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Biblical Based Servant Leadership and the Liberian Methodist Church: Lessons from the Christological Hymn in Phil. 2:7-11

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"Biblical based servant leadership and the Liberian Methodist Church: Lessons from the Christological Hymn in Phil. 2:7-11"

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in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

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by

Daniel Reeves

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ABSTRACT

Daniel Reeves   D.Min., Perkins School of Theology

"Biblical based servant leadership and the Liberian Methodist Church:
Lessons from the Christological Hymn in Phil. 2:7-11"

Sometimes a biblical understanding of leadership challenges cultural and traditional understanding. It's the context of the Liberian traditional and cultural understanding of leadership that my research will focus on. My project will show the continued need for servant leadership, which is demonstrated by the portrait of Jesus in the Christological hymn and the Gospel.

The theses will focus on contrasting traditional Christian leadership within the United Methodist Church in Liberia with the humility of Jesus' servant leadership. This research hopes to offer academic authentic transformative ideas of servant leadership and intentional examples to the continuous study of servant leadership. However, the research intent to also provide a fresh look at how cultural and traditional orientations in Liberia, can pose a challenge to the impact of servant leadership and hope to submit practical ways the leaders understand the transformative nature of power (Linthicum, 2003)

Therefore, the inquiry will consider scholarly works of literature in the area of servant leadership, primarily drawing resources from *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and The way of Jesus* (Hill, 2016), *Culture and leadership in Africa: a conceptual model and research agenda* (Kuada, J. 2010), the impact of Carmen *Christi* (Fee, G. 1992), the servant example of Christ in the Gospel, and suggesting applicable knowledge from my research, and personal experience that's workable within the Liberian context; as opposed to a king and ruler cultural/traditional

understanding of Christian leadership (Mansago, 2009). Secondly, this research hopes to

contribute to the current scholarship on Christian leadership based on the Christological hymn as

it challenges from a cultural or traditional context (Jones, 2012).

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Acknowledgments

I will first give God the glory for bringing me thus far in my pursuit of academic excellence. Higher education is nothing short of rigor and pursuing a doctoral program in any field of education is even a higher test of individual ability, patience, and commitment to academic excellence. Secondly, and importantly I would like to acknowledge my wife Mrs. Rebecca Haggen Reeves that stood by me during this time of my schooling process.

Thirdly, I also like to acknowledge Perkins School of Theology -Southern Methodist University for allowing me to complete my doctoral program. The flexibility of the professors, the thoroughness of their presentations, and their continued prayer for me and my cohort as we solder on is nothing short of grace and passion for impacting academics and spiritual knowledge.

Fourthly, I want to acknowledge those that pray with me when I encounter challenges along the way during my program at Perkins. Lastly, I do want to recognize individual contributions that without it would have been impossible for me to accomplish this project:

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Thanks for all your contributions. I truly appreciate you all!

Introduction
Motivation for servant leadership

The book of Philippians is regarded as one of Paul's contributions to the theological framework of the New Testament specifically within the context of the *Christological hymn* (Philippians 2:7-11). My motivation for this project is rooted in my personal experience and the need for authentic servant leadership within the context of cultural challenges especially within the Liberian traditional setting of leadership, and its impact on how Liberian Methodist clergies serve, but a lesson African leaders can learn from the project.

One of the most practical experiences that I encountered on servant leadership that challenge my cultural and traditional understanding of leadership was at Tyndale Theological Seminary, Badhoevedorp, Amsterdam 2007 during my summer semester in my M.Div. program. During lunch, my Greek professor came up to our table, we were three at the table. Right after eating, I decided to take my tray and my professor's tray, but to my greatest surprised, he said no! I felt ashamed and embarrassed. But what I later learned that summer was that every professor clean and took care of their trays during lunch.

It was an aha moment for me! The transformative understanding of the hymn especially Christ's *humility* will serve as the basis for counter-tradition or cultural understanding of leadership within the Liberian Methodist Church and the Christian church. According to Hill, "Status is not the gift of the Spirit. Ambition is absent from the list of the spiritual fruit within the New Testament."[1] This project is by no means against "status" or being "ambitious," but the intention is to help the leaders and readers to appreciate the "*mind of Christ*" (Phil. 2:5 ESV). I intend to help expand the United Methodist clergies in Liberia's understanding of servant

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[1] Hill, Craig. *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*. Eerdmans, 2016. 1

leadership within the context of Jesus' humility as it was similarly counter-intuitive to the Greco-Roman world of status, and ambition. It's important to point out how social-cultural stratification and the "elevated status quo"[2] and the idea of "due deference and honor"[3] influence how the Greco-Roman world understood leadership within the context of cultural power and honor than service.

I have to say that when I had an aha moment in the Netherlands during my lunchtime with my professor, I begin to think about how my culture[4] affected the way I think and thought about leadership, especially Christianity. According to Massango, "African people treat a leader by being a king, priest or ruler chosen by the office to serve the nation."[5] The leadership of the church within Africa and especially in the Liberian context needs to learn how humility serves as the foundation for healthy Christian leadership that affects the community with positive outcomes.

The first chapter is *Exegeting Philippians 2:7-11*. It will provide the reader with exegetical insights into the Christological hymn by drawing on New Testament scholarship literature.

The second chapter will emphasize *Lessons from the Christological hymn: Jesus' Model of servant leadership.* The primary goal of this chapter is to present lessons that can be learned from the Christological hymn by zeroing in on the example of Christ's humility.

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[2] Ibid, 4-5

[3] Ibid, 4-5

[4] According to Idang, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Idang, Gabriel E. 2015). It's clear that there's not a single definition of culture in sociology or philosophy. I think the main takeaway from all the definitions on culture is the distinctive of the art, people, political or religious systems and how they live and interpret what it means.

[5] (Masango, M., 2003. *Leadership in the African context.* The Ecumenical Review, 55(4), p.313.

The third chapter will consider the *impact of culture on servant leadership: A challenge to Christian leadership* (Reinke, 2004). The benefit of this chapter is to draw the reader's attention to how Jesus encountered culture and traditions, his impact as a Leader, and his understanding of leadership, contrasting with the Greco-Roman status-seeking cultural society.

The fourth chapter will concentrate on *The Transformative Power of Servant Leadership* (Allen, Moore, Moser, Neill, Sambamoorthi, and Bell, 2016), that Liberia leaders, African or any leader can learn and be an effective leader. The goal of this chapter will be to educate the reader on the practical power that servant leaders' effect in transforming their communities.

The fifth chapter will suggest *the Authentic application of Carmen Christi*[6] in a culturally oriented community. The idea is to draw the reader's attention intentionally to practical suggestive practices of servant leadership within the context of "*the mind of Christ*" (Philippians 2:5b KJV) that may include vulnerability as well within the community (Brown, 2018).

Lastly, the hope is that the project will serve as a continued source of challenge to others who would let to further explore servant leadership and the problem of cultures and traditions in other parts of the world (Asia, Europe, South America, North America, Africa, etc., (Bolden, 2009).

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[6] The understanding of the hymn among scholar is that Paul relates the "humiliation" of Christ in his earthly state, but it will ultimately lead to his "enthronement" (Martin, P, R. 1967.viii). The focus of *Carmen Christi* is how the Creator humble himself even unto death, human humiliation and yet with so much power, he didn't fight back. It's the lesson of servanthood that intent for any leader to learn especially within the context of Liberian United Methodist Church and universally.

CHAPTER ONE: The Focus of Exegesis: Philippians 2:7-11

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO PHILIPPIANS

The test of dating or attempting a historical narrative of any event comes with its challenge. Even more tasking for theologians and biblical historians is providing the historical background evidence of *Holy Scriptura.* The margin for errors and the need to authenticate the sources are of the highest concern to scholars. Therefore, the historical background of Philippians is no exception to the difficulty in providing authorship, dates, place, and purpose.

AUTHORSHIP

According to Gromacki "The contents of the Epistle strongly support the traditional view that Paul wrote this book,"[7] also, the internal evidence gives credence to Paul's authorship. In fact, in chapter 1:1a, the letter begins with "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus," (NIV). Another noteworthy piece of evidence that validates Pauline's authorship is the mention of Timothy (1:1a). We know from the book of Acts 16 that Timothy accompanies Paul on his missionary journey preaching the gospel in the city of Philippi (Macedonia), and Paul mentioned the young Timothy (1:1, 2:19-23, 1 Tim.1:2).[8]

However, there are four main arguments as it relates to Pauline's authorship. The arguments mainly center around the Christological hymn (Philippians 2:5-11).[9] The first view or argument is a total denial of Paul's authorship. According to Parker, "This viewpoint was held mostly by nineteenth-century scholars who argued the style of the book, particularly the "hymn",

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[7] Gromacki, Robert Glenn. Stand United in Joy: An Exposition of Philippians. Kress Christian Press, 2002. 9

[8] Ibid, 9

[9] Parker, Nathaniel B. "A Background Study on The Book of Philippians." (2016). 2

was not Pauline."[10] The second argument is a view that has been espoused by many critics of

biblical authorship. The main argument is that the book covers both a Pauline and non-Pauline

theology or writing style.[11] The third argument that is widely accepted is that Paul was the author

of the book, and the entire book was written by him. Scholars that espouse this argument are

"comfortable with also accepting the possibility of the hymn being written by Paul at a prior date

and later incorporated into the book."[12]

The fourth view falls somewhere between full acceptance and suggestion, despite

affirming Pauline's authorship of the book. Proponents of the fourth view argue that Paul may

have accessed other Christian resources including the Christological hymn while writing

Philippians.[13] Among the four understandings regarding Paul's writing of Philippians, the third

view is the most accepted. As Herrick points out, "There apparently never was a question in the

minds of the Fathers of the Church as to the canonical authority of Philippians or about its

authorship."[14]

Also, the church fathers attested to Paul's authorship as they quote Philippians. For

example, "Polycarp of Smyrna (d. *ca.* AD 155) addresses himself to the Philippians and directly

mentions Paul as having written them (3.2). Irenaeus (d. *ca.* AD 200). Clement of Alexandria

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[10] Ibid, 2
[11] Ibid, 2
[12] Ibid, 2
[13] Ibid, 2
[14] Herrick, Greg. Introduction, Background, and Outline to Philippians
https://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-background-and-outline-philippians published
6/29/2004 accessed 5/2/21

(d. *ca.* AD 215), Tertullian (d. *ca.* Ad 225), and the later fathers not only quote from Philippians but assign it to Paul as well."[15]

Date and Place

Determining the exact date of writing for the book has always come with its challenges. Despite the majority consensus that the letter was written from Rome (Acts 28:30), there are arguments or suggested cases for Caesarea or Ephesus.[16] Despite the suggestion that the book was written from Caesarea or Ephesus, Bruce argues that there is no known evidence to corroborate the certainty of date and place. Bruce states "Against Caesarea is the weighty fact far from expecting release there, Paul appealed to Caesar…Against Ephesus is the fact that there's no express record in Scripture of an Ephesus imprisonment."[17]

It appears the traditional view of Rome as the place of writing looks to be convincing. Lastly, Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs, and Wiseman argue that "We cannot be dogmatic, but the arguments, on the whole, seem to favor Rome rather than Ephesus…that is towards the end of Paul imprisonment of which Acts 28 speaks of."[18]

Purpose

To state emphatically that Philippians has a single purpose is a difficult suggestion. As you read the contents of the book, it looks plausible that Paul had various reasons for writing the book. It seems that Paul was "greatly cheered by the coming of Epaphroditus from Philippi

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[15] Ibid, Greg Herrick. Introduction, Background, and Outline to Philippians
https://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-background-and-outline-philippians published
6/29/2004 accessed 5/2/21

[16] FF Bruce The International Bible commentary, 1979. 1440
[17] Ibid, 1440
[18] Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs and Wiseman, The new Bible commentary 1970. 1126

bearing the gifts of the church…Grieved by the lack of harmony, he pleads with the Philippians

to be marked by the mind of Christ and thus to be brought to a new and happy oneness of interest

and character (4:10, 14-18, 1:27-30, 2:1-11, 4:2f)."[19] Secondly, Paul's understanding of the

churches cautions forcefully against any "Judaizers or libertines (3:3-11)" [20] that may appear to

distort the gospel. Finally, of note, Paul wanted to inform the church of any concerns that his

imprisonment may have caused a delay to the gospel and his plan to send "Timothy to them, and

subsequently to come himself (2:19-24)."[21]

The focus of exegesis is not to bore the reader with long stories and self-elevation when

handling the word of God. The meaning speaks for itself "to lead out of."[22] It's the opposite of

Eisegesis "read into."[23] In a biblical context, exegesis is a method of biblical passages

interpretation by using critical reasoning or analysis of a text.[24] The focus of exegesis should be

to look at the historical-grammatical, basically looking at the language(s) (Greek, Hebrew, etc.,)

and critically examining commentaries, expositions, dictionaries, works of literature, and any

resources that help with understanding the text.

Also, consider the genre, background, context, and studious effort to get at the original

meaning as possible and see how that passage of text relates to the current situation, and cultural

challenges of the contemporary time.[25] According to Bouma, "A text cannot mean what it could

never have meant for its original readers/hearers…the true meaning of the biblical text for us is

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[19] Ibid, 1440
[20] Ibid, 1440
[21] Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs and Wiseman, The new Bible commentary 1970 p.1126
[22] www.biblestudy.org accessed 6/15/2021
[23] Ibid, accessed 6/15/2021
[24] Ibid, accessed 6/15/2021
[25]Focus of exegesis, "faith and worship" assessor www.methodist.org.uk Ichibus Volume 160, issue 1 p.13

what God originally intended it to mean when it was first spoken or written."[26] Consequently,

exegesis interprets (hermeneutics) process to be trustworthy and conclusively assumes that what

is been interpreted has gone through the rigor of original intent of the author when handling *Holy*

Writ.

Paul's writing has always created a lot of interest. The Philippians 2:7-11 passage is no

exception. Uy captures the task of exegeting the Christological hymn by suggesting "The

literature on Philippians 2:5-11 has become virtually unmanageable."[27] Uy is not alone in his

assessment of the debated nature of 2:6-11 among scholars as it pertains to the form, author, and

interpretations of the hymn. New Testament scholar Fee suggests that "This remarkable passage

is at once one of the most exalted, one of the most beloved, and one of the most discussed and

debated passages in the Pauline corpus…on the other hand, because of its exalted description of

Christ…has long debated its meaning and role in its present context."[28]

Despite the "remarkable" nature of the passage (Philippians 2:6-11), there are scholarly

questions that the text present that needs to be answered. My approach to the text is trying to find

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[26] Bouma, Jeremy, *Exegesis and Hermeneutics: The Bible Interpreter's Two Most Important Tasks* https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/biblical-interpretation-exegesis-and-hermeneutics July 8, 2014 accessed 6/4/2021.

[27] Uy, Julius Brian. "Carmen Christi."
https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/57157518/Term_Paper.pdf?1533785641=&response-content-
disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DCarmen_Christi_The_Socio_cultural_Backdr.pdf&Expires=1
627800514&Signature=ghL0EfPgSj0KXzjVyK2-v2V~kP8B2z~fWJuhlL9q72PA~ZzfeKdzklLjzc5s7-
41MsTbPhJJk2~qiMRAwC7G~IehzZIUa53EMP2KAKtqyTJfkT5J40e2NnNljQQP~bTuw~Z6NzdOTST
8UDHbAQsREtQtpq6i587j9qv8OkEHMPOaP1I0W6xVTBM0chKrvF7ZlS4Nz76E88FB87wzhwi8iZu
G~UJfV1OCeOAFp-
98tnak989qtR6Q3BSY7b2ysoHwh9c1ouNBQITfQ2K7eZAJlsKzclMYC2Oy~DHLtErhEvyPfWN3~EBx
~f8~xxZ48SX7Lg8OQH4qUYe2I9P9GWexkQ__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA accessed
7/20/21.

[28] Gordon D. Fee, "*Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?" Bulletin for Biblical Research 2* (1992): 29

out what Paul meant within the context of the text. In doing so, I must first look at the form of

the text, its author, grapples with difficult words within the text, and what it means in terms of

interpretations. Secondly, how does the interpretation(s) affect my view of the humility

(servanthood) of Christ, and its relevance for the church and ministers today?

The consensus on Phil. 2:6-11 as it relates to the literary form[29] is that it's a hymn that

focused on Christ.

There are many reasons for this universal consensus of the text being a hymn (Philippians 2:6-

11). According to Fee, there are four basic reasons why scholars consider 2:6-11 to be a

Christological hymn:

> The Ós with which it begins is paralleled in other passages in the NT also understood to
> be   Christological hymns (Col 1:15, 18; 1 Tim 3:16); (2) the exalted language and
> rhythmic quality of the whole; (3) the conviction that the whole can be displayed to show
> structured parallelism, of a kind with other pieces of Semitic poetry; (4) the language and
> structure seem to give these verses an internal coherence that separates them from the
> discourse of the epistle itself at this point.[30]

There is also an interpretational reason to consider the form of the passage. According to Talbert

"a proper delineation of form leads to a correct interpretation of meaning. Such a criterion seems

especially appropriate in this case since we are dealing with hymnic material."[31] From close

research of 2:6-11, it seems there are two main schools of scholarly arrangements that are highly

competitive in current research as to which structural form is acceptable when it comes to

understanding the Christological hymn.

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[29] The Merriam Webster dictionary defines a form as "the shape and structure of something as
distinguished from its material." The text arrangement is agreed universally by theological
scholars that Philippians 2:6-11 is a hymn. The question has always been was Paul the author, or
did he "adapt" the ancient hymn and added new material?
[30] Ibid, 30-31
[31] Talbert, Charles H. "*The problem of pre-existence in Philippians 2: 6-11*." Journal of Biblical
Literature 86.2 (1967): 141

The two dominant structural forms are mainly suggestions of "Lohmeyer and

Jeremias."[32] In the case of Lohmeyer, he "sees the hymn as falling into six strophes of three lines

each," which many scholars find problematic. For example, Talbert posits that Lohmeyer's

arraignment "structure fails to follow the inner parallelisms… structural scheme leaves all but

strophes three and six dangling. The ends of strophes do not correspond to periods."[33]

Building on Lohmeyer's work but disagreeing with his structure of "six strophes of three lines",

Jeremias develops a structural arraignment of his own to further explain the form of the text 2:6-

11.

According to Marshall "the most important being that of J. Jeremias who obtains three

strophes of four lines at the cost of regarding parts of verses 10 and 11 (in addition to a phrase in

verse 8 already noted by Lohmeyer) as Pauline additions to the original hymn."[34] Understanding

the form of the text is important because it affects the various interpretations that theologians

developed over the years, but also helps readers and biblical students handle the text with the

best scholarship and the right thought of application. According to Uy,

> The theological weight of Philippians 2:5-11, also known as the Carmen Christi, has
> served the interest of many and gave birth to multiple debates around the nature of the
> incarnation and Christ Himself. On the other hand, the practical aspects of it must not be
> completely overshadowed by mere theological analysis. A plain reading of the verses and
> the surrounding context shows that Paul wasn't intending to teach a new dogma. Rather,
> he sought to teach the Philippians the right way to live.[35]

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[32] Ibid, 142

[33] Ibid, 142-143

[34] Marshall, I. Howard. "*THE CHRIST-HYMN IN PHILIPPIANS*." Tyndale bulletin 19 (1968): 105

[35] Uy, Julius Brian. "Carmen Christi." https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/57157518/Term_Paper.pdf?1533785641=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DCarmen_Christi_The_Socio_cultural_Backdr.pdf&Expires=1627800514&Signature=ghL0EfPgSj0KXzjVyK2-v2V~kP8B2z~fWJuhlL9q72PA~ZzfeKdzklLjzc5s7-41MsTbPhJJk2~qiMRAwC7G~IehzZIUa53EMP2KAKtqyTJfkT5J40e2NnNljQQP~bTuw~Z6NzdOTST8UDHbAQsREtQtpq6i587j9qv8OkEHMPOaP1I0W6xVTBM0chKrvF7ZlS4Nz76E88FB87wzhwi8iZuG~UJfV1OCeOAFp-

Despite Fee, Uy, Talbert, and other NT scholars' thoughts on the hymnic nature of *Carmen Christi*, and the fact that other scholars conclude that 2:6-11 is Christological in its form, there are oppositions that questions if Paul was the original author of the hymn or "un-Pauline."[36] The prevailing view for most anti-Pauline origins is that he "adapted"[37] the hymn and may have rearranged them in prose.

According to Scacewater critics of Paul's authorship of the hymn "argue that Paul has made additions to the hymns, either by pointing to places where Paul "messes up" the metrical structure or where he introduces words that are "foreign" to the original hymns (e.g., "even death on a cross")."[38] In other words, the critics believe that Paul may have distorted the original meaning of the ancient author by introducing external or additional material to the original. The question then becomes do the un-Pauline critics have a valid argument or are it that the critics of Paul's authorship of 2:6-11 are arguing based on not crediting Paul as the author of the entire hymn.

Holloway points out that Paul's critics may not be convincing but causes us to think and wrestle with why one of Paul's central themes the "resurrection" (Rom 6:1-11; 1Cor 15:3-4) is never mentioned, despite speaking of "Christ's death and exaltation?"[39] It will be more simplistic if the argument is only limited to omitting the "resurrection" which is one of Paul's themes.

98tnak989qtR6Q3BSY7b2ysoHwh9c1ouNBQITfQ2K7eZAJlsKzclMYC2Oy~DHLtErhEvyPfWN3~EBx
~f8~xxZ48SX7Lg8OQH4qUYe2I9P9GWexkQ__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA
accessed 7/20/21

[36] Ibid, 34

[37] Todd Scacewater HYMNS OR NOT? RECENT WORK ON COL 1:15-20 AND PHIL 2:6-11
http://exegeticaltools.com/2017/12/11/hymns-or-not-recent-work-on-col-115-20-and-phil-26-11/
published 12/2017. Accessed 7/20/21.

[38] Ibid, 1

[39] Holloway, Paul A. *Hymn to Christ? (Philippians 2:6-11)*
https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/related-articles/a-hymn-to-christ accessed 7/15/2021.

That raises the idea of zooming in only on one of Paul's theological concepts than looking at his theology from a holistic view. It will be a limitation of Paul's Christological understanding but also a concept of restraint that questions the ability of Paul to omit his (usual or regular themes). I believe Holloway's suggestion is more serviceable considering the resurrection argument against Paul's writing of 2:6-11:

> But Paul also imagined Christ's story along "incarnational" lines, beginning with Christ's heavenly origins (compare Rom 8:3), which is clearly the plot line in Phil 2:6-11. This latter scheme is borrowed not from Jewish martyr stories but from what Paul's contemporaries would have called tales of metamorphosis, according to which a divine being adopts a mundane "form" before returning to his or her original exalted state.[40]

Considering Holloway's argument, two things stand out to me. Firstly, the presentation of Christ's pre-existence state. It's important because particularly in the context of Romans 8:3b *"God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering."* My concentration is on the word "likeness." The second thing that catches my attention is "tales of metamorphosis, according to which a divine being adopts a mundane "form" before returning to his or her original exalted state."[41] If Romans 8:3b expressive the pre-incarnate state of taking an on the similar state of mankind, then the use of "form" or the expression of metamorphosis can't be an isolated theme in Paul Christology, particularly of suffering or humility and final exaltation.

Holloway expands on this by pointing out an example from the Greco-Roman world "The classic example of this story is Euripides's popular Bacchae, in which the god Dionysus introduces himself to the audience with these words: "Here I am, having changed form [morphēn] from that of a god to that of a man."[42] This classical example of the Greco-

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[40] Ibid, 1
[41] Ibid, 1
[42] Ibid, 1

Roman world would have not been lost to Paul's readers in Philippi. It underscores the importance of how the apostle used the existing world context through the Holy Spirit to express a Christological theme of "form/morphed."

What does the hymn mean?

At this point, I would like to turn my attention to the meaning of 2:7-11 within the context of verses 5-6. I will start by presenting a block arraignment of the text, considering various interpretations and consider some words and phrases that may throw light and open the door to a new scholarly take on Carmen Christi.

Verses 5-6[43]

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the **form of God**, thought it not robbery to be **equa**l with God:

7 **But made himself of no reputation,**
and took upon him the **form** of a **servan**t,
and was **made in the likeness of men**:
8 And being found in fashion as a man,
he **humbled himself**, and became obedient unto death,
even the death of the cross.
9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,
 and given him a name that is above every name:

  Isaiah 45:43 (NKJV)

I have sworn by Myself.
The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every knee shall bow,
Every tongue shall take an oath.

---

[43] Block form of Philippians 2:7-11 (KJV), verses 5-6 for clarity and the bolded words will be exegetically consider. Not assigning number or alphabet to each line allow me to consider the intra-connectivity of the hymn as I try to exegete each of the verse within the context of New Testament scholarship.

10 That at the **name of Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.,
11 And that every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God, the Father

Considering various interpretations

It's logical to not divorce a biblical text from its historical context, the genre, and pay particular attention to the language in which the text or passage was written for proper exegetical insight. Secondly of particular interest to me is the circumstance or circumstances of the author at the time of writing (ex. Paul writing the book of Philippians from prison). The same method will be followed as I consider the various interpretations based on scholarly contributions. First thing first. When Paul the apostle wrote the Philippians around 62 A.D., he wrote the letter within the existing culture, addressing some of the cultural challenges that the Church in Philippi was faced with and addressing those issues in writing through the Holy Spirit.

According to Norris, the hymn to the church at Philippi "presents Jesus as recognizing that being equal with God means most profoundly to be „not grasping.' The self-emptying of Jesus unto death-and death on a cross-is the revelation that to be God is to be unselfishness itself."[44] This is profound. It sets the foundation for the historical-cultural context of Paul's hymn in 2:5-11 of Philippians. In a society of ambitions, status and emperor worship, Jesus' "self-emptying" was antithetical to the very basic cultural norm of his time. Wallace points out that "Beginning in Chapter 2, Paul exhorts the church to unity and selflessness as a body.

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[44] Norris, Sharon E. "*Authentic Christological leadership revealed through sacred texture analysis of the Philippians Hymn* (2: 5-11)." Inner Resources for Leaders 2.1 (2009): 3.

Thus, 2:5-11 shows Christ as Paul's ultimate example of the attitude he hopes they will demonstrate,"[45] the key then is to understand the contextual connection 1:27- 2:1-4 and Paul's used of verse 5 as a bridge to connect 6- 11.

However, we must look at key words and phrases that have become a point of tension, led to different interpretations by many Christian denominations but also raises theological and philosophical questions by various Christian groups.

The necessity for considering word(s) within the text from the original language

Before I dive into the key word(s) and contentious phrases, let me first consider the issue of the need to understand the meaning in the original language (Greek, Hebrew, etc..,). One of the contentious issues in theology and specific interpretation is the meaning of words. The fact that a "word" can affect and effect a change in any field of study is not an understatement. When Jacques Derrida developed his Deconstructionism concept about language especially the idea that a person can't know the intent or meaning of the original author, it became another reason for theologians to circle back to biblical linguistic, the need for proper historical and cultural context for appropriate exegesis, hermeneutics, and interpretation.

According to Turner, "Deconstruction by its very nature defies institutionalization in an authoritative definition… where he explored the interplay between language and the construction of meaning…The term becomes the core around which meaning is constructed, the reference point that determines all subsequent knowledge."[46] If Derrida is right, then the need for us to look at phrases, words, and linguistics structure, syntax, and meaning of the original text is non-

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[45] Wallace, Tracie https://bible.org/seriespage/2-incarnation-christ-philippians-25-11 accessed 10/25/21.
[46] Turner, Catherine. *Jacques Derrida: Deconstruction* https://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/05/27/jacques-derrida-deconstruction/ 27 May 2016 accessed 10/20/21

negotiable within the context of biblical interpretation. It becomes even more challenging when the language is not your native or first language, and the individual does not have training or some exposure to knowledge to understand what was written in the original language of the word(s) that is under-consideration.

To put this in perspective, if our congregation or community we serve can't understand the meaning of words like "Faith" Grace" and "Love" within the very context each word is used and how one word can mean different meanings depending on how it is used in the biblical text (love: agape, eros, etc.,), and if the leader can't adequately explain each word, then there's a disservice to the community the leader serves within the Church.[47]

According to Silva,

> The easiest, but also the most superficial, method of profiling the linguistic character of writing is by presenting statistics based on the writer's vocabulary. We can very quickly, for example, count those words that are unique to Philippians… The total comes to forty different words, a proportionately higher number than average: Galatians and Ephesians, which are longer, contain thirty-one and thirty-five, respectively."[48]

I think Silva's point is important because it helps the reader or any scholar to understand some word(s) of a particular Epistle or genre is exclusive to that genre or book (it could be the Torah, poetical, Historical, or Prophetic) within Scripture.

However, there may be times that some of the word(s) of a particular genre will appear in the work of another author, either use within the context of the same meaning or convey a different meaning.

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[47] Precept Austin: How to Perform a Greek Word Study
https://www.preceptaustin.org/greek_word_study accessed 9/12/21

[48] Silva, Moisés. *Philippians*. Vol. 11. Baker academic, 2005. P.10

Therefore, "words are building blocks of thought" and since God uses the words written in the Bible to communicate with us, it follows that a proper understanding of the meaning of His Words in the original language…is important for a full understanding of His "thoughts" (revelation)"[49] Now, let me shift my attention to the issue of key words and phrases that have become a point of tension as it relates to the Christological hymn or Philippians 2:7-11.

Considering key word(s) and phrases that have become a point of tension

The first thing to consider in looking at this word is "When performing Greek word studies, it is imperative to pay close attention to the context in which the word is used, lest we arrive at the meaning of the word that was not intended by the Spirit…context is critical to understand what a given word means."[50]

Each word or phrase must be treated within the context with the appreciation of what the author tries to convey in the text. With that in mind, consider the phrase "Instead he emptied himself" (2:7a CSB), "Instead he gave up everything" (2:7a CEV), and "But made himself of no reputation" (2:7a KJV). The three translations are all well-known English texts. The first two translations "Instead he emptied himself" (2:7a CSB), and "Instead he gave up everything" (2:7a CEV) create an immediate problem just from simply reading them at face value. The Greek phrase is "ἀλλὰ (But) ἑαυτὸν (Himself) ἐκένωσεν (emptied)."[51]

The question becomes did Christ "emptied Himself" like a pitcher or bowl or bottle previously full? Or if you take the CEV translation "Instead he gave up everything" (2:7a), it even becomes more problematic to explain if the translation is saying that Christ didn't retain or

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[49] Precept Austin: How to Perform a Greek Word Study
https://www.preceptaustin.org/greek_word_study accessed 9/12/21

[50] Ibid, 1

[51] https://biblehub.com/interlinear/philippians/2-7.htm accessed 10/1/21

maintain his divinity but "give everything up," only by reading the verse. Secondly, when you

consider 2:7b-c, in Greek with the English translation, "μορφὴν ([the] form) δούλου (of a

servant) λαβών (having taken) ἐν (in) ὁμοιώματι ([the] likeness) ἀνθρώπων (of men) γενόμενος

(having been made)[52] not taking the context of 1:27-2:4 and 2:5-4:1-8 can lead to serious

doctrinal blunders.

Christological controversies and theological difficulties from 2:7

According to McClain, the passage of 2:7-8 especially 2:7 has been the basis of most

Christological theories and to a further extent debates the Christological debate,

> This passage in the Philippian Epistle has been so closely connected with certain
> problems of Christology that any discussion of it will be the more complete if
> prefaced by a brief historical survey in this particular field of Christian doctrine.
> Such a survey will serve to show the theological importance of the passage, why
> the attention of Christologists from the first was drawn to it inevitably, and how
> speculations regarding the Person of Christ have finally culminated in several
> theories, related in principle, which receive their name from a Greek word in the
> passage, and are based to a greater or less extent upon it.[53]

The Christological difficulties constructed from the text 2:7 by most scholars and

denominational interpretations set the stage for controversies from the early Church, and

through the centuries. The entire distortion or differing understanding of 2:7 in my view

hinges on the phrase "but emptied (ekenosen from kenoo) himself "(v.7a)"[54] without

doing due diligence to verses 2:5-6 to have a proper basis for 2:7a. The fact that some

within the early church and even some 21st-century Christian leaders still struggle with

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[52] ibid, 1. Parentheses of the English version is by me. I put the English translations in bracket
for clarity.

[53] McClain, Alva J. *The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians* 2: 5-8. Grace Theological Seminary,
1967.p1

[54] Donovan, Niell, Richard. Biblical Commentary (Bible study) Philippians 2:1-13 2017
https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/new-testament-philippians-21-13/ accessed 9/20/21.

the divine nature of Christ base on their understanding of 2:7a warrants scholarly

consideration.

At the center of the Christological controversy or the *Carmi Christi* text is the

question if Christ ever gives up his divinity. If he's God, did Jesus Christ ever "empty

himself" of His divine attribute, or what did Christ empty himself of? Musick suggests,

the Roman Catholic influential theologian Karl Rainer's take on 2:7 is challenging, it

seems in my view (Karl Rainer) suggestion of Christ's "gradual consciousness" is semi-

denial of Jesus Christ's complete divinity in human form.[55]

According to Musick,

> Rainer speaks of Christ as gradually developing His self-consciousness: 'This consciousness in Christ realized itself only gradually during his spiritual history, and this history does not consist only, or even first and foremost, in being occupied with this or that fact of external reality but consists rather in the never quite successful attaining of what and who one is oneself ...'18 So Christ in His human consciousness never became fully aware of His self-identity, nor was He fully cognizant that His Sacred Humanity was intimately united to the Logos[56]

The difficulty then becomes whether was Christ not "fully aware of His self-identity" as

human or was limited because of the incarnation according to Musick. As Musick

continues, Kenotic Theology possesses a theological problem as to one understanding the

divine and human nature of Christ.[57]

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[55] Musick, Dan (Ed)., "*Christ" emptied Himself*"(Philippians 2: 7)." 2007.p3
[56] Ibid, 3
[57] Ibid, 3

Definition of Kenosis and Morphed

At the heart of 2:7a is the Greek word Kenosis. According to the Bible Hub Interlinear Greek version, Kenosis comes from the Greek word ἐκένωσεν (emptied).[58] In the Strong's Greek Concordance it is #2757 - κενόω.[59] Within the context of Christ, there are many definitions of Kenosis that has led to some classification of conservatives' and Liberal description of how theological scholars through the centuries wrestle with the text 2:7-8. According to Wallace, there's a need for theologians and the church to understand what it means when Paul used the word,

> *Kenosis* is the word used to discuss what took place in Christ's incarnation. We must seek to understand *in what sense* Christ laid aside His divine riches in becoming human. Historically, most in the ancient church taught that the Son laid aside only His divine appearances or rights, but fully retained all of His divine attributes. They argued that if He ceased to have some divine attributes, then He could not be fully God[60]

One of the challenging controversies from the kenotic theology of Christological concern was the early church dealing with the doctrine of Christ's limitation or totally "emptied himself" of his divine attributes. The main debate of Philippians of 2:7-8 has always been if the divine nature of Christ was completely absent or if he was only human. Wallace questioned, "in what sense Christ laid aside His divine riches in becoming human?"[61] According to Pickowicz, the challenge to understanding the transition of Christ from his "pre-existence glory into absolute humility in the Incarnation"[62] raises a lot of questions to be explored.

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[58] https://biblehub.com/interlinear/philippians/2-7.htm accessed 10/1/21
[59] https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/eng/greek/2758.html accessed 9/30/21
[60] Wallace, Tracie https://bible.org/seriespage/2-incarnation-christ-philippians-25-11 accessed 10/25/21.
[61] Ibid, 1
[62] Pickowicz, Nate. *The Fullness of God in the Weakness of Man: Examining the Doctrine of the Kenosis*

Pickowicz posits that "After all, verse 8 says that Christ "became" obedient. There is

some sort of transition occurring here. But how are we to understand the implications of the

abject humility of the greatest One in history?"[63] Considering Pickowicz's take on verse 8 and

the word "became obedient," I think Riccardi's insights into the kenotic debate are relevant as I

consider his thought. According to Riccardi,

> Because the same person, whom we now call Jesus Christ, was both divine and
> human, he was able to live on two levels at the same time. He continued to live on
> the divine level as he had done from all eternity—sharing fellowship with the
> Father, maintaining the universe (see Col 1:17) and whatever else God does. But
> now he began to live on a human level at the same time—being conceived and
> born as a baby, growing up in Nazareth, learning Scripture as any other Jewish
> boy would, becoming hungry, thirsty, and tired, and even dying.[64]

I believe Riccardi's take on the Christological hymn is pivotal in helping to shape the theological

debate as to how we can understand 2:7 within the context of Christ "emptied Himself." The

debate is nothing new since the early Church had to battle for the soul of orthodox exegesis as

opposed to the distorted explanations given by heretical groups at the time. In my view, the early

church had to deal with various heretical groups that in some shape or form try to explain the two

natures of Christ either by going too far, falling short of orthodoxy or just flat-out heretical

doctrines that were meant to deny Christ divinity over His humanity or emphasized his divinity

above his humanity. I believe that Talbert's insights are helpful as to why the Christological

controversies are worth debating. According to Talbert,

> "FROM the ancient church to modern times there have existed two different
> interpretations of Phil 2 6-11. One sees the passage as making reference in vs. 6-8

https://www.reformandamin.org/articles1/2019/3/21/the-fullness-of-god-in-the-weakness-of-man-examining-the-doctrine-of-the-kenosis accessed 9/25/21.
[63] Ibid, 1
[64] Riccardi, Mike. *He Emptied Himself: A Study of the Kenosis of Christ*
https://www.thegracelifepulpit.com/sermons.aspx?code=2017-03-02-MR accessed 10/1/21.

only to the human existence of Jesus. The other regards vss. 6-8 as referring both to Jesus' pre-existence and to his earthly life. In spite of its obvious difficulties,2 it is the latter view which dominates modern exegesis…. "The attempts which have been made to eliminate pre-existence entirely from this passage . . . must be pronounced a failure…"[65]

The takeaway from Talbert's point is the effort to deny Christ's divinity or only emphasized his humanity, which of course either one can't stand the test of orthodox Christian teaching from the early century up to the 21st century. The first doctrine worthy of consideration is Adoptionism. Historically, there are two schools of thought when it comes to the development of the doctrine of Adoptionism. My interest is in the second that began in the "8th century in Spain and was concerned with the teaching of Elipandus, archbishop of Toledo"[66] who I believe like many before him and after struggling with the fact of how to reconcile the two natures of Christ: humanity and divinity.

At the heart of Adoptionism at least within the context of Elipandus the Bishop of Toledo is "Christ in his humanity as "adopted son" in contradistinction to Christ in his divinity, who is the Son of God by nature. The son of Mary, assumed by the Word, thus was not the Son of God by nature but only by adoption."[67] The problem with this view (Adoptionism) is that it denies not only Christ's deity but the "same nature of the Father."[68] I would suggest that Adoptionism is a theological deconstruction by a misguided effort to explain the incarnation but falls short, sacrificing one nature (deity or divinity) and corruptively reducing the incarnation of Christ only

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[65] Talbert, Charles H. "*The problem of pre-existence in Philippians* 2: 6-11." Journal of Biblical Literature 86.2 (1967): 141

[66] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "*Adoptionism*". Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 Jan. 2020, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Adoptionism. Accessed 12 November 2021.

[67] Ibid, 1

[68] Riccardi, Mike. He Emptied Himself: A Study of the Kenosis of Christ https://www.thegracelifepulpit.com/sermons.aspx?code=2017-03-02-MR accessed 10/1/21

to a simple man status. Secondly, even though Elipandus the Bishop of Toledo theorizes that

before Christ's adoption he was a sinless man when he was adopted, a mere man.

Christ can't be a mere man and be sinless, he can only be sinless by having his divine

nature. Even though human, he was God is in the flesh. The next heretical group that influences

the Christological debate is Arianism. Simply put at the heart of Arianism doctrine is "there was

when he was not."[69]

At the core of Arius's teaching when he had his conflict with the Bishop of Alexandria, in

318 A.D., he taught "that the Word was created by God."[70] Again it goes back to how the leaders

of the church wrestle with "kenosis". But espousing such unorthodox doctrine within the church

was an invitation for traditionalists or non-conformists to confront Arius. The theological

implication of Arianism is that "God the Son is not co-eternal with God the Father."[71] According

to Challies, the effect of Arianism heresy can be summed up this way,

[T]he Father alone was really God; the Son was essentially different from his Father. He did not
possess by nature or right any of the divine qualities of immortality, sovereignty, perfect
wisdom, goodness and purity. He did not exist before he was begotten by the Father. The Father
produced him as a creature. Yet as the creator of the rest of creation, the Son existed 'apart from
time before all things. Nevertheless, he did not share in the being of God the Father and did not
know him perfectly[72]

Even more challenging for Arianism is the fact that the Son didn't exist with the Father or

possess divine attributes of the Father. This can't hold up under sound orthodox systematic

theology, especially within the context of John 1:1,14.

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[69] Challies, Tim. The False Teachers: Arius https://www.challies.com/articles/the-false-teachers-arius/
accessed 9/20/21
[70] Ibid, 1
[71] Ibid, 1
[72] Ibid, 1

The reality, the Son is "of the same nature of the Father…perfect in Godhood…begotten from the Father before the ages"[73] sounds like the most orthodox theological argument against Arianism heresy. The next Christological heretical group worth mentioning here is Apollinarianism. In a nutshell, Apollinarianism is the opposite of Arianism. The interesting thing is that the doctrine was developed in part to combat Arianism but end up adding more confusion to the very Christological debate that it intended to solve.[74] The doctrine form around the 4th century by Apollinarius bishop of Laodicea promoted and "denied the existence in Christ of a rational human soul"[75] basically limiting Christ's fully human nature.

I think it is an overreaction to the doctrine of Arianism, but also fails to answer the question of John 1:14, and Philippians 2:7-8. In summary, Apollinarianism posits that Christ's divine mind took over His human mind.[76] Riccardi argues that Christ was "truly man, of a rational soul and body"[77] and Pickovicz points out,

> This simple phrase, "emptied Himself" carries with it the potentiality of dangerous implications on the full deity of Jesus Christ. Certainly, within the realm of orthodoxy, we cannot understand or accept the notion of Christ subtracting or losing any of his deity! The absolute deity of the God-Man is essential because of salvation—both his full deity and complete humanity. One writer notes, "If He were not a man, He could not die; if He were not God, His death would not have had infinite value..."[78]

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[73] Riccardi, Mike. He Emptied Himself: A Study of the Kenosis of Christ
https://www.thegracelifepulpit.com/sermons.aspx?code=2017-03-02-MR accessed 10/1/21
[74] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Apollinaris The Younger". Encyclopedia Britannica, 1 Jan. 2020, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Apollinaris-the-Younger. Accessed 12 November 2021.
[75] Ibid, 1
[76] Knight, Kevin Apollinarianism https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01615b.htm
 2020. accessed 10/20/21.
[77] Riccardi, Mike. He Emptied Himself: A Study of the Kenosis of Christ
https://www.thegracelifepulpit.com/sermons.aspx?code=2017-03-02-MR accessed 10/1/21
[78] Pickowicz, Nate *The Fullness of God in the Weakness of Man: Examining the Doctrine of the Kenosis*
https://www.reformandamin.org/articles1/2019/3/21/the-fullness-of-god-in-the-weakness-of-man-examining-the-doctrine-of-the-kenosis accessed 9/25/21.

Another controversy that originated from the *Carmen Christi* (hymn to Christ) was the doctrine of Docetism. It seems that Docetism (from Greek *dokein,* "to seem") takes the Christological debate to another level of complex explanation of both Christ's humanity and divinity.

At the core of the doctrine is the fact that "Christ was born without any participation of matter and that all the acts and sufferings of his life, including the Crucifixion, were mere appearances. They consequently denied Christ's Resurrection and Ascension into heaven."[79] Docetism challenges the fundamental orthodox doctrines about redemption, bodily resurrection, and Christ's ascension into heaven, but also denied Christ's humanity since Docetists affirm that "Christ did not have a real or natural body during his life on earth but only an apparent or phantom one."[80]

This line of thought is confusing since Christ was born by a virgin from Nazareth, ate, slept, got thirsty, and felt hungry. I think what encapsulates the entire doctrine of Docetism within the context of the Christological controversy is the definition of the word *dokein* "it seems."[81] The fact that Docetists believe that Christ didn't have a human body, but "it seems" or "appears" like He had one is antithetical to orthodox Christian doctrine that affirms the humanity and divinity of Christ. Again, Pickovicz suggests that,

> Before his incarnation, Jesus Christ existed with God and was identical with God both
> inwardly and outwardly. He shared to the full the divine nature, and he was clothed with
> the splendor that had always surrounded God's person. During the incarnation, Jesus laid
> aside the outward glory (which would have made it impossible for human beings to
> approach him) and took the form of a servant. What remained was God's glory in the
> inward sense, for even in the flesh Jesus Christ was God and retained all of the divine
> nature.[82]

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[79] Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopedia. "Docetism". Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 Apr. 2014, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Docetism. Accessed 12 November 2021.
[80] Ibid, 1
[81] Ibid,1
[82] Pickowicz, Nate. *The Fullness of God in the Weakness of Man: Examining the Doctrine of the Kenosis* accessed 9/25/21.

Considering the various heretical groups that promoted differing understandings of the humanity of Christ including the ones covered in my paper and those that I didn't (Monophysitism, Dynamic Monarchianism, and Gnosticism), at some level sacrificed the Divinity for humanity or humanity for Divinity or just out right failing to properly articulate the two natures of Christ.

As Challies suggests "The Bible says that Jesus is co-eternal with God, uncreated, and in all ways completely divine…Among them are John 20:28, where Thomas exclaims to Jesus, "My Lord and my God," Acts 7:59 where Stephen prays to Jesus, and John 10:30 where Jesus claims, "I and the Father are one." Many more irrefutable proofs…"[83] clearly helps us consider the source for sound theological interpretation of Christian doctrines.

However, with theology being a field that attracts both Liberals and traditionalists (orthodoxy), the issues of Christology will always remain a debate between scholars that holds orthodox views and those that will extend and interpret from an unorthodox position. I think McClain is right when he succinctly summarizes the Christological debate as,

> This was the era of the modern kenotic theories, during which, as might be expected, searching and critical examination was given to every New Testament passage that could possibly be utilized in their support. The Philippian passage naturally received most attention, being in fact the exegetical cornerstone of the whole kenosis idea. Certain extremists it is true, simply ignored it in the construction of their Christological schemes; but all those who felt bound in any real sense to the New Testament records rightly understood that no formula could be regarded as valid which failed to gain the support of this important text.[84]

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https://www.reformandamin.org/articles1/2019/3/21/the-fullness-of-god-in-the-weakness-of-man-examining-the-doctrine-of-the-kenosis accessed 9/25/21.

[83] Challies, Tim. *The False Teachers: Arius* https://www.challies.com/articles/the-false-teachers-arius/ accessed 9/20/21

[84] McClain, Alva J. The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2: 5-8. Grace Theological Seminary, 1967.p2

The second and most difficult question of the Christological debate is the word

"morphed." Even though the word follows 2:7a "Emptied Himself," the Third Person of

the Trinity took on a "form" of a servant, "μορφὴν ([the] form) δούλου (of a servant)

λαβών (having taken) ἐν (in) ὁμοιώματι ([the] likeness) ἀνθρώπων (of men) γενόμενος

(having been made) 2:7b-c."[85] Since 2:7b-c continues Paul's theology of Christ's

humiliation, it seems to me 2:7b-c can be bettered explained if we add 2:6 "ἁρπαγμὸν

(something to be grasped) ἡγήσατο (considered to) τὸ εἶναι (to be) ἴσα (equal) Θεῷ

(with God)"[86] In other words, 2:7b-c is predicated upon 2:6 within the context of 1:27-2:4

and verse 5 (the bridge) between 2:6-11.

In considering the word "morphed" or μορφὴν ([the] form), I think the King

James Version (KJV) is helpful to understanding the impact and exegesis of the text,

"**6** *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be*

used to his advantage; **7** *rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a*

servant, being made in human likeness." (Philippians 2:6-7). According to Fletcher-

Louis,

> "form of God" is a language that Philo uses to describe the divine self-pretensions
> of Gaius Caligula…The Greek of v. 6c (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ) evokes centuries-old
> technical terminology for the status of the divine ruler who receives cultic
> honours equal to those given to the gods (isotheoi timai) …One who is equal with
> a God" (τὶ θεός; τὸ κρατοῦν. Τὶ βασιλεύς; ἰσόθεος)."87

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85 https://biblehub.com/interlinear/philippians/2-7.htm accessed 10/1/21
86 Ibid, 1 parenthesis of English translation are mine for clarity.
87 Fletcher-Louis, Crispin. "Incarnation, Ruler Cult and divine Desire in Philippians 2: 6-11," New Testament
Seminar, Cambridge, 7th November 2011." p4

Seeley takes the argument a step further and posits that "Jesus,' "kenosis" eventuated in

his taking the form of a slave or servant (morf doulou),"88. If Seeley's suggestion is

right, then Christ's morphing was not something that He thought of that will benefits his

ego, but in the end to serve others as a slave. Despite Seeley's suggestion about the

connection between "kenosis" and that Christ "morphed," the verse still presents

exegetical issues most especially within the context of the English translation. According

to Moen,

> There's not much debate about hos. It means "who, which, as long as, that
> means," depending on context. Here must mean "who." But now we have a
> problem. There is no Greek word for the translation "although." And, by the way,
> there is no Greek word for "He existed" either. The verb, hyparchon, comes from
> hypo and archomai, literally means, "to begin under (quietly)."[89]

Does the question then become did the translators add the additional words for clarity? If

so, what are the exegetical implications for such additions? How do the additional words

"He existed" and "although" affects our interpretations of the text?

My quest here at this point is not to get into all the "weeds" and "tares" about the

"additional' words that translators "added," but to ascertain how much impact and

understanding that Christ's morphing had on leadership, salvation, and the original

recipients (the church at Philippi). To resolve some of the difficulty with "μορφὴν ([the]

form)" as it relates to interpretations and Christological study, I believe Dennis argument

offers an insight beginning with 2:6a,

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[88] Seeley, David. *The Background of the Philippians Hymn* (2:6-11)
https://depts.drew.edu/jhc/seelyphl.html Institute for Higher Critical Studies, 1994. Accessed
8/25/2014.
[89] Moen, Skip. *The Assumed Trinity: A look at Philippians 2:6*
https://skipmoen.com/2014/10/the-assumed-trinity-a-look-at-philippians-26/ 10/19/14. Accessed
9/20/21.

> …According to the form of a servant, he was made of a woman, made under the law [Gal 4:4]. According to the form of God, he and the Father are one [John 10:30]; according to the form of a servant, he came not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him [John 6:38]. According to the form of God, as the Father has life in himself, so has he also given to the Son to have life in himself [John 5:26]; according to the form of a servant, his soul is sorrowful unto death, and: "Father," he says, "if it is possible, let this cup pass" [Matt 26:38–9]. According to the form of God, he is the true God and life eternal [1 John 5:20]; according to the form of a servant, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross [Phil 2:8][90]

I think Dennis' contribution to attempting to resolve the debate about what the word and the impact of morph means are important. He tried to explain the relationship between Christ's two natures (divinity and humanity) in the light of humility, retaining his divinity and not sacrificing his humanity *" Who, "being in very nature God," did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by "taking the very nature[b] of a servant," being made in human likeness*." (Philippians 2:6-7 KJV). If there's an understanding and no ambiguity between 2:6 and 2:7 in terms of the nature of Christ, I think Fletcher-Louis's point is of value,

> Our Pauline text plays with the same distinction. In Phil 2:6–8, the divine Christ self transforms. In 3:20–21, he returns to transform believers. The subtle linguistic echoes of the first text in the second ensure that no first-century reader would miss the point and its implications. Christ is god, not man. Like the deified Romulus he can transform others. Though unlike the deified Romulus he always was god, not man; coming to earth in his human life the way the gods come when they self-transform.[91]

That means when Christ morphed, it was not to only take on the societal culture that was dominated by honors and prestige, but with a mind of transformation that was antithetical and

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[90] Jowers, W. Dennis. THE MEANING OF MORFH IN PHILIPPIANS 2:6–7 https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/49/49-4/JETS_49-4_739-766_Jowers.pdf 12/2006. Accessed 8/20/25. p740
[91] Fletcher-Louis, Crispin. "Incarnation, Ruler Cult and divine Desire in Philippians 2: 6-11," New Testament Seminar, Cambridge, 7th November 2011." 9

reimagined to the prevailing cultural societal norms of the Greco-Romans world of the gods and Emperors' perception.

I believe "kenosis" can be better explained when one has an orthodox interpretation of the word "morphed" within the context of Pauline theology of humility, and his charge to the church at Philippi, "**2** Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord of one mind. **3** Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**4** Look not every man on his things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:2-4 KJV); I believe Mowekzo states it better "The word "form" (*morphē*) implies internal as well as external form, compared with *schēma* which refers only to outward appearance, "*Morphē* refers to that form which truly and fully expresses the being that underlies it."[92]

Let's get back to the interpretation of 2:7-11

Now let's get back to the basis. As I previously indicated, to have a sound interpretation of Scripture, one must consider the exegetical task of context, original language, cultural and historical contexts, the theological interpretation or task and I strongly suggest the condition or context of the author at the time of writing. It is important because "Scripture interprets Scripture"[93] but also considering other factors that help interpret biblical passages to meet scholarly criteria within the context of Christian orthodoxy when it comes to handling *holy writs*. Levin agrees, he posits the critical task of interpreting 2:7-11, not just in the 1900s but also its effect on 21st-century scholars "The debate about the interpretation of Philippians 2:6-11 enables

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[92] Mowczko, Marg *The Creed (Hymn) of Philippians* 2:6-1 https://margmowczko.com/the-creed-of-philippians- 2/5/ 1/ 2010. Accessed 7/10/21.

[93] Cowan, Steven B. *Scripture Interprets Scripture: The Role of Theology in Biblical Interpretation* https://arcapologetics.org/scripture-interprets-scripture/ accessed 9/30/21.

us to take a close-up look at dramatic changes in biblical hermeneutics…and to consider new ways of viewing this important Christological text today."[94]

According to McClain, when one approaches the text of 2:6-11 and considers verse 5 which serves as the bridge between 1-4 and 6-11, the student of scriptural should know, "It is supremely important that the purpose and spirit of the passage with its context be kept constantly in mind. The writer of this passage is not composing a theological treatise; he is pleading with his Philippian converts for a life of love and self-forgetfulness--"not looking each of you to his things, but each of you also to the things of others."[95] In interpreting the Christological hymn or the Carmi Christi, Levin suggests that "Current Biblical exegesis begins with attention to the historical context and original intent of the author,"[96] if I may add more of the historical-grammatical school of interpretation.

In considering the interpretative nature of 2:7-11, we turn our attention to what Levin calls "Historical Criticism and Lindberg's Dogmatic Scholasticism."[97] Levin theorizes that Lindberg's attempts to explain the Christological hymn, assumed a more "literal interpretation"[98] or (exact, precise, or verbatim) position; he asserts that "Lindberg builds his kenosis Christology on the assumption that what Paul wrote in Phil. 2:6-7 describes Jesus, the God-man who never completely gives up his divine attributes as a human, nor his human nature in his exaltation…He interprets Phil. 2:6-11 as the scriptural foundation of the kenosis doctrine rather than as a song

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[94] Levin, G. Arnold. *The Debate about the Interpretation of Philippians 2:6-11* http://augustanaheritage.augustana.edu/interpretation_of_philippians2.pdf accessed 9/7/21. 3

[95] McClain, Alva J. The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2: 5-8. Grace Theological Seminary, 1967. 3

[96] Levin, G. Arnold. *The Debate about the Interpretation of Philippians 2:6-11* http://augustanaheritage.augustana.edu/interpretation_of_philippians2.pdf accessed 9/7/21. 3

[97] Ibid, 2

[98] Ibid, 2

used in an actual first-century letter."[99] It's an interesting thought. In as much as I appreciate Lindberg's interpretation, I struggle with "rather than as a song used in an actual first-century letter."[100]

The prevailing orthodox view is that 2:6-11 was a hymn sung in the early church, the question as to if the apostle Paul was the original author as Weymouth argues "This thesis argues the case that Philippians 2:6-11 represents a Pauline prose narrative (and is not a pre-Pauline hymn), which may be called the Christ-story."[101] I would welcome a scholarly debate on the idea of "if" the hymn was written by St. Paul or another author as Weymouth points out, "and is not a pre-Pauline hymn"[102] If the text is to be interpreted as "Christ-story," the question becomes what's the story? How does the story fit into the hymn, and what can the 21st-century student of Scripture interpret as one of the most debatable texts of Scripture?

To consider the interpretative nature of the question "Christ-story" within the context of the hymn (Christological), I would like to draw the reader's attention to some scholarly interpretative understanding of the text (2:7-11). Marshall states that "The Lutheran 'Dogmatic' view that the hymn does not refer to the pre-existence of Christ, but has as its subject the incarnate, earthly Christ,"[103] and he continues with Loymehyer's view of the text "…that the hymn depicts a cosmic, soteriological drama against a mythological background, and that this background… the primal man. He believed that this figure (the Son of man Daniel 7:13) was fused with that of the suffering Servant."[104] Marshall concludes that "…in the context of a

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[99] Ibid,

[100] Ibid,

[101] Weymouth, Richard John. The Christ-Story of Philippians 2: 6-11: Narrative Shape and Paraenetic Purpose in Paul's Letter to Philippi. Diss. University of Otago, 2016. vii

[102] Ibid, vii

[103] Marshall, I. Howard. "*THE CHRIST-HYMN IN PHILIPPIANS*." Tyndale bulletin 19 (1968): 106

[104] Ibid, 107

thorough study of early hymns. Philippians 2:6-11 is the oldest example of a Christ-hymn and expresses the early church's rejoicing in God's historical act of salvation in His Son."[105]

I will suggest that the in interpreting 2:6-11, one should be careful to avoid over-explaining what the text does not include or understating what the text states with mediocrity. I concurred with Gray that "Scriptural text, such as Paul's letters, is an intricate tapestry of complex patterns and images, and concentrating on a single image or pattern may limit or distort the meaning of the narrative."[106] I will submit that any biblical student or scholar that works with 2:6-11, should consider 1:27 and the individual works his or her way through 2:1-4, "being like-minded" (KJV 2:2a) in mind and understand verse 5 as a connecting bridge of verses 3-4 as Paul lays bare Christ's humility (servanthood), crucifixion and finally Christ's exaltation (2:6-11) within the wilder context of chapters 3-4. I think McClain's thoughts on 2:6-11 best summed up the exegetical challenge of the *Carmi Christi*,

> One determining factor in various interpretations of the Philippian passage has been the central problem of the incarnation, namely, What is the relation of the divine to the human historic Christ? The Apostle Paul certainly must have known that his statement would raise problem but, like other New Testament writers, makes no attempt to solve it. In the main, writers of Scripture are content to assert the reality of the two natures in Christ, without attempting a rationalization of their doctrine[107]

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[105] Ibid, 127.
[106] Gray, R. David *CHRISTOLOGICAL HYMN: THE LEADERSHIP PARADOX OF PHILIPPIANS* 2:5-11 https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol2no1/Gray_David_Final.pdf accessed 8/12/21. 6
[107] McClain, Alva J. The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2: 5-8. Grace Theological Seminary, 1967. 9

CHAPTER TWO: Lessons from The Christological Hymn: Jesus' Model of Servant Leadership.

The thought of being a leader can elevate the pressure on anyone who is nominated or desires to become one. According to Parris and Peachey, "Leadership is one of the most comprehensively researched social influence processes in the behavioral sciences. This is because the success of all economic, political, and organizational systems depends on the effective and efficient guidance of the leaders of these systems."[108] The idea of efficiency, operational success, and supervision of members or community that is required by a leader at any given time in areas that demand leadership is heavily dependent on the behavior and orientations of the leader.

Again, Parris and Peachey point out that the behavior, attitudes, and values of the leader play a pivotal and distinguishing role between a servant leader and other leadership theories, they theorize "some leadership scholars have called attention to the implicit connection between ethics and leadership. A burgeoning new research area and leadership theory that has been linked to ethics, virtues, and morality is servant leadership."[109] It's within the context of values, ethics, service, and morality that a look at the Christological hymn can help us understand and become a guide to shape our mindset as to what kind of leadership one wants to practice, especially within the context of a servant leader.

It seems to me that Philippians 2:6-11 does not only provide a scholarly debate for Christ's humanity and divinity but offers a model that can become an example to any

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[108] Parris, Denise Linda, and Jon Welty Peachey. "*A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts.*" *Journal of business ethics* 113.3 (2013): 2
[109] Ibid, 2

leader that intends to lead a community, tribe, organization, or nation. Does the question

then becomes what is servant leadership? Since there are if not millions of definitions of

leadership out there just by simply googling the word leadership. Farling, Stone, and

Winston point out that "natural servants are persons who understand they are servants

first. Consequently, they are more likely to define and strive to meet the highest priority

needs of others,"[110] it's significant because at the core of anyone's value is understanding

and knowing what their values are and how those values shape them for a greater good in

whatever way that value benefits humanity.

Farling, Stone, and Winston further posit that "Serving others is how the servant

leader facilitates the accomplishing of their desired goals. Merely serving is not how to

get results, but the behavior of serving is the result,"[111] the takeaway is that not the end

that will justify the means but the motive (the reason for which we do whatever we do) of

the means "behavior" for which the leader is serving is the way of life and enjoys being a

model for his or her community to emulate. It speaks to the core of servant leadership

because the leader is placing value on not what to gain personally for selfish reasons but

recognizes that serving others helps get them to achieve the highest goal or purpose.

Development and Definitions of the term Servant-Leadership

However, the concept of servant leadership is not a modern epiphany "a moment of

sudden revelation or insight."[112] Keith suggests the word "servant-leader" or "servant

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[110] Farling, Myra L., A. Gregory Stone, and Bruce E. Winston. "Servant leadership: Setting the stage for empirical research." *Journal of leadership studies* 6.1-2 (1999). 50
[111] Ibid, 53
[112] https://www.bing.com/search?q=epiphany&search=&pc=COS2&form=CHRDEF accessed 12/22/21.

leadership" was first coined by Robert Greenleaf in the 70s.[113] Parris and Peachy

concord, but add that "Servant leadership was introduced into an organizational context

through Greenleaf's three foundational essays – The Servant as Leader (1970), The

Institution as Servant (1972), and Trustees as Servants (1972)."[114]

 According to Nsiah, "Servant leadership refers to the philosophy of leadership

that…calls for a holistic approach to work, a sense of community and the sharing of

power in decision making… servant leadership deals with the reality of power in

everyday life—its legitimacy, the ethical restraints upon it…that can be attained through

the appropriate use of power"[115] To appreciate the impact of servant leadership, it's worth

noting to first understand and unpack what the word servant means. The word servant is

defined as "personal or domestic attendant,"[116] in the present participle its "to attend, wait

upon"[117] and "in 14c.-15c. and later in Biblical translations, servant often was used to

rendering Latin *servus*, or Greek *doulos* "slave."[118]

 However, the verb (serve) "to render habitual obedience to"[119] is derived from the

following words shown in the table below with definitions.

Old French **Servir**:
to do duty toward
show devotion to.
set table, serve at table.

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[113] Keith, Kent M. *Definition of Servant leadership* http://toservefirst.com/definition-of-servant-leadership.html accessed 12/20/21.
[114] Parris, Denise Linda, and Jon Welty Peachey. "A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts." *Journal of business ethics* 113.3 (2013):
[115] Nsiah, Gabriel Kofi Boahen. "Leading as Jesus led: Christ models of leadership." *Open Journal of Leadership* 2.4 (2013): 103
[116] https://www.etymonline.com/word/servant accessed 12/23/21
[117] Ibid 1
[118] Ibid 1
[119] Ibid 2

offer, provide with.
Latin *servire:*
be a servant,
be in service
be enslaved.
Figuratively:
be devoted.
be governed by.
comply with.
conform, flatter.

Table 1.1[120]

According to Keith, Greenleaf defines servant leadership as,

> The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.[121]

The idea of a "natural feeling to serve first" is not a common characteristic in the 21st century, especially within the context of a world that seeks personal recognition, glory, and the quest for popularity through social media. Secondly, of note is the fact that "That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions."[122]

There is a lot to work with from the definition. How a leader becomes "different first," when the individual is looked up to as the one "leading" is a difficult question to answer. However, the need to be "different first" can be a God-giving opportunity if the

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[120] Ibid

[121] Keith, Kent M. *Definition of Servant leadership* http://toservefirst.com/definition-of-servant-leadership.html accessed 12/20/21

[122] Ibid 1

leader is not driven by power-seeking but live out an example of servanthood. Keith

further asserts that Greenleaf opines,

> The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure
> that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and
> difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being
> served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to
> become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will
> they benefit or at least not be further deprived?[123]

The idea of being second and prioritizing goals and helping others reach their highest potential is

not a natural thought for anyone. Even more challenging is how to reach the communities that

are under-privilege, those that are marginalized, and even those that we don't "count" in our

society as "one of us" or live-in segments of the cities that are "no go zones" because of millions

of reasons that I can't go into here? According to Ingram, most leadership can be detected by the

surrounding contexts the leader finds him or herself, unlike Servant leadership which comes

from within the leader, "Most leadership models can be observed in the workplace and then

explained in behavioral terms.

 Servant leadership differs from other models in that servant leadership comes from

within the leader, surfacing out of the leader's principles, values, and beliefs."[124] The concept of

morals, ethics, and attitudes are the differentiating factors that drive a servant leader. Even most

importantly, it's the inner characteristics that present a feature of values and principles that

surface as a behavior of service to others than grasping or demonstrating power when leading.

  It is through service to others that the servant leader seeks to achieve organizational goals,

empower, model a life of service, and ultimately help the community, organization, and

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[123] Ibid,1
[124] Ingram, Osmond M. *Servant Leadership as A Leadership Model* http://ibii-
us.org/Journals/JMSBI/V1N1/Publish/V1N1_3.pdf 9/26/16. 23. Accessed 11/31/21

members achieve the highest potential. In essence, SLs (Servant leaders) are about people's interests first before oneself.   According to Porter "A true servant leader shares their power, builds community, and practices authenticity in leadership toward a shared vision. The servant leader is a servant first as it begins with the desire to serve others. Then one makes the conscious choice to lead."125

Potter's insights are worth noting, especially the idea of a leader sharing power, and the ability to be "authentic" or genuine "toward a shared goal" is significant. The concept of being reliable, trustworthy, and honest can shape not just who you are as an individual, but also those around you that you are particularly committed to influencing at any level of leadership. Servant leadership allows you to not "mask" your true self (be authentic), but helps you lead by serving others. Potter suggests that "Sometimes the leader will be asked to relinquish their position or place of importance with the ultimate goal of bringing one's followers to a position of power."[126]

Jesus' model of servant leadership

According to Hardgrove, the reason for the hymn was "to challenge the Philippian believers to follow the example of Jesus, to empty themselves of "envy and rivalry," "selfish-ambition," and "vain conceit" and be filled instead with the attitude of Christ, who is the ultimate example of self-renunciation, humility, obedience, and service."[127] The key takeaways from Hardgrove's thoughts on the *Carmi Christi* within the context of "the ultimate example of self-renunciation, humility, obedience, and service" drives home and add to the concept of the model of Christ as a servant leader.

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[125] Porter, Tracy H. "*Jesus as Leader: A Sacred Texture Analysis of Philippians* 2: 5-11." *The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs* 3.1 (2016):7
[126] Ibid, 7
[127] Hardgrove, Mark E., and D. MIN. "*The Christ hymn as a song for leaders*." Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 2.1 (2008). 27

Christ's example of humility was antithetical to the status and ambitions-seeking a society that He was not only birthed in but lived and practiced His ministry. It seems to me that the idea of "vain conceit, selfish ambition, envy, and rivalry"[128] is part of human nature. But how one decides to exercise "human nature" within a particular context, society or culture can become an issue. For example, in most African cultures, not having a male child to continue the father's surname diminishes the father's "standing" within the clan or family. Those that have male children see themselves as "special", blessed, or "real man."

The problem with such status-driven communities is the marginalization of females and placing less value on females and most often looking down on others that are not on the level of their status or achievement. That's why the model of Christ's humility is so significant. According to Hill "In Jesus's day, social class was marked and reinforced in countless ways, one of which was foot washing. It was a menial and dirty job…reserved for the lowest-ranking person in the house."[129] As Christian leaders, the need for humility should never be a question, despite our natural human instinct to dominate, our desires should be to serve all and everyone despite societal status or stratification. Hill points out that Jesus' approach was his understanding that "one's worldly status was both temporary and, in a sense, illusory. What matters is what is true ultimately…Jesus considered God's reign to be the true and final reality."[130]

With the understanding of humility being the core value, Christ's model of SL is within the context of Jesus' model of leadership, especially within the context of Mark 10:35-45. According to Thompson, the historical context of Jesus' ministry in the 1st Century was highly influenced by the kind of societal culture and points out that "Leadership in the roman Empire

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128 Ibid, 27

129 Hill, Craig. *Servant of All: Status, Ambition, and the Way of Jesus*. Eerdmans, 2016. 28
130 Ibid, 52

during the first century A.D. was highly structured and tightly controlled…access to power depended upon several well-defined criteria: namely, wealth, family origins, and occupation,"[131] to be a leader in the Roman dominated status society, there were standards or measures that one has to reach or achieve to lead.

Thompson's approach to Jesus' model of SL is to consider how Jesus models SL within the context of Mark 10: 32-52 but with a focus on Mark 10:35-45. As you read the twenty (20) verses, you will realize two things that stand out: the prediction of Christ's pain, mockery, and ultimate denunciation to death by the Jewish authority and Christ's resurrection after his death "33 *"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise*" (Mark 10:33-34 NIV).

The second section deals with the concept of how the sons of Zebedee in part if not at all view the role of being a leader. The concentration of the brothers James and John on their status and not digesting any of Christ's warnings about passion shows their mindset and the influence of the Greco-Roman societal culture on both the Gentiles and Jews, but also exposes the misconceptions of the brothers about how Jesus led them. According to Kgatle "The disciples have two specific kinds of misunderstanding: the necessity of Jesus' sufferings and their position in the community."[132]

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[131] Thompson, Bill. "Servant, Leader, or Both? A Fresh Look at Mark 10: 35-45." Journal of Applied Christian Leadership 9.2 (2015): 3

[132] Kgatle, Mookgo Solomon. "Discipleship misconceptions: A social scientific reading of James and John's request for seats of honour (Mark 10: 35-42)." (2017). 187

It's a challenging assessment of the two disciples bent on community influence, then paying attention to the passion of Jesus in Jerusalem. Interestingly, Kgatle explains the tension that James and John's request creates in disconnection to how Jesus regarded leadership, "The two stand in sharp contrast to one another. Indeed, it is precisely the tension between them that gives the passage much of its force. Unlike those who are regarded as ruling over nations, a disciple of Jesus should become a servant if he wants to be first."[133]

It's clear that instead of the disciples learning from Jesus' leadership of self-denial, the brothers' question seeks selfish ambition fulfillment. As Thompson observes "the exegetical analysis is divided as follows—the brothers' request (10:35-37), Jesus' response (10:38-40), his comparison and contrast of leadership models (10:41-44), and his example of sacrificial leadership (10:45)."[134] What catches my attention is the last three (3) points of Thompson's exegetical observations, (1) Christ's reply, (2) the way how Jesus compare and contrast leadership and (3) what Christ's portrayal of leadership means to us?

Now let's consider the first observation regarding SL within the context of Christian leadership: Christ's reply. Notice in the text that when Jesus replied "*38You don't know what you are asking… but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. these places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.*" (Mark 10:38a, 40) to the brothers (James and John), He didn't berate them about why they asked the question? There's nothing from the text that tells or shows anger from Jesus toward the sons of Zebedee.

It shows that ambition, status, and goals are not entirely evil intentions at all. Kgatle agrees "Ambition in this context refers to an instinct of nature, a desire to rise; and like all other

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[133] Ibid, 188
[134] Ibid, 4

instincts, capable of good and evil…Ambition can be negative or positive. It depends on the motive of an ambitious person. If for example, a person has a positive motive, then that ambition is positive."[135] The question become is the leader prepared for the challenge(s) that involves taking on a leadership role as Christian a leader? *"Jesus said. "can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"* (Mark 10:38b). In fact, I will argue that it's good for us to dream, have goals, and become ambitious about things that matters to us. But the one that seeks the position must be prepared, or has been prepared to lead, and not rule with selfish desires with the end goal of personal satisfaction and selfish intent.

I think Jesus' answer was not only about his crucifixion, or the passion week before him that will ultimately lead to humiliation, pain, and death, but as Thompson states "in a similar manner, the metaphor of baptism signifies being overwhelmed by pain and misery. Jesus uses the metaphor here to portray being flooded by the pain and agony of the cross."[136] The real lesson then is why we want to serve, and the reality is how we decide to and the motive or the reason for which we are ambitious, status-seeking, or fulfilling our goals.

The second aspect of Thompson's exegesis of Mark 10:35-45 which is enlightening is the way how Jesus compares leadership. As I read the text (Mark 10:35-45), verse 41 is inescapable, "When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John" (Mark 10:41). The instant reaction of the ten (10) disciples to the others James and John's request is worth looking at. Their actions portray I think the influence of the Greco-Roman world of status, and within the context of Mark 9:33-34 *"They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked*

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[135] Kgatle, Mookgo Solomon. "Discipleship misconceptions: A social scientific reading of James and John's request for seats of honour (Mark 10: 35-42)." (2017). 193

[136] Thompson, Bill. "Servant, Leader, or Both? A Fresh Look at Mark 10: 35-45." Journal of Applied Christian Leadership 9.2 (2015). 5

them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they

had argued about who was the greatest" (NIV). Jesus's response to the apostles (the 10), was

taking the time to educate and help them understand the distinction between rulers and servant

leadership.

Notice that Christ said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it

over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them" (Mark 10:42), as Thompson

points out "in other words, the disciples should not want leadership in the order of the Empire

that oppresses them ("rulers" and "tyrants" who "lord it over them"). rather, they should be

willing to serve the people and, in that way, become "great."[137] Kagtle agrees and posits that,

> The point is that the text combines two ideas, namely: rulership and service which
> stand in sharp contrast to one another. Indeed, it is precisely the tension between
> them that gives the passage much of its force. Unlike those who are regarded as
> ruling over nations, disciples of Jesus should become servants if they want to be
> great and a slave of all if they want to be first.[138]

Within the context of Christ's ministry, the fact that the Jews were under Roman rule and their

culture and traditions competing for purity amid a Gentile world and an emperor's lordship and

the continued exercising of authority over the Jews, that were "lord over them," it was time for

Christ to reorientate the mindset of His disciples to a radical new understanding of what

leadership must entail. Jesus wanted the disciples to divorce their minds from the kind of

political power showing authority to a more serviceable role of leadership. To put this in

perspective, I believe Kagtle observation is helpful; he observes that,

> Domineering over other people was the culture and custom of the day. It was a
> system that took pride in exercising authority and lording over other people. Jesus
> exposes that culture and its way of doing things. He indicates that even if it is

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[137] Ibid, 5

[138] Kgatle, Mookgo Solomon. "Discipleship misconceptions: A social scientific reading of James and John's request for seats of honour (Mark 10: 35-42)." (2017). 200

common to abuse power, it is not the only way of leading people. Jesus points to the surrounding culture and its way of leading. The surrounding culture dominates and, in most cases, oppresses those under their rule (Sweet 2012:33). In fact, it celebrated that domination-that hierarchy. It again esteemed the rights and privileges that come from being on top. Jesus calls the disciples instead to follow the model of the house servant and the bond slave which is to give up rights and privileges to serve the interest of another.[139]

The third aspect of Thompson's exegetical work that is worth emphasizing is looking at the question of what Christ's portrayal of leadership means to us. To help us understand the impact of Jesus' portrait of leadership, we must consider the context, of Christ's model as portrayed in the Gospels. The context of Christ's ministry was influenced by the societal, cultural, and hierarchical structure of the Greco-Roman world that promoted a class system. Mwanvwang describes the political, social, and economical system of the Greco-Roman world this way. According to Mwanywang,

> The Social and Economic Life In view of the above, the social and economic life of the Graeco-Roman world, it can be observed that there were two categories of people. The first grouping includes the military, political leaders, and priests as the wealthy people, and the second is the common people like the poor, which includes the "widows, orphans and strangers" …explains that slavery was an accepted reality within the Graeco-Roman society as well as poverty, which separated the poor from the rich. The same social strata were transcended by the church, where rich and poor were equally accepted. However, in the New Testament time, Jesus condemned such development in the Graeco-Roman time. Cassidy explicates that "Jesus asked the rich to divest themselves of their surplus possessions, and counterposed an emphasis upon humility and service to the domination being practiced by the political rulers of his day"[140]

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[139] Ibid, 201
[140] Dantoro, Davou Mwanvwang (Rev.)
The Socio-Historical Background of 1 Peter in Relation to Αἰσχροκερδῶς and Κατακυριεύω form of Leadership in the Graeco-Roman Context (2020)
 https://socialscienceresearch.org/index.php/GJHSS/article/download/3428/3317/
accessed 06/1/2022. 13

One of the biggest takeaways from Mwanymang's observations is the way Jesus turn the cultural norm of socio-economic class on its head by leading a radical lifestyle that emphasizes service, equality, and acceptance of all people despite their various backgrounds. Thompson agrees. Thompson suggests that the "leadership positions in Greek and Roman cities were held by wealthy people who offered to underwrite the city's expenses in exchange for status and privileges.

Since both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians were surrounded by these types of leaders… see how early Christians accepted this model of leadership and brought it into the church."[141] The structure of societal strata was never lost to the disciples of Jesus. I can argue from Mark 9:33-34 that the disciples' response to James and John in the negative was the fact the brothers were fast and quick to beat the ten (10) to ask Jesus about the place of honor. Now let's look at the model of Jesus' Servant Leadership.

Jesus's model of leadership (SL): considering the Gospels

To appreciate the effect or power of Christ's leadership of servanthood, the best source is how the Synoptics portray Jesus. According to Addo and Dube, the Gospels present to us the way Jesus exemplified leadership from a relationship perspective that models His ability to lead as a servant but also became the embodiment of service that predates Him,

> Jesus spent time with people, and, through his interaction, he left us with vast material to infer regarding his leadership style. Social interaction is inordinately tied to leadership, and it appears that a leader's success hinges on mastery of this indispensable daily phenomenon. Unknown to many is the nexus between leadership and interaction, which is typified in Jesus Christ, who expressed leadership in everyday living. Over the years, Bible-based discourses on leadership have projected 'service' as the key operational word. The service

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[141] Thompson, Bill. "Servant, Leader, or Both? A Fresh Look at Mark 10: 35-45." Journal of Applied Christian Leadership 9.2 (2015). 3

paradigm concerning leadership predates Jesus, but the method by which he came to service is what sets for us a new leadership paradigm to be explored[142]

Considering Addo and Dube's suggestion that relationship was the key to how Jesus serves, then let's consider what a model is. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a Model as "an example for imitation or emulation,"[143] however, when you consider the way the word "model" is defined as an adjective, it means "serving as or capable of serving as a pattern"[144] and when you at the model as a transitive verb, the definition become "to plan or form after a pattern."[145] If Christ's service is ever demonstrated and can be looked to as the perfect portrait of SL, then Christian leaders must follow his example or imitate Him. One of the best examples that can serve as a "pattern" for imitation is recorded in the Gospel of John 13:1-20.

According to Schneiders, John's thoughtful portrayal of Jesus points not only to a symbol but to His servanthood, "The evangelist's contemplative description of Jesus' elaborate, almost liturgical, preparation for his action of washing the disciples' feet (13:4-5) focuses the reader's attention on the essential characteristic of the sign. That which Jesus is about to do is an act of serving, of literally waiting upon his disciples,"[146] it seems to me that the motif here is not only a display of washing feet but a predictive action within the context of 13:1-3 *"It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The evening*

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[142] Jnr, John K. Addo, and Zorodzai Dube. "Interactional leadership: Jesus' model of leadership– A case of Mark 7: 25–29." HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 76.4 (2020). 1

[143] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/model#:~:text=1%20%3A%20a%20small%20but%20exact,garments%20that%20are%20for%20sale accessed 6/15/22.
[144] Ibid, 1
[145] Ibid, 1
[146] Schneiders, Sandra M. "The foot washing (John 13: 1-20): An experiment in hermeneutics." The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 43.1 (1981). 81

meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to

betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had

come from God and was returning to God" (NIV).

However, the significance of Christ's action has served as a model of humility despite the eschatological[147] introduction by the evangelist in 13:1-3 that sets the stage for Jesus' example of SL. Schneiders further elaborates on the importance of the scene in John 13:1-20 by drawing the reader(s) attention to the problem of how Christ's action was counter to the prevailing view of leadership in the Greco-Roman world, he posits "this scene, therefore, we must come to grips with the enigma of Jesus' service to understand both why he presented his salvific work by means of this symbol … but in its inner structure and realization in human relationships."[148]

The idea of "human relationship" was at the center of Jesus at the center of Jesus's ministry and was never lost by the evangelists as the Synoptic writers give their accounts about the life of Jesus. I think for any leaders to serve their community, the relationships will enhance and become the corridor for service. Addo and Dube expand on the concept of relationship and the power behind this vital virtue. Even though Addo and Dube use the word "interaction" to describe Jesus' relational skill with the people He encountered, they suggest that,

> Jesus spent time with people, and, through his interaction, he left us with vast
> material to infer regarding his leadership style. Social interaction is inordinately
> tied to leadership, and it appears that a leader's success hinges on mastery of this
> indispensable daily phenomenon. Unknown to many is the nexus between
> leadership and interaction, which is typified in Jesus Christ, who expressed

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[147] Eschatological in the context of Christ's arrest, and crucifixion the next day. In this context I used the word "eschatology" as description of what is beyond the present, and as the doctrine of the last things. It's eschatological because 13:1-3 hints at what was to follow, and Christ's full awareness of His own pain, death, and resurrection.
[148] Schneiders, Sandra M. "The foot washing (John 13: 1-20): An experiment in hermeneutics." The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 43.1 (1981).84

leadership in everyday living. Over the years, Bible-based discourses on leadership have projected 'service' as the key operational word.[149]

One of the challenges that developing countries face in terms of interaction between the leader and the community is the top-to-bottom expectation that most communities are used to. Within the African context, the Kings, Chiefs, and Queens do indeed relate to their people; However, there's an established or prescribed protocol and some known and unknown traditional rites that "subjects" have to follow during the time "interaction" with the leader. Due to the almost natural inclination to respect one's leader, larger driven by the culture and traditional established norms within the community, sometimes the leader uses this to his or her advantage intentionally or unintentionally.

The result then is not a relationship based on understanding the need of the constituents of the community, but a means to exploit the traditions and establish the culture of the community and control the people either intentionally or by omission with the understanding of little consequences. According to Kuado, culture has a direct impact on how a leader leads and ultimately influences the leader's behavior, he observes that

> culture represents the shared values and norms that bind members of a society or organization together as a homogenous entity...That is, people living within a particular culture have their conduct regulated through a collection of consensual aspirations (i.e., central values) and universal orientations (i.e., patterns of behavior). Social structures that develop through the processes of regulated behavior are perceived to be orderly, patterned, and enduring.[150]

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[149] Jnr, John K. Addo, and Zorodzai Dube. "Interactional leadership: Jesus' model of leadership–A case of Mark 7: 25–29." HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 76.4 (2020). 1

[150] Kuada, John. "Culture and leadership in Africa: a conceptual model and research agenda." African Journal of Economic and Management Studies (2010). 13

It's important to note that most African leaders understand the community lives by a structurally "regulated" behavior that is based on "a collection of consensual aspirations (i.e., central values) and universal orientations (i.e. patterns of behavior)."[151] This kind of almost conditioned cultural orientation within the context and the background of traditional utmost respect for the societal and cultural institutions based on Kings, Queens, and Chieftaincy leadership, the African community has a natural inclination to serve a leader, instead of the leader setting the example of servanthood.

It's always an expectation of the leader that the community "serve" the leader with every "respect" he or she deserves. Thomas agreed. Thomas observes that "the degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards individuals…When the Gentile leaders lorded it over their subjects, they were practicing not only high-power distance, but also low humane orientation, and when combined, these cultural characteristics make it easier for leaderships to become oppressive, domineering, and inhumane."[152]

I must be clear, I'm in no way advocating for leaders to not be served within the African community, or that the community should not follow the norms and both the traditional and cultural core values that make each community unique. I'm only arguing from the standpoint of the need for Christian leaders to look at the portrait of Christ and lead by how Christ led. According to Nsiah SL does not lead from afar but identifies with the community during the most needed time and is actively leading by example, "Servant leadership requires us to sit and weep with those who weep…It requires getting down and dirty when hard work has to be done… picking up or throwing away trash, arranging the desk and chairs for a meeting, attending to the

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[151] Ibid, 13

[152] Thomas, Debby. "Jesus' Cross-Cultural Model of 'Leader as Servant 'in Luke 22: 24-30." (2018). 74

needs of our workers…when the need arises."[153] Kalaluhi points out the need for African

leadership to rethink how leaders on the continent lead,

> Africa needs leaders of integrity and competence rather than leaders who are
> immoral and who misuse or abuse power. Empowered, properly trained and
> conscientious Christian leadership (both clerical and lay) can make an enormous
> difference in addressing the wide range of personal, family, and social needs in
> Africa. In order for authentic leaders to emerge and operate, we need to identify
> and overcome some of the leadership problems we experience on the continent[154]

To understand Christ's SL within the context of how the evangelist Matthew highlight

Jesus' approach to being a leader, we have to look at how His self-awareness affected

both His moral attitude that impacted the way Jesus' radical leadership was modeled.

From the Gospels, we understand Christ was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-20), grew up

in Nazareth (Mark 1:9), and spend part of His pre-ministry working as a Carpenter

(Matthew 13:55-56).

It seems to me that the socio-culture of the Greco-Roman world didn't affect

Jesus despite having so many followers and at one point the idea of making Him a king

became possible in the minds of the crowds that follow Him. According to Kalaluhi,

Christ's humble beginning and experience of life in Nazareth shaped His understanding

of what servant leadership is,

> In addition to His leadership resume, Jesus understood from years of personal
> experience the challenges of daily life and work. Although Jesus was God, He
> was not ashamed to do a man's work. He spent the first thirty years of His life on
> earth as a workingman – the carpenter of Nazareth. We can never sufficiently
> realize the wonder of the fact that Jesus understands a day's work and knows the
> difficulty of making ends meet. He knows the frustration of ill-mannered

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[153] Nsiah, Gabriel Kofi Boahen. "*Leading as Jesus led: Christ models of leadership.*" Open
Journal of Leadership 2.4 (2013) 104

154 Kalaluhi, Stephen L. "*On developing a deeper understanding of authentic leadership:
Interpreting Matthew 3: 11-5: 48 using intertexture analysis and social and cultural texture
analysis*". Diss. Regent University, 2015. 15

customers and clients who won't pay their bills. He knows the difficulties of living in an ordinary home and a big family, and He knows the problems that beset us in the everyday world.[155]

The understanding is that in every way, Jesus' understood the pain, suffering, and power control system that his audience endure for years under Roman occupation. The change in status did not affect the moral compass of Jesus, but his humble beginning serves as a reference point for service to all. The lesson then is that a leader's humble beginning or experience should never be put in the rear-view mirror and allow the societal cultural norm to dictate who you are and how you exercise power or authority. For example, when there's a district conference, the elders and district superintendents are placed in a more exalted position than the rest of the congregation, especially in rural areas.

Women and young ladies will take bath water in an outside bathroom for them, they are placed on a special elevated table and eat in "golden bowls." In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees shows an example of how leaders misused power to control. According to Rodgers "The Pharisees are in authority and misusing it, and Matthew systematically undermines their position by the words and actions of Jesus…As such, the first half of Matthew 12 sets the tone for the conclusions that follow."[156]

Apart from the Sermon on the Mount, and other chapters that portray Jesus' leadership in Matthew gospel, chapter 12:1-21 lays bare why Christian leaders need a servant's heart, for example instead of the Pharisees focusing on service, their interest was wielding

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[155] Ibid, 58

[156] Rogers, Daniel P. "Leadership: More Sacrifice Than Glory A Socio-Rhetorical Reading Of Matthew 12." Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 7.1 (2017): 165

power, "The Pharisees are in authority and misusing it"[157] The chapter begins with Matthew's narration of Jesus and His disciples going through the corn field on the "sabbath day" while plugging the "ears of the corn, and to eat" (Matthew 12:1). The Pharisees enter the story by accusing Jesus' disciples of breaking the Sabbath's law (Matthew 12:2), but the encounter gets interesting and heats up as Jesus enters the Synagogue, the Pharisees again ask Jesus if it "is lawful to heal on the sabbath days?" (Matthew 12:10c) but Matthew adds "that they must accuse him" (Matthew 12:10c).

The idea that the religious leaders will accuse Jesus at face value will be not something for Matthew to mention since Christ has delivered a man from bondage. But the religious leaders that should have exercised grace, mercy, and praise God for a miracle in the house of God (Synagogue), were more interested in controlling how things must be done according to what they believed to have been the way things should be done.

The Pharisees didn't care about the people they profess to have been leading, but rather to flaunt pretense and use their authority to control the masses. Jesus' response to the two encounters, according to Rodgers was not to argue, but "Far from pursuing conflict, Jesus responds to each challenge by teaching both by word and action. In verse 3, he quotes David's actions. In verses 11-12, he contrasts helping men with helping animals"[158] The main difference between Jesus' reactions and the Pharisee's leadership style is placing importance on people's need, and serving them through the leader's gift, then trying to use some legal means to excuse your inhumane attitude to avoid meeting the community's need.

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[157] Ibid, 165
[158] Ibid, 164

For example, at the Kakata/Farmington River district convention, the

congregation refused for the bishop to use the outside bathroom, so the local

congregation had to look for a "comfortable" bathroom for him. The bishop forgot about

placing importance on the community, then his fulfillment. As Rodgers succinctly

observes in his exegetical analysis of Matthew 12:1-22, he reaffirms the idea that leaders'

power or authority should be used to empower, and for good not the other way around,

> The theme comes in verse 7, "you would have not condemned the guiltless." The
> rationale is in verses 3-6 as Jesus discusses how David and the Pharisees break the
> law and are not guilty. The contrary rational is in verse 10 in that the Pharisees
> still wish to accuse him. The restatement of the thesis and rational comes in verse
> 12 as Jesus presents the value of man and the lawfulness of doing good. The
> analogy is in verses 11-12 as man is compared to a sheep…. Overall, the major
> premise of this narrative is that power should be used to do good...Jesus holds the
> power to reverse the Pharisee's position as they follow the wrong leader, but they
> are blinded, unwilling to receive the healing he offers.[159]

The reality is that Jesus' leadership style seems to lead to conflict or disruption. Not just

among the religious leaders of his day, but his followers as well.

Sometimes the radical lifestyle of a leader completely creates "conflict" within the

context of not aligning with the view of the community's settled norms of hierarchical

structure. For example, when Jesus met the woman at the well in John 4:4-42, broke the

existing cultural, societal, and religious norms at that historical moment between the Jews

and Samaritans.

According to Nsiah, "Jesus crosses both social and religious barriers. In the story

of the Samaritan woman, Jesus did not only converse with a Samaritan but a Samaritan

who was a woman. Jewish culture in those days frowned on conversations between males

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[159] Ibid, 165

and females"[160] The challenge for leaders that challenges societal, cultural, and religious

taboos are how to navigate the radical reform that the leader brings to the cultural and

religious norms and how the community responds to the radical approach to those

established norms. Mostly, Servant Leader's antithetical societal shifts always rattle the

system; Nsiah posits that radical leaders can help break segregations and help eliminate

existence barriers, he points out,

> Besides, the Jews and Samaritans did not get along, but Jesus crossed those
> barriers. Our society today and leaders, in particular, need to cross these barriers
> as well. Some women suffer to gain employment in many places in the world
> because of their gender. Some organizations or individuals would not employ a
> woman because a woman may need maternity leave and other breaks when
> employed. Others also suffer unemployment because of their race, sex, or tribe.
> Jesus models the style for all leaders. Leaders must avoid all forms of
> discrimination and provide equal opportunity for everyone.[161]

Another Servant leadership skill of Jesus that the evangelist portrays is delegation. Power

and authority are two synonymous operative vocabularies or words that carry a deeper

understanding of how each is used within the context of leadership. According to

Sessoms "Power used wisely has enormous potential for good…Similarly, many leaders

struggle with the feeling that they never have quite enough power. It's like drinking salt

water: the more you drink the thirstier you get"[162]

The idea that power becomes insatiable to a lot of leaders is nothing of the

ordinary since we know from history that emperors, Kings, Queens, and religious leaders

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[160] Nsiah, Gabriel Kofi Boahen. "Leading as Jesus led: Christ models of leadership." Open Journal of Leadership 2.4 (2013) 104

[161] Ibid, 104

[162] Sessoms, Rick. Types of Power in Leadership – Stewards of Power https://freedomtolead.net/power-and-leadership/?gclid=CjwKCAjw2f-VBhAsEiwAO4lNeK1F2TTAsFFxH-hZe2H0SmLu1X1NyvduDx-zN5epgsjgoXDjZzxmoxoCpKUQAvD_BwE   July 9, 2018. Accessed 6/25/22. 1

(Pharisees) have all used power to control their communities. What makes power the use

of power more interesting is how it is used and for what purpose or motive the one that is

invested with power exercise power. The key question then becomes is the power has

been used for personal satisfaction or helping to empower others to reach their God-

giving potential.

According to Bryant Jesus' use of power was from a more caring and

empowering motive that transformed his audience's perception and influence them to

succeed,

> As a leader, Jesus thought about and aggressively responded to the needs of the
> poor. Jesus also worked diligently to change the biblical audience's current way
> of thinking about their lives and situations. He took them from marginalization
> and positions of non-authority to liberation and roles as disciples. As a change
> agent, he articulated and demonstrated the benefits of a transformed social and
> religious landscape and successfully influenced others to embrace his vision of
> discipleship in the kingdom of God.[163]

For a servant leader the concept of the delegation wouldn't be a problem, since the end

goal is not to focus on one's insecurities, but to advance the community so that it can

reach its highest potential of success, be it building a relationship, evangelize, helping the

needed in society, or standing up for the marginalized in the community. Bryant further

emphasizes the importance of a leader's power to be decentralized and learning how Jesus

empowers His followers despite their orientations, gender, or societal status; he states,

"Followership dominates our lives and organizations, but not our thinking." …This was

not the case with Jesus.

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[163] Bryant, Doreen. "Luke's Disruptive Jesus: Harnessing the Power of Disruptive Leadership."
Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 7.1 (2017): 155

He accepted women and men into his movement and empowered them to be influential leaders and followers."[164] Servant leaders seek to be holistic and use "power" for the good of the people.

According to Yeakley, the real use of authority by the Christian leader to help them effect since they are stewards of God's grace, "God's servant leaders are given authority to lead and influence others and are called to steward that influence well. Spiritual leaders will all give an account to Him of how they use this authority and influence."[165] No leader uses power in a vacuum. Power is always if not interchangeably synonymous with authority. At the heart of both power and authority is how each is used and to what end the aim is meant to be accomplished. Jesus the perfect example of leadership helps us understand how authority is used.

According to Martin Jesus used his authority in a way that never kept the status quo or endorse existing social and political norms of the Greco-Roman hierarchical leadership style but did use authority from the bottom to the top example to transform his disciples. Martin points out that,

> Prior to Jesus, leaders sat at the top of the organizational pyramid, giving instructions, and being supported by the masses below. Jesus inverted this pyramid. He saw his role as providing direction and purpose to his followers, then using his expertise, wisdom, and authority to help them to achieve their goals. Rather than sitting on top while the troops did all the work in support of him, Jesus got down in the trenches and served the troops.[166]

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[164] Ibid, 156

[165] **Yeakley, Tom,** TWO TYPES OF POWER AND AUTHORITY
https://www.tyndale.com/sites/readthearc/two-types-of-power-and-authority/
May 24, 2019, accessed 6/22/22. 1

[166] Martin, Gregg F. *Jesus the strategic leader.* ARMY WAR COLL CARLISLE BARRACKS PA, 2000. 17

The lesson from Martin's suggestion led me to the next portrait of Jesus' leadership at least within the context of SL as recorded in the synoptic, compassion. Thliza defines compassion as "being moved by and feeling of sorrow for another person's suffering and taking action to alleviate the pain…This involves an authentic desire to help…compassion is taking action to alleviate the sufferer's pain… taking action is the most important part of compassion…a key differentiator of a compassionate person from the rest,"[167] is the leader's ability to go beyond a superficial behavior and empathize with the individual, group or the community that is affected. The idea that Jesus was an "authentic" leader has never come into question by biblical scholars. Thliza asserts that Jesus is the perfect example of what a Christian leader can look up to for compassion.[168]

According to Thliza, Christ's compassion is seen not only in how Jesus expressed it, but the Godman became one of us in every human connective way, "Jesus' compassion to humanity is expressed in the reality… "he became one like us so he could enter into all of our experiences, feelings, difficulties, joys, and hopes." This is seen in the self-abasement of Jesus …he was God, Jesus humbled himself… and was obedient to…death on a cross (Phil 2:6-8)."[169] The Christological hymn serves as a backdrop to the gospel's portraits of Jesus because, without the incarnation, the Word will not become flesh "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14 KJV).

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[167] Thliza, Linus. *"POPE FRANCIS AND COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION*." Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development 3.6 (2020). 139
[168] Ibid, 139
[169] Ibid, 140

I believe compassion is the hallmark that set a leader apart from a ruler. When the leader can relate to the community, and identify with their sufferings, the leader is uplifting the community, but most importantly saying I'm sharing in your pain, and here for you. Parsons agreed. According to Parsons, the success of institutions and organizations with leaders who exercise compassion has a better chance of success than a leader that never cares and leads from afar. Parsons states that "It's no accident that organizations with more compassionate leaders have stronger connections between people, better collaboration, more trust, a stronger commitment to the organization, and lower turnover."[170] The importance of the need for SL leadership can never be overstated within our present context of COVID-19. I believe leadership all over the world is being tested as to how leaders are responding to their various contexts of community.

The question becomes, is the leader leading from power and authority that does not foster success, impacting the community spiritually, and emotionally, and challenging existing discriminatory cultural, and societal norms; or is it that the leader's only interest is in controlling the community? The final portrait from the list of hundreds of scholarly references of an example of Christ as a servant leader is love. The power of love can't ever be measured in terms of the sacrifice that one makes when love is expressed. According to Vondey "The rationale is that love formed the basis for the servanthood of Jesus Christ, and Jesus commanded his disciples to love others just as he had loved

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[170] Parsons III, Theodore W. "The AOA: A Comprehensive House with Compassionate Leaders. Presidential Address to the AOA, June 15, 2020: AOA Critical Issues." JBJS 103.21 (2021): e85. 3

them… If love for others is modeled by the leader…the follower will, in turn, show love through the performance of citizenship behavior."[171]

The central takeaway from Vondey's suggestion is that love serves as the basis for Christ's SL, and this love was demonstrated not only by washing the feet of the disciples (John 17:1-13), having compassion for the multitude (Mark 6:4), breaking social, cultural and political barriers (John 4), but He pays the ultimate price which with His life, "*No one has greater love [nor stronger commitment] than to lay down his own life for his friends*" (John 15:13 AB). The importance of love leads us to the challenge SL face within the context of cultural impact, and it challenges Servant leadership.

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[171] Vondey, Michelle. "The relationships among servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, person-organization fit, and organizational identification." International journal of leadership studies 6.1 (2010): 7

Chapter 3: The Impact of Culture on Servant Leadership: A Challenge to Christian Leadership.

No one lives out of culture, or if I can rephrase, everyone that lives exist within a society or community that is guided by norms both invisible and visible signals or code that dictates the way a particular society is a structure. Culture itself is not evil, sometimes it is how people within that culture or society decide how the culture affects those that live within or encounter the known norms. Most people that have a "cultural shock" have no previous knowledge, or even if they have read about the culture, experiencing it is another thing. The beauty of culture is the identity and value of the community are held up and highly esteem. Secondly, I understand that culture is not tradition. However, there's a tendency for people to use the two (culture and tradition) interchangeably.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, Culture is defined as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group."[172] The Oxford dictionary defines Tradition as "a belief, custom or way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people; a set of these beliefs or customs."[173] According to Mittal, Rakesh, and Elias culture is defined as " "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations."[174]

It seems to me the actual difference between tradition and culture is the length of time that the group hold or practices a particular way of life. According to Graburn, "tradition refers

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[172] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture accessed 6/3/22.
[173] https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/tradition#:~:text=tradition-,noun,of%20these%20beliefs%20or%20customs accessed 6/25/22
[174] Mittal, Rakesh, and Elias. "Social power and leadership in cross-cultural context." Journal of Management Development (2016). 61

both to the process of handing down from generation to generation, and something, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time."[175] Secondly, I believe that Culture is not static, I think it is dynamic.

According to Wesch, "All cultures are dynamic and constantly changing as individuals navigate and negotiate the beliefs, values, ideas, ideals, norms, and meaning systems that make up the cultural environment in which they live."[176] I have to say that my task here is not to go into the "weeds" and try to present an anthropological review of tradition and culture, I'm simply trying to lay a foundation as to how culture and particularly tradition affect Servant Leadership within a community that allows long-standing old-style values to continually serve as a barrier to reform. For example, when I was a refugee in Ghana, I went to fetch water from the pump, with the bucket in my right hand, I saw some people sitting in their yards, it was around 7:45-8 am.

Not wanting to stop and put the bucket down before I greet, I decided to use my left hand. It never occurs to me that in the tradition of the Ghanaian culture, and nearly all African traditions, you never greet with your left hand. One of the older fellows, I think must have been around his late twenties or early thirties. He said, "hey you stop, you don't respect…this is not Liberia." I was shocked. After about a month, I was invited to a friend "our dooring" of their son. At that party, I have my plate of food, and soft drinks (Coke), and saw a lady that I greeted by using my left hand to hi-five her right hand. Immediately I remember I made a mistake and decided to apologize. Her reaction caught me off guard. She said, "don't worry, the left side is

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[175] Graburn, Nelson H.H. What is Tradition? https://web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/gender-sexuality/What%20is%20tradition.pdf accessed 6/20/22.
[176] Wesch Michael. The Dynamics of Culture file:///C:/Users/Daniel123/Downloads/13-WeschAOBH_Cool-1.pdf accessed 7/1/22. 1

where the heart is, you are sharing your heart with me." The two experiences tell me that in the first experience, the "fellow" was still steep in his belief system and had little room for consideration, he expects everyone and assumes everyone to know the traditions of his community.

The second encounter helps me understand that either she was making a shift culturally and that not everyone has to always do things as expected by traditional norms since humans are likely to make innocent mistakes especially when they don't know the practices of a particular community. I also must be clear that the role of traditions and culture in any existing society can never be overlooked. Both culture and traditions are twin pillars that are foundationally relevant to the identity of any community. Nevertheless, no human institution is perfect, and most especially when it is tested against Scripture. It is either affirmed by Scripture or it is reformed considering its existing challenges within the community and the cultural shift that the traditional value system faces considering what scripture teaches.

For example, female genital mutilation. It's a valuable traditional practice, but lots of organizations have tried for years to help traditionists understand both the medical and psychological damages that follow when the ritual is performed on a female. However, despite intense efforts to "buy" some of the younger females from their traditional native traditionists, it has proved to be a more herculean task than a "walked in the park." The simple reason is the community holds, practices and passed down the value of female genital mutilation to many generations. The impact of tradition on SL has never been in doubt, especially within the African context.

As I previously indicated in this paper, since the community lives by an expected code of conduct, leaders expect the status quo to continue and be re-enforce by the members of the

community they lead. At the heart of the traditional impact on SL is the established system that the African community elder and leaders deserve almost automatic honor and respect. From a western perspective that is mainly individualistic, it will seem out of the ordinary for a leader to be almost and always be granted that honor. However, in a society that is "community" driven, it comes naturally, since this level of respect has been passed down from various generations to the present.

By the same token despite the dynamism of culture, it can serve as a challenge to SL depending on the established "customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group."[177] According to Kuada culture plays a pivotal role in how a leader leads within a particular community, he posits that "culture represents the shared values and norms that bind members of a society or organization together as a homogenous entity… That is, people living within a particular culture have their conduct regulated through a collection of consensual aspirations and universal orientations."[178]

The idea that a community is bonded by its shared values can be an asset or a challenge particularly when change is about to rattle the status quo. There have been enough "Social structures that develop through the processes of regulated behavior are perceived to be orderly, patterned and enduring,"[179] the problem with such "regulated behavior" that has become a pattern over time creates a one-man show and a sense of being served, then empowering and lifting everyone to reach their God giving potentials; it all about the leader and not the people they assume to lead.[180]

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[177] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture accessed 6/3/22.
[178] Kuada, John. "Culture and leadership in Africa: a conceptual model and research agenda." African Journal of Economic and Management Studies (2010). 13
[179] Ibid, 13
[180] Ibid, 13

Kuada further flushes out these cultural static structures of "regulated behavior" and suggests that it can lead to selfish power corruption, "Cultures of some societies endorse autocratic leadership behaviors while others demand that their leaders must exhibit participatory leadership behaviors."[181] The impact of culture is real, and the way the community responds to the leadership or leader is usually shaped by the culture and traditions the members find themselves. According to Baumgartner the effect of culture on leadership is not limited to a local community anymore, and that cultural influence from a diverse perspective has created a challenge to the way SL is perceived.

Baumgartner suggests that "Leaders around the world are finding out that… The rules found in old administrative manuals no longer work smoothly in a world of cultural diversity. What used to be "straight-forward" is now more difficult because your colleagues in the multicultural team bring their perceptions and expectations to the table."[182] For example, a leader that is SL-oriented may struggle in a community that is more of a leadership honor society that never seeks to express openly how each member of the community feels. Even complicating SL is the way most societal cultural structures are created.

According to Connerley and Pedersen "The culture that we are embedded in inevitably influences our views about leadership."[183] It may not be that the leader by nature is power hungry at the initial stage of when he or she begins to lead, but the culture could create an opening for pride and societal ambition, and a status-oriented mindset.

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[181] Ibid, 13-14

[182] Baumgartner Eric The Impact of Cultural Factors on Leadership in a Global Church https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=jams accessed 6/22/22

[183] Connerley, Mary L. and Paul B. Pedersen. "Cultural Frameworks and Their Importance for Leaders." (2005). 1

Connerley and Pedersen state that "Culture has been defined as the source of ties that bind members of societies through… "socially constructed constellation consisting of such things as practices, competencies, ideas, schemas, symbols, values, norms, institutions, goals, constitutive rules, artifacts, and modifications physical environment."[184] The challenge has always been, how SL leaders unlock the "ties that bind members"[185] of a particular society that are wired to honor the leader and not the other way around?

For example, in the West African culture, clergies are held up in high esteem. It seems whatever they say (Clergies) is followed in most cases by the community they serve. On the other hand, Latin American culture may find the word "servant" problematic.[186] According to Irving and McIntosh "Commenting on servant leadership in a changing culture…provides some introductory reflections on servant leadership in the Brazilian context…while the…environment recognizes…the principles of servant leadership…at the same time, the term servant is not attractive to people from the Brazilian culture due to associated religious and historical factors."[187]

Now let's consider how Jesus interacted with culture and how the cultural impacts impacted his ministry as a Servant Leader. Irving and McIntosh present a challenging view of how culture affects one's understanding of leadership. If the word "servant" does not come across or understood in a positive light, why do you think the community will respond positively to the idea of servanthood? After all, a leader that's modeling SL is leading from a Christian perspective.

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[184] Ibid, 39

[185] Ibid, 39

[186] Irving, Justin, and Timothy McIntosh. "Investigating the value of and hindrances to servant leadership in the Latin American context: Initial findings from Peruvian leaders." Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies 2 (2010).

[187] Ibid, 6

According to Whitefield "culture is the most powerful variable in any entity; be it a corporation, a church, a family, a university, or a group, its power is compelling and ubiquitous."[188] Whitefield's assessment of the power of culture within the context of any existing human community, or any other societal composition is compelling. In another word, every societal unit or organization has cultural ethics that the community recognizes, respects, and tries to be normalized.

However, if the community considered the existing cultural or traditional view of the leadership style a difficult concept based on "religious and historical factors,"[189] the leader has to educate the community on the value of SL and make the community understand that the word "servant" is not a designation of a lower state, but the way up is down, and by serving, we achieve greatness "*11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted"* (Matthew 23:1-12 NIV).

Now let's consider how Jesus encountered culture and the impact it had on the SL style of Jesus. Jesus' radical leadership didn't only challenge the prevailing system of the time but give us the ultimate example of both historical and theological models as to how we can react as leaders in any culture that challenges the way a Christian leader should lead in their community.

Jesus' Impact on culture as a Servant Leader

Be it Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:9), or the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22), the meetings left a positive impact on the women He met. According to Banks "Rabbinic literature was filled with disparagement toward women. Women in the first century were treated

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188 Whitfield, David. "Servant-leadership with cultural dimensions in cross-cultural settings." Servant leadership: Research and practice. IGI Global, 2014. 57
189 Ibid, 6

as objects whose sole purpose was to please and serve men, which included bearing men children…The rabbis taught that women were not to speak, be spoken to, or even acknowledged in public."[190] Just imagine living in a society that places importance on status and respect over one gender over another.

That's why when Christ met women and interacted with them, the Rabbis had an issue with it. The thing about culture is that it creates a system that may run deep on traditions and most often benefits people that want to use the cultural norms to their advantage. For example, during my first mentor meeting for candidacy in the United Methodist Church, the Elder at the University United Methodist Church in Fort Worth ask me how Pastors from Africa view women. I told her; it depends on the cultural orientation of the Pastor. African culture is not monolithic but involves various customs of different tribes, clans, and ethnic groups. According to Adeboye "The issue of the marginalization of women in…leadership has been a very topical one.

And despite all that has been written…the position of women has only slightly improved. While this is not a peculiarly African problem…patriarchal nature of the African culture seems to have compounded the issue."[191] Adeboye's perspective is significant. It speaks to the current condition and challenges that leaders from an egalitarians society would face in a "patriarchal" society.[192] Due to the male-dominated culture, some cultures portrayed a female child as not the "child" except it's a "male child." A girl child doesn't carry the same "value" reception as a male. The core idea is the female child will take on the name of her husband, and the father's

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[190] Banks, Bonnie. "Jesus' method of inclusion in leadership: a model for innovation and creativity in the early church." Biblical Perspectives (2008) 2

[191] Adeboye, O. A. "Breaking Through Gender Barriers: Religion and Female Leadership in Nigeria." Journal of History and Diplomatic Studies 2.2 (2005). 1

[192] Ibid, 1

surname will be condemned to the past. Adeboye sums up the cultural indifference to women in

the Nigerian culture this way

> On a general note, whatever recognition women enjoyed in certain Nigerian
> communities in pre-colonial times did not place them on the same level as the
> men. Moreover, certain social practices in some parts of Nigeria were clearly not
> in the interest of women. A case in point is the custom among some Igbo
> communities and a few of their neighbors in the Cross-River Valley that
> disallowed women from inheriting land and other important property. In fact,
> some communities in southern Nigeria even treated women as part of the property
> to be inherited by male members of the family on the event of their husbands'
> death.[193]

The cultural indifference towards women in the Greco-Roman world was not only

cultural or traditionally deep, but the religious implication was profound. Banks argues that

"Rabbinic law attributed status and distinguishable rights to religious men and men who

observed the law, whereas, women, sinners, gentiles and the infirmed were marginalized by

society and regarded with low status…However, Jesus consistently modeled boundless love and

democratizing acceptance of women, sinners, and those seen as foreigners."**[194]**

For example, despite Liberia having the first female president in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,

the culture is largely patriarchal. The United Methodist Church up to this time has no known

female Elder that is leading a congregation or served as district superintendent in the 20 know

districts of the annual conference.

Banks' arguments touch a nerve. Normally the ability to control a certain community is

based on how the community reacts to the leadership culture, that's almost the norm. However,

occasionally you will have a radical leader or an individual that will challenge the existing

prevailing culture of a dominant style of leadership. As I understand Jesus' interaction with the

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[193] Ibid, 2
[194] Ibid, 2

marginalized, downtrodden, and those that society thinks "less" of, I realize that the Rabbis, Pharisees, and Scribes were not only angry with Christ's claim as equal with the Father, but I also think one of the sources that led to conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, Christ was empowering those that the religious leaders took power from.

For the religious leaders, to control and be in charge was more of their focus, than helping the community achieve. Jesus became a symbol of an antithetical radical and was transforming the culture. According to Whitefield, "The world is crying out for ethical and effective leadership that serves others, invests in their development, and fulfills a shared vision."[195] If the idea of efficient leadership is built on the pillar of servanthood, Christ modeled a perfect example and sets a marker for leading people. Banks points out that Jesus' SL serves as a revealing grace and defies the status quo of the prevailing traditions and culture, "Jesus challenged his contemporaries and followers to look beyond basic behavioral adherence to the law to the deeper revelation of love as the stimulus for obedience.

According to Jesus, the authenticity of righteous living could be only realized through love."[196] The concept of loving radically was challenging for the religious leaders that have grown to the expectations of nothing less than respect and service to them. Love was never based on agape, which is selfless, uplifting, and seeking the interest of others than yourself. For Christ serving was unconditional and not for honor's sake. It was not that the Son of man couldn't be served, after all, He's God in human flesh.

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[195] Whitfield, David. "Servant-leadership with cultural dimensions in cross-cultural settings." Servant leadership: Research and practice. IGI Global, 2014. 50.
[196] Banks, Bonnie. "Jesus' method of inclusion in leadership: a model for innovation and creativity in the early church." Biblical Perspectives (2008) 2

Yet, He chose to set an example for not only the audience He ministered to, and not just the twelve that Jesus called as His disciples, but those of us that will later become a part of the Christian movement in the 21st century and beyond. That leads me to the second way Jesus challenged culture, he was an effective Teacher. I believe the Liberian United Methodist Church can empower women beyond Deacon and assistant pastors' positions, to where God intends them to be, and exercise their gifts within the church.

Jesus' impact on the culture as a Servant Leader: Teaching

Teaching is a skill. To teach a person must possess a certain ability to help a student or learner follow directions, and understand concepts, both sophisticated and non-complex skills. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word "teach" is a transitive verb.[197] The central idea then is that teachings involve action, modeling, and demonstrating. Anytime an effective teacher teaches, the results are profound. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines teaching as "to cause to know something,"[198] the idea of an individual effecting a "cause" for imparting "knowing" and developing a skill is significant. That's why not everyone can skillfully impart a student like a master teacher.

According to Raddatz, "His aim as the Great Teacher of men was, and ever is, not to relieve the reason and conscience of mankind, not to lighten the burden of thought and study, but rather to increase that burden, to make men more conscientious, more eager, more active in mind and moral sense."[199] The cultural norm of the Pharisee's teaching was more of a hypocritical one, that's the kind of pedagogical society that Jesus SL had to challenge. The suggestion by

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[197] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/teach accessed 7/15/22
[198] Ibid, accessed 7/15/22
[199] Raddatz, Darvin H. "Jesus The Master Teacher." (1978). 7. http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/3931/RaddatzMaster.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y accessed 7/12/22.

Raddatz that Christ's teaching was to effect awareness that will lead to an individual being "active in mind and moral sense"[200] gives the clearest contrast between the way Jesus taught within the context of the 1st-century religious culture that was dominated by the rabbinical teaching largely promoted by the Scribes and the Pharisee as depicted in the New Testament.

According to Erik and Elena Brewers, the Pharisees were dishonest and most of them morally corrupt; it was Torah and the theological teachings of Israel only to be taught to the people, but never almost modeled in the moral sense by the respected leaders of the Jews community.[201] Erik and Elena posit that the reason Jesus was so effective in the cultural context and traditional setting of His ministry as a teacher was that,

> The teaching of the Pharisees is hypocritical. They say things that they feel that the listener wants to hear, although, inwardly, they have hidden motives in doing what they do. They are not asking questions and seeking answers. They are asking questions to trap or to set someone up so that they can use the answer against the person. In other words, their teaching is based on deceit, and it teaches the audience to live deceptive lives. The teaching of the Pharisees lacks faith. They see things with their eyes, but they do not believe them. They choose not to believe. Their teaching focuses on the physical things of this world and is void of the spiritual.[202]

It's an important distinction. One of the differences between SL and other leadership styles is not self-seeking but serving others to fulfill their God-given gifts. We know that culture and traditions can be understood as norms that are excepted but also used to the advantage of one's in a leadership position to expand or thrive by keeping an existing status quo alive.

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[200] Ibid, 7

[201] Brewer, Erik and Elena. The teachings of the Pharisees vs. The teachings of Christ https://erikbrewer.wordpress.com/2017/02/24/the-teachings-of-the-pharisees-vs-the-teachings-of-christ/ . 2/24/2017 accessed 6/30, 2022.

[202] Ibid, accessed 6/30/22.

Raddatz expands on the idea that Jesus' teaching was not a superficial mirage but aim at affecting the totality of the whole being.[203] Raddatz suggests that,

> Jesus did not appeal solely to the cognitive domain of the human personality which we have so far been talking about. He addressed Himself to the whole person, He sought to involve the whole man in the learning role; the thinking man, the feeling man, and the doing man… "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus could have given him an immediate and complete answer, but He didn't: Rather, He told the parable of the Good Samaritan. Thus, Jesus obtained the emotional involvement of His questioner in the plight of the man "who fell among thieves." The hearer's sympathy was aroused for the victim. He must have "burned" when he heard the callous indifference to human suffering displayed by the men of religion! With relief and gratitude, he listened to Jesus' portrayal of kindness by the Good Samaritan. Having gained the sympathy of the rich man for the victim of the thieves, Jesus then posed His question: "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"[204]

The reality that Jesus didn't only teach facts about the Torah, and the Prophets from a more intellectual basis, but brought his pupils and listeners into the conversation was quite a contrast to a didactic style espoused by the Pharisees and Scribes.

The truth is not that the Pharisees were not capable of effecting the same impact that Jesus had on His audience. They were well respected and culturally revered as the "custodians" of the laws.[205] Jesus referred to the Pharisees as those that sat in Moses' seat, yet the problem was not following through with what they were telling the people, in another word, they are hypocrites "*Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples: 2 "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3So practice and observe everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach*" (Matthew 23:1-2 BSB).

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[203] Raddatz, Darvin H. "Jesus The Master Teacher." (1978). 7.
http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/bitstream/handle/123456789/3931/RaddatzMaster.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y accessed 7/12/22. 8
[204] Ibid, accessed 6/30/22
[205] Ibid, accessed 6/30/22

Yet when you contrast the saying of the temple guard of his evaluation of Jesus, you understand why Christ was so effective in connecting with his audience than the religious leaders of the time **"*The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man! (*John 7:45 KJV*).* Stavem agrees. Stavem suggests that the teachings of Jesus Christ were antithetical to the prevailing ways the culture the first-century religious leaders both led and taught.[206] According to Stavem "Jesus' message was revolutionary, challenging, and different than many people expected. But if they were willing to give it a hearing, if they were willing to open their Bibles; their Old Testaments and read the message they would see that He was the fulfillment of their hopes and expectations."[207]

The challenge for a Christian leader in the 21st century is how to navigate the cultural or traditional contexts in which the leader finds him or her selves and how the leader leads or responds to the culture within the context of the predominant view of leadership. That's what sets Jesus' teachings apart, it positively was "revolutionary", not keeping the status quo kind of teachings that was done by the Pharisees and Scribes. If the culture or traditions dictate making women, and slaves non-essential and was created less human, Jesus' teaching reaffirms the status of the marginalized groups and helps lead them to freedom from the cultural yoke that the cultural custodians perpetrated. For example, historically the view of women in Liberia has been more of home help, and female education is never elevated to the same level as a male. I think the United Methodist church leadership can take a leading role in female education and effect a change from within the community of the church that can impact the country.

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[206] Stavem Neil. "The Counter Cultural Teachings of Jesus" https://myfaithradio.com/2016/the-counter-cultural-teachings-of-jesus/ 3/2016. Accessed 7/20/22.
[207] Ibid, accessed 7/20/22.

Bond's perspective on how Jesus was so effective greatly enhances the way Christ thought of Himself, and the way the religious teachers thought of themselves. According to Bond, "Although referred to as "teacher." Here…Jesus turns all worldly conceptions of honor on their head in favor of a deeply counter-cultural focus on what contemporary society would usually brand as shameful… to act as slaves or servants to one another, and to care nothing for status or prestige."[208] The idea that the master Teacher believes the honor society was not anything to brag about, was a great departure from the Greco-Roman world of status-craving culture. Having lived in America for the past 12 years, and still learning a culture that is more seclusive, personal, and more of private. Yet, one of the distinct cultural marks of the western world is individualism.

According to Chong Jesus' teaching at least within the context of the gospel is to help His audience to understand that individualism was more of a self-center philosophy, and not more of a community, grace, and loving concept.[209] Chong posits that "Jesus is essentially teaching us— who generally have a "Me-first" mentality—that we need to have a "God-first" perspective and value system."[210] To become counter-cultural, one must look past themselves and follow the servant attitude of Jesus. The challenge that a Christian leader faces is how to navigate the honor that comes with being a leader, and still be humble while being a leader. Another area in that Christ modeled SL that was counter-cultural was how He place value on women in a culture that

[208] Bond, Helen K. "A Fitting End? Self-Denial and a Slave's Death in Mark's Life of Jesus." New Testament Studies 65.4 (2019): 9. 425-442.

[209] Chong, Chien Lim. Making Sense of Jesus' Countercultural Teachings https://ymi.today/2018/08/making-sense-of-jesus-countercultural-teachings/ Aug 16, 2018/0. Accessed 7/22/22.
[210] Ibid, accessed 7/22/22.

rarely thought of women as important. The Liberian United Methodist Church leaders can model what Christ taught us as Christian leaders.

Jesus' impact on the culture as a Servant Leader: placing value on women in a manly culture.

In a culture that had a low view of women, and highly value men, Jesus thought his disciples and model for us in the 21st century and beyond how to respect and honor all of God's creation. According to Conway, the Greco - Roman world understood manliness to be the overall creative power representation of everything else that was not male-related at least within the context of the affluence of Greeks and Romans males, Conway posits that "Examples abound in Greco-Roman literature of how these ancient elites thought about manliness. But one surprising aspect is how masculinity was understood not only to be the superior sex, but in a way, the only one."[211] The belief that the masculinity was not "masculinity was understood not only to be the superior sex, but in a way, the only one"[212] permeated the cultural lives of the Greeks, Romans and ultimately the religious leaders view in Jesus' day.

So, the fact that the Galileans would raise women to a level of prominence was always going to become a point not only of religious tension but a challenge to the status hierarchy of society. The real issue of manly dominance in my mind is not the fact that it escapes the masculine-led traditionists that "*He created them male and female and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created*" (Genesis 1:27 KJV). However, the default scriptural position mostly espoused by manly cultural society dominance advocates is 1 Cor. 11:3 "But *I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man,[a]*

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[211] Conway, Colleen M. "Was Jesus a manly man? On reading masculinity in the New Testament." Word & World 36.1 (2016): 16
[212] Ibid, 16

and the head of Christ is God" (NIV) and 1 Timothy 2:11-13 "*A woman[a] should learn in*

quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a

man; [b] she must be quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the

one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner" (NIV).

Since the Bible was written in a male's dominant culture, Jesus Christ's elevation of

women blew up the traditional expectations of what some of the religious leaders thought about

Christ's departure from the status quo of power and male dominance. Conway further suggests

that even in Hellenistic writings, the male dominance masculinity effort was on display. For

example, Conway posits that,

> While Wisdom's name is feminine, her nature is masculine. For all the virtues
> have women's titles, but powers and activities of perfect men…For that which
> comes after God, even if it were the chiefest of all other things, occupies a second
> place, and therefore was termed feminine to express its contrast with the Maker of
> the Universe, who is masculine, and its affinity to everything else. For the
> feminine always falls short and is inferior to the masculine, which has priority.[213]

Conway's suggestions raise a major point and help us understand the world in which the

dominance of the male gender was celebrated, and female was depicted as second class

or lowest denominators, "For the feminine always falls short and is inferior to the

masculine, which has priority."[214] Banks concurs. The idea that the female gender was a

mark of weakness and more passive than male-led to lots of cultural obstruction that

provided the foundation for both intended and untended consequences of non-inheritance

of property, beholden to their husbands, stop from being educated and was never consider

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[213] Ibid, 17
[214] Ibid, 17

voting in the Greco-Roman culture.[215] Banks summarizes the plight of women in the NT culture this way,

> Rabbinic literature was filled with disparagement toward women…The rabbis taught that women were not to speak, be spoken to or even acknowledged in public. Additionally, women were made to walk six paces behind their husbands and were considered harlots if they wore their hair uncovered in public… Women were not allowed to vote, not allowed to be educated and not allowed to receive an inheritance." Women were also viewed as "unclean" during menstruation and after childbirth and would suffer further isolation for specified periods of time during and after each of these events.[216]

That's why the leadership of Christ was so defining and a rarity of what the Rabbis, and leaders in the 1st Century were used to. The idea of love superseding everything else and lifting the marginalized from the pit of disgrace, and disparagement, and setting the community, and individual on a more acceptable status than a bottom-relegated non-entity became a point of conflict between Jesus Christ and the controlling elites of his time.

For example, Szterszky suggests that "Jesus had a knack for subverting the prejudices of his culture…his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. For his Jewish disciples, the entire encounter was problematic on several levels, and their bewilderment – as well as that of the woman herself – is evident in the account."[217] It's difficult to initiate a change as a leader in a culture that runs deep for years and the community in which the culture exists has gotten used to its "normalcy." I think what makes Jesus' radical exemplary leadership even more striking is how he went about

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[215] Banks, Bonnie. "*Jesus' method of inclusion in leadership: a model for innovation and creativity in the early church." Biblical Perspectives* (2008). 2
[216] Ibid, 2
[217] Szterszky Subby. *Welcome, respect, affirmation: How Jesus interacted with women* https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/welcome-respect-affirmation-how-jesus-interacted-with-women accessed 7/18/2022.

engaging the culture and how his teachings, interactions, and coolness became a massive weapon to silence the critics of his time.

Szterszky further posits that "In addition, Jewish men didn't address women in public, even their wives, much less a stranger. Moreover, the fact that this woman came to the well during the heat of midday was a cue that she had a compromised reputation and wished to avoid uncomfortable social contact."[218] That's what set Jesus apart from the Rabbis, Pharisees Scribes, or other manly-oriented communities in the 1st century. In Servant Leadership, the one that leads empowers, but also is never afraid to challenge the status quo that is discriminatory to the very people that live and breathe within the same community the leader is supposed to lead, guide, and serve.

Szterszky puts the encounter of the woman at the well with Jesus in perspective that I think is a teachable moment for all that those that use culture to "lord" and enslave women "Jesus' respectful treatment of this woman, as much as his knowledge of the secrets of her heart, empowered her to return to town in the face of public scorn…begin spreading the news that Jesus was the Messiah. In so doing, she became the first non-Jewish evangelist recorded in Scripture."[219] I think in every culture or tradition, the end goal is to help the community conform to the value system the authors of whatever determines traditional or cultural norms they see fit for the people within the community. However, when the norms and value systems espouse denigrate and empower a certain group of people, then I believe the real motif for which those norms and values lose their effect and only become a vehicle for enslavement and honor seeking. For example,

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[218] Ibid, accessed 7/18/22.
[219] Ibid, accessed 7/18/22.

despite all the efforts made by the international community to combat women's

enslavement, and marginalization in Africa, there has been no significant improvement.

The continent still struggles to come with a grip and institute real-life impact

reform for advancing women's rights and role within the culture and traditions that bind

them. According to Mutume "For many African women, the Beijing platform and the

various international instruments their governments have signed have yet to translate into

positive changes in their daily lives. They remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy,

with poor access to land, credit, health, and education."[220] Mutume's observation is

essential to the ongoing challenge of what traditions and cultural norms can do in

dragging unintentionally or intentionally obstructing the progress of a particular group,

community, or individual.

To put the cultural marginalization of women in perspective, Mutume points out

the inequalities between boys and girls concerning a preference for education on the

African continent and the consequences of such marginalization of girls,

> But perhaps the most inhibiting factor is that women in Africa continue to be
> denied an education, often the only ticket out of poverty. Disparities between girls
> and boys start in primary school and the differences widen up through the entire
> educational system. In total enrolment in primary education, Africa registered the
> highest relative increase among regions during the last decade. But given the low
> proportion of girls being enrolled, the continent is still far from the goal of
> attaining intake parity by the end of this year. By 2000, sub-Saharan Africa was
> the region with the most girls out of school, 23 million, up from 20 million a
> decade earlier.[221]

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[220] Mutume Gumisai. *African women battle for equality*
https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2005/african-women-battle-equality July 2005
Accessed 7/22/22.

[221] Ibid, accessed 7/22/22.

For every leader that is empowered, the goal is how to lead his community, country, clan, or group to achieve its highest goal.

That's what Jesus did. Jesus' SL was to help the cultural and traditionalist reorientate their minds on how to express love in a radical way that would value life, and status and reaffirms God's creation that all of humanity was created in God's image, all people need to be respected and help to live in freedom. Again, I am not saying that there hasn't been progress made in promoting the value of women's equality in Africa, but I am simply suggesting the reason there's a significant setback and slow progress is because of the cultural and traditional manly society the continent is used to; as Conway points out "So earnestly and carefully does the law desire to train and exercise the soul to manly courage…that it strictly forbids a man…no mere shadow of the female, should attach to him to spoil his masculinity."[222]

Mutume agrees, he posits that "For African populations and societies, the absence of a legal framework of reference to fight against violations of women's rights currently constitutes a real handicap for the optimal participation of women in the development of their countries and Africa, that economic and social rights that are constantly violated, either deliberately or out of ignorance…"[223] In the gospel of Luke 8:40-56, the evangelist narrates a story about how Jesus' SL did not only surprise his audience but even the woman. The woman with the issue of blood has been praised for her bravery and faith by touching the helms of Jesus Christ's garment. But digging deeper into the cultural and

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[222] Conway, Colleen M. "Was Jesus a manly man? On reading masculinity in the New Testament." Word & World 36.1 (2016): 17
[223] Mutume Gumisai. *African women battle for equality* https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/july-2005/african-women-battle-equality July 2005 Accessed 7/25/22.

traditional contexts of the 1st century will make any reader not only appreciate her effort but will understand the countercultural attitude of Jesus.

Luke's accounts tell us that as the crowd "*pressed around him*" (Luke 8:42), the woman through faith *"came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased*" (v.44). When Jesus noticed healing has taken place, "But Jesus said, "*Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me"* (v'46), but the woman's fear and Jesus's reaction of love is the biggest takeaway from the story "*And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. 48 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace*" (Luke 8:47-48).

Szterszky points out that even to the woman's greatest surprise in a manly culture that looks down on women experiencing menstrual cycles, the response of Jesus was "Contrary to everyone's expectation – apparently, even the trembling woman's – Jesus didn't rebuke her for touching him as a ritually unclean female. Instead, he welcomed and affirmed her faith and called her "daughter," healing her chronic condition and restoring her to public life in her community."[224] The idea of "restoring" is synonymous with Servant Leadership. One of the things that sets a leader apart from a ruler or status-seeking self-honoring person is their ability to look beyond the cultural and traditional norms from a position of love, grace, and mercy, then enforcing the letter of the law when grace can be exercised to restore the individual or community.

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[224] Szterszky Subby. *Welcome, respect, affirmation: How Jesus interacted with women* https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/welcome-respect-affirmation-how-jesus-interacted-with-women accessed 7/18/2022.

No other story in the NT will illustrate this than the narrative of the woman caught in adultery in my humble opinion. To understand the nature and why Jesus' response in the story of the "Woman caught in adultery" is so touching was the graphic nature of how the woman was portrayed and the "man" who committed the act with her was left off the hook. It takes two persons to commit adultery, and the obvious disappearance of the "man" in the story shows the corrupt nature and the power of a masculine culture that disregarded every rational thought pattern. The story is set in Jerusalem, while Jesus Christ was visiting the "city of David."

To really understand the narrative from a manly culturally contextualize view, I think Banks' observation can help "Rabbinic law attributed status and distinguishable rights to religious men and men who observed the law, whereas, women, sinners, gentiles and the infirmed were marginalized by society and regarded with low status."[225] It seems to me two things are working against the "woman caught in the act of adultery," one she's a woman, that makes her social and culturally "low" on the scale of respect and value, and secondly, a "sinner," even creating an incentive for her self-righteous accusers that follows a tradition of shunning "sinners" to bring an accusation against her.

The problem though was not that the woman was immune from accusations, but the deference given to the "man" in the story raises eyebrows, and just reading the story in the 21st century, you kind of wonder, what was going on. Szterszky agrees. He states, "To be precise, the Law called for both the man and woman caught in adultery to be stoned, but it would seem these men chose to give the man in question a pass while

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[225] Banks, Bonnie. "*Jesus' method of inclusion in leadership: a model for innovation and creativity in the early church." Biblical Perspectives* (2008). 2

condemning only the woman."[226] The observation of Szterszky is not only significant

from an egalitarian perspective but it is a similarity, yet with a distinction in my mind. If

the "Law of Moses," states "*If a man be found lying with a woman married to an*

husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman and the

*woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (*Deut. 22:22 KJV) was to be applied, the

man and the woman should be brought to Jesus and the question should have been if both

could be stone.

However, the glaring "free pass" given to the man, lay bare the masking and

open disregard of any value for a woman in a manly dominant society. Szterszky

observation is an indictment of the scribes and Pharisees of their deceitful nature. In the

gospel of John 7:53-8:11, while Jesus sat down teaching the people in the temple, "*The*

scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and placing

her in the midst." (v.3), the scribes and the Pharisees make their case against the woman,

accusing her of "*been caught in adultery" (*V.3).

The legal basis for the accusation is in the "*Law of Moses*" (v.5). and the result is

for her to be "stone" per the "Law of Moses" (V. 5). John records the motivation for the

reason the scribes and Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus and accused her *"This they*

said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him" (v.6). The fact

that the culturally acceptable view could be to use a woman as a bait to trap Jesus was

telling. Because, if the intent was to "test" and create "some charge" against Jesus, in a

culture that value all people, the man wouldn't have been left off the hook easily, because

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[226] Szterszky Subby. *Welcome, respect, affirmation: How Jesus interacted with women*
https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/welcome-respect-affirmation-how-jesus-interacted-with-women
accessed 7/18/2022.

both committed the act of adultery. According to Graves, Jesus' radical leadership

confronts the pervasive cultural attitude and its perpetrators but models an example of

love and grace to the marginalized in the culture of an honor-seeking society,

> Everything Jesus did challenge the religious and political status quo of his time.
> And ours also. Even his graciousness…His unconditional love for all people, even
> his "enemies," and his compassionate actions challenged the cultural mentality of
> religious and economic privilege. Outrageously, he forgave persons… he ate and
> hung out with social outcasts, he challenged the Temple practices of sacrifice that
> exploited the poor. All were acts of compassion and grace. But they threatened
> the established social and/or religious order of his day. God's prophetic grace in
> action.[227]

If leadership is about helping, improving, at times protecting, and at some point,

tempering mercy with punishment, then the Servant Leadership of Jesus embodies it all.

As John the apostle record, if the scribes and the Pharisees planned to "test" and "charge"

Jesus Christ, then His response was a devasting blow and exposed the hypocritical nature

of their class, status, and disparaging society of women *"Let him who is without sin*

among you be the first to throw a stone at her" (v.7).

This is significant because "*beginning with the older ones*" (v. 9) they all left, and

this could have been Jesus' moment to shame her be it in a private moment, yet He

chooses grace and mercy "Jesus *stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has*

no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I

condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."] (v. 10-11). This was a teachable moment

not only just for the people of Jesus' time but also for those of us that aspire to be a leader

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[227] Graves Paul. *Faith and Values: Jesus challenged religious, political status quo of his time – and ours*
https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2019/dec/23/faith-and-values-jesus-challenged-
religiouspoliti/#:~:text=Outrageously%2C%20he%20forgave%20persons%2C%20he,religious%20order
%20of%20his%20day 12/ 23/ 2019. Accessed 7/20/22.

within the United Methodist Church within the contexts of both an African setting and

globally "*Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more*" (v.11). I think the

way women are treated within the Liberian culture needs to change, not only in the wilder

context of the country but within the local churches. I do know that the

charismatic/Pentecostal churches elevate women within the denominations, but Liberian

UMC is yet to do the same at a higher level of church leadership.

Jesus' impact on the culture as a Servant Leader: Advocating for the downtrodden in society.

The idea of society treating the vulnerable, poor, or "sinners" in a community with disrespect is

nothing new. The sad aspect about it is that the disparaging attitude does nothing to advance the

rights or dignity of those that are treated that way. In the Greco-Roman society of class

stratification, people at the margin of life, or heavily hit with suffering, poverty, or even a

communicable disease, were treated with disdain and consider outcasts. According to Pa

"Jesus advocated liberation and the Kingdom of Heaven not only for the Jews but for humanity

in general…Jesus as the initiator of a worldwide…Proletarian based on ideals of freedom, human

rights, and universal love… the culmination of… establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on

Earth."[228]

In the synoptic gospels, there are many examples of how the culture and traditions help

the elite in society perpetrated unjust and inhumane treatment against those that the system

considers not worthy of love or grace. Nevertheless, Jesus' attitude was in direct contrast to the

way the Greco-Roman treated the community and people that were deemed not significant or

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[228] Pa, Chin Ken. "*WT Chu's Jesus, the Proletarian*." *Stasis* 3.2 (2015). 138-139
file:///C:/Users/Daniel123/Downloads/40%D0%A2%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D1%82%20%D1%81%D1
%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%8C%D0%B8-119-1-10-20180331%20(1).pdf accessed 7/20/22

"sinners." I think Jesus' own up bringing may have shaped his understanding of poverty, and

societal marginalization. According to Garcia "the Jews of Galilee were distinctly different than

their Judean counterparts. The Galileans Jews were thus uneducated, agrarian groups of

commoners who were looked down upon by the educated and wealthy southerners,"[229] and we

know from the gospel that Jesus grew up in Nazareth and started his ministry in Galilea.

Sometimes our community shaped the way we response to circumstances or situations in our

lives later as we interact with society, systems, and both invisible and non-invisible markers of

cultural and traditional customs.

Gordon and Evans, argue that "involvement in advocacy is vital, both practically and

theologically, to the church's calling to bring about justice, speak out for truth, defend the poor

and oppressed… Advocacy involves both tackling individual cases of injustice or poverty, and

tackling systems and structures that allow this injustice to happen."[230] For Jesus advocating for

the oppressed in society was always part of his mission. At the very beginning of his ministry in

Nazareth, Jesus declares what I term as his mission and Kingdom's manifesto, according to Luke

4:16-19

> *16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his*
> *custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17*
> *And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and*
> *found the place where it was written,18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*
> *because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to*
> *proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at*
> *liberty those who are oppressed,*

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[229] Garcia, Jeffery P. Jesus the Galilean, a Stranger in Judea?
https://www.jerusalemperspective.com/12154/ 2014MAY19 accessed 7/29/22.
[230] Gordon, Graham and Evans Bryan, *Mission of Church and Role of Advocacy Evangelical Advocacy: A Response to Global Poverty*
https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=engaginggovernme ntpapers 2012. Accessed 7/31/22.

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (ESV)

One of the glaring examples of Jesus advocating for the downtrodden in society is recorded in

the gospel of Mark 1:40-45. The story is significant not only because healed the leper, but he

"touched him" which was forbidden in Jewish tradition and culture since lepers were considered

"unclean" and were discriminated against and considered "outcasts" for the communicable

disease in the Greco-Roman world. Mark 1:41 *"Jesus was indignant. [b] He reached out his hand*

and touched the man…." (KJV). To put this encounter in perspective, sang points out,

> As Jesus is walking around in a town, he encounters a man with leprosy…and does
> something that would have made himself ritually unclean…The leper would have been
> an untouchable and practically invisible except for when others saw him and would
> actively avoid him. He would've been completely shunned by society for being ritually
> unclean because of his dreaded skin disease and the ensuing deformity. Lepers would
> have had to leave their friends and family and live in their own separate leper commune
> away from everyone else. Yet Jesus welcomes him and does not fear contracting the
> disease himself. Although he could have simply spoken a word and healed him, he
> knows the leper's deepest need and desire for physical contact.[231]

I believe as a servant Leader, Jesus sets the standard of undivided love, grace, and forgiveness

that 21st-century Christian leaders can emulate in Liberia, and globally.

Gordon and Evans argue that "Jesus' approach to power was very different from the

approach of those around him. He: modeled servant leadership and was willing to suffer for the

sake of others- did not use force associated with everyone, especially with those on the edges of

society."[232] That's the impact we can have on culture and tradition as leaders when we become

servant leaders within the context of Christ's example. We champion the needs of those that are

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[231] Sang Robert. *6 Outcasts In Luke's Gospel That Jesus Welcomed Openly*
https://drawingontheword.com/outcasts-in-lukes-gospel/ 8/19/2018. Accessed 7/29/22
[232] Gordon, Graham and Evans Bryan, *Mission of Church and Role of Advocacy Evangelical Advocacy: A Response to Global Poverty*
https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=engaginggovernme
ntpapers 2012. Accessed 7/31/22.

living at the margins of life, by giving them hope as leaders and loving just as they are, that's the power and impact of Jesus Christ's antithetical response to the challenging impact culture has on Servant Leadership. Now let me turn my attention to the impact of the transformative power of SL within the context of effecting change in society and why Christian leaders must aspire to become servants than rulers.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Transformative Power of Servant Leadership.

The transformative power of servant leadership shows why Christian and some secular organizations find it a potent leadership style. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word transformation comes from the word "transform" (transitive verb) which means "change the outward form or appearance; or to change character or condition."[233] When the word transform is used as an intransitive verb, it is defined as a "change."[234] The basic definition of the word "transform" is "changed."[235] To help us appreciate and understand the power of transformative leadership, let's consider why leading is so important.

According to McCloskey, to lead required action, leaders do not fold their hands and expect others to be at the forefront, the leader must set the tone and all other follows.[236] McCloskey suggests that "Our English term "lead" is derived from the Old English term "lithan" and the Old French "leden" meaning "to go", or "to cause to go with oneself" and thus "to guide or show the way." The term connotes a sense of movement or journey from one place to another."[237] In the gospel of Matthew 15, the evangelist tells us that Jesus' encountered a group of Pharisees and Scribes that came to Jerusalem to confront Jesus (Matthew 15:1).

Noticed that in verse 2, the focused of the Pharisees and Scribes or "Teachers of the law" (V.2 NIV) was not exercising grace, love, or service but perpetuating the "traditions" and making sure they continue to control the people by using cultural norms. Jesus' reply was a complete challenge to their hypocrisy, by quoting Isaiah 29:13 "*And the Lord said: "Because this people*

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[233] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transforming 2022. accessed 7/31/22
[234] Ibid, 1
[235] Ibid, 1
[236] McCloskey, Mark W. "What is transformational leadership." People Bethel Education [Accessed: March 10, 2016] Available at: http://people. bethel. edu/pferris/otcommon/TransformationalLeadership. pdf (2015).1
[237] Ibid, 1

draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and

their fear of me is a commandment taught by men," (ESV). In Matthew 15:14, Jesus tells his

disciples that the Pharisees and Scribes have no interest in leading the people with the truth but

love to be honored, and that desire leads them not to the truth of spiritual leadership, but

"blindness." Christ's challenge to the religious rituals and traditional status quo was to drive

home the need for spiritual transformation, then religious rituals without sincere love for

humanity. In other words, for transformation to take place either in "physical appearance or to

change character or condition"[238] there needs to be a shift or difference in a community or an

individual.

Within the context of leadership, a transformational leader, that is the leader that

"transforms" a system, culture, and society is regarded as the one who effects change or impacts

his or her community, organization (both secular or religious), or individuals that produces

transformation.[239] According to Stone, Russell, and Patterson, the mark of a transformational

leader is "providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work" but also allowing the

community, organization, or group "to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions,

reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways."[240]

The power of servant leadership can be summed up in the transformational nature of

how servant leaders affect change in an organization, community, society, or group of people.

Caldwell, Cam, et al. agreed. According to Caldwell, Cam, et al. they posit that "Transformative

leaders seek new solutions that require people to rethink their assumptions, rather than simply

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[238] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transforming 2022. accessed 7/31/22

[239] Stone, A. Gregory, Robert F. Russell, and Kathleen Patterson. "*Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in leader focus.*" Leadership & organization development journal (2004).

[240] Ibid, 351

returning to old solutions to resolve new problems,"[241] in other words, servant leaders serve as the agents of change by not allowing the same old organizational and societal cultural tradition of exclusion and discrimination to continue but challenges the system for a change. In Africa, and especially Western Africa, the need for Christian transformational servant leadership is not an understatement, but a call to reality.

Due to the inherent nature of "top to bottom" cultural and traditionally accepted leadership in every organization (ex. Christianity, secular, and other religious groups), there's an urgent need to help Liberian Christian leaders to pivot to a more practical, serviceable, and humbling leadership style. According to Ncube, there's always resistance to change when it comes to societies that are used to a particular traditional organizational behavior.[242] Because Africans are so communal in their community, that sense of mutual mindset impacts the way we understand and react to leadership. For example, Ncube posits that "Change and transformation are not strong components of traditional societies…Leaders search for opportunities to initiate change through people. Rather than being forced on people, change comes through a process of openness and transparency; people come to accept change. Decisions to change come by consensus rather than polling."[243]

The reason that servant leadership is so transformational is that it is about placing value on the community, members, group, or people within the organization that the servant leader leads. According to Peregrym and Wolf, at the core of the transformational nature of SL is the leader placing "values" on its members and helping the organization or community to reach its

[241] Caldwell, Cam, et al. "*Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence.*" Journal of Business Ethics 109.2 (2012): 176
[242] Ncube, Lisa B. "Ubuntu: A transformative leadership philosophy." Journal of Leadership Studies 4.3 (2010): 79
[243] Ibid, 79

fullest potential.[244] This is fundamental to other leadership theories and practices. According to Peregrym and Wolf, leader's "values" impacts the way they lead and help them form their transformational compasses, which impact the community the leader serves,

> For leaders, living out their personal values gives them a great advantage in shaping their organization's culture. Leaders who practice their personal values set a clear example for others. They are aware of why they make decisions and how those decisions impact the people around them. They have an internal guidance system, which some might call a conscience. This internal GPS helps them make tough choices and feel confident and courageous in their decisions. We believe that it is impossible to be effective, transformational servant leaders without practicing…Therefore, all who desire to be transformational servant leaders must commit themselves to discern their values, critiquing them against their life purpose and other standards/values, developing values that will bring maximum benefit to themselves and others, and to then live those values consistently so that they produce like values in the people and organizations they serve. Then, we will be in a strong position to demonstrate a robust form of TSL that can have a significant local and global impact.[245]

If one's "values" serve as a foundational virtue for leaders to be transformational as servant leaders, then let me turn my attention to Jesus Christ and why he was so transformational as a servant Leader.

Jesus Christ as the transformational servant Leader

If there's any leader that has changed and challenged societal ostracism with transformational effect at the utmost highest level and with positive results, we can learn from to become effective vessels of changed, it is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. According to Wilson "The transformational leader treats each follower as an individual and provides

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[244] Peregrym, Darrell, and Randy Wollf. "*Values-based leadership: The foundation of transformational servant leadership.*" The Journal of Values-Based Leadership 6.2 (2013): 7.
[245] Ibid, 7-11.

coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities."[246] One of the examples of a

transformational leader is when the opportunity for higher education opened for the

lecturers at Gbarnga Theological School to improve scholarship; Bishop Innis against the

will of some that argue for only United Methodist teachers included a non-United

Methodist lecturer for the greater good of the community and the seminary. The goal is

not "my church" but the Church. The goal is to empower all, not show favoritism. One of

the beauties of reading the gospel is the way Jesus interacted with every group, and how

his interactions were perceived by each group. For the upper class, I think it was two-

fold: one, they wanted him in their homes for some societal reasons, but secondly, most

of them may have not liked the way he taught them to not place their statuses above

everyone. On the other hand, through His interaction with the disciples, we learn what

Christ's leadership style was about.[247]

        According to Wilson "Chapter 21 in the book of John provides a snapshot of

Jesus interacting with a few of his disciples, which provides insight into his leadership

style and tactics."[248] The potency of Jesus' leadership style was the way he interacted

with people, culture, tradition, and society at large. Christ's transformational "power"

was never a lording one, but more relational and empathetic not from a head knowledge

position but showing love to those who were left marginalized by the discriminatory

policy of the upper class. Transformation means to change or effect a change. In Paul's

letter to the church in Rome, the apostle calls the church to not be *"conformed"* (Romans

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[246] Wilson, John H. "*Jesus as agent of change: Leadership in John 21*." Emerging Leadership
Journeys 3.1 (2010): 12
[247] Ibid, 10
[248] Ibid, 10

12:2 NIV), but to "*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*" (Romans 12:2 NIV). Noticed in the NIV version, the verb "transformed or "μεταμορφόω"[249] from where we have our English word "metamorphosis."[250] In other words, for transformation to take place, there must be a shift from the previous position to a new one. For example, when you look at the word "transformed" in the NIV version, it is in the past tense, informing the reader that a changed must occur for transformation to take place.

According to Gordon, transformative leadership is not only based on having a positive influence, but the leader must be able to weed out the harmful activities within the organization.[251] According to Gordon "Positive leadership is not just about feeding the positive, but also about weeding out the negative. One of the biggest mistakes leaders make is that they ignore the negativity within their team and organization—you must address the negativity. Confront it, transform it, or remove it."[252]

Coming from a culture that is mostly influenced by respecting the elders in the tribe, or clan, and ultimately the family; questioning the negativity of the "family head" is considered disrespect. For example, in a typical African home, we are taught and learned not to question our elders, and every argument with an elder is regarded as insubordination. The problem then becomes when the individual grows up and is in a leadership position, naturally gravitates toward being honored than working to honor and serve the community, or organization he/she was chosen to serve.

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[249] https://www.biblehub.com/greek/3339.htm Strong Greek concordance #3339 accessed 8/1/2022
[250] Ibid, 1
[251] Gordon, Jon. *The power of positive leadership: How and why positive leaders transform teams and organizations and change the world*. John Wiley & Sons, 2017. 6
[252] Ibid, 6

That's why Jesus was so successful, it was not about the satisfaction of his egos, but embracing humility and demonstrating it to his disciples. According to Williams "Transformational leadership is a leadership perspective that changes organizations and its people for the better. It is based on the premise of higher values, qualities, and beliefs, and is just the opposite of transactional leadership which is based on mutual exchange between parties."[253] At the heart of Williams' definition is the fact that a transformative leader strives and prioritizes his/her community by placing "higher values, qualities, and beliefs"[254] system in place for the progress of the people the leader leads. Now let me turn my attention to some examples that make SL effective with transformational power.

Jesus as a transformative servant leader: empowering the community

The way one sees a community is important because it plays a greater role in what ever thought patterns one forms about that community or individual. According to Lewis and Leibrand, a community is defined "as a group unified toward following Jesus, motivated by God's love, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, supporting one another and holding one another accountable to live out the great commandment (loving God and others) and to fulfill the great commission (making disciples among all the nations)."[255] Within the context of the definition stated, it seems to me that a community existence is predicated upon unifying in Christ, but also the source of the community "power" comes

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[253] Williams Dianna. "Jesus Christ, The Greatest Transformational Leader of All Times" *https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141022181310-89077245-jesus-christ-the-greatest-transformational-leader-of-all-times/* 10/22/2014. Accessed 8/2/22.

[254] Ibid, 1

[255] Lewis, D., and S. Leibrand. "Community O." Occupational therapy and mental health. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone (1997): 1

from the Holy Spirit, inspired by the love of God, which then leads to loving without exclusion, and the making of disciples.[256]

One of the typical examples of a community is in Acts 4. In Acts 4:32-34, the evangelist Luke tells his audience that *"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and sit was distributed to each as any had need*" (ESV).

There are a few things from the text that are worth highlighting. The first is the commonality of the people, "*and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common*" (Acts 4:33b ESV). When a leader leads a community, clan, tribal group, or organization, the task is to unify the people to achieve the highest purpose of the community. That's what has expected of any leader be it secular or Christian. The problem is most if not all communities have some sort of norms that can be antithetical to the progress of the community at the expense of the group, primarily based on perception, and exclusion (written or unwritten), that has been culturally established.

For example, you could walk into a place the first time, meet those in the place for the first time, and yet, a person in the place will immediately start forming a perception about you. The reality is that communities are built on certain values. That's why any

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[256] Ibid, 1

behavioral actions outside of how the organization is culturally structured can easily be spotted and opposed. I must also emphasize that exclusion of individuals that are marginalized in a community didn't happen overnight. It took some time for people within those communities to exclude others from their midst.

The biggest reason often for exclusion is controlled. When a leader senses any type of reform, that is not based on what has kept the people in the community, organization, or institution under his/her control, it creates an immediate ground for conflict. Unlike the attitude of preserving the constant nature of control, Jesus reforms the community and empowered the people within the community to achieve their highest goals and purposes. Instead of maintaining and controlling the community, Christ reforms that community. In stating the significance of community reforms within the context of the church, Shellberg points out that

> Paul levels the playing field, demonstrating how Jew and Gentile alike are equal in sinfulness but also equally loved by God and equally worthy of favor. He tells the story of God's purposes, weaving together the histories of Israel and of humankind to show how Israel was chosen to make God's heart known to the rest of creation…in chapter 12 where the theme verse for Transformed Community is found, Paul begins to reconstruct what should be the community's common and shared Christian identity. He calls all of them, Jewish and Gentile Christians together, to "not be conformed to this world," to resist expectations of their present age, and to not conform to familiar social hierarchies or cultural and religious privileges. Rather, he wants them to be transformed by the renewal of their minds—which for Paul means having the "mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16 and Philippians 2:2, 5)—so that they "may discern what is the will of God."[257]

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[257] Shellberg, Pamela. *TRANSFORMED COMMUNITY FREED AND EMPOWERED FOR RADICAL WELCOME* https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/TransformedCommunityBibleStudy_2019.pdf accessed 8/1/22. 4

One of the remarkable takeaways from Shellberg's suggestion is that Paul's intention of the church in Rome was not to "conform to familiar social hierarchies or cultural and religious privileges,"[258] it's an important nugget for leaders, especially within the context of Liberian United Methodist Church leadership. Our (Liberians) concept of leadership is highly influenced by the cultural and traditional societal perspective of a top to bottom leadership style than a bottom-to-top leadership style model by Jesus Christ. According to Friedman and Langbert "In contrast, transforming leadership shapes, alters, and elevates the followers' motives and values. It unites diverse members in pursuit of higher goals, the realization of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the pooled interests of leaders and followers."[259]

The distinctive nature of transformational leadership is not based on transactional values. For example, when you consider transactional leadership "is characterized by an exchange that aids individual interests. The emphasis is on motivating followers by exchanging rewards and benefits for motivation and productivity."[260] If all leaders' motivations come from a "transactional" position, then it is more of an external driven factor than an innate driven relationship to help the community achieve its goals. That's the challenge in Liberia, West Africa, and mainly the entire continent.

I think for the Liberian leadership in the United Methodist Church to become effective transformative leaders, we first how to divorce ourselves from the cultural and traditional status quo of "transactional" leadership. On the other hand, African leadership is not only heavily transactional "basically reliance on rewards and punishment to achieve optimal performance

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[258] ibid, 4

[259] Friedman, Hershey H., and Mitchell Langbert. "*Abraham as a transformational leader*." Journal of leadership studies 7.2 (2000): 3

[260] Ibid, 3

from his or her subordinates"[261] but also cultural influenced. According to Freeman societal and

traditional norms dictates how the leader leads. For example, Freeman posits that

> because of the high-value honor and shame societies put on relationships…the
> group, as opposed to an individual, sets the standards for social rating.'
> Relationships are expected to be 'characterized by respect [honour], especially by
> the young to the old… and to upset harmony is unacceptable and wrong…'In
> principle, younger men owed deference not only to their compound head but to
> elder brothers and all those senior to them…Thus the influence of leadership is
> upon whoever is 'below' a person in the hierarchy"[262]

The power of "deference" permeates throughout the entire African existence most especially to

the elders. It is heavily rooted in the African community. For example, when an elder is speaking

to a stranger, be it relational or not, you are to not only listen but rarely question the intentions of

the elder's rationale for what he or she is saying. In other words, "talking back" to the elder

creates insubordination. To even compound the situation is the communal spirit, where the entire

community is seen as one unit despite various tribal diversity. Freeman further asserts that the

'respect for elders [which] may lead to a blind loyalty to old ideas' prohibiting innovation or

disagreement with elders…others also note chiefs never stoop to serve their subjects."[263]

The very fact the "chiefs never stoop to serve their subjects" speaks volumes of the way

the top to bottom leadership style affected Liberia and the entire African continent in the past and

to a huge extend in the present despite some progress. Now some may argue that there are

benefits of African "cultural humility."[264] In as much as I agree, I think we draw our leadership

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[261] Prat K. Mary, *"Transactional leadership"*
https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/transactional-leadership_4/2017 accessed
8/17/22.

[262] Freeman, S. E. "*The Doctrine Of The Servanthood of Christ And the Potential Impact On
Honour Dynamics In African Christian Leadership." (2019). 10*
[263] Ibid, 12
[264] Ibid, 15

model as Christians from Jesus, which is more of a biblical foundation, then a cultural traditional "humility."[265] Again, Freeman suggests there's a need to examine cultural and biblical humilities,

> Such incongruences, between cultural 'humility' and biblical humility, require closer examination otherwise we risk the danger…where 'our model of leadership is often shaped more by culture than by Christ'. If the church is to truly honour and glorify God and demonstrate true servanthood in leadership, in both attitude and action, a reversal of honour dynamics is potentially needed, where going 'down' in the eyes of people is going 'up' in God's eyes. Jesus demonstrated God's counter-cultural honour dynamics, where 'humility comes before honour' (Proverbs 15:33) when he washed the disciples' feet and lowered himself positionally to do what was considered culturally shameful.[266]

The question then becomes, how can Liberian United Methodist Pastors response to the challenge of "where going 'down' in the eyes of people is going 'up' in God's eyes," when leaders are so used to the traditional view of the community serving, then the leaders serving the community. To help answer the question, draw our attention to another way Christ model transformative Servant Leadership.

Jesus as a transformative servant leader: Investing in people

Recently, I read an online post about the influential power of a leader investing in people. According to Allen, the reason he has today in life is due to people that invested in him and took their time to help him succeed. Allen posits that transformative leaders are effective because "In short, they owned their power (not their authority) and effected meaningful and measurable

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265 Ibid, 15
266 Ibid, 15

change."[267] Noticed that Allen points out that one of the secrets and tools that sets transformative leaders apart is not exerting their power, but "owning their power (not their authority.)"[268]

Any transformative leader through the ages knows that to effect change, the individual must balance how power is enforced when exercising the use of power. For example, Allen identifies five markers any transformational leader can use to impact the lives of the community or group they lead. The markers are not an end by themselves and can only become effective if the leader exercises servant mentality by understanding the need for connectionism, and relationship, understanding that leadership requires probing one's members to understand their situations at a particular point in their lives.[269] According to Allen, to make an impact on your community, group, or congregation and establish value, the transformational leader should be,

> **Exceptionally curious…**These leaders want to know what others need, what they care about, and what their goals are. From the boardroom to the staff meeting, to the classroom, these people are asking the power questions and digging deeply into matters that will move people to action. **Inspired and inspiring…**These leaders are inspired and when their inspiration fails them, they rely on the three "Ds" (decisions, dedication, and discipline) to get themselves and others focused on common goals. They are good at inspiring others to a greater vision. Clear **about expectations**…They ensure standards are in place and solicit feedback from others in setting and communicating expectations. These leaders remain focused on mutual accountability. **Create a sense of urgency**…These leaders are persistently focused on the mission and work to provide resources and remove obstacles (directly or indirectly) for success. They remain doggedly focused on the goal and on creating an environment for people to deliver their best work. **Accessible and aware…**These leaders are available and approachable, and they make it their business to stay aware of where you are struggling and what

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[267] Allen Terna, "*How Transformational Leaders Impact Those Around Them*", https://www.forbes.com/sites/terinaallen/2018/09/12/the-touch-it-taste-it-feel-it-type-of-leadership-that-transforms-lives/?sh=2402fb7d1d63 9/12/2018. Accessed 8/20/22.

[268] Ibid, 1
[269] Ibid, 1

developmental opportunities you need. They know where the gaps are and help to fill them.[270]

It is interesting to me that the connection between Allen's experiences while growing up, helps him to shape his markers in his article as he reflects on his Six grade teacher, or the "Janitor" that invested time in him and help to change his trajectory in life.

In context, as I considered the most excellent Leader of all time Jesus, I want to point out how Christ serves as the perfect example of Allen's experience about 2000 years ago. According to Echols, a transformational leader "seeks to satisfy higher needs…engages the full person…converts followers into leaders and moral agents."[271] Jesus' ability to focus on the needs of those that He encountered during the time of ministry, and how that impacts their lives for the greater good of humanity is told in the gospel narration of Christ's life. For Jesus, the focus was on how the best of vision could be realized and live out in those that Christ led. According to Hazel, when a leader devotes his or her time to developing and mentoring an individual or leading a community, it's not all about exchanging ideas, or partnerships but the leader's ability to serve and value those that the leader leads.[272] Hazel posits that,

> Investing in others is not about networking or even collaborating, both of which have their place. This is about being willing to serve others in their best interest. It is about esteeming others and even preferment, being willing to put someone else, and their needs first. As we try to get to grips with this challenge, we are led straight to Jesus who willingly made Himself nothing, for us. Jesus took the nature of a servant and came to serve, investing His all in you and me.[273]

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[270] Ibid, 1

[271] Echols, Steve. "Transformational/servant leadership: A potential synergism for an inclusive leadership style." Journal of Religious Leadership 8.2 (2009): 94

[272] Hazel, Sharon https://limitless-horizon.com/is-true-encouragement-investing-in-the-lives-of-others/ 02/26/22. Accessed 7/30/22.

[273] Ibid, 1

Based on the Gospel accounts of Jesus, a Leader puts the utmost interest of those he encountered and his disciples ahead of his glory, and satisfaction. In the gospel of Matthew 20:29-34, we see how Jesus responded to the needs of people that he met while focusing on his ministry. In the immediate context, Matthew records a request from the mother of the "sons of Zebedee" (Matthew 20: 21 ESV).

After Jesus answered her and the evangelist continues their journey through Jericho, Matthew draws his readers' attention to a miracle. In the gospel of Mark, one of the blind men was identified as Bartimaeus "*Jesus and his disciples went to Jericho. And as they were leaving, they were followed by a large crowd. A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was sitting beside the road*" (Mark 10:46 ESV). In Matthew both are not identified, "… two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Matthew 20:30 ESV). In Mark's gospel, Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, that's an important detail. If they were leaving and walking to another city in the Judean region, where at the time there were no vehicles as a means of transportation, they had to time their walking distance from Jericho to the next city, with the understanding of not getting late.

Yet despite the distance ahead of them, Jesus stopped. To become a transformational leader, one must learn to stop and listen and help if the leader can or point the individual or community in the right direction for help. In fact, "It is about esteeming others and even preferment, being willing to put someone else, and their needs

first,"[274] even when at times the situation will "delay" the leader's planned schedule. Another nugget from the Synoptics is that Jesus had compassion. A heart of compassion embraces empathy.

The synoptic records on numerous occasions that Jesus was moved by compassion. I had an experienced that stays with me today regarding leaders having compassion. In 1998, I was returning to Liberia, West Africa after living in Accra, Ghana as a refugee. We had to pay about $160 per person and raised money for checkpoints as we passed through La Cote' Voire (the Ivory Coast). When we got to a town closer to the Liberian border, we were told the "pass" we had from Abidjan was forged, and the entire convoy will return to Abidjan, or we will be locked up. At this point of the trip, all the passengers were exhausted, low on cash, and devasted. As God could have it, Liberia shared cultural tribal heritage with Ivory Coast. The Gio-speaking and Krahn-speaking tribes exist both in Liberia and Cote Voire. A general that was leading the border unit's mother was Liberian, and his father was Ivorian. A group of Liberians at the border heard about our situation and informed him. When he came, he said, we could stay in the barracks, but we will need an escort of military men the next day to take us to the Liberian side. However, we had to raise some funds for the military escort unit. The last cash I had on me, was used as my contribution.

When we crossed the bordered to the Liberian side, I had no money, and two other friends of mine were in the same situation. I suggested to my friends, the best place we can get help from in this strange town will be the Church. In Toes town, we decided

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[274] Hazel, Sharon https://limitless-horizon.com/is-true-encouragement-investing-in-the-lives-of-others/ 02/26/22. Accessed 7/30/22.

to look for the Pastor of a Pentecostal Church we saw, I can't remember his name, it was 1998 September. We explained to the Pastor our condition, and we were hungry. The Pastor asked us to sit, his wife prepared food for us (Rice and potatoes Greens), and we ate. We went back in the evening since our bus broke down, and it took a whole day to get it fixed. In Mark 8, the evangelist narrates about Jesus' compassion for the crowd. The chapter starts with the crowd gathering around Christ.

In verse 2, Jesus shows his heart of compassion for the crowd as a transformational servant leader, recognizing the fact that the people had been with Him for "Three days" and needed food, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat" (Mark 8:2 ESV). The difference between having compassion and knowing about compassion is when compassion leads the leader to address the situation in the best ways, he or she can meet the needs of the community. On the other hand, a person may have all the knowledge about compassion, but it's only a textbook and scholarly reference resource, only head knowledge, not of the heart. Another example of Jesus investing in people is how he gives his time and explains his vision to his disciples. Hazel points out that "As Jesus' ministry began, He called twelve disciples to follow Him. He invested His time in teaching and preparing others to be evangelists so that they could continue the work after Him."[275]

The idea that Christ ministered to thousands and invested or dive deeper with a, most notably the twelve (12), shows how a leader sells or reproduces him or her selves at a deeper level. What is even striking about these transfers of vision during Jesus' training

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[275] Hazel, Sharon https://limitless-horizon.com/is-true-encouragement-investing-in-the-lives-of-others/ 02/26/22. Accessed 7/30/22.

of the twelve (12), was he took three (3) and had them as the most inner of his circle.

According to Hicks "Jesus intentionally invested himself in the lives of a few men. He

ministered to large crowds but went deep with a small group. This idea goes against our

Western philosophy that everything bigger is better. Jesus understood the exponential

impact of twelve men on the world."[276] What is worth noting from Hicks' observation is

the word "intentionally."

According to the Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, the word "intentional" means

"done by intention or design."[277] Considering the synonyms of the word intentional

(purposeful or deliberate), Christ then by purpose and with a deliberate mindset invested

in the disciples, shaping their lives and making helping them realize their potential.

Interestingly, Hicks points out five strategies based on the gospels that make Christ's

transformative SL impactful,

> **Intimacy**: What does Jesus give these 12 men? He gives them access to Himself. This group travels with Jesus; they stay in the same homes, eat the same meals, and share life with Him. These men have a front-row seat to the life and character of Jesus. They observed his lifestyle, his attitude, his words, and his actions.
> **Community**: As a small group, these men not only had access to Jesus; they shared life. In this environment, they learned from one another, and their character had opportunities to grow and be transformed. We understand that the process of discipleship cannot be formed in isolation; it requires community.
> **Investment**: This 12-man discipleship experiment wasn't merely about sharing life; it was about intentional growth. Jesus took every opportunity to teach these men about the Kingdom of God and their role in it. Much of their education was about unlearning what they had been taught. Jesus would often say to them, "You have heard it said, but I say...." Jesus served as a rabbi to his disciples. **Release** -

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[276] Hicks, Loren "*How Jesus Made Disciples*" https://www.5minutediscipleship.com/blog/how-jesus-made-disciples3470695 12/5/2020. Accessed 8/25/22.

[277] "*Intentional.*" Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intentional. Accessed 4 Sep. 2022.

As Jesus sends his disciples out for ministry, they received "on-the-job" training. In Matthew chapter ten, we see Jesus sending out his disciples for ministry. Verses 7-8 say, "As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, and drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give." **Accountability**: Jesus spoke freely to his disciples, and in addition to teaching, he also corrected them, providing much-needed accountability. We see Jesus confronting their jealousy, their selfish ambition, their pride, and their self-righteousness. This accountability enabled these men to see their blind spots and grow in character and wisdom.[278]

Based on Hicks' strategies, Liberian United Methodist Church leaders can learn to be accessible, and accountable, invest quality time, and release those they invest in spiritually, and not all of the crowd, but a few. Jesus loves all people, yet Christ empties Himself in a few as a Model of an effective transformational Leader.

Transformative servant leader: Apostle Paul

According to Guvette, Paul's transformative servant leadership wasn't an automatic leap or a sudden recovery of some inner zeal of the Christian faith. I can argue that Paul's zeal was more of a pharisaic compulsion based on Luke's account in the book of Acts.[279] Guvette posits that "As Christians fled from the violence in Jerusalem, they were scattered throughout the region. Saul believed it was his duty to pursue them wherever they might be."[280]

Acts 9:1-2 confirms Guvette's observation of Paul's pre-Christian conversational state of mind "*And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the*

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[278] Hicks, Loren "*How Jesus Made Disciples*" https://www.5minutediscipleship.com/blog/how-jesus-made-disciples3470695 12/5/2020. Accessed 8/25/22.

[279] Guyette, Fred. "*The Apostle Paul: A Transformed Heart, A Transformational Leader*." The Asbury Journal 74.2 (2019): 370
[280]Ibid, 370

synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might

bring them bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1-2 K JV). However, Acts 9 does not only

describe Paul's zealot pharisaic persuasion, but Luke invites his audience to take a second

look at what God's plan for Saul of Tarsus's openness and acceptance of grace would

become later in life.

In Acts 9:3-6, Luke states that while Paul was so focused on his journey to

Damascus, he encountered a life-changing experience that defined and realign his zeal

forever,

> As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed
> around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul,
> why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom
> you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will
> be told what you must do" (Acts 9:3-6 NIV).

In retrospect, it seems to me that Paul's letter to the Church in Rome to "*transformed*

their minds" and not "*be conformed*" (Romans 12:2), was in part based on how his

passion for persecuting the church turned to be the most outspoken person for the

Christian faith. The question then becomes, how was Paul a transformational leader?

According to Paul, "Paul's leadership was unquestionably transformational. This is

evidenced by both change and increasing maturity in the lives of individuals he served,

such as Timothy who developed from a young, timid person to a church leader. Paul

expected individuals to respond to his leadership positively."[281]

The understanding then is the apostle Paul devoted time to mentoring, coaching,

and supporting both communities and individuals he came across to be their best. Guvette

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[281] Paul, Michael K. "*The Role of Transformational Leadership in Preparing Youth as Future Church Leaders*." (2020).

points out that "Paul does not "lord it over" the Thessalonians or try to impose his own

will on them the way a despotic leader would. Paul adopts a countercultural stance,

making sure the Thessalonians understand the difference between the idolatry of imperial

Rome and the humble way of Christ."[282] Guvette suggests that when considering the

apostle Paul, as a transformational leader, one's must look at him from three levels:

"Micro, Meso, and Macro."[283] At the "Micro…face to face interaction,"[284]

Paul didn't always lead from far, he was in contact with the churches he founded.

We know from Paul's letters his influence on Timothy, Titus, and others that he had close

contact and how that relationship helped them achieve their potential.

Concerning the word "Meso," Guvette theorizes that "While Paul is remembered today primarily

as a theologian, a missionary, and a pastor, he was also involved in an important fund-raising

project… that involved communicating with a network of churches…when he was at a

conference in Jerusalem, he had accepted a charge "to remember the poor."[285]

It appears that Paul understood the connectional importance of the Church, but also as a

leader raising funds for the under privilege or "poor" Christians in Jerusalem was also of utmost

significance as a leader. In considering Paul's transformational leadership at the "Macro" level,

Guvette invites his reader to consider how Paul communicated Christian theology to affect not

only a local audience but with a far-reaching universal transformational effect as a leader,

> When we consider Paul's pioneering efforts to proclaim the gospel in the public
> sphere, in places such as Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17) and the court of King
> Agrippa (Acts 26), then we can say that he is a transformational leader at the
> macro-level, as well…It would be difficult for us to count all the conflicting

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[282] Guyette, Fred. "*The Apostle Paul: A Transformed Heart, A Transformational Leader*." The Asbury Journal 74.2 (2019): 370
[283] Ibid, 378
[284] Ibid, 378
[285] Ibid, 379

interpretations of Paul's Areopagus discourse in Acts 17:16- 34…Is it a radical critique of pagan polytheism? If we read it that way, it means Paul's basic insight was that there were so many gods in the Graeco-Roman pantheon and so many stories in which their gods flippantly entered the war and other forms of competition with each other, that they would never be capable of providing a coherent account of human existence. In that case, the altar dedicated "To an Unknown God" would have suggested to Paul the moral emptiness and the epistemological bankruptcy of Greek and Roman religion. Or is it the case that Paul's speech on Mars Hill provides the first model for a friendly dialogue between Christian values and Greek philosophical thought?... If we read his words that way, it means that… Christians will find encouragement in Acts 17 for probing the strengths and weaknesses of Plato's account of truth, beauty, and goodness, along with Aristotle's reflection on the ethics of virtue and his argument for the existence of an Unmoved Mover. Whichever approach we find more compelling, there is no denying that in Acts 17, Paul was seeking to bring the discussion of "public theology" to a new level.[286]

Whichever approach or levels that a leader may prefer in evaluating Paul's transformational impact as a leader, it's clear that his letter to the church at Philippi gives us a clue to his thought pattern and his life as a servant leader,

> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11 ESV).

Transformative servant leader: Nehemiah

Nehemiah as a leader has always influenced me and listening to an exposition while serving as my high school Scripture Union President in 1998 at the YMCA in Accra, Ghana. It was also the very first time I encountered the United Methodists theologian. Dr. Asante's exposition to this date still becomes a point of reference for me

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[286] Ibid, 379-380

as a leader. My concentration in this chapter is the transformative impact of Nehemiah on

his community, and what makes him so impactful.

According to Patton, "The book of Nehemiah provides an early case study in

strategic management. Nehemiah was armed with an eclectic array of leadership

strategies, ranging from prayer to perseverance. a selection of these strategies, many of

which belong to the transformational leader."[287] Patton's observation that "Nehemiah

provides an early case study in strategic management"[288] is not an understatement.

As a candidate for Ordained ministry within the UMC Central Texas Conference,

I certainly concurred. One of the hall marks or consistent threads that runs through all

transformational leaders is their ability to clearly articulate their vision to those that they

lead. It is clear that "Where there is no vision, the people perish…" (Proverbs 29:18

KJV). Paul and Jeremiah agreed. According to Paul and Jeremiah "Leaders are

individuals who have —a clear vision of the future state of their organizations. This

vision helps direct followers toward a common goal and empowers them with the

knowledge that they form a vital component serving to accomplish that goal. Nehemiah

had his vision in mind; he communicated it to others."[289]

When a leader can undoubtedly explain his or her vision, even though it may be

challenging to the group at first, with much clarity, it can become simple, attainable, and

achievable. In other words, the leader creates the capacity and ability to not only

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[287] Patton, Cheryl. "*What made Nehemiah an effective leader?" Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 1.1 (2017): 1
[288] Ibid, 1
[289] Paul, KOLAWOLE Oladotun, and A. D. E. L. O. D. U. N. Jeremiah. "*Nehemiah as an Example of Project Manager*" International Journal of Social, Politics & Humanities ISSN: 2797-3735, Volume 3, Issue 2. 317.

influence but transform the community. As I previously indicated with Christ, there was a clarity of how Christ intended the evangelists to reach the known world at the time with the gospel message of Christ. Paul and Jeremiah point out that, there may have been others before Nehemiah that had the desire to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but they suggest that those leaders or people may have not had the ability to transform a broken, in my mind ridiculed community to rebuild the walls.[290] Paul and Jeremiah posit why Nehemiah was so transformational, and why that transformational influence led the people to rebuild the walls,

> Nehemiah 's heart and spiritual vision set him apart as a leader and project manager. Something is noteworthy in Nehemiah 's prayer: ―Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man‖ (the king). Nehemiah was willing to pray that God would use him to change the situation. He was available and willing to act. No doubt many lamented the state of the wall but had anyone done anything about it? Delegation of works is good, but project managers should not sit on the sideline complaining or barking out orders, they lead by example, and they lead by action, and others file in line behind them. Nehemiah showed them what was possible; he told them how God had been so gracious to him in the presence of the king. He said ―let 's.‖ He knew that he could not rebuild the wall alone. He was going to rebuild the wall with them.30 He knew that city transformation had to be done together. Nehemiah would work alongside them the entire time and with his money.31 The people of Judah knew that if they could rebuild the wall, their descendants would always remember that it was them. This was a chance to make history because they were faced with the leveled walls every day.[291]

Taking a nation, community, or individual from a state of dejection, insecurity, and I think self-doubt, and to the point of success, and achievable people, is nothing short of impact and servant leadership transformation at the highest level.

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[290] Ibid, 319
[291] Ibid, 319

Transformative servant leader: Moses

In this chapter, I have already considered three transformative servant leaders: Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul, and Nehemiah. I will now turn my attention to Moses. While growing up in a Baptist home, with my late mother was a Baptist Lay preacher in our local Bassa dialect, and my late father a Baptist Deacon, Sunday devotions were full of biblical stories. Learning about the Ten Commandments, crossing the Red Sea by the Hebrews, the Burning bush, and catch phrases like "Let my people go" (Exodus 5:1), and being a member of the *Royal Ambassador* (RA), in retrospect all help to ground me theologically and introduce me to the leadership of Moses.

However, I didn't grasp the transformative impact of Moses as a leader, until I started engaging the Pentateuch (Greek) or Torah (Hebrew) texts, which are the first five books according to tradition written by Moses. According to Berendt et al, they point out that,

> Perhaps what is lacking in many of our so-called leaders today, not only in business but in the fields of politics, entertainment, religion, or any other human endeavor, is a particular kind of leadership. This is the kind that it appears, from all scripture and tradition, Moses possessed and… It is based on personal values, beliefs, and qualities in combination with the ability to elevate the interests, awareness, and acceptance of the group and to stir followers to look beyond their own interests[292]

I must point out that every leadership comes with a challenge. For Moses, there may be mixed reactions from others concerning his success as a leader, but this challenge is not lost as a fact to Berendt et al "although Moses' leadership may superficially appear to have been a failure, as most adults liberated from Egypt in the Book of Exodus, including

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[292] Berendt, Charles J., et al. "*Transformational leadership: Lessons in management for today.*" International Business Research 5.10 (2012):228

himself, did not live to see the Promised Land."[293] However, Berendt et al emphatically

countered focusing on Moses' leadership failure with the fact that "the children of Israel

collectively were changed by Moses' examples and innovations from twelve

confederated tribes into one nation,"[294] it is a testament to the enduring legacy of an

effective leader in my view.

Lewis seems to bring more clarity to Moses' leadership, by pointing out that

"Every leader has seasons of frustration, but it should not define who one is as a person

or leader. Moses's disappointment was not…of self-centeredness but genuine concern for

the plight of the people…God reaffirmed His call of Moses by informing him of his

limitations and the need for assistance."[295] One of the clearest examples of SL by Moses

and his transformational ability was his willingness to listen to Jethro and appoint

Seventy leaders to help him lead the Hebrews when it was a fact he couldn't do it alone,

> And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the
> seventy men of the elders of the people and set them round about the tabernacle.
> And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit
> that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that,
> when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. (Number
> 11:24-25 KJV).

Another mark of Moses as a transformational leader was transferring his vision of

leading God's people to the promised land. Not to sound redundant, Jesus transformed

the Twelve apostles to reach the world, Paul influenced Timothy and Titus; Moses also

influenced Joshua. According to Hagos, "Similarly, Moses moved Israel from slavery to

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[293] Ibid, 228
[294] Ibid, 228
[295] Lewis, Derwin Earl. "*Old Testament view of Robert Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Theory*."
Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 1 (2019): 314

freedom, from Egypt to the promised land, from serving the earthly king to serving the Holy One…Indeed, transformational and virtuous leaders are people-oriented."[296] There is evidence from the Bible that highlights the role of Moses as a transformational leader and leading an individual and a nation to achieve their highest goals, with the heart of a servant. The reason Jesus, Paul, Nehemiah, and Moses were successful was that they understood the need for reform, and working for the community, and not for their satisfaction. The Liberian United Methodist Church is full of leaders that can be transformation, by serving and leading the community into serving each other.

Now I will turn my attention to how the Christological hymn can be applied authentically with the "Mind of Christ" in a culturally oriented community.

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[296] Hagos, Aron O. "*Leadership Lessons from Jesus and Moses*." (2021). 10

**CHAPTER FIVE: Authentic Application of *Carmen Christi* "The Mind of Christ"
In A Cultural-Oriented Community**

In considering the authentic application of the Christological hymn as it relates to the

"mind of Christ," according to Posey it is important not to neglect the societal context the apostle

Paul wrote Phil. 2:5-11. Posey suggests that "First, the social and cultural context is an important

aspect of proper exegesis. With continuing research, the first-century world of Paul takes on

greater depth and solidity. Becoming conversant with the Greco-Roman world…offers

significant insight into the world and the writings of the New Testament congregations."[297]

It is a significant observation within the context of the challenge of how to apply the

Carmen Christi. According to Uy, the societal stratification of the Greco-Roman world reminds

the reader of how the ideological mindset of honor had overtaken every cultural norm during the

time of Paul,[298]

> At the time of Paul, more than half a century of ideological influence from the
> Romans to Philippi has already permeated the region such that even though the
> Romans are a minority in the colony, they are an ideological majority. The
> political atmosphere of the place is wholly Roman.
> The political atmosphere of the place is wholly Roman. The chief magistrates
> called themselves praetors and the pride and privilege of Roman citizenship
> abound in Philippi. This is a valuable piece of information because social values
> such as the Roman honor system, called cursus honorum (meaning course of
> honor or honor's race) have become a social norm in Philippi.[299]

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[297] Posey, David Alan. "The Unifying Theme of the Mind of Christ in Philippians Demonstrated
by Paul's Use of Rhetorical and Linguistic Devices in an Oral/Aural Culture." (2019). 163

[298] Uy, Julius Brian. "Carmen Christi"
**https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/57157518/Term_Paper-with-cover-page-
v2.pdf?Expires=1662612676&Signature=Ab-
3qIreuvpe7WqEuR9J3plAqj8wAOTIiYq8p9rO5Ku**. Accessed 8/3/22.

[299] Ibid, 3-4

At the heart of the Christological hymns is the doctrine of Christ emptying himself and taking on the form of a slave. So, when one attempts to authentically apply and draw a lesson from the text for the 21st-century reader, especially with the understanding of SL, the onus is on the individual to consider the scholarship requires for such a task. Uy asserts that "understanding honor and shame is crucial in understanding the social environment of the times of Christ,"[300] and thus the cultural practices of societal values. In other words, context matters as one applies the text within the 21st-century cultural contexts or any society. Considering Christ's servanthood and focus on his leadership as a servant-leader, my starting point for an authentic application of the "mind of Christ" within a cultural-orientated community is the foundational truth of Philippians 2:3-4 "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*" (KJV).

For any culturally oriented society that perpetrates honor, or an honor-driven leader, Paul builds on verses 3-4, to encourage the church at Philippi to consider Christ's humility as a transforming example *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men*" (Philippians 2:5-6). According to Green et al, "First, how societies viewed leadership two millennia were somewhat different from more egalitarian and democratic societies in the twenty-first century… Yet, despite cultural differences, the general idea of leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal is timeless."[301]

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[300] Ibid, 4

[301] Green, Mark, et al. "Assessing the leadership style of Paul and cultural congruence of the Christian community at Corinth using Project Globe constructs." Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 2.2 (2009): 4

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The nugget that can be gleaned from Green et al, is that it doesn't matter what cultural,

and societal organizations and communities exist, be it in the past or current; the truth remains

that a leader's goal is to influence, serve and effect change for positive transformation. The

question becomes how the leader leads, and what philosophy or leadership style is the guiding

principle. I want us to consider "the mind of Christ" as a leading theological principle and guide

for Christian leadership within the context of Servant Leadership.

Considering "the mind of Christ" within the context of Servant Leadership

According to Devenish, Paul used the phrase in 1 Cor. 2:16 "*For who has*

understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of

Christ"[302] (ESV). When I crossed referenced the text, the apostle Paul previously state

the same question in Romans 11:34, but never add "*but we have the mind of Christ*" (1

Cor. 2:16b ESV). For contextual purposes, it is important to understand the context in

which Paul the apostle used "*but we have the mind of Christ*" in (1 Cor. 2:16b) and

Philippians 2:5. According to Clark's Commentary, the text in 1 Cor. 2:16b can be

understood this way,

> *But we have the mind of Christ.* — He has endowed us with the same disposition,
> being born again by his Spirit; therefore, we are capable of knowing his mind and
> receiving the teachings of his Spirit. These teachings we do receive, and therefore
> are well qualified to convey them to others. The words, that he may instruct him,
> ος συμβιβασει αυτον, should be translated that he may teach IT: that is, the mind
> of God; not instruct God, but teach his mind to others. And this interpretation the
> Hebrew will also bear.[303]

Contextually, it is quite different from how "the mind of Christ" is used by Paul the

apostle in Philippians 2:5, especially within the context of Christ's humiliation. Matthew Henry's

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[302] Devenish, Stuart Cranford. "The mind of Christ? A phenomenological explication of personal
transformation and cosmic revision in Christian converts in Western Australia." (2001). 59
[303] Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2:16". "The Adam Clarke Commentary".
https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/1-corinthians-2.html. 1832. Accessed 8/30/22.

commentary throws further light on the focus of the Apostle (Paul) in 1 Cor. 2:16, according to

Matthew Henry's commentary, it is the revelation of understanding the things of God in Christ

through the Holy Spirit, since the carnal mind can't understand the things of the Spirit,[304]

> *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him* (1 Cor. 2:16),
> that is, the spiritual man? Who can enter so far into the mind of God as to instruct
> him who has the Spirit of God, and is under his inspiration? He only is the person
> to whom God immediately communicates the knowledge of his will. And who
> can inform or instruct him in the mind of God who is so immediately under the
> conduct of his own Spirit? Very few have known anything of the mind of God by
> a natural power. But, adds the apostle, *we have the mind of Christ*; and the mind
> of Christ is the mind of God. He is God, and the principal messenger and prophet
> of God. And the apostles were empowered by his Spirit to make known his mind
> to us. And in the holy scriptures the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in
> Christ, are fully revealed to us. Observe, it is the great privilege of Christians that
> they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by his Spirit.**[305]**

It's clear then that "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5a) is more of Paul exhorting the church

at Philippi, to follow the servanthood example of Christ,[306] and is predicated upon *"Do nothing*

through strife and vain glory. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the

things of others (Phil. 2:3-4 ESV)**.** The concept of selflessness and serving others become the

primal idea of the text. According to Freeman "His servanthood was not in conflict with his

kingship and his eternal victory over sin, but would demonstrate to the world what defined a

God-honoring leader… In Philippians 2:5-11 Scripture clearly outlines Jesus' servant 'mind',

meaning his 'mind-set' (NIV) or 'attitude' (NLT, NASB, CSB)."[307] Leadership involves the

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[304] MATTHEW HENRY'S COMMENTARY https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/1Cor.2.6-1Cor.2.16. Accessed /1/22.

[305] Ibid, 1

[306] Ibid, 1

[307] Freeman, S. E. "*The Doctrine Of The Servanthood of Christ And the Potential Impact On Honour Dynamics In African Christian Leadership*." (2019). 5

individual mentality, and how that mental mind set is used by the one that is leading leads.[308]

One of the glaring example of the "mind of Christ" is when I first went to visit the Ghanaian

congregation in Arlington, Texas. Based on the District superintendent's suggestion I visited the

predominantly African congregation with the mindset of helping out. When I was called into the

Elder's office, he also invited the Lay leader. As we spoke and discuss my options, the Lay

Leader said, "it's not about any of us here, I don't care if you are a Ghanaian or not. My interest

is what can you do to help us grow?" I was blown away! The mind of Christ is not self-seeking,

but for the service of all.

According to Ward Leadership is a behavior—a lifestyle—that is worthy of being

inspected; it is even worthy of being emulated. Leadership is not just what a person knows, not

just what a person says,"[309] throws light on the responsibility that comes with being a leader. In

his attempt to answer the question about the "mind of Christ," Tyler states "What is the "mind of

Christ"? It is a selfless, servant-centered, and humble and obedient mind."[310] In concluding his

article, Tyler concludes on the question about the mind of Christ as follows,

> So, our passage is an exhortation to have the "mind of Christ." Paul sets forth this
> mindset in his analysis of Christ (2:5-11); he translates it into daily life by citing
> examples of it in action. Ancient moral writers often adduced examples to prove
> their points; furthermore, it was common and expected in ancient ethical
> instruction for a teacher to refer to himself as an example. Paul thus points to
> Jesus (2:5-11), to Paul himself (2: 17-18), to Timothy (2: 19- 24), and to
> Epaphroditus (2:25-30)-four examples, known to the Philippians, who modeled
> the "mind of Christ."[311]

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[308] Ward, Ted W. "*Servants, leaders, and tyrants." Common Ground Journal* 10.1 (2012): 5
[309] Ibid, 5

[310] Tyler, Ronald L. "*Philippians 2.5-11 & the Mind of Christ,*" Leaven: Vol. 5: Iss. 3, Article 8
(1997). 25

[311] Ibid, 5

According to Tan the mind of Christ can be summed up this way, "The mind of Christ as introduced in Philippians 2:5 is revealed through the choices Christ makes and the attitude he adopts both as God and man. His humiliation unfolds…he refuses to take advantage of his preexistent status…by emptying himself and taking the form of a slave."[312] As I read Tan's understanding of the mind of Christ, I am challenged by a few things that jump at me from his exegesis of the text. The fact that Jesus "refuses to take advantage of his preexistent status… the choices Christ makes and the attitude he adopts both as God and man."[313] is telling.

It seems to me that a leader's mindset determines how far that leader can influence and lead people either based on how that leader thinks or what drives that leader. For most Christian leaders within the African continent, the challenge is how they approach the community, organization, or group(s) that they lead. The leader's attitude toward his community with the heart of humility is important. According to Gray "The form of humility, taken in the form of man, was that of a servant. Unlike the Roman emperors Caligula and Nero, Christ assumed the lower social status of a servant…contrary to the convention established by the rulers of the dominant political power of the Mediterranean world, the Roman World. "[314] Assuming the lesser societal status Jesus' mind was not only on how his example would impact the disciples but as a model of grace and wisdom that Christian leaders can tap into.

According to Piper, the mindset of Christ in Philippians 2:5a is Paul's way of reenforcing his foundational truth in verse 4 "In other words, verse 4 is a way of saying the words of Jesus,

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[312] Tan, Rachael. "*Conformity to Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis of Paul's Perspective on Humiliation and Exaltation in Philippians* 2: 5-11." (2017). 184

[313] Ibid, 184

[314] Gray, David R. "Christological hymn: The leadership paradox of Philippians 2: 5-11." Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 2.1 (2008): 12

"Love your neighbor as you love yourself."[315] Piper furthers asserts that "In humility count others more significant than yourselves…lowliness."[316] The mind of Christ is a living life transformative results actionable lifestyle, there must be a relational understanding of the community or institution to which the leader is called to serve.

 I think Piper's exegetical understanding of the humility of Christ as demonstrated by his actions model his mind for every leader within the context of servant leadership to emulate both within the context of African leadership or any Christian leaders around the world,

First is Jesus himself. Verses 5–8:

Have this mind among yourselves [the mind of verse 4!], which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count [notice the word!] equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing [literally emptied himself], by taking the form of a servant [that is what it means to look to the interests of others], being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself [he laid down all his legitimate entitlements] by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross[317]

It is clear then that the "mind of Christ" is the humble act of leading by service not out of "eye service" or any ulterior motive but a complete service to God first and humanity.

 In concluding his exegesis on the "mind of Christ," Piper points out the necessity for Christian leaders to not be self-center but follow the example of Jesus,[318] "It was beautiful when Christ put our interests above his earthly comforts and died for us."[319]

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[315] Piper, John: The Mind of Christ Looking Out for the Interests of Others
https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-mind-of-christ
AUGUST 31, 2008. Accessed 9/1/22

[316] Ibid, 1
[317] Ibid, 1
[318] Ibid, 1
[319] Ibid, 1

According to Tyler, one of the keys to understanding "the mind of Christ" is to consider verse 5 within the context of verses 6-8 to better understand Paul's statement in verse 5a of Philippians 2.[320] Tyler posits that Christ's mind "…is a selfless, servant-centered, and humble and obedient mind. Let us explore these three themes."[321] According to Tyler "Christ's mind is humble because he was obedient…Humility is a uniquely Christian value. In the Greco-Roman world, humility was not highly viewed; it was something possessed by persons of lesser status. Greek moralists regarded it as self-abasement… (true humility) …will act in humble ways toward other people."[322] With this idea of humility, let me turn my attention to consider African Christian leadership within the framework of the "the mind of Christ."

Considering African leadership within the context of "the mind of Christ"

According to Amoafo, one of the challenges to the Church in Africa is the need for leadership, within the context of Christian leadership deficiency within the framework of how leaders consider their positions on the continent (Africa), "Many of these "leaders" see their positions as careers and personal businesses to be gained and protected at all costs. The widespread nominalism, the… growing syncretism that permeates the African church today have often been blamed on this sad state of African church leadership."[323] I think Amoako's observations are well-placed.

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[320] Tyler, Ronald L."*Philippians 2.5-11 & the Mind of Christ*," Leaven: Vol. 5: Iss. 3, Article 8. 1997.https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1854&context=leaven#:~:text=The%20Philippians%20are%20to%20have,which%20was%20in%20Christ%20Jesus.%22&text=What%20is%20the%20%22mind%20of,and%20humble%20and%20obedient%20mind. 2. Accessed 9/1/22

[321] Ibid, 2
[322] Ibid, 26
[323] Amoafo, Emmanuel Kwasi. "*Improving African Christian Leadership: A Biblical View*." Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology 32 (2013): 153

The dominant theme that permeates African leadership is it secular of Christianity is this idea of "careers and personal businesses to be gained and protected at all costs,"[324] even though the Christian leader is called to be a servant first, and It God that provides all that is needed for the leader to succeed in the community. Amoafo posits that the way African leaders lead their community, or Christian organization is heavily influenced by this cultural orientation of displaying power and showing dominance, as opposed to the biblical images modeled by Christ our Lord and Master[325], he asserts that,

> African Christian leadership, unfortunately, is more often than not modeled upon and shaped by the African cultural understanding and worldview of the uses and purposes of leadership and power than by biblical concepts of leadership. African traditional concepts of leadership embrace the ideas of might, material wealth, worldly wisdom and obeisance to ancestors and ancestral spirits. Heavily influenced by this worldview and cultural understanding of leadership, African Christian leadership frequently displays values that are self-serving, intolerant, nepotistic, autocratic, inefficient, and inconsiderate of the real and felt needs of the people they lead. Leadership is perceived to be a means of personal aggrandizement and material wealth.[326]

The idea of displaying "values" for personal satisfaction is emphasized by Kgatle. According to Kgatle "Leadership is, thus, distinct from formal authority…The leader does not deduce his or her authority from codes and statutes… deduce his authority from traditional customs or feudal vows of faith, as is the case with patrimonial power…The leader deduces his or her moral authority by leading by example."[327]

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[324] Ibid, 153
[325] Ibid, 154
[326] Ibid, 154
[327] Kgatle, Mookgo S. "*Servant leadership: An urgent style for the current political leadership in South Africa*." Verbum et Ecclesia 39.1 (2018): 1-9.

In other words, it is the ethical requirement and spiritual mindset of humility that should be the test of leadership, not the use of "authority"[328] that equates to being a great or exemplary leader. For example, when Pope Francis visited Nairobi, Kenya, he was quick to exemplify the need for humility by both Christian and secular leaders on the continent.[329] According to Blair "In actions and words on his first tour of the world's poorest continent, Pope Francis has sent a message to African leaders that they could do with less pomp and a bit more humility."[330] Blair further posits that "I encourage you to work with integrity and transparency for the common good, and to foster a spirit of solidarity at every level of society."[331] The Papal exhortation to the African leaders, especially Christian leaders is a wakeup call for the continent that culturally exploited the paying of homage to leaders on the continent.

Amoafo further asserts that "The key to changing this unfortunate profile of African Christian leadership is to heed the counsel…allow the Bible to judge our African culture and to jettison our ungodly African models of leadership that are incompatible with biblical principles of servant-leadership…our natural instinct is not to serve but to be served."[332] At the core of the challenge to any African leadership is the idea of being served, then serving. Amoafo concludes on the importance and how African leaders should aspire to have the mind of Christ, "African Christian leaders must first learn to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, becoming more like Christ as they follow Him. This will develop both their character and competence and lend

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[328] Ibid, 1-9

[329] Blair, Edmund. *Pope offers lesson in humility to flashy African leaders* https://www.reuters.com/article/ozatp-uk-pope-africa-humility-idAFKBN0TF1MX20151126 November 26/2015. Accessed 9/2/22.

[330] Ibid, 1
[331] Ibid, 1
[332] Amoafo, Emmanuel Kwasi. "*Improving African Christian Leadership: A Biblical View.*" Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology 32 (2013): 155

greater credibility to their leadership as their lived-out trust of Christ results in faithfulness,

conviction, confidence, and commitment."[333] To further put this in perspective, Manala posits

that "Servant leaders focus on the development and growth of others. This is accepted within

servant leadership as the priority…Here, people are not merely used like production machines

but are valued as important human beings, who need to be equipped for service,"[334] meaning that

the leader is constantly trying and inventing ways to seek the best and highest goal(s) for the

community for all to thrive.

When I consider the mind of Christ within the Liberian United Methodist Church, I am

looking to the time that women play a lead role in the pastorate, clergies living a servanthood life

style and not using the cultural norms of an honor society for selfish motives. Kgatle emphasizes

that "Jesus taught humility because it was at the core of who He was. It enabled him to follow

God's plan for His life. The person who leads the same way as Jesus led will take this

approach…Jesus was out not to honor Himself, but to follow God's will."[335] For Liberia, the

challenge is not that the leaders "can't turn the corner," the issue is how leadership is perceived

within the context of honor-oriented society and culture.

The idea of an honor-oriented society, become the express road for a non-total

transformation of most leadership in Liberia. Recently, I came across an article from Forbes

written by Jeff Hyman. According to Hyman, most leaders struggle to be humble because

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[333] Ibid, 58

[334] Manala, Matsobane J. "Servant leadership: A required leadership model for efficient and effective service delivery in a democratic South Africa." Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae 40 (2014): 257

[335] Kgatle, Mookgo, Solomon. *Servant leadership in Philippians 2:5-11: Concept and application* https://www.academia.edu/43749634/Servant_leadership_in_Philippians_2_5_11_Concept_and_application 2012, p. 90. Accessed 9/28/2022.

humility carries the idea of not having a stronger leader trait, but a sign of weakness.[336] Hyman

posits that's an erroneous view, because "Humility is most closely associated with a cluster of

highly positive qualities including sincerity, modesty, fairness, truthfulness, unpretentiousness,

and authenticity. And there's nothing about humility that makes it incompatible with strength

and courage."[337]

      Coming from a context that celebrates masculinity, leaders flexing their authority can be

an extension of "strength" and "power" control by a leader within the church in Liberia and

Africa at large. Hyman suggests five tests as a window in identifying candidates for leadership

that may not be humble and raises the possibility of non-humility traits in their leadership style.

He states that based on the answers to these questions, both secular and Christian leaders can

conclude the candidate's style of leadership can become a barrier or a means to succeed,

> **Do they credit others**? If a candidate fails to acknowledge the contributions of
> others in helping to achieve their successes, it's a red flag.
> **Do they admit to mistakes?** A humble person not only admits to making
> mistakes; they seek to understand what they did wrong and what they should
> change going forward. Be especially careful of candidates who blame others and
> exempt themselves from responsibility.
> **Do they accept constructive feedback?** Does the candidate admit to receiving
> criticism in previous jobs? Ideally, the candidate will acknowledge the validity of
> the feedback and demonstrate a thoughtful response.
> **Do they strive to overcome their weaknesses?** We all have skill gaps. Has the
> candidate recognized their own and sought to improve?
> I worked with a technology executive who simply dreaded public speaking. I
> encouraged her to join a Toastmasters group and in just months, she was able to
> transform a weakness into a strength.

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[336] Hyman, Jeff. Why Humble Leaders Make The Best Leaders
https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffhyman/2018/10/31/humility/?sh=1e76fb6b1c80 Oct. 21, 2018.
Accessed 9/25/22.

[337] Ibid, 1

Do they help others? In prior jobs, did the candidate demonstrate that they cared about their direct reports, gave them the tools and training, and helped to advance their careers?[338]

Considering the questions that Hyman suggests, three of the questions easily resonate with me. The first is "Do they credit others?" The power of pride can easily consume anyone that is in a leadership position, most especially if that position is a coveted one.

According to Todorovich, "If you give praise where it is due, it will provide you with more opportunities for developing a great workplace culture. Avoid showing off your accomplishments."[339] It is an invaluable contribution to the continuing question of how humility should become a hallmark for every leader. The second point that jumps out at me from Hyman's work is "Do they admit to mistakes?" In my view, this is the most important question that helps you have an idea if the aspiring leader's ego is in check or never acknowledges any flaw at all

. According to Meyer, Le fevre, and Robinson, the significance of an individual admitting his or her mistakes, allow the leader to express a vulnerability which can lead to trust.[340] Meyer, Le fevre, and Robinson posit that "By recognizing one's vulnerability, one can take responsibility for one's actions, be more responsive to others and share

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[338] Ibid, 1

[339] Todorovic, John, S. *Humility in Leadership – 8 Reasons Why Being Humble Is So Important* https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/humility-leadership-8-reasons-why-being-humble-so-john-s-todorovic/?trk=pulse-article_more-articles_related-content-card
Published on December 8, 2021. Accessed 9/25/22.

[340] Meyer, Frauke, Deidre M. Le Fevre, and Viviane MJ Robinson. "*How leaders communicate their vulnerability: Implications for trust building*." International Journal of Educational Management (2017).

responsibility for concerns and concern resolution more openly… Being able to accept and show vulnerability can be seen as a sign of strength…"[341]

The idea of being vulnerable can be interpreted by some as negative exposure and may in some instances not play to the leader's advantage.[342] However, Meyer, Le fevre, and Robinson remind us that "Leaders shape the culture of communication and the culture of the organization as a whole. Leaders who explicitly demonstrate their vulnerability by admitting mistakes, inviting questions and feedback, and responding non-defensively to questions and challenges, reduce defensiveness,"[343] and I believe build trust among their community members. Within the context of the Church, a leader's ability to demonstrate vulnerability can help heal any misfortunes of the individual easily, then denial and pride. The third nugget that is worth highlighting from Hyman's article is the ability of a leader to accept "constructive feedback." In a nutshell, no one like criticism.

The fact that I'm the leader and should be in charge, and yet been criticized by my (subordinates), is unimaginable to non-servant leaders. According to Steffens, Niklas K., et al. "Even though there is little empirical research on how followers respond to leadership succession, there is abundant evidence demonstrating that formal performance appraisals have an impact on followers' willingness to work for their organization — both when these appraisals are favorable and when they are unfavorable,"[344] that means, feedback plays an important role in how any organization thrives, and the reality of those

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[341] Ibid, 5
[342] Ibid
[343] Ibid, 6
[344] Steffens, Niklas K., et al. "*How feedback about leadership potential impacts ambition, organizational commitment, and performance.*" The Leadership Quarterly 29.6 (2018): 638

at the helm of affairs of the community, institutions or organizations react when they are appraised.

Within the context of the Christian church, depending on the polity of the denomination, there are times that the leader must submit monthly reports to the District Superintendent or Conference and whatever set up of supervisory denominational hierarchy within the denomination. Secondly, and of most importance is how the local congregation or community evaluates the leader's progress within a given period. Steffens, Niklas K., et al posit that

> First, whereas the Pygmalion effect demonstrates that individual performance is impacted by others' performance expectations, we suggest that effects due to leadership potential need not be driven by performance expectations, but rather by the potential to be a leader, that is, to occupy a leadership position and be able to influence the people they work with so that they are motivated to contribute to collective goals. After all, followers may receive positive appraisals of their current task performance, but yet still not be seen as possessing leadership potential…we argue that followers' responses to feedback about their leadership potential will impact their general work motivation, which includes their primary task efforts, but also their ambition to become a leader and their organizational commitment. In this way, we suggest that individual responses will extend beyond direct task performance to willingness to contribute to shared goals.[345]

The takeaway from Steffens, Niklas, et al is that a leader willingness to digest and ponder over the feedback that one receives from the community and see how that feedback can be used to enhance growth in the community, local organization, or congregation that the leader is appointed to serve.

The challenge for most African leaders is when the feedback becomes negative, and when the leader is lacking behind in almost every conceivable metric used as a rubric to evaluate the leader. For example, when a Pastor is called by the district Superintendent

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[345] Ibid, 638

to discuss ways and means for healthy church or congregational growth, and outreach to the community, most leaders' reaction would be negative, instead using the feedback as a humble assessment and building on whatever strength(s) that is cited in the feedback. Vu, Joceline V., et al agreed.

According to Vu, Joceline V., et al, a result from a residency on how feedback affects a leader's performance based on responses was highlighted, and the significance of why a leader should value feedback, they state "As a result, feedback—or information about a…performance intended to improve performance—may become the primary mechanism by which residents glean insights into their leadership abilities, reinforce positive leadership behaviors, and identify negative ones."[346] I believe Liberians United Methodist Church leaders should embrace feedback, despite the unfavored results that are sometimes associated with the leader's performance ability.

When a leader can accept his or her weaknesses, the humility to learn and excel begins. Because, when you can learn from your mistakes, you are on a road not only to being a great leader but to inspiring others to succeed. The reason is that you have failed, and learned, and with that experienced, you are ready to impact others who may be struggling in other areas of Christian leadership or any organization. I believe that it will benefit Liberian United Methodists leaders serving, to consider the "mind of Christ" within the context of humility, as they strive to be the best leaders they can become. With that in mind, I would like to consider, the authentic application of the Christological hymn by a Christian leader.

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[346] Vu, Joceline V., et al. "Leadership-specific feedback practices in surgical residency: a qualitative study." Journal of surgical education 77.1 (2020): 2

Authentic Application of the "mind of Christ" in Philippians 2:5-7

The word authentic is defined by the online Merriam-Webster dictionary, as "true to

one's personality, spirit, or character," or "conforming to an original to reproduce

essential features."[347] To be "authentic" is not trying to fake one's personality, but to be

oneself. It requires the individual to do a lot of soul searching and personal inventory of

their own lives if it is worth faking, or just being genuine. Within the context of the

Christological hymn, especially Christian leadership, and Philippians 2:5a, the bar is even

higher when it comes to authenticity as a leader within the church.

According to Walumbwa., et al., defined authentic leadership "as a pattern of

leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and

a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral

perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part

of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development."[348] The definition

from Walumbwa, et al, strikes at the heart of what one may think of when considering an

authentic leader. Despite the warning from Alvesson and Einola, and their analysis of

why authentic leadership should not be elevated to a higher status among leadership

theories, because of what they described as a "problematic concept, a Disneyland-

inspired"[349] leader; suggest their objective as follow,

> Our aim is to raise the flag against what we consider an excessive positivity that
> has been a fashionable trend in leadership studies for over 15 years. We focus on
> the popular but problematic concept of authentic leadership…The Disneyland-
> inspired good leader, a moral peak performer, may not find most organizations a

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[347] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authentic accessed 9/30/22

[348] Walumbwa, Fred O., et al. "*Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure." Journal of management* 34.1 (2008) 94

[349] Alvesson, Mats, and Katja Einola. "Warning for excessive positivity: Authentic leadership and other traps in leadership studies." The Leadership Quarterly 30.4 (2019). 383-348.

hospitable environment to begin with. But apparently the leadership community and its journals do, despite – or possibly because of – flawed theory development, widely used but poorly operationalized methodology[350]

In as much as I do acknowledge that no one is "perfect" and all human institutions come with some biases of their own, the leader's ability to be self-reflective, and live "above reproach" (Titus 1:6a KJV) is never too much to ask or set as a bar for appraisals.

According to Henderson and Hoy "Leader authenticity is therefore defined as the extent to which subordinates perceive their leader to be maximizing the acceptance of organizational and personal responsibility for actions, outcomes, and mistakes; to be non-manipulating of subordinates; and to demonstrate a salience of self over the role."[351] I suggest leadership authenticity will enhance the credibility of the leader among and within the community, institution, or organization that the individual leads. What is even more challenging to me from Alvesson and Einola is their assessment and conclusion of the practical possibility of what they term "authentic self."[352] The difficulty is compounded by the fact that they suggest it is almost impossible for "authenticity," therefore, asking for leadership authenticity is more of an "as aspirational goal."[353] They posit that,

> Striving towards knowing oneself requires significant, self-reflective, critical, and continuous work and struggle with the self as a whole. In this sense, there is no distinct external work-self and professional self. Indeed, most philosophers consider knowing oneself (and thus perhaps reaching authenticity) as aspirational goals only a few humans, if any, can ever reach. Leadership, another significant but admittedly a more accessible challenge related to one's professional role,

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[350] Ibid, 383-384

[351] Henderson, James E., and Wayne K. Hoy. "*Leader Authenticity*: The Development and Test of an Operational Measure." (1982). 6

[352] Ibid, 384

[353] Ibid, 384

requires influencing others. Combining both, authenticity, and leadership, in one concept becomes an endeavor only heroes from the mythological realm can ever aspire to successfully overcome. The two terms do not combine well semantically either. Authenticity in the meaning it is framed in the study of leadership is self-referential and self-developmental, even though individual authenticity projects inevitably develop in social contexts. There is no outside influence (positive or negative) implied directly swaying one's authenticity. In contrast, leadership by definition is a process of social influence.[354]

I believe any Christian leader with an intentional mindset will disagree with the statement "Combining both, authenticity and leadership, in one concept becomes an endeavor only heroes from the mythological realm can ever aspire to successfully overcome."[355]

I think the statement can become passable within a political and philosophical context, but not in the context of Christian leadership. For example, when a politician is accused of raped, sexual misconduct, or any immoral unethical behavior, his or her supporters are prepared to work overtime; by twisting the truth through Media, and surrogates and most often get away with almost no consequence(s). In contrast, just a rumor of a clergy behind closed with a parishioner can cause a stir that could alter the trajectory of the clergy ministry for good, if not explained with factual and credible proof that it was never a harmful or malicious intention.

That's why the need for authentic leadership is a requirement, and non-negotiable for Christian leadership. To put this in perspective, Walumbwa, and et al posit that,

> **Self-awareness** refers to demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning-making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time. It also refers to showing an understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses and the multifaceted nature of the self, which includes gaining insight into the self through exposure to others and being cognizant of one's impact on other people…**Relational transparency**

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[354] Ibid, 384-385
[355] Ibid, 385

refers to presenting one's authentic self (as opposed to a fake or distorted self) to others. Such behavior promotes trust through disclosures that involve openly sharing information and expressions of one's true thoughts and feelings while trying to minimize displays of inappropriate emotions…**Balanced processing** refers to leaders who show that they objectively analyze all relevant data before coming to a decision. Such leaders also solicit views that challenge their deeply held positions…Finally, **internalized moral perspective** refers to an internalized and integrated form of self-regulation. This sort of self-regulation is guided by internal moral standards and values versus group, organizational, and societal pressures, and it results in expressed decision-making and behavior that is consistent with these internalized values.[356]

According to Adepoju, at the basic core of authenticity is this idea of how an individual understands who they are.[357] Within the context of the Liberia UMC leaders, Bishop Innis was self-aware, not only he knew the power of inclusivity, but the understood the value of helping all in the community to succeed. The takeaway is that being constantly conscious of one's character and how your character relates and building others up for the common good of reaching their potential is important for a Christian leader. Adepoju concurred. Adepoju points out that,

> Jesus Christ knew who He was and is in the current scenario of Phil. 2. Jesus Christ existed from the beginning of time and was in the form of God. Despite this, he chose to empty himself of this acclaimed nature as shown in Phil. 2:6-7: "although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men" (NASB). This perfectly illustrates the concept of self-awareness, with Jesus Christ realizing that He needed to be authentic as a person to be able to deliver the mandate that God has given Him. For an authentic leader, it is not about the power or position of authority; it is about the followers or subordinates. Jesus Christ could have simply decided not to go through that experience by virtue of the enormous power that He had as a person in the form of God (Phil. 2:6).[358]

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[356] Walumbwa, Fred O., et al. "*Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure."* Journal of management 34.1 (2008) 95-96

[357] Adepoju, Ayo. "*Jesus Christ as the ultimate authentic leader: An inner texture analysis of Philippians 2: 5-11.*" Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 10.1 (2020): 36

[358] Ibid, 44

In other words, to authentically apply the "mind of Christ," Christian leaders are to understand it is not the position that makes them, it is their "self-awareness"[359] and especially understanding the humility of Christ that sets them apart from other leaders when it comes to leadership.

Agreeing, Caza and Jackson, suggest the rewards that authentic leadership produces affect both "behavioral and developmental changes."[360] Caza and Jackson posit that "To explain the many benefits expected to arise from authentic leadership...The first is attitudinal change, such that some of the beneficial attitude changes are used to explain behavioral and developmental changes performance… imitation of positive role models…"[361] The "mind of Christ" is genuine, humble and helps leads the leader to an excellent judgment, the ability to look beyond self-egos and for the betterment of the community.

For example, every organization that I have been a part of ensures that a leader's negativity and non-biblical behaviors do not become the root of schism, division, and most of all doubt of Christian leadership. At the heart of the message of the *Carmi Christi* is how a leader uses authority and power for the progress of the community, then self-elevation. For a leader to put aside the temptation of "self" it's a struggle that the Holy Spirit can help the leader to overcome by constantly dying to oneself will. According to People, Young, et al, the Christological hymn "reminds us that "in the New Testament,

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[359] Ibid, 36

[360] Caza, Arran, and Brad Jackson. "*Authentic leadership*." The SAGE handbook of leadership (2011): 6

[361] Ibid, 6

the incarnation of the Word of God is spoken of by St. Paul in terms of hospitality and of life turned towards the 'other (Phil 2:6–8).[362]"

Jones, Murray, and Warren state the importance of why the authentic application of the "mind of Christ" within the context of humility and service is vital for the Christian leader, they posit that "humility of leaders can be shown by admitting mistakes creating a culture where the voices of organizational members are heard… Jesus directly linked faith and humility to necessary qualities for leaders Christians should put into practice those things that are true, honorable, and right…"[363] For Liberian United Methodists Church leaders, living out their "faith" through leadership within the context of setting an example of "those things that are true, honorable, and right," which are the virtues that our Lord Jesus taught the disciples during His earthly ministry. The gains of a leader being morally upright are enormous. For example, during district or annual conferences, the leaders should cultivate the habit of "individualized moral perspective" for the greater good of the community they lead. Not only trust is built, but the leader becomes a symbol of excellence to the community they served.

One of the reasons that doubt in a leader develops is when there's no understanding of the community, and their call to lead God's people, most concentrate on the accolades that come with being a leader, which in most cases becomes a root for morals failure and true Christian leadership. For the Christian leaders in Liberia,

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[362] People, Young, et al. "*Discerning the Mind of Christ in a Pluralistic World: Theological Education in a New Environment*." https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/discerning-the-mind-of-christ-in-a-pluralistic-world-theological-education-in-a-new-environment/ 2022. Accessed 9/31/22

[363] Jones, Janet S., Samantha R. Murray, and Kelly B. Warren. "*Christian Leadership in a Secular World." Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 12.2 (2018): 96

especially the United Methodist Church, the culturally acceptable norm of a leader being served should never define their leadership. On the other hand, they must gravitate toward service and humility which are predicated on the foundation of servanthood. In other words, in the Liberian UMC, when members are downtrodden and poverty-stricken, there should be a policy to help the community.

I am intending to remind every leader that even though culturally in the Greco-Roman world it was unthinkable for the leader to serve the subordinates, Jones, Murray, and Warren succinctly summed up the need for authentic servant leadership. They opine that "leadership is not about the leader. Authentic servant leadership lays ego and selfish behavior aside, emphasizing the needs and desires of the community and others… the need for renewed attention to ethical and moral leadership…the concept of servant leadership has become the leading benchmark for many organizations."[364]

I will end this chapter by returning to the basis for the theses of this dissertation, by emphasizing the word of St. Paul to the church at Philippi, when he wrote eloquently and by stressing the power of having the "mind of Christ," and the example of Christ's servanthood for all Christian leader to imitate since Christ is the perfect example for Christian leadership within the context of the Christological hymn or the *Carmen Christi,*

> So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord, and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [a] 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [b] 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, [c] being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being

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[364] Jones, Janet S., Samantha R. Murray, and Kelly B. Warren. "Christian Leadership in a Secular World." Journal of Applied Christian Leadership 12.2 (2018): 99-100

found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:1-8 ESV).

Conclusion

The Christological hymn offers the Christian Church the jewel of the highest standard but also invites every leader of the Christian community to understand the incarnation of Christ, not only from a theological debate perspective but the need for servant leadership globally. The entire emphasis of this paper has been to draw the reader's attention to the power of Servant Leadership as demonstrated by Christ, a practical portrait drawn by the synoptic Gospel authors, yet Paul's theologically connecting the practical reality and impact of the incarnate Christ to the power of serving based on an ancient hymn.[365] My conclusion will draw attention to two areas that I believe are practical.

Firstly, practical lessons from Philippians 2:5-11 that the Liberian UMC leaders can implement in its context for effective leadership. Secondly, closing thoughts: an invitation for humility and a challenge for continuous research on Christian leadership within the context of the *Carmen Christi.*

Firstly, a Practical lesson from Philippians 2:5-11 that the Liberian UMC leaders can implement in its context for effective leadership. The research has allowed me to not only appreciate the scholarly exegetical work, and immense commentaries on the 2nd chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians but help me appreciate the need for humility in every area of a leader's life. If the Liberian United Methodist Church leadership (Superintendents, Elders, Local Pastors, Deacons, and leadership) wants to be an example of excellence, the Christological hymn provides the blueprint based on Christ's example (Phil. 2:5a).

Gray argues that "Subsequently… "taking the form of a servant" …contrast to the claims of Nero, a mortal being, that he was a god. We see Jesus, a person of privilege, taking a

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subservient to elevate others, while the Roman emperors used their privilege to elevate themselves at the expense of others."[366] Ayers concurs. Ayers points out that Christ's example of humility and servanthood was not exclusive to Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, but the evidence of Jesus' servant nature was recorded by the synoptic evangelists; Ayers suggests that,

> Since the servant nature of Christ serves as an example of and motivation for leadership throughout the New Testament, it is fitting to make appropriate applications with such a summative description of that nature as is found in the Christological hymn. Here it may be assumed that as a servant Jesus epitomizes what leaders should do—namely, lead for the benefit of others.[367]

It is fair to say that there's no huge difference between the 21st century and the Greco-Roman world in terms of status and ambition.

The real challenge is how Christian leaders pass the temptation to test self-interest over the communities they are called to serve. I think Potter's argument is noteworthy and can serve as a reference point for starting how Christian leaders and Liberian UMC leaders can avoid personal service. Potter posits "To be a leader often means to place the focus of one's leadership duties on the followers. Sometimes the leader will be asked to relinquish their position or place of importance with the ultimate goal of bringing one's followers to a position of power."[368]

Finally, closing thoughts: an invitation for authentic leadership and a challenge for continuous research on Christian leadership within the context of the Carmen Christi.

There is a plethora of research on leadership out there, and whatever leadership theories, or positions one espoused within the framework of their belief systems, will always be challenged by scholars with data or contrary views. But my challenge is for scholars and

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[366] Gray, "*Christological hymn: The leadership paradox of Philippians* 2: 5-11." (2008). 10
[367] Ayers, Michale. "*Toward a theology of leadership.*" Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 1, no. 1 (2006): 20.
[368] Porter, Tracy H. "*Jesus as Leader: A Sacred Texture Analysis of Philippians 2: 5-11.*" The Journal of Traditions & Beliefs 3, no. 1 (2016): 7

leadership gurus to embrace the authenticity of leadership based on humility, and community

values. With all humility, I believe there's still a lot to explore as Christian scholars within the

context of servant leadership and the *Carmen Christi* (Phil. 2:5-11).

For example, there will always be a need for a proper exegetical interpretation of the

text, and how it applies to Christian leadership. The concepts of a servant, and humility; how can

they be defined and understood by laities and the community, without taking them out of context

or painting a misguided picture of the leader being "weak?" I think the words of Roof can be a

strong reminder of both a need for further scholarship and an infinite appreciation of the

Christological hymn by Christian leadership in Africa, Liberia and globally,

> Exploring the sacred texture of Philippians 2:5-11, great insight is found not by
> focusing on the deep theology of the kenosis or form of God, but from the clear
> lessons of Christ's humility…that offer sound truth for the Christian leader. The
> message is clear that those who humble themselves will be exalted in God's
> Kingdom, that the last will be first, and that those who will lead, must be servants
> of all.[369]

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[369] Roof, Richard A. "*Christ's Hymn: A Divine Image of Leadership in Philippians* 2: 5-11
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