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SERVANT LEADERSHIP FOR NEW EVANGELIZATION

AN EXAMINATION OF THE SERVANT LEADERSHIP MODEL PROPOSED
BY ROBERT GREENLEAF IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SCRIPTURE AND
CATHOLIC TEACHING, AND ITS POTENTIAL AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL
FOR NEW EVANGELIZATION

by

MATHEW GEORGE CHARTHAKUZHIYIL

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Statement of Originality

The views presented in this thesis are those of the candidate. All sources employed in drafting this thesis have been acknowledged herein.

Candidate

Date

Director's Approval

This thesis has been approved.

Director

Date

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE THE CHURCH’S TEACHING ON EVANGELIZATION AND NEW EVANGELIZATION	5
1.1 Introduction.....	5
1.2 What is evangelization?	5
1.3 The Need for Evangelization	7
1.4 The Agents of Evangelization.....	9
1.5 The Methods of Evangelization	13
1.6 The Goals of Evangelization.....	16
1.7 Who should be Evangelized?.....	19
1.8 The Content of Evangelization	22
1.9 Obstacles to Evangelization.....	25
1.10 What is New Evangelization?.....	27
1.11 Conclusion	30
CHAPTER TWO ROBERT GREENLEAF AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP.....	31
2.1 Introduction.....	31
2.2 Life and Influence of Robert Greenleaf	32

2.3 What is Servant leadership?.....	35
2.4 The Qualities of A Servant Leader	37
2.5 The Work of a Servant Leader.....	42
2.6 The Impact of Servant leadership	45
2.7 Accountability and Servant leadership	47
2.8 Servant leadership and the Future.....	48
2.9 Application of Servant leadership.....	51
2.10 A Critical Analysis of Servant leadership.....	53
2.11 Conclusion	56
CHAPTER THREE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP.....	58
3.1 Introduction.....	58
3.2 Servant Leadership in the Old Testament.....	58
3.3 Servant Leadership in the New Testament	63
3.3.1 Jesus, the Master Servant.....	63
3.3.2 Jesus Turns His Followers into Leaders	66
3.4 Leadership in the Church—A Call to Serve	68
3.4.1 The Exercise of Teaching Authority in the Church.....	72
3.5 Servant Leadership for the New Evangelization	76
3.5.1 Recommendations for Implementing Servant Leadership Principles in the New Evangelization:	82

3.6 Conclusion	88
CONCLUSION.....	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	93

INTRODUCTION

The Church is going through a unique phase in her history experiencing the need for a new evangelization.¹ A large number of the world population still live outside the purview of the saving message of Christ even after two thousand years of relentless preaching of the gospel. In recent decades, millions of people have lost their connection with Christ as they abandoned their Christian heritage. There are various reasons for the disintegration of this Christian identity; thus creating the need for a renewed focus toward a new evangelization.

The Church's theology on evangelization is immensely rich because of her long history of mission work. The need for a new evangelization is a modern phenomenon emerging especially from recent trends of secularization and the subsequent abandonment of Christ and the Church by many traditional Christian cultures. Acknowledging the seriousness of this situation the Church is spending a considerable amount of time and talent in re-evangelizing those who either abandoned their faith or stopped living the Christian life. John Paul II is credited with bringing the issue of the new evangelization to the forefront of every activity of the Church. He is the 'pilgrim Pope' of the new evangelization and used the word "new evangelization" for the first time in a speech on his visit to Haiti on May 9, 1983. In Mexico City on May 6, 1990, Pope John Paul II declared: "The Lord and master of history and of our destinies has wished my pontificate to be that of a pilgrim Pope of evangelization, walking down the roads of the world, bringing to all peoples the message of salvation."²

¹ The terms "evangelization" and "new evangelization" will be explained in detail in the first chapter.

² John Paul II, "Arrival Speech in Mexico City (May 6, 1990)," *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Ed.), May 7, 1990, sec. 1, p. 12.

The new evangelization demands a new kind of leadership, not to preach a new gospel message but the same gospel with a new vigor and enthusiasm that is appropriate for the new situation. The leadership style this effort demands is not entirely new either. It is based on an interpretation of the leadership style preached and practiced by Jesus. The authority exercised by the Church is an extension and continuation of the leadership model of Christ, which was practiced by the apostles. An innovative style of leadership rooted within these two principles—the leadership of Christ and the authority of the Church—is needed to meet the challenges of our time.

Church history is marked by cultural changes and the transformation of entire social structures through their contact with the gospel of Christ. All those nations and communities who accepted Christ were transformed for the better. Even Vandals and barbarians became civilized through the saving message of the gospel with the belief that they would continue to follow Christ. It became apparent when many people left the faith, that without a continual emphasis on proclaiming the gospel, the initial missionary outreach eventually might end up in the de-Christianization of all those Christian countries.

Our immediate task is to re-evangelize the de-Christianized countries through the successful utilization of Christian elements already present in the world. These Christian elements present in the cultures can be used as a springboard into new dialogue with the secular world. Pope Paul VI states that when these elements “are put at the service of the Gospel, they are capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the Word of God is heard.”³ We are reminded of St. Paul’s preaching at the Areopagus where he referred to the statue of an “Unknown God” (cf. Acts 17: 22—34) as a starting point for evangelization. John Paul II states

³ Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Rome, 1975, no. 45.

that many of these Areopagus opportunities have been neglected due to our fear or complacency; therefore, “the split between the Gospel and culture is undoubtedly the tragedy of our time.”⁴ His suggestion for solving the problem is to seek cultural connections, which will eventually lead through the doorway of new possibilities: “We would do well to be attentive to these modern areas of activity and to be involved in them.”⁵ If we neglect to use the opportunities present in the world, “The Church would feel guilty before the Lord.”⁶ Instead, it will further jettison tangible efforts to be transformed through the gospel of Christ.

One modern element which presents itself as a genuine opportunity for linking into a new dialogue with the world is the servant leadership model proposed by Robert Greenleaf. This is a widely practiced leadership theory in the secular world. A wide array of institutions, from major corporations to charitable organizations, have been positively influenced by the ideals and values introduced through the strategic implementation of servant leadership. Greenleaf’s Servant Leadership is a modern day ‘Areopagus’ for venturing into the secular culture. Adopting some or all of Greenleaf’s methodology will promote a leadership that is in line with gospel values.

This thesis gives a brief explanation of the Catholic Church’s theology on evangelization and new evangelization. It also serves as an examination of the “Servant Leadership” model proposed by Robert Greenleaf, its relationship to Sacred Scripture and Catholic teaching, and its potential as an effective tool for the new evangelization.

The work consists of three chapters. Chapter one is focused on the Church’s theological perspective on evangelization and explains the key concepts of evangelization and new evangelization. This chapter also defines the basic components of evangelization and new

⁴ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 20, quoted in Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, Rome, 1990, no. 37.

⁵ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 37.

⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 45.

evangelization such as the agents, needs, methods, goals, recipients, content and obstacles. Two documents of the Church, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Paul VI and *Redemptoris Missio* by John Paul II have been extensively used. Other documents referenced include the teachings of Vatican Council II, *Go and Make Disciples* (a document of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops) and several theologians of our time such as Avery Cardinal Dulles.

The second chapter is a brief exploration of the servant leadership theory and practice of Robert Greenleaf. The key concepts are drawn from his book *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness*, where he explains both the role of a servant leader and how he developed this theory. This chapter also illustrates that through the efforts of his loyal supporters, especially those that have attended classes at the Greenleaf Center, the servant leadership model has been further refined.

The third chapter focuses on the Scriptural foundation of servant leadership in both the Old and New Testament writings. It draws a comparison with the servant leadership model preached and practiced by Jesus, the model upon which Church authority is based. Besides the above mentioned Church documents, some of the personal reflections of John Paul II on leadership and the writings of one of the greatest ecclesiologists of our time, Yves Congar, are used in this chapter. This chapter includes some practical suggestions for adapting the servant leadership model of Greenleaf and its effective implementation in the new evangelization.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHURCH’S TEACHING ON EVANGELIZATION AND NEW EVANGELIZATION

1.1 Introduction

The single reason for the existence of the Church is the dissemination of the gospel to the ends of earth. The Church’s identity is grounded through her vocation to evangelize the world.⁷ She has been committed to spreading the Good News for two thousand years, and will continue this effort until her final glorification in the second coming of Christ. Since “the Church on earth by its very nature is missionary,”⁸ her members, through their baptismal call and individually defined roles, actively participate in this responsibility. The renewed enthusiasm for mission work in recent decades, especially among the laity, is a tangible sign of the Holy Spirit’s continued direction and influence. This zeal for “evangelization” is a continuation of Jesus’ mandatory commission to preach the good news and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28: 19 – 20); Mk 16: 15 – 18). The challenge lies in our understanding this assignment and acting accordingly.

1.2 What is evangelization?

In order to properly understand evangelization, we need to examine its core meaning. The English word evangelization has its roots in the Greek *evangelizō* which is simply to “announce

⁷ Cf. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 14.

⁸ Second Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*, no. 2, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, vol. 1, new rev. ed., ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Co., 1992).

the good news” or “to bring the good news of salvation.” *Evangelizō* is a translation of the Hebrew word *basar* which has the same meaning: “to announce good news” or “to bring the good news of salvation” (Is. 52: 7; 61: 1).⁹ According to Avery Dulles, evangelization is twofold. Its primary meaning is “the announcement of the global Christian message to those who do not believe”¹⁰ or to those who have not been given an opportunity to believe. Cardinal Dulles defines the second aspect of evangelization as “everything that brings human life and the world under the sway of God’s Word.”¹¹ In a broad sense, this second meaning embraces the overall action of the Church community and her essential mission. “It is, rather, the umbrella under which all ministries are carried out. Everything we do must be seen as evangelization.”¹²

Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* implies that it is impossible to comprehend the concept of evangelization without understanding all of its essential elements. A partial definition will impoverish and distort its meaning. He defines evangelization as “bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new.”¹³ This understanding is aligned with the teaching of Second Vatican Council which understood evangelization to be the “entire Christian endeavor”¹⁴ and invited “Catholics to share their faith”¹⁵ with the rest of the world. This viewpoint is fully supported by the American bishops in their document *Go and Make Disciples*: “evangelizing means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society

⁹ Archdiocese of Chicago, *Spreading the Holy Fire: A Plan and Study Guide for Catholics Evangelizing in the Archdiocese of Chicago* (Chicago: Archdiocesan Office for Evangelization, 2002), 7.

¹⁰ Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Robert S. Rivers, *From Maintenance to Mission* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 21.

¹³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 18.

¹⁴ Archdiocese of Chicago, *Spreading the Holy Fire*, 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

by the divine power of the Gospel itself. At its essence are the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, which are both works of the Spirit of God.”¹⁶

The Latin American bishops further define evangelization in terms of man’s integral growth in conjunction with one’s rights and duties: “Evangelization promotes integral development, by demanding that all fully respect their rights and fully observe their duties so as to create a just and solidary society en route to its completion in the ultimate reign.”¹⁷ This unique blend of respect and obligation reflects the essence of the gospel. Fr. Robert Rivers in his book *From Maintenance to Mission*, comments that if we say everything is evangelization, then nothing is evangelization unless it challenges “all baptized persons to a conversion to Christ, by living their faith fully, sharing it freely, and living these gospel values in the world.”¹⁸

1.3 The Need for Evangelization

A large portion of our twenty-first century world has yet to be influenced by the Gospel of Christ. The Church is well aware of this reality and remains committed to Jesus’ command to evangelize all nations: “Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all.”¹⁹ The Church understands that we are called to obey the command of the Lord: “Obedience to the Lord’s command is therefore the primary motive for evangelization.”²⁰ Preaching the Gospel is not an option for the Church since it is a question of people’s salvation. In the words of

¹⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), no. 10.

¹⁷ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization, Human Development, Christian Culture: Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, Santo Domingo, 12-18 October, 1992, translated by Phillip Berryman (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Office of Pub. and Promotion Services, 1993), no. 47.

¹⁸ Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 18.

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 10.

²⁰ Dulles, *Evangelization*, 6.

Pope Paul VI, “It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved.”²¹

The Decree *Ad Gentes* of the Second Vatican Council Decree states that the apostles diligently carried out their mission to evangelize and through their word and action gave birth to the Church.²² It is all the more urgent today that we should propagate our faith that “all things might be restored in Christ, and so that in him men and women might form one family and one people of God.”²³ The U.S. Bishops’ document *Go and Make Disciples* sees this mission continuing until the last person is saved: “We must evangelize because the Lord Jesus commanded us to do so. He gave the Church the unending task of evangelizing as a restless power, to stir and to stimulate all its actions until all nations have heard his Good News and until every person has become his disciple.”²⁴

In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II highlights the tremendous achievements humanity has made, but at the same time laments a world that has lost the sense of ultimate realities. Making people aware of the real meaning and worth of human life “is the primary service which the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world.”²⁵ It is the Church’s obligation to make people aware of these realities and the meaning of our existence. It is for her mission to evangelize, and her ability to successfully communicate life’s ultimate realities as shown through the gospel, that she will one day be held accountable. It is from this mission to evangelize that our salvation is made known.

²¹ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 5.

²² Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes* no. 1.

²³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 5.

²⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 28.

²⁵ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 2.

Salvation in Christ is offered through the works of the Church. Our mission, as Church members, is to bring people to the knowledge of Christ: “people must be brought to the salvation that Jesus the Lord offers in and through the Church.”²⁶ The Church proclaims that God’s love extends to all of humanity: “the Church believes that God has established Christ as the one mediator and that she herself has been established as the universal sacrament of salvation.”²⁷ The good news of salvation through Christ should be taken to all people irrespective of cast, creed and culture because Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14: 6).

Once we experience the love of Christ, we want to share it with others who have not yet had that experience. This gift of faith has been given to us freely through the gospel message and the faith of the Church so that we may share it freely: “Like the large catch of fish or the overflowing measure of flour, faith makes our hearts abound with a love-filled desire to bring all people to Jesus’ Gospel and to the table of the Eucharist.”²⁸ Pope John Paul II says that we cannot evade the task of this mission as long as there remain people who do not know Christ as the redeemer of humanity: “In a specific way this is the missionary work which Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church.”²⁹

1.4 The Agents of Evangelization

Who is called to preach the Gospel? *Evangelii Nuntiandi* gives the answer: “The command to the Twelve to go out and proclaim the Good News is also valid for all Christians, though in a different way.”³⁰ Contrary to this perspective, many Church members believe that

²⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 30.

²⁷ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 9.

²⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 33.

²⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 31.

³⁰ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 13.

evangelization is the work of a select few who receive a special vocation to become missionaries, while the role of the greater Church community is limited to prayer and financial support, rather than a meaningful extension of their own individual faith life. *Lumen Gentium* corrects this perspective by stating that this mission is given to all baptized: “All disciples of Christ are obliged to spread the faith to the best of their ability.”³¹ Based on their individual faith commitment, each Church member is responsible, accountable and shares an active role in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel.

Mission works are not the isolated acts of a few individuals. Every Church member’s work is ecclesial in nature; therefore no evangelizer can act apart from the Church. Pope Paul VI states that the whole Church responds to the invitation of mission work and “the work of each individual member is important for the whole.”³² In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II states that the Church as the sacrament of human salvation has to extend her activity to the whole of humanity: “She is a dynamic force in mankind’s journey toward the eschatological kingdom, and is the sign and promoter of gospel values.”³³ John Paul II further states that this confidence comes from our faith, “from the certainty that it is not we who are the principal agents of the Church’s mission, but Jesus Christ and his Spirit. We are only co-workers, and when we have done all that we can, we must say: ‘we are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty’ (Lk 17: 10).”³⁴ This is what we have been called to. It is our vocation as Christians.

John Paul II also addresses each person’s role in evangelization, especially those who have received the sacrament of holy orders. He emphasizes in *Redemptoris Missio* that, in

³¹ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, no. 17, in Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II*.

³² Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 15.

³³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 20.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 36.

relation to proclaiming the gospel, the hierarchical structure is based on responsibility and accountability rather than status or position.³⁵ Pope Paul VI notes this deep sense of accountability in his encyclical on evangelization: “The Successor of Peter is thus, by the will of Christ, entrusted with the preeminent ministry of teaching the revealed truth.”³⁶ John Paul II strives to continue this tradition and forewarns his brother bishops that they are ultimately responsible for the evangelizing efforts of the Church at the local level: “My brother bishops are directly responsible, together with me, for the evangelization of the world, both as members of the College of Bishops and as pastors of the particular churches.”³⁷

The universal Church is made tangible within the communal framework of the local church. “Mission is seen as a community commitment, a responsibility of the local church,”³⁸ therefore priests and deacons, as ordained ministers, share in the responsibility of the bishop in empowering the laity and communicating their responsibility in taking up the task of evangelizing the world. The Latin American bishops also emphasize that all levels of service require a coordinated effort when preaching the Gospel: “The agent of new evangelization is the whole church community in accordance with its own nature: we bishops, in communion with the pope; our priests and deacons; men and women religious; and all of us men and women who constitute the people of God.”³⁹

The Catholic Church, as a whole, is becoming increasingly aware of the role and responsibility of the laity in missionary work. The lay faithful are shining gems who are fully incorporated into the body of Christ through baptism and share Christ’s threefold office as priest,

³⁵ Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, nos. 63 – 64.

³⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 67.

³⁷ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 63.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 27.

³⁹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 58.

prophet and king.⁴⁰ They “live in the world” (because of their profession and occupation), but “are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative where only through them can she become the salt of the earth.”⁴¹ The response to this great vocation defines the spirituality and mission of the laity in today’s world.

The laity’s “secular character” must be seen as a great challenge and opportunity to promote the Holy Spirit’s direction and influence in the rediscovery of evangelization. This character makes Christ present through a life of holiness as shown through the ordinary circumstances of family and culture. The laity should equip themselves to be actively involved in the temporal affairs of the world by spearheading a spiritual renaissance, i.e., “to engage in conversation with others, believers or non-believers, in order to manifest Christ’s message to all men.”⁴² They should get involved with the world—the economic, social and political institutions—with the purpose of transforming them in the light of the gospel. It is from here that the seed of the Word can penetrate today’s culture and bring the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth. “The ‘world’ thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation.”⁴³

As ‘secular apostles’, the lay faithful have to develop an attitude and awareness of actively listening to the Word of God and participating fully in the sacraments of the Church, while discerning a response to their call. It is impossible for anyone to accomplish this mission without God’s help: “The laity derives the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; incorporated into Christ’s Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the

⁴⁰ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, no. 33.

⁴² Second Vatican Council, Decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 31, in Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II*.

⁴³ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, Rome, 1988, no. 15.

Lord himself.”⁴⁴ Lay Catholics are in need of good formation just like ordained ministers: “The fundamental objective of the formation of the lay faithful is an ever-clearer discovery of one’s vocation and the ever greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one’s mission.”⁴⁵ Once the laity is ready to embrace their baptismal vocation and the ordained ministry is willing to empower the laity with the resources necessary to realize this vocation, the ultimate command of the Lord becomes possible.

1.5 The Methods of Evangelization

According to Pope Paul VI, proper execution of the mission is preeminently important since the evangelizer should take into consideration the time, place and culture to which the gospel is presented. Our “capacity for discovery and adaptation”⁴⁶ may result in great success in the evangelization process. Pope Paul VI states that the first means of evangelization is our witness to an authentic Christian life: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”⁴⁷ The Church should evangelize the world through her conduct and devotion to a life of holiness. It means “in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus—the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 3.

⁴⁵ John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 58.

⁴⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 40.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Cardinal Dulles describes martyrdom as being the preeminent form of personal witness.⁴⁹ The heroic witness of faith by the early Church martyrs, beginning with St. Stephen, is continuing in our own era: “The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission.”⁵⁰ John Paul II considers personal witness, especially by families, the best means of bringing the gospel to everyone. He states that the “first form of witness is *the very life of the missionary, of the Christian family, and of the ecclesial community*, which reveal a new way of living”⁵¹ that is characterized by a willingness to forfeit personal motive for the sake of the gospel.

Preaching, or the verbal proclamation of the gospel, is equally important since faith is generated through both word and action. John Paul II says that proclamation should always be the priority of mission work: “The Church cannot elude Christ’s explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the ‘Good News’ about their being loved and saved by God.”⁵² Since modern man is “tired of listening,” according to Pope Paul VI, we should use multiple methods of modern communications as instruments to disseminate the gospel into people’s hearts: “The word remains ever relevant, especially when it is the bearer of the power of God. This is why St. Paul’s axiom, ‘Faith comes from what is heard,’ also retains its relevance; it is the Word that is heard which leads to belief.”⁵³ It is also true that evangelization is not complete with the first proclamation of the gospel: “It is a lifelong process of letting the gospel permeate and transform all our ideas and attitudes”⁵⁴ into a genuine experience of God’s unfailing love for us.

⁴⁹ Dulles, *Evangelization*, 92.

⁵⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 42.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., no. 44.

⁵³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 42.

⁵⁴ Dulles, *Evangelization*, 80.

Another important method of evangelization is through Christian worship. Worship is directed to God by those who are coming to Church. It is through their active participation in sacraments and preaching that they respond personally to the call of Christ and continue a Spirit-filled life outside of the Church walls. Pope Paul VI states that it would be “a mistake not to see in the homily an important and very adaptable instrument of evangelization.”⁵⁵ Cardinal Dulles says that our worship is directly connected to evangelization when it influences outsiders as well as our community members.⁵⁶ This evangelizing influence has been valued throughout history. There is a legend that around the year A.D. 988, Russian Emperor Vladimir of Kiev sent a group of emissaries to Constantinople in order to evaluate the influence of Christian worship. Upon their return, they reported that they “knew not if we were on earth or in heaven” in describing their experience of Christian liturgy. It was upon this news and its evangelizing moment that Vladimir chose Christianity to be his country’s religion.⁵⁷

Personal witness, preaching the gospel and Christian worship are all primary methods of evangelization. The American bishops in their document *Go and Make Disciples* cite several different ordinary ways to evangelize, especially the way we live our daily life through our love and support of one another. Family members evangelize each other through their daily faith life. The two main elements at work here are witness and sharing⁵⁸—the simple living of the faith and spreading it in an explicit way. If we could “explain it [the faith] intelligently, defend it

⁵⁵ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 43.

⁵⁶ Cf. Dulles, *Evangelization*, 95.

⁵⁷ Cf. Edward Faulk, *101 Questions and Answers on Eastern Catholic Churches* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007), 15.

⁵⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, nos. 35—36.

charitably, and share it effectively”⁵⁹ while in a consistent manner, it is likely that many more individuals would be moved to embrace the faith of the Church.

Another important and indirect way of evangelizing is by utilizing institutions such as schools, hospitals and other charitable institutions that are connected to the local churches. Christians who involve themselves with social activities and justice-related issues are doing so out of their love for Christ. Thus, the missionary message becomes Christ-like. No matter which methods of evangelization we adopt, we should be inspired by the Holy Spirit to be evangelizers through all that we do and say.

1.6 The Goals of Evangelization

The document of the American bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, proposes three specific goals as part of Catholic evangelization:

Goal I: To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.⁶⁰

Evangelizers need to be evangelized. Every baptized Catholic should engage in works that deepen one’s faith. This deepening of faith enables one to witness and share the gospel. Fr. Robert Rivers, in his *Maintenance to Mission*, comments that evangelization begins with the people in the pew.⁶¹ By evangelizing all those who are regular church members, it helps us to reach others who are not present in the church. In order for this to occur, many of the regular

⁵⁹ Envoy Magazine website, Mission Statement, <http://www.envoymagazine.com/about.htm>, quoted in Laura N. Anzilotti, “Evangelization: Three Contemporary Approaches” in *Evangelizing America*, ed. Thomas P. Rausch (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 35.

⁶⁰ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 46.

⁶¹ Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 97.

church attendees, who do not yet have a basic conversion to Christ, must be catechized first: “If faith is not transforming each heart and life, it is dead.”⁶² We need to keep the flame of faith alive in the minds and hearts of all the faithful who attend church weekly.

Goal II: To invite all people... whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of Catholic faith.⁶³

God’s universal plan of salvation is carried out today through the Church. Vatican II came up with a clear teaching on the Church’s attitude towards other religions, cultures and churches. The way to engage them in an effort to promote evangelization is through dialogue: “We must proclaim Jesus Christ as universal savior *in dialogue with other religions*. We must proclaim that the Catholic Church has the fullness of the means to salvation *in dialogue with other Christians*, who also form part of the one church of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁴ *Go and Make Disciples* reminds us that “People can know they are invited to experience Jesus Christ in our church only if they are really and effectively asked and adequate provisions are made for their full participation. We want our Catholic brothers and sisters to effectively ask and to really invite.”⁶⁵ Those who are engaged in missionary activity are to visit people and Robert Rivers talks about four types of visitations that develop relationships with the intention of evangelization—census visit, social visit, witness visit and pastoral visit.⁶⁶

⁶² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, no. 53.

⁶⁴ Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 107.

⁶⁵ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 55.

⁶⁶ Cf. Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 118.

Goal III: To foster gospel values in our culture, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society, so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.⁶⁷

Fostering gospel values is a call for all Catholics to reorder the world in which we live for Christ. This change is not a human endeavor, “rather, it is a matter of participating in the transforming power of Christ already at work in the world through the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁸ This transformation creates a new awareness in our management of temporal affairs. *Go and Make Disciples* states that the third goal “calls for results not only in the way we evaluate things but also in the way we carry the Good News through the practical works of justice, charity, and peace that alone can fully authenticate our message.”⁶⁹ This goal is initiated through the most basic institution of society—the human family. It is in this place where we learn the essential lessons of life and faith: “Families are challenged to make their faith real in society”⁷⁰ by actively embracing the direction and guidance offered through the Holy Spirit.

These goals demand that we be enthusiastic about our faith and invite others to share in this enthusiasm, with the end result being a culture and Church that are completely defined by life-giving values. This requires that we be liberated at our individual and communal core. As Pope Paul VI states in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the Good News of Christ is “liberation from everything that oppresses man but which is above all liberation from sin and the Evil One, in the joy of knowing God and being known by Him, of seeing him, and of being given over to Him.”⁷¹ At the same time the Pope warns against the tendency to reduce “liberation” to a “man-centered

⁶⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 56.

⁶⁸ Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 132.

⁶⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 60.

⁷⁰ Rivers, *From Maintenance*, 144.

⁷¹ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 9.

goal”. It must “envisage the whole of man, in all his aspects, right up to and including his openness to the absolute, even the divine Absolute”⁷² and the work of this liberation through the Church is incomplete “if she neglects to proclaim salvation in Jesus Christ.”⁷³

1.7 Who should be Evangelized?

According to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, all men and women are to be evangelized. This position is both fundamental and foundational to the Church since the day of Pentecost. The Gospel of Christ must be preached to all human beings. The gospel transcends the barriers of race, gender, nationality and socio-economic condition and is to be proclaimed first to those who have not heard it. The de-Christianization of present-day culture also makes it necessary for us to preach the good news to all those “who have been baptized but who live outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and many others.”⁷⁴

Cardinal Francis George in an article “Evangelizing Our Culture” argues that “the culture in which we evangelize, itself needs to be evangelized.”⁷⁵ In our attempt at the successful evangelization of cultures, the Catholic Church offers counter-cultural ideas in response to the modern day deviations. Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* says that our living of the Gospel is linked to certain cultures in every age, even though Gospel and evangelization are “not identical

⁷² Ibid., no. 33.

⁷³ Ibid., no. 34.

⁷⁴ Ibid., no. 52.

⁷⁵ Francis Cardinal George, “Evangelizing Our Culture” in *The New Evangelization: Overcoming the Obstacles*, ed. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008), 43.

with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures.”⁷⁶ Hence the Gospel should permeate all cultures without becoming subject to any one of them. The culture has “to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel.”⁷⁷

Cardinal Dulles argues that it is a misinterpretation of the teaching of Vatican II by some theologians to say that living according to one’s conscience is sufficient for human salvation, eliminating the need to preach the gospel to all. At the same time we should use our pastoral prudence to avoid proselytization and confrontation in this matter. If there is a reason for the Church “to wait for an opportune moment before confronting certain persons or groups with the claims of the gospel,”⁷⁸ we should use our pastoral prudence. Pope Paul IV, in his writings, highly extols the different non-Christian traditions, cultures and religions all around the world. At the same time he clearly points out that “neither respect and esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁹ They all have the right to hear the Word and to experience Christ.

Salvation through Christ applies to all humanity. Cardinal Dulles argues that preaching the gospel to all humanity includes Jews and Christians who are not Catholics. Since the Church is inseparably connected to Christ, joining the Church is not an option for salvation but a necessity: “Therefore, those could not be saved who refuse either to enter the church, or to remain in it, while knowing that it was founded by God through Christ as required for salvation.”⁸⁰ *Lumen Gentium* states “Fully incorporated into the society of the Church are those

⁷⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 20.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Dulles, *Evangelization*, 8.

⁷⁹ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 53.

⁸⁰ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 14.

who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept its entire structure and all the means of salvation established within it and who in its visible structure are united with Christ, who rules it through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops, by the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion.”⁸¹

The documents of the Second Vatican Council acknowledge the existence of authentic values in the world prior to the preaching of the gospel, but clearly state that evangelization “preserves everything good that is to be found in human cultures or religions, frees it from admixture with evil, and elevates it to a higher plane.”⁸²

In his opening address to the fourth general conference of Latin American Bishops, John Paul II admonished the bishops that “Culture is not the measure of the gospel; rather Jesus Christ is the measure of all culture and all human endeavor.”⁸³ The bishops then echoed this sentiment by asking the people to allow Jesus to purify whatever bears the mark of sin and to elevate what is good in the culture: “All evangelization must therefore mean inculturating the gospel. Every culture can thus become Christian, that is, point toward Christ and draw inspiration from him and his message.”⁸⁴

Just as the Word became human, the faith of the Church needs to become local depending on to whom it is presented. Cardinal Francis George argues that when a given culture lacks certain components necessary to express the faith in its fullness, it is quite natural to experience tension. Certain practices such as polygamy, ritual murder, sexual promiscuity, abortion, exploitative business practices, might be normal to certain cultures but opposed to our Catholic faith: “When believers recognize demonic elements in their culture and work to diminish or

⁸¹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 14.

⁸² Dulles, *Evangelization*, 6.

⁸³ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 47.

eradicate them, the dialogue between faith and culture turns into the evangelization of culture. Culture is the object of our evangelization and not just the sea in which we swim. To form gospel-shaped people, the Church must work to create gospel-friendly cultures.”⁸⁵ In his address to the Medellin Intellectuals, John Paul II spoke about the need to evangelize the culture in which we live today: “Indeed, evangelization of cultures represents the deepest and most comprehensive way to evangelize a society, since the message of Christ thereby permeates people’s awareness and is projected into the ‘ethos’ of a people, its essential attitudes, its institutions and all its structures.”⁸⁶

1.8 The Content of Evangelization

Cardinal Dulles says that ordinary people sometimes have a misconception that after the Protestant Reformation the Catholic Church became “the Church of tradition, law, priesthood, and sacraments rather than the Church of the Word of God.”⁸⁷ He goes on to elaborate making a reference to the Council of Trent: “In its discussion of the authorities to be used for teaching and conduct, that the Council declared that the gospel was the source of all saving truth and moral discipline, and was to be preached to every creature.”⁸⁸

The content of all evangelization is based on the preaching of Christ: “a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.”⁸⁹ Pope John Paul II states that “The subject of proclamation is Christ who was crucified, died and is risen: through him is

⁸⁵ George, “Evangelizing Our Culture”, 44.

⁸⁶ Quoted in National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 16.

⁸⁷ Avery Cardinal Dulles, “Vatican II and Evangelization,” in *The New Evangelization*, ed. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski, 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 27.

accomplished our full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death; through him God bestows ‘new life’ that is divine and eternal.”⁹⁰ People all over the world have the right to hear the good news of Christ which saves humanity and human history. This salvation is not of a temporary nature but an ultimate union with God: “a transcendent and eschatological salvation.”⁹¹ Even though that union begins here on earth, it will be completed and fulfilled only in eternity. Consequently, our proclamation must contain our hope in the life to come: “Evangelization therefore also includes the preaching of hope in the promises made by God in the new Covenant in Jesus Christ; the preaching of brotherly love for all men—the capacity of giving and forgiving, of self-denial, of helping one’s brother and sister—which, springing from the love of God, is the kernel of the Gospel; the preaching of the mystery of evil and of the active search for the good.”⁹²

Pope Paul VI repeatedly emphasizes that the gospel message should contain elements for ordinary people who are confronted by the challenge of daily life. Efforts to liberate people from famine, chronic disease, illiteracy, poverty, injustices are part of the message we are to preach. The Episcopal Synod of 1971 declared evangelization as liberation in every area of life: “the mission of proclaiming the gospel in our times requires that we commit ourselves to man’s integral liberation, here and now, in our earthly existence.”⁹³ These are based not on any ideology but part of Christ’s mission that the Kingdom of God be manifested in the world. In his address to the Latin American bishops, John Paul II states that “ideologies cannot overthrow the

⁹⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 44.

⁹¹ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 27.

⁹² *Ibid.*, no. 28.

⁹³ World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo*, 1971, n. 35 quoted in Anzilotti, “Evangelization: Three Contemporary Approaches”, 29.

evil that holds human beings in bondage. The only one who can free us from this evil is Christ.”⁹⁴

In his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict XVI speaks about the relationship of Christians with Christ: “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice of a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”⁹⁵ Ralph Martin in an article titled “Who Can Be Saved? What does Vatican II Teach?” says that: “...it is a huge mistake theologically and pastorally to move from the possibility of salvation apart from Christ and Church to the probability or even presumption of such salvation.”⁹⁶

At the end of *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II tells the Church that a true missionary is a saint, since each person’s mission is derived from their call to holiness. Unless the missionary commits himself to holiness, he will not be able to achieve anything: “Holiness must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation in the Church.”⁹⁷ Our call to holiness and our call to mission are inseparably linked to each other. John Paul II goes further stating that the missionary must be a “contemplative in action,”⁹⁸ a person who is characterized by committing their soul to the daily search for God.

⁹⁴ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 14.

⁹⁵ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, Rome, 2005, no. 1.

⁹⁶ Ralph Martin, “Who Can Be Saved? What Does Vatican II Teach?” in *The New Evangelization*, ed. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski, 32.

⁹⁷ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 90.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 91.

1.9 Obstacles to Evangelization

Our Church is rich in its history of evangelization, but, at the same time, we have faced disappointments in many areas of missionary work. The disappointments are both internal and external. Internal disappointments are based on the reluctance of Church members to take up the challenge of mission work, coupled with human weakness and limitation. Patrick J. Brennan in his book *Re-Imagining the Parish* argues that many parishes are just maintenance-oriented because parishioners have a consumer consciousness;⁹⁹ therefore drifted away from a spiritually driven awareness of the call to evangelize. When our weakness disrupts God’s work, it slows down momentum and creates negative effects. Our consumer culture reinforces the attitude that church exists only as an institution that provides for sacramental needs: “Parishes end up spending a lot of time and energy serving them, the people who are present, rather than reaching out to those who are absent.”¹⁰⁰ John Paul II sees internal difficulties being the most painful when they manifest “fatigue, disenchantment, compromise, lack of interest and above all lack of joy and hope,”¹⁰¹ but the most serious internal obstacle is the widespread indifferentism found among Christians.¹⁰²

External disappointments are when the “preachers of God’s Word are deprived of their rights, persecuted, threatened or eliminated solely for preaching Jesus Christ and His Gospel.”¹⁰³ These external difficulties include missionaries being denied entry into certain countries and having conversion “seen as a rejection of one’s own people and culture.”¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Cf. Patrick J. Brennan, *Re-Imagining the Parish: Base Communities—Adulthood—and Family Consciousness* (Chestnut Ridge, NY: Crossroad Publishing, 1990), 10.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Rivers, “Evangelization in the Contemporary Catholic Church” in *Evangelizing America*, ed. Thomas P. Rausch, 59.

¹⁰¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 36.

¹⁰² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 50.

¹⁰⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 35.

John Paul II states that the seemingly insurmountable difficulties could lead one to discouragement¹⁰⁵ when embracing the mission to evangelize, though the evangelizer should recognize that it is not mere human enterprise. In John Paul’s opinion one of the temptations of this age is to “reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom, a pseudo-science of well-being.”¹⁰⁶ The proliferation of this mindset will end up in the “gradual secularization of salvation”¹⁰⁷ and alienate us from ultimate union with God.

Cardinal Avery Dulles discusses the theological obstacles to evangelization. He is of the opinion that the exaggerated egalitarianism in our present day culture, placing every religion, every conviction, and every moral practice at the same level is one of the greatest threats to evangelization.¹⁰⁸ An egalitarian and individualistic culture influences us to believe that religion is a human construction and God has not shown any special favors to anyone. Cardinal Dulles argues strongly against this position, noting Scripture and Tradition teach us that “the Christian religion is a uniquely precious gift of God.”¹⁰⁹ Equating Christianity to other religions and cultures is a considerable danger to our evangelization work: “We could not evangelize anyone unless we were confident of having something important to give.”¹¹⁰ There are elements of goodness and truth in other religions and cultures, but that does not mean those religions and cultural values are the way to eternal salvation.

Cardinal Dulles points to another harmful attitude in the Church’s mission to evangelize—the belief that all Christian churches and ecclesial communities are equally

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 11.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Avery Cardinal Dulles, “Current Theological Obstacles to Evangelization” in *The New Evangelization*, ed. Ralph Martin and Steven Boguslawski, 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

legitimate. There are many who believe that the Church of Christ “has been fragmented into a multitude of denominations, no one of which claim to have the fullness of Christianity.”¹¹¹ This is not a belief accepted by the Catholic Church. Dulles clearly states the position of the Church being that the fullness of God’s revelation to humanity is found in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Without accepting and proclaiming this reality, our evangelization is not complete.¹¹²

1.10 What is New Evangelization?

The slogan “aggiornamento” (i.e. bringing up to date) introduced by Pope John XXIII in convening the Second Vatican Council contained, among many other things, the seeds of a new awareness for evangelization, while the missionary identity of the Church has been reaffirmed through this Council. Pope Paul VI in taking the name of the great missionary Apostle made it clear that he was going to walk in the footsteps of his predecessors, who gave great leadership and vision to the missionary activities of the Church. At the beginning of his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI states that the Synod fathers expected from the Pastor of the universal Church a new direction in the area of evangelization, “capable of creating within a Church still more firmly rooted in the undying power and strength of Pentecost a new period of evangelization.”¹¹³

John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* gives a clear definition of new evangelization when he speaks about the different situations we need to understand in evangelization: “... there is an immediate situation, particularly, in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of

¹¹¹ Ibid., 17.

¹¹² Cf. Ibid.

¹¹³ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 2.

faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a ‘new evangelization or a ‘re-evangelization.’”¹¹⁴ *Redemptoris Missio* highlights some of the problems the traditional Christian countries are facing. It is a fact that they are not able to send missionaries to the rest of the world as they did in previous generations. Now they are also challenged by the number of non-Christians in their own country: “Hence missionary activity *ad intra* is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity *ad extra*, and vice versa.”¹¹⁵

By definition, the new evangelization presumes the carrying out of a previous evangelization. It is the continuation of the former evangelization by starting “from the many rich values it has left in place and proceed[ing] to complement them by correcting previous shortcomings.”¹¹⁶ John Paul II states that the new evangelization is not the preaching of a “new gospel” nor is it “trimming away from the gospel everything that seems difficult for the contemporary mind-set to accept.”¹¹⁷ The newness doesn’t change the unchangeable gospel. It provides an overall awareness of what is true and eternal in character.

The Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops explains the meaning of John Paul II’s statement that the new evangelization is new in its ardor, methods and expression.¹¹⁸ It is Christ who gives new ardor to our evangelization work through the working of the Holy Spirit: “An evangelization that is new in its ardor means a solid faith, intense pastoral charity, and steadfast fidelity, which under the Spirit’s action, generates a mystique, an enthusiasm that

¹¹⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 33.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 34.

¹¹⁶ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *New Evangelization*, no. 58.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 7.

¹¹⁸ John Paul II, Speech to the CELAM Assembly in Port-au-Prince (Mar. 9, 1983), in *Pope John Paul II to CELAM: The Task of the Latin American Bishop, Origins* 12 (1983), 659-661.

irrepressibly proclaims the gospel and that can awaken credibility so that the good news of salvation may be accepted.”¹¹⁹

It is this faith, charity, fidelity and action of the Spirit which requires us to adopt new approaches to evangelization. Here evangelizers must use creativity and imagination to present the message in a compelling way: “Since we live in an image culture, we must boldly use the means made available to us by science and technology, while never placing all our trust in them.”¹²⁰ The new evangelization becomes new in its expression when the good news is presented “in a language that will bring the perennial gospel closer to the new cultural realities of today.”¹²¹ The culture around us is changing and we need to express the gospel in a new way without diluting the faith. It demands us to go through a pastoral conversion presenting the Church as a means of salvation through Christ.

People have drifted away from or abandoned the Catholic faith for a myriad of reasons. They include a lack of formation in faith as a child, difference of opinion on the teachings of the Church and mistreatment by church representatives. The aim of new evangelization is to address all these issues. The document *Go and Make Disciples* states: “As a community of faith, we want to welcome these people to become alive in the Good News of Jesus, to make their lives more fully a part of the ongoing story of salvation and let Christ touch, heal, and reconcile them through the Holy Spirit.”¹²² The inactive members of the Church, most prevalent in much of Europe, always have a place in the Church. Cardinal Hume prays that Europe be given a new

¹¹⁹ Ibid., no. 60.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 40.

soul to become aware of its present condition.¹²³ It is a daunting task to re-evangelize the Church in Europe: “In many ways, the evangelization of Europe must be started all over again as if it had never before taken place.”¹²⁴ The question is where does the process of new evangelization begin?

1.11 Conclusion

When the Church carries out the work of Christ in an explicit evangelizing mission, it “will remedy much of the upheaval we face and will place the church in a powerful position to be the light of the gospel to the nations.”¹²⁵ The document *Go and Make Disciples* summarizes in few words what we have been discussing in these pages:

Evangelization, then, has different implications depending on our relationship to Jesus and his Church. For those of us who practice and live our Catholic faith, it is a call to ongoing growth and renewed conversion. For those who have accepted it only in name, it is a call to re-evangelization. For those who have stopped practicing their faith, it is a call to reconciliation. For children, it is a call to be formed into disciples through the family’s faith life and religious education. For other Christians, it is an invitation to know the fullness of our message. For those who have no faith, it is a call to conversion to know Christ Jesus and thus experience a change to new life with Christ and his Church.¹²⁶

¹²³ Cf. Quoted in Michael I. Bochenski, *Theology from Three Worlds: Liberation and Evangelization for the New Europe* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1997), 166.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Robert Rivers, “Evangelization in the Contemporary Catholic Church,” 57.

¹²⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 27.

CHAPTER TWO

ROBERT GREENLEAF AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

2.1 Introduction

The theory of servant leadership as proposed by Robert Greenleaf has been adopted by a variety of institutional organizations, including churches, corporations, universities, health care institutions, charitable foundations and different kinds of businesses. The term “servant leadership” was coined by Greenleaf in his essay “The Servant as Leader,” published in 1970,¹²⁷ which defined the central tenets of servant leadership. This chapter presents the servant leadership theory of Robert Greenleaf and its impact on various organizational principles.

Greenleaf’s ideas on servant leadership provide an alternative to many traditional leadership practices. Traditional organizational authority issues commands to others, who produce results that are either rewarded or punished. Servant leadership challenges this conventional leadership style. It promotes an organizational environment where effective leadership is recognized through a person’s ability to fully serve and successfully adapt to a rapidly changing world. These societal changes may stem from advances in technology, industry standards or mainstream cultural and social values. Adapting to these types of changes requires a unique service characteristic. In an essay on servant leadership, “Foresight: The Lead that the

¹²⁷ Cf. Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power & Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 21—61.

Leader Has,” David S. Young remarks that servant leaders has the quality required of adapting to the changing situations because of their quality of service and manner.¹²⁸

Providing service to others is the first priority in Greenleaf’s vision. His theory of servant leadership has a ‘secular character’ and its religious indebtedness has not yet been fully exploited or studied. As we shall see in the next chapter servant leadership is truly a Christian principle modeled after Jesus’ own leadership style, which has been followed by the Church for two thousand years. It is no secret that leadership plays a vital role in our attempt to influence or direct people to Christ. Effective leaders elicit a willing participation and continual deepening in a person’s commitment to their faith. It is this faith that generates the desire to serve others and to bring them to the table of the Lord. This Eucharistic bond is firmly fixed on Christ as the Redeemer of all humanity. The study of Greenleaf’s servant leadership theory and the application of its principles will help accelerate our understanding of what it means to lead through a life of service, further promoting the Church’s mission to bring the good news of salvation to all humanity.

2.2 Life and Influence of Robert Greenleaf

Robert Greenleaf’s primary legacy is his development of the idea of servant leadership in modern day society. He was born in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1904, and completed his studies in Carleton College in Minnesota. As a business professional, Greenleaf had extensive experience with various organizations, including forty years of service at AT&T. While employed by AT&T, his duties included management research, development and education. Greenleaf became

¹²⁸ Cf. David S. Young, “Foresight: The Lead that the Leader Has” in *Focus on Leadership: Servant Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 250-51.

convinced that the power-centered authoritarian leadership style prominent in American organizations was inadequate and archaic, so he opted for an early retirement and established the Center for Applied Ethics. The purpose of this center was to train people in servant leadership principles. In 1985, the center was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center and was headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.¹²⁹

In his writings, Greenleaf acknowledged various factors that influenced him to develop, promote, and educate others in the servant leadership model. He credits his early attraction to this style of leadership to observing his father's response to the demands of family life and his Judeo-Christian upbringing as a Quaker. In one of his classes at Carleton College, Greenleaf was challenged by his professor to make a difference in society which was mainly dominated by large institutions. He records his teacher's remarks in the introduction to his book *Servant Leadership*:

We are becoming a nation that is dominated by large institutions—churches, businesses, governments, labor unions, universities—and these big institutions are not serving us well. I hope that all of you will be concerned about this. Now you can do as I do, stand outside and criticize, bring pressure if you can, write and argue about it. All of this may do some good. But nothing of substance will happen unless there are people inside these institutions who are able to (and want to) lead them into better performance for the public good. Some of you ought to make careers inside these big institutions and become force for good—from the inside.¹³⁰

This remark had a tremendous impact on Greenleaf's future plan to make a difference in society through the principle of servant leadership.

¹²⁹ For a detailed description of Greenleaf's life story cf. Larry C. Spears, "Introduction: Servant-Leadership and the Greenleaf Legacy," in *Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's Theory of Servant Leadership Influenced Today's Top Management Thinkers*, ed. Larry C. Spears (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 2—3.

¹³⁰ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 15-16.

The single most important influence on Greenleaf was Hermann Hesse's famous book, *Journey to the East*. Hesse (1877 – 1962), a German-born Swiss poet who received the Nobel Prize in Literature (1946), published this book in 1932. It is a story of a band of men taking a mythical journey to the East. Hesse presents himself as part of this group. The main character of the story is a person named Leo who follows the party as a servant helping everyone. He tries to keep spirits high for all those on the journey by singing and serving, and has an extraordinary presence among his friends. Leo is willing to do anything when someone is in need of help. Hesse writes: "This servant Leo worked in a very simple and natural manner, friendly in an unassuming way, alongside the many forms of our League, which, without doing harm to the value and sincerity of the League, had within them something exalting, something singular, solemn, or fantastic."¹³¹

Later in the journey, as a result of Leo's disappearance, the journey disintegrates. There is no one to direct, to lead, or to tell them what to do next. After a while, Leo appears again and the journey is drawn back to its initial order. Eventually Hesse finds out that Leo was not the servant but the leader. In his conversation with Hesse, Leo proclaims the law of service: "He who wishes to live must serve, but he who wishes to rule does not live long."¹³²

Greenleaf was convinced after reading this story that "*the great leader is seen as servant first*, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness. Leo was actually the leader all of the time, but he was servant first because that was what he was, *deep down inside*."¹³³

¹³¹ Herman Hesse, *The Journey to the East* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 25.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³³ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 22.

2.3 What is Servant leadership?

As already noted, through the idea of servant leadership Greenleaf proposes a new kind of leadership in present-day society. His intention in promoting this theory is to give greater service to people by creating a new sense of community. It begins with the leader assuming the nature of a servant in his or her interactions with followers. According to Greenleaf, a desire to serve first and then a conscious effort to lead defines the nature of servant leadership: “The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”¹³⁴ This kind of leadership emerges from a strong desire to serve others for the benefit of the society: “servant leadership starts as a feeling, a desire to serve others, that then becomes a commitment to move that desire into practice, to actually take on the great courageous task of serving others.”¹³⁵

Greenleaf believes that this attitude is different from one who tries to be a leader first, motivated by a desire to attain personal glory or material possession. There are many individuals who have the inherent ability to be a servant leader but are reluctant to take up a leadership position. Instead, they choose to follow someone else who subscribes to a power centered authoritarian leadership style; whereas a servant leader always takes care of the needs of others before his own personal agenda. It is that constant desire to listen and focus on the well-being of others that best promotes the leadership style of the servant leader. Greenleaf says: “only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*.”¹³⁶

In Hesse’s *Journey to the East*, Leo by nature was a servant, and as a result of this nature, leadership was bestowed up on him: “His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not

¹³⁴ Ibid., 27.

¹³⁵ Margaret Wheatley, “The Work of the Servant Leader” in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 352.

¹³⁶ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 31.

assumed, and not to be taken away. He was servant first.”¹³⁷ Servant leadership requires the transformation of every leader to a Leo figure for the sake of the fellow travelers in his or her life journey.

The theory of servant leadership is applicable in any situation, though not a panacea for a flawed humanity. A servant leader demonstrates tolerance by accepting and working with the imperfections in others. Servant leadership in Greenleaf’s mind is a “way of being” rather than a “quick fix” to the problems of leadership.¹³⁸ It is neither an “easy solution” approach to the problem of leadership, nor are the results instantaneous: “At its core, servant leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work, in essence, a way of being that has the potential to create positive change throughout our society.”¹³⁹

Servants by nature are self-effacing with their primary agenda rooted in the well-being of the group. This quality is expected of all who aspire to become servant leaders. It gives the servant leader a great advantage, since they are essentially motivated to get in touch with and empower the lowliest group member: “Servant leaders are functionally superior because they are closer to the ground—they hear things, see things, know things, and their intuitive insight is exceptional. Because of this they are dependable and trusted. They know the meaning of that line from Shakespeare’s sonnet, ‘They that have power to hurt and will do none’.”¹⁴⁰

Larry C. Spears, the President of Greenleaf Center for Leadership, observes that the words *servant* and *leader* are naturally understood as polar opposites. This thought is supported through the traditional classification of societal groupings: a ruling group who were privileged to have all the benefits and the ruled group who were called to serve the rulers. The idea of servant

¹³⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹³⁸ Cf. Spears, “Introduction: Servant-Leadership,” 4.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 56.

leadership, though it is highly effective, remains paradoxical at the same time: “When two opposites are brought together in a creative and meaningful way, a paradox emerges. And so the words *servant* and *leader* have been brought together to create the paradoxical idea of servant leadership.”¹⁴¹

The underlying principle of servant leadership is a willingness to serve humanity: “a holistic approach to work, personal development, and shared decision making—characteristics that place it squarely in the mainstream of conventional talk about empowerment, total quality and participative management.”¹⁴² Spears summarizes the idea of servant leadership in an essay “On Practicing Servant Leadership”: “Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making.”¹⁴³

2.4 The Qualities of A Servant Leader

Larry Spears in an article entitled *Servant leadership and the Greenleaf Legacy* explains the main characteristics of servant leadership. He identifies ten critical characteristics that must be integrated into the leadership role of a servant leader:¹⁴⁴

1. **Listening:** A leader is presumed to be a good communicator, but a servant leader must listen to others and to his or her own inner voice before communicating: “Listening, coupled with regular periods of reflection, are essential to the growth of the servant

¹⁴¹ Larry C. Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact of Servant-Leadership” in *Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit, and Servant Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 2.

¹⁴² Quoted in Howard L. Young, *A Primer for Servant Leadership: Leading in the Right Direction* (Lexington: BookSurge, 2009), 66.

¹⁴³ Spears, “Introduction: Servant-Leadership,” 3-4.

¹⁴⁴ I have followed Larry Spears’ order in categorizing the characteristics. Refer to *Ibid.*, 4-7.

leader.”¹⁴⁵ Listening must be the automatic response of the servant leader to any problem, “because true listening builds strength in other people.”¹⁴⁶ “One of Greenleaf’s tenets of servant leadership is listening... If you want to discover, clarify, or refine your calling, start by listening. This may entail finding quiet time—being still, and getting out of the constant state of busyness most of us live in.”¹⁴⁷

2. Empathy: The uniqueness of each individual needs be respected. Servant leaders show great empathy to those who are working with them, giving great consideration to their needs and desires: “The most successful servant-leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners”¹⁴⁸ and people “grow taller when those who lead them empathize.”¹⁴⁹
3. Healing: Healing wounded relationships is essential for the effective functioning of any institution. Servant leadership encourages people to heal each other when everyone is thinking about the well-being of those around. According to Greenleaf: “There is something subtly communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the contact between servant leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.”¹⁵⁰ Servant leaders need to become healers “by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would be likely to attain for themselves.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Elizabeth Jeffries, “Work as a Calling” in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 32.

¹⁴⁸ Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 4.

¹⁴⁹ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 14.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Ibid., 5.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 240.

4. Awareness: Awareness of oneself and the institutional environment is another required strength of the servant leader. Greenleaf observes: “Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply aware and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity.”¹⁵² This awareness leads one to contribute substantially to the development of society: “Servant leadership is an idea that begins with the self, but leads to concrete action.”¹⁵³

5. Persuasion: Unlike leaders who use their positional authority in organizational decision making, servant leaders must win the hearts and minds of others through persuasion. According to Spears, “this particular element offers one of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model and that of servant leadership.”¹⁵⁴ Greenleaf states that a servant leader must initiate and persuade followers even when there is uncertainty: “A leader says, ‘I will go; follow me!’ while knowing that the path is uncertain, even dangerous.”¹⁵⁵ The leader, through the action, needs to gain the explicit trust and confidence of their followers.

6. Conceptualization: A servant leader must be a person who can dream big things. Greenleaf states that our civilization “will be shaped by the conceptions of individuals that are born of inspiration.”¹⁵⁶ Confronting problems and challenges are part of leadership, though the effective leader needs to conceptualize realities beyond the present

¹⁵² Quoted in Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 5.

¹⁵³ John Burkhardt and Larry C. Spears, “Servant-Leadership and Philanthropic Institutions” in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 225.

¹⁵⁴ Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 5.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 29.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

day situation: “Servant-leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day focused approach.”¹⁵⁷

7. Foresight: The leader must have the ability to see the likely outcome of his action, which is closely linked with conceptualization: “Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future.”¹⁵⁸ Greenleaf believes that “Foresight is the ‘lead’ that the leader has. Once leaders lose this lead and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only.”¹⁵⁹

According to Greenleaf there are two intellectual abilities a leader needs, which are not accessed in any academic way: “*a sense for the unknowable* and be able to *foresee the unforeseeable*.”¹⁶⁰ To the question “Who really makes a good servant leader?” Greenleaf says: “The most important quality is a deep, internal drive to contribute to a collective result or vision”¹⁶¹ that is fostered through the servant leader’s foresight, having a deep personal ability to see in advance what is coming around.

8. Stewardship: This quality is defined as holding an institution in trust for the greater good of society. Just like servant leadership, stewardship helps one to work for the needs of others in an institutional environment or society at large.
9. Commitment to the growth of people: People have an intrinsic value other than being a worker in an institution. The servant leader makes sure that the needs of each individual

¹⁵⁷ Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 6.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 40.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 140.

are met: “The servant leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything within his or her power to nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of employees.”¹⁶² Greenleaf states that “the leader gives certainty to others who may have difficulty in achieving themselves.”¹⁶³ Commitment to people is the secret of institution building when the leader is “able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be.”¹⁶⁴

10. Building Community: Large institutions, by their mere size and complex infrastructures, inherently assume the power to shape human lives without the support of a local community. This requires servant leaders to build community from among the actions of those who work within the organization . Greenleaf says: “All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant leader demonstrating his own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group.”¹⁶⁵ In *Servant Leadership in Foundations* Greenleaf remarks: “If one is to serve, one needs a continuous assessment of how the persons being served are responding.”¹⁶⁶

These ten qualities listed above are by no means a complete listing of what Greenleaf sees as required of a servant leader. But they communicate the power and promise contained in his theory which could be further developed by each servant leader. It is essential that one who aspires to become a servant leader try to develop some of these qualities in one’s life.

¹⁶² Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 6.

¹⁶³ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 29..

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁶⁵ Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 6.

¹⁶⁶ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 215.

2.5 The Work of a Servant Leader

Greenleaf claims that we live in an age of anti-leaders, and it is the duty of the servant leader to make people aware of the need for leadership through their being an effective leader. He states in his essay “Servant Leadership in Churches”: “Some intelligent and serious-minded people denigrate leadership and urge a leaderless society. Others simply ignore leadership as a critical problem. There is a widespread, naïve assumption that great institutions just build themselves.”¹⁶⁷ The work of a servant leader is essential in maintaining a healthy respect for leadership and how his or her leadership ability is valued by others.

In a world marred by the lack of acknowledgment and appreciation for authentic leadership, the work of servant leaders is vital. Some of the approaches taken by servant leaders may not be appealing to all, but as Greenleaf says, a servant leader should not worry about such reactions: “Servant leaders differ from other persons of goodwill because they act on what they believe. Consequently, they ‘know experimentally’ and there is a sustaining spirit when they venture and risk. To the worldly, servant leaders may seem naïve; and they may not adapt readily to prevailing institutional structures.”¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, the work of a servant leader is validated through his or her ability to elevate people to a higher level. At the same time, they elevate leadership to a higher level. Greenleaf expresses his dream of a servant led society in the following words:

A servant-led society is one in which the majority of its institutions—churches, schools, business, philanthropies, government units—are led by servants.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 240.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 341.

And who is a servant? What is a person like who, if in a leading or managing position, will make an institution servant-led? I prefer to identify such a servant in terms of the consequences of her or his influence on people.

Will all (or almost all) of the people touched by that leader's influence grow as persons? Will they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more like themselves to become servants? And what will be the effect on the least privileged in society; will that person benefit or, at least, not be further deprived?

I judge the quality of any society by what the least privileged in it achieve.¹⁶⁹

In an article "Servant-Leaders Making Human Models of Work and Organization," Thomas A. Bausch states that the idea of servant leadership is rooted in an objective understanding of the human person. A sense of belonging is created when large organizations work together for the sake of all people. Such institutions do this "by constantly striving to enhance the dignity of each and every person, most importantly the employees impacted by the organization. The growing dignity, in turn, releases the creativity necessary ... for sustainable success."¹⁷⁰

Greenleaf believes that there is an integral relationship between servant leadership and creativity. In *The Servant as Leader* he states: "Except as we venture to create, we cannot project ourselves beyond ourselves to serve and lead."¹⁷¹ One of the reasons servant leaders need to be

¹⁶⁹ Quoted in Carl Rieser, "Claiming Servant-Leadership as Your Heritage," in *Reflections on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 52.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas A. Bausch, "Servant-Leaders Making Human New Models of Work and Organization," in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 240.

¹⁷¹ Tamyra L. Freeman, Scott G. Isaksen and K. Brian Dorval, "Servant-Leadership and Creativity" in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 257.

creative is that there are no pre-existing “how to” formulas in place: “Servant-leaders must create their way into the answers.”¹⁷²

To further support the need for this creative focus, Richard Smith, a Greenleaf scholar, states that “servant leadership ‘turns leadership into a territory,’ a field of action in which various people can operate depending upon their individual abilities and capacities to serve the mission of the enterprise and the people who make it all happen.”¹⁷³ Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, in their article “From Hero-As-Leader to Servant-As-Leader” comment that this idea of servant leadership as being creative and participative is contrary to the typical traditional image of strong and authoritarian leadership, and “as a result of this false picture of what defines a leader, we celebrate and reward the wrong things.”¹⁷⁴ Whereas the traditional leadership styles we see are often motivated by the drive to achieve more power and wealth, the servant leader is always motivated by a desire to serve others. Traditional leadership is highly competitive and personal achievement is highly valued. Servant leadership is highly collaborative and interdependent, sensitive to the needs of others.

The efforts of an effective servant leader are recognized. Many people are driven to leave behind a legacy, and servant leadership gives them the opportunity to do so: “On a personal level, as many of us begin to come to terms with our own mortality, our desire to leave a legacy grows. ‘What can I contribute that will continue long after I am gone?’”¹⁷⁵ When people weigh the limiting factors of this life experience and recognize their own earthly demise as a certainty,

¹⁷² Ibid., 258.

¹⁷³ Don M. Frick, *Robert K. Greenleaf: A Life of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004), 339.

¹⁷⁴ Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, “From Hero-as-Leader to Servant-as-Leader,” in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 143.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 149.

they often desire to be remembered as someone who made a positive impact on society. They tend to be more open to a life of service, a sharing of one's own talents with others.

2.6 The Impact of Servant leadership

Greenleaf claims that there is a natural instinct inside every human being which compels them to serve others. When the 'spiritual image' of serving is introduced to a managerial system, its impact on individuals and organizations, as a guiding principle, is significant. Larry Spears believes that this philosophy influences people to grow spiritually, professionally, emotionally, and intellectually. It also raises the quality of life by introducing new opportunities to serve and lead. Unfortunately, there are no existing quantifiable studies that support this claim. In the mind of Larry Spears, it is just the right thing to do. Both the work and overall impact of the servant leader are self-evident and tangible yet defy conventional measurement analysis. The benefit is spiritual in nature and cannot be objectively proven.

There are many organizations, institutions and businesses in the United States and around the world that have implemented the model of servant leadership, noting that it has been a great service to their customers. The Sisters of St. Joseph Health Systems, TDIndustries, Southwest Airlines, Herman Miller Company and Schmidt Associates, and Architects, Inc. are a few organizations that have implemented this principle and achieved great success.¹⁷⁶ "Some businesses have begun to view servant leadership as an important framework which is helpful (and in fact, necessary) for ensuring the long-term effects of related management and leadership approaches such as continuous quality improvement."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Spears, "Introduction: Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-Leadership," in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 9-10.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

Greenleaf acknowledges that there is great resistance in institutional structures to the idea of servant leadership, not only because it calls for changes in the organizational structures and practices, but also it “runs counter to a deeply felt, strongly held value in North America that stresses individualism over the lateral relations implicit in the *primus inter pares* concept.”¹⁷⁸ Employees who have earned organizational status and rank often view significant change in behavior as a threat. Their individual buy-in is essential and, if the head of the organization (president or CEO) does not fully support the change to a servant leadership style of management, it will not succeed. Another reason for resistance to servant leadership style is that it calls for the dismantling of the conventional infrastructure of organizational power and prestige. Joseph Distefano states that “the key is the temperament of those in positions of authority to be servant-leaders, regardless of whether or not their labels are ‘chief’ or ‘primus.’”¹⁷⁹

In his essay *Trustees as Servants*, Greenleaf asks these questions of all those who are entrusted with responsibilities as trustees of institutions: “Whom do you serve?” and “For what purpose?”¹⁸⁰ He challenges the board of trustees of all institutions to undergo a radical shift in the way they look at their roles: “Trustees who seek to act as servant leaders can help to create institutions of great depth and quality.”¹⁸¹

Educational institutions are another area where servant leadership has made tremendous impact. The Robert Greenleaf Center offers courses and seminars specific to educators.

¹⁷⁸ Joseph Distefano, *Tracing the Vision and Impact of Robert K. Greenleaf* (Indianapolis: Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 1988), 11.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ Frick, *Robert K. Greenleaf*, 327.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Greenleaf states that the goal of educational institutions is “*to prepare students to serve and be served by the present society.*”¹⁸²

Greenleaf views the church from the perspective of a theorist of organization rather than a theologian. Hence he views the Church as the institutionalization of humankind’s religious concern. “We need a religion, and a church to steward its service, to heal the pervasive alienation and become a major building force in a new society that is more just and more loving, and that provides greater creative opportunities for its people.”¹⁸³ Greenleaf conveys the impression that churches can serve better and become models for other institutions: “And they can be helped to become servant leaders—by being exemplars for other institutions.”¹⁸⁴

2.7 Accountability and Servant leadership

An essential element for an institution trying to implement this model is that they hold every individual accountable for their specific organizational responsibilities. This provides a greater awareness among the employees that they are accountable to each other and ultimately to the people whom they are called to serve. In many organizations this is referred to as meeting the needs of the internal customers. In this process people are trained to confront their weakness and limitations in order to deal with them effectively. In their essay on “Teaching Servant-Leadership,” Hamilton Beazley and Julie Beggs talk about the difficulties people face in their effort to be accountable as servant leaders:

In the practice of servant leadership, they come to see the missed opportunities to serve and be served, and to appreciate how difficult it may be to accept the serving of others. It is easier to make a ‘leader’ than a ‘servant,’ to indulge hierarchies and control than to

¹⁸² Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 203.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

embrace service and collaboration. Practice begins with serving, not because it is more important than leading (it can't be more important because it is part of leadership), but because it is more difficult.¹⁸⁵

Accountability in the servant leadership model is the most important priority for a servant leader. In her essay "Accountability as Covenant: The Taproot of Servant-Leadership," Ann McGee-Cooper explains why servant leaders consider mutual accountability as the greatest priority: "*Our deepest sense of self defines this new relationship. We lay out the role of each of us... how each can best support the other in achieving this shared vision. Both will be leaders AND followers, both will answer to the other on promises made. Failures will be explored as opportunities to learn and grow. Each will expect to unlearn and change.*"¹⁸⁶

2.8 Servant leadership and the Future

True leadership is recognized on the basis of the leader's ability to prepare for future events that could have either a positive or negative impact on the individual lives that make up the organizational whole. These events vary in scope. Ways to prepare for these events would include the development of meaningful economic forecasts, creating strategies for increased revenue, being able to embrace and successfully communicate measures for organizational downsizing, the succession planning of key managerial positions, the effort of promoting organizational growth and expansion, and the enhancement of the identities of all members of the organization. Overall planning for future events depends on the size and complexity of the

¹⁸⁵ Hamilton Beazley and Julie Beggs, "Teaching Servant-Leadership," in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 61.

¹⁸⁶ Ann McGee-Cooper, "Accountability as Covenant: The Taproot of Servant-Leadership", in *Insights on Leadership*, 78. The original quote is in italics.

organization. Servant leadership has great potential in assisting the leader's approach to future events as it elicits the dream of serving the good of the entire organization.

Thomas Bausch argues that the practical application of the servant leadership model is more relevant today than in Greenleaf's time. Some of the reasons that support this argument are the existence of various organizations which share similar policies and infrastructure, the increase in the number of workers who are familiar with the benefits of this style of leadership, our culture's hunger for a sense of community, along with intense competition and resource constraints in the market place. An effective servant leader propels the organization into the future even when confronted with these variables and other elements of uncertainty: "The leader always knows what it (the direction) is and can articulate it for any who are unsure. By clearly stating and restating the goal, the leader gives certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves."¹⁸⁷

The successful cultivation of more servant leaders may even bring about an amiable solution to the anti-leader mentality of our present day culture. According to Larry Spears, "A new moral authority is emerging, which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader."¹⁸⁸ The people who genuinely recognize the need to follow a leader will not casually follow any leader: "Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 244.

¹⁸⁸ Robert K. Greenleaf, "Essentials of Servant-Leadership," in *Focus on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears and Michele Lawrence, 21.

servants. To the extent that this principle prevails in the future, the only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant led.”¹⁸⁹

Servant leadership is actually a state of being rather than the action of a person or persons within an organization. Don M. Frick, coeditor of the book *On Becoming a Servant-Leader*, elaborates on the future of servant leadership: “Greenleaf was a home grown mystic in many ways, but a practical one who saw doing and being as inseparable. For him, servant leadership begins with an enlargement of identity, followed by behaviors. The reverse order—enlarging behaviors to mask identity—is false, and people know it.”¹⁹⁰ Those who are in that ‘state of being’—the being of servant leadership—recognize the need to lead others to that futuristic state: “Servant leadership is providing a framework from which many thousands of known and unknown individuals are helping to improve how we treat those who do the work within our many institutions.”¹⁹¹ In her essay “Accountability as Covenant” McGee-Cooper comments that a servant leader does everything in a spirit of mutual respect: “The servant leader asks to be coached and given honest feedback as well as offering the same to those served. Making it safe for the teammates to be honest and being accountable to change, grow, communicate, and resolve differences in a spirit of mutual respect is the foundation of this new paradigm.”¹⁹²

The future of servant leadership also depends on the successful implementation of an environment which supports both individual and communal creativity. Leaders should be people of great creativity, but unfortunately we see that many are missing this element, causing confusion to those who try to follow them: “Transforming people, organizations, and society as a

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Don M. Frick, “Understanding Robert K. Greenleaf and Servant-Leadership,” in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 354.

¹⁹¹ Larry C. Spears, “Practicing Servant Leadership,” *Leader to Leader* 34 (Fall 2004): 11.

¹⁹² McGee-Cooper, “Accountability as Covenant,” 79.

whole requires both radical and incremental forms of creativity. As a result organizations that exclude one type of creative talent are less likely to have long-term success than those that take an inclusive approach and value people's contributions along the full spectrum of creativity."¹⁹³

When someone is able to exercise their creative energies, then their gifts and talents are afforded the necessary spark to ignite: "This is why we believe that the relationship between creativity and servant leadership is so important."¹⁹⁴

Accountability is also a shared value in servant leadership. It reflects a joint commitment involving the individuals who are the providers of service and the individuals who are the recipients of that service. The recipient is accountable to sharing their gifts and talents in a similar capacity. If individual authority and accountability are mutually created up front through the process of establishing servant leadership, a new whole paradigm emerges as to what accountability means. Accountability in servant leadership is much different than the traditional meaning of organizational accountability. In traditional organizations it is the boss who controls and defines accountability "as an obligation to account for and give an explanation of one's actions and to bear the consequences for those actions."¹⁹⁵

2.9 Application of Servant leadership

Greenleaf believes that society is built on the premise that people are capable of caring for each other. Caring can take place through the structure of a family, a small community or through some form of organizational caring. So it is necessary that institutions be built with new

¹⁹³ Freeman, Isaksen, and Dorval, "Servant Leadership and Creativity," 259.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 267.

¹⁹⁵ McGee-Cooper, "Accountability as Covenant," 77.

regenerative forces “to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant.”¹⁹⁶

Greenleaf’s initial focus was on businesses, universities and churches. It is because of his personal association and life experience that he opted to address these institutions.

When servant leader principles are applied in a situation, the intent is not to widen a sense of personal power or the power of the institution but to maximize the institution’s service to people. Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, in their essay “From Hero-As-Leader to Servant-As-Leader,” talk about three important principles in the application of servant leadership:

Rather than controlling or wielding power, the servant-leader works to build a solid foundation of shared goals by (1) listening deeply to understand the needs and concerns of others; (2) working thoughtfully to help build a creative consensus; and (3) honoring the paradox of polarized parties and working to create ‘third right answers’ that rise above the compromise of ‘we/they’ negotiations. The focus of servant leadership is on sharing information, building common vision, self-management, high levels of interdependence, learning from mistakes, encouraging creative input from every team member, and questioning present assumptions and mental models.¹⁹⁷

The Sisters of St. Joseph Health System, Ann Arbor, Michigan is an institution that successfully implemented servant leadership principles such as creating the right environment (non-oppressive) for core values to take hold and prosper. The reality of this implementation has led to their mission of today, which is “To serve together...in the spirit of the Gospel, to heal body, mind, and spirit, to improve the health of our communities and to steward the resources entrusted to us.”¹⁹⁸ Sr. Joyce DeShano, senior vice president of Sisters of St. Joseph Health System from 1994 through 1999, remarked in an interview that she considers this theory as a

¹⁹⁶ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 62.

¹⁹⁷ McGee-Cooper and Trammell, “From Hero-as-Leader,” 144.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Sisters of St. Joseph Health System, *St. Joseph Health System*, <http://www.stjhs.org> (April 10, 2010).

means to influence rather than control anyone and she believes that servant leadership is critical in facing the challenges of today's leadership needs: "*when we choose to influence people rather than control them, it at first might seem weakness, but it really calls forth an inner strength. We think it really serves to engage and develop the creativity, productivity, and vibrancy that already exist.*"¹⁹⁹

2.10 A Critical Analysis of Servant leadership

In her essay "Servant Leadership: The Leadership Theory of Robert Greenleaf," Carol Smith points to some criticisms of this theory. Smith states that "Servant leadership has come under some fire for remaining grounded in philosophical theory, and for lacking empirical substantiation."²⁰⁰ There needs to be empirical validation to demonstrate that the theory is functional. Smith is of the opinion that "Servant leadership lacks a formal, confirmed framework, and has not yet been empirically linked to organizational performance. Many areas of concern remain to be explored and answered, including the question of whether servant leaders can be formally trained. As the theory's popularity continues to grow, these and other issues must be addressed."²⁰¹

Another potential problem is illustrated by Hermann Hesse's story. Greenleaf acknowledges that his reading of Hesse's *Journey to the East* had a profound influence on the development of servant leadership theory. Even though the servant leader Leo was ideal in his role of leadership, the journey disintegrates after his departure. It shows that he had not

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Sister Joyce DeShano, Senior Vice President, Sponsorship, Sisters of St. Joseph Health System, quoted in John S. Lore, "Servant-Leadership in a Christian Organization: The Sisters of St. Joseph Health System," in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 307.

²⁰⁰ Carol Smith, "Servant Leadership: The Leadership Theory of Robert K. Greenleaf," (Course Paper, Drexel University, 2005) <http://www.carolsmith.us/downloads/640greenleaf.pdf> (April 5, 2010), 7.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

developed a culture which supports the group in his absence. The success of servant leadership depends on the one who will continue what the previous leaders were doing before he or she departed from the organization (e.g., because of retirement). If servant leaders are modeled after Leo, the organization can collapse when something happens to the leader. Robert E. Kelley, in his essay “Followership in a Leadership World,” talks about the leadership of Leo: “His departure provides a startling contrast to the lack of followership skills in the other group members.”²⁰² The mark of lasting, consistent and effective leadership is when a succession plan is developed and put in place. This acts to preserve the long-term integrity of organizational leadership.

Critics of servant leadership also argue that unlike Herman Hesse’s Leo, in the servant leadership model everyone is a leader, thus another potential problem in this leadership model is exposed: when everyone is a leader, the problem could arise that there is no leadership at all. The past president of the Boston Celtics basketball, Red Auerbach, once remarked about the need to have a particular person to lead a group in order to succeed: “Can you imagine a team in which players picked other players and decided on the substitution?... Or can you imagine a business run by people without authority or by people who are not in a position to assume the responsibility of failure? It would be undoubtedly flounder.”²⁰³ “A mark of leaders, an attribute that puts them in a position to show the way for others, is that they are better than most at pointing the direction.”²⁰⁴ A leader should be a person who can articulate the way so that the rest of the group can follow: “actions speak louder than words is a simple reminder that a lot of talk

²⁰² Robert E. Kelley, “Followership in a Leadership World,” in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 170.

²⁰³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁰⁴ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 29.

about serving will do you no good if all that others see are the same old attitude and behaviors. Talking servant leadership is easy. Practicing servant leadership requires significant effort.”²⁰⁵

Another challenge is that the success of servant leadership depends on the cooperative effort of all those who work in the organization. This is a hard sell. Some of the ideas of servant leadership are difficult to implement, since it is difficult to unlearn patterns of work that people are used to, and the affected workers need to be able to offer constructive criticism with a deep sense of humility.

Another criticism of this secular theory is that it is believed to be overly religious and spiritualistic, since “some authors have attempted to couch servant leadership in spiritual and moral terms.”²⁰⁶ This poses a threat to its practical expansion. In reality, this style of leadership is built upon service to one another. It does not promote a moral or religious agenda.

The one criticism that cannot be refuted is the difficulty of empirically validating servant leadership theory. Concrete data which records its success or failure cannot be obtained; however it can also be surmised that there is a genuine lack of empirical data supporting the successful proliferation of the gospel. We can count the number of churches, the number of ministers and the current number of Church members; however, it is with great difficulty that we can assign metrics to the empirical growth of individual or communal faith. How does anyone assign metrics to a disciple’s heart or a communal pulse?

²⁰⁵ Lawrence J. Lad and David Luechauer, “On the Path to Servant-Leadership,” in *Insights on Leadership*, ed. Larry C. Spears, 66.

²⁰⁶ Quoted. Spears, “Tracing the Growing Impact,” 8.

2.11 Conclusion

A significant portion of our secular culture considers servant leadership to be the preeminent leadership model for present-day society. Servant leadership principles have been widely disseminated into institutions through faithful servant leaders. Many leaders have accepted the challenge and invitation to assume servant leadership roles and to undergo a radical change in understanding and exercising their leadership style. The intention in summarizing this chapter is to show how the wider world has benefited from the principle of servant leadership without their knowing that it embraces the Christian message of salvation.

Greenleaf is inviting anyone who is interested in being a leader of people to recognize that real leadership occurs through an openness to serve others. : “...leaders bend their efforts to serve with skill, understanding, and spirit, and that followers will be responsive only to able servants who lead them—but that they will respond. Discriminating and determined servants as followers are as important as servant leaders, and everyone, from time to time, may be in both roles.”²⁰⁷ Whether it is the organization’s CEO or its maintenance personnel, everyone is called to serve the interest of the organization as a whole. All seamlessly lead and serve together. Their individual service and leadership capacities are aligned and transparent to one another. This servant leader demeanor is then introduced back into the overall social network. As McGee-Cooper and Trammell say, “The true heroes of the new millennium will be servant leaders, quietly working out of the spotlight to transform our world.”²⁰⁸

Servant leadership appears to be paradoxical to many and folly to some, though its authority cannot be disputed. It works. Through their ability to listen, reflect, heal, persuade,

²⁰⁷ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 18.

²⁰⁸ McGee-Cooper and Trammell, “From Hero-as-Leader,” 150.

inspire, forecast and secure both individual and communal growth, servant leaders can successfully influence and direct people to Christ. It can be used as an instrument to deepen faith and promote a familial bond at home and within the community, a bond that is firmly rooted in charity, humility, forgiveness and a hope that is fixed on gospel values and establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

CHAPTER THREE

NEW EVANGELIZATION AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

3.1 Introduction

Effective leadership is essential to give direction in the new evangelization work of the Church. Since the Church has identified evangelization as the primary motive of her existence, a leadership which understands this need is imperative. The first part of this chapter deals with the Scriptural basis of leadership practices both in the Old and New Testament. Israelite leaders understood their role as a vocation from God primarily to serve God. Jesus assumed the role of a servant which was followed by the Apostles and the leaders of the Christian communities from the beginning of Christianity. The leader becoming a servant to Christ's followers is foundational to Christianity. Robert Greenleaf's ideas on servant leadership had been successfully applied in many secular institutions and finding a common ground with his principles will enable us to make significant inroads into our new evangelization work and will help us bring back those who have fallen away from the faith.

3.2 Servant Leadership in the Old Testament

The call of Abraham marks the beginning of Israel as a chosen group of people under the special care of God. Abraham proved his allegiance and dependence on God by obeying all the commands of the Lord, being willing even to sacrifice his son Isaac. His leadership emerged

through his response to God's call in order to fulfill a divine plan for him and his posterity. Abraham became a servant of God by willingly submitting to God's providential care.

Abraham's commitment to a servant leadership role before God is affirmed in several Scriptural passages. In Genesis 26, God tells Isaac that he would be blessed because of his father's willingness to be a servant: "I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham" (Gen 26: 24). Those who were called to serve God considered themselves privileged to receive such a calling (Gen 12: 1-5), just as those who served a king considered it a great honor. Later, Moses tells the people how he prayed to God invoking the name of their forefathers who were the servants of God (cf. Deut 9: 26-27). Abraham's unique relationship with God brought out all the leadership qualities in him, creating a model for subsequent leaders of Israel. Abraham's unparalleled commitment and faithfulness in following God's ways brought many blessings to him and to his posterity. He was given the promise of the land (Gen 13: 14-15), countless children (Gen 15: 1-6) and also the promise that whatever had been given to him would continue to be bestowed upon his posterity (cf. Rom 4: 23-24).

In the book of Genesis, Jacob and Joseph are two leaders who brought blessings to all those around them because of their dependence on God. They acted as instruments of God by serving Him and securing blessings on their families and eventually Israel. The acme of servant leadership in Hebrew Scripture is seen in the call of Moses and his deliverance of the people of Israel from the shackles of slavery. Moses is both God's servant and a servant of the people of God. God commands Pharaoh through His agent, Moses, to deliver the people from Egyptian bondage. Also, God spoke to the people of Israel through Moses, and the people conveyed their grievances to God through the agency of Moses.

During the dedication of the Jerusalem temple, Solomon prays to God using the name of God's dear servant Moses: “thus may your eyes be open to the petition of your servant and to the petition of your people Israel’. ... ‘because you have set them apart among all the peoples of the earth for your inheritance, as you declared through your servant Moses when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.’ Not a single word has gone unfulfilled of the entire generous promise he made through his servant Moses” (1 Kg 8: 52, 53, 56). As a servant of God, Moses is depicted as the meekest man on the face of the earth (Num 10: 3). He always demanded that the people of Israel should serve God and sees himself only as a servant of God: “Moses never lost the sense of being a true servant. Despite his strength of character that grew over time, Moses’ intent was that Israel should serve God, not himself. It is as if his message to the fledging nation of Israel, delivered by word and example, was simply: ‘God is your leader, not me’.”²⁰⁹

There were three distinct leadership roles in Old Testament Israel: priests, prophets and kings. Initially the first born sons in Israel inherited the role of priests from their fathers who served as priests. God claimed them as His own (Ex 13: 1–2; Num 8: 17). Later on God revoked this privilege when Israel lapsed back into idolatry, worshiping the golden calf. The right to priestly service then fell exclusively to the Levites. The only criterion used in selecting the Levite tribe for priesthood was their non-participation in the idol worship and their willingness even to slay those who had committed the idolatry (cf. Ex 32).

Faithfulness to God is a necessary requirement in order to serve in the Temple. Priests served God and the people in different capacities. Their service to God was through caring for the sanctuary and offering sacrifices. They served the people by manifesting the divine mind and by teaching and preaching. People consulted the priest to know the divine will for them: “Those

²⁰⁹ John Adair, *The Leadership of Jesus and Its Legacy Today* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 43.

who wished to ask God what course of action to take went to a priest, who used the *Urim* and *Thummim* to manifest the divine will in the form of a Yes or a No.”²¹⁰

Prophets also played a prominent role in manifesting God’s divine will. God called them to be his spokesmen, leading the people in accordance with his way. Sacred Scripture illustrates how the prophets are mediators between God and Israel (cf. Deut 18: 15–22); therefore they are always servants of God. There are several examples in the Scripture where God tells the people that the prophets are acting as his servants even when they adopt extreme measures to convince the people of God’s divine will. In his warning to the Israelites regarding their captivity by the Assyrians, God tells them: “Just as my servant Isaiah has gone naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away captives from Egypt ...” (Is 20: 3-4). In the book of Jeremiah God refers to all of his prophets as being servants of God: “ From the day that your fathers left the land of Egypt even to this day, I have sent you untiringly all my servants the prophets” (Jer 7: 25). They were men of God (cf. Dt 33: 1; 1 Sa 2: 27; 9: 6; 1 Kgs 13: 1), and often God addresses them as his servants (cf. 2 Kgs 17: 13; Am 3: 7; Je 7: 25; Ezr 9: 11).

Old Testament kings are servants of the judicial and executive power of God. They are acting in the name of God (cf. 2 Chron 19: 6; Ps 2: 10-11; Jn 5: 27). Israel’s demand for a king was also a sign of their rejection of God’s sovereignty over them (cf. 1 Sam 8: 7), yet God asks Samuel to anoint Saul as the king. When Saul failed in the eyes of God, God selected David whom he addressed as God’s servant (cf. 1 Cron 17: 4) and “a man after his own heart” (cf. 1 Sam 13: 14). David knew that the king of Israel is not like other kings, since he is the servant of

²¹⁰ John J. Castelot and Aelred Cody, “Religious Institutions of Israel,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 1255.

God. It is for the sake of the people that he had been chosen as the King of Israel (cf. 2 Sam 5: 12). Solomon also understood the meaning of serving God and his people. The only request that Solomon made to God was to attain the wisdom necessary to be a successful ruler (cf. 2 Cron 1: 10 – 11). The kingly leadership role disintegrated when the Kings of Israel failed to serve God. Instead, they reverted back to idol worship and desired to build an identity based on their false beliefs rather than the worship of the real God.

The Old Testament also links leadership roles to shepherds, and often priests and kings were referred as shepherds who were to protect the flock, the people of Israel, from harm. In Psalm 23, David joyfully praises God in that, as the divine shepherd, he fulfills the needs of the sheep. In Ezekiel, God tells the failing shepherds (i.e. priests and kings) that he himself will tend the sheep of Israel (cf. Ezek 34: 15). In the New Testament Jesus is presented as the Good Shepherd (cf. Jn 10: 1- 21) and the Church has extended this role in history by presenting the bishop as the chief shepherd of a local diocese. The frequent failures of the Old Testament priests and kings resulted in God punishing them through the fall of Jerusalem and the subsequent exile from their homeland.

Thus it is clear from this analysis of the Old Testament texts that biblical leadership is defined as a response to God's call to action, taking care of people's needs within a particular time and place: "From a biblical perspective, servanthood was the drama of dedicated individuals willingly performing a thousand unseen deeds of kindness without recognition. Biblical servants possessed an intuitive awareness that they were born not for themselves, but for others."²¹¹

²¹¹ H. Young, *Primer for Servant Leadership*, 15.

3.3 Servant Leadership in the New Testament

New Testament leadership is modeled after the person of Jesus. Yves Congar remarks that all expressions of a disciple's leadership role are understood in relation to Christ: "Diakonia, ministry, the position, behavior and activity of a servant, appears throughout the whole of the New Testament to be as it were coextensive and practically identical with the character of disciple—a man possessed by Christ and living in subjection to him."²¹² When a person is conformed to Christ's way of life and receives a leadership role of a Christian community, that person is called to action for Christ. This action is oriented to the needs of the community in which they are called to serve. It is a fundamental requirement to have a personal knowledge and integration of Jesus' leadership style in order to successfully lead a Christian community.

3.3.1 Jesus, the Master Servant

Jesus' relationship with the Father is the key to his authority. This relationship is based on mutual love, which is intrinsic to the nature of the Holy Trinity. Congar comments on the mission to serve that Jesus received from the Father: "Jesus himself has this honor only by reason of the mission he received from his Father. The Father alone is the principle without a source. All comes from him; all is called to return to him."²¹³ The Incarnation is the Son's response to the Father's call to redeem a fallen humanity. Jesus' unconditional response is the greatest example of obedience and humility. This response to the Father's will enables him to fully embrace his human nature. In St. Paul's words: "...he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself,..." (cf. Phil 2: 7–8): "This self-emptying of Christ or kenosis as found in Philippians 2, finds its social

²¹² Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church* (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1964), 23.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

scope in a resolute identification with the lowest members of the community.”²¹⁴ This is the primordial model for us to follow in our service to fellow human beings.

The gospels present Jesus as a person who acts with authority (cf. Mk 1: 22). Jesus was frequently challenged by the present day Jewish leadership to prove the validity of this authority whenever they found him casting out demons or performing miracles and even when he was teaching in the synagogue (cf. Mk 11: 28). Jesus’ response to their questions led to their ultimate frustration, for the nature of authority exercised by Jesus is that of being a servant (cf. Mk 10: 45; Lk 22: 27) far outside any claim of rank or moral superiority.

In Mark’s gospel, when James and John asked Jesus for a position beside him, Jesus’ response is based on the principle of servant leadership: “...whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk: 10: 43-43). Jesus is teaching them that the measurement of a leader’s greatness is in its being modeled after his own unconditional commitment to serve. This type of service is fundamentally opposed to the gentile way of exercising authority over one’s subjects. Jesus does not reject the disciples’ desire to become great leaders, but the way to achieve this goal is through service without seeking personal gain, manifested in the example of Christ: “every Christian is to be identified [with Christ] in the rendering of service which makes the self available to others.”²¹⁵ This commitment to service is by its very nature also a commitment to true leadership and authority.

²¹⁴ Quoted in Steven Crowther, “The Spirit of Service: Reexamining Servant Leadership in the Gospel of Mark,” *Inner Resources for Leaders*, 1, no. 3 (2008)
http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/innerresources/vol1iss3/crowther_spirituality.pdf (May 10, 2010), 6.

²¹⁵ Jack Dominian, “The Role of Authority in Faith,” in *Governance and Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, ed. Noel Timms and Kenneth Wilson (London: Cromwell Press, 2000), 8.

The culminating moment of Jesus' servant leadership occurs at the Last Supper. In washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus demonstrates what it means to be a servant leader: "The long 'farewell discourse' begins not with Jesus' spoken words, but with his act that directly deals with the attitude with which his followers should relate with one another. In the leadership model of Jesus, deeds precede words!"²¹⁶ It is with intent that Jesus does this gesture just before his death, revealing the immense importance of this act. It is human nature to take seriously the final words and/or actions of a dying person and, in many cases, try to emulate them in spite of the consequences. In these closing moments of his life on earth, Jesus is teaching what will be his disciples' essential response to their call in following him.

Jesus says the gentiles exercised their authority by "lording it over" people (cf. Mk 10: 42). Jesus demonstrates an alternative to the traditional leadership model of asserting one's authority. The authority exercised in the Church is not by exerting any power over people but is just like that of Jesus—through humility and service. For a believer, this action of foot-washing has theological consequence in relation to the saving act of Christ:

The foot-washing symbolically points to Jesus' death on the cross and the cleansing effect of his blood by means of which one can be united with him. Jesus' humble act, then, was not merely an example for his adherents to follow, but also an effective means of communicating the truth that the one who laid down his life himself becomes the life-giving and enabling source for them to accomplish their mission in the world as servant leaders.²¹⁷

The act of washing feet changes the nature of leadership: "The unusual twist of Jesus' leadership through the feet washing example has redefined the meaning and function of leadership power

²¹⁶ Jey J. Kanagaraj, "Johannine Jesus, The Supreme Example of Leadership: An Inquiry into John 13: 1—20". *Themelios* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 18.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

from ‘power over’ to ‘power to’, that is power as an enabling factor to choose to serve others.”²¹⁸ Jesus became the servant leader in its fullest sense; therefore he is the servant leader *par excellence* and asked his disciples to emulate that quality when integrating their role as leaders.

3.3.2 Jesus Turns His Followers into Leaders

During the time of his public ministry, Jesus was focused on training his disciples on how to be effective leaders. It was inherent within their call to leave all possessions (cf. Lk. 12: 22–34, Mt. 19: 21, 27) follow Jesus and take up his mission. In Mark’s gospel, Jesus sends out his disciples two by two, giving them instructions on what to do (cf. Mk 6: 7-13), though before his ascension he told the disciples to stay together and pray until the coming of the Holy Spirit (Lk 24: 49). It is only after the coming of the Holy Spirit that the leadership of the Apostles is put into practice. We witness this with the three thousand people who became Christians in the first preaching of Peter (cf. Acts 2: 41). Fear left the Apostles as they began trusting in God when they received the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is evident in their later ministry also when they courageously (cf. Acts 4, 23, 26) witnessed the gospel and gave leadership to the community in difficult times. The Apostles understood their mission as the continuation of Christ’s ministry. St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians states: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11: 1). The Apostles followed the Master’s way: “Every minister of the Gospel, every Christian, is a *doulos*, a servant of God, of Jesus Christ and of his brethren.”²¹⁹ Congar also believes that

²¹⁸ Sen Sendjaya and James C. Sarrows, “Servant Leadership: Its Origin, Development, and Application in Organizations,” *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9, n, 2 (Fall 2002): 59.

²¹⁹ Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 33.

Christian leadership is “a loving obedience to Christ, shaping the life of each with all and for all, according to the position which the Lord has given him in the Body.”²²⁰

Before we serve others, it is important for us to allow Jesus first to serve us so that we might experience his love, forgiveness, and total cleansing. In other words, Jesus’ followers need to let him deal with them completely that they might be better to serve the world. It is the servant attitude, demonstrated by Jesus, which makes intimate fellowship with Jesus possible for his followers. Thus a person can participate in Jesus’ life by yielding oneself to serve people in communion with him.²²¹

The Apostles followed Jesus’ model in their preaching and actions. St. Peter admonishes Christians to follow the example of Christ in serving: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps” (1 Peter 2: 21). Congar states that Jesus wanted his followers to take up the Isaian servant leadership style which Jesus practiced: “The attitude of service, not of power, which Jesus makes his disciples’ law, he expressly links with his own—the Master’s—for the disciple is not merely a pupil under instruction; he imitates the master and shares his life. Jesus lived his mission, and defined it in terms of the Isaian Servant.”²²² He continues to argue that service is a necessary accompaniment of being a Christian and authority “is a duty, not a right: *nec imperrio praesidere, sed ministerio*: to exercise authority not as power, but as service.”²²³

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Cf. Jey J. Kanagaraj, “Johannine Jesus,” 23.

²²² Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 26.

²²³ Ibid., 91-92.

3.4 Leadership in the Church—A Call to Serve

Christian leadership is a special vocation from God to serve the people of God. In the Acts of the Apostles, deacons were chosen to help the Apostles by serving at the table so that the Apostles can take care of the “distribution of the word of God” (Acts 6: 1–8). Thus, the most important task of the Apostles is identified as serving others through the preaching of the gospel. According to Congar, the first Christian community totally embodied the pattern of leadership to be followed for the subsequent generations through their *koinonia, diakonia and martyria* (fellowship, service and witness)²²⁴: “These three supreme realities could be the starting point of a positive program of Christian life in the world.”²²⁵

The Fathers of the Church repeatedly emphasized the need to understand that all ministries are characterized by service to God’s people. For St. Augustine “the minister [is] the dispenser of the evangelical word and sacrament.”²²⁶ Ministry is always understood as a service of God. Augustine was a “servant of Christ and through him servant of his servants.”²²⁷ He considered his Christian calling as a privilege and the office of the bishop as a “burden”: He wrote “I wish not so much to be in charge as to be of help.”²²⁸ He repeatedly told the people: “For you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian.”²²⁹

This attitude of understanding Church leadership as a service to the people of God was evident when Pope John XXIII and Paul VI promulgated the documents of Vatican II, signing them with the title *Servus Servorum* which was originally used by Pope Gregory the Great (540 -

²²⁴ Cf. Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 138.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Joseph T. Lienhard, “Ministry,” in *Augustine Through Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed., Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 568.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 569.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

604). Pope John Paul II in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, states that St. Gregory used this title knowing that the Petrine ministry is carried out for the good of the Church and the faithful: “St. Gregory the Great understood this perfectly when, out of all the titles connected to the functions of the Bishop of Rome, he preferred that of *Servus servorum Dei* (Servant of the Servants of God).”²³⁰ Referring to St. Augustine’s usage of *Vobis sum episcopus, vobiscum christianus*, John Paul says “*christianus* has far greater significance than *episcopus*, even if the subject is the Bishop of Rome.”²³¹ According to Congar, Gregory the Great didn’t adopt the title *Servus servorum Dei* as a decoration to his office, instead he acted as the one in service to the people of God: “Over and above the exercise of authority and in the very act of exercising it, he took a genuine interest in the welfare of the men under his command. He loved and respected their progress in virtue as resulting from their own free will. He took care to explain to them the reasons for any of his own decisions in the light of some good or some truth which their souls instinctively sought.”²³²

In his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, John Paul II states that the authority vested in the offices in the Church, especially that of the pope, cannot be understood or exercised without understanding the mission that goes along with it:

This service of unity, rooted in the action of divine mercy, is entrusted within the College of Bishops to one among those who have received from the Spirit the task, not of exercising power over the people—as the rulers of the Gentiles and their great men do (cf. *Mt* 20:25; *Mk* 10:42)—but of leading them towards peaceful pastures. This task can require the offering of one’s own life (cf. *Jn* 10:11-18). ... The mission of the Bishop of Rome within the College of all the Pastors consists precisely in “keeping watch” (*episkopein*), like a sentinel, so that, through the efforts of the Pastors, the true voice of

²³⁰ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 13.

²³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 14.

²³² Congar, *Power and Authority*, 52.

Christ the Shepherd may be heard in all the particular Churches. In this way, in each of the particular Churches entrusted to those Pastors, the *una, sancta, catholica et apostolica Ecclesia* is made present. All the Churches are in full and visible communion, because all the Pastors are in communion with Peter and therefore united in Christ.²³³

Referring to his appointment as a bishop, John Paul II states that this “great honor” is given to the bishop not because he is an outstanding person but, “The honor comes from his mission to stand at the heart of the Church as the first in faith, first in love, first in fidelity, and first in service.”²³⁴ Those who seek their own honor in this mission will not be able to function effectively as Christ’s ministers. In an essay “Authority as Service in Communion” David McLoughlin states: “The bishop’s whole life is at the service of the community: attending to it; encouraging and inspiring; listening and drawing forth its strengths and weaknesses; sharing what he sees and knows locally through the presbyterium, and internationally through the Episcopal college.”²³⁵ It is through serving the community in a faithful manner that the leader and the led grow in mutual holiness: John Paul states: “A bishop is called to personal holiness in a particular way so that the holiness of the Church community entrusted to his care may increase and deepen.”²³⁶ He also talks about the crosier he bears as being the symbol of his duties for pastoral care, leadership, and responsibility: “It is not a sign of authority in the usual sense of the word, nor is a sign of precedence of supremacy over others: it is a sign of service.”²³⁷

In his book *Teaching with Authority*, Richard R. Gaillardetz states that in the ecclesiological renewal of Vatican II we find a recontextualization of doctrinal teaching on authority: “First, those who exercise doctrinal teaching of authority must always be cognizant of

²³³ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint* (Rome, 1995), no. 94.

²³⁴ John Paul II, *Rise, Let us Be on Our Way* (New York: Warner Books, 2004), 45.

²³⁵ David McLoughlin, “Authority as Communion” in *Governance and Authority*, 135.

²³⁶ John Paul II, *Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way*, 45.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

that authority's transcendent ground. The Church does not possess an authority in its own right but only in radical dependence on God's word borne in the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit."²³⁸

In his apostolic constitution *Pastor Bonus*, Pope John Paul II clearly states that the authority vested in the bishops is explicitly for service modeled after the example of Christ: "The power and authority of the bishops bears the mark of *diaconia* or stewardship, fitting the example of Jesus Christ himself who 'came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk 10: 45)."²³⁹ This power is to be exercised in the same manner that Christ exercised his authority: "Therefore the power that is found in the Church is to be understood as the power of being a servant and it is to be exercised in that way; before anything else it is the authority of a shepherd."²⁴⁰

Yves Congar is of the opinion that any desire to eliminate the element of service from the Church has no place in Christianity: "Authority is indeed a title in its own right, but the title is conferred within a general order of service and, in Christianity, has no existence outside this order."²⁴¹ *Pastor Bonus* states that what applies to the bishop in the form of service also applies to the pope since he is endowed with the Petrine ministry to serve the whole Church. Thus, the pope is the servant of love: "It is largely from this principle that those great works of old have come—"The servant of the servants of God"—by which Peter's successor is known and defined."²⁴²

²³⁸ Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 28.

²³⁹ John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, Rome, 1988.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, 91.

²⁴² John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, 685.

3.4.1 The Exercise of Teaching Authority in the Church

The teaching authority of the Church is known as the magisterium. St. Thomas Aquinas spoke about two kinds of authoritative teaching in the Church. According to him the teaching authority exercised by the bishops is *magisterium cathedrae pastoralis*, “the teaching of the pastoral chair,” and *magisterium cathedrae magistralis* “the teaching of the master’s chair,” is the teaching carried out by the masters (theologians).²⁴³ Today, the word “magisterium” is strictly used to designate the teaching authority of the Church. Theologians, through their contribution, also play a major role in enriching the body of Christ. It is often through their untiring persistence, endurance and hard work that the magisterium is enlightened.

The Church teaches that the message it proclaims is not its own; it is the word of God. The authority of the Church is dependent on the authority of God’s word. The transcendental ground of the Church may never be forgotten: “The authority the Church possesses is then not a self-validating authority but an authority conditioned by the Church’s openness to God’s Spirit.”²⁴⁴ *Dei Verbum* describes the function of the teaching authority as the interpretation of the word of God. This authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ: “This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.”²⁴⁵ *Lumen Gentium* states that the

²⁴³ Quoted in Aidan Nicholas, *The Shape of Catholic Theology: An Introduction to Its Sources, Principles, and History* (Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1991), 254.

²⁴⁴ Richard R. Gaillardetz *Teaching with Authority*, 24.

²⁴⁵ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, no. 10, in Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II*,

bishops are preachers of faith and “they are authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ.”²⁴⁶

Francis A. Sullivan explains that the use of the Latin words *authenticum* and *authentice* in the documents of Vatican II (cf. *Dei Verbum*, n. 10, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 25) when talking about the authority in the Church do not signify the English ‘authentic,’ meaning ‘genuine’ but it really means ‘authoritative’.²⁴⁷ Aidan Nichols argues that “authority” to the modern mind has a legal connotation and applying just that meaning to the authority of the Church or theologians is misleading.²⁴⁸ Instead, “*Autoritas* is the characteristic quality of an *auctor*, an ‘author’ or ‘source.’ To say that something has authority in Christian theology is principally to say that it is a perennially valid source from which insight and illumination flow down to us in the life of the faith.”²⁴⁹ The bishops receive this authority by virtue of their episcopal consecration to continue the ministry of the Apostles: “Therefore, the Sacred Council teaches that bishops by divine institution have succeeded to the place of the apostles, as shepherds of the Church, and he who hears them, hears Christ, and he who rejects them, rejects Christ and Him who sent Christ.”²⁵⁰ The bishop’s authority includes the teaching, sanctifying and governing functions of the Church. As a result of their role in administering these functions, the members of the Church are united and bound together in following Christ. Structures and disciplines were developed to continue the Tradition and to maintain the faith from generation to generation.

According to Catholic belief, papal authority is the continuation of the Petrine ministry. In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus tells Peter that he will build his Church on the rock of Peter. He

²⁴⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25.

²⁴⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ Cf. Aidan Nichols, *The Shape of Catholic Theology*, 177 – 78.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁵⁰ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 20.

gives Peter the power to bind and loose (cf. Mat 16: 18-19). After the resurrection, Jesus tells Peter three separate times to tend his sheep, signifying the special role to serve that he has been given by the Lord (cf. Jn 21: 15-19). In his book *Epiphany: A Theological Introduction to Catholicism*, Aidan Nichols comments that in return for the affirmation of love Peter gives to Christ, he receives a personal bequest: “a transfer of this loving relationship between the good shepherd and the members of the flock.”²⁵¹ Nichols continues that the papacy is a charismatic order rather than sacramental and the pope shares the ministry of the bishops as a “universal pastor”:

The papacy is not separate from the regular ministry which all bishops share, but it is unique in its mode of continuity and in the personal authority conferred by the charism of the papal office. The pope as the spiritual father is, so to say, the “abbot” of the Catholic episcopate. The title of the “holy father,” given to the pope by the Catholic faithful, is not, after all, a technical ecclesiastical term, but an expression of the experience of faith, putting into words the special relation between each member of the Church and the pope, the “universal pastor.”²⁵²

The Church’s authority depends exclusively on the authority present in the word of God, representing Christ through her service to the people. The Second Vatican Council clearly understood this role of the Church as a servant. *Gaudium et Spes* states: “The Church is not motivated by earthly ambition but is interested in one thing only—to carry on the work of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served.”²⁵³

²⁵¹ Aidan Nichols, *Epiphany: A Theological Introduction to Catholicism* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 233.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 3, in Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council*

Pope John XXIII observes that pastoral prudence must be used in the implementation and dissemination of the teachings of the Church. In his opening address to Vatican II he declares: “The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration with patience if necessary, everything being measured in the forms and proportions of a Magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character.”²⁵⁴ In an essay “Authority and the Churches” Kenneth Wilson argues: “The authority with which the Church seeks to act internally and in relation to the world must graciously express, to the extent that is possible, the relationship which she believes God to have with her.”²⁵⁵

The Catholic Church believes that she is entrusted with the truth about God and the truth about human beings and our relationship to God. Christ revealed God’s plan for us and that deposit of faith has been entrusted to the Church. Church authorities act as custodians of this tradition and are bound to follow this revelation. Popes and bishops are not free in these matters to make their own rules as they go along: “Doctrine is not a matter of papal or episcopal whim or willfulness. Popes and bishops are the servants, not the masters, of the tradition—the truths—that make the Church what it is. Thus the pope and the bishops are authoritative teachers, not authoritarian despots.”²⁵⁶

Congar argues that, in the tradition of the Church, liturgy is performed in the name of the community and a leader cannot be understood apart from this role: “The ancient liturgy has no

²⁵⁴ “Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council,” *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott and Joseph Gallagher (Chicago, 1966), 5, quoted in James C. Livingston and Francis Schussler Fiorenza *Modern Christian Thought: The Twentieth Century*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: First Fortress Publication, 2006), 237.

²⁵⁵ Kenneth Wilson, “Authority and the Churches,” in *Governance and Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, ed. Noel Timms and Kenneth Wilson (London: Cromwell Press, 2000), 35.

²⁵⁶ George Weigel, *The Courage to Be Catholic: Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 43.

‘I’ distinct from the ‘we’ of the whole community. The celebrant, that is, the president of the assembly and the head of the community, speaks in the name of all, for he is one with all its members.”²⁵⁷ John Paul II in *Pastor Bonus* also stressed the need for adopting a pastoral approach in fulfilling the threefold functions of the bishop: “... here we are looking at that special concept whereby the pastors of the Church share in the threefold task of Christ—to teach, to sanctify, and to govern: and as the apostles acted with Peter, so do the bishops together with the bishop of Rome.”²⁵⁸ Even people’s faithfulness to the teachings of the Church is more expressed in their commitment to service than just conforming to certain rules and regulations. In his first public prayer after his election as Pope, John Paul II prayed: “Christ, make me become and remain the servant of your unique power, the servant of your sweet power, the servant of your power that knows no eventide. Make me a servant. Indeed, the servant of your servants.”²⁵⁹

3.5 Servant Leadership for the New Evangelization

This analysis of text from Scripture and Tradition has shown that servant leadership is the way to serve both God and human beings. In fact, it is the only leadership model preached and practiced by Jesus. The leadership infrastructure of the Church is also designed after the model of Christ and emulated by the Apostles and many centuries of Christian faithful. It is mandatory and normative for every Christian who faithfully tries to implant a Christian culture in a world which is increasingly secular. By taking Christ’s lead, Christians will curb the secular trend of

²⁵⁷ Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority*, 37.

²⁵⁸ John Paul II, *Pastor Bonus*, 684.

²⁵⁹ John Paul II, Homily at Mass For the Inauguration of His Pontificate (October 22, 1978), Rome, 1978, quoted in Owen Phelps, *The Catholic Vision for Leading Like Jesus: Introducing S³ Leadership—Servant, Steward, Shepherd*, (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2009), 75.

humanity's disintegration, isolation and ultimate denial of what is required to be at peace in this life and the next.

The question we need to ask is why should we address the servant leadership model now if it has been in practice since the beginning of Christianity? If the historical Church has been built on this framework, then why introduce it as some kind of new phenomenon? The answer lies in exposing some of the practices prevalent among twenty-first century Church members that are in direct contradiction to the character found in the servant leadership model. Human failure plays a significant role in distorting the practice of Christian leadership. Church leaders are very much aware of this reality and are making every effort to lead us back to the original spirit of the gospel message.

Yves Congar establishes a self-criticism when he suggests that at least in some areas, the Church is too focused on externalism. He claims that this attitude must change if we are to participate in effective mission work: "The Church today is marked by a predominance of pastoral care over prelacy, of tasks and responsibilities over the claiming of privileges. Yet an ecclesiology that is still too juridical, too remote from spiritual anthropology, continues to give a somewhat external character to the aims of authority, a character sometimes inclined to be sociological rather than interior and spiritual."²⁶⁰ Dr. Howard L. Young states that "it is ironic that secular organizations appear to be giving more credence to this biblical model of leadership than does the church for which this effective pattern of leadership was established!"²⁶¹ The Church is being called to return to her core identity and to live accordingly.

The new evangelization is heavily dependent on the credibility of the people who are assigned leadership roles in promoting mission work. As *Evangelii Nuntiandi* states, "Modern

²⁶⁰ Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 75.

²⁶¹ H. Young, *Primer for Servant Leadership*, 5.

man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers;”²⁶² therefore, it is fundamentally important to visibly demonstrate that we practice what we preach. In Congar’s analysis, the outside world initiates its relationship with the Church through the external expressions of her existence. He contends that we need to express ourselves in a manner that attracts people to the Church: “It is by the outward signs of the Church, by what she is seen to be, that men know her and through her are, or should be, brought to the Gospel, led to God; or else they are estranged from her, repelled or even turned towards some sort of religion of material things, a system where sociological conduct predominates, rather than towards a personal religion with its inherent spiritual demands.”²⁶³ Church leadership that fails to cultivate an identity grounded in a personal and communal relationship with Jesus engenders a compromised credibility for evangelization.

Many worldly practices have crept into the liturgical and administrative structures of the Church, and it is unfortunate that at times we are carried away by the external regalia, which does not support the cause of being an effective witness to the gospel. Some of these externalities came into the Church because the “Church was *within the Empire*.”²⁶⁴ Congar in his book *Power and Poverty* says that even though we could argue for a spiritual significance for the *pallium*, *stola* and pontifical shoes, they originated from the insignia of high Imperial officials of the fifth century.²⁶⁵ The same is true with the use of splendid vestments “many of its elements being borrowed from that of the Court: processions, sumptuous vestments, gold furnishings and vessels – all the rich display of liturgical ceremonies ...”²⁶⁶ St. Bernard criticized his former subordinate

²⁶² Paul VI, *Evangeli Nuntiandi*, 41.

²⁶³ Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 111.

²⁶⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 116.

pope Eugenius III for the use of costly ornaments: “When the pope, clad in silk, covered with gold and jewels, rides out on his white horse, escorted by soldiers and servants, he looks more like Constantine’s successor than St. Peter’s.”²⁶⁷ Congar also refers to some of the titles such as ‘Eminence’ and ‘Excellency’ adopted from the ‘rulers of the world’: “But the church also borrows terms: after taking over the Byzantine title of Eminence, she has in our own time adopted the title of Excellency, so that no less honour may be imputed to her bishops than Mussolini allowed his prefects...”²⁶⁸ This fact is expressed by Pope John XXIII when he states that it is high time “to shake off the dust of the Empire that has gathered since Constantine’s day on the throne of St. Peter.”²⁶⁹ When the pope makes the effort to “shake off the dust,” the balance of Church leadership must follow his noble example in removing authoritarian attitudes and exploitive behaviors.²⁷⁰ It is now apparent that the Church needs to rediscover its roots in order to understand, interpret and practice the leadership required for new evangelization.

As we noted in the introduction of this thesis, Western culture was formed through its interaction with Christianity. Its shape was a direct reflection of its Christian influence. Greenleaf’s servant leadership theory is a tangible example of being sculptured from the influence of a Christian Quaker heritage. He had the courage to risk taking this ideal to another level by proposing the servant leadership model for every existing institutional structure.

By making solid use of Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership, the Church could expand her mission work. Similar to the way that St. Paul looked for an inroad into a gentile culture in mentioning the altar to an ‘Unknown God’ (cf. Acts 17: 16 – 34), Greenleaf’s theory

²⁶⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁶⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 126 – 27.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁷⁰ Congar, in his book *Power and Poverty in the Church*, provides a historical analysis of some of the feudal practices that crept into the systems of the Church from the middle ages that are continued today. Cf. “How the Church has Acquired its Appearance of Privilege” in *Power and Poverty*, 111–131.

could be used as a starting point in a world where the gospel must be reintroduced in a manner which assumes that the secularized world has not heard it before. Every Christian element found in our culture needs to be further expanded. It is only then that the human community will have realized its design intent, a design that is built upon the character of God, a character defined by radical and unconditional love.

Before we try to implement our mission of transforming the culture through evangelization, we need to establish the common ground between the Christian idea of servant leadership and Robert Greenleaf's idea of servant leadership. Section 3.5.1 offers practical suggestions for the effective implementation of servant leadership theory in our new evangelization work. The ultimate intent is to successfully carry forth the good news of salvation to a wider spectrum of people within our present day culture. In no way are we suggesting that the servant leadership theory of Robert Greenleaf be a substitute for any of the Church's foundational leadership principles. Greenleaf does not claim that he has the right or the ability to offer explanations of religious mysteries, since he views religion from a non-theological point of view.²⁷¹ He humbly admits that he does not "feel called upon to invent explanations of the mystery."²⁷² At the same time he hopes that the Churches will take the lead "by being exemplars for other institutions."²⁷³

For Greenleaf, servant leadership is "a way of being that has the potential to create positive change throughout our society."²⁷⁴ It has greater merit than just performing good acts. Servant leaders are more about who they are than what they do. Their action is based on their identity. In other words, what they do is the result of who they are. The question becomes, Do we

²⁷¹ Cf. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 231.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., 232.

²⁷⁴ Rieser, "Claiming Servant-Leadership," 56.

know who we are? What is the foundation of our individual identities? What are our ultimate values? How do we define them? How do they motivate us? Do we strive for material values that are cloaked by personal gain (power, control, status and wealth), or are we driven by a desire to build our personal foundation in Christ?

Christian identity is grounded in one's relationship with Christ. Choosing to be a Christian is a way of being, and subsequent behavior is the result of becoming that person. In the gospels, the basis for Jesus' action is who he is. The 'being' and 'doing' attributes of Jesus are interrelated. For the Christian, "servant leadership is not only about 'doing' the acts of service but also 'being' a servant."²⁷⁵ A self-serving, individualistic culture views this type of behavior as being restrictive, a sacrifice of one's freedom, leaving the individual vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation.

Yves Congar claims that the Christian must surrender oneself to Christ in order to identify with Christ: "In one way or another the conduct of the Christian, and especially the apostolate, because they lie in the realm of *agape*, of self-giving love, self-sacrificing love, pledge the Christian and especially the apostle to sacrifice, and ultimately to the surrender of life itself."²⁷⁶ In order to lead like Jesus one needs the heart of a servant: "Leading like Jesus is not about what you say, but about *what you do*,"²⁷⁷ which is the result of who you are. It is a choice to live in a relationship defined by radical, unconditional love. This love may become challenged and even threatened, but by its very nature it remains always present and unfailing. The sacrificial love of Christ rises far above bondage and strife. Not even the betrayal, isolation and

²⁷⁵ Cf. Sendjaya and Sarros, "Servant Leadership," 60.

²⁷⁶ Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 35.

²⁷⁷ Phelps, *Catholic Vision*, 140.

abandonment of Calvary could ever diminish the reality of that love, a love which is destined to evangelize our world.

3.5.1 Recommendations for Implementing Servant Leadership Principles in the New

Evangelization:

1. Formation houses such as seminaries need to teach the principles of the new evangelization. Along with this formational commitment, special courses should be offered on servant leadership. This will help create servant leaders who build their identity on the model of Christ. One of the highlights of servant leadership is that servant leaders create servant leaders. Thus, servant leadership formation generates more servant leaders as they apply those principles in their areas of work. Servant leadership is of utmost importance in today's parish setting. It builds a support fabric that assists with the primary call to preach the gospel, especially when the assigned leadership (the pastor) is burdened with administrative issues.
2. The ongoing formation of priests, religious and lay people is also of vital importance, especially when learning new principles in the field of new evangelization. Church teaching should disseminate into all areas of Christian life and be properly communicated to the people. This would assure the proper implementation of these principles on the parish level. For this to happen, each diocese should establish a diocesan evangelization department, which includes training personnel in servant leadership skills. Pastors should be trained to effectively utilize the potential in lay people for the direct purpose of new evangelization work based on the recent teaching of the Church. As John Paul II states in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, "we should put our nets into the deep (*Duc in*

altum Luke 5: 4) in order for a great catch,”²⁷⁸ which includes using all avenues for new evangelization like servant leadership programs.

3. According to Greenleaf, community building is considered one of the prime characteristics of a servant leader. In the new evangelization work of the Church, we must build effective communities, based on the gospel, whose members can support each other. Creating an effective organizational/institutional environment is secondary to community building rather than the other way around. Greenleaf intends to create a new sense of community through the implementation of the servant leadership model. By being a Christian, one must create a new sense of community through the presence of the Holy Spirit and there are concrete ways to experience and grow the Christian life together. Prayer groups, Bible study programs are among few examples of such concrete community building groups.
4. Greenleaf argues that servant leaders “are *healers* in the sense of *making whole* by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would be likely to attain for themselves.”²⁷⁹ New evangelization includes healing of past wounds especially with people and communities who left the Church due to failures in leadership. A servant leader is called to heal those wounds in the effort to re-evangelize. There was relative unity in Church for the first thousand years of its existence until the East-West schism in 1054. The second thousand years has been marked by periods of divisiveness, especially with the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The next thousand years must be a time of healing, restoring the Church to its original unity, while never losing site of

²⁷⁸ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Inuente*, Rome, 2000, no. 1.

²⁷⁹ Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 240.

its essential diversity. This effort will demand a servant kind of leadership that will act through understanding and acceptance of others, and, at the same time, heal past wounds.

5. The Church relates to the secular world through many of her institutions. This is of key importance when practicing servant leadership in an effort to re-evangelize the world.

Catholic institutions such as schools, universities, colleges, and hospitals should adopt the servant leadership model. We already have discussed the successful implementation of servant leadership within the St. Joseph Health System in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. It was during the 1990s that they implemented these principles in the healing ministry of Christ through hospital work. Even with a success story like this one, there are elements operating against the implementation of a Christian culture. In order to counteract this threat, Catholics who are employed in these institutions should also be servant leaders. Also, the priests, religious and lay leadership working in these institutions should become evangelizers, so that others can come to know Christ through their witness to the gospel. In effect, they become agents of conversion.

6. Serving others is the utmost priority in servant leadership. Everything that the Church does is tied to the vocation to serve God by serving God's people. In the servant leadership theory, "If one is to serve, one needs a continuous assessment of how the persons being served are responding."²⁸⁰ The Church needs an objective means of assessing the performance of its leaders so that they are able to improve their ability to serve the people of God. This evaluation needs to be done by those who serve in hierarchical authority and also from those who are the beneficiaries of the services. It is important to know with what attitude and for what purpose is the leader exercising that

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 215.

leadership authority. There needs to be a pastoral openness which is in constant dialogue with the people by listening to their concerns.

7. Church community is not like any other community, it is the communion of the faithful, set apart by Jesus' Eucharistic command to "do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19). People should feel that they are part of a family and that they are called to surrender themselves for the sake of building up the Body of Christ throughout the entire human community. Most often parish work remains on the level of pastoral care rather than on the level of the new evangelization. This needs to be changed, a change from maintenance to mission. The servant leader is always in touch with the people. The best example of such a servant leader in our time is John Paul II. During his pontificate and his many missionary journeys, it is safe to say that no one before him in the history of the Church, and maybe in the history of humanity, had met so many people on an individual level as he brought the message of Christ because of his pilgrim journeys to many countries.
8. Robert Greenleaf addresses the simplicity of a servant. A servant knows the basic things and is aware of what is going on in the house. A good servant is always willing to help. Christian evangelists need to emulate this simplistic lifestyle, attitude and behavior. Mother Teresa, through her life's simplicity and commitment to God's work, influenced many people in a simple and self-sacrificial manner. Yves Congar states: "authority is *moral* and requires people who are themselves spiritually alive,"²⁸¹ and willing to surrender their own desires for the good of the Christian community.

²⁸¹ Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 55.

9. The world we live in is constantly changing due to various factors. Whether it is the result of technological invention or ecological disaster, we are continually challenged by the cycle of change. So the approach and response of the Church to the issues of society needs to take into account these changes. In Congar's words: "the attraction of the Church will lie not in miraculous hagiography or ceremonial splendor, but far more in the truth... of the spiritual relationship of communion with others—a relationship founded on the genuine and exacting Gospel attitude of living faith, inward obedience, true prayer, love and service."²⁸²
10. Since interaction with disciples is an essential element of servant leadership, the leader must be well aware of the needs of the people. If leaders succeed in establishing this awareness, there will be a greater acceptance of new perspectives. There should be some objective means of assessing the quality of those people who enter into leadership positions. Leadership criteria needs to include pastoral experience as well as academic qualifications. It is absolutely essential to know the daily struggles of ordinary people in order to be an effective leader. We often see Jesus spending time with both the ordinary and outcast people of the society, unlike many other leaders of that time.
11. John Paul II acknowledges that there is always a struggle in finding a balance between authority and service. He wants all those who are entrusted with pastoral care, especially bishops, to adopt an attitude of service in exercising their authority. It is better for a leader to adopt an attitude of service first: "if he [the bishop] adopts an attitude of service,

²⁸² Ibid., 130 – 31.

the faithful spontaneously tend to listen to him and willingly submit to his authority...He must serve by ruling and rule by serving.”²⁸³

12. Servant leadership requires a personal sharing of one’s time, talent and life.

Evangelization is sharing the life of Christ with others because “*faith is strengthened when it is given to others.*”²⁸⁴ A Christian servant leader must be sharing ones faith filled life with others to lead them in the same path. In his biography on John Paul II, George Weigel reflects on John Paul’s idea of priesthood as men for others:

To be a priest, then, is not to perform a task or play a role, but to become an *alter Christus*, ‘another Christ,’ a personal continuation of the mediating priesthood of Jesus himself. Ordination does not simply authorize the priest to conduct certain types of ecclesiastical business. It ‘configures’ him to Christ in a unique way. That configuration confers a solemn obligation to serve the Christian community. Service is the way the priest’s unique sacramental authority becomes an image of ‘Christ the Priest’.²⁸⁵

13. Servant leaders are also known through the way they conduct their lives. Pope Paul VI remarked that the work of each individual is important to the whole.²⁸⁶ In a servant-led community, each work is for the building up of the entire community. Evangelization is not the work of a few individuals. Instead, it is the collective effort of the whole Church. The first Christians were recognized by the way they lived. Evangelization is accomplished through the direct witness of individuals and the greater community. The servant leader is respected not because of position but because of the way they work. To

²⁸³ John Paul II, *Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way*, 50.

²⁸⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 2.

²⁸⁵ Cf. George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 656.

²⁸⁶ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 15.

assist this recognition and to effectively aid the overall evangelization process, gospel-friendly cultures need to be created as tangible points of reference.

3.6 Conclusion

The truth of the Gospel needs to be presented not only in its simplicity but also in its authenticity. It is through the authority of the Church that we preach the gospel: “There can be no doubt that authority will have increasingly to recover the spiritual character of the Church of the Martyrs and the Fathers and to take as its aim the building up of communities of Christian men.”²⁸⁷ Congar continues to state that we cannot dazzle people with gold, purple or lofty titles that many offices in authority hold. Instead, God “compels us now to show forth in our lives the truth of what we profess to believe and love with all our heart.”²⁸⁸ Servant leadership needs to lead us in the direction of simplicity and humility as we preach the gospel of Christ, for we have been called to “act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

²⁸⁷ Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 76.

²⁸⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 131.

CONCLUSION

Pope Benedict XVI in his book *Jesus of Nazareth* explains the deeper meaning of the word *evangelion* beyond its usual translation of ‘good news’.²⁸⁹ The Holy Father says that this term is found in the vocabulary of the Roman emperors who presented themselves as the lords, saviors and redeemers of the world. Their messages were *evangelion* (in Greek, or in Latin *evangelium*), regardless of the nature of the content: “The idea was that what comes from the emperor is a saving message, that it is not just a piece of news, but a change of the world for the better.”²⁹⁰ But when it comes to Jesus what the emperors illegitimately claimed really occurred. It is not just informative speech but performative—“a message endowed with plenary authority, a message that is not just talk, but reality.”²⁹¹ The message is the person of Jesus Christ, who is not just information, “but action, efficacious power that enters into the world to save and transform.”²⁹² Giving this message to the world is imparting the person of Christ into every reality, transforming them in Christ. In giving that saving message of Christ, the giver must conform oneself to the message:

Hence, we Christians must start from Christ, from contemplation of Him who has revealed to us in his mystery, the complete fulfillment of the human vocation and its meaning. We need to become docile disciples, to learn from Him, in following him, the dignity and fullness of life. We likewise need to be consumed by missionary zeal, to bring to the heart of the culture of our time that unifying and full meaning of human life that neither science, nor politics, nor economics, nor the media can provide.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 46-47.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Conference of Latin American Bishops), *Concluding Document of the Fifth General Conference of Latin American Bishops* (May 13-31, 2007), no. 41, Aparecida, Brazil, 2007 http://www.nccbuscc.org/latinamerica/english/aparecida_Ingles.pdf (April 10, 2010).

In bringing the saving message of Christ we need a leadership style which is also modeled after Christ. Christian leaders must be able to lead like Jesus to continue doing Jesus' work. Servant leadership principles will accelerate our efforts to bring the gospel to the four corners of the world. If the Christian principle of servant leadership can transform businesses, educational institutions, health care institutions and corporations, how much more would it help us to fulfill our only mission of transforming everything in Christ? The Church should go back to her evangelical roots and the way to achieve this goal is to return to the leadership style of Christ and the Apostles. Leaders should become pastors, evangelists and witnesses to the gospel they are serving. Talk of change today might have different implications but for the Church it is returning to her roots. In that sense the Church should always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to develop "a theologically enriched sense of its unique mission in and through the world."²⁹⁴ It is a way of acting in self-giving, not self-asserting.

As we saw in the first chapter, the single reason for the existence of the Church is the dissemination of the gospel to the ends of earth, to bring the Good News of salvation to everyone. Today, this is accomplished through our willingness to evangelize and to follow through on our commitment to the new evangelization. Servant leadership is properly aligned with this task. Pope John XXIII reminds us, "it is the spirit that counts more than the gesture; and this lesson does not apply to the leaders of the Church alone: every position of power, every exercise of authority, is a service. The Pope gladly calls himself *Servus servorum Dei*; he is conscious of being, and strives to be, the servant of all."²⁹⁵ Pope John XXIII continues to say that this 'burden of responsibility' is entrusted to us so that this "authority will be all the more

²⁹⁴ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 846.

²⁹⁵ Quoted in Congar, *Power and Poverty*, 11.

acceptable to their people for being exercised in a spirit of humble service and complete devotion to the welfare of all.”²⁹⁶ As Jesus’ disciples, we have been called to this task.

All of us do share in both the authority and responsibility of being a servant, which maximizes the greater good of the community. The servant leadership model holds us accountable to this action. It is a genuine source of an enlarged identity which neglects no one. It is accountability to a more creative and deeper sense of self, through shared vision and interdependence. It is the direct responsibility of the servant leader to forge this communal reality by being the conduit, the steward of the spirit of change. By adopting servant leadership principles into the Church’s new evangelization process, a Christian leader now embraces the role of being the servant of servants of God, as practiced by Jesus.

God’s gift of salvation is for everyone, and as we pursue the work of the new evangelization we must always remember that it is not our work we are doing. We are doing the work of Christ, for Christ is the head of the Church. It is our task to make Christ available to all by making his identity known to all. “As in so many other times of historical crises in the church, it is a time to return to the basics—those attitudes and practices of faith and humble living that give faith its marvelous attraction to outsiders and minister compassionately to insiders.”²⁹⁷ This is a love that has been forever stretched beyond all limitation and constraint, a love based on humility, justice and the truth that sets us free. In Jesus, we are fully redeemed and called to make his kingdom known to all people.

The characteristics of Robert Greenleaf’s servant leadership theory do mirror genuine gospel values. They are not salvific by themselves; however, they are properly aligned with what is expected of a Christian. To be an effective listener, to be empathetic in one’s approach, to act

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ H. Young, *Primer for Servant Leadership*, 6.

as someone who provides a healing touch, to have an awareness of one's environment, to persuade in a manner that gains the trust and confidence of others, to conceptualize a dream, an inspiration, that motivates people to right action, to have the foresight for what needs to be done, to be a steward for the greater good, to remain committed to the growth of others and to build a community of people working together for a common purpose, are all valuable characteristics that are in agreement with a Christian way of life. They are practical characteristics that could help promote a renewal in the Church's effort to evangelize.

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