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ESTABLISHING A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
FOR GOSPEL-CENTERED MULTIPLICATION AT THE
VILLAGE CHURCH, FLOWER, MOUND, TEXAS

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ESTABLISHING A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
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I dedicate this project to the members of The Village Church. May we faithfully raise up
and release men and women to lead God's mission forward.

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PREFACE

The Lord has been overwhelmingly faithful to bring saints into my life who have contributed to my formation in significant ways. These men and women have helped shape my view of what a Christian leader is, and grow my conviction for how crucial leaders are for the mission of the church. The men and women on staff at The Village are the most committed gospel leaders I have ever seen, and they have marked my life in astonishing ways. The elders who faithfully serve TVC are a gifted and godly group of men in whom I am grateful to serve alongside. The story of The Village Church has been an incredible journey that I have been grateful to be a part of.

This journey has been one of deep impact and transformation in my life. I am grateful to The Village Church for affording me the opportunity to take part in this doctoral cohort. I want to recognize and thank Dan Dumas, who has been instrumental in shaping me as a leader, and whose partnership in the gospel is one of my greatest take-aways from this journey. I also want to thank Dr. Wilder and the doctoral office for their deep investment in me and this project. Lastly, I want to thank my bride and best friend Rachel Joy. Your fierce commitment to the kingdom of God has been the greatest influence on my life.

Trevor Joy

Flower Mound, Texas

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a strategic vision document to serve The Village Church (TVC) as it strives to create a leadership development pipeline, enabling it to effectively raise up and release men and women for kingdom impact inside and outside the church.

Goals

The specific goals for this project were as follows: (1) to identify the core leadership competencies TVC desires to nurture in the lives of their members as they move from leading self to leading others to leading leaders, (2) to establish a unified language and process that maps the development stages of a leader, content, processes, and environments necessary to transition leaders from one stage to another, and desired outcomes for each individual in their various sphere(s) of involvement, and (3) to create a functional pipeline for the identification, assessment, training, and releasing of leaders at TVC.

The benchmark for the first goal was the establishment of foundational characteristics of a growing Christian leader. These elements needed to be executable and accountable at every level within the organization and also clear and understandable by every participant within the organization. As with any foundational element in a spiritual formation process, these core competencies had to be theologically informed, philosophically matched with the direction of the church, and methodologically achievable inside the existing mechanisms. In essence, these competencies had to be both

biblically sound and fit the culture of TVC.

The benchmark for the second goal was the creation of a functional process for transitioning someone from a visitor to a leader. This process needed to be executable and attainable both internally and externally. Many leadership pipelines in organizations fail because either (1) the internal leadership knows the pipeline well and the congregation does not, frustrating the growth process because the organization lacks alignment, or (2) no intentional pathway exists that transitions people from participants to leaders, creating a system where success is accidental and not reproducible. Achieving the goal of this project meant that TVC develop a clear and communicated language for describing how someone progresses through the stages of leadership development, as well as a unified intentional mechanism to accomplish this within each ministry.

The benchmark for the third goal was to incorporate an accessible on-ramp with the leadership development process that brought people into the process and an effective off-ramp that released them into leadership. Clarity proved essential to progression. Speaking clearly about the stages and requirements of a process creates confidence and unity for those leading and participating in the practice. Informing people about how to begin and advance empowers them to take charge of their own development process. This development process is on-going in the life of a Christian.

“We receive the Holy Spirit at the beginning of our regenerate lives, and anyone who has the Holy Spirit, has the guarantee of final perseverance. All of this to say, simply, that God completes the work he begins (Phil 1:6).”¹

In this sense the growth of a Christian leader is never fully complete in this life, though there is a continual forward progression. Artificial ceilings occur when there is a lack of opportunity to express and explore what is being developed through practical

¹John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 926.

experience. The pipeline needs a method for releasing leaders into gospel-centered multiplication and continuing their development in and through leadership. Large organizations can easily become a house of siloes where each ministry has a distinct and developed philosophy for maturing and deploying leaders. Because of these potential occurrences, alignment becomes a key aspect to maintaining a unified strategy of leadership development.

The success of each of these goals hinged on the need for the strategies to accomplish them to be both executable and accountable. If a plan is to be executable, there must be a strong foundation of clarity. Gaining clarity can be an arduous process, but is one which this project hoped to accomplish through a thorough consideration of theological, philosophical, and methodological implications shaping this strategy. If a plan is to be accountable, there must be alignment throughout the organization as we move forward. Execution of this strategy in limited pockets within the church will yield deficient outcomes resulting in an incomplete picture of the success of the pipeline to raise up, train, and deploy leaders.

Ministry Context

In order to understand the goals of this project, one must understand the ever-changing landscape of TVC. In 1845 the Southern Baptist Convention formed a missionary organization to take the gospel out west. In 1869, 10 families settled in the plains of Texas and established Holford Prairie Church. 1882 marked the first year of string growth, which moved the church into the city to become First Baptist Church Lewisville. In 1962, FBC Lewisville planted a new church just down the road called Lakeland Baptist Church. In 1978, Lakeland planted a new church in Highland Village called First Baptist Highland Village. In November 2002, First Baptist Church of Highland Village called Matt Chandler to assume the role of Senior Pastor. The congregation collectively agreed to the immediate and necessary changes that would

come as a result of this decision. Prior to Matt’s arrival, the church had experienced several shifts in their theological beliefs as well as philosophical practices. There were no functional elders, Sunday services were “seeker sensitive”, and had recently adopted some non-conservative theological views. The decision to bring Matt Chandler in as the lead pastor meant that all of these issues were willing to be challenged and changed. The 168-member church also immediately began to experience rapid growth. At this time, the two largest ministries of the church were *Next Generation* (children and students) and *Home Groups* (adults). Together, these two ministries made up the bulk of the discipleship efforts at the church.²

From 2002 to 2007, the church experienced growth of over one thousand people per year. By 2007, the church consisted of over five thousand adults in the weekend services, over two thousand adults in groups, and over six hundred children in the next generation ministries. The rapid growth during those five years leading up to 2007, however, prevented the limited existing staff from building structures and processes in place to ensure health. The bulk of the staff’s efforts went to managing issues that arose from the ever-increasing group of people coming to the church. For example, in Home Groups there was a growing demand of attenders who desired to get plugged into a group. This demand caused a chain reaction where the staff made the decision to focus on creating adequate supply to meet the demand and efficient on-ramps to help these people connect to a group. This decision led to some dramatic philosophical developments in the priorities of the adult discipleship arm of the church. There was greater concern around forming new groups in great quantity to satisfy the growing

²Though these two ministries made up the primary discipleship efforts of the church, it is important to note that they were not healthy or reasonably successful in that endeavor. Next Generation ministries were under new leadership and were heading in the right direction, focusing on healthy and consistent study and application of God’s Word with older kids and solid catechesis began to form in the younger children’s ministries. Home Groups were primarily concerned with being a connection point which led to a compromising of some of the key leadership elements that needed to be in place to promote discipleship.

demand versus focusing on quality. Also, the structure of how leaders were trained and released and the systems of connection operated much like an airport and the staff functioned more like air traffic controllers. Groups were stopping and starting weekly drawing the bulk of the staffs' attention to the management and placement of people versus raising up, training, and releasing qualified leaders. The compromise primarily existed in leadership development.

From 2007 to 2012, TVC continued to grow. In 2007, the church merged with Grace Temple Baptist Church in Denton, Texas, to open the first multi-site campus. The decision to move in the direction of multi-site was driven by the need for relief at the main campus. There was a strong and growing contingency of people from the Denton area. That fact combined with the opportunity for affordable facility space in the heart of the city created the ideal situation for The Village to step into the multi-site approach. From there, TVC expanded the multi-site strategy to include over twelve thousand people at locations in Dallas, Fort Worth, and Plano in addition to Flower Mound and Denton. The structural make up of TVC today includes over twelve thousand adults, five locations, and five hundred groups spreading across a 9,200 square mile metropolis that encompasses twelve counties. Up until 2008, a recurring theme of ministry development was the management of numerical growth.

History of Groups

Home Groups serve as the most accurate context for understanding leadership development at TVC. The Village employs a more simplified approach to discipleship. There are a very intentionally limited amount of programs offered to ensure that there is deep and focused investment. In terms of adult discipleship for example, at The Village we do not have ministries that are life stage or affinity specific. Since 2002, the church sought to be a church *of* groups rather a church *with* groups.³ The mobilization of

³A church “of” small groups is differentiated from a church “with” small groups primarily

members and attendees into smaller units that meet in homes during the week across the metroplex proved to be an integral feature of ministry at TVC. In 2008, though, the church underwent significant changes in groups ministry. Groups, at that point, were growing in numbers but lacking in depth. Out of a conviction to see theology inform the philosophy of ministry, leaders realized that they must attack the tree at its root. That year has become a point of reference at the church because it was that year when leaders shared a vision for groups at TVC based on theological convictions, not the growing demand for people to connect. Up until that point, supply and demand primarily motivated ministry development; everything was reactionary. In order to respond to the demand, leaders employed a system focused on creating supply, which meant the priority was in the quantity of new groups formed rather than quality. Again, the creation of groups was driven by a reaction to satisfy a demand.

Due to this reactionary approach to group life, the number of groups in the church, enabling quantity to eclipse quality, defined success. No church leader, at the outset of an endeavor, says they want the wrong things to dictate how they engage in ministry, but these pressures slowly lull leaders into making decisions based on pragmatism. These pragmatic decisions begin to compound until one day they wake up and find that their ministry philosophy is built more on a reaction to consumerism rather than theological conviction. In a move to course correct the dysfunctions that had arisen out of this approach, there needed to be fundamental changes in the direction of the leadership that placed the focus on the right things.

There were two main operating principles guiding this change at TVC: (1) the leaders⁴ would rather not have a group to send someone to than to send them to an

through intentional focus. A congregation seeking to be a church “of” small groups sees group life as a primary means of achieving the mission of the church where as a church “with” small groups sees group life as an additional offering amid a menu of programs.

⁴Leaders referenced here are the staff and elders responsible for dictating and implementing ministry direction.

unhealthy group, and (2) the leaders believe that the health of a group depends on the health of the leader. Up until this point, the primary driver of the growth of the groups ministry was supply and demand. The rapid growth of the church, combined with the desire to see people coming to the church to enter group life, meant that the number of groups needed to increase at the same rate.

The first step toward health involved removing supply-and-demand as the determiner of how and when groups arose. The second principle that drove this direction was to focus group health on the development of qualified group leaders. This step began by creating a profile of what the church considered a qualified leader and then creating a pipeline (or process) to mine those leaders from the congregation. The anatomy of a qualified group leader included three competencies: (1) a love for Jesus—the leader is actively growing in the maturity of their faith, (2) a love for the Scriptures, demonstrated by a growing understanding and application of God’s Word, and (3) a love for people, meaning that group leaders need to have an earnest desire to serve others.

Once this set of competencies was established, the church began proactively looking for these traits in potential leaders while also removing some existing group leaders based on a lack of those same traits. As a result, the groups ministry shrunk by fifty percent in 2008 in order to prepare for healthy growth moving forward. This shift in focus led to the first formation of an intentional leadership pipeline at TVC. This leadership development strategy aligned every ministry to mimic the group leader process in how they identify, assess, and deploy leaders.

Challenges and Complexities

In 2007, TVC adopted a multi-site strategy with the merger of Grace Temple Baptist Church in Denton, Texas. To date, the church has grown to five locations in four separate counties throughout the metroplex. During weekend services, the message is live streamed out to each location, independently led by a staff and elders. While this growth

was exciting, the multi-site model brought the challenge of developing ministry for one church expressed in differing contexts. Each location contains its own unique complexities. The Dallas campus consists mainly of young single adults who commute to church. The Fort Worth campus consists of many families who do not live within ten miles of the facility. The Denton campus holds a large contingent of college students and families that live within five miles of the church. The Flower Mound and Plano locations host lots of young and growing families. Facility space and participant availability became the leading obstacles to overcome. Contextualization became a key component to leadership development in a multi-site church, because there is no “one size fits all” solution to these challenges.

In a multi-site context leaders are faced with the challenge of protecting philosophy without proximity. Ministry philosophy is derived ultimately from theological convictions. These theological convictions provide a foundation for how we see God and the church, and though they may grow in greater clarity over time they should not fundamentally change. Philosophy of ministry leads to an applied methodology. Unlike theology, philosophy can be subject to change and shift over time. Philosophy is the “how” discipleship is executed within the framework of the church. It is the vision through which leadership uses to lead the congregation towards faithfulness in God’s mission.

Though change in philosophy of ministry is inevitable, these changes should be directly connected to a theological conviction thus be taken slowly and seriously when leading a people through them. Contextualization is a wind that constantly challenges philosophy. A complexity with a multi-site strategy is that though the philosophy of ministry is created with the entire church in view (including all locations), it is difficult to create a one-size-fits-all framework that works seamlessly in every campus context. This creates a tension where campuses begin to want to create changes in methodology (practice) to reflect the contextual differences of their location that lead to challenges in

the architecture of how ministry is executed (philosophy).

Centralized Versus De-centralized

In 2009, with the addition of the Dallas campus bringing the total campuses to three, the staffing structure underwent a drastic change. Up to this point, “subject matter experts” who led from the largest and oldest campus in Flower Mound oversaw ministry direction and development. These leaders were responsible for providing oversight to the ministry through a “dotted-line” reporting structure over each department to the other campuses. However, as each campus grew rapidly, it became evident that the campuses needed greater autonomy in the day-to-day operations of ministry.

Each campus carried its own set of complexities that required the ability to provide unique contextualization at every site. One site had plenty of facility space, but its congregation did not live within accessible distance to the church. Other sites had the opposite problem with people living in the neighborhood of the campus but lacking enough facility space to accommodate every ministry. This challenge led to the decentralization of ministries at TVC. Though the majority of the ministry direction remained fixed, there became room for each campus to contextualize their application to their various needs. In order to maintain unity and guard quality in the ministries across the campuses, the leaders developed ministry charters for each department. These charters became the “playbook” for every department to execute at each site. Charters operate as a dynamic tool that provide direction and guidelines to ensure that TVC remains one church with one vision and one mission at multiple locations.

Other Contextual Considerations

Since 2002, when Matt Chandler became the lead pastor of TVC, rapid growth has occurred in almost every area of ministry. The Highland Village campus grew to over four thousand people across six services every weekend. This growth led to the building of the Flower Mound campus, which can house 1,444 adults in each service and is

currently running at 90 percent capacity with almost five thousand adults and 1,200 children each weekend. There are over 3,500 adults in the 250 home groups that call the Flower Mound campus home stretched across six zip codes in a twenty-mile radius surrounding the campus. Each zip code has an assigned pastor to give oversight to the leaders and groups in that area. Though Flower Mound is the largest campus, it has the least amount of multi-purpose space to utilize.

The Denton campus began in 2007 and has experienced steady and healthy growth. With 1,500 adults in attendance every weekend and over 80 home groups, the majority of the church exists within five miles of the campus. The Dallas campus began in 2009 and rapidly reached capacity with 3,000 adults in the current facility, forcing the option of an alternative worship venue on site for the Sunday morning services. The Dallas campus has the smallest contingency that lives close to the facility, and most of the 150 groups exist ten miles or more away. Much like Denton, though, the Dallas campus has extensive facility space, giving greater flexibility to ministry programs on weekends and during the week. The Fort Worth and Plano campuses are each running between 1,000 and 1,500 adults on the weekends and have over 150 groups that call each of those campuses home. The facility space in both of these locations are greater than Flower Mound, but they are faced with the same challenge as Dallas in that a great contingency of the congregation commute to these locations from other cities.

Rationale

There is a vigorous faith in the collegiate generation—a willingness to cast everything aside to push a cause forward. This attitude was exemplified in the story of the “Cambridge Five,” a group of college students who caught a fire for something, and it changed the trajectory of their lives. In England during the late 1800s, a famous cricket player named C. T. Studd, in the cricket world, would have been considered a top recruit; he was known for his success in the sport all throughout Great Britain. When Charles was

a young man, his father came to faith at a Moody evangelism campaign sweeping through Western Europe. A wealthy and well-known businessman, Charles' father often invited missionaries to stay in his home while on furlough from the field. During one of these instances, a series of conversations occurred between the visiting pastor and Charles. By the end, Charles professed faith in Christ, and the trajectory of this well-known athlete's life changed dramatically.

Not long after, Charles formed a morning Bible study and accountability group of six other men on their college campus, and God began to stir amongst this community in a powerful way. The most pivotal moment came when a famous missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, gave the chapel message at their college campus, speaking about all God was doing to reach the people in the East. Convicted and ignited, these seven men decided to abandon everything to take the gospel to China. Prior to leaving for the mission field, they toured several surrounding college campuses sharing the gospel and God's heart for the nations, and in a powerful movement, God ignited missionaries across the country. They were dubbed the "Cambridge Seven," and their influence spread beyond England to even the U.S. where it inspired Robert Wilder's student volunteer movement. The Cambridge Seven went on to spend their lives spreading the gospel in some of the hardest and most unreached places of the world.

The movement began with a small group of seven young men praying and sharing their lives together, and God used that group to spark a generational gospel journey that took the good news of Jesus Christ across the globe. There were no programs or grandiose initiatives; the gospel took root in such a powerful way that it burst into a contagious movement that spread from this group of leaders, out of the local community and into the world.

Interestingly, this story is not unique. The movement that happened among the Cambridge Seven is the normative flow of the gospel among the people of God. Throughout the New Testament, the Holy Spirit comes upon a people and the gospel

takes root in such a way that it transforms them into leaders and begins to flow beyond that group to the world around them (Acts 2:42-47; 2 Cor 5:16-21).⁵ All who today claim faith in Jesus Christ are a part of this gospel flow. For example, God used someone to save a man in Wichita Falls, Texas, who then shared the gospel with my brother, who then came home to Dallas and shared it with me. The mission of God pushes forward through the people God raises up to lead.

When talking about building a gospel-centered church, who the leader is and what they do must be elevated to the top of the priority list. Believers must talk about how to go about raising up leaders. If a church's desire is to see the message of the gospel go forward and transform the hearts and lives of the people in all churches, to multiply out in a gospel movement, then Christians must pay greater attention to the messenger. A church cannot program around life change. The simple message of the gospel is that through Christ, God redeems and reconciles hearts to Himself, and this message then goes forward through the imperfect and broken vessels in whom it takes root. In Mathew 28, Jesus gives marching orders to the church when he says,

All authority on Heaven and earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded them, and behold I am with you to the end of the age.

Jesus did not say, "Go therefore and serve snacks," or, "Go therefore and make friends"; rather, He said, "Go therefore and make disciples." Of all the problems facing pastors among churches across the nation, two problems almost always arise in the conversation about building a healthy church. First, there are never enough leaders to move ministry forward. Churches have largely become a professional culture where ministry is primarily driven by staff. Second, a closely related problem is that leaders are rarely multiplying themselves creating gaps that are inhibiting long-term movement.

⁵ All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version.

These two problems are symptomatic of a larger problem, a breakdown that has less to do with the branding and buy-in and more to do with the leadership development culture in the church.

The flow of a gospel-driven church is made up of disciples who make disciples who make disciples. TVC seeks to be a place that constantly identifies, raises up, and sends out gospel-centered leaders to impact the Kingdom. The most effective way that the church can be faithful in this endeavor is to create a clear and accessible pipeline for leadership development that is aligned across every ministry of the church and communicated consistently to the body.

Definitions

Multi-site church. A multi-site church is one church that meets in several locations. Geoff Surratt, Pastor of Sea Coast Church, defines multi-site as “a church that has more than one worship venue, more than one campus, or a combination of both.”⁶ Several unifying factors make each site a part of the greater whole such as shared leadership, budget, vision, and elder board. Numerous variations of multi-site strategies arise. Some have a greater amount of shared teaching, and some have greater diversity in contextualized ministry strategy. The common unifying factors in a multi-site church are around vision, polity, and finance.

Development pipeline. A pipeline is an intentional pathway that participants move through in a unified fashion towards a shared destination. In the context of this project, a leadership development pipeline is a deliberate system created to move people from one stage of development to the next in a strategic way. “In shaping pathways, it is imperative to create clear processes that guide people to meaningful involvement. For

⁶Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird, *Multi-Site Revolution: Being One Church in Many Locations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 18.

most churches, there are more steps and fewer clean movements.”⁷ Jay Conger, the professor on Research in Leadership Studies at Claremont McKenna College, says successful organizations have clearly defined leadership development pipelines that offer easy and secure access to participants.⁸ A pipeline differs from a traditional program in that it encompasses all of the mechanisms within an organization and aligns them toward a unified purpose.

Charter. A charter is “a written instrument that creates and defines the franchises of a city, educational institution, or corporation.”⁹ The multi-site environment can create increasing levels of complexity because the lack of proximity can negatively affect alignment. This challenge led to the decentralization of ministries at TVC. Though the majority of the ministry direction remained fixed, there became room for each campus to contextualize their application to their various needs. In order to maintain unity and guard quality in the ministries across the campuses, the leaders developed ministry charters for each department. These charters became the “playbook” for every department to execute at each site. Charters are central to this project in that they are the primary instrument TVC utilizes to remain one church at multiple locations by providing vision and direction to how ministries are executed at the campus level.

Multiplication. In Mathew 28, Jesus gives a charge to the church to “go therefore and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit teaching them to obey all that I can commanded you.” The term *multiplication* is used in this project to represent the reproduction effect of discipleship. “Making disciples by going, baptizing and teaching people the Word of Christ and then enabling them to do

⁷Bill Donahue. *Building a Life-Challenging Small Group Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 128.

⁸Jay A. Conger, “Developing Your Leadership Pipeline,” December 2013, accessed November 1, 2015, <https://hbr.org/2003/12/developing-your-leadership-pipeline>

⁹Miriam Webster, s.v. “Charter,” accessed October 28, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/charter>.

the same thing in other people's lives—this is the plan God has for each of us to impact the nations for the glory of Christ.”¹⁰ In 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Paul describes the role of the Christian is to be a “messenger of reconciliation, God making His appeal through us.” Multiplication is the carrying out of the discipleship command of going and making other disciples through the proclamation of the gospel unto salvation and the instruction of the Word unto obedience.

Home group. Home group is the nomenclature utilized at The Village Church to represent the primary adult discipleship context within the church. Home groups foster gospel-centered community in which believers grow as disciples and make disciples. All home groups are multi-generational and geographical in structure. Multigenerational means that there is an equal emphasis on having differing ages represented in each group and geographical means that the groups are assembled of people that live in the same locations. The ideal size of a home group is twelve to fifteen individuals. All home groups follow the same weekly schedule that lines up with the church calendar.

Limitations and Delimitations

A significant limitation to the scope of this project was the lack in abundance of resources at the campus level. The Flower Mound campus, where the bulk of ministry development takes place, contains the largest staff, houses centralized resources, and possesses the largest margin to deploy the elements necessary to create a healthy leadership development pipeline. The other four campuses that make up TVC have leaner staff teams. Also, the members of those teams operate in a more generalist capacity rather than a narrowed scope of responsibility. Two other significant limitations are the distance of the campuses and facility space. TVC is one church in five locations with up to sixty-five miles in distance between locations. The incarnational ministry model of the church

¹⁰David Platt. *Radical: Taking Your Faith Back From the American Dream* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2010), 92.

has led to the development of a robust groups ministry with now over five hundred home groups spread across the 9,200-mile metropolis. Though the campuses serve as a central gathering point for each local area, people and groups still exist large distances from these campuses, making mobilization and contextualization a continual challenge. Another limitation is that in a church of twelve thousand people, any significant change will take three to five years to implement and evaluate. The length of this project will carry through the initial planning and development stages, but will not include an evaluation of the pipeline's success.

The delimitation of the project was the leadership of TVC, from elders to staff to lay leaders. Among the leadership is a unified desire to see an intentional pathway created to raise up and send out gospel-centered leaders not just within the walls of the church, but beyond.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1 provides an understanding and the purpose and goals of this project as well as context for the application of this project. Chapter 2 establishes the importance of creating a leadership development pipeline through providing a theological framework for a leaders path of development as exhibited through the New Testament. Though every Christian leader is distinct in scope and direction, each leader's formation and emergence follows a similar pattern. The stages of development established in this chapter as the development outline of Christian leaders are *conversion*, *calling*, *challenge*, and *convergence*. The goal of chapter 3 is to establish unified competencies and align those competencies with a set of components that map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village Church (from leading self to leading others to leading leaders) through the utilization of the church's mission statement. The goal of chapter 4 is to establish the content and catalysts necessary to transition leaders from one stage (i.e., leading self, others, and leaders) to another, and to create a unified language and process

to govern this pipeline. This chapter takes the competencies and components of the leadership pipeline established in chapter 3 and codifies those elements into an achievable pipeline to serve The Village Church. Chapter 5 summarizes the context and content of this ministry product, provide implications that were discovered as a result of this project, and establish a strategic plan for implementation of the leadership development pipeline at The Village Church.

CHAPTER 2
A NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY OF
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to create a strategic leadership development pipeline, enabling TVC to raise up and effectively release men and women for gospel-centered multiplication. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the importance of creating a leadership development pipeline through providing a theological framework for a leader's path of development as exhibited through the New Testament. Though every Christian leader is distinct in scope and direction, each leader's formation and emergence follows a similar pattern. The stages of development that will be established in this chapter as the development outline of Christian leaders are *conversion*, *calling*, *challenge*, and *convergence*. Through examining the life and development of the Apostle Paul, it was necessary to expound on each trait to demonstrate how they paint a picture of the growth stages disciples experience, as they become leaders in the church.

The Emergence of Christian Leadership

The leaders of the church who followed Jesus were pioneers of a new paradigm shift as they "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). The book of Acts demonstrates how these leaders emerged and developed amidst this seismic shift called the church. A paradigm shift occurs when conditions necessitate a change in assumptions. Throughout human history, leaders have arisen in the midst of paradigm shifts. Until the early 1600s many people were certain the primary source of new life was the male sperm. They believed the female egg was an empty vessel whose only function was to facilitate the growth of the sperm. A young doctor named William Harvey began to study the

stages of reproduction by observing the development of the chicken and the egg. Through his work in embryology, scientists are now aware of the early stages of human development and the importance of the egg in the generation of new life. This new discovery brought about a paradigm shift in scientific thought that changed the trajectory of medicine. In the early 1700s, a young scientist built an instrument that allowed him to magnify objects. With this device, Antony Van Leeuwenhoek discovered microscopic organisms called bacteria, which led to the development of germ theory. Before this discovery, evil spirits and invisible gases were to blame for diseases and illnesses. Since Leeuwenhoek's discovery, science has been able to show the origin of disease and also develop methods of prevention to stop the spread of illness. This paradigm shift was so significant that it fundamentally changed the role science plays in modern societies.

Jesus introduced a paradigm shift when He changed the fundamental approach of the religious world through His Sermon on the Mount. Robert Dale explains,

To the Jews for whom the law was paramount, Jesus took a radical stance. He contrasted what they had heard from their earliest history with “but I say to you.” He refused simply to settle for external and technical compliance with the Decalogue. Rather, Jesus, the outsider who knew the old paradigm but refused to be shackled by it, challenged His followers to practice an internalized covenant written on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). He changed the rules.¹

Jesus, before He ascended, charged the church with her mission. This mission was and is to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that He has commanded. In his earthly ministry Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God, a kingdom that would be built person by person as He redeems and reconciles men and women to himself. Richard Longenecker describes,

For though Jesus' mission and the church's mission are not to be taken as identical, they are, nonetheless, compatible and inseparable—that of Jesus being the announcement and effecting of redemption, that of the church being the

¹Robert D. Dale, *Leading Edge: Leadership Strategies From the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 52.

proclamation, extension and application of what Jesus effected.²

The cross of Christ creates a paradigm shift in religion where reconciliation to God has been manifested apart from the law, and is now through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus as our propitiation for sin (Rom 3:21-22). Through the cross, Jesus issues a call that demands a response. Michael Wilkins expounds on this calling when he states,

Once Jesus extended His call, a response had to be made. That response was a pivotal point of the person's life. From that point, a person was either a disciple of Christ or turned away from him. It was an either or situation because Jesus said that, "he who is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23). The responses to Jesus' call involved recognition and belief in Jesus' messianic identity, obedience to His summons, and a personal commitment that was undertaken after counting the cost of allegiance to him.³

Wilkins highlights an important point; Jesus is calling disciples, not leaders, into the kingdom. Every Christian leader is first and foremost a disciple of Jesus Christ. Each stage of a leader's development runs parallel with their maturation as a Christian and growth as a disciple. Put simply, every Christian leader is a disciple, however not every disciple is also a leader. The point where a disciple becomes a leader is when their sphere of influence moves beyond themselves and they begin using their gifts, experiences, and influence to serve the mission of the church.

Leadership, in the context of the local church, is about affecting the assimilation, mobilization, and formation of God's people towards faithful and effective participation in God's mission. That which distinguishes a leader is the ability to influence people to move in a common direction towards a common goal. That which distinguishes a Christian leader is the ability to influence movement among the people of God to accomplish the mission of God for the glory of God. Leadership in the bible primarily concerned with who a leader is rather than what they do. The context for all application

²Richard N. Longenecker, *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 53.

³Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 108.

of biblical leadership is the mission of God. Therefore the leader as a disciple is the primary category for understanding who the Christian leader is and how they lead is demonstrated through imitation and invitation. All followers of Christ are called to live lives that reflect the grace that has been bestowed through Christ. Throughout several of the pastoral epistles, there is a consistent exhortation to the members of God's church to live in a way that is distinctive of God's elect. Ephesians 4 says, "walk in a manner worthy of the call for which you have been called". Colossians chapter 1 and 1 Thessalonians 2, both contain the exhortation for followers of Christ to walk in a manner worthy of the glory of God, living lives fully pleasing to Him. Paul displays an example of this principle in 2 Thessalonians 3:9 when he is warning the church not to follow those who walk in idleness, but to follow Paul's leadership "an example to imitate". In 1 Peter 5, the appeal to the leaders of the church is that leadership is not an exercise of dominance, but rather through being humble examples.⁴ Following the same pattern, Paul's exhortation to the leadership of the church is to live a life worthy of the Lord. Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 spell out the qualifications of someone who is to have the responsibility of leadership within the church. These passages both begin by stating that a leader is someone who is "above reproach". As with Timothy and the church in Ephesus, Paul left Titus to provide leadership for the struggling church in Crete.⁵ The Christian leader is first and foremost an actively growing disciple of Christ who is living a life that reflects this reality. This life is intended to be a model for those who follow. The life of a Christian leader is a life worthy of imitating.

⁴ "Peter exhorted the elders to be examples (*typoi*, "types or patterns"), to serve as models for the people to follow. They were not to drive God's people, but to lead them by their examples of mature Christian character." John Walvoord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 1983), 856.

⁵ "Titus was now acting as an apostolic agent (cf. Acts 14:23) in Paul's absence. His authority in the Cretan church was an extension of Paul's own." Walvoord and Zuck describe the life of a leader in the church is much larger than someone being willing or available to serve. "He must be blameless in his behavior. This Greek word *anepilēpton*, "above reproach," is used in the New Testament only in this epistle (v. 2; 5:7; 6:14). It means to have nothing in one's conduct on which someone could ground a charge or accusation." Ibid., 762.

The practice of Christian leadership in the bible is seen through invitation. Jesus told his disciples, “if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).⁶ The invitation Jesus is giving to those who would follow him is a life committed to the mission of God. In Paul’s second letter to the church in Corinth, he explains that Christian disciples are those who have “been reconciled to God and have been made messengers of reconciliation.” Those who have been reconciled into right relationship with God have been invited into active participation in God’s mission through the making of other disciples. Christian leaders have been invited into right relationship with God and are used by God to continue to extend the invitation of reconciliation and participation to others. The trajectory of a disciple to also become a leader then is demonstrated when their sphere of influence moves beyond themselves (leading self) and grows to include leading others and eventually leading leaders. The stewardship of influence in the realm of Christian leadership is done through modeling a life that is worthy of imitation. The practice if Christian leadership is seen through invitation into a reconciled relationship to God and active participation in God’s mission. This chapter serves to demonstrate a biblical theology of leadership development through examining the growth stages of the Apostle Paul in how this maturing disciple also grew into an effective kingdom leader.

Conversion

The primary marker of a disciple of Jesus is a response of faith to the gospel call and commitment to follow him. Wilkins continues, “Once the response was made it marked the beginning of a new life; it meant losing one’s old life.”⁷ This *conversion*

⁶ In the Roman Empire a convicted criminal, when taken to be crucified, was forced to carry his own cross. This showed publicly that he was then under and submissive to the rule he had been opposing. Likewise Jesus’ disciples must demonstrate their submission to the One against whom they had rebelled. The path Jesus and His followers would travel would be a road of sorrow and suffering. But in so losing one’s life, one would truly find a better life. Jesus’ similar words (in 10:38–39) were stated in connection with one’s attitudes toward his family; here (16:24–25) Jesus spoke in relation to Peter’s misunderstanding about His program and the cost of discipleship. *Ibid.*, 59.

⁷Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 108.

experience is the primary catalytic event that forms a disciple of Christ and is the first stage of development in becoming a Christian leader. In conversion, a disciple's life trajectory becomes governed by a single-minded devotion to the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). This change involves new affections, which lead to new actions, a new allegiance which leads to a new purpose. This purpose, for the leader, is advancing the mission of God through the people of God. Conversion creates a new agenda for the Christian leader, one that is focused on the glorification of God through the building of His church (John 17:6-26). A great example of a conversion narrative occurs in the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14.

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'

Multiple waves of invitations go out throughout this parable. In the first wave, the guests prove themselves. They were either indifferent (v. 5) or hostile (v. 6). Culturally, when a king sent out an invitation, the recipient could not respond in either of those fashions. To respond with indifference was an insult to the king, and punishment would soon come upon the person. To respond with hostility by harming or killing the messengers was an outright declaration of war on the king. These sorts of responses parallel the responses Jesus received from the religious leaders. It was customary to send out a second invitation to the guests when the meal was ready and the table was set. Here, the king sent out such an invitation to a different group of people than the first. He sent his servants to the roads to invite everyone. This portion of the parable illustrates the preaching of the gospel after Israel rejected Jesus. The exhortation given to the church at Christ's ascension was that the gospel is to be preached in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The master sent servants with the message to gather people for the celebration

feast. The *readiness* refers to the unfolding of the mystery, namely, Christ ushering in the Kingdom of God through the Cross. The king has set the table of redemption, and the invitation goes out to invite guests to partake in the grace the king has extended. The context of this parable is that a king is putting on a celebration over the wedding of his son. The wedding imagery is the primary illustration used to describe the gospel, the relationship between Christ and His bride (Gen 2; Eph 5; Rev 19). Jeremiah Burroughs explains,

The gospel of Christ in general is this: It is the good tidings that God has revealed concerning Christ. More largely it is this: As all mankind was lost in Adam and became the children of wrath, put under the sentence of death, God, though He left His fallen angels and has reserved them in the chains of eternal darkness, yet He has thought upon the children of men and has provided a way of atonement to reconcile them to Himself again. . . . Namely, the second person of the Trinity takes man's nature upon Himself, and becomes the Head of a second covenant, standing charged with sin. He answers for it by suffering what the law and divine justice required, and by making satisfaction by keeping the law perfectly, which satisfaction and righteousness He tenders up to the Father as a sweet savor of rest for the souls that are given to Him. . . . And now this mediation of Christ is, by the appointment of the Father, preached to the children of men, of whatever nation or rank, freely offering this atonement unto sinners for atonement, requiring them to believe in Him and, upon believing, promising not only a discharge of all their former sins, but that they shall not enter into condemnation, that none of their sins or unworthiness shall ever hinder the peace of God with them, but that they shall through Him be received into the number of those who shall have the image of God again to be renewed unto them, and they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.⁸

The table that the King has set is that believers might be reconciled to God through Christ. Upon conversion, people are united with Christ. Using the language of Ephesians 2, those who were dead, far off, strangers, are now alive, sons, and coheirs in union with Christ. The wedding hall is now full of guests who have accepted the invitation, and no sooner than when the parable seems to be over, the king enters and begins to inspect His guests. He finds a man not wearing wedding garments and confronts him. Traditionally, wedding guests came to a king's celebration in "clean" garments appropriate for the occasion. In some instances, the host provided garments for some guests to wear;

⁸Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Conversation* (Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997), 3-4.

regardless, this issue is the root of the confrontation. The king asked the man why he was not wearing the proper clothes. The man received the same invitation as those around him, and the same amount of instruction, and chose not to put on those garments. His silence to the king's question gives the impression that he knew what he was supposed to do, but he disregarded it. The king was enraged that this man disgraced him, because he accepted the invitation to the feast yet created his own terms of participation. The Jewish rulers—and others like them that have publicly rejected Jesus—are represented in this parable by the ones who refused to come to the wedding feast. The man without the garment represents those who accepted the invitation, and outwardly responded to the gospel call, but have not come in through faith in Christ. The point the parable makes is that not only those who openly reject Jesus will be judged for their unbelief. Even among those who respond will be some who have come for other reasons. They do not come in faith, and thus do not come to the wedding in the “garments of salvation” or “robes of righteousness.” These are the ones who come with an outward profession of faith, but their real trust is not in the finished work of Christ on the cross. This stage illustrates the moment when one passes from death to life through faith alone in the grace of Christ alone. Conversion marks the point where one is no longer living for the kingdom of self, or the enemy, but rather the kingdom of God.

A dramatic example of conversion changing the trajectory of a disciple and marking the launch of a Christian leader occurs in the life of the Apostle Paul. His conversion experience was so pivotal in his emergence as a leader that it is repeated three times in the narrative of Acts (9:1–30; 22:3–21; 26:9–23). In Acts 9, Paul (Saul) is a Jewish leader who is actively persecuting the growing Christian sect—“But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1a).⁹ After a

⁹“So great was Paul’s hatred for the Christian church that he went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus.” John Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 1983), 375.

traumatic encounter with Jesus, where Paul converts and comes to faith in Christ, the trajectory of his life changes instantly. Jesus looks at this newly formed disciple and says to Ananias, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). In his study of the life of Paul, David Horrell talks about his conversion this way, “Paul’s encounter with the risen Christ was no doubt a dramatic and life-changing experience, which led Paul completely to revalue everything he had previously thought and done.”¹⁰

Gene Getz argues, “The changes in Paul’s life following his conversion were dramatic. He was just as zealous for Christ as he had been against Christ. He immediately began to ‘preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God’ (9:20).”¹¹ For the Apostle Paul, this conversion was such a traumatic shift that it meant spending the next three years of his life out of his primary context while gaining clarity about what this meant for the trajectory of his life. Upon conversion, Paul began to prepare for a new mission. Conversion marks the first phase in the development of a Christian leader where the actions, affections, and allegiances of that person shift to align with the kingdom of God.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christian Leadership Development

The creation account in the book of Genesis describes us (human beings) as created in the image of God. Though frequently passed over, this brief description is a vast ocean of deep and sobering truths to be considered. If we are created in the image of God, this means that His nature and His existence as a Trinity inform our own nature and existence. This is not to say that we partake in any degree in the deity of God; rather,

¹⁰David G. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul* (New York: T&T Clark, 2000), 26.

¹¹Gene Getz, *The Apostles: Becoming Unified through Diversity* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1998), 201.

being created in his image has implications for the design of our nature as well as our formation. The importance of this doctrine has monumental implications for the Christian life. This paradoxical topic must be approached both fearfully and curiously because what we understand about the nature and inter-relational dynamics of the Godhead greatly impact the whole of Christianity. Though the Holy Spirit is active in any work that the Trinity is active in, the main emphasis of the Bible in reference the Spirits work has to do with the formation of a Christian disciple.¹²

One knows from 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 that God is actively pursuing the disciples' sanctification and from Philippians 1:6 it is derive that this sanctification is a desire God will not fail to bring to fruition. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." The activity of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is to enlighten the mind and heart to the beauty of Christ, so that they might be increasingly conformed into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).¹³ In the Matthew 28, Jesus gives the method by which the church is to carry out the mission of making disciples, which is also the process of sanctification in which the Spirit is active in bringing to fruition, and that method is to "teach them to obey all that I have commanded" (Matt 28:18). One of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit in the formation of a disciple is the illumination of the truth of God from the Word of God.¹⁴ Daryl Elderidge, when describing the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian

¹²John Frame, in his work *Systematic Theology*, reminds the readers that the Spirit is a divine person not a force. "The fact that the Spirit is coordinate with the Father and Son in passages such as Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 2:21-22; and elsewhere, the divine attributes ascribed to him, and the divine acts he performs makes it plain that the Spirit is a person, together with the Father and Son." John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 924.

¹³"Paul concludes that the progressive work of the Christian character is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit. After conversion to the Spirit (v. 16), there is liberation through the Spirit (v. 17b) and transformation by the Spirit (v. 18)." Everett F. Harris, *Romans, The Expositors Bible Commentary: Volume 10*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 338.

¹⁴All Christian education should have, at its root; a mission of seeing the follower of Christ formed more into the image of Christ. The language here of "Christian formation" is intentionally used rather than "education" to draw attention to the purpose of education as the growth of the believer into the

formation says, “With the Spirit of God comes illumination—true understanding of what has been written. Every believer has the one who inspired the writers of Scripture residing in him. Without his illuminating ministry to us, the truth of Scripture could not penetrate our hearts and minds.”¹⁵ Faithful obedience to the commands of God in Scripture is impossible to understand or achieve outside of the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. First Corinthians 12:3 says, “no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit”.¹⁶ God has not left the Christian in a place of question as to what those commands are specifically. Illumination, in particular, is the work of the Spirit to enlighten the conscious of a disciple as to the clear revelation God has provided through his Word.¹⁷ The role of the Holy Spirit is crucial to the development of a Christian disciple and leader.

Calling

Calling refers to the role one plays and the unique contribution a disciple makes in the kingdom of God. In Paul’s second letter to the church at Corinth, he speaks of the salvific call of God experienced at conversion, but he also reveals the missional call of God that immediately follows.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal

fullness of Christ.

¹⁵Daryl Eldridge. *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1995), 47.

¹⁶ “Also Jesus who had suffered was now the Jesus who reigns as Lord, whom Paul represented (1 Cor. 1:1) and who was to be obeyed. Only believers, speaking by the Holy Spirit, acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. Nonbelievers—including false teachers—deny His sovereign lordship. Thus anyone who tries to controvert Jesus’ authority and His Word will suffer the consequences.” John Walvoord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 1983), 305.

¹⁷ “The Spirit would teach, as Jesus had taught for the three previous years of his ministry on earth; and the Spirit’s way of teaching would be to make the disciples recall and comprehend what Jesus himself had said. Thus the Spirit would glorify the glorified Savior, acting both as interpreter to make clear the truth about him and as illuminator to ensure the benighted minds receive it.” J. I. Packer, *Keeping in Step with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 1984), 61

through us. (2 Cor 5:18–20)

The geography of the country of Israel is a great picture of what 2 Corinthians is talking about. In Israel, the North is significantly different from the South. Right in the middle of the northern territory is the Sea of Galilee. Running across the country from north to south is the Jordan River. The Jordan runs into the north end of Galilee and exits the south end, continuing on. Lush farmland and beautiful weather thrive all around this body of water. If one follows the Jordan southward, away from the Sea of Galilee, the landscape gradually transitions into dry, arid desert that runs right into the Dead Sea. This area is void of life because the Jordan River ends there—the Dead Sea consumes it, and there is no outflow. The flow of the river terminates on the Dead Sea, creating a lifeless region with no growth whatsoever.

Paul paints a picture in this passage that the gospel has a flowing nature.¹⁸

When the gospel invitation goes out, and there is a response in faith, that person then becomes a vessel for that gospel to be carried on.

Paul attributes his changed perspective to God, who did too things for him. First, he *reconciled Paul to himself through Christ*, and second, he *gave him the ministry of reconciliation* (v. 18). This is an amazing statement. The reconciled become reconcilers.¹⁹

The gospel flow is the mission of God in action making disciples who make disciples. “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 Cor 5:20). The transformed believer experiences a change of trajectory upon conversion. Now entrusted with the message of reconciliation, the believer is called to be an ambassador²⁰

¹⁸Connecting the imagery of the Dead Sea to the 2 Cor 5 passage demonstrates that the gospel is not stagnate but moving. The argument here is that any application of the truth of the gospel that does not lead beyond the individual is not a full application of the gospel. Paul’s argument here is that not only does being reconciled to God mean that believers have become representative agents of the message of reconciliation, but where there is a lack of taking up the call to ambassadorship potentially could be evidence of a lack of regeneration.

¹⁹Linda Belleville, *2 Corinthians*, IVP New Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2011), 1078.

²⁰Those who have been redeemed and reconciled to God are a changed people with changed trajectories. Walvoord and Zuck explain it this way, “No longer need people be the objects of God’s wrath (Rom 5:9). By trusting themselves to the reconciling work of Christ alone, people pass from God’s wrath to God’s blessing (Acts 16:30–31; Rom. 8:1) and from spiritual death to spiritual life (John 5:24; Eph 2:1, 5).

of reconciliation, an agent in the kingdom of God. This *calling* to mission is a universal invitation to the people of God to advance the mission of God. The outworking of that call is distinct for each person and is based on factors such as spiritual gifts, background, context, and the passions of each individual that all come together to form the picture of how each disciple contributes to the overall mission (Eph 4:8-13; 1 Cor 12:12). It is in the active pursuit that leaders begin to discover who God has created them to be and what he has created them to do in the context of God's plan to redeem and reconcile the fallen world to himself.

This pattern continues in the life of Paul during his time in Arabia. Paul identifies in this period his specific role within the kingdom of God, to be the "Apostle to the Gentiles," as these passages indicate:

Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. (Acts 9:15)

But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles. (Gal 1:15-16)

Horrell writes of this aspect of Paul's life, "Whatever we label it, Paul certainly saw his conversion/call, at least in retrospect, as the moment when he was commissioned by God to the task of being the Apostle to the Gentiles."²¹ In the calling phase of leadership development, Paul moves beyond what it means to be a disciple *in* the mission of God to what it means to be a disciple *on* mission for God. During this time Paul grew in his gifting and gained clarity on the trajectory of his ministry. Getz elaborates,

Then men's sins are no longer counted, that is, imputed or reckoned, against them, for Christ has taken them on Himself (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18). This is the treasure of the gospel which Paul proclaimed (2 Cor 4:7), the message of reconciliation (5:19) delivered in the ministry (cf. 4:1) of reconciliation (5:18)," Walvoord and Zuck go on to say, "Few verses more precisely summarize Paul's ministry and message (cf. Acts 26:16-18). As Christ had preached peace to all men (Eph 2:17) on the basis of what He would accomplish (Eph. 2:16), Paul continued that proclamation in His stead. The immediate representative of God's message of reconciliation was Paul, whose ministry is shared by all who are "in Christ" (2 Cor 5:17, 19)." John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 956.

²¹Horrell, *Introduction to the Study of Paul*, 27.

Following his conversion, Paul evidently spent three years in relative isolation, overcoming his feelings of prejudice and dealing with his incredible indoctrination in Judaism ... It was during this time that Paul received more direct revelations from Jesus Christ regarding the gospel of God's grace ... He had grown "powerful" in his preaching and "baffled the Jews living in Damascus, by proving that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 9:25).²²

Gifted and context are the two primary elements that play a key role in Paul gaining clarity about his calling. It is obvious in Acts 9 that the proclamation of the Word was a strong gift for Paul. This is the gift he spent most of his time cultivating and also what the scriptures attest as his primary area of contribution to the kingdom of God. So says B. B. Warfield,

The manner in which Paul approaches this great declaration concerning Christ lends it a very special interest. What we are given is not merely how Paul thought of Christ, but how Paul preached Christ. It is the content of "the Gospel of God," the Gospel to which he as "a called apostle" had been "separated," which he outlines in these pregnant words. This is how Paul preached Christ to the faith of men as he went up and down the world "serving God in his spirit in the Gospel of His Son." We have no abstract theologoumena here, categories of speculative thought appropriate only to the closet. We have the great facts about Jesus which made the Gospel that Paul preached the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed. Nowhere else do we get a more direct description of specifically the Christ that Paul preached.²³

Paul's background in an urban city center within the Roman Empire hints at his missionary strategy of focusing his evangelization efforts on the same types of cities. Paul is identified as one who preached the good news of the gospel to the Gentiles and the Jews in the urban city centers of the Roman Empire, and raised up men to lead the churches there. This was Paul's calling.

Challenge

The maturation of a leader is a process that takes place over an entire lifetime. In fact, there is no end-point of development. There are, however, seasons in the life of a leader where he or she is faced with *challenges* that catalyze intense growth in their

²²Getz, *The Apostles*, 203-4.

²³Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield. "The Christ That Paul Preached," (1918), 95, accessed January 26, 2016, www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/pdf/warfield_christpaul.pdf.

development over a shorter period of time. These challenges enable a leader to advance through ceilings of growth by providing clarity and refining on a disciple's calling. Challenges can be both positive and negative. An example of a positive challenge would be the formative experience of participating in a mentor-mentee relationship, or to be an apprentice. The apprenticeship approach is where a future leader is able to navigate new waters of leadership under the guidance of someone who is more familiar with the territory. Jesus modeled this approach in his life as he intentionally invested in the twelve disciples. Greg Ogden recounts,

Jesus adapted his leadership style to the readiness of the disciples. His goal was that the twelve would continue his mission. The incarnate Son of God intended from the beginning to extend his life and ministry through this small core of disciples and, through them, set up an interlocking, multigenerational chain of disciple making.²⁴

In John 17, Jesus prays specifically for these twelve before he hands them the ministry to carry on in his physical absence. Jesus sends them (John 17:18) and also commissions them to reproduce what he has done in them, namely, making new disciples who are “those who will believe in me through your word” (John 17:20). Jesus is modeling a structure of investment and reproduction that will build the church. One of the most significant breakdowns in leadership development in the church today is the discipleship gap.²⁵ It is very difficult to reproduce what one has not experienced. Greg Ogden, in *Transforming Discipleship*, issues this challenge to the church:

Apostles are born to reproduce, which can be said of every disciple of Jesus. Here is the challenge to all pastors and Christian leaders. Where are the men and women who are multiplying ourselves so that the ministry carries on after we are gone? How would your ministry be different if you placed the highest priority on selecting, motivating, and training leaders that could carry on as much the mission of the parish after you are gone?²⁶

²⁴Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 99.

²⁵*Discipleship Gap* refers to the phenomenon that occurs when there is not a consistent and progressive transfer of discipleship from one generation to the next. This gap is also common in first or second generation Christians who did not have a mentor relationship as a primary driver of their initial formation.

²⁶Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 97.

Paul modeled this reality as he both took part in a mentor relationship and became a faithful mentor of another. Once Paul returned from his three-year season in the deserts of Arabia, he came to Jerusalem by way of Damascus where he faced heavy persecution for preaching the gospel. The disciples knew, prior to this, that Paul (Saul) was a zealous persecutor of the Christian church. They were reluctant to believe the stories of Paul's conversion to Christ and calling into ministry because they were afraid of him. Paul's first relationship upon returning to Jerusalem was vital for the future of his ministry.

In Damascus, Saul needed a friend, Ananias; in Jerusalem he needed another, Barnabas. He whose name means "son of encouragement" proved to be that for Saul. Ten believers in Jerusalem, convinced by Barnabas that Saul had in fact been converted, allowed Saul to stay with them.²⁷

This mentor relationship played a crucial role in helping Paul navigate difficult waters early on in his apostolic ministry with Christians and the non-believing world. Barnabas was a faithful example of the role a mentor plays in challenging a disciple to grow, but also in getting out of the way when the disciple is ready to begin leading. Oswald Sanders writes, "Barnabas' spiritual stature is seen in his entire freedom from jealousy when his protégé Paul surpassed his own leadership skills and became the dominant member of the team."²⁸

Paul was also faithful to continue the line of discipleship by investing in a younger leader, Timothy. The reader first meets Timothy in Acts 16 when Paul stops in Lystra as he is heading out on his second missionary journey. Paul's later letters to Timothy offer insight into the depths of their relationship, "Timothy, my true child in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). Paul fervently mentored this young, emerging leader, and faithfully stepped out of his way when it was time for Timothy to walk out on his own.

²⁷John Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs CO: David C. Cook, 1983), 378.

²⁸Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 147.

Experiencing persecution can be a transformative challenge in the life of a leader. This kind of challenge occurs when others, who do not share the leader's foundational values, become oppositional to the direction the leader is attempting to influence people towards. In this environment, antagonism is born. This scenario tests the core assumptions and foundational beliefs of a leader, forcing he or she toward greater clarity and confidence in what they believe. In Acts 21, Paul leads in the face of heavy persecution as he is attempting to return to Jerusalem. The persecution that awaits him is so intense that his companions beg him not to go. Michael Green writes,

The closer Paul came to Jerusalem, the more it became obvious that his fears were well founded. At each port of call, the more insistent the storm warnings became. At Tyre, "through the spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem" (Acts 21:4). At Caesarea, a Christian prophet named Agabus, taking a leaf from his Old Testament counterparts, tried to dissuade Paul, dramatically tying his hands and feet to symbolize what would await him in Jerusalem. Even Luke begged Paul not to risk his life this way. At Caesarea, the last stop before Jerusalem, Paul's friends broke down and cried, pointing out the dangers in continuing.²⁹

Persecution can also take many non-physical forms (e.g., demotion, degradation, temptation, or demonic oppression). Jesus, immediately following the inauguration of his earthly ministry through baptism, encountered demonic persecution: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt 4:1).³⁰

Persecution presents a unique opportunity for a leader. When facing a challenge through opposition of any kind, a leader must dig beneath the *what* and consider the *why*. The *what* of leadership is a crucial component to any task and typically contains the formal and functional elements of leadership. The *why* consists of the foundational values and beliefs that provide the motivation, inspiration, and momentum

²⁹Michael Green, *Thirty Years That Changed the World* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 157.

³⁰"After being baptized, Jesus was immediately led by the Spirit of God into the desert for a period of testing. This period of time was a necessary period under God's direction—a time in which the Son obeyed (Heb 5:8). After fasting 40 days, when the Lord was hungry, the tests began." Ibid., 26.

for the mission. When a leader gains clarity on the *why*, their content and direction becomes focused and effective. This clarity of direction leads to a greater effectiveness in their leadership by providing greater substance to their process of influencing others. This stage of leadership development is crucial. A leader can generate followers through communicating the *what*, but a leader begins to influence others when they can communicate the *why*.

Lastly, the most intense challenge a Christian leader can face is the challenge of suffering. Suffering, in the life of a leader, has a winnowing effect where encumbrances fade and elements that would have previously distracted the leader from the mission fall away. David Powlison offers great encouragement when he writes,

When you've passed through your own fiery trials, and found God to be true to what he says, you have real help to offer. You have firsthand experience of both his sustaining grace and his purposeful design. He has kept you through pain; he has reshaped you more into his image. . . What you are experiencing from God, you can give away in increasing measure to others. You are learning both the tenderness and the clarity necessary to help sanctify another person's deepest distress.³¹

There is no greater refining process in the life of a Christian leader than the experience of suffering. The Apostle Paul, when he was imprisoned and brought before Festus and Agrippa, faced death because of his influence. Festus, trying to appease the Jewish uproar, offered Paul a fair trial in Jerusalem, but Paul used his Roman citizenship to ask that his trial be moved to Rome, a right reserved by their citizens. Festus agreed to put this request in motion, but before Paul could begin his journey, he was brought before Agrippa as well (Acts 25:21-25). In both of these instances, Paul faced the possibility of death because of his proclamation of the gospel. In both of these instances, Paul's leadership rose to a new level as he used these opportunities before these government officials to fuel the movement and further the mission. David Black and Thomas Lea comment,

³¹David Powlison, "God's Grace and Your Sufferings," in *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2006), 166.

“Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?” A ruler of Agrippa’s status could scarcely confirm or deny Paul’s question, and he parried Paul’s verbal thrust with a comment, “In short you want to persuade me to become a Christian.” After Paul expressed the hope that all of his listeners would become Christians as he was, the interview was concluded. Agrippa later agreed on Paul’s innocence.³²

Paul experienced many different kinds of suffering. Whether it was through beating and imprisonment, relational loss and personal denial, Paul’s leadership became increasingly focused and effective with every encounter.

Did Paul embrace suffering because it would confirm that he is simply a faithful disciple of Jesus? Jesus had said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:23–24). So there is no true Christianity without cross-bearing and daily dying. Evidently Paul did not consider these promises of suffering as limited to the twelve apostles, because he passed them on to his churches . . . So it would be understandable if Paul embraced a life of suffering because it would simply confirm that he was a Christian.³³

Every follower of Christ will face moments of tension that test his or her foundational beliefs and assumptions. These moments have a solidifying affect in the life of a Christian leader. Seasons of challenge, whether intentional or circumstantial, momentary or constant, catalyze the development of a leader by creating a need for increased clarity and confidence, and catalyze growth and effectiveness in their ability to influence others towards active participation in the mission of God.

Convergence

The final stage of leadership development, as we see in the life of leaders in the New Testament Church, occurs when the leader experiences a *convergence*. Convergence³⁴ is a culmination of vision, experience, training, and preparation, creating a leader who is effectively using their gifts to further the mission of God through

³²David Alan Black and Thomas D. Lea, *The New Testament: Its Background and Message* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2003), 322.

³³John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 286.

³⁴Convergence is defined as “a coming together from different directions, especially a uniting or merging of groups or tendencies that were originally opposed or very different.” Miriam Webster, s.v. “Convergence,” accessed October 28, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/convergence>.

influencing others towards active participation. The two elements that exist in convergence are: (1) the leader is using his or her gifts effectively, which requires both understanding their design and also sharpening through experience; and (2) the leader is effectively raising up other leaders and is now focusing his or her efforts on leading through and developing those leaders. An example of convergence appears in Paul's leadership through his letters to the churches.

Paul's apostolic ministry was marked by preaching the gospel city to city, and by raising up leaders to build the church as he moved on to the next location. Paul was faithful to not only raise up converts, but disciples who would in turn make disciples. Because Paul could not be in more than one place at one time, he relied on letter writing as a significant means of leading churches and developing their leaders in his absence.³⁵ By examining the content of these letters, one can see that Paul is at a mature stage of his leadership development when he is generating focused and effective movement of active participants in the mission. In his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, which he and Silas planted in Acts 17, Paul communicates his deep affection for them and his hopes for their future. Shepherding, though not tied to a particular gift-set, is a universal call on the life of Christian leaders. As a leader is faithful to raise up and disciple other leaders, the relationship of ongoing care and development that exists takes the form of shepherd leadership. Paul exemplifies the priority of shepherding in Christian leadership. D. A. Carson writes,

Here is a Christian so committed to the well-being of other Christians, especially new Christians, that he is simply burning up inside to be with them, to help them, to nurture them, to feed them, to stabilize them, and to establish an adequate

³⁵Randolph Richards, in his work *Paul and first Century Letter Writing*, wrote, "Why did Paul so obviously love to write letters? We used to think he only wrote letters to substitute for when he could not visit a church personally. In fact, it was thought that it was Paul's first choice to visit personally, failing that he sent a representative, such as Timothy, and as a last resort he sent a letter." Richards goes on to give explanation for why it seemed Paul valued letter writing so highly, "While Paul may have turned to writing letter to meet the practical needs of his situation, the extensive length and development of themes indicate that Paul saw enormous benefit in sending letters." Randolph Richards, *Paul and First Century Letter Writing* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 16.

foundation for them. This is typical of Paul. He never descends to the level of mere professional.³⁶

Paul concentrates his efforts in the latter half of his ministry, demonstrating that through his progress as a leader, he gained clarity on how his particular gifts and make-up were most effective in the mission of God. Maturity in leadership, as seen in Paul, is building the church not on his own, but through leading leaders. Carson continues, “In Colossians, Paul is writing to a church he has never visited, a church apparently founded by Epaphras, himself a Colossian, who was probably led to the Lord through Paul’s ministry in Ephesus.”³⁷ This is an example of a church that exists not because of Paul’s direct involvement in that city, but because Paul raised up a leader that went on to establish a new work. This new work was second-generation fruit from Paul’s leadership and it presents a prodigious example of the multiplicative effect of mature leadership. The convergence stage of development is where the Christian leader experiences freedom being who God created him or her to be and do what God created him or her to do, and also experiences fruit from effective concentration of their gifts and experiences towards advancing the mission of God. Sanders claims, “The initial call of Christ to the men with whom he planned to associate in His purpose of world evangelization was a call to discipleship.”³⁸ This stage of development is a culmination of growth that leads to a multiplying effect from one leader to another to another.

Conclusion

All of the stages demonstrated here are components of the anatomy of a growing disciple of Christ. The path to maturity and multiplication is a universal path for all who follow Christ. Though each disciple in the mission of God has a different role and

³⁶D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 81.

³⁷D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, 97-98.

³⁸Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship*, 1.

a distinct level of responsibility and authority, all disciples are called onto the path of the mission. “The scriptures picture the church as full of proactive ministers; the reality is the majority of church members are passive recipients,” argues Ogden. “The New Testament picture of the church is an every-member ministry.”³⁹ Paul, though a radically effective leader used by God to accomplish great feats, demonstrates in his life common benchmarks of growth that mark the trajectory of an emerging leader. Conversion marks the moment in a person’s life when he or she ceases to be in active rebellion against God and with an allegiance to the world and becomes an active participant in the mission of God with allegiance to his kingdom. Calling is the breakthrough where a disciple discovers his or her unique design and purpose within the mission of God. Challenges are unique catalyzers in the life of a disciple that provide clarity and confidence to the vision and direction that enable a disciple to become a leader through influencing others towards a common and clear direction. Convergence is where a leader finds freedom and effectiveness being whom God created them to be and reproducing that reality in the lives of others. The primary mark of a Christian leader is the ability to influence movement among the people of God to accomplish the mission of God. Christian leadership is about activation and mobilization of God’s people towards faithful and effective participation in God’s mission. The trajectory of a disciple to a leader then is demonstrated when the sphere of influence moves beyond themselves and grows to include leading others and eventually leading leaders.

³⁹Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 24.

CHAPTER 3

COMPETENCIES AND COMPONENTS OF A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

The purpose of this project was to create a strategic leadership development pipeline, enabling TVC to raise up and effectively release men and women for gospel-centered multiplication. Chapter 2 spoke to the importance of creating a strategic leadership development pipeline by establishing a biblical framework for Christian leaders, how they develop, and their role in the life of the church. The goal of this chapter is, through utilizing the current mission statement of TVC, to establish unified competencies and align those competencies with a set of components that map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village Church (from leading self to leading others to leading leaders).

Determining the foundational competencies of a growing Christian leader is fundamental to creating a deliberate developmental pipeline at TVC. These elements need to be executable and accountable at every level within the organization and also clear and understandable by the participants within the organization. As with any foundational element in a spiritual formation process, these core competencies should be theologically informed, philosophically matched with the direction of the church, and methodologically achievable inside the existing mechanisms.¹ Once there is an

¹In *Creature of the Word*, Josh Patterson talks about the importance of a church's theology being the primary driver of its philosophy and its methodology. "Gospel theology must translate into gospel practice. For a church culture to be centered on the gospel, there must be harmony between theology, philosophy, and practice. The more these three are connected, the stronger a church culture is. But whenever there is a disconnect among any of these areas—theology, philosophy, and practice—the culture weakens and the potential impact of the church suffers. All three must converge to put the gospel on full display and to keep the gospel paramount." Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger, *Creature of the Word* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2013) 96.

established set of competencies, the next step is to create the components of the pipeline that demonstrate the movement of each leader through the progressive stages of the pipeline. This chapter reviews the profile of a Christian leader as examined more intentionally in chapter 2 and then walks through each individual discipleship trait to explain how each trait functions as a competency of development as well as the venues that TVC will facilitate to nurture these competencies. Finally, the discipleship traits of the TVC mission statement are aligned with the components of leadership development as seen in the stages *leading self, leading others, leading leaders*.

The Profile of a Christian Leader

At its foundation, leadership is about the presence and utilization of influence among a group of people. A notable voice on the subject of leadership, Peter Northouse, describes the relationship of influence to leadership in this way; “Leadership involves influence; it is concerned with how the leader affects followers. Influence is the *sine qua non* of leadership. Without influence, leadership does not exist.”² Christian leaders are disciples who use their influence to direct people towards God’s purposes. God’s purposes are primarily about the glory of his name (1 Cor 10:31) through the making of disciples (Matt 28:16-21). Greg Ogden defines Christian formation as “a process that takes place within accountable relationships over a period of time for the purpose of bringing believers to spiritual maturity in Christ.”³ In order to make disciples, one must first be a disciple and then understand how disciples are made. At TVC, we believe that the profile of a Christian disciple is someone who is actively growing as a follower of Christ through gospel-centered worship, community, service, and multiplication. These categories make up the anatomy of what we believe to be competencies of a disciple of

²Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 2.

³Ibid., 129.

Jesus Christ. These are the areas in which we are seeking holistically to cultivate growth through a variety of venues.

Competencies of a Leadership Pipeline

The Village Church exists to bring glory to God by making disciples through gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service and gospel-centered multiplication.⁴ Gospel-centered worship is the fuel for discipleship. Gospel-centered community is the context for discipleship. Gospel-centered service is the overflow of discipleship. Gospel-centered multiplication is the result of discipleship.

The four discipleship traits from our mission statement are at work in the life of a maturing believer. None of the discipleship traits are meant to function in isolation, but rather, each discipleship trait is dependent on the others. These traits present both a person and a process of discipleship and form the core competencies⁵ that we would like to see nurtured and developed in the life of every member of TVC.⁶ It would be impossible to create ministries that perfectly and evenly nurture each of these traits simultaneously. In order to foster growth in each of these areas, TVC has created venues

⁴“Mission | The Village Church.” 2016. Accessed February 4. [http:// www.thevillagechurch.net/about/mission/](http://www.thevillagechurch.net/about/mission/).

⁵One of the primary reasons I have chosen to utilize the language of the mission statement as the core competencies of a leadership development pipeline versus creating new language is clarity and consistency. We have gone to great lengths to vet this current mission statement and have spent a large amount of resources organizing both our leadership and ministry structures to be consistent with the direction of this statement. Over the past five years, the people of TVC have become well acquainted with the language of the mission statement and have grown significantly in their understanding of the traits it outlines. It will best serve the church and the project to utilize existing language and structures in the development of this strategic pipeline versus creating new language that will have to be indoctrinated in the life of the church.

⁶TVC does not believe that the mission statements are the only elements of discipleship nor do it hold that these traits are the sum total of the teaching of the New Testament on discipleship. Mission statements serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not, clearly state which priorities will be served and how, and communicate a sense of intended direction to the entire organization. The TVC mission statement is an attempt by the elders to be faithful in God’s call on the local church in intentionally growing disciples of Jesus Christ. There are numerous ways that this can be accomplished in the life of the church. Though TVC believes the Bible gives room for a wide variety of expressions in methodology, this is how TVC intends to focus her efforts on making disciples in our context.

that strategically seek to focus on developing each particular trait.⁷ Even though these venues strategically focus on a particular trait, we recognize that elements of all four traits exist and are expressed in these venues regularly.⁸ An implication of this approach to discipleship is the focus on events or process over people. A historic struggle of TVC is for strategies to translate more intently to the functions of a department not a disciple. Careful attention will need to be paid to establishing a robust theological foundation for how these traits contribute to the formation of a disciple in order to shape the participants' understanding of how they function in everyday life and ensure they are not limited to the venues alone. The theological foundation that currently exists for each discipleship trait is not sufficient to accomplish this, therefore an implication of this project is the necessity for the leadership of TVC to establish a sufficient theology prior to implementing this pipeline.

Gospel-Centered Worship as a Discipleship Trait

At TVC, worship is a central trait in the life of a follower of Christ.⁹ There is nothing in life more important than worship. We are all worshipping something all the time. The question is not whether we worship, but the object of our worship. The TVC Covenant Membership documents describe worship this way by arguing,

Life consists of constant worship. Every thought, word, desire and deed involves the

⁷A variety of traits could be utilized to describe the formation of a disciple. Worship, community, service, and multiplication are the traits that TVC has chosen to nurture in an intentional effort towards making disciples.

⁸Home Groups are a great example of what is mentioned here. The purpose of Home Groups is to provide a context for gospel-centered community. Though this is the narrow focus of this particular ministry in the life of the church, worship, service, and multiplication all take place frequently in the home groups setting. Though the function Home Groups are primarily about providing the context for community at TVC, it is fully expected that all of the discipleship traits will be expressed consistently by participants in community.

⁹D.A. Carson says, "Worship is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so. This side of the Fall, human worship of God properly responds to the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made." D. A. Carson, *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 3.

ascribing of worth and value—glory. Each attitude, affection and activity is an expression of our allegiance, whether to our Creator or His creation. God alone is worthy of our worship. Worship is related to every area of our lives. We are called to eat, drink, speak, think and work to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). Worship cannot be narrowed down to a particular time and place as if God does not claim authority over certain aspects of our lives. There are no neutral desires or deeds; everything is an expression of worship.¹⁰

In John 4:24 Jesus says, “The Father is looking for worshipers who worship him in spirit and in truth.” The mark of a follower of Christ is that our minds’ attention and hearts’ affection are arrested by the truth of the gospel in a way that produces Christ-exalting worshippers. Gospel-centered worship is the posture of a heart that adores Christ for who he is and what he has done. As a brief examination of the Psalms reveals, worship can be pursued through various postures and practices. Even the New Testament presents this varied view of worship in exhorting the Church to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and teach and admonish one another, all as an expression of thanks to the Father for the work of the Son through the Spirit (Col 3:16). The Spirit illuminates the disciple to the truths of God’s Word and enables obedient action. The Holy Spirit also works in those obedient actions to produce righteous affections. These affections are indicative of a transformed heart that is decreasingly longing for the things of this world and increasingly longing for the things of God.¹¹ To worship genuinely is to know God. The more we know and understand the God of the Bible, the more we adore, the more we celebrate, the more we obey, and the more we love him. Worship is an act of yielding ourselves to God’s rule and dominion. This is the “attitude” or affection that we seek to reflect.¹² The act of worship is an authentic and continuous expression of all that we were

¹⁰“Membership | The Village Church.” 2016. Accessed February 4. <http://www.thevillagechurch.net/about/membership/>.

¹¹Paul David Tripp describes the person as being comprised of two parts, the outward person and the inward person. The outward person is comprised of actions, what you do. The inner person is who you are. He describes the breakdown in this way, “the outer person is your physical self, and the inner person is your spiritual self. The synonym the bible most often uses to describe the self is *the heart*. The heart is the “real you”. It is the essential core of who you are.” Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemers Hands* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 57.

¹²In his book *Real Worship*, Warren Wiersbe argues that true worship is balance by mind and emotions, heart and intellect. Worship is fueled by knowledge of God, motivated by love, and leads to obedient actions. Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 21.

and are in response to all that God is doing in the world. This idea of worship transcends music style, formal or informal setting, and personal preference. Our goal is that we would be able to appropriately and reverently respond to the Truth of God, led by the Spirit of God, with great passion and desire for redemption and restoration not only for us as individuals, but for us a community. Worship is comprised of righteous actions and affections as the response of a person who has been transformed by the truth of God's Word. TVC has chosen to focus on specific venues where the focus is developing the disciple in this particular trait. As explained above, worship is something that Christians should be seeking to express in all aspects of their lives and not limited to an event or space. An implication of this project is that there needs to be more work done on establishing a theology of worship among the people of TVC to ensure a more holistic understanding of biblical worship that is not limited to an event but is rather expressed in the whole life.

Gospel-Centered Worship as a Discipleship Venue

At TVC, it is believed that worship is the fuel for discipleship. The primary way that TVC seeks to nurture this discipleship trait is through the regular gathering of the saints in a corporate service—primarily weekly weekend worship services and monthly Elder-Led Prayer services. Within these venues, God is worshipped by remembering the gospel through preaching, teaching, singing, praying and celebrating the ordinances of baptism and communion. Each presents an opportunity for the church to receive, remember, respond, and rejoice in the work of our great King. Weekend services are strategically planned to provide an opportunity to respond to God, in spirit and truth, for Who He is and what He has done, as expressed in adoration and obedience to the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit while fulfilling the mission of The Village by modeling and teaching gospel-centered worship. At TVC, it is believed that the weekend gatherings are formative because they are participatory. However, the

facilitation of the weekly gathering does not reflect the role it is believed to play in the formation of disciples at TVC. In order for weekend gatherings to operate in a formational capacity for the participants as a primary means for nurturing the trait of worship, a more sufficient theological foundation must be established that will inform the methodological approach to the planning and execution of the weekend gatherings.

Elder-Led Prayer (ELP) services are venues created by the elders at each campus to call the church to corporate prayer and worship together. These services are a growing discipline in the life of the church and provide a space for the church to take a deeper and intentional focus on many of the elements that exist in a weekend service (i.e., prayer, communion, fellowship) but are focused in on during Elder-Led Prayer in a unique way.¹³ The structure of the ELP services have continually evolved since their inception in 2009. An implication of this project is that the planning and execution of the ELP services must flow from a theological understanding of the role they play in the formation of a disciple. This theological understanding does not currently exist at TVC in a way that has been communicated effectively to the participants.

Gospel-Centered Community as a Discipleship Trait

At TVC, gospel-centered community is the context for discipleship and, therefore, is an essential trait to the formation of God's people. This belief is held because, foundationally, God created his people to exist in a community rather than in isolation. In the creation account of Genesis 1, God said,

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over

¹³ELP services are unique in the context of TVC because of their size and scope. Typically a weekend worship gathering ranges from 1000 to 1400 in attendance while an ELP service will range from 400 to 600. This smaller size of the ELP service allows for more flexibility in the elements of service, provides more opportunity for participation and interaction, and also requires less volunteers in areas such as greeting and ushering which would otherwise prohibit those volunteers from participating in the service. Also, the scope of an ELP service is far more narrow than a weekend gathering. Whereas on the weekends, there are going to be elements such as announcements and a sermon, which occupies much of the time, ELP services are more intentionally focused on prayer and worship.

the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Orthodox Christian teaching says the God of the Bible is one essence and three distinct persons. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons co-exist in perfect harmony in eternity. The Westminster Confession of Faith, one of the most well known doctrinal statements in church history, sums up the nature of God this way: “In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, having one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴ According to the Scripture passage above, we are created in the image of the Trinity. This simple idea carries massive implications, only one of which we will explore in depth. This reality separates Christianity from every other religion. Humans are in the *likeness* of God. Humans reflect Him. Phillip Ryken and Michael LeFebvre explain how creation points to community:

From all eternity, the three Persons have enjoyed perfect love within the Godhead. When it pleased God to make mankind in his own image, he created us as social beings. We were created for relationship with God and to reflect his likeness not merely as individuals but in relationship with one another. This may be why the author of Genesis dared to use plural pronouns to describe God at that point in the creation account where he tells of God’s creating mankind in his own likeness God made man a social being because the prototype for man – God himself – is a being in communion.¹⁵

Worship is directed toward a triune God, who has eternally existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In identifying the tri-unity of God, it is recognized that God is communal. Bearing the image of God, humankind is called to reflect this reality. Though each Christian has a personal relationship with God, that relationship is not individual or private. The Christian faith is not intended to be lived in isolation. Humans were made

¹⁴“Classics.” 2016. Accessed February 4. http://www.hisglory.us/THEOLOGY.htm/Reformation_Classics.htm. The historic Nicene Creed and more recently the Baptist Faith & Message also summarize the Trinity in an accessible fashion.

¹⁵Phillip Graham Ryken and Michael LeFebvre, *Our Triune God: Living in the Love of the Triune God* (Wheaton, IL., Crossway, 2011), 92.

for community—relationship with God and with each other.¹⁶ The formation of a follower of Christ is intended to happen in the company of others.¹⁷ The Bible calls believers members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31) with the expectation that each believer contributes to the body for the glory of God and the good of His people. Gospel-centered community is a radical call amid a culture of mere attendance and casual involvement. It involves mutual love, care, consistency and authenticity as believers seek to adorn the person and work of Christ with their lives. Though this type of community can be expressed in various ways, there are particular practices that the Bible commands for a healthy functioning of the body. These commands demonstrate fruit from the gospel flowing into a people, that through Christ, we are reconciled to God and to one another. This defines the function of how believers exist together. Jesus commands believers to love one another (John 13:34), outdo one another in showing honor (Rom 12:10), live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16), comfort and agree with one another (2 Cor 13:11), serve one another (Gal 5:13), bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), forgive one another (Eph 4:32), submit to one another (Eph 5:21), be honest with one another (Col 3:9), encourage one another (1 Thess 5:11), confess to and pray for one another (Jas 5:16), and humble ourselves before one another (1 Pet 5:5). Though this type of community can be expressed in various ways, there are particular practices that the Bible

¹⁶In conducting research on how millennials engage the church, Ed Stetzer says, "Three out of five young, unchurched people say they are willing to study the Bible if a friend asked them to do so." Ed Stetzer, *Lost & Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2009), 65. In the particular survey cited, "young-unchurched" represents the 20 to 29-year-old age range of those not attending a church.

¹⁷Bruce Ware says, "The very fact that God, though singular in nature, is plural and societal in person, indicates that people should not view ourselves as isolated individuals who happen to exist in close proximity to others, but as interconnected, interdependent relational persons in community. It is not enough just to exist together alongside but independent of others, along the lines of how a lot of guys live in a dorm—sharing space with other guys whom they just pass in the hall. They exist in close proximity, but is there really a relationship of community in many such cases? God intends that there be a created community of persons in which there is an interconnection and interdependence, so that what one does affects the other, what one needs can be supplied by the other, and what one seeks to accomplish can be assisted by the other." Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2005), 132.

commands for a healthy functioning of the body. These commands demonstrate fruit from the gospel flowing into a people, that through Christ, we are reconciled to God and to one another. It is difficult, if not impossible, to carry out these obligations toward one another if there is no knowledge of and love for one another in the context of trusted relationships.

Gospel-Centered Community as a Discipleship Venue

At TVC, gospel-centered community is the context for discipleship and that the context for community is facilitated through Home Groups and Recovery Groups. The primary gathering of TVC, the weekend service, is limited in the feasibility of participants having the opportunity to connect to one another significantly enough to develop relationships that foster biblical community because of its size.¹⁸ Home groups provide an opportunity for every member of the local church to have an environment where they can connect to one another in a deeper way than the weekend gathering is able to facilitate. These groups are comprised of men and women from all generations of life who meet throughout the week for fellowship, care, prayer, accountability, sharing stories, and studying God's Word. Home Groups are small, multi-generational, geographical expressions of the local church. Quarterly Group Connect events are hosted that focus on assimilating unconnected attendees into newly formed Home Groups throughout the metroplex. The goal of Home Groups is biblical, gospel-centered community, where genuine, real and authentic relationships is valued and effort is made to see lives changed by the power of the gospel.

At TVC, groups are the primary context by which this kind of community becomes a reality. Groups must be a safe place for people to pursue depth in their walk

¹⁸The current size of the worship center at TVC is 1444 seats. In 2015, TVC was running at 85 percent capacity, which means that there was an average of 1200 people at any given service.

with Christ as they study God's Word corporately and apply it to their lives individually. Home Groups attempt to not only provide an opportunity for community, but for the individuals in that community to be reminders of the gospel to one another, glorifying God and participating together in the mission to make disciples. Groups help us to learn and grow in truth while experiencing and exercising love. James provides an example of the outworking of community, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." (Jas 5:16) Maturity in Christ does not happen by accident; rather, depth in your walk with Christ comes through active pursuit by the power of the Holy Spirit in the company of those who are willing to speak truth into your life. Much of the growth in the body of Christ is bound to experiencing the gospel working through the lives of others. Sanctification is a community project. Home Groups are where the body can tangibly take on the responsibility of seeing you grow more into the fullness of Christ.

Another venue at TVC where gospel-centered community is nurtured is through Recovery Groups. These groups give men and women a safe place to pursue redemption in Christ from sin and suffering.¹⁹ They meet for two hours every week at each campus. The first hour includes worship through song and a biblically based lesson or testimony. The second hour includes small groups that address specific issues and struggles. The issues addressed in these groups fall into three broad categories: suffering primarily as a result of a person's sin (e.g., addictions), suffering primarily as a result of a person being sinned against (e.g., abuse) and suffering primarily as a result of a person living in a fallen world (e.g., infertility). Recovery groups are strategically designed to provide a temporary environment for intense and specialized care for those afflicted by

¹⁹Recovery Groups differ from Home Groups in that they provide an environment where participants can receive specialized care that is focused more intentionally on a specific area of struggle. Recovery Groups also differ in that they are not intended to be long-term solutions for community but rather a seasonal environment ideally not lasting longer than one year.

any of the aforementioned circumstances. At TVC, community is an integral element to the formation of disciples and thus see home groups and recovery groups as essential venues to facilitate in the discipleship process.

Gospel-Centered Service as a Discipleship Trait

John 13:1-20 is the account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. This was no regular rabbinical task but, instead, reserved for the lowest of all servants.²⁰ Here was the anointed King, the eternal Son of God, doing the unthinkable. By humbly cleaning the feet of His disciples, Jesus gave an enduring example of service and issued a command for us to follow in His steps.²¹ God saved people in order that they might now serve.

Gospel-centered service is motivated by the reconciling work of God and seeks to extend His grace and mercy to others for His glory and not our own. Peter describes the role of service in the believer's life in this way:

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves as one who serves by the strength God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet 3:8-11)

²⁰Jonathan Edwards, in his sermon preached at Portsmouth, at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Job Strong, June 28, 1749, described the example Jesus gave in washing the disciples' feet to have this effect: "When our Savior calls on his disciples to imitate the example he had given them in what he had done, we are to understand him, not merely by the example he gave in the emblematical action, in washing his disciples' feet, in itself considered, but more especially, of that much greater act of his that was signified by it, in abasing himself so low, and suffering so much, for the spiritual cleansing and salvation of his people." Jonathan Edwards, "Sermon Given at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Job Strong." (Portsmouth, June 28, 1749). www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/example.htm.

²¹Edwards continues, "When Christ had finished washing his disciples' feet, he solemnly requires their attention to what he had done, and commands them to follow his example therein. Verses 12-17, "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." When our Savior calls on his disciples to imitate the example he had given them in what he had done, we are to understand him, not merely by the example he gave in the emblematical action, in washing his disciples' feet, in itself considered, but more especially, of that much greater act of his that was signified by it, in abasing himself so low, and suffering so much, for the spiritual cleansing and salvation of his people." Ibid.

Gospel-centered service is also an expression of love and stewardship of grace marked by humility, generosity, and hospitality empowered by a passion for the glory of God. In Philippians 2, Paul exhorts disciples to imitate Christ's example:

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. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.²²

The ultimate example of the Lord was to die for all. Paul is contending that in light of this example, we too should no longer live for ourselves. Those who die with Christ should then live for Christ.²³ Gospel-centered service is a radical call to self-denial for the follower of Christ, but it is also a call to self-awareness and pursuit of understanding of how one has been gifted by God and how those gifts can be most faithfully expended for kingdom purposes. In order for one to faithfully utilize one's gifts for the building up of the church, there needs to exist opportunities for spiritual gifts to be discovered, understood, and expressed in a way that enables more effective stewardship of those gifts. Currently, TVC does not possess or utilize and mechanism for its members to discover their individual spiritual gifts. An implication of this project is that in order for gospel-centered service to function as a discipleship trait, there needs to be a strategic philosophical approach to the implementation of this trait in the life of a growing disciple. The lack of development in this area of gospel-centered service has negative effects in the build out of the progressive stages of leadership development.

²²In his commentary on Philippians, Gordon Fee says, "For in "pouring himself out" and "humbling himself to the point of death on the cross", Christ Jesus has revealed the character of God himself. Here is the epitome of God-likeness: the preexistent Christ was not a "grasping, selfish" being, but one whose love for others found it's consummate expression in "pouring himself out," in taking on the role of a slave, in humbling himself to the point of death on behalf of those he so loved. Discipleship in the present calls for servant hood, self-sacrifice for the sake of others." Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Erdmans, 1995), 155.

²³Harrison says, "For those who rose to walk with Christ in the newness of life (Rom. 6:4), slavery to sin and self has ended while devotion to Christ and his church has begun. The outcome of Christian self-denial is a Christ-centered life filled with concern for others." Everett F. Harrison, *Romans, The Expositors Bible Commentary Volume 10*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 352.

Gospel-Centered Service as a Discipleship Venue

At TVC, the discipleship trait, gospel-centered service, is the overflow of discipleship. Those who have been impacted by the gospel have the responsibility to express this trait— in both formal and informal ways, as well as inside and outside of the church. Formal venues of service in the church include opportunities such as ministry teams,²⁴ or participating in a short-term trip.²⁵ Formal venues of service outside of the church include serving with one of our local missions partners or a community-based organization seeking to model Christ by engaging the city through service. Through serving on these teams or with these organizations, men and women have the opportunity to grow in the application of God’s word, expression of their gifts, pursuit of their passions, and discovery of their role towards advancing the kingdom of God through the building up of his church. In Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church, he talks about the role of service in the church and the believer:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor 12:4-7)

In this text, gospel-centered service includes both the opportunity to be formed as a disciple and the forming of disciples by the building up of the body through the use of ones individual gifts. In order for this discipleship venue to function as a developmental tool in the life a disciple, there also needs to be the opportunity for each individual to discover and develop his or her gifts. Currently, TVC does not employ any curriculum or tool to aid its members in the discovery or use of their individual spiritual gifts. An

²⁴*Ministry Team* is the title used for a group of men and women who serve in a particular facet during our weekend services. These opportunities range from parking to greeting to sharing the gospel in Connection Central. Ministry teams are open to both members and non-members but require a formal application, assimilation, and training process to be eligible to serve on one of these teams.

²⁵*Short-term trips* are TVC sanctioned mission trips that visit one of our official partners around the world where participants can observe and contribute to the work being done by the ministry partners. These trips are open to both members and non-members and typically last between seven to ten days.

implication of this project is the necessity to form a process to equip TVC members in the understanding and application of their spiritual gifts.

Gospel-Centered Multiplication as a Discipleship Trait

In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, he says, "As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." In the community of the Trinity we see the Father displaying His love by *sending* the Son to redeem and reconcile a fallen creation through the work of the Spirit. Through Christ, we have been made vessels for this message of reconciliation and sent out. The people of God are a sent people.

Jesus redefines the people of God as those who are in Him. The people of God no longer have a national identity but an identity based on a person. Those who place their love and trust in the Lord Jesus now belong to the church and are sealed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The church has a mission to multiply disciples, and God will use His people to bring about His original design for multiplication: the worship of His name in every tongue, tribe and nation and the representation of His rule over the entire earth.²⁶

In perhaps the most famous passage on discipleship, Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus issues the Great Commission for the Church, which involves multiplication:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The disciple's call is to multiplication and replication through the gospel for the glory of our God. The goal for every believer is to become better disciples through love for God

²⁶In his doctoral work on providing a biblical theology for multiplication, Josh Patterson writes, "God's intent and design for His creation, specifically with humanity, was to call out a people unto Himself. God's people would represent Him on the earth and steward on His behalf, serving as His vice-regents. The command to be fruitful and multiply among the earth signified His blessing and joy. Biblical multiplication is more pronounced than simply bearing children, although numerical multiplication is certainly a component. Within the biblical understanding is also the idea of multiplying God's reign and rule over the earth. This is the charge for His people." Patterson is pointing out the continual theme of multiplication through sending that is threaded from the creation narrative to the commissioning of the apostles. The idea encapsulated within this argument is that God has a mission that is going to get accomplished and that he intends to accomplish this mission through his people. Joshua Rice Patterson, "Leveraging the Multi-Site Approach as a Long Term Church Planting Strategy at The Village Church in Dallas-Fort Worth" (Ph. D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 85.

and love for others by equipping and empowering others to do the same. Disciples of Christ multiply through seeing Christ formed in the lives of others.²⁷ In Paul's second letter to the Corinthian Church, he says,

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”

Frank Gaebelein writes, “This message of reconciliation is the God-designed link between the objective work of reconciliation and the subjective appropriation by the sinner.”²⁸ This passage implies that the follower of Christ has something to be received and also something to now offer. Discipleship does not terminate on itself, but rather continues to multiply as disciples of Jesus make more disciples. Arthur Glaser affirms this connection by stating,

Although the Great Commission is the climax of the earthly instruction of Jesus, this in itself does not make the Christian movement a missionary faith. This movement has its source in God, whose gracious redemptive purpose through Christ was “to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Col 1:20).²⁹

Gospel-centered multiplication is about being a faithful custodian of the gospel message through the use of spiritual gifts and talents to see Christ formed in others.

²⁷In their work on *A Biblical Theology of Mission*, Kostenberger and O'Brien explain that the mission of the people of God stems from the mission of Jesus. “The mission of the exalted Jesus is accomplished through the witness of the apostles in the power of the Holy Spirit. The one who is himself sent by God, sends his representatives to bear witness to his salvation, to announce the forgiveness of sins, and to make disciples of all nations. In other words, his witnesses continue the mission of Jesus by declaring to men and women everywhere the glorious gospel of the grace of God. As his Father sent him, so Jesus sends them. Moreover, this testimony to Jesus and his saving work involves a wide-ranging series of activities that result in believers being built up in Christ and formed in Christian congregations.” Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 269.

²⁸Ibid., 354

²⁹Arthur F. Glaser, *Announcing the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2003), 233.

Gospel-Centered Multiplication as a Discipleship Venue

At TVC, gospel-centered multiplication is the overflow of discipleship. As previously discussed in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, the message of reconciliation is the offer to be reconciled to God in one part and also the call to carry the message of reconciliation as an offer to others. Coupled with the command of Jesus in Mathew 28, the mission of all disciples of Christ is carried out through the discipleship of others. Christian multiplication is about disciples who make disciples who make disciples. Currently, the venues that foster the trait of multiplication are limited to only those who wish to be sent out from the church body as missionaries in a cross-cultural context through our Sending Program. The argument here, as an implication of the project, is that the primary venue to nurture at TVC in order to foster gospel-centered multiplication is the Institute. The goal of the Institute is to train and send out men and women who have been profoundly furnished with the tools necessary to be faithful disciples of Christ in their contexts. The Village Church Institute mission statement says,

We believe that at the heart of Christian discipleship stands the story of God reconciling the world to Himself through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Institute helps you find your place in this story, sending you out to proclaim the gospel to the world. We do this by offering forums, classes, online resources, programs and residencies focused around intentional discipleship.³⁰

Through a variety of environments, the Institute seeks to develop disciples in three key areas: Christian Story, Christian Belief, and Christian Formation. Through this holistic approach to equipping, men and women are sent out to spread the hope of the gospel in fulfillment of the great commission in their groups, neighborhoods, workplaces, or to the ends of the earth.

Components of a Leadership Pipeline

The previous section discussed the competencies of a leadership development

³⁰“Mission | The Village Church,” accessed February 4, 2016, <http://www.thevillagechurch.net/about/mission/>.

pipeline. Competencies are the areas of proficiency that are to be nurtured to achieve the desired outcome. The competencies form a standard of measurement and evaluation for the growth and progress of disciples at The Village Church. Establishing a clear and unified set of core competencies ensures that focused effort and attention will be given to the training and assessment of those competencies within the church. This section will establish the components of the leadership pipeline. Leadership development is a process not a program. Though there is a starting point of development as a disciple in salvation, maturation as a leader happens through stages of growth over time. These stages mark the progressive evolution of a newly formed disciple to a leader who is actively seeing Christ formed in the lives of others through participation in God's mission. In order for a church to faithfully pursue the development of Christian leaders, there needs to be an established pathway for leaders to progress through these stages of growth. The stages discussed in this section mark the components of a functional leadership pipeline and form a trellis on which the competencies can be cultivated. These stages are: Leading Self, Leading Others, and Leading Leaders. Chapter 4 will discuss how these competencies and components work together in the context of The Village Church to create an executable leadership pipeline.

Leading Self

Conversion experience is the first catalytic event that forms a disciple of Christ and is the initial stage of development in becoming a Christian leader. In conversion, a disciple's life trajectory becomes governed by a single-minded devotion to the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). This change involves new affections leading to new actions, a new allegiance which leads to a new purpose. This new allegiance comes as a result of the transforming work of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:3, that, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except in the Holy Spirit." Murray Harris affirms this connection in this way, "What the apostle is saying is that apart from

the Holy Spirit's power in enlightening the mind and captivating the will, no person can make this simple confession with understanding and commitment."³¹ The commitment mentioned here by Murray is the charge Jesus gives to the disciples in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." The first stage of leadership development is when newly formed disciples learn how to faithfully and functionally lead themselves in devotion to Christ. At TVC, *leading self* is expressed through the disciple's growing understanding of the discipleship traits and personal participation in the venues created to nurture those traits.

Leading Others

Two very important formational stages in the development of a disciple are *calling* and *challenge*. Calling refers to a universal invitation to the people of God to advance the mission of God. The outworking of that call is distinct for each person and is based on factors such as spiritual gifts, background, context, and the passions of each individual that all come together to form the picture of how each disciple contributes to the overall mission (Eph 4:8-13; 1 Cor 12:12). It is in the active pursuit of mission that leaders begin to discover who God has created them to be and what he has created them to do in the context of God's plan to redeem and reconcile the fallen world to himself. This particular phase in formation is discovery, where the disciple is learning how God has constructed them with the result being an increasing clarity on how they individually fit into the larger narrative of redemption.³²

The challenge stage includes catalyzing seasons or events in the disciple's life

³¹Murray J. Harris, *Slave of Christ: A New Testament Metaphor for Total Devotion to Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 89.

³²Greg Ogden talks about the developmental opportunity and results of a mentor relationship in this way, "Internalization cannot happen through mass transference in an audience, but must occur in an interpersonal environment. True multiplication or reproduction is only possible when disciples so internalize the mission that they are motivated to pass it on to others." Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove IL: IVP Books, 2003), 75.

that enable the leader to experience new ceilings of growth. Challenges can be both positive and negative. An example of a positive challenge would be the formative experience of participating in a mentor-mentee relationship, or being an apprentice in a certain area of ministry. This type of challenge would mean an intentional push and shaping of the disciple in the context of a trusted relationship and a more controlled environment. Here the mentor is seeking to help the leader grow in areas of gifting as well as weakness with the end result being a more faithful participation in God's mission through leading others.

An example of a negative challenge would be through a disciple's suffering. Suffering can come as a result of one's own sin, being a victim to someone else's sin, or a result of living in a fallen world. R. C. Sproul talks about the role of suffering in the life of a Christian in this way, "God allows suffering as part of his judgment, but he also uses it for our redemption—to shape our character and build up our faith."³³ In this season or event, a person's foundational beliefs are challenged in a way that forces them to gain greater clarity on the truths of God through personal application. Seasons of challenge, whether intentional or circumstantial, momentary or constant, catalyze the development of a leader by creating a need for increased clarity and confidence, and surge effectiveness in their ability to influence others towards active participation in the mission of God.

Calling and challenge are instrumental stages in the disciple's life to establish them deeper in the truths of the gospel and give them greater clarity on how the truths of the gospel are applied practically in one's life. What also happens in these stages is a shift in the role of the disciple within the mission of God. Out of these catalytic stages can emerge a leader who is prepared and competent to begin influencing others. As we see in

³³R. C. Sproul, *Now, That's a Good Question!* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 461.

the example of Jesus in Mark 3:14-15, the disciples were sent out after a period of development to proclaim the message and given the authority to cast out demons. This is the point in their development where the disciples begin to take ownership in the mission. At TVC, *leading others* is demonstrated when a disciple's understanding and application of the discipleship traits evolves to the place where they begin using their gifts to see Christ formed in the lives of others. These leaders utilize the disciple venues as environments to influence others towards active participation in God's mission.

Leading Leaders

The stage of development where Christian leaders begin to have their greatest level of effectiveness occurs when the leader experiences *convergence*. Convergence is a culmination of experience, self-awareness, and preparation, culminating in a leader who is effectively using his or her gifts to further the mission of God through influencing others towards active participation. The two elements that exist in convergence are: (1) the leader is using his or her gifts effectively which requires both understanding their design and also sharpening through experience; and (2) the leader is effectively raising up other leaders and is now focusing his or her efforts on leading through influencing those leaders. In the book of Acts, the growth of the church is not just in number but in structure as well. As the church expands from city to city and person to multiple people, there is an increasing need for more formal leadership in the life of the church. Arthur Glaser talks about the development of the church in Acts this way:

In Acts 2-12 the story of the expansion of the Christian movement is largely a record of spontaneous growth brought about by the witness of the individual Christians and, on occasion, by multi-individual activity. In Acts 13-28 the advancement of the Christian movement was achieved through a strikingly different

structure—the apostolic team or ministry structure.³⁴

Here Glaser presents the evolution of the leadership makeup of the early church, that as the church continued to grow there was increasing need for formalized structure where leaders are leading leaders who lead others. At TVC, *leading leaders* is expressed when a disciple's influence grows to the place that they are now catalyzing movement among God's people of active participation in God's mission. This is accomplished through influencing those who are focused on the formation of the discipleship traits in the lives of the participants and overseeing the venues in which these traits are nurtured.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to establish unified competencies and components that map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village Church. The core competencies that make up the anatomy of a growing disciple, therefore an emerging leader, at The Village Church are *gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service, and gospel-centered multiplication*. These competencies serve as characteristics to strategically cultivate and evaluate in the life of the people at TVC. Establishing these core competencies gives a basis for creating effective venues that will foster growth in each of these areas. The components of a leadership pipeline provide an intentional road map for the development of a leader at TVC. It is the desire of TVC to see all disciples within the church context to *lead self* though growing in their personal understanding and expression of the discipleship traits through participation in the discipleship venues. As a disciple continues to grow in the maturity of their faith, TVC

³⁴Glaser further talks about the development of leadership in the life of the early church: "What impresses one in Acts is the manner in which the twelve are most prominent in it's early chapters but virtually disappear by the time of the Jerusalem Council. We can only conclude this because they were followed by other apostles, principally Paul and his team. Luke seems to be validating the continuance of God's salvation history. The Twelve go out of existence as an institution but live on as a tradition, and their ministry continues as the abiding missionary tradition of the church." Arthur Glaser, *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 300.

desires to see them become active participants in the mission of God through using their gifts and abilities to see Christ formed in the lives of others and *leading others*, influencing them towards active participation in God's mission. The hope and desire of TVC is to see every member of TVC take on greater ownership in God's mission. This ownership is best accomplished when men and women who have been trained and commissioned to catalyze movements within the body of God's people become active participants in God's mission.

CHAPTER 4
THE CODIFICATION OF A LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE AT THE
VILLAGE CHURCH

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to create a strategic leadership development pipeline, enabling TVC to effectively raise up and release men and women for kingdom impact inside and outside the church. Chapter 3 emphasized the importance of establishing unified competencies and components that map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village Church (i.e., leading self to leading others to leading leaders). The goal of this chapter is to establish the content and catalysts necessary to transition leaders from one stage (i.e., leading self, others, and leaders) to another, and to create a unified language and process to govern this pipeline. This chapter will strive to take the competencies and components of the leadership pipeline established in chapter 3 and codify those elements into an achievable pipeline to serve The Village Church. First, an explanation of benchmarks and waypoints serve to demonstrate how it is determined whether a man or woman transitions along the pipeline. Next, each stage of the development pipeline is outlined and discussion follow on how each discipleship trait is strategically nurtured through the selected venues to create a holistic approach to development. The first stage of the development pipeline will be *leading self*. Leading Self is comprised primarily of leader as individual participant. This stage will seek to show how each disciple grows in their own personal development through active participation in the discipleship venues. The next stage discussed here is *leading others*. This stage is reached when the individual experiences a catalyst event that enables them to begin facilitating the development of other participants within the pipeline.

Involvement at this stage is unique across each discipleship trait. The last stage discussed in this chapter is *leading leaders*. Though no development path of a Christian has an “end point,” this stage serves to provide opportunities for those who desire to grow in their involvement in the development pipeline through focusing on the development of other leaders who are actively facilitating discipleship venues. Together, these stages comprise the sequence of development of a leader in the strategic pipeline at TVC.

In his book *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, Chris McChesney says that anytime a leader is attempting to implement a strategy that will move the organization forward, there are two types of changes that take place: the stroke-of-pen change and the behavioral change.

Stroke-of-the-pen strategies are those that you execute just by ordering or authorizing them to be done. Behavioral-change strategies are very different. You can't just order them to happen, because executing them requires getting people—often a lot of people—to do something different.¹

McChesney highlights a significant challenge facing leaders especially within the church. One of the most significant challenges when considering how to implement this leadership development pipeline within the church is how to move people effectively into and along the pipeline. This task requires influencing both what they know and what they do, which will mean that as a church there are ways of operating that will continue, ways that will change, but also there will be deficiencies within the processes that are exposed as a result of this project. One significant deficiency within The Village Church has been external communication of formation processes. It has been a historic struggle for the leadership of TVC to communicate to its members an intentional pathway for their development. Though an intentional pathway for formation has always existed to some degree, participants within the formation process have not been made aware of how they might progress or what the intended outcome is. The mechanisms of the pipeline have

¹Chris McChesney, *The 4 Disciplines of Execution* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 3.

largely functioned as internal language.² It is not sufficient for the language of a pipeline to function internally (within the staff leadership); it must be communicated externally³ (church members) as well. Informing people about how to begin and advance empowers them to take charge of their own development. Clarity will prove essential to progression. Speaking clearly about the stages and requirements of a process creates confidence and unity for those leading as well as those participating in the process, thus a primary deliverable of this project is to be a clearly communicated and accessible pathway to development for leaders at TVC.

Codifying a Pipeline

Systemizing a plan for developmental lanes at TVC begins by demonstrating how all of the components of the pipeline will function together to create a desired flow of movement for the participants. Once the elements have been established, it is then possible to demonstrate how they work together to form the leadership pipeline.

Benchmarks and Waypoints

As previously discussed in this chapter, a functional leadership pipeline creates an intentional process not an exact formula. Though TVC believes gospel-centered worship, community, service, and multiplication serve as the necessary attributes of

²“Internal language” refers to understanding that exists within the organization but not outside of it. Many processes exist within the church where the steps in the process are communicated internally (meaning to the staff or those responsible for the process), but those who are participants (external parties) may be unaware of the particulars. An example of internal language would be around our child-abuse reporting policy. This sort of language is what our children’s staff members are trained on and responsible to execute when a situation warrants action, but our participants within the children’s ministry are not privy to the information.

³Paul Argenti wrote about strategic communication in his book *Corporate Communication*. He argues that it is imperative for modern organizations to adopt effective models of communication. Effective communication, according to Argenti, is “communication aligned with the companies overall strategy (intended) to enhance its strategic positioning.” He goes on to argue that “an effective strategy should encourage organizations so send messages that are clear and understandable, true and communicated with passion, strategically repetitive and repeated, and consistent across constituencies.” Paul Argenti and Courtney M. Barnes, *Digital Strategies for Powerful Corporate Communication* (Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Education, 2009), 29.

growing disciples and leaders and have created particular venues to nurture those traits, the leadership of TVC does not believe this process to be a formula or assembly line to creating mature leaders. The leaders do recognize and believe these are essential traits and though they all need to be individually pursued with equal intentionality, many times a healthy pursuit will mean they are experienced collectively. In his book, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald Whitney explains the nature and function of spiritual disciplines.

Disciplines are things you do—such as read, meditate, pray, fast, serve, worship, learn and so on. The goal of practicing a given discipline, of course, is not so much about *doing* as it is about *being*, that is, *being* like Jesus. To put in another way, there are specific practices that we are to do sometimes that cultivate generally being like Jesus all the time.⁴

The reality of spiritual growth, according to Whitney, is that it involves intentional action and movement. Creating clear steps for how someone moves along the pipeline is essential to its function in the life of the church, but the end goal is not to just achieve action. The goal of the formation process is to see a disciple who worships, serves, lives missionally and in community, not just someone to attend events that focus on these attributes. The construction of this leadership pipeline will use the core competencies mentioned to serve as waypoints for the participants. Waypoints are significant markers that occur along the course of a journey. These competencies serve as the actions to be practiced, environments to be pursued, and the aspects to be desired of a growing disciple of Jesus Christ. Participants within the pipeline will be encouraged to pursue each of these competencies through specific venues. Each competency will provide a point of evaluation on the journey towards maturation as a disciple, indications of growth along the way. The components of the pipeline (i.e., leading self, others, leaders) will serve as benchmarks in the development as a leader. As a man or woman grows more faithful and

⁴Don S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Spring CO: Nav Press, 1991), 6.

capable in leading themselves, there is opportunity created for their influence to expand beyond themselves to leading others. These opportunities are designated here as *catalyst experience* which serve to facilitate movement along the pipeline. Each stage of leadership development has a catalyst that serves as a designated action step towards deeper involvement and greater opportunity for leadership.⁵

Leading Self

The role of leading self is described primarily as individual participation. Every leader is also a participant. The beginning stage of this pipeline is focused on introducing the participants to healthy and holistic involvement within the church and active pursuit of growth as a disciple. This is the stage where the newly-formed (or newly-involved) disciple becomes introduced to the method and mechanisms of formation within the church. A recent study of connection pathways at TVC revealed that in the course of 6 months, over 90 percent of those who filled out a visitor card also took an active step towards participation in one of the ministries.⁶ What can be concluded from this is that the initial steps towards involvement at TVC are clear and functionally working. A man or woman's active participation in each of the discipleship traits determines success in this stage.

Gospel-centered worship. TVC currently provides two venues that focus on developing the trait of gospel-centered worship as the fuel for discipleship. Weekend

⁵Merriam-Webster defines a *catalyst* as “an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action.” In this project, a *catalyst experience* is defined as an event or environment that provides the opportunity for more rapid growth and development in a particular area of focus.

⁶In 2015, research was conducted to determine the viability of connection pathways at TVC. This was done through examining data compiled over a six-month period of the connection patterns of visitors at the Flower Mound Campus.

worship is the primary gathering of TVC and has within its function an environment geared towards adults and an environment for the next generation.⁷ The adult gathering is led by the elders, for the purpose of worship in song, proclamation of the gospel, participation in the sacraments, and adoration of Christ. The weekend gathering at TVC is the least developed of all the venues listed in this project. The worship service is not sufficient as an intentional disciple venue in the way it is currently being utilized. This is primarily due to a lack in a formed theology of the gathering at TVC. An implication of the project is that there needs to be considerable effort given to forming a more robust theological understanding and philosophical approach to the adult weekend gathering. The Next Generation gatherings are led by ministry staff and include a time of worship, teaching, and lead to small group discussion. Weekend worship attendance is open to all who desire to participate, but communion is closed to only those who profess saving faith in Jesus Christ and are members in good standing with a local church. Elder-led prayer is another venue that serves to foster gospel-centered worship. This opportunity is also open to all but carry the same limitations in regards to communion. The hope of ELP is to provide a space for the elder leadership of TVC to provide vision and direction to the congregation through prayer as well as to provide an accessible opportunity to receive care and counsel from elders. The *catalyst experience* that provides the opportunity for participants to move from leading self to leading others is the Covenant Membership Class.⁸ Once a participant becomes a covenant member of TVC, he or she is then able to

⁷Next Generation refers to the ministries that facilitate disciples of children from birth through High School. This designation includes all of the ministry departments within this age range. Those departments are *Little Village* (Preschool), *Kids Village* (Elementary), *Middle School* (6th to 8th grades), *High School* (9th to 12th grades).

⁸Covenant Membership Class is an event held at each campus minimally three times per year. This class serves as the first and necessary step towards becoming a covenant member of TVC. The class serves to provide the participants with the opportunity to be trained on what membership to the church looks like as well as pair each participant with an affirmation leader to guide them through the process of becoming a member following completion of the class. The class points out what makes someone eligible for church membership (they are a professing believer and have been baptized after coming to saving faith in Christ), what makes someone a functional church member by teaching through the mission statement, and explaining the formal process for pursuing membership which is led by the affirmation leader.

participate in all aspects of the gathering and now become eligible for leadership roles within the church.

Gospel-centered community. Gospel-centered community is the context for discipleship, the people with whom one experiences Christ. The primary ways we live out this discipleship trait is through Home Groups and Recovery Groups for adults and Next Generation Groups for children from preschool to high school. Home groups are multi-generational gatherings of men and women who meet together throughout the week for fellowship, accountability, prayer, and Bible study. These groups serve as smaller expressions of the church where participants have the opportunity to grow as disciples of Christ in the context of trusted relationships. Participants can become involved in home groups through attending a Group Connect event where they are able to gain a greater understanding of why home groups exist and are given the opportunity to join a group that is geographically close to where they live.⁹ Recovery groups give men and women a safe place to pursue redemption in Christ from sin and suffering. These groups meet weekly for two hours at each campus. The first hour includes worship through song and a biblically-based lesson or testimony. The second hour includes small groups that address specific issues and struggles. Participants can become involved in a Recovery Group by attending one of the weekly meetings where a volunteer will help connect them to a support group related to their specific struggle. Next Generation Groups serve to provide gospel-centered community for children in preschool through high school. Though these groups maintain the same function, the format looks different as the children grow older. In Little Village (preschool), the children are broken into groups by age and are led by a

⁹Group Connect is a quarterly event held at each campus that is open to anyone who desires to participate. This event is geared to information and connection. The information that is given to attendees is about why home groups exist and why someone should want to be involved in one. The purpose here is to communicate the role that home groups play in the larger picture of discipleship at TVC. The connection opportunity comes in the form of an open room where group leaders are present and attendees have the opportunity to meet them and connect to one of their groups.

volunteer (adult) teacher. The time in these groups are focused on a bible lesson and activity. In Kids Village (Elementary), the groups are also broken up by age and led by an adult volunteer, but the content of the group time shifts to application of the large group teaching. Middle School and High School groups are comprised of children of the same age and school. They are also led by an adult volunteer and focus on the application of the content provided in the large group teaching.

The catalyst experience that provides the opportunity for someone to move from leading self to leading others in gospel-centered community is the Group Leader Training.¹⁰ Once someone has completed the process to become a group leader, they are given the opportunity to form and facilitate a new group of adults or children to begin leading in gospel-centered community.

Gospel-centered service. Gospel-centered service is the overflow of discipleship. Modeling Christ through the service of others puts the transformative power of the gospel on display. Whether serving inside the church on a ministry team providing a context for someone to hear the gospel preached, or painting a wall in a public school classroom outside of the church, service is the opportunity to see all that God has done in the life of a disciple overflow onto others. Though gospel-centered service is encouraged as a constant practice of the Christian life, it is facilitated through three primary venues at TVC that exist inside and outside of the church. Service teams and Next Generation ministry teams are opportunities to serve inside the church and local missions projects are opportunities to serve outside of the church. Service teams are weekend specific roles that

¹⁰Group Leader Training is the final part of the process to becoming a group leader. Beginning with an application, each candidate is then interviewed by a member of the pastoral staff to determine whether or not the person is eligible for group leadership. The application and interview assess the competency of the individual in growing as a disciple through “leading self” as well as their potential to lead others in growing as disciples. Once a leader has been approved following an interview, they attend the group leader training where they are taught the role and function of a group leader. Currently, the new leader training process has been aligned to include home groups and recovery groups. An implication of this project is that there will need to be further alignment to include next generation group leadership as well.

collectively facilitate the weekend worship environment. These teams include opportunities such as greeting, parking, shuttling, and hospitality, and are open to anyone (members and attenders) who desires to serve. Next Generation ministry teams are opportunities within Little Village, Kids Village, Middle School, and High School to serve the children on those ministries by helping facilitate the age-specific gatherings. This can be done through roles such as hospitality, hosting, and programming. Local missions projects are contextual opportunities for TVC participants to display the love of Christ to the surrounding community. These projects are generated at each campus to serve a particular need(s) within the community and are led by the deacons and staff. Anyone can participate in these service projects. Currently, TVC is more developed in opportunities to serve than it is in opportunities to learn how one is to serve. In order to facilitate effective growth in the area of service, TVC will need to develop a mechanism for individual participants to discover their spiritual gifts and be equipped in understanding how those gifts serve to build up the body. The deficit of intentional equipping in this area creates significant developmental disabilities within gospel-centered service as a discipleship trait. The underdeveloped theology and philosophy of service will make it difficult for participants to progress in their expression of the discipleship trait.

The catalyst experience that provides the opportunity for a man or woman to move from leading self to leading others in gospel-centered service is a short-term mission trip. Short-term trips are five to twelve day excursions focused on serving a particular ministry partner or missionary outside of the U.S. These trips are led by a covenant member of TVC and are comprised of men and women who desire to experience a greater challenge by serving in a cross-cultural context. These teams walk through a 6-month experience of cross-cultural learning, raising support, planning and preparation, and on-site experience. Short-term trips have the opportunity to propel men and women into deeper levels of service through the unique experience of cross-cultural

ministry.

Gospel-centered multiplication. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthian Church, he says,

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:17-19)

Those who have been reconciled to God have also been made messengers of reconciliation. God has designed the gospel message to move forward from person to person. In his commentary on 2 Corinthians, Warren Wiersbe said, "Paul usually connected *duty* and *doctrine*, because what God has done for us must motivate us to do something for God."¹¹ The disciple's call is multiplication and replication through the gospel—for the glory of our God. Gospel-centered multiplication happens when the message of reconciliation is carried forward through the messengers. Though we would recognize that multiplication should be taking place in all aspects of a believer's life through missional living, the venues that TVC provides to nurture this trait are classes in The Institute for adults and large-group teaching environments for the Next Generation.¹² Classes are open to anyone who wants to mature in Christian discipleship through growing in their understanding of the Scriptures, theology, or formation. These classes can be as short as six weeks and as twelve weeks. The specific offerings of classes vary each semester at each campus, but there are also foundational classes that remain consistent every year to provide starting points for those just beginning their journey in training.

¹¹ Warren Wiersbe, *2 Corinthians, The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 646.

¹²Classes typically meet over multiple weeks and provide an opportunity to learn about a variety of topics, grounding our people in knowledge of the Bible, theology and spiritual formation. Typically, classes meet for 1 to 2 hours and involve lecture and discussion. Some classes involve weekly work outside of class time. Led by staff and experts both inside and outside The Village, classes are offered on a campus level throughout the year.

The large group teaching environments in the Next generation ministries take place weekly for each age group and are open to all children in those age groups who desire to participate. In Little Village, the large group teaching focuses on five foundational truths: God made everything, God is in charge of everything, God is good, Jesus came to save sinners, and God wants to talk with us. Kids Village large group teaching focuses on the nature and character of God—that he is wise, kind, loving, and good. Middle School is where the large group environment begins to evolve to look more like the adult large group setting. In Middle School, the large group teaching time focuses primarily on an age-appropriate application of the weekend sermon coupled with strategic lessons to help the students begin to learn how to study the Word of God for themselves. High School is where the large group setting becomes most like the adult setting. Here the goal is to train the students to begin walking out their faith on their own and become functional disciples of Christ.

The catalyst experience that provides the opportunity for someone to move from leading self to leading others in gospel-centered multiplication is the Training Program. The Training Program is a one-year discipleship cohort with one coherent curriculum. It equips believers in three areas of discipleship—Christian story, Christian theology and Christian formation. By weaving together these three elements into a holistic approach to discipleship, men and women have the opportunity to grow in their love for God, Scripture and His mission.

The Training Program catalyzes growth in multiplication through the equipping of participants in the essential elements and practices of biblical discipleship. Currently, the TVC Training Program is only available to adults and not students within the Next Generation ministries. An implication of this project is the need to create a catalyst experience for students that functions similar to the Training Program, and exists either within the Institute or in Next Gen.

The goal of a participant within the leadership pipeline at TVC is not to focus

solely on one of these traits at one time to the exclusion of the others, but rather to be equally intentional about growing in all of these areas all of the time. This process is holistic because it communicates the importance of every trait and provides a framework for participants to evaluate their own growth as they progress. The goal of a participant in the *leading self* stage is to first and foremost be introduced to the good news of the gospel message and experience the transformative work of the Holy Spirit unto saving faith in Jesus Christ. Leading self is fundamentally about growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The competencies and venues in this stage are aimed at individual growth and development. As the participant grows in these competencies, there are well-defined opportunities to continue in development through leading others.

Leading Others

At TVC, *leading others* is demonstrated when a disciple's understanding and application of the discipleship traits evolves to the place where they begin using their gifts to see Christ formed in the lives of others. In this stage, the disciple is continuing to grow in the competencies through active participation in the venues, but is now also providing leadership through facilitating environments to influence others towards active participation in God's mission. These leadership opportunities take the form of both formal and informal roles within the life of the church based on the particular trait and venue.

Gospel-centered worship. All covenant members are able to experience a greater level of involvement in the worship venues (adult and children). Members who are attending the weekend services are not merely attending but rather are gathering with their church family and local expression of the body of Christ in which they have covenanted to walk in fidelity to and under the authority of the elders of the church in whom they have submitted their lives to celebrate and commemorate the person and work of Jesus. Leading others in this venue comes through demonstrating the gospel through

the facilitation of the elements that comprise the weekend worship gathering. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul points to the role of the believer in the gathering as the active building up of the body of Christ. Leading others in adult weekend worship is done through the building up of the church through active participation in the service, and the facilitation of the sacraments or music. The adult weekend worship gathering does not facilitate increased opportunities for leadership in the current state. An implication of this project is the need for leaders of TVC to develop a more robust theological understanding of what the biblical aim of the weekend gathering and philosophical approach to the facilitation of the gathering. Currently, the amount of leadership opportunities within the weekend service is very limited. In order to function within the development pipeline as a discipleship venue, there will need to be a greater diversity of opportunities for people to be involved both as active participants and as leaders. These opportunities should emanate from a well-rounded understanding of the role of the gathering in the formation of the Christian disciple. Leading others in Next Generation worship venues is done through leading the large group time in the teaching of the lesson or the facilitation of worship through music and programming. As becoming a covenant member is the primary catalyst to growing as an individual in gospel-centered worship, a significant opportunity to influence others towards growth as worshipers comes through membership affirmation. All covenant members, in good standing with the church and active participation in the body, have the opportunity to lead others in their growth as gospel-centered worshipers through serving as an affirmation leader. This role is a three-month commitment that begins with attending the membership class and conducting affirmation interviews with membership candidates on behalf of the elders. These affirmation interviews serve to ensure that these participants are eligible for membership through the completion of the requirements for membership.¹³ In addition to vetting the candidates

¹³Three requirements must be met to become a covenant member at TVC following the completion of the membership training class. The first requirement is the candidate must be a follower of

for potential membership, the affirmation leader helps to facilitate greater involvement in the other discipleship venues through actively connecting the candidates into the leadership pipeline.

The catalyst experience to move someone from leading others to leading leaders in gospel-centered worship is the deacon process. Deacons serve in concert with ministry staff to facilitate ministry at the campus in a variety of contexts. Deacons can be both men and women covenant members who have demonstrated the qualifications necessary for the role and have a desire to serve the church by leading a ministry. Deacon leadership in the adult weekend gathering is seen through examples such as the communion team or the hospitality team. These are functional ministry teams that serve to make the weekend service possible and are led by deacons at the campus under the direction of the elders.¹⁴

Gospel-centered community. TVC believes community is the context for discipleship, and groups are the venue to nurture in order to provide that context for the participants. Therefore, the leadership believes that participants of every age should be involved increasingly in group life. Starting in preschool and continuing to adulthood, the gospel-centered community venue is expressed through groups. The opportunity to lead others in gospel-centered community is in the role of a group leader. The requirements of a group leader are the same across every ministry, but the function of a group leader varies by ministry. All group leaders must be covenant members in good standing and active participants within all the discipleship venues. The function of group leaders in

Christ. This change is evaluated through personal testimony and demonstrated evidences of grace in the person's life. The second requirement is that the candidate be baptized following salvation in Christ. TVC practices baptism by immersion, but requires credo-baptism (baptism following conversion) for membership. Last, the candidates are required to sign the membership covenant which outlines the expectations for members to the body of TVC as well as the expectations of the elders to TVC.

¹⁴An implication of the project that will have to be addressed is the current limitation on variety of deacon roles available at the campus.

Preschool will be largely program and activity driven, communicating the lesson through age-appropriate methods. In elementary groups, the group leader's focus is on application of the large group lesson through facilitating discussion. Middle school groups are the beginning place of evolution towards adult groups. In these groups, the students are encouraged to begin participating in the reciprocal aspects of community (i.e., prayer, accountability, confession) while applying the truths shared in the large group lesson among peers. The group leader in middle school not only facilitates discussion, but also helps to foster all of the elements of biblical community among the students. High school group leaders serve in a capacity similar to middle school leaders but with the difference that in high school the content and emphasis is more closely related to what is happening with adults. The role of a home group leader is to care for and counsel group members, model Christ and the fullness of joy found in him, and mobilize their group to serve both inside and outside the church. Home group leaders lead multi-generational groups of adults that meet weekly in homes throughout the city for prayer, accountability, study and application of God's Word, support and encouragement of one another, and demonstration of the gospel through community engagement. Recovery group leaders hold the same role as the home group leader, the primary distinction being the format and content of their particular group. Recovery group leaders facilitate groups that are formed to support someone in a particular area of struggle. These groups meet weekly on campus and the leader's focus is more heavily on support and encouragement than facilitation of discussion. All group leaders are the primary people providing a context for discipleship through caring for and encouraging those in their groups.

The catalyst experience that exists to help someone move from leading others to leading leaders in gospel-centered community is the deacon process. Similar to becoming group leaders, group deacons have a formal application, assessment, and training period that determines whether or not someone is qualified to serve in this capacity. Once released to serve in the role of group deacon, that person now provides

leadership for group leaders as well as the participants in their groups.

Gospel-Centered Service. Service is the overflow of a growing disciple. Jesus refers to the role service plays in a disciple's life in the Gospel of Matthew:

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matt 20:26-28)

The example of Jesus to those who would follow him is that considering others before oneself is a sign of "greatness." Those who would seek to be leaders must do so by laying down their life, as Jesus demonstrated. Gospel-centered service is crucial to the growth and maturation of a disciple through following the example of Jesus and thus demonstrating the transformative power of the gospel. Leading others in gospel-centered service is seen through roles that focus on facilitating opportunities for others to explore and experience discipleship through serving. One role that provides this opportunity to lead others is through functioning as a service team leader. Service teams facilitate ministries such as parking, greeting, and connection for both the adult and Next Generation weekend services. Service team leads are responsible for recruiting and directing participants to serve in these areas on a weekly basis. They have the opportunity to promote gospel-centered service by communicating the importance of these functions in the life of the disciple and the church to those who are looking to get involved. Service team leaders must be covenant members in good standing and people who exhibit active participation in the discipleship venues. Leading a short-term trip is another opportunity to lead others in gospel-centered service. Focused on demonstrating the gospel by serving the needs of others in a cross-cultural context, short-term trips are organized and executed by trip leaders who facilitate these opportunities.

The catalyst experience that exists to help participants move from leading others to leading leaders in gospel-centered service is the deacon process. As mentioned above, deacons serve in concert with the staff to facilitate ministry in a variety of contexts

at the campus. There are numerous deacon roles that focus specifically in the area of gospel-centered service. Examples of opportunities in this role are areas such as local mission, connections, facilities, and global missions.

Gospel-centered multiplication. The aim and result of biblical discipleship is multiplication. Josh Patterson describes multiplication in this way,

Those who place their love and trust in the Lord Jesus now belong to the church and are sealed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The church has a mission to multiply disciples, and God will use His people to bring about His original design for multiplication: the worship of His name in every tongue, tribe and nation and the representation of His rule over the entire earth.¹⁵

Mechanisms created with the intent of making disciples can be healthy elements to a church's discipleship strategy, but they must promote the primary method God has chosen to advance His mission: disciples who make disciples who make disciples. Leading others in gospel-centered multiplication is primarily about making a disciple who contributes to the making of other disciples. Though this stage of multiplication can and should be pursued in every facet of life (i.e., parents discipling their children, men and women discipling one another), TVC facilitates opportunities for participants to lead others in gospel-centered multiplication through two strategic roles. One strategic role is that of a cohort leader. The catalyst experience to help move someone from leading self to leading others in gospel-centered multiplication is the TVC Training Program. This yearlong experience is designed to equip individuals with the tools necessary to be functional disciple-makers.

The format of this program is accomplished through a cohort. The cohort is a community-based model of learning built around a shared learning experience among peers. The weekly classroom environment of the Training Program is comprised of tables

¹⁵Joshua Rice Patterson, "Leveraging the Multi-Site Approach as a Long Term Church Planting Strategy at The Village Church in Dallas-Fort Worth" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 96.

of eight to ten individuals, one of those participants is the table leader who serves to aid in the learning process of the participants by facilitating discussion and encouraging contribution. As the Training Program serves to equip members to make disciples, the cohort leader role serves to lead others through contributing to their equipping within the program. Another opportunity to lead others in gospel-centered multiplication is through becoming a teacher. Teachers are covenant members who have demonstrated the gifting and competency necessary to facilitate environments such as training classes for adults and large group lessons for Next Generation. Though the role of a teacher is the same regardless of environment, the function of a teacher varies depending on the ministry context. Training classes and large group lessons in Kids Village look very different in format, but hold the same purpose, which is to provide an environment to equip the participants with the truths of the scriptures.

Two catalyst experiences help move participants from leading others to leading leaders in gospel-centered multiplication. The first catalyst experience available is the Sending Program. This program exists to prepare and send out equipped men and women to make disciples through planting churches and missionary work in cross-cultural contexts. The length of this program varies for each participant and is customized based on an evaluation of his or her existing competencies and the progress that will be necessary to prepare him or her for the desired context of ministry. Through the sending program, these men and women are equipped and sent out to start new ministry works in places that have need. The next catalyst experience for growing someone in leadership of gospel-centered multiplication is the deacon process. As mentioned above, deacons serve in concert with the staff to facilitate ministry in a variety of contexts at the campus. One of the areas that deacons have the opportunity to facilitate ministry at the campus is through providing leadership in multiplication. Examples of these roles are deacons of global mission, missionary care, sending, and training.

The goal of the *leading others* stage is to provide opportunities for those who

have continued to grow in the discipleship traits to influence others towards more active pursuit of growth as disciples. This stage is distinct from leading self in that the leader's involvement begins to narrow and focus based on the role. While each participant can and should continue to grow in each discipleship trait through active involvement in the venues, leading others will require a more concentrated commitment to serving in a particular trait and venue. As the leaders continue to grow in the discipleship competencies and influencing others towards active participation, opportunity exists for those leading to move from leading others to leading leaders.

Leading Leaders

The opportunity to lead leaders is a culmination of experience, self-awareness, and preparation that produces a leader who is equipped to effectively use his or her gifts to further the mission of God through influencing other leaders towards active participation. Leaders in this stage possess a greater ownership in facilitating the leadership pipeline within a given discipleship trait. This is accomplished through providing leadership in both the discipleship venues as well as the catalyst experiences as their focus has evolved to focus on seeing men and women grow through the pipeline. There are two characteristics that someone in this stage possesses: (1) the person is using his or her distinctive spiritual gifts and talents effectively which requires both understanding of their unique design and also sharpening through experience; and (2) the person is effectively reproducing other leaders and is now focusing his or her efforts on influencing those leaders. A leader and disciple's growth is never complete in this life. Though a progressive pathway is implied in the leadership pipeline, it is both a process of growth and a picture of growth. The process is linear in nature, but the picture is the story of the disciple's formation and growth in leadership that can take different forms in different seasons throughout their life.

Though each discipleship trait provides distinct leadership opportunities, the

role that exists across all of the discipleship traits in this stage is that of a deacon or staff minister. Deacons' positions exist to assist elders contextually according to the specific physical and spiritual needs at their designated campus and are comprised of both lay persons and paid staff. Deacon responsibilities include but are not limited to assisting the elders and pastors in shepherding the Covenant Members through providing care and counsel, helping the elders and pastors lead and organize specific ministry initiatives, and helping strengthen ongoing ministries. Considering the size of the campuses at The Village, the deacons also will strive to equip other Covenant Members at each campus to meet the needs of the body rather than being themselves at the front line of the ministry. Deacons must have a broad understanding of the role of the elders they are assisting in order to effectively help them shepherd the flock. The role of a deacon at the Flower Mound Campus is to serve the church in areas that promote the elders in order to more effectively focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer. In order to create a functional stage of leading leaders, TVC will need to adopt a robust deacon structure to facilitate diverse and numerous opportunities across all ministries.

Gospel-centered worship. The primary venues that exist to nurture growth in gospel-centered worship are weekend services (adult and Next Generation) and Elder-led prayer. The elders provide oversight and direction to each of these discipleship venues. Those who administer the gospel-centered worship discipleship venues at the campus are deacons and staff ministers.¹⁶ Deacons of worship are men and women who are providing leadership to the adult weekend services through the facilitation of music, construction of the liturgy, the administration of the sacraments, and the development of volunteers who serve within these venues. These men and women are responsible for recruiting and developing the leaders who serve within the ministry to provide an environment where

¹⁶Deacons and staff are the same role with one distinction: deacon positions are comprised of laity and staff positions are paid ministers.

participants can grow in the discipleship competencies. Deacons of membership are men and women who serve by overseeing the membership affirmation process and train the affirmation leaders. These roles comprise the primary leadership of this discipleship trait and venues under the authority and direction of the elders.

Gospel-centered community. Historically at TVC, the role that served to provide leadership of group leaders has been called a “home group coach.” In this leadership pipeline, the role of leading leaders in gospel-centered community is that of a group deacon. Serving in concert with staff ministers, group deacons are men and women who nurture the trait of gospel-centered community at TVC through providing care, counsel, encouragement, and mobilization to group leaders and members of their groups in a given area. Leading leaders in this role is done through the development and implementation of groups as a venue as well as the recruiting and training of leaders within those groups.

Gospel-centered service. The role of leading leaders in gospel-centered service is done through deacons and staff ministers who facilitate venues within this trait. Connections deacons include those providing leadership over shuttles, connection central, and welcoming. Other areas where deacons provide leadership within this trait is through benevolence, local mission, and widow care. The men and women who serve in these roles contribute to the mission of the church by facilitating growth in this discipleship trait through mobilizing the participants at TVC to serve both inside and outside the church. A significant area of weakness that currently exists in this area of ministry at TVC is that many of the people who currently serve in these roles do so primarily out of a willingness to serve the church in general rather than out of a more mature, biblical understanding of their unique design and gifting by God to serve the church. A strategic aim of this project is for leaders who serve at this level of influence to become those who

have a developed understanding of their gifts in order to effectively facilitate that same process of gift discovery and development throughout the other stages of the trait.

Gospel-centered multiplication. Jesus explains the means of multiplication given to the church in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18). His authority, which extends over heaven and earth, propels his people out to the ends of the earth to multiply the glory of God by making disciples. Gospel-centered multiplication implies that some will multiply in their immediate context, but as Matthew 24:14 says, “the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world” we know that there will be those who multiply by going and multiplying in contexts outside of their own. At TVC, we want to be intentional about developing leaders who will lead leaders in a variety of contexts, at home and away. The opportunities for men and women to lead leaders in gospel-centered multiplication exists through the pastoral residency for those preparing to go and the deacon and staff minister roles for those who desire to stay. The residency is a year-long program designed to equip men and women to lead in a church through intentional training and leadership experience within this church. Candidates for this program will be those who have successfully completed and have demonstrated faithful leadership in the multiplication venues. Deacons and staff ministers leading in gospel-centered multiplication serve in roles in global mission and training. Deacons over global mission will oversee the development of trip leaders as well as mission opportunities that TVC engages in around the world. Deacons over training will be men and women who oversee the development of training classes as well as teachers who facilitate the class environments.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to establish a functional leadership development pipeline for TVC by codifying the content and catalysts necessary to transition leaders from one stage (leading self, others, and leaders) to another, and to create a unified

language and progression to govern this pipeline. In this chapter, the competencies and components of a leadership pipeline established in chapter 3 were codified into an executable pipeline to serve The Village Church. Every stage in the leadership pipeline (leading self, leading others, and leading leaders) contains clear venues that TVC will provide to nurture those traits within the participants, and clear opportunities to pursue greater levels of leadership through catalyst experiences. The goal of this pipeline is to create leaders who have taken greater ownership of their role of God's mission by making disciples through providing opportunities for development that can lead to greater influence.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE AT THE VILLAGE CHURCH

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the argument made in this project for the creation of a leadership development pipeline at TVC, clarify the implications that arose through the course of this project, and establish the next steps to address these implications towards the successful the implementation of the pipeline. Fundamental to establishing a leadership development pipeline was to identify the distinctions between a disciple and a leader. Every Christian leader is first and foremost a disciple of Jesus Christ. Each stage of a leader's development runs parallel with their maturation as a Christian and growth as a disciple. Put simply, every Christian leader is a disciple; however, not every disciple is also a leader. The point where a disciple becomes a leader is when their sphere of influence moves beyond themselves and they begin using their gifts, experiences, and influence to serve the mission of the church. That which distinguishes a leader is the ability to influence people to move in a common direction towards a common goal. That which distinguishes a Christian leader is the ability to influence movement among the people of God to accomplish the mission of God for the glory of God. Leadership, in the context of the local church, is about catalyzing the assimilation, mobilization, and formation of God's people towards faithful and effective participation in God's mission. The trajectory of a disciple to also become a leader is demonstrated when their sphere of influence moves beyond themselves (leading self) and grows to include leading others and eventually leading leaders. The mission of the church

is to make disciples. (Matt 28:18) Discipleship is a narrower discipline than leadership, with its focus primarily being the formation of a disciple according to the image of God and preparing them for the mission of God.

Project Summary

The purpose of this project was to create a strategic vision document to serve The Village Church (TVC) as it strives to create a leadership development pipeline, enabling her to effectively raise up and release men and women for kingdom impact inside and outside the church. Chapter 1 established the goals that encompass this project, provided important context to bring clarity to the need for a leadership development pipeline, addressed the challenges and complexities that exist at TVC, and gave a rationale for the role this project will serve to further the mission of TVC.

The specific goals for this project were as follows: (1) to identify the core leadership competencies TVC desires to nurture in the lives of their members as they move from leading self to leading others to leading leaders, (2) to establish a unified language and process that maps out the development stages of a leader, content, processes, and environments necessary to transition leaders from one stage to another, and desired outcomes for each individual in their various sphere(s) of involvement, (3) and to create a functional pipeline for the identification, assessment, training, and releasing of leaders at TVC. Understanding the context in which this project is going to be implemented is crucial to its success. From 2002 to 2007, the church experienced growth of over one thousand people per year. By 2007, the church consisted of over five thousand adults in the weekend services, over two thousand adults in groups, and over six hundred children in the next generation ministries. The rapid growth during those five years leading up to 2007, however, prevented the limited existing staff from building structures and processes in place to ensure health. The bulk of the staff's efforts went to managing issues that arose from the ever-increasing group of people coming to the

church. From 2007 to 2012, TVC continued to grow. In 2007, the church merged with Grace Temple Baptist Church in Denton, Texas, to open the first multi-site campus. From there, TVC expanded the multi-site strategy to include over twelve thousand people at locations in Dallas, Fort Worth, Plano, and Southlake in addition to Flower Mound and Denton. The structural make up of TVC today includes over twelve thousand adults, five locations, and five hundred groups spreading across a 9,200 square mile metropolis that encompasses twelve counties. The challenges and complexities that exist in the context of TVC stem primarily from the fact that it is a multi-site church. Maintaining a unified ministry philosophy and methodology has become increasingly challenging in the landscape of a church that is literally spread out across an entire metropolitan area. TVC seeks to be a place that constantly identifies, raises up, and sends out gospel-centered leaders to impact the Kingdom. The most effective way that the church can be faithful in this endeavor is to create a clear and accessible pipeline for leadership development that is aligned across every ministry of the church and communicated consistently to the body.

Chapter 2 argued for the importance of creating a leadership development pipeline through providing a theological framework for a leader's path of development as exhibited through the New Testament. Though every Christian leader is distinct in scope and direction, each leader's formation and emergence follows a similar pattern. The stages of development that were established in this chapter as the development outline of Christian leaders are *conversion*, *calling*, *challenge*, and *convergence*. Through examining the life and development of the Apostle Paul, this chapter expounded on each trait to demonstrate how they paint a picture of the growth stages disciples' experience, as they become leaders in the church. Conversion marks the moment in a person's life when he or she ceases to be in active rebellion against God and with an allegiance to the world and becomes an active participant in the mission of God with allegiance to his kingdom. Calling is the breakthrough where a disciple discovers his or her unique design

and purpose within the mission of God. Challenges are unique catalysts in the life of a disciple that provide clarity and confidence to the vision and direction that enable a disciple to become a leader through influencing others towards a common and clear direction. Convergence is where a leader finds freedom and effectiveness being whom God created them to be and reproducing that reality in the lives of others. All of the stages demonstrated in this chapter comprise the trajectory of a growing disciple and leader on their path towards maturity and multiplication. Chapter 2 considered the importance of creating a strategic leadership development pipeline by establishing a biblical framework for Christian leaders, how they develop, and their role in the life of the church.

Chapter 3 established a set of unified competencies and aligned those competencies with a set of components that map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village. The development competencies were identified through the utilization of TVC's existing mission statement.¹ Gospel-centered worship is the fuel for discipleship. Gospel-centered community is the context for discipleship. Gospel-centered service is the overflow of discipleship. Gospel-centered multiplication is the result of discipleship. The four discipleship traits from TVC's mission statement are being nurtured in the life of a maturing believer at all times. None of the discipleship traits are meant to function in isolation, but rather, each discipleship trait is dependent on the others. These competencies serve as characteristics to strategically cultivate and evaluate in the life of the people at TVC. The establishment of these core competencies gives a basis for creating effective venues that will foster growth in each of these areas. In order to foster growth in each of these areas, TVC has created venues that strategically seek to focus on developing each particular trait. Even though these venues strategically focus on

¹The mission statement of TVC is to glorify God by making disciples through gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community, gospel-centered service, and gospel-centered multiplication.

a particular trait, it has been stated that TVC recognizes elements of all four traits exist and are expressed in these venues regularly.

The components of a leadership pipeline provide an intentional road map for the development of a leader at TVC. As demonstrated in this chapter, TVC desires to see all disciples within our church context lead themselves through growing in their personal understanding and expression of the discipleship traits. As a disciple continues to grow in the maturity of their faith, we desire to see them become active participants in the mission of God through using their gifts and abilities to see Christ formed in the lives of others and *leading others* influencing them towards active participation in God's mission. The hope and desire expressed here is to see every member of TVC take on greater ownership in God's mission. The leadership of TVC believes this is best accomplished when men and women who have been trained and commissioned to catalyze movements within the body of God's people become active participants in God's mission. Together, the competencies (worship, community, service, and multiplication) and components (leading self, leading others, and leading leaders) form a scope and sequence for the implementation of a leadership development pipeline at TVC.

Chapter 4 established the content and catalysts necessary to transition leaders from one stage (i.e., leading self, others, and leaders) to another, and to create a unified language and process to govern this pipeline. This was done by codifying the competencies and components of the leadership pipeline established in chapter 3 into a viable pipeline to serve The Village Church. In order to accomplish this, chapter 4 began with an explanation of benchmarks and waypoints that will serve to demonstrate how it is determined when a man or woman transitions along the pipeline. Next each stage of the development pipeline was outlined and clarity was brought to how each discipleship trait would be strategically nurtured through the selected venues to create a holistic approach to development. The first stage of the development pipeline discussed was *leading self*. Leading Self is comprised primarily of leader as individual participant. This stage exists

to show how each disciple grows in their own personal development through active participation in the discipleship venues. The next stage discussed here was *leading others*. This stage is reached when the individual experiences a catalyst event that enables them to begin facilitating the development of other participants within the pipeline. Involvement at this stage is unique across each discipleship trait. The last stage discussed in this chapter is *leading leaders*. This stage exists to provide opportunities for those who desire to grow in their involvement in the development pipeline through focusing on the development of other leaders who are actively facilitating discipleship venues. Every stage in the leadership pipeline (leading self, leading others, and leading leaders) contains clear venues that TVC will provide to nurture those traits within the participants, and clear opportunities to pursue greater levels of leadership through catalyst experiences. The goal of this pipeline is to create leaders who have taken greater ownership their role of God's mission by making disciples through providing opportunities for development that can lead to greater influence.

Project Implications

This section draws out the implications that arose as a result of this project as well as provide next steps for the leadership of TVC to take in order to address the areas mentioned here. The first implication addressed here is a more “high-level” implication pertaining to TVC's overall theological approach to discipleship. The implications that follow have been organized in a way that corresponds with the discipleship traits from the mission statement. Implications from each trait will be addressed individually and proposed next steps will be offered for the leadership of TVC to coincide with the implementation of this project.

A Person Versus A Process

The mission statement of The Village Church states that TVC exists to glorify God by making disciples through gospel-centered worship, gospel-centered community,

gospel-centered service, and gospel-centered multiplication. The genesis of this mission statement was birthed out of a desire from TVC's leadership to establish directional clarity to the membership and ministries of the church. Prior to this change, the mission statement was more ambiguous, and proved very difficult to function as a filter for leadership decisions on the direction of the church. The hope of the new mission statement was that it would serve to provide clarity for the church as to the picture and the process of discipleship. Worship, community, service, and multiplication make up the anatomy of a growing Christian disciple and paint the picture of the formational elements of a member of TVC. While they serve as components of a disciple's life, when applied as a philosophy of ministry, the traits also outline a process of discipleship that is being nurtured at TVC. The desire is to see people come to know, love, and trust Jesus Christ and to worship and adore him as savior. As that person seeks to grow as a disciple of Christ, they get plugged into Christian community where they can live intentionally among the family of faith to be encouraged and spurred on in their journey. Service and multiplication are the products of a fruitful Christian as they use their gifts and talents to serve the body and expand the kingdom. An implication of this project is the realization that, through the implementation of the new mission statement, the primary focus of the leadership of the church was on the build out of the process and the venues that comprise the process and there was not sufficient attention given to the "person" in the process.

The tension that exists in this mission statement is that it paints a portrait of both a process (discipleship) as well as a person (disciple). The purpose of this project was to create an intentional pipeline for the development of disciples into leaders within the church. The focus of this project has been more heavily weighted on the process versus the person. By focusing more on the process has led to the build out of venues such as the weekend worship service, where the focus is the expression of the discipleship trait, gospel-centered worship. In this example, adequate attention has not been given to the disciple (person) who should be seeking worship God in all things, but

rather to the venue where worship is being facilitated. The same can be said for each of the discipleship traits and their related venues. The focus of the discipleship efforts at TVC need to shift away from the process that is being facilitated and more to the person that is being formed through intentionally establishing a more sufficient theological foundation of each of the discipleship traits.

Gospel-Centered Worship

At TVC, it is believed that worship is the fuel for discipleship. The primary way that TVC seeks to nurture this discipleship trait is through the regular gathering of the saints in a corporate service—namely weekly weekend worship services and monthly Elder-Led Prayer services. Within these venues, we worship God by remembering the gospel through preaching, teaching, singing, praying, and celebrating the ordinances of baptism and communion. Each presents an opportunity for the church to receive, remember, respond, and rejoice in the work of our great King. Two implications that arose as a result of this project pertaining to gospel-centered worship were (1) a present lack of a theological understanding of the role of worship in the life of a believer and how that has affected their approach to the local church gathering, and (2) an inadequate amount of leadership opportunities for the people of TVC to serve within the worship venues.

A negative effect of the Western church culture in the last few decades has been the rise in the event-based approach to the weekly worship service. Many churches follow a similar format where the audience is seated in a theatre style room where they are led up front by someone musically and then listen to a sermon. Participation in this format comes primarily through observation. A byproduct of this approach to a weekend service is that it can create a limited approach to worship as something that takes place at an event rather than something a Christian does all of the time. This can be addressed in the steps mentioned previously, through the laying of a stronger theological foundation of

how each of the discipleship traits works in the life of a disciple not just how they are expressed in the discipleship process.

In order to see the weekend worship gathering function as a true discipleship venue, unification among the leadership of TVC as to what the purpose of the gathering is among the local body is necessary. Recently, more attention has been given to the implementation of the liturgy through weekly planning services. While this effort has netted positive effects in the formation of the service, there has not been adequate teaching to the people of TVC as to what the role of the weekend gathering plays in their personal discipleship. A suggested next step for addressing this area is to create a space within the weekly liturgy where the audience is instructed on the purpose and place of the gathering.

Gospel-Centered Community

Gospel-centered community is the context for discipleship, the people with whom one experiences Christ. The primary ways TVC facilitates this discipleship trait is through Home Groups and Recovery Groups for adults and Next Generation Groups for children from preschool to high school. A similarity seen in each of these venues is an emphasis placed on the quality of the men and women who are selected to lead these groups. In each of these areas, a significant amount of intentionality is given to the vetting and training process of these leaders. One implication of this project is that TVC would affirm that every man and woman who leads a group, whether a home group or a next generation group, would need to possess the same qualifications and complete similar training. Another implication is the lack of symmetry of the lay leadership levels within groups as compared to other discipleship venues. This exists within the “leading leaders” level of the development pipeline where the leaders in these venues function in the capacity of deacon in every discipleship venue except for home groups, recovery groups, and next generation groups where the role is instead a coach.

A proposed next step in the implementation of this project is to create a unified “group leader training” to be utilized by every department within the church that facilitates groups. Though each department will have ministry-specific orientation needs for their leaders, the core components of the training can address the keys areas of qualifications and expectations of the group leader. This would ensure a greater level of quality and unity among all of the groups’ environments at TVC, as well as force collaboration among the different departments that facilitate these groups. A suggested format for this training would be what has been established in the home group leaders training process. In order to bring greater symmetry to the leadership roles within the developmental pipeline, a suggested next step is to make the group coach role a campus deacon role. Currently, there is not an established process for becoming a group coach that matches the intentionality of the process for becoming a group leader. Comparing the coaching role to that of a deacon shows that the roles are synonymous in every other venue except for groups. One substantial implication of this move is that the current quantity of group coaches would mean a significant rise in the number of deacons should the roles be changed. Given the current expectations of a deacon at the campus, the required number of group coaches could be decreased. The process for becoming a deacon is more sufficient for vetting someone who should be considered for this level of leadership within the church.

Gospel-Centered Service

Gospel-centered service is the overflow of discipleship. Modeling Christ through the service of others puts the transformative power of the gospel on display. Whether serving inside the church on a ministry team providing a context for someone to hear the gospel preached, or painting a wall in a public school classroom outside of the church, service is the opportunity to see all that God has done in the life of a disciple overflow onto others. Though gospel-centered service is encouraged as a constant

practice of the Christian life, it is facilitated through three primary venues at TVC that exist inside and outside of the church. Currently, TVC is more developed in opportunities to serve than it is in opportunities to learn how one is to serve. An implication of this project is the need for TVC to develop a process for its members to discover their spiritual gifts and receive training on how those gifts function inside the body. The lack of education on the nature and function of spiritual gifts has far-reaching implications within the church. The three main venues that TVC facilitates service are through ministry teams, next generation service teams, and local mission opportunities. Due to the lack of sufficient understanding of gifts, the opportunities to serve inside and outside the church are driven by needs rather than someone's giftedness. This often results in someone signing up to serve in an area because it was an expressed need, not because they are particularly gifted to serve in that way. This motivation can prevent that opportunity from contributing to the individual's discipleship to the degree that it could if it were driven by a more theologically informed pursuit.

A suggested next step in the implementation of this leadership development pipeline is to create an opportunity where participants looking to grow in gospel-centered service begin with an understanding of the nature and role of spiritual gifts. This can best be achieved in a class form through the TVC Institute. In this class, participants will have the opportunity to gain a theological understanding of the gifts, as well as a guided environment to discover their individual gifts. After completing the Institute class, the Connections Ministry will serve as the liaison to connecting the individuals to areas of service that provide the best opportunity to express their gifts. While it is important for TVC to create a pathway for members to discover what their spiritual gifts are and where those can be best utilized, we recognize that not every service opportunity will be driven by giftedness. Some of these opportunities will be driven by needs that have arisen within the body which will necessitate members fulfilling those needs through serving in areas outside of their gifting. The goal in this direction will be to strive for a higher percentage

of people serving in areas that correspond to their gifting, recognizing that there will still be exceptions where people have the opportunity to serve for the good of the body as a whole.

Gospel-Centered Multiplication

At TVC, the belief is held that gospel-centered multiplication is the overflow of discipleship. Authentic expression of this trait is demonstrated through being a faithful custodian of the gospel message through the use of spiritual gifts and talents to see Christ formed in others. In short, Christian multiplication is about disciples who make disciples who make disciples. An implication of this project is that the TVC Institute becomes the primary venue to be nurtured at TVC to foster gospel-centered multiplication. The Institute is a vehicle through which we hope to train and send out men and women who have been equipped with the tools necessary to be faithful disciple-makers. Another implication that resulted through the development of this project is the need to create a version of the Training Program to serve as a catalyst experience for participants in the Next Generation ministries.

In order to adequately serve these needs, TVC leadership will have to, as the first step, make the determination whether the Institute is going to serve as the primary venue for gospel-centered multiplication. The formation of TVC-I is a new initiative (as of 2015), and was born out of the leadership recognition that TVC was not providing an environment for its members to be equipped sufficiently in the necessary tools for discipleship (of self and others). Previous to the formation of TVC-I, the only environments where members were furnished such instruction was through studies created for home group discussion or semester-based equipping classes that were offered for 4 to 6 weeks at each campus. The home group setting proved to be insufficient to provide this kind of equipping because of two reasons: (1) the primary purpose of groups is not to equip the participants, and (2) there is not a requirement for the group leaders to

have the gift of teaching. As TVC-I has begun to take shape, it has proved to be a necessary component that compliments the mission of the church through providing specialized environments suited to equipping participants in the fundamentals of Christian discipleship. Though there are certainly elements of community that exist within TVC-I environments, and the study of truth should always lead to worship, the principal aim of TVC-I is to equip disciples to be able to make disciples, which is also the definition of gospel-centered multiplication. An important next step is that TVC leadership strategically views the Institute as a venue to promote gospel-centered multiplication. As the Training Program serves to provide a catalyst experience for adult participants to transition from leading self to leading others, a similar mechanism will need to be created to provide participants in the next generation ministries the same opportunity. An important next step is that TVC create a version of the training program that serves both middle school and high school students in their formation as Christian leaders.

Conclusions

The aim of this project was to create a strategic vision document to serve The Village Church in implementing a leadership development pipeline that will enable it to effectively raise up and release men and women for kingdom impact in the church and beyond. This project began by establishing the importance of creating a leadership development pipeline through providing a theological framework for a leader's path of development as exhibited through the New Testament. Through examining the life and development of the Apostle Paul, each stage was expounded upon to prove how they paint a picture of the growth phases disciples experience as they become leaders in the church. Next, a unified set of competencies was established and those competencies were aligned with components that, together, map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village Church. Lastly, the competencies and components of the

leadership pipeline established in chapter 3 were taken and those elements were codified along with the necessary content and catalysts creating a viable process to serve as a pipeline at TVC.

The Village Church continues to pursue its mission towards the biblical mandate to make disciples. Christian leadership is principally about the influencing of God's people towards faithful and effective participation in this mission. The primary mark of a Christian leader is the ability to utilize influence to catalyze movement among the people of God to accomplish the mission of the church. If churches catch the vision for the significance of intentionally developing Christian leaders, they have the opportunity to unlock a vast ocean of giftedness that will catalyze a new generation of gospel-centered movements. Ideally, this project will serve to further the mission of the church through the raising up and releasing of kingdom leaders to give their lives away for the glory of God.

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ABSTRACT

ESTABLISHING A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR GOSPEL-CENTERED MULTIPLICATION AT THE VILLAGE CHURCH, FLOWER MOUND, TEXAS

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Chapter 1 establishes the goals that encompass this project, provides important context to bring clarity to the need for a leadership development pipeline, addresses the challenges and complexities that exist at TVC, and gives a rationale for the role this project will serve to further the mission of TVC. The specific goals for this project were as follows: (1) to identify the core leadership competencies TVC desires to nurture in the lives of their members as they move from leading self to leading others to leading leaders, (2) to establish a unified language and process that maps out the development stages of a leader, content, processes, and environments necessary to transition leaders from one stage to another, and desired outcomes for each individual in their various sphere(s) of involvement, (3) and to create a functional pipeline for the identification, assessment, training, and releasing of leaders at TVC.

Chapter 2 argues for the importance of creating a leadership development pipeline through providing a theological framework for a leaders path of development as exhibited through the New Testament. Though every Christian leader is distinct in scope and direction, each leader's formation and emergence follows a similar pattern. The stages of development established in this chapter as the development outline of Christian leaders are *conversion*, *calling*, *challenge*, and *convergence*. Through examining the life and development of the Apostle Paul, this chapter expounds on each trait to demonstrate how they paint a picture of the growth stages disciples' experience, as they become leaders in the church.

Chapter 3 establishes a set of unified competencies and aligns those competencies with a set of components that map out the desired developmental lanes of a leader at The Village. The development competencies are identified through the utilization of TVC's existing mission statement.

Chapter 4 establishes the content and catalysts necessary to transition leaders from one stage (i.e., leading self, others, and leaders) to another, and creates a unified language and process to govern this pipeline. This is done by codifying the competencies and components of the leadership pipeline established in chapter 3 into a viable pipeline to serve The Village Church.

Chapter 5 summarizes the argument made in this project for the creation of a leadership development pipeline at TVC, clarifies the implications that arose through the course of this project, and establishes the next steps to address these implications towards the successful implementation of the pipeline.

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