complete their responsibilities. The organization’s leaders adhere to the hedgehog concept, focusing on what is at the

²³ Ibid., 41.

²⁴ Ibid., 63, 74-75.

²⁵ Ibid., 90-91, 95-96.

intersection of the three circles above.²⁶ Finally, Collins indicates that technology, when used correctly, accelerates (not creates) the momentum of company success.²⁷

Collins concludes *Good to Great* by indicating that companies that have a “good to great” breakthrough do so through this organic process, not through some knee-jerk sudden action calculated to appeal to more customers.²⁸ Collins’ insights are well researched and therefore carry much weight with organizations. Some of these insights apply to non-profit groups. For examples, the insight of Level 5 leadership can be directly related to Jesus’ teachings on humility.²⁹ Similarly, having the right persons on the leadership team is a concept that is reflected in the history of the faith.³⁰ Such faith stories focused on leadership can offer much wisdom to leadership decisions.

Heifetz’ work, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, offers a helpful description of effective leadership for organizations that operate in a world in which problems and their solutions are unclear—which is a good description of this postmodern era. The leader of an organization that faces problems or issues that do not have technical or regular solutions mobilizes adaptive work. Adaptive work calls for learning the issues that the problem presents and the aspects of a possible solution. “Adaptive work requires a

²⁶ Ibid., 120, 124.

²⁷ Ibid., 152.

²⁸ Ibid., 168.

²⁹ See, for example: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5); “I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29); “Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4); “For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Luke 14:11).

³⁰ See, for example, the choice of David to fight Goliath in I Samuel 17.

change in values, beliefs, or behavior.”³¹ Heifetz compares the environment of such work to a pressure cooker. When problems do not have an easy solution, pressure builds and anxiety rises. One adaptive leadership task is to manage this pressure-cooker environment by managing the pace and sequence of actions taken to move toward a solution.³² The leader focuses attention on the relevant tough issues and not distractions.³³ The leader also chooses an appropriate decision-making process—the more participative for the more adaptive problem. Because of their authoritative positions, leaders become lightning rods for the attention given to adaptive work and need strategies for self-care.³⁴

Heifetz offers many practical suggestions to help leaders bear the responsibility of adaptive work. He suggests that a leader learn the art of “getting on the balcony,” meaning that a leader becomes objective about the entire work situation even as he is engaged personally in this difficult work and the attention it receives. A leader can also distinguish himself from his role, thus externalizing the conflict that arises in the work of changing an organization. A leader can recruit and use partners in adaptive change. Heifetz also proposes that a leader find a sanctuary in which she can retreat and regain composure and perspective. Finally, Heifetz advocates that a leader preserves a sense of purpose that enables her to review her orienting values.³⁵

³¹ Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 22, 76.

³² *Ibid.*, 106, 109.

³³ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 224-225.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 252-274.

Heifetz offers valuable help to a leader that attempts to guide an organization through a difficult change. His proposals help give such leaders an orientation to adaptive work as well as helpful tips as to how they can accomplish this work and not be destroyed by it. By the end of the book, one can be left simply asking for more guidance.

Cormode, in *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders As Spiritual Interpreters*, writes that the “first duty” of the Christian leader is to provide a “Christian perspective ... for people who want to live faithful lives.” “... Christian leadership is fundamentally an act of theological interpretation.” The best leaders change how people view life.³⁶ Cormode describes how a leader makes meaning in the midst of mutual efforts in a community. The leader does not control this process.³⁷ The leader provides his community with theological categories that help them make sense of situations.³⁸ These categories provide a framework that help people understand their world.³⁹ As an example of this process, Cormode offers Jesus’ reframing of religious life as recorded in Matthew 5. This reframing includes: change people’s expectations; draw from a different set of cultural resources; weave these resources together using a narrative structure; ensure that clear actions result from the story-shaped interpretation; sometimes legitimate fresh interpretations; and enable people to internalize new interpretations.⁴⁰ Cormode finally

³⁶ Scott Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), x-xi.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49-53.

describes how, specifically, Christian leaders make spiritual meaning. Leaders use cultural resources to speak to and reframe meaning for subcultures of people.⁴¹ Such resources include community, ideology, norms, goals, narrative (and ritual), and practices.⁴²

Cormode's description of Christian leadership is a helpful, though limited one. Certainly Christian leaders offer spiritual meaning, and Cormode's detailed description of this process is useful. Yet, leaders in the Judeo-Christian tradition also have done and continue to do something else: they act in order to help people's lives.⁴³ Hence, there are numerous stories of Jesus' healing in the gospels. The earliest Christian leaders were known for their generosity and caring toward others. The Christian faith records how God acts, through men and women leaders, in history many times.

Qualities of Good Teams

The third part of this literature review includes resources on the qualities of good teams. George Cladis' *Leading the Team-Based Church* is particularly focused on teams within churches. J. Richard Hackman's *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances* and Howard Clinebell's *Growth Groups* offer rich resources from business and psychological disciplines for Christians in leading effective teams.

⁴¹ Ibid., 66.

⁴² Ibid., 70.

⁴³ Cf. Robert Greenleaf's description of leaders' actions in Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant-Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 15.

Cladis in *Leading the Team-Based Church* offers a biblically-based vision of how teams are led to accomplish God’s purposes for churches. He grounds his concept of team in the trinitarian nature of God. Like the relationships of the three members of the trinity, the relationships of a good team are in perichoresis—a circle dance that has a deep sense of joy, freedom, song, intimacy, and harmony. Such characteristics of teams and leaders are more fitting for postmodernism, an era that emphasizes equality rather than domination and privilege.⁴⁴ The first characteristic of such a team is that it is covenanting: its members are bound by covenants that induce freedom, love, warmth, unity, and grace.⁴⁵ These covenants are initiated by the leader, specific, reviewed often, distributed widely, and gracious.⁴⁶ The second characteristic of a good team is that such teams are pulled by a focused purpose. Effective teams cast a vision “that unites people around a God-given cause.”⁴⁷ The third characteristic of good teams is that they create a culture that reflects the mission to which God calls them. Culture-creation includes forging values and ways of being that reflect the core beliefs of the church.⁴⁸ Cladis offers ways for teams to create such cultures like eliminating competing cultures, making

⁴⁴ George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 4-5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 41-47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 48, 50.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 66, 69.

heroes and heroines, using the tradition of the church, communicating the vision, incorporating cultural diversity, and using music and media.⁴⁹

Other characteristics of good teams for Cladis are varied. The fourth characteristic of such teams is collaboration. “When members of leadership teams collaborate in order to accomplish what they discern is God’s will, they experience the beauty of Spirit-given synergy.”⁵⁰ The fifth characteristic of effective teams is trust. A trusting environment within teams creates an atmosphere of safety and security in which there is a reliance on the character and truth of others.⁵¹ The sixth characteristic of good teams is that they empower team members to complete ministry tasks. Hierarchy gives way to trusting and respecting people to respond to their call to ministry.⁵² The final characteristic of effective teams is that they are “ever growing and open to new discoveries.”⁵³ Cladis’ descriptions of teams within a church are helpful because he gives specific examples of actual church team development. Cladis might have included more specifics of how a team-building project had challenges and how the church met the challenges. Nevertheless, Cladis offers a richly biblical and practical model for creating effective church teams.

Hackman’s *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances* offers similar components to effective teamwork, based on his research of teams within business

⁴⁹ Ibid., 76-85.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁵¹ Ibid., 107.

⁵² Ibid., 123.

⁵³ Ibid., 141.

organizations. Hackman identifies five conditions for leaders to establish for a team to perform well. The first condition, creating a “real team,” involves its members’ working together in close proximity.⁵⁴ The second condition is that someone in authority sets a compelling direction for the team’s work.⁵⁵ The third condition is that effective teams have an appropriate enabling structure that includes, among other things, norms of conduct for team members.⁵⁶ The fourth condition for good teams is that competent teamwork occurs in an appropriate supportive context of the overall organization.⁵⁷ Such a context includes a good reward system, a good information system, and a good educational system that support teams with appropriate rewards, trustworthy data, and good training.⁵⁸ Finally, the fifth condition for good teams is that they have good coaching that assists in group process.⁵⁹

Hackman concludes his book by offering suggestions for leaders to create the five conditions for good teams. Hackman is careful to indicate that leaders are not the ultimate cause for success or failure of a team. It is the implementation of the five conditions that are most important. Still, a leader can develop and draw upon a number of skills to establish these conditions: envisioning skill, inventive skill, negotiation skill, decision-

⁵⁴ J. Richard Hackman, *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 42.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 95, 105.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 135, 149, 156.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

making skill, teaching skill, interpersonal skill, and implementation skill.⁶⁰ Hackman's analysis, research, stories and conditions are helpful for the development of good teamwork. Hackman could have used more examples to highlight each condition.

Hackman's thesis of lessening the importance of a leader—particularly the authoritarian leader—for the effectiveness of a team is echoed in Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom's *The Starfish and the Spider*. In this important volume, the authors stress how effective organizations today are increasingly leaderless. Organizations are becoming more decentralized like a starfish and less centralized like a spider.⁶¹ However, this book does offer ample evidence of hybrid organizations that contain qualities of both decentralization and centralization, like eBay which is a centralized company that decentralizes the customer experience.⁶² These authors offer helpful examples of how organizations, teams, and movements are changing toward having more shared leadership.

Finally, Clinebell's *Growth Groups* gives many helps as to how to structure and lead a team. Though written for groups for psychological growth, nevertheless, this book gives invaluable aids to the formation and functioning of an effective group. Clinebell advises that the length and frequency of group meetings should be appropriate for their

⁶⁰ Ibid., 209-232.

⁶¹ Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York: Portfolio, 2006), 34-35.

⁶² Ibid., 164.

task.⁶³ The size of the group or team is similarly appropriate to its task.⁶⁴ Like Cladis and Hackman's observations above, a good team has a covenant with guidelines to help the group's performance.⁶⁵ The author describes the stages in a group's development: initial testing, honeymoon, frustration and questioning, risking and trusting, effective work, and closing.⁶⁶ Among other things, Clinebell describes a good group leader as someone who observes the development of the group's identity based on their behavior, maintains awareness of the state of the individuals and the entire group, and offers tools for enhancing communication.⁶⁷ This book also gives helpful tips for teams to deal constructively with group problems such as silent members and those who monopolize the group.⁶⁸ Clinebell's aids are helpful for facilitating good group process. He could have included more examples of the use of these tools in this volume.

⁶³ Howard Clinebell, *Growth Groups*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977), 17-18.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31-34.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 35-40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 43-46.

CHAPTER 4

ECCLESIOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Disciples of Christ ecclesiology has unique elements that can shape leadership training so that its recipients can better address the concerns of a postmodern world. A close examination of the ecclesiology of the Disciples of Christ will reveal its strengths and weaknesses. Additional ecclesiological resources will be offered to enhance this training.

Principles of the Disciples of Christ

As explained in the literature review above, the Disciples of Christ have a rich history of bedrock principles that define this church movement. Chief among these is the Restoration Principle in which the Disciples of Christ seek to restore the ancient and early Christian faith of Jesus' disciples. This principle was a clear directive for the earliest movement leaders and elegantly simple in its construction. If all Christians simply practiced and lived as the early church lived, recorded in the Bible, then the divisions among churches due to creeds and other denominational differences would fade away.

Churches could then join in a unified witness, thus fulfilling Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17:20-24.¹ Using the Restoration Principle, early Disciples of Christ churches understood their work as helping others receive the kingdom of God. The early movement's leaders were decidedly evangelistic—following the example of Jesus' disciples. They shared the good news of God's love for everyone, regardless of specific religious beliefs or creeds. These leaders had a clear mission to help others, regardless of their backgrounds.

The Restoration Principle has been debated and discussed among Disciples of Christ for decades now. Current ecclesiological practice among Disciples is to emphasize the unity of all Christians and to de-emphasize the restoration of primitive Christianity (as their sister denominations, Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches, emphasize the restoration of primitive Christianity). However, new Disciples of Christ church plants increasingly adhere to New Testament guidance, especially the simple act of following Jesus' way. These newer communities of faith are practicing the spiritual ways they receive from primitive Christianity and learning anew the old disciplines of the early church.

The Disciples of Christ, along with the Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches were, arguably, the first non-denominational and inter-denominational Christian movement. This denomination was an early leader of the ecumenical movement

¹ This principle is summarized in Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* as described in McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 113.

that focused on uniting Christian churches.² Disciples of Christ leaders continue today in local, state, region, national, and international efforts to unite the witness and practice of churches. With so many churches working together today in mission, studying non-denominational curricula, praying together, and worshipping in similar contemporary and emergent styles, the Disciples of Christ can offer inter-denominational experience as a helpful blueprint for how churches can serve God collaboratively in these endeavors.

Another principle Toulouse underscores is the Disciples of Christ early practice of ministry. The three-fold ministry of elder (bishop), deacon, and evangelist provides a template for a multi-dimensional character of ministry. Such a template encourages a view of ministry that includes variety. Leadership is shared among different people with different talents and foci. In the nineteenth century, this template changed to a focus on a strong eldership. In the twentieth century, the leadership form then was transformed to professional ministry. In the mid-twentieth century, the leadership style changed again to a committee-style of leadership. The leader then became a coordinator of committees.³ Today, in a leadership system that seems mired in the old committee system, which is no longer useful—as described earlier in chapter 2—this series of changes gives hope that another transformation in leadership can occur. The Disciples of Christ have adapted their leadership style to the forms needed in different eras and can do so again today.

² McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 422-424.

³ Toulouse describes some of these changes in Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity*, 164-185.

Vital to Disciples of Christ leadership has been the role of lay or non-ordained leadership over the decades. Especially true in its early days on the frontier, those who were not educated in a seminary or Bible school had leadership roles in the new church starts that populated the territories in the nineteenth century. Toulouse describes the ethos of these early frontier churches as elevating the importance of the common individual, resulting in a revolt against the power of professionals in society. Truth rested not in the educated and official authority but in the regular interchange and arguments that occurred in the homes, businesses, church pews, and fields of everyday people.⁴ This emphasis on lay ministry is exemplified in the exalted position of ruling elder in local churches.

The Disciples of Christ emphasis on lay leadership continues to exist today in various forms—from ruling elders, elected to this role or taking informal leadership, to laypersons' leading at the Lord's Table or on committees or teams. The committee system engendered a respect for committee lay leaders who could lead teams. Lay leadership at the Communion table, a long-time Disciples of Christ practice, emphasizes the image of the lay leader as a holy leader or priest. Many lay leaders tell of how they personally felt intimidated or unworthy of this leadership when they began to serve at the Lord's Table. This attitude speaks of the how the holiness of this role affects lay leaders. Nevertheless, these lay leaders serve Communion every Sunday in thousands of Disciples of Christ churches around the world and are therefore recognized as legitimate spiritual leaders.

⁴ Ibid., 165.

These practices underscore the importance of lay leadership of churches within this denomination.

Another ecclesiological principle for the Disciples of Christ is that these churches value deeply the autonomy of the individual. Christians within this denomination respect people's right to determine their faith on their own.⁵ Out of this ecclesiological principle flow two ecclesiological practices: spirituality and mission.

The Disciples of Christ emphasis on the individual's autonomy highlights the need for spiritual development of each person. As previously stated, the Disciples of Christ have historically engaged in deep spirituality that has flowed out of their lives through mission, evangelism, and numerous kinds of community service. In their early years on the frontier, these pioneers regularly practiced numerous spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, singing and weekly Communion. Similarly, they aided their neighbors and those in need through almsgiving and personal help. As the Disciples of Christ movement grew and matured, these spiritual practices resulted in more mission activity that was within and beyond their local communities. In fact, Disciples of Christ organized the first vestiges of a general or national structure out of a deep concern for mission. It was named the American Christian Missionary Society.⁶ Women within this movement in the twentieth century took the leadership of mission work, creating the

⁵ Ibid., 46-48.

⁶ McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 176.

Christian Women's Board of Mission and starting numerous local and international mission institutions and projects.⁷

The Disciples of Christ emphasis on the autonomy of the individual highlights the need for each person to respond to the gospel call to mission work. Such mission work continues today as the more inward focus of most Disciples of Christ churches of the latter half of the twentieth century is giving way to a wave of mission projects by existing churches and the evangelistic start of hundreds of new churches.⁸ Mission-oriented churches, such as New Hope Church, are leading mission and service projects on a regular basis, thereby teaching Christians that mission is a central aspect of church life. Beginning in the 1990's the Disciples of Christ began to emphasize that churches are defined by mission. The mission of the Disciples of Christ became and remains, "To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps 'to the ends of the earth'"—derived from Acts 1:8. A newer identity statement, introduced in 2007 and derived from the mission statement above, is "We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us." This identity statement describes how Disciples of Christ will share the good news of Jesus Christ. Church leaders are becoming more mission-oriented, devoting more of their time and

⁷ Ibid., 323.

⁸ The 20/20 vision of the Disciples of Christ begun at the turn of the millennium included the transformation of 1,000 churches and the establishment of 1,000 new churches.

energies toward serving others in the name of Jesus. This ecclesiological nature of the Disciples of Christ guides the nature of their leadership and leadership training.

Strengths of Disciples of Christ Ecclesiology

There are many strengths of Disciples of Christ ecclesiology. The Restoration Principle itself offers many strengths to churches. The humble desire to help others that flows from this principle is attractive to many today. Particularly younger generations today seek a church or spiritual experience in which they serve others.⁹ In this postmodern era in which people refer more to tradition, history, and ancient forms of religion in their spirituality, a return to the historic Restoration Principle may fit today's spiritual search. Contemporary generations of Christians are less interested in former religious battles and more interested in how historical expressions of the faith can be used and revised for today's spirituality. Hence, this principle can be a key component of today's leadership training because of its strengths of historicity and spirituality.¹⁰

Another strength for Disciples of Christ churches is their focus on unity. Certainly, Christian unity—the polar star of the Disciples of Christ—is more popular today as different churches cooperate in so many ways. Shared food pantries, borrowed Vacation Bible School materials, Habitat for Humanity projects, joint worship services, and

⁹ Church of the Redeemer in South Central Los Angeles is an example of a house church that is concerned with justice and with serving the poor in their area. Their story is told by Timothy Sato in Richard W. Flory and Donald E. Miller, eds., *GenX Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 213.

¹⁰ Toulouse makes a similar point in the conclusion to his chapter on biblical interpretation within the Disciples of Christ. Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity*, 69-70.

combined churches are among the collaborative efforts of congregations in the greater Omaha, Nebraska area alone. The Disciples of Christ, with its long history of Christian unity practices, can help provide guidance and resources to other churches in this collaboration. Such unified Christian witness can be fertile ground for joint mission projects, for the mission matchmaking service described in chapter 1, and for a leadership training academy that springs from this project and serves many churches in Papillion, the greater Omaha area, and in Nebraska. This practice of unity is another ecclesiological aspect to training effective leaders for contemporary faith communities.

The Disciples of Christ have modeled transformation in its changes in leadership style over the years. Therefore, it is within their DNA for their leadership style to be transformed anew today. Appropriate leadership for this postmodern world has already been described in chapter 3. Tom Beaudoin describes the deep suspicion of institutions and their leaders. He argues for a more egalitarian leadership through new forms, such as through “cyberspace.”¹¹ Gabe Lyons argues for the “next Christians” to live their personal calling in their non-church employment by restoring the world according to God’s design.¹² Both of these authors, and many more postmodern voices, offer a vision of leadership that is adapting to new realities. Because of its history of transformation, the

¹¹ Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998). Countryside Community Church (United Church of Christ) in Omaha, NE is currently offering such web-based spirituality through their “Darkwood Brew” experience of interactive worship and social media connection.

¹² Gabe Lyons, *The Next Christians* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 107-126.

Disciples of Christ have the ability to let God transform its leadership and its leadership training to meet the current needs for leaders in this era.

The Disciples of Christ ecclesiological practice of lay leadership is a strength—especially in the this postmodern world in which “lay” or non-credentialed leaders are leading movements, groups, chats, blogs and other endeavors. Today, the Internet and google make “experts” of common, everyday people on a variety of topics including religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of today’s churches are increasingly led by laypeople who do not have divinity degrees. Indeed, many Disciples of Christ regions (groups of churches) have lay institutes for short-term training of lay ministers who then serve churches. The region of Nebraska has arguably the premiere training academy in Cotner College. Moreover, the Nebraska region will soon add a training experience for discipleship. Significantly, a lay person started this academy for her congregation and is leading this effort for the region. The 2007 General Assembly of the Disciples of Christ voted to put lay ministers in a ministry “class” or paradigm equal to ordained ministers. These churches have recognized the importance of lay ministry and leadership. This ecclesiological emphasis on lay leadership, deeply rooted in Disciples of Christ history, reflects and connects with the leadership practice of the times as mentioned earlier.

The Disciples of Christ emphasis on the autonomy of each individual is a strength because it leads to great tolerance and diversity. The new church movement recently has testified to this strength in that it has welcomed new churches of numerous racial backgrounds and very different theological and ecclesiological positions. The theological

strength of this principle lies in its recognition of each person as a uniquely gifted child of God. All people can receive the kingdom of God and can grow in their faith in this kingdom as they feel that God has called them, without compulsion or interference from others.

Another strength in Disciples of Christ ecclesiology is its emphasis on spiritual practices. The emphasis on practicing one's faith in a variety of ways empowers believers to experience and live their faith in genuine ways. A believer's practice of regular prayer, Bible reading, worship, tithing, Communion, service to one's neighbor, and other spiritual disciplines all shape the believer into becoming a better disciple of Christ. Lyons writes that today's Christians need to be grounded in a number of disciplines.¹³ Thus, the Disciples of Christ historical emphasis of practicing spiritual disciplines helps them to connect deeply with the current movement of the Spirit among some Christian communities. As was related in chapter 2, New Hope Church disciples regularly practice such disciplines. New Hope Church leadership teaches some form of these practices on a regular basis.

More new churches and more transforming churches observe these disciplines.¹⁴ In fact, New Hope Church has followed the lead of an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Minnesota by naming its "members" disciples.¹⁵ This shift denotes a transformation from

¹³ Lyons, *The Next Christians*, 132-144.

¹⁴ To read about a church's journey in implementing such a series of disciplines, see Michael W. Foss, *Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 89.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13-22.

a more traditional understanding of a Christian as a “member”—which includes privileges and rights—to an ancient/present understanding of a Christian as a “disciple”—which includes the responsibility of following Jesus. This shift is highlighted in Hamm’s book mentioned in chapter 3. Disciples follow Jesus by practicing disciplines, thus living in Jesus’ way. One observer of New Hope Church in offering hospitality remarked on how wonderful were its actions. Such actions flow from New Hope Church disciples’ regular practices. As Christians exhibit more “disciple” behavior and less “membership” behavior, they will offer the witness, good news, and service that a hurting world needs. Not only are these disciplines essential in the training of the disciples in churches today, they are essential in the training of leaders for these churches. Hence, the leadership training of this project includes such disciplines.

The ecclesiological emphasis on mission is a great strength for the Disciples of Christ in the postmodern era. Many people today—particularly those of younger generations—do not want to sit in a church pew, a committee meeting, or a fellowship group and simply be passive recipients of religion. Instead, they want active involvement in service projects, mission trips, and small acts of kindness that represents the gospel of Jesus Christ. While many Disciples of Christ churches continue to be stuck in the practice of “passive religion,” others actively seek ways to help their communities and their neighbors.

These mission-oriented churches offer the projects, trips, and opportunities for simple acts of gospel service that many people crave today. The Davis Memorial Church

in Taylorville, Illinois, for example, offers many community-oriented events and ministries. In 2013, this congregation began a community garden. Many in this rural community, some of whom are poor, joined with this church in tending and receiving the benefits of this garden. Trinity United Christian Church (a merger of a Disciples of Christ and a United Church of Christ congregation) of Cheney, Kansas regularly sends mission teams to Nicaragua. Los Discipulos De Cristo church of Omaha, Nebraska regularly offers children's events for the south Omaha community, such as a Vacation Bible School. These examples are just a few of the thousands of mission-oriented projects that Disciples of Christ churches offer their communities today. Connecting with the needs of the poor as well as the need for people to engage in service, these churches engage others in mission and serve their communities well. Therefore, they form a strong connection with today's postmodern world. This connection forged through service becomes an essential component of leadership training for today's society.

Weaknesses of Disciples of Christ Ecclesiology

With thirty-five years of church leadership experience, this author has experienced many weaknesses of Disciples of Christ ecclesiology and practice. These weaknesses occur in each of the areas of Disciples of Christ ecclesiology discussed above. Nevertheless, these weaknesses can be overcome by an accompanying strength of this church.

The Restoration Principle has been debated over the years because it rested upon a misreading of the Bible and history. Biblical interpretation, particularly the historical-

critical method of studying the Bible, has shown that there really is not a clear picture of the earliest church in the Bible.¹⁶ Rather, there is a multi-layered picture that emerges that is rich in complexity and history. Such a view of the New Testament is helpful when the richness and the authority of the Scriptures are not disparaged. Yet, such a view of the Bible does not yield a perfect world of primitive Christianity where all was well and everyone unified. On the contrary, biblical interpretation has revealed that there were a great many conflicts within the early Christian community. Multiple versions of Christianity vied with one another for power and for the authority to claim its form of the faith as the truth. Hence, this principle seems to be built on a “bed of sand” rather than a foundation of rock. Nevertheless, this principle in its general form spurred a revival movement to introduce many to the kingdom of God. Though flawed, it can be a powerful influence on people to seek and follow Jesus as was taught through the Bible.

Christian unity has been the guiding force for the Disciples of Christ in many ways. However, the path of Christian unity has been pursued mainly within the leadership and academic circles of the Disciples of Christ. Many lay leaders and members of most churches are presently not aware of the ecumenical work that has been done and continues by Disciples of Christ leaders. One of the chief Disciples of Christ leaders of ecumenical work complained to a group of ministers in Omaha in 2003 about this lack of awareness, wondering aloud if any one really cared about Christian unity and ecumenical work within Disciples of Christ churches. If the ecumenical work of the Christian unity

¹⁶ Toulouse summarizes this argument in Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity*, 60.

movement had been encouraged more at the community level, there would have been more of a grassroots acceptance of its work. There also would have been more disciples engaged in joint ministry and mission projects with other churches. Thankfully, Christians from different backgrounds are joining together more in community mission. Many of these efforts could have happened earlier if disciples of different churches—not members—had been given permission to act ecumenically and missionally.

It can be argued that the ecumenical movement, spurred by Disciples of Christ leadership, has been successful. Today, as opposed to sixty years ago, a Roman Catholic and a Methodist will consider marriage probably without a thought of their respective religious differences. Ecumenical advocates point to the unity work done in the twentieth century as the cause of such societal changes. There is much truth to this claim. However, these changes have also been due to the general shift in opinions of successive generations that religious differences and conflicts are not as important as the beliefs and practices of the believer. Increasingly, people have been brought together through technology, transportation, and knowledge to the extent that they have better understandings of people from different religions. Nevertheless, Christian unity, with all of its flaws, is on the resurgence today and can provide a holistic ministry to a community. One contemporary Disciples of Christ regional minister powerfully argues for Christian unity in stating that in most communities in North America, no one church can offer the variety of ministry that a particular community needs. Multiple and varied

churches can offer different yet cooperative ministries so that residents can receive a unified Christian witness and way of life in their local setting.

Another weakness of Disciples' ecclesiology is in its understanding of leadership. Because no one person has ultimate authority, at times it is difficult to resolve conflict. The Disciples of Christ—unlike the United Methodists, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and other such churches—do not have a bishop or overseer who can step in to a local church conflict and simply make an authoritative decision. Internal church conflicts are expected to be resolved through the good graces and manners of the different sides in these fights. Often, good graces, manners, and Jesus' way are not followed in church conflict so that the parties are left hurt, sometimes fatally. When tied to the Disciples of Christ emphasis on the autonomy of the individual in matters of faith, this ecclesiological principle makes it extremely difficult to resolve differences within churches. Such an attitude has created one of the most tolerant churches ever known. Yet, such a stance also has led to the stifling of conflict in churches, much to their detriment.¹⁷ The early Disciples of Christ churches had such an anti-clerical position that conflicts were not properly resolved and even festered over decades because those in leadership positions had not the authority to bring the conflicting parties together to resolve the conflict. The presence of unresolved conflict stifles ministry and mission.

Each leadership model mentioned earlier has its limitations. Like individuals, Disciples of Christ congregations are similarly autonomous and therefore have different

¹⁷ Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity*, 46-47.

leadership styles. Some congregations invest ultimate authority in the professional, credentialed minister. The danger in this leadership arrangement is that this one person may not be suited to leading a church. That leader may be too dictatorial or too vacillating or even too submissive to the stronger personalities among lay leadership. The danger inherent with the ruling elder paradigm is that this elder may not have the education to equip himself toward effectively leading a congregation to accomplish its God-given mission to its community.

Still, many churches today are adopting leadership models of cooperative teams—such as those of New Hope Church. With the richness of these teams, their leaders are therefore better equipped to assist churches in serving their communities. Leadership training for teams, such as the one suggested in this paper, can help congregations train leaders to better serve today's churches.

The Disciples of Christ ecclesiological principle of the autonomy of each individual has weaknesses. This principle of autonomy has led individuals to not practice their spiritual disciplines. This lack of practice has led to many kinds of problems within individuals and families. This, of course, is not to say that people who practice spiritual disciplines do not have problems. They do. Yet, when professed believers do not actually follow Jesus' way in their personal lives and are not held accountable for this lack of practice—due to the autonomy principle—then they do not have the spiritual resources they need in times of trouble. They can even encounter more problems because the spiritual resources they lack have not helped them to live Jesus' way, which is a more

fulfilled way of life. For example, they may not live in such a way that they experience the fruits of the Spirit as recorded in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. They can easily follow other ways that are opposed to Jesus' way. For example, they may be chronically upset, unhappy, depressed, angry, and even hurtful to others.

The ecclesiological principle of the autonomy of each person is also problematic when church conflicts erupt. When there is no oversight or discipline from leaders in churches, church members can simply base their beliefs on their own experiences or on norms in the greater society rather than their regular practice of spiritual disciplines. Such church members will often cite American history, the ethos of the United States, or a personal example unrelated to faith rather than the Bible or some example from the history of the faith to make their point. Usually, such points are made in an un-Christlike manner. When conflicts occur in such ways, there is often not one authoritative person or rule of conduct to regulate and help resolve the fight. Such conflicts can reign in congregations for decades, eventually leading to the death of the congregation.

Another weakness of the ecclesiological principle of individual autonomy is the lack of mission that can result in a church. When people believe that they can do anything they want in a church, then a guiding vision or leader does not have much influence to compel these people to follow Jesus' way into mission for their community. Such people often rely on their privileges and rights as members of a church, demanding that church

leadership attend only to them and cater to their needs. Such congregations offer little mission or service to their community.

Though there are great inherent weaknesses in the ecclesiological principle of individual autonomy, there is also great opportunity for leaders or teams to inspire a group of such individuals to genuinely follow and give consent—not coerced by a strong leader or by a rule of conduct—to a God-given vision for a church. Many new and transforming churches today inspire such individuals to become consenting parts of a community that is grounded in a mutually shared covenant to follow Jesus. The importance of such inspiration and leadership highlights the need for its development. Such development of leadership can be nurtured and encouraged through a leadership training process, such as the one proposed in this paper.

Alternative Ecclesiological Resources

Alternative ecclesiological resources can augment the strengths of Disciples of Christ ecclesiology. They can also compensate for its weaknesses. The alternative resources below will be drawn from Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologies as well as from contemporary and postmodern authors.

The concept of the trinity can be a model for ecclesiology for the Disciples of Christ. Without the power of the Restoration Principle and the more recent lack of dynamism of the ecumenical movement, the Disciples of Christ can explore a more fundamental ecclesiological principle: that of the trinity—how the different persons of God interrelate and function together. This proposal may be a stretch for the

individualistic Disciples of Christ. Founded on the frontier in which “rugged individualism” no doubt in part shaped its own ecclesiology of the autonomy of the individual, many of the Disciples of Christ nevertheless note the weaknesses of its ecclesiology, as described above. Enjoying the fruits of their decades of ecumenical dialogue, the Disciples of Christ have been favorably influenced by the theologies of other churches within this dialogue. Moreover, the Disciples of Christ have adopted many of the ecclesiological practices of these other faiths. For example, as their church leaders became more professional and experienced the more “high church” forms of their conversation partners, Disciples of Christ churches adopted many of these forms. For instance, many preachers and senior ministers wear a robe and don beautiful stoles, observing the liturgical year that other churches have followed for centuries. Therefore, this time may be right for the Disciples of Christ to turn to other ecclesiologies to strengthen their own.

Miroslav Volf explores trinitarian theology as espoused by Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and other traditions as an ecclesiological model for the church. Volf states that just as the persons of the Godhead give of themselves to each other and receive of themselves the other, Christians give to and receive from each other pieces of themselves, guided by the Spirit. Of course, this giving and receiving is done imperfectly because of the limitations of humankind. Still, in these ways the Church is one (John 17:21).¹⁸ Volf emphasizes the reciprocal and symmetrical relationships within the trinity and, by

¹⁸ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 211-212.

extension, within the church.¹⁹ Christians within a church exercise their gifts from God or charismata openly, thereby receiving the kingdom of God and welcoming the divine into the church and its ministry.²⁰ This latter point fits well with the understanding of the Disciples of Christ that Christians are uniquely gifted and can develop their gifts spiritually. Given this point of connection, it is not too far of an ecclesiological stretch for Disciples of Christ to view their ministries, relationships, missions, and work as an embodiment of the life of the trinity, albeit in all of their failings and limitations.

Disciples of Christ can view the relations among the trinity as modeling and guiding how the disparate parts of the body of Christ work together in a local congregation. The trinitarian model is connected to the model of the body of Christ as Paul records in I Corinthians 12, to be reviewed below.²¹ Disciples of Christ church leaders can use this model in their ecclesiological vision of how the church can effectively engage in mission and ministry. This vision can therefore be a vital part of leadership training.

Roman Catholic ecclesiological resources can also be offered to the Disciples of Christ in the practice of spiritual formation. What began as a trickle of interest in spiritual development in the latter three decades of the twentieth century has become a flood of practice within Disciples and other mainline denominations. Centering prayer, lectio

¹⁹ Ibid., 69.

²⁰ Ibid., 243.

²¹ See Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders*, 92-93.

divina, spiritual workshops, Ignatian spirituality are among many spiritual offerings in Disciples of Christ churches. After spiritual development declined in the mid-twentieth century in churches, church leaders incorporated resources from Roman Catholic and older churches into helping disciples grow spiritually. As an example, New Hope Church disciples regularly practice a set of spiritual disciplines.

Though often a mission-oriented people, many believe that there has not been adequate missiological work among the Disciples of Christ. With mission work on the wane in some congregations, serious ecclesiology in the form of missiology can benefit these churches. Using the image of the trinity for a church's service, Volf writes that the local church is able to "transmit further, in the power of the Spirit and through mutual service and common action in the world, the entirety of grace they have received."²² If Disciples of Christ truly know their churches, ecclesiologically, as welcoming the kingdom of God in the fullness and relationships of the trinity, then the life of the trinity will flow through them in the form of mission.

Lesslie Newbigin comments on the relationship between church and mission when he offers this common mission-oriented motto: "The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning."²³ This sentence offers clear directive for Disciples of Christ churches who desire to exist in God's kingdom: serve in mission. This strong ecclesiological principle informs the very nature of the Disciples of Christ for today. For Alan Hirsch,

²² Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, 274.

²³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church*, 2nd ed. (Cumbria, Great Britain: Paternoster Press, 1998), 192.

missiology precedes and defines ecclesiology.²⁴ Hirsch makes a strong argument for defining the church by its mission. A church is not created and then decides on its mission. Newbigin makes a similar point that the church was not created around an idea but was called into existence around a person, Jesus, who then sets its agenda in representing God on earth.²⁵

The mission or calling of God comes to a church and then sets its course. According to Darrell Guder, the church does not have a mission but is a missional church.²⁶ This radical reorientation of the relative importance of the different branches of theology might be what is needed to move the church to think and live more in mission terms and less in survival or institutional terms. Newbigin gives a direction for understanding mission: "... understanding the church's mission is rooted in the triune nature of God himself."²⁷ With churches increasingly living their calling from God to serve others in the postmodern world, this emphasis on missiology and mission needs to be a central part of today's church leadership and therefore part of church leadership training.

²⁴ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 142-143.

²⁵ Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church*, 25.

²⁶ Darrell Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 6.

²⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, 2nd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 65.

CHAPTER 5

A THEOLOGY OF TEAM LEADERSHIP

Leadership training depends on the nature of leadership for local Disciples of Christ communities. The composition of such leadership has been explored through historical, theological, business, and denominational resources. In this chapter, biblical and theological resources that enhance a fuller understanding of good church leadership are further described.

Team Leadership in I Corinthians 12

Such leadership first depends on a deeper understanding of the church. Such an understanding can be gleaned from a relevant exegesis of I Corinthians 12. Previous to this chapter, Paul is teaching the Corinthians on a variety of spiritual topics that are of concern to this community. From the evidence of this letter, there is a problem in Corinth: it is broken and divided with schisms (I Corinthians 1:10-11; 3:3; 11:17-18). These divided factions can be partly understood religiously in terms of the differences between Jews and Gentiles (I Corinthians 1:26-31). These factions can partly be understood

through socioeconomic factors alluded to in I Corinthians 4:8-10. For example, richer persons take others to court (I Corinthians 6:1) and the seemingly more privileged take the Lord's Supper first (I Corinthians 11:17-22). These are behaviors of a more wealthy upper class typical of this time. This divisiveness is also fueled by how they have perceived the workings of Holy Spirit. Paul addresses these misunderstandings in I Corinthians 2:6-13.

The issue in this context is not diversity but what the Corinthians have made of diversity. In a diverse larger group, it is when people in one group begin to see themselves as better than those in another group that there are problems with difference that leads to division. Paul distinguishes between proper diversity and schisms from different groups in I Corinthians. Paul particularly addresses the diversity of gifts from one Spirit in I Corinthians 12. Different people have different life circumstances and different callings and thus different gifts. All are appropriate. All are used by God for the common good.¹ Such divisions are not unusual, particularly to the church in the postmodern world. For example, some churches have as many as six generations within current church membership.² Due to such difference, there has been much division, conflict, and schism within the Disciples of Christ for various reason within the last fifty years.

¹ J. Paul Sampley, *I Corinthians*, in vol. X of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 943.

² Hamm, *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Post-Modern Age*, 47-48.

Paul sets the stage for this chapter by taking the Corinthians back to the origin of their faith. The phrase “concerning spiritual gifts” in I Corinthians 12:1 may be an allusion to questions of the Corinthians about such gifts given the divisiveness and dominance experienced within that congregation. Reminding them of their faith origins (I Corinthians 12:2), Paul reveals that he is speaking to them as spiritual babes (Cf. I Corinthians 3:1-12). He uses the phrase “Jesus be cursed!” for shock value to abruptly indicated that the Holy Spirit is the source of faith and its expressions. Paul has already written that the Spirit dwells in believers (I Corinthians 3:16-17) and interprets things that are unclear (I Corinthians 2:14-15).

Paul then offers a trio of varieties in I Corinthians 12:4-6. They are gifts or *charismata*, services or *diakonoia*, and activities or workings or *energema*. The word “varieties” or *diairesis* indicates that there are differences but also that these differences are allocated or divided by another, that is God. The services or ministries and the activities or general church workings are not described by Paul who will focus on the gifts shortly.³ How this list is presented is highly significant because, as Cladis observes, the lists come from the trinity whose emphasis is oneness. To illustrate:

³ Sampley, *I Corinthians*, 941, 944.

varieties of gifts	but the same Spirit
varieties of services	but the same Lord
varieties of activities	but the same God, who activates all of them in everyone ⁴

Figure 1. Gifts related to members of Trinity.

The varieties are designated by the three members of the Godhead. This trinity is the model for Christian community or the body of Christ. Just as God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit collaborate and work together, so the different members or disciples of the church are to collaboratively serve in the single mission of the church—to follow God’s leadership in fulfilling God’s mission for a particular church on earth.

Next, Paul lists the different spiritual gifts. This list is framed by two verses (12:7, 11) that emphasize how the different gifts are manifested for one purpose: the common good as directed by God’s Spirit. Paul is emphasizing here what is helpful (in Greek, *sympheron*) to the whole community, as he does in I Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23. This statement is a gloss on the Corinthians’ belief that “all things are permissible.” Paul takes the counter position—that all things are for the common good. The source of the common good is God’s Spirit; therefore, the gifts listed in I Corinthians 12:8-10 have as their source the Spirit. The gift of tongues or *glossolalia* is listed last, as is Paul’s custom for every such gift (see I Corinthians 12:28, 30; 14:26; 13:1, 8). Paul takes great pains to place this gift, which has been used by Corinthians as a way to be dominant (Cf. I

⁴ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders*, 93.

Corinthians 14), in a lesser place and indicating not its dominance but its purpose to build up the common good (I Corinthians 14:5). Thus, Paul dissociates gift and status and rather ties gift to serving the common good of the body.⁵

Paul makes it clear that the gifts of everyone in the church are meant to be used by God's Spirit for the service of the church. This statement has immense consequences for how churches function and are led. In 12:8-11, Paul offers a detailed list of the gifts or charismata: each person has been given a particular gift through the Spirit, which also activates the gift (12:11). So, church participants wait on the Lord (cf. Psalm 27:14) to activate their gifts. They do not try to activate these gifts themselves or use them for their own purposes. They let the Spirit activate and guide the use of their gifts. Hence, the use of these gifts in the church is Spirit-led and not people-led. It is the responsibility of each disciple or member of the church to listen carefully to God as to how they use their gifts. Spiritual inventories, mentoring conversations with wise church leaders, and organizational charts that are marked with appropriately needed gifts can all be helpful in helping church members discover and use their gifts as long as these disciples and their leaders are listening to God and following God's direction regarding this use. Church members humbly offer their wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, speaking in tongues, or the interpretation of tongues not according to how they want but according to God's direction.

⁵ Sampley, *I Corinthians*, 944-945.

Likewise, Church leaders and servants with particular gifts are not to use these gifts to draw attention to themselves or to make themselves more important than others, as has happened in the Corinthian congregation. Instead, these gifts are for the humble use of God's Spirit for the common good of the congregation. At the discretion of God, the gifts of people in churches are for the service of Jesus Christ as Lord of the church. With the leading of God, the gifts of disciples are for the general work of God's people in accomplishing God's purposes. These clear goals provide the framework of the leader's task. This task is not to make the church great or to embellish the reputation of church leaders. This task is to follow God's Spirit in helping people to use their gifts for God's purpose in congregations. Anything less than this task is a betrayal of the giving of these gifts allocated by God's Spirit. Church leaders often get confused in their task because they may hear other guidance such as "grow your church with these five steps" or "become a great church in thirty days in thirty ways." Yet, if these leaders do not listen for God's voice in the midst of such messages as to whether these plans may accord with God's will, then using such plans is normally doomed to failure because God's direction is not followed.

The emphasis on the different gifts within the body of Christ, the congregation, or a team of Christians can ground the emphasis of diversity on teams within Disciples of Christ congregations. The theological truth of the diversity of gifts is related to and can be expressed in Collins's urging that leaders let teams do the work of finding and developing answers by asking questions. This leadership behavior is similarly echoed in

Heifetz' direction that groups of people do adaptive work together. These leadership behaviors allow for the diversity of the members of the Disciples of Christ to be fully expressed. The participation of various parts of the body of Christ has been and continues to be a hallmark behavior within Disciples of Christ congregations—as noted earlier in Toulouse's and Hamm's works.

Paul then emphasizes the unity of the church's mission in 12:12-13 by using the metaphor of the body. Paul highlights the interdependency of the church's parts by relating them to the body's parts. He affirms their unity in their diversity. Referring to something that which is helpful (12:7), he focuses on the goal of action. A way that this goal is achieved is through love that “builds up” (I Corinthians 8:1) the church so that it realizes the common good in unifying actions.⁶ Paul's use of the body as a metaphor is greatly helpful to churches and the “parts” that comprise churches. As church members focus on what best for the whole church—the common good—they can collaborate with one another and coordinate their efforts in achieving this God-directed goal. Of course, often it is not so clear as to the exact nature of the common good or the identity of the common goal. A way to gain such clarity is for members and leaders to pray for and focus not on their own personal goals or views but on God's goal or purpose. This purpose or goal may be elusive at times, but with focused prayer and a real sense of members' living as parts in a body such a goal can be clarified and then sought.

⁶ Ibid., 946. Note, again, the inclusion of the leadership emphasis of action and not just interpreting or explaining.

In 12:13, Paul uses two images to express the aforementioned unity. First, he writes about baptism, the beginning of each person's life in Christ. Baptism unites all believers because they all began their life in Christ through baptism. Second, Paul hints at the continuation of that life in Christ in the form of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper when he writes, "we were all made to drink of one Spirit." The Lord's Supper unites all believers because they practice it on a regular basis. The Lord's Supper reminds Christians of their covenant with God they began at their baptism. Thus, with two interconnected spiritual practices disciples experience the oneness of Christ's body and the manifestation of that body on earth—the local congregation.

This emphasis on baptism and communion is a key focal point for the Disciples of Christ. This denomination is comprised of people from many different traditions (just as there are a variety of gifts listed in this Bible passage). Yet, its unity and focus is maintained through the regular practices of adult or believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. Communion in most Disciples of Christ churches is practiced every week. A church of believers in Christ who are so diverse needs a converging focus each week. The Lord's Supper—and its connection to baptism—is a way for the Spirit to be known in common acts of worship. This act is a distinct way for Disciples of Christ to know the unity of their larger church and their churches. Disciples of Christ leaders throughout the decades have often encouraged the unity of church members through baptism and the Lord's Supper. In fact, Disciples of Christ founders Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone offered these two sacraments as liturgical acts that could unify all Christians.

The Disciples of Christ leader today humbly employs these unifying acts of worship on a regular to help believers focus on God and God's will for their lives. In these acts of worship themselves, there is great diversity. As previously noted, Disciples of Christ churches lay leaders often preside at the table, offering meditations and prayers. Most of these meditations and prayers are personal. Similarly, as each believer is baptized into Christ's body their unique gifts, services, and workings are celebrated by their congregations. Yet, baptisms nearly always remind members of their common bonds in Christ. Likewise, Communion nearly always highlights the oneness of the body of Christ gathered—the local church—as this community of faith eats and drinks together. In diversity, there is unity.

An African word describes this sense of unity: *ubuntu*. This word emphasizes the unity of human beings and can loosely be translated, "I am me because I am connected to you." The oneness of people not only connects them but also defines them. The author experienced this sense of unity on an "Ubuntu" tour to Africa in 2006 in which he met with members of Christ's body from South Africa and Angola. He experienced a deep oneness in faith and mission as he listened with excitement to their various ministries. These leaders and the author were all working on the transformation of their local and faith communities. The wise Disciples of Christ leader has a sense of *ubuntu* in church work. This leader can interpret church situations as being in the spirit of *ubuntu* or not, taking on the task of spiritual interpreter that Cormode suggests above.

Further explaining the “one body/many members” metaphor, Paul then describes more fully what this metaphor means for a particular congregation in 12:14-26. This metaphor (generally described in 12:14) is described specifically in this section in two ways. The first treatment of the metaphor (12:15-17) addresses those who feel low estimation of themselves as members. Choosing the foot and the ear as feeling not as important as the hand and the eye, respectfully, Paul explains that these feelings do not make them less important parts of the body (12:15-16). In fact, he further emphasizes that if the body were all one member (presumably the seemingly more important members) then it would not include the important contributions of the other parts (12:17-19).

Paul frames this description of the importance of every individual member by mentioning the unity or oneness of the experience of the body (12:14, 20, 26). In so doing, Paul makes sure that the reader knows the interdependence and unity of the members in the one body. Indeed, Paul uses the word “body” or *soma* fourteen times in these twelve verses, further underscoring the unity that binds the diversity of the members.

Paul offers a second treatment of this metaphor as he focuses on those members that have a low estimation of others (12:21-24). He summarily says that one part of the body cannot say to another, “I have no need of you” (12:21). Paul then uses the culturally determined practice of dignifying certain parts of the body with clothing to make the case that all parts are necessary and honored (12:22-24). He emphasizes that God orders the body in such a way that members have proper concern for one another, sharing in honor

and suffering (12:23-26). Thus, Paul address those who have been treated poorly within the Corinthian community (referring to I Corinthians 6:1; 11:17-34).⁷

Paul addresses here the congregational interactions that have the feel of dominance and judgment, and his heeded words have powerful consequences for member relationships, interdependence, teamwork, and spiritual leadership. Many, many times each year Disciples of Christ leaders witness church members' judging each other or feeling low because they feel judged. Some of these leaders even exhibit this behavior. These Bible verses offer a sharp rebuke to such behavior. In leadership training, such direction to understand all members as having worth and value and gifts to share can be understood theologically as an underpinning to Hackman's understanding of the contribution of team members to the team's ultimate product. These verses also underscore Brafman and Beckstrom's notion of a "leaderless" organization—one in which all members offer leadership in their own unique way. Thus, with this biblical guidance spiritual leaders can undergird their leadership as encouragers of others' leadership gifts.

In 12:27-31, Paul offers a final example of the unity in diversity he has discussed. He first reminds the Corinthians, as well as all believers, of the "one body/many members metaphor" in 12:27. He continues by extending the metaphor to specific roles in a church. The list is in order of importance—not value or worth—because of the use of "first," "second," and "third." The other roles are generally considered of the same importance

⁷ Ibid., 947.

(12:28).⁸ Paul again emphasizes that the members in these roles have unique functions and that all have value (12:29-30). He finally encourages disciples to “strive for the greater gifts” and suggests a “still more excellent way” of living as a member (12:31)—referring to the description of love he then offers in I Corinthians 13. Such interdependence among members presupposes an interaction that can be described as a perichoretic dance—like unto how the members of the Godhead interact in a dance of action and love.⁹

Examples of Spiritual Leadership

Training for spiritual leadership can be enhanced through the biblical resources of examples of personal leadership, leadership roles, and leadership situations. The Bible offers good leadership examples in the persons of Moses, Miriam, David, Ruth, Jesus, and Mary. The roles of elder and deacon from I Timothy 3 will be explored. The moments in which leadership is expressed through the calling of leaders in Acts 6:1-6 and through conflict in Acts 15:1-35 will also be examined.

Moses has been a major leader for the Judeo-Christian tradition for millennia. An intimate portrayal of Moses is offered in the last four books of the Pentateuch. Moses is first presented as a reluctant leader, one who is well aware of his limitations for leadership in Exodus 3-4. Moses is known here as a flawed person, not a great leader. Yet, this reluctance can also reveal humility (as Numbers 12:3 states), a characteristic of a

⁸ Ibid., 949.

⁹ Described by Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, 189.

great or Level 5 leader, according to Collins. God promises help for Moses who then receives this assistance and is transformed into a preeminent leader for the people of God. One example of this help is that God gives Moses a co-leader in the person of Aaron (Exodus 4:10-17). A leadership team is thus created here to lead this great congregation of God's people.

Moses becomes the spiritual leader that God calls for the task of leading God's people out of slavery and into the freedom of the promised land. This process of leading the people of Israel to the promised land took over forty years to conclude. Moreover, this group of people were transformed from a loose configuration of tribes to a somewhat cohesive group that ultimately worked together to triumph in Canaan, the promised land. This complicated process of transformation included a shift from the habits and behaviors of slaves to the habits and behaviors of a free people who gave their loyalty to God. Moses exemplified the quality of patience in staying with this group for many decades. Though at times he himself was angry with the people and complained bitterly (Exodus 16:20, 32:19), Moses awaited and aided this transformation—even in the extreme conditions of the desert. Moses is mostly depicted as lawgiver, one who listened to God's words about how this new community would be organized and then conveyed these plans to God's people.

Miriam, Moses' sister, is another spiritual leader who helped lead this process of transformation of God's people. She was first instrumental in saving Moses' life when he was a baby, suggesting to Pharaoh's daughter that he be nursed by his own mother when

the princess found him floating in a basket (Exodus 2:7-8). Leaders help save others, including other leaders. As the exodus proceeded to the crucial point of successfully crossing the sea, Miriam was identified as a prophet—one who hears the words of God and speaks them to God’s people. In this role, she used her musical and dancing gifts to offer a song to glorify God’s victory (Exodus 15:20-21). This example highlights the importance of communicating God’s words to God’s people and using God-given gifts to praise God.

David is another example of a spiritual leader in the Bible. The first of many examples of David’s leadership wisdom was when he did not don Saul’s armor to fight Goliath but rather trusted in his own weaponry to defeat this giant (I Samuel 17:38-51). The spiritual lesson here is that leaders lead best when they use the instruments and gifts that are most appropriate to them. David spared king Saul’s life twice (I Samuel 24, 26) even in the midst of Saul’s hunt for David’s life. David recognized that Saul was God’s anointed one (I Samuel 24:10, 26:23). As a spiritual leader, David respected the current leadership arrangement that God had established in the person of Saul (I Samuel 11:5-15)—even when that arrangement meant a threat to David’s life. The story of the proposed building of a house for God illustrates David’s great love for and devotion to God (II Samuel 7), which are other important characteristics of a spiritual leader. Finally, when caught in adultery David admitted his sin and submitted to God’s punishment (II Samuel 12:7-15), which are two vital characteristics for spiritual leadership.

Ruth is another example of a spiritual leader whose love for God guided her actions. Even though Ruth's story begins in tragedy, she makes the courageous and caring decision to return to her mother-in-law's country of Judah in order to help her. She gives up the relative safety and security that she might have received in her native country of Moab (Ruth 1). Ruth thus demonstrates the leadership characteristics of compassion and courage. After conferring with her mother-in-law Naomi, she puts herself in a position to be in a relationship with the landowner Boaz (Ruth 2-3). She thus exemplifies the leadership characteristics of conferring with others and practical wisdom in meeting needs.

Jesus is an example of a spiritual leader in many ways. He lived in a perpetual state of obedience to God, spending long hours in prayer—even entire nights (see Luke 6:12, for example). When facing his own death and in prayer, he said, "... not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42b). Like Moses, he was a lawgiver, offering commandments to God's people (Matthew 5-7). He told others about God and healed people's diseases (Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:23). Jesus had a keen sense of mission that encouraged him to be immediate in his actions. Mark uses the word "immediately" numerous times to emphasize the sense of urgency in his mission. Jesus was concerned for the outcast and those who were "different," and he helped them (Luke 17:11-19). Among the numerous stories that illustrate this leadership characteristic, the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) is probably the best to highlight Jesus' teaching that even those as different as enemies can be given concern and care. Jesus offered as an example to his

disciples the metaphor of service, extending it even to the heart of leadership (John 13:1-20). Finally, as a leader Jesus engendered and spoke about the unity of his disciples (John 17:20-24).

Mary is also a spiritual leader to be emulated as an example. When told about her upcoming pregnancy with the Son of God, she willingly agreed to the plan, indicating that she was a “servant of the Lord” (Luke 1:26-38). When she was with her kinswoman Elizabeth who rejoiced in this news of the coming of God’s Son, Mary, like Miriam before, offered her gift of music to praise God for the deliverance of the lowly (Luke 1:46-55). When the birth came, Mary treasured the praises for the coming of Jesus and reflected on them privately (Luke 2:19). These verses reflect the leadership characteristics of gratitude and reflection. Finally, Mary was loyal to following Jesus even to his death—being present at his crucifixion (John 19:25-27).

New Testament Guidelines for Spiritual Leaders

The New Testament offers guidelines for spiritual leaders of the earliest Christian communities. According to I Timothy 3:1-16, the guidelines for both elder and deacon are similar and are derived from profound theological principles.

This passage from I Timothy flows from this letter’s earlier discussion of a concern for good order. Good order in the state (2:1-2) sets the stage for good order in the home (2:9-15). Similarly, good order in the household leads to good order in the church (3:1-16). Likewise, Good order in the home becomes the model for good order in the church (3:15). Tying these concerns together is a desire of the author of I Timothy to

place high importance on how leadership is viewed by others who are outside of the church (see 3:2,7). Good order in the church and home are reflected outwardly to the grander society, which has been rightly ordered by God and which judges the order of the Christian home and church.¹⁰

First, the author of I Timothy describes the nature of a bishop or overseer. The word for bishop (3:1) or *episkope* derives from the notion of a visitation that is meant for good (such as in Genesis 50:24-25; Job 10:12; Luke 1:68, 78) and is extended to denote an office whose function is to give oversight of a group of people for their wellbeing (such as the function of the priest recorded in Numbers 4:16). Luke, writing in Acts 20:28, envisages overseeing as a function of “elders” appointed by Paul from the beginning (Acts 14:23). Here, Luke may give greater formality to what had been much less clearly defined or designated ministries in an earlier time (Cf. Titus 1:5-7). Regardless, all of these passages share the basic notion of care and oversight of a community of believers.

The qualifications listed in I Timothy 3:2-7 are the first attempt in the Bible to define ministry as an office with clearly identified conditions of candidacy and come outline of responsibilities. The word for “blameless,” *anepileptos*, is significantly used only by the author of I Timothy of widows (5:7) and of Timothy, himself (6:14). These are persons “without reproach.” The word for “temperate” may reflect a sense of temperance in drinking (Cf. 3:3). Therefore “sober,” “clear-headed,” and “self-

¹⁰ James D.G. Dunn, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus*, in vol. XI of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 804.

controlled” are good translations for this characteristic. The characteristics of “sensible” and “respectable” help the bishop make a good impression on others. Hospitality was a much approved social grace of this culture (Cf. Romans 12:13). The rough characteristics suggested in I Timothy 3 of the field of candidates reflects the “frontier” nature of these early Christian communities. In I Timothy 3:4, the correlation between keeping the right order in the church and keeping the proper order in the bishops home is made. This connection is further accentuated by relating it to how others perceive the bishop’s leadership (Cf. I Timothy 3:7).

In this culture, the role of family leader or *paterfamilias* was the most obvious role model for the church overseer. Such a figure managed the family (3:12; 5:17). The word for “manage” here is *proistemi*. It means literally to “place or stand before” with the double overtone of “give leadership to” and to “take initiative on behalf of” or “be concerned about, care for.” Hence, such leadership includes taking initiative on behalf of others and having their concern at heart. The injunction against not having more recent or younger converts suggests that this young movement had learned painful lessons about the need for seasoned leadership in such posts (3:6). The phrase “fall into disgrace” (3:7) implies a reference to the pride that has brought down other leaders. The author of I Timothy uses the phrases “He must” or “it is necessary” that the overseer make a good impression on outside world so that this leader would command respect from nonbelievers. Otherwise, this leader might be vulnerable to reproach from them and as well as traps of slander or gossip.

Second, the author of I Timothy writes about the qualifications necessary for deacons as spiritual leaders. The deacon was initially a waiter at a table or servant (Acts 6:1-6, which will be explored further below).¹¹ The author of I Timothy in describing deacons in 3:9 offers the only reference to faith in both lists. Deacons were to affirm their commitment to the faith, no matter how mysterious it was. In this early church, testing for church leaders (3:10) is listed as important (Cf. I Thessalonians 5:21). The author of 3:11-12 indicates that marriage and household leadership are good testing grounds for church leadership. Deacons are then encouraged (3:13) to serve well in order to advance in rank in the church and to receive the boldness of faith in Christ Jesus (Cf. II Corinthians 3:12; Ephesians 3:12).

The author of I Timothy summarizes these characteristics of spiritual leaders with general comments that gave them weight. This letter is an authoritative document, substituting for Paul's authoritative presence (3:14-15a). Everything mentioned is derived from the household of God. God is the real *paterfamilias* of all things and from whom all authority ultimately derives and with whom all authority ultimately rests. The words "pillar and foundation" evoke the imagery of a building—probably the temple of God (Cf. Revelation 3:12). Thus, these characteristics and the persons in leadership carry authority from the Most High God. This high claim that these little churches were God's

¹¹ Ibid., 805.

family and in direct continuity with Israel of One Lord God put significant emphasis on the importance of these positions of bishop and deacon.¹²

New Testament Narratives of Active Spiritual Leadership

The New Testament offers several narratives that offer valuable insights into particular acts of spiritual leadership. Two are instructive for developing spiritual leadership in this project: the calling of the seven in Acts 6:1-6 and the resolution of conflict at the council in Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-29.

The calling of the seven in Acts 6:1-6 reflects God's historical concern that leadership entails service to others. The background to this story is that economic disparity was present (6:1). The rapid growth of the movement recorded in earlier in Acts (Acts 2:41, 47) imperiled the injunction of the community to take care of its most vulnerable (I Timothy 5:3-16; James 1:22-2:17).¹³ The difference highlighted here between the Hellenists and Hebrews was one of language groups and not theology. The disciples were concerned that administrative tasks were precluding the completion of prophetic tasks, which ranked ahead of the administrative tasks (6:2).¹⁴ Hence, the community was encouraged to choose seven people to care for those who were vulnerable, exercising administrative and prophetic tasks (6:3).

¹² Ibid., 807

¹³ Robert W. Wall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in vol. X of *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 111.

¹⁴ Ibid., 112.

Choosing seven people for leadership is deeply rooted deeply in Jewish religious history as seven people were chosen to provide leadership to local communities (Exodus 18:21) as part of the Mosaic laws. The word for “select,” *episkeptomai* (Acts 6:3), is from a word family used of critical and prudent judgments made only after careful deliberation by mature believers. Hence, the calling of Christian leaders entails using such judgments. The three attributes (“of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom”) are each good for waiting tables. The description “good standing” means a good reputation based on favorable testimony of others. This reputation is a crucial feature of leading others in Acts and other parts of the Bible (Cf. Acts 15:14, 36 and I Timothy 3 above). Hence, the outward concern that a leadership choice has on its community weighs heavily in the selection of leaders. The phrase “full of the Spirit” means evidence of candidates’ mature faith (Cf. Acts 2:38) and implies capacity for prophetic ministry (See Acts 2:4). The presence of wisdom in these candidates in combination with Holy Spirit suggests spiritual authority.

The actual choosing and laying on of hands (6:5-6) of these candidates likewise reveal important clues as to the nature of Christian spiritual leadership. That Nicolaus is a proselyte of Antioch indicates the diversity that extends across household of Israel (6:5). This diversity is important for spiritual leadership teams. The use of the word “word” is a catchword for the full range of the prophet’s tasks--keen interpretation of scripture, persuasive proclamation of the gospel, and the performance of the Spirit’s signs and wonders (Cf. Acts 4:31; 6:7; 8:4, 14; 11:1). The seven also served “the word” in this way

as is clear from Acts 6:8. The laying on of hands indicates the religious authority of its recipients to govern the community's internal life and sanction its decisions. Also, this act empowers the succession of authority from one leader to the next (Cf. Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9).¹⁵ Such is the model for conveying authority and leadership status upon leaders. The Disciples of Christ practice laying on of hands for these purposes today.

The resolution of a conflict at the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-29 is another story that offers wisdom for developing spiritual leaders. The background to this narrative is that the decision to give salvation to Gentiles has already been made (Acts 11:1-18).¹⁶ At this same time in the narrative, a pattern emerges of a mission report (as in Acts 14:14:27-28 and 15:4) followed by a contentious reaction (as in Acts 15:1-2 and 15:5). The problem resided in the obdurate reaction of the Jewish believers to the report of the Gentile converts. Hence, some of the Pharisaic group raised the point that the converts needed to be circumcised and ordered to keep Mosaic law.¹⁷ A large council of apostles and elders met to consider these reactions (15:6). They listened to all sides of the debate. The important leadership function of listening is thereby revealed in this passage. After considerable discussion, Peter, as the recognized leader with ties to Jesus spoke on these issues. He emphasized God's prerogatives in welcoming Gentiles, indicating that God

¹⁵ Ibid., 113.

¹⁶ Ibid., 203.

¹⁷ Ibid., 206-207.

made no distinction between Gentiles and Jews and that both will be saved (15:7-11).

Paul and Barnabas then provided the evidence for God's presence in the Gentiles (15:12).

James, newly revealed as the leader of the Jerusalem church, then commanded attention (15:13) and recounted the evidence of the religious experiences testified to by Peter (15:6-11) and by Paul and Barnabas (15:12).¹⁸ He indicated that such evidence needed to be interpreted or read by Scripture. James underscored the leadership task of having Scripture interpret present situations. Hence, he turned to Amos 9:11-12 and Jeremiah 12:15 to confirm the presence of God in the Gentiles (Acts 15:16-18). James then declared that he had "reached a decision," meaning that he was making a reasoned judgment by someone who had authority to render a verdict on behalf of the council (15:19). Yet, James also offered something of a compromise, instructing that a letter be written to solidify this decision and to offer important guidelines pertaining to fornication as well as items related to idols, strangulation, and blood. (15:20-21).¹⁹ The letter was written and sent (15:22-29). Reading the letter occasioned rejoicing (15:30-35). Judas and Silas "strengthened" the believers (15:32) which meant fortifying believers to resist threats to their faith, usually through instruction and comfort (see Luke 22:32 and Romans 1:11). The sending of the letter is paradigmatic of follow-up ministry where mature believers stand alongside rank-and-file believers in working through the implications of a new teaching. Christian solidarity results.

¹⁸ Ibid., 217-218.

¹⁹ Ibid., 219.

PART THREE
MINISTRY STRATEGY

CHAPTER 6

MINISTRY PLAN WITH GOALS

The preceding biblical, theological, ecclesiological, and missiological studies provide the foundation for the construction of the ministry plan for the development of spiritual leaders. The biblical and theological construct of the body of Christ comprises the basic framework for leadership development in churches. Other wisdom from ecclesiological, missiological, prayer, and business resources complete the training curricula. This training is particularly shaped to prepare leaders for Disciples of Christ church teams that serve Sarpy County, Nebraska.

Theological Principles and Examples from the Bible

The body of Christ as described in I Corinthians 12 is the basic image for the development of spiritual leaders. From this foundational understanding of Christian groups, teams, and churches flows the description of spiritual leadership and its resultant training. As previously mentioned, Paul's metaphor for the Church emphasizes the diversity of gifts within the unity of the Spirit of God. This constant emphasis of unity

within diversity and the seeking the common good of God flows from the life of the trinity, which models and empowers the “many members/one body” metaphor in churches. This concept is embodied in the practice of Disciples of Christ communities and agencies. The Disciples of Christ respect for the faith and unique ministry of each member or disciple of the church expresses beautifully the “many members/one body” concept. Likewise, the successful Disciples of Christ ecumenical work as well as collaborations with other churches on local projects provide living examples of this metaphor in action.

This metaphor is uniquely qualified to help members provide a healthy and loving environment of a diversity of leadership for churches and teams. As disciples receive this model from God and Scripture, less dissension, major conflict, and hurt result within the life of the church and the exercise of leadership. The church leader is not understood theologically as the head of the body—that is Christ’s position—but rather one that welcomes the use of diverse gifts by different people so that their leadership is welcomed at appropriate times as the body needs. Hence, just as there are a variety of gifts and roles in the church, there are also a variety of leaders. The designated leader or leaders welcome others to lead when their gifts and roles are needed and when God prompts. Leaders encourage the interdependent service of the body of Christ.

Specific theological principles for and biblical examples of leaders shape training for spiritual leadership. The gifts and roles listed in I Corinthians 12 instruct church leaders with a sense of diversity within the church, its teams, and its leadership. Moses’

example of humility, embracing team leadership, and patience in the transformation of God's people is excellent for leaders to emulate. Miriam's saving, prophetic, and musical gifts are similarly important for leadership. David's use of appropriate tools for leadership as well as his great love for God are key components of leadership training. Ruth's example of courage, compassion, and practical wisdom are meaningful leadership components. Jesus many leadership traits can be nurtured by current and potential leaders: obedience to God, sense of mission, concern for the outcast, focus on disciples' unity, and servanthood. Likewise, Mary's example of obedience, praise of God, reflection on God's action, and gratitude to God offers leaders much for which to strive. Of course, one leader does not embody all of these principles and traits. Rather, the leader encourages these leadership capabilities within and from the diverse members of the body.

I Timothy's description of the characteristics for church leadership are also instructive for spiritual leadership training. Such training can nurture and encourage first maintaining a household that is in good order. From this domestic leadership flow such leader characteristics and functions as being blameless, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, caring, and a servant.

Acts 6:1-6 and 15:1-35 offer theological and practical implications for church leadership. The calling of the deacons in Acts 6:1-6 emphasizes leadership as service, especially for the vulnerable. Such servant-leadership has diversity. Flowing from this servant-leadership are the requirements that such leaders are to be in good standing in

their community, be full of the Spirit, and have wisdom. Such leaders can be prophets whose tasks include keen interpretation of scripture, persuasive proclamation of the gospel, and the performance of the Spirit's signs and wonders. Leadership is confirmed or consecrated through the laying on of hands. Acts 15:1-35 exemplifies leadership in the midst of a church conflict. Such leadership entails listening to all sides and allowing debate on issues. Peter portrays the leadership act of pointing to God's prerogatives in the issue at hand. Barnabas and Paul lead by reporting what God had done with the Gentiles. James expresses the leadership principle of having Scripture examine the case at hand. He leads by assuming the authority given to him and makes a decision. James portrays a leadership gift by offering something of a compromise in the final decision, thus helping to forge a consensus at the council.

Given this wealth of resources, the preferred future for this ministry plan is spiritual leadership training based on the "many members/one body" metaphor with specific principles and examples from the Bible. This overarching concept reflects God's interdependent relationships among the members of the trinity. This concept also flows from the roots of the Disciples of Christ movement and is embodied in its respect for each disciple as well as the unity of all disciples.

Goals for the Ministry Plan

The goals for this ministry plan are calling current and potential leaders for this training, offering resources for excellent team leadership, establishing training events for these leaders, planning for the mentoring of trainees, establishing the best environment

for trainees to lead teams, and providing a consecration service to acknowledge advancement into leadership.

The pastor and proven leaders at New Hope call potential leaders for spiritual leadership training through a process of prayer and discussion. These established leaders have demonstrated biblical characteristics, gifts, and behaviors previously discussed. It is best that the potential leaders have a prior working relationship on a team. They also have a sense of affinity with the previously mentioned principles, values, and behaviors of the Disciples of Christ. These potential leaders have a heart to serve others in Sarpy County, Nebraska. They identify with and live the mission, values, and beliefs of New Hope Church as they interact with others daily.

These potential leaders exhibit many of the attitudes, understandings, and values that the preceding studies have identified, including humility, patience, courage, compassion, obedience to God, concern for the outcast, focus on disciple unity, and gratitude. They have some sense of crucial biblical leadership understandings: sense of mission, a “team” understanding of leadership, practical wisdom, and a sense of using the right tools to fit the person. They exhibit some of the leadership actions previously identified: using Scripture to interpret a situation, assuming authority to make decisions, maintaining a good household in order, listening to various sides of a conflict, having a sense of using the right tools appropriate to a leader and the situation, and seeking compromise and consensus.

These potential leaders also have particular gifts, characteristics and previous success in various functions described in the Bible. They have some combination of biblical gifts: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracle-working, prophecy, discernment of spirits, various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, music, and praise of God. In addition, they have achieved some competence in the following biblical characteristics: being blameless, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, caring, and a servant. They may have already performed in some way these roles and functions: persuasive proclamation of the gospel, demonstration of signs and wonders, and performance as apostles, teachers, power-workers, healers, helpers, leaders. Again, it must be emphasized that no one person has all of these traits, attitudes, understandings, demonstrations, and gifts. That is, after all, the point of the “one body/many members” metaphor. Rather, a potential leader can have some unique combination of the endowments described earlier. Most important, potential leaders display a willingness to let the different endowments of the group be expressed as God’s trinitarian life flows through the group.

A second goal of this spiritual leadership training is to include resources, understandings and skills from the business world and the church world. These resources will fall within the rubric of “one body/many members.” The highlighted principles of the Disciples of Christ—respect for the unique leadership gifts of each disciple, unity of the body, and focus on the Bible as authoritative—as well as its aforementioned practices—spiritual disciplines and community mission—provide a historical rootedness and

framework for organizing the resources in this training. The previously noted biblical resources provide a general spiritual description of leadership. Then, the resources describing spiritual leadership in today's world by the aforementioned contemporary authors will provide a fuller picture of what it means to be a "spiritual" leader.

Specifically, the resources that highlight good team leadership within the context of a church will be offered.

The training offers other general understandings and specific skills for leadership. The trainers will introduce how a spiritual leader can become a more effective team leader. The resources from the business world that offer a general description of such a leader will be presented. Other resources that give more specific suggestions for team leadership will be introduced. Participants will practice these leadership understandings and skills within the training. The training will conclude with an introduction of prayer practices and other spiritual disciplines that can both support and direct the work of the team as well as the spiritual life of the leader. These spiritual disciplines are meant as resources to help potential leaders listen more closely to God.

A third goal of the spiritual leader training is to offer a structured training event for potential leaders. The pastor and leaders at New Hope Church can offer a six-hour training event or two three-hour events. The first part of this training event is to present the overall biblical and Disciple of Christ context already mentioned. Some Bible study discussion, particularly focused on the narrative passages in Acts, will engage participants. The training will also include presentations of the general nature of spiritual

leadership, the leadership of teams, and more specific leadership skills, as previously discussed. This training will include smaller group discussions (in pairs or triads) so that the participants can explore more deeply the material. Also, potential leaders will be able to practice their leadership within smaller groups. Finally, a few spiritual disciplines will be modeled and taught so that these leaders can have tools for group and personal spiritual practice.

The fourth goal of the ministry plan for spiritual leadership training is for potential leaders to be mentored. The pastor and established leaders at New Hope Church will pair a potential leader with a proven leader who will act as mentor to the potential leader. The mentor will meet with the potential leader on a regular basis—perhaps monthly—for a specific period of time—six months to a year. The purpose of this goal is for the trainee to experience leadership in participating in a team as well as leading a team. The new leaders will then discuss their experiences with their mentors. A template of questions will be developed as suggestions to guide these discussions. The goals of the mentor are to support, encourage, listen to, pray for, discuss issues with, gently challenge, and provide a good leadership example for the person being mentored. It is a requirement for the mentor to have many of the attitudes, characteristics, traits, habits, and behaviors of the leader already presented from the previous biblical study. Mentors will occasionally meet with the pastor and the leadership training team to discuss the issues of leadership raised, common themes in the practice of leadership, how leadership at New Hope can be improved, and particular pastoral concerns related to the potential leaders.

The fifth goal for this ministry plan of leadership training is to provide the best environment for this training to flourish and succeed. A key to the success of this goal is to staff the training or program with the leaders who best exemplify the kind of leadership already described. Church leadership will broadcast the importance of the nurturance of developing leader on a regular basis to the congregation so that grace, acceptance, and encouragement of this development are emphasized. Leaders will offer to the congregation a regular invitation—perhaps twice a year—to enroll in this leadership training. New Hope leaders will continually prayerfully seek potential leaders that have some of the leadership gifts, characteristics, traits, and behaviors listed above. These established leaders will ask if these members feel called to engage in training for spiritual leadership. Another aspect of a favorable environment for this training is that leaders will be uplifted by comments and gifts of gratitude for their leadership work on a regular basis. Such encouragement is countercultural in a society that regularly over-criticizes its leadership. Such uplift will also help to nurture a body of Christ that is hope-filled and fed by mutual love.

Spiritual Leadership Training Content

This ministry plan includes specific content that helps potential leaders to develop their spirituality and their leadership skills. Much of this content has previously been identified and explored. In this section, the specific application of this content to the leadership training is highlighted.

Prior to the leadership training, New Hope Church leaders will engage in prayer and conversation regarding calling potential leaders to be trained within this process. These leaders will seek to have conversations with those members who exhibit the qualities mentioned earlier. They will note to the pastor and leadership training team which disciples seem to them to have the best combination of qualities for this training. The leadership training team is comprised of those New Hope Church leaders who have a heart and passion for training new leaders for the different ministries and missions of the church. The leadership training team will contact these potential leaders about participation in a future training event and mentoring process. This team will encourage these potential leaders to be in prayer about their involvement. The training team will receive responses from the possible participants, set a date for the training, recruit teacher-leaders for the training, recruit mentors for the participants, and communicate the dates of the event to the participants and the church.

The teacher-leaders will then lead the training event. They will begin with song and prayer. Woven into this event will be moments of song, prayer, and tangible reminders of God's presence such as candles and crosses. The leaders of this event will emphasize how God leads leaders and teams through their receptive and obedient listening to the movement of God's Spirit in their midst. The teacher-leaders will teach the potential leaders that anyone on a team can become a leader as they hear the Word of God, Jesus, speak to them and share this Word with others. The presenters at this training will use appropriate videos, you-tube clips, slides and other media to illustrate their

teaching. The teacher-leaders will also give examples throughout the training event of how specific New Hope Church leaders and teams have accomplished goals that reflect the mission, vision, values, and beliefs of New Hope Church. These aspects of the church's governing ethos will be presented along with a few stories of celebration of how the church has been led by God through particular leaders and teams to accomplish its mission.

The teacher-leaders will then explain how the church's life flows from and is based on how the members of the trinity interrelate. The "one body/many members" metaphor will then be introduced through a Bible study on I Corinthians 12. Pairs and triads will discuss the passage as a leader presents the Scripture and asks the small groups to respond to questions about the text. The teacher-leader will welcome and report some of the responses and further questions from the small groups to the whole group. A teacher-leader will then present how the unique ecclesiology of the Disciples of Christ highlights the importance of each member, the unity of the members in the body of Christ, grounding in biblical interpretation, spiritual disciplines practiced, and missions served. This leader will then present examples of how New Hope Church has exemplified this "one body/many members" vision. This teacher-leader will talk about how the current governance structure of the church reflects a team approach. This leader will emphasize how input from all church members is welcome in the context of the different groups of the church. A teacher-leader will then lead the plenary group in contemplative prayer.

After an appropriate song, teacher-leaders will then present biblical leaders and their leadership characteristics. Different biblical leaders—Moses, Miriam, David, Ruth, Jesus, and Mary—will be portrayed by the different teacher-leaders of the event who will explain their relative characteristics, qualities, and behaviors. They will highlight each leaders' unique connection with God, obedience to God, servanthood, listening to God and others, and concern for the less fortunate. Trainees will be allowed to ask a few questions of these biblical servants. Then, the biblical leaders will explain the requirements for leadership as listed in I Timothy 3:1-16.

These biblical leaders will briefly talk about the leadership principles and behaviors highlighted in Acts 6:1-6 and Acts 15:1-35. Connecting Heifetz' description of the characteristics and assistance for a leader under pressure is helpful in this training in order to provide a sense of leadership actions within the realities of the stresses of the church and community. Potential leaders can benefit from learning about such concepts and practices as adaptive work, managing a properly-paced decision-making process, getting on the balcony, finding partners and co-leaders, and maintaining a sense of mission. Appropriate connections to the Acts 6:1-6 and Acts 15:1-5 passages will be made. Again, pairs and triads will discuss these three passages and the Heifetz material through questions posed by the biblical teacher-leader. The teacher-leader will listen to and report some of the responses and further questions from the small groups to the whole group. The plenary group leader will then lead the group in a prayer time using an

Ignatian prayer exercise of imagining the self in one of the texts. If this training session is an all-day session, a meal will then be served.

Next, after an appropriate song the teacher-leaders of this event will highlight the nature of spiritual leadership in churches and in teams. They will present the Disciples of Christ history of leadership, emphasizing its varied nature as fit certain contexts. They will offer Hamm's suggestions for postmodern leadership, including his analysis of the current society and the importance of humility for the leader. They will present his three questions for leaders to ask of themselves: "What time is it?" "Where am I?" and "What am I doing there?" To help these potential leaders organize their overall leadership, the teacher-leaders will next offer Collins' three-fold schema of Disciplined People, Disciplined Thought, and Disciplined Action. Potential spiritual leaders will be taught about having the right people—including humble persons—for leaders, the right thought—including a sense of mission—or focus within the church, and the right action—including a mixture of freedom and responsibility—which leads to self-discipline for disciples. Pairs and triads will again discuss questions related to each of these presentations, especially emphasizing the biblical connections these potential leaders make to the material presented. The teacher-leader will welcome and share with the whole group some of the responses and further questions from the small groups. A teacher-leader will then lead the plenary group through a prayer time of *lectio divina*.

After an appropriate song, the teacher-leaders will talk about how good church leaders lead teams and task groups. They will then present Cormode's model of spiritual

leader as a spiritual interpreter, which spiritually grounds the work of churches and teams. They will present Cladis' suggestions for a template of an effective team for a spiritual leader. Such a template includes having a covenant, a mission, a sense of collaboration, a sense of empowerment, and a sense of trust. They will then connect Cladis' suggestions to similar ones in Hackman's work, highlighting team development, rewards or celebrations, trustworthy data, good training, and helpful coaching. Then, the trainers will include Clinebell's practical tips for teamwork including the stages of team development and the importance of the leader's attentiveness to the members of the group. Small groups of six to eight persons will then form in order to have a brief discussion on the material presented. An observer will be designated to simply record observations on the leadership exhibited, based on the teaching previously presented. The teacher-leader will welcome and report some of the small groups' responses and further questions to the whole group. A teacher-leader will then lead the plenary group through a prayer time of journaling.

After an appropriate song, teacher-leaders will then introduce the mentoring of the potential leaders. The mentors as well as a mentoring covenant will be presented to the participants. One of the mentors will explain the covenant and its duration. Participants will be encouraged to then ask questions of the lead mentor. The participants and mentors will then be introduced. The matched mentors and potential leaders will then take some time to get acquainted, talk more specifically about how the mentoring process works, begin to set regular appointments, and then pray with each other.

At the end of this training event, the unique and particular mission of New Hope Church will again be presented. Teacher-Leaders will present a brief description of the community and its needs, encouraging all of the gathered leaders to reflect anew on how they may serve to address these needs. They will offer a slide show of photos—set to music—of how particular teams have ministered to the community in the past. Then, pictures of the potential leaders are presented on the screen with a caption like, “What will YOU lead next?” The event ends with a song of praise.

This training process continues with trainees’ practicing leadership, receiving mentoring, and participating in a consecration service. Potential leaders lead teams or task groups. The mentor observes this leadership. Mentors and potential leaders meet regularly to discuss their leadership. The mentor makes connections to the spiritual, biblical, and leadership teaching from the training event. The mentors also meet occasionally with the leadership training team to discuss the mentoring, issues related to leadership, and the improvement of the leadership training program.

Within this mentoring program, mentors provide updated material that describes Sarpy County communities and residents. The mentors talk about this data with the potential leaders. These leaders are encouraged to reflect on and discuss how New Hope Church’s teams can address particular spiritual needs in Papillion, Nebraska. Mentors will suggest to these leaders that they challenge their teams to consider how they can best minister to the people of this community. Specific attention will be focused on the need for community, spirituality, and service to others—particularly the “least of these.”

Mentors will suggest service or mission ideas to help leaders assist their teams in brainstorming how they might better serve this community. Mentors will encourage team leaders to listen to the specific passions, gifts, and interests of their team members so that they they can provide the most appropriate response to the needs that God is calling forth in a particular team—thus reflecting Collins’ principle of “First Who . . . Then What.”

Mentors will also emphasize with these leaders that the goal is not “the perfect leader” but rather a leader who can develop God-given gifts, characteristics, and skills to become an effective leader. These leaders will learn that it is their development in spiritual leadership, not their perfection in spiritual leadership, that is the ultimate goal of this process. Mentors and leaders will look for progress made in their spiritual leadership. These leaders will discuss team goals, objectives, and their achievement or progress toward achievement. Yet, leadership will not be solely defined by the relative “success” in meeting team goals. Leadership development will be assessed based on the expression of the qualities, gifts, and behaviors previously studied. If a leader’s team fails to accomplish some goal, the mentor will not ask, “Why did you fail?” Rather, the mentor will ask, “How did you lead? How did you encourage the gifts within your team to be expressed in order to accomplish the overall goal? What did you do well? What might you do differently next time?”

After a period of several months, this process concludes with a consecration service in which the leadership training team along with the pastor and elders lay hands on the potential leaders and read from Acts 6:1-6.

CHAPTER 7

MINISTRY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The preceding ministry strategy, plan, and goals need to be implemented in specific ways so that this spiritual leaders can be trained for mission at New Hope Church. This chapter will identify steps to implement the aforementioned goals. The steps will identify the important church leadership needed for each stage of the training.

Pilot Project Summary

New Hope Church leaders will offer a pilot project in the fall of 2014 and offer an initial training event. The previous training event and subsequent mentoring will be streamlined so that New Hope Church leaders can get a “taste” of this training. This pilot project will include much of the training outlined above. For example, the qualities of the established leaders and potential leaders as enumerated in the Bible will remain the same. New Hope Church leaders will pray about who will participate in this program.

This pilot training event will include much of the same content of the training described above, though, in an abbreviated form. This pilot event will open with prayer.

The leader will introduce the central concept of the trinity as model for the “one body/many member” metaphor. The unique expression of this metaphor as lived by the Disciples of Christ will be presented. The leader will highlight the history of the varied nature of church leadership, the focus on the unity of all believers, the mission work, and the spirituality of the Disciples of Christ. The leader can use a video from the Disciples of Christ Office of Communications to introduce this metaphor. Indeed, the Disciples of Christ General Minister and President may use Skype to greet the gathering and highlight the relevant Disciples of Christ emphases. Or, the Nebraska Regional Minister can speak about the unique Disciples of Christ nature previously described. The leader will explain how New Hope Church embodies this metaphor. A member of the community can talk about how a team from New Hope Church helped him. The participants will then be led in contemplative prayer. Next, the leader will present the previously mentioned biblical material. The leader will receive questions and lead a brief discussion on these passages. Participants will then experience an Ignatian prayer exercise.

After a break, the leader will then present a description of spiritual leadership from the authors already mentioned. The leader will offer a brief history of leadership within the Disciples of Christ. Hamm’s unique contribution to the understanding of postmodern leadership will next be presented. Hamm himself may speak to the assembled group by Skype. Collins’ leadership priorities of Disciplined People, Disciplined Thought, and Disciplined Action will be examined. The leader will then lead the group through a *lectio divina* prayer exercise. Specific guidelines for spiritual leaders who lead teams will next

be offered. Cormode's role of the spiritual leader as spiritual interpreter will be discussed. The leader will next present Cladis' and Hackman's suggestions for the composition of teams. A local church leader of another denomination or a local business leader may speak about how their respective group has effectively created teams using Cladis' or Hackman's ideas. The leader will share Clinebell's recommendations for effective team procedure. Another local leader may speak about how these suggestions helped their teams. A brief prayer time of journaling will be introduced. The leader will then introduce mentoring. The leader will invite the participants or trainees to join in a conversation with the mentors. The mentoring covenant will be discussed. The mentor will also explain the process. The prospective leader will ask questions of or make comments to the mentor as is appropriate.

This pilot training event will include a few more resources. It will involve some of the religious symbols, discussion, and media mentioned earlier. It will last three hours and include refreshments. Participants will be encouraged to be in contact with their mentor. They will also be reminded of the consecration service, including laying on of hands, that concludes the mentoring phase of this process. These participants, the mentors, and the additional leaders (not from the Leadership Training Team) will be given an appropriate evaluation, described below, and encouraged to complete it while still on site. This event will conclude with a song and a prayer.

Mentors will then help the prospective leaders in the manner prescribed in chapter 6 for six months. Mentors will exhibit spiritual disciplines and leadership in their weekly

lives. They will be well thought of by others, in the manner proscribed in I Timothy 6. They will be seasoned spiritual leaders who have spent considerable time in teamwork and in leading teams.

The mentor and person being mentored will agree to and sign a covenant in their first meeting. This covenant between the mentor and the prospective leader has several key components. One of these is the time frame for the meetings between mentor and trainees—their duration, frequency of meeting, and approximate dates (such as, the first and third Thursdays of each month). The covenant will include the expectations of each person in the covenant. For example, the mentor agrees to meet regularly with his trainee and listen to the issues she presents, offering a caring and supportive presence. Mentors will emphasize the servanthood aspect of leadership and share data on community needs as is appropriate to the mission interest of each team. They will ask appropriate questions. The trainee will promise to meet the established appointments or arrange for another, come prepared to discuss at least one item from their recent leadership experience, listen to the mentor's comments, and complete the action items on which they agreed. The covenant will state that the mentor and prospective leader share time together in scripture and prayer. The covenant will also lift up that the relationship between these two will follow New Hope Church values and beliefs such as acceptance and respect. The covenant will finally state the terms for termination of the mentoring relationship—when the six-month time frame is completed or when one of the participants in the covenant is convinced that the relationship is not helpful.

Leadership training mentors will ground the conversations in the spirituality of leadership. They will offer the trainee their sense of God's presence and direction in the midst of their conversation and in the midst of the teamwork that this prospective leader reports. Each will model the prayer disciplines during the prayer time they share together. For example, in one meeting, the mentor might begin the session by leading contemplative prayer. In the next meeting, the trainee might end their session by leading a lectio divina prayer. The mentor and prospective leader will strive to answer the question, "How was Jesus, as head of the body of Christ embodied in the team that you are currently serving, leading the team in the situation described?"

Mentors will tend to lead with questions rather than providing answers for questions that the trainee raises or that team behavior suggests. They will ask the leaders questions like, "Where was God in the team meeting?" or "How was God perceived to have led the group in their mission activity?" For instance, if a conflict within a team has become too divisive in a particular team meeting, the mentor will not respond to the reported incident with a statement like, "Well, you should have done" Rather, the mentor responds with a question like, "So, what issue do you perceive was really at the heart of the conflict?" The mentor will listen thoughtfully for the trainee's response to questions rather than hurriedly ask another question or make a point. They will attempt to explore deeply with the prospective leader the issue or issues of the team in question. They will practice patience, listening to the triune God lead the conversation in the

direction that God wills with a spiritual “ear” or discernment cultivated through much prayer.

Pilot Project Timeline

The timeline for this pilot training process will include these phases:

The first step will be in the spring of 2014. The curriculum will be written by the pastor in collaboration with other New Hope Church leaders. The curriculum will draw heavily on the resources and plan previously mentioned; though, the input of other leaders will be valued and used as appropriate.

The next step will be in the summer of 2014. The leadership for this pilot event will be called and trained. The pastor will share the material with those who will form a team with him. This team will be called the Leadership Training Team. Their unique gifts will be expressed in the final proposal for this pilot training. The mentors will likewise be recruited for this training process.

Also in the summer of 2014, potential leaders or trainees will be called by the Leadership Training Team to participate in the upcoming training event. This team will engage potential leaders through prayer and conversation about the possibility of their participation. They will invite promising potential leaders.

In the fall of 2014, the Leadership Training Team will offer the pilot leadership training event for those who accept the call to participate. In the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015, mentoring will be offered to participants. The mentoring will follow the guidelines previously written. However, the mentors may not meet on a regular basis.

In the winter of 2015, the mentoring will conclude with the consecration service. This service will include a laying on of hands as described above. The service also will include the core leadership of the church.

Also in the winter of 2015, the pilot project event will be evaluated, changed, and updated by the Leadership Training Team. This team will use some or all of the tools described below. This team will plan for future leadership training events.

Identifying and Developing Leaders for Pilot Project

Established leaders of New Hope Church will be encouraged to form the Leadership Training Team. The pastor will spend time in prayer and discernment regarding offering invitations to particular established leaders for this team. The pastor will seek those leaders who have best exemplified the biblical qualities already discussed. The qualities of proven leadership, regular connection with God, faithfulness, obedience to God, servanthood and being held in high esteem by others will be counted heavily in the selection.

Newer disciples at New Hope Church and those outside New Hope Church will be sought to participate in this pilot leadership training event. Several families are new to the church and are excellent candidates for participation in this event. New Hope Church leaders have met many potential leaders outside of the church in its mission activity as well as in its relationship to the YMCA. These potential leaders may be contacted also. The pastor and Leadership Training Team will pray about prospects for this event. After discerning, by consensus, who call to participate in this training the members of this

leadership team will then have conversations with these prospective participants. Those who are the most promising participants will be invited to the event.

The pastor will help to develop the Leadership Training Team to effectively lead this pilot project. The members of this team will not only have the curriculum for the event, but they will also meet with the pastor to receive more in-depth study of the aspects of spiritual leadership already discussed. The pastor and the training team will meet several times in order to become familiar with the spiritual leadership material, form a collaborative team themselves, and to practice their unified presentation.

Resources for the Pilot Project

The Leadership Training Team will have numerous resources for the pilot project. The curriculum and the Bible have already been mentioned. Additionally, the pastor will make available for the training team the texts described above as well as copies from key passages from these books. The collaboration of training team members focused on the study of these texts is a key resource for the pilot project. The curriculum will be refined and improved as fits the needs of the church, the community, and the potential leaders invited.

Other resources for this training will be procured. The leaders will approach the YMCA for the use of a space, some chairs, and a screen. If the YMCA facilities are not adequate, then other facilities such as the community rooms of the Papillion Fire Department or of the Sump library will be requested. The church already owns and will use its religious items, projector, laptop, and pens and pencils. The leadership team will

make available the printed materials for this event such as an agenda or outline. The Leadership Training Team will also make available the mentoring contract for this process. This team will offer appropriate refreshments for this event. They can consult with the hospitality elder as to the logistics of serving these refreshments.

Additional Leadership Personnel

Given the Disciples of Christ churches' interest in collaboration with other churches and agencies, the Leadership Training Team may invite other leaders to help present aspects of this project during this leadership training event. The pastor and New Hope Church leaders know many such possible presenters. Members of the community who give brief testimonies about New Hope Church's team ministry have been mentioned above as additional leadership resources for the training event.

Pastors and leaders from other religious traditions can present some of the faith-oriented parts of the training event. A lecturer or Jesuit teacher from the local Roman Catholic university, Creighton, can speak to those at the training event regarding the perichoretic nature of the triune God. This leader can also speak to how he has experienced this triune work of God in educational institutions, churches, and agencies with which he is familiar. This leader can also provide the prayer exercises for the training event, particularly the Ignatian exercise. Other protestant clergy and lay leaders in the greater Omaha area can also provide this leadership. The Leadership Training Team can recruit other Disciples of Christ pastors and regional leaders to present the Disciples of Christ history of leadership varieties, focus on unity, spiritual practices, and mission

emphases. United Church of Christ pastors in the area can also speak to the trainees about how the Disciples of Christ have often focused on church unity and mission. Such a presentation would be a powerful witness to the participants. To view the relevant history and the spirituality and mission of Disciples of Christ churches from the viewpoint of an “outsider”—a non-Disciples of Christ believer—would make a profound impact on New Hope Church potential leaders.

Area business leaders—from profit or nonprofit businesses—can likewise be recruited by the Leadership Training Team to present the insights and results of how their organizations tried the strategies described in some of the texts mentioned earlier. For example, such a leader can present the strategies to help organizations become great that Collins espouses. Such a leader would be proficient with Collins’ plan and would have some leadership experience in implementing his suggestions with some success. Another leader can talk about their experience in using Heifetz’ ideas for leadership in a changing postmodern world. Such a talk would be particularly helpful for leaders to hear how other leaders met resistance and conflict yet thrived through the difficulties using these concepts. Another leader—even church leader—can be recruited to speak about how they organized teams using Hackman’s or Cladis’ guidelines. Again, such a “real life” testimony to the utility of these guidelines would be an authoritative presentation to participants. Finally, an area leader who has had success with the guidelines that Clinebell espouses can present some of these ideas in a persuasive way to future leaders.

Other faith leaders who have used the concepts of these and other authors can similarly make compelling presentations regarding their use. For example, a Disciples of Christ leaders who have read Hamm's work can offer his ideas in a useful way—indicating what has helped their ministry and what has not. A church leader of another denomination can tell stories of how their leaders have functioned as spiritual interpreters in effective ways, as Cormode describes. Another church leader can talk more specifically about Volf's discussion of the interdependence of church members and churches as a reflection of the triune action of God, giving specific examples of how church people have cooperated to serve their community.

There are many helpful resources in the greater Omaha, Nebraska area which this New Hope Church training event can receive to strengthen its training of leaders. If the training process attracts many participants and the more expanded version of this process as described in chapter 6 is offered, then a skilled mentor from the community—perhaps from the Midlands Mentoring Partnership—can occasionally lead the sessions with the mentors. Such a skilled mentor can listen to their comments, empathize with their struggles, celebrate their successful mentoring moments, and suggest different strategies or ideas for mentoring particular kinds of prospective leaders. Executive coaches and trainers of leaders from the area can also assist in evaluating this leadership training process and in addressing particular concerns of coaching or mentoring.

Assessment Plan

The leadership training process will be evaluated using several resources. The entire process will be reviewed—including the calling of the prospective leaders, the planning for a specific training event, the training event itself, the mentoring, and the final consecration service. The Leadership Training Team will draw upon these resources in order to assess the training process and make changes to improve leadership training. As each leadership training process is evaluated, the tools and questionnaires themselves will be refined and upgraded as best fits the particular leadership needs of the time.

The Leadership Training Team will develop and use various tools for the assessment of this training process. This team will offer its own initial observations about and assessments of the quality of the training process. The leaders on this team will provide a questionnaire for the presenters from outside New Hope Church to complete. This questionnaire will inquire of these presenters their impressions of their own presentation, their sense of the interaction with the participants, and their observations and assessments about the process as a whole. They will be specifically asked how they believe the process can be improved. They will complete multiple-choice and essay questions. In addition to receiving regular feedback from the mentors during the mentoring phase of the process, these leaders will seek input from the mentors in the form of a questionnaire. This survey will ask mentors about the nature of the mentoring relationship, the areas in which they believed there was success in the improvement of leadership, the moments in which the participant struggled with the process, and their

ideas of how both the mentoring and the overall leadership training process can be improved. The mentors will also respond regarding how they believe the overall process might be improved. They will also complete multiple-choice and essay questions.

The participants in this process or the trainees will also receive evaluation tools. They will complete a questionnaire about the training event at the end of this event. This series of questions, both multiple-choice and essay, will ask the participants their assessment of the effectiveness of the event, their belief about the helpfulness of particular aspects of the training event, their thoughts about the setting for the training, and their ideas about how the event can be improved. The Leadership Training Team will also gather a smaller group of the participants and ask similar questions in a focus-group style of interview. This meeting will last no more than one hour and involve a more conversational and relaxed discussion focused on evaluating the event. The comments of participants will be recorded to include in the assessment data. The trainees will also be given a similar survey at the end of their mentoring and consecration ceremony. They will be asked about the training event again, the mentoring process, and the consecration ceremony. They will respond to questions about what was helpful, what was not as helpful, and what can be improved.

Another group to be asked for their assessment by the Leadership Team will be the teams or groups that the prospective leaders lead during the mentoring process. They will be asked questions, in multiple-choice and essay formats, about their sense of the quality of the leadership at the beginning of the mentoring process and at the end of the

mentoring process. They will also be asked about their sense of the gifts, skills, and Christian characteristics which they can celebrate in the prospective leader.

The Leadership Training Team will then receive this data and organize it into a report. They will tabulate the responses to similar questions answered by members of the different groups identified above. They will also summarize the results of the essay questions. They will pay particular attention to responses that have a common theme. They will write an executive summary that includes these common themes and overarching impressions of team members.

Report on Results

The Leadership Training Team will present the aforementioned data, in raw form and in the executive summary, to the elders of New Hope Church. The executive summary will be available to members of the church who desire to see it. The training team will collaborate with the elders to continually improve this leadership training program. The Leadership Training Team will have the main responsibility for this program and its improvement.

The elders and Leadership Training Team will conduct this training program, share its results, and communicate its assessment within the scope of the New Hope Church values of Christ-like love, healthy relationships, mutual acceptance, and growth of faith. The gathering of the data for this assessment and the reporting of its results will be done with respect to confidentiality of the participants.

After being in communication with other Disciples of Christ leaders, this project may become a pilot leadership training program for other churches. If so, New Hope Church leaders will be honest in their assessment of the program and encouraging of improvements on the part of other churches or church agencies. Currently, the Nebraska Region of the Disciples of Christ has invested in a Lincoln, Nebraska church's efforts to begin a Discipleship School. The preceding training for spiritual leaders may become integrated into this school as New Hope Church reports about its programs. In fact, as expressed at the outset of this paper there is a crying need for leadership training in churches. New Hope Church may begin a collaboration among many churches through which they provide training for spiritual leaders in many communities. In line with the Disciples of Christ identity as serving in unity with other churches, an ecumenical or inter-church movement of leadership training might grow from the reporting and sharing of this training process.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction to this paper, I have always desired to combine the best insights and practices of the business world with the best insights and practices of the church world in order to design the best process for developing spiritual leaders. This paper has attempted to achieve this desire. The process of writing the paper has revealed a different discovery. The structure of the paper forced a deep reflection on the resources of leadership from the Christian faith. Through the richness of Church history and resources there emerged a complex and deep answer to the basic question, “What makes a good spiritual leader?” This answer was distinctly Christian and faith-oriented. The insights and techniques of the business world can put this answer in contemporary packages so that today’s people can understand what makes a good leader. Yet, the Christian faith has such abundant resources for leadership that have been tried, tested, and proven for so many centuries that the business world as well as churches would do well to attend to its resources. Moreover, one’s faith is still so fundamental to a life that it must be the starting point to the development of anything, including leadership development.

The components of good spiritual leadership listed above have so many applications to the church and to the business worlds. As indicated in the introduction of this paper, church leaders for years have asked for guides to develop more good leadership. Not many have been forthcoming. There have been a few attempts at more in-depth training. Some regional judicatories of the Disciples of Christ have offered a

regular leader training event. The Upper Midwest region, for example, holds a yearly event in early September. Their purpose is to train leaders for the upcoming regular church activities. There are wonderful seminars offered at these events; however, none of these courses provide the more comprehensive training outlined in this project.

Some Disciples of Christ regions have more extensive training programs for lay pastoral leadership. The Missouri School of Religion in the Mid-America Region and Cotner College in the Nebraska region are two such programs. However, the curricula of these institutions model themselves after those of seminaries, offering such courses as history, New Testament studies, and Old Testament studies. These curricula do not delve deeply into the specific aspects of leadership explored in this paper. Over the decades of my ministry, I have consistently asked the question, “Where is spiritual leadership taught?”—in the manner outlined in this paper. Through my investigations, I have repeatedly arrived at the answer to this question: “Nowhere.”

As in the church world, the need for leadership training and coaching is increasing in the business world. In my visiting neighborhood homes in Papillion, Nebraska in the summer of 2013, one of these home’s residents was a consultant for leadership development in businesses and corporations. I had two conversations with him about becoming a paid consultant to organizations for leadership development. He told me that businesses are “crying out” for such a service. He said that his own consulting business could not keep pace with the demands for such training. Another business consultant

recently wrote a Linked-In article on how to develop an effective leadership development plan. His main points were:

1. “Define what Leadership looks like in your organization.
2. Consider the company culture.
3. Build the infrastructure.
4. Identify high potential talent inside the organization.
5. Make leadership development the business imperative.”¹

As one reviews the spiritual leadership plan designed in chapter 6 and delineated in chapter 7, one can then see how this project plan successfully meets the requirements of an effective leadership plan listed in the Linked-In article. Hence, the spiritual leadership training described in this paper can potentially meet the leadership needs of businesses as well as churches.

Nevertheless, the leadership training described above is first and foremost spiritual in nature and at its heart. The foundation of this training begins with God’s nature. Leaders reflect on how the members of the trinity interrelate and collaborate. Reflecting such interrelationships, the metaphor of Jesus’ leadership over the body of Christ is next offered as the overarching principle and image for spiritual leadership. Such leadership is further defined by describing the manifestations of the “one body/many members” metaphor within the Disciples of Christ. Such leadership is collaborative not authoritarian. The leadership training described here proceeds to describe the leadership “picture” by using faith and biblical principles, images, phrases, concepts, stories, and

¹ Dave Wilkins, “Building an Effective Leadership Development Plan,” The Oliver Group, http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20140223233804-29149456-building-an-effective-leadership-development-plan?trk=eml-ced-b-img-Ch-6&midToken=AQHZw3en8H1kDw&ut=0M-zyeTo_5m681 (accessed February 25, 2014).

descriptions to complete the understanding of spiritual leadership. This training finally uses the resources of faith and business authors to further explain what leaders do and how they lead in the context of teams.

In the final analysis of leadership, one of the biggest learnings of this project is that leadership is not about the *paterfamilias* who makes all of the decisions and “calls all the shots” for the group. Rather, the leader humbly—with questions not commands, through listening and not ruling, and calling on the gifts of others—leads more like a servant, as Jesus proscribes in John 13:12-20. Robert Greenleaf describes this concept when he uses the phrase “servant-leader.” This leader is servant first, according to Greenleaf.² Through her service, this leader leads—as Jesus taught and modeled.

In leading this way, the leader leads more as the lead jazz player in a jazz band, not as a rigid conductor pointing at the different members of an orchestra and expecting them to play when and how they are directed. Rather, the jazz band leader sets the tone and melody line of a song, inviting other players to join in this melody but also to improvise and add to the song as their gifts and spirits prompt them. Max DePree uses this image to describe leadership as improvisation when different situations arise and drawing the best out of other team members.³ Terrence Deal and Lee Bolman use the metaphor of a basketball team to describe the flexibility and fluidity needed by teams and team leaders.⁴

² Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 13.

³ Max DePree, *Leadership Jazz* (New York: Dell Trade, 1992), 8-9.

⁴ Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 109.

All of these metaphors are particularly apt for a postmodern world that is constantly in flux and changing rapidly.

The picture that emerges of a good spiritual leader for Disciples of Christ churches is one that is grounded in biblical and theological principles, nurtured by spiritual disciplines, responsive to local community needs, and skilled in team leadership for a postmodern era. The new training described above is designed to provide the needed components to help disciples let God develop them into good spiritual leaders. The pastor and other planners will need patience to hone and craft the training process so that it can successfully achieve the purposes outlined above. These leaders will also need to remember that the triune God directs and drives this process through the pouring of the divine life into it. Their own connection to God through the aforementioned spiritual disciplines will help them let the Spirit guide the development of this program.

As this spiritual leadership training program is developed, new hope is born in the communities that this training benefits. Disciples of Christ and other churches receive new hope as their spiritual leaders are effectively trained. Local communities receive new hope when they benefit from the mission work of the teams that are well led due to good spiritual leadership training. Papillion and the greater Omaha area receive new hope as this training may inspire an interest in the mission-matching service described in chapter 1. Potential new congregations receive new hope as this training may spark a desire to follow God's calling to plant churches in new communities. As God's life pours into these communities, spiritual leadership gives new hope to them.

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