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S-E-R-V-E: A theoretical framework for Christian leadership

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Abstract

This article introduces a new perspective on Christian leadership. The theoretical framework critically integrates and transforms Gary Yukl's theory of four meta-categories of leadership. It is argued that spiritual leadership should be defined as a distinct meta-category. Spiritual leadership includes self-transcendent practical wisdom (phronesis), occurring Coram Deo. This serves as the integrating center of the model. Furthermore, change-oriented leadership is reconceptualized as visionary leadership grounded in the Christian story. Yukl's basic description of relational behavior is expanded through the lens of Christian virtue ethics. Effective leadership is understood as stewardship, requiring a balance between internal moral goods and external instrumental goods. The church's external relations are defined in terms of missional or evangelistic hospitality. Consequently, Christian leadership comprises five key dimensions: spiritual, effective, relational, visionary leadership, and external relations, summarized in the acronym S-E-R-V-E.

Keywords: Christian leadership, servant leadership, spiritual leadership, visionary leadership, relational leadership, meta-categories of leadership, virtue ethics, SERVE model

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INTRODUCTION: PROBLEMS AND GOALS

The basic question asked in this article is, what is Christian organizational leadership? This question prompts a theological deliberation that gives rise to two additional questions. Firstly, what is the distinctiveness of the linguistic and epistemic qualifier 'Christian'? Secondly, what are the key categories and practices of Christian leadership? The goal of the article is to outline a general theoretical framework of meta-categories that may aid researchers and practitioners in articulating more specific theories of Christian leadership grounded in their theological tradition. This general framework will not offer an exhaustive description of all possible subcategories of leadership behavior. However, in the conclusion, I will sketch a provisional model that outlines what I consider to be the most fundamental.

Method and dialogue partners

In terms of method, this article is both an exploratory and constructive theological work, employing a hermeneutical approach that aims at a minimal ecumenical consensus. Put differently, although the author can be situated within the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition, he seeks to provide a theoretical framework that may be utilized by various theological traditions. Moreover, it is also an interdisciplinary work, engaging in transversal interdisciplinary dialogue with several other academic disciplines.

While the article examines earlier conceptualizations of Christian leadership, particularly the work of Corné Bekker, who has provided a proto-theory of Christian leadership (Bekker, 2007; Bekker, 2009), Gary Yukl's meta-research on leadership studies in the field of organizational psychology serves as the primary dialogue partner. Yukl's model of leadership is chosen for its extensive foundation in six decades of empirical research. Notably, this model offers a heuristic *gestalt* that comprehensively and clearly summarizes effective leadership behaviors. In leveraging Yukl's model, I argue that a significantly more comprehensive understanding of leadership can be presented, which introduces an innovative approach to Christian leadership by addressing meta-categories, for which there are currently no theological dialogue partners who have as yet pursued this.

In light of this lack within the theological field, I have opted for a diverse and inclusive array of theological dialogue partners, particularly those with established ecumenical relevance, to expand and complement the discussion. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology will serve as the most consistent interlocutor. Kärkkäinen is a distinguished evangelical and charismatic scholar, and is highly respected by other prominent ecumenical theologians (Clayton, 2015; Bevans, 2014). Additionally, the Cape Town Declaration is referenced as a theological resource (Cameron and Wright, 2013).

As I will argue that an ethical approach provides an important corrective to Yukl's model, my primary philosophical dialogue partners are Alasdair MacIntyre, esteemed as one of the leading virtue ethicists of our time (Murphy, 2023), and Geoff Moore, who has transposed MacIntyre's way of thinking into the field of management studies (Moore, 2019), broadening its application. Finally, this article extensively references and effectively summarizes my prior works on Christian leadership, encompassing empirical (Tangen, 2012), biblical (Tangen, 2018a; Tangen, 2018b), historical (Tangen, 2023; Tangen, 2017), conceptual (Tangen, 2014), and critical (Tangen and Åkerlund, 2017) perspectives.

Progression and a note on the meaning and use of models

I will begin by clarifying what I mean by Christian leadership before offering a critique of Yukl's model. Once this starting point is established, I will proceed to develop, elaborate on,

and discuss what I will call the S-E-R-V-E model in conversation with my theological dialogue partners.

However, this raises the question, what is meant by the term 'model'? I see models as theories that seek to apprehend and describe structures of reality through partial and sometimes metaphorical correspondence. Philosophers of science argue that a model may correspond to what it represents in some respects but not in others (Johansson, 2015, pp. 189–196). Accordingly, Avery Dulles suggests that it is challenging to draw an exact line between the proper and metaphorical usage of models in theology (Dulles, 2002, p. 12). I concur and see models as helpful reality maps; but it is unproductive to mistake the map for the territory by believing in a direct one-to-one relationship between them. Hence, for this reason and many others (see Flyvbjerg, 2001), I reject the idea that social scientific theories can accurately predict human behavior. Yet, I will still suggest that partial correspondence implies that models can be used hermeneutically to discuss future scenarios, as in planning (Flyvbjerg, 2023). It follows that models may serve both as maps of reality and as guides for action (Hiebert, 1986; Hiebert, 1994, p. 36).

What is meant by 'Christian'?

At the heart of shaping a model of Christian leadership lies the question about the meaning of the term 'Christian.' From a sociological perspective, Christianity can be seen as a theological and moral tradition. As a tradition, the church functions as an "embodied argument" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 222). It mediates, embodies, and discusses specific ideas and practices within institutional structures that have emerged and developed over centuries. However, according to the Christian tradition itself, the Christian faith is something more. The church relates to a transcendent, personal, and triune God, revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Moreover, this God invites humans to enter into communion with him through his Son, in The Holy Spirit (John 3:16; Matt 28:18-20; Fee, 1997; Vanhoozer, 2012; Wright, 2015). Thus, to be Christian is to live in communion with Christ, in the Spirit (1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 13:13).

The Evangelical tradition highlights that there is one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:6), emphasizing God's act of sending his Son to atone for our sins (Cameron and Wright, 2013, p. 17). Kärkkäinen observes that the Christian perception of God is distinctly "trinitarian in its experience and form" (Kärkkainen, 2016, p. 33). Thus, being Christian involves a mystical communion with God through Christ within a community of sons and daughters born of the Spirit (John 1:12-13; 3:3-17; 17:3). This organic and pneumatological view of the church is minimalist in nature. Lutheran theologians suggest that the church serves as an assembly of believers where the gospel is preached in its purity, and sacraments are administered according to the gospel. Kärkkäinen finds this to be a fruitful minimalist starting point for further development in ecumenical ecclesiology (Kärkkäinen, 2017, p. 301). I agree, but as a Pentecostal, I will also add the church is a communion of charisms (Land, 2010).

However, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and various Protestant and Free Church theologians seek a more comprehensive and institutional description of the church. This raises important questions regarding theology, obedience, sacraments, and ecclesiastical structures (Kärkkäinen, 2017) that cannot be discussed in depth here. Nevertheless, following Kärkkainen, I will maintain that the church, as a structured community, is sustained by the Spirit in the sense that the Spirit works through structured practices like preaching, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Different churches will understand these ordinances or sacraments in a diversity of ways and may incorporate additional practices (Kärkkäinen, 2017). It follows that Christian leadership will emerge in a plurality of tradition-based shapes.

The S-E-R-V-E frame cannot include all of these, but all these may potentially use the frame to develop their own models of leadership. Put differently, the S-E-R-V-E frame is attuned to the notion that Christian leaders should lead out of their spiritual communion with God, guided by the tradition to which they belong. In the following, I will see the church both as an institution or organization – and as a more organic community of persons that actively participates in God's mission in the world. These images, institution and communion, can also be used as a hermeneutic tool to outline two basic forms of Christian leadership.

Firstly, at its core, ecclesial leadership can be viewed as service within the institutional church, where the community gathers in Jesus's name to worship God through Christian practices. Secondly, Christian leadership may extend to Christian individuals and groups who are sent to serve within other social spheres (Wagenman, 2019). The Cape Town Declaration eloquently articulates this when it says that

> we see the Spirit of God active in creation, in works of liberation and justice, and in filling and empowering people for every kind of service. (Cameron and Wright, 2013, p. 27)

Thus, Christian leadership is not simply congregational leadership within the church but an integral part of the church's holistic mission to the world (Cameron and Wright, 2013).

Service in the world can be understood from two perspectives. Firstly, Christian leaders participate in God's creative preservation of the world (*creatio continua,* Gen 1:27-31). Secondly, as missional and Spirit-empowered co-hosts of the kingdom of God (Acts 1:8), they are called to witness Christ, who invites humans into personal communion with him. In this article, the kingdom will be understood as God's saving rule in Christ, which is already present but not yet consummated until Christ returns (e.g., Ladd, 1993; Moltmann, 1993; Kärkkainen, 2016; Land, 2010; Green, 2012). Finally, I will add an insight following both MacIntyre and Kuyper's political philosophies (Wagenman, 2019). The specific nature of Christian leadership as service will depend on the particular practices in each social sphere. These practices will pursue a variety of moral goods internal to those practices, which nonetheless, in sum, contribute to the common good of all spheres.

Service in the Spirit – as a root metaphor for Christian leadership

The term S-E-R-V-E suggests that the notion of service can be conceived as a leitmotif or root metaphor for Christian leadership. This proposal is grounded in the biblical story. In the Old Testament, leaders are seen as servants of God, to whom God gives delegated authority to act as priests, kings, and prophets (e.g., Deut 17:14-30; Jer 1:1-10; Exod 40:12-15; Isaiah 40–55; Bell, 2014; Stevens, 2012). However, the most obvious reason for using service as an integrating metaphor is that Jesus seems to use the image of a servant (*diakonos*) in this way in his farewell speech in Luke 22:14-32 (see also Mark 10:35-45; Matt, 20:20-27). Jesus presents his life as a paradigm of servant leadership that stands in sharp contrast to Roman perceptions of power and fame (see Tangen, 2018a).

The idea of leadership as exemplary service can also be found in John (John 13:1-20; Lauren and Henson, 2021), but it is Paul who presents the most comprehensive vision of ecclesial leadership as service. Within what Michel Gorman refers to as Paul's 'master story' in Philippians 2:6-11 (Gorman, 2001), Christ's unselfish, self-giving (kenotic), and humble service operates as a model for Christian leadership (Bekker, 2007; Tangen, 2018b). The fundamental notion of service is then reflected in the image of leaders as stewards (1 Cor 3:5; 4:1-5) within the broader understanding of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27-31; Eph 4:11-12).

However, the use of service as a guiding image is not without problems. Andrew Clarke aptly cautions theologians against imposing the modern concept of servant leadership 'onto' the New Testament (Clarke, 2013). Jack Niewold rightly laments that many contemporary Christian models of servant leadership lack a robust Christology (Niewold, 2007). In response, I propose that any depiction of leadership as service should be understood within a network of other metaphors and practices. For instance, service can also denote stewardship in the New Testament. It is a multifaceted term that must be situated within a broader framework of metaphors and concrete practices, including worship, sonship and daughterhood, community, stewardship, care, and delegated authority (Bell, 2014; Agosto, 2005; Niewold, 2007; Clarke, 2013; Wilson, 2010; Åkerlund, 2015; Banks et al., 2016). The dominant use of the Greek term *diaconia* might, as John N. Collins suggests, imply that it commonly meant "messenger" (Collins, 2003). Yet, to reduce its meaning to 'being an emissary' is, in my view, theologically unsatisfactory. The contrast between Jesus's model of leadership as service and worldly models of power and honor in texts like Philippians 2:5-11 and Luke 22:14-32 – and the use of parallel Greek terms like *doulos* (Mark 10:43-44) – certainly implies that leadership as a Christian practice must be seen as a form of service.

However, Collins's observation is also beneficial because it demonstrates that service may include delegated authority. Most significantly, Christian leadership as service involves participation in Christ (Phil 3.3-11; Tangen, 2018). Corne Bekker's 'proto-theory' of Christian leadership, derived from the Christ hymn in Paul's letter to the Christian communities in Philippi (Phil 2:5-11), demonstrates the possibility of establishing a theologically grounded model of Christian leadership as a mimesis of Christ's kenotic service in the world (Bekker, 2007; Bekker, 2009). Building on Philippians 3:3-11, I have argued elsewhere that the church participates in this service by the Spirit and that it embodies both cruciformity and charisma (Phil 3:3-11; Tangen, 2018a). In previous work, I have also shown that Luke portrays Christian leaders as servants who partake in God's hospitality through the power of the Spirit (Tangen, 2018a; Tangen, 2018b). Hence, both Paul and Luke address Christian leadership as service empowered by the Spirit (e.g., Phil 3:3; Luke 4:18; 2 Tim 1:7). It is important to acknowledge, however, that Paul describes the empowerment of the Spirit as strength in weakness (2 Cor 11:16–12:10).

The concept of leadership as service can also be grounded in constructive theology. From a systematic theological perspective, it is crucial to maintain that Jesus is the Son of God (Niewold, 2007; Åkerlund, 2015). The concept of service should, therefore, be grounded not only in Jesus's kenosis but in Trinitarian relations and be seen in light of the mutual love and service that manifests in the interplay between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1 Cor 15:24-27; John 5: 19-20). Kärkainen refers to recent Pentecostal theology, which perceives this interplay as perichoresis, in terms of the mutuality of partners in a dance (Kärkkäinen, 2013, p., 209).

This is also imperative because it implies that the goal of servant leadership is to create a community of mutual service. Kenotic self-emptying is not a self-destructive pursuit of pain, nor is it a manipulative covert demand; it is a free and unselfish gift that models a response. It begins in the shape of agapeic love that empties oneself for the sake of the other, but the fruit of this may be mutual service and include other forms of love like friendship (*philos*). Thus, this is not an economic mode of calculated reciprocity but a divine mode of giving and receiving that produces joy and thankfulness. Clark Pinnock stresses that this kind of life overflows:

> There is only one God, but this God is not solitary but a loving communion that is distinguished by overflowing life. (Pinnock, 1999, p. 31)

This overflowing love manifests in the world as divine hospitality (Pinnock, 1999; Cameron and Wright, 2013). Kärkkainen suggests that God's power is not that of a passionless tyrant but the limitless capacity of a loving and compassionate Father to rescue, support, and deliver (Kärkkainen, 2014, p. 306) – and, I would add, heal. Following Luther, Kärkkainen maintains that

> God's love seeks that which is worthless in itself and donates not only gifts but oneself. At the cross, God's self-giving, the most profound act of hospitality, came to expression. (Kärkkainen, 2014, p. 310)

Kärkkainen goes on to suggest that hospitality can serve as a summative term that eloquently expresses the concerns lying at the heart of the Christian gospel, as it is revealed, embodied, and mediated through Christ (Kärkkainen, 2014, p. 312). It is no surprise, then, that the verb Jesus uses to summarize Christian leadership in Luke 22:26-27 (*diakonos*) also means table hosting. Consequently, leadership as a practice can be seen as a way of participating in communion (koinonia) with the Trinitarian life mediated in the Eucharist (1 Cor 10:16; Luke 22: 19-20). Thus, Christian leadership entails participation in the life of God, and this life manifests as hospitality – an inviting and serving influence (Tangen, 2018a).

It follows that Jesus's loving service unto death is more than a moral example. Tom Marshall wonderfully captures this when he suggests that Christ's loving obedience to the Father transformed power:

> The choice made by the Man with the most power in the universe did something to power itself – it redeemed it. (Marshall, 2003, p. 63)

I interpret this statement in light of the classical understanding of Christ's death as a decisive triumph over the power of sin. The term 'kingdom of God' implies that God is a king in the sense that he has ultimate authority. Paul's master story concludes that Jesus is given the name above all names (Phil 2:11). However, Marshall's statement also seems to align with the theology of recapitulation advocated by Irenaeus. Kärkäinen summarizes this theology as follows: "Human nature was sanctified, transformed, and elevated by the very act of Christ's becoming man" (Kärkkäinen, 2013, p. 301). Christ's incarnation and sacrificial death are, therefore, the beginning of a new kind of humanity (Luke 22:14-32; Tangen, 2019). The resurrected Jesus, present in the Holy Spirit, becomes a source of transformation that shapes both the leader and ways of leading; namely, into the likeness of his image (2 Cor 3:17-18).

Thus, serving leadership is more than a set of practices and virtues; it is participation in the character of God's saving rule, ontologically grounded in the shape of Trinitarian relations revealed in the incarnation and mediated as a gift of transformation (*theosis)* to those who believe and repent (Acts 2:33-38). In other words, serving leadership is one of the gifts of salvation passed on to the church, as the Spirit transforms the church into Christlikeness (2 Cor 3:17-18; Acts 1:5-8; Tangen, 2018; Augustine, 2012:16–20). This will also take the shape of communal Christo-practices, like common discernment, where leaders in humility seek that which is beneficial for others (Phil 2:1-5, Tangen, 2018b; Root, 2014). However, since salvation is already, but also not yet, it is crucial to acknowledge that the church lives in a struggle between the Spirit and sin (Gal 5.16), being *Simul Justus et Peccator*. Servant leadership cannot be taken for granted but is a gift that must be continually received through faith and repentance as the Holy Spirit battles the human tendency to seek power and fame for its own sake.

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Before I elaborate on what these theological ideas mean for organizational leadership, it is useful to make some further clarifications. Firstly, what do I mean by organization? A sociological definition of an organization is "a grouping of people, structured on impersonal lines and set up to achieve specific objectives" (Giddens, 1997, p. 284). In the following, I will elaborate on this definition in light of the dual nature of organizations as identified by Alasdair MacIntyre and Geoff Moore. Good organizations are carriers of certain practices that are oriented towards internal (and intrinsic) moral goods; such as politics for the common good and the provision of services and goods that contribute to human flourishing, including expressive activities like the arts (MacIntyre, 2007; see also Moore, 2019).

However, to uphold these practices, organizations also need an institutional infrastructure. This infrastructure is oriented towards what MacIntyre calls external or instrumental goods:

> They are involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power, and status as rewards. Nor could they do otherwise if they are to sustain not only themselves but also the practices of which they are the bearers. (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 194)

Secondly, what do I mean by leadership? I take as my starting point, the quite common understanding of leadership as a "process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2018, p. 5). I will elaborate on this definition by exploring the different dimensions of leadership described by Yukl (2012) as meta-categories.

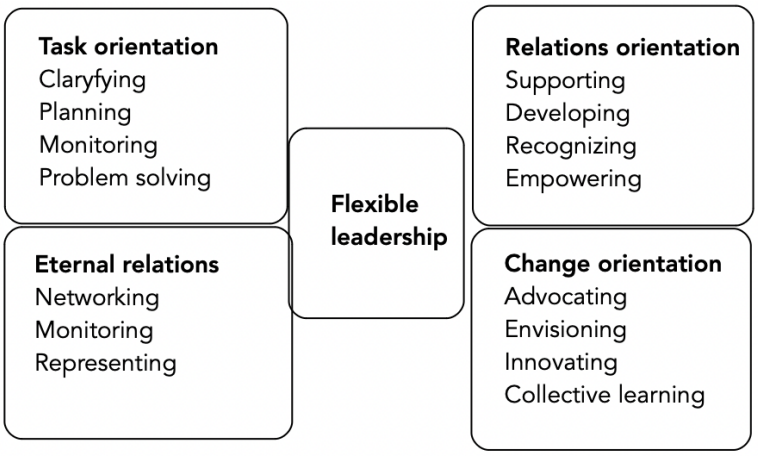
Gary Yukl's meta-study of leadership research

Gary Yukl and his colleagues have developed a fascinating hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior, which is based on meta-studies made over more than six decades of empirical research on organizational behavior (Yukl, 2012; Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004; Yukl, Gordon, and Taber, 2002; Yukl et al., 2019). Yukl offers several criteria for defining a meta-category, where the principal factor of differentiation is based on *the primary objective* of each type of leadership behavior (Yukl, Gordon, and Taber, 2002:17*)*. Each type of leadership must also be observable, grounded in empirical research, and applicable to all types of organizations. Yukl's taxonomy could be seen as both a descriptive and normative – and even a predictive – model in a post-positivist sense, although Yukl uses terms like 'the chain of causality' cautiously, including notions of fallibility and probability (Yukl, 2018).

Yukl suggests that effective organizational leadership can be separated into four meta-categories. The first is task-oriented leadership. According to Yukl, the primary objective of task-oriented behavior is to accomplish work in an "efficient and reliable way" (Yukl, 2012, p. 68). To achieve this, leaders organize structures by clarifying roles, planning and monitoring operations, and assisting in problem-solving when necessary. The second meta-category is relations-oriented leadership, described as enhancing the quality of human resources and relations (Yukl, 2012, p. 68). To accomplish this, leaders engage in supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering their co-workers. The third meta-category is change-oriented behaviors, encompassing "innovation, collective learning, and adaptation to external changes" (Yukl, 2012, p. 72). It also involves envisioning change, which is an effective way for leaders to build commitment to new strategies by articulating an inspiring vision. Finally, Yukl's fourth meta-category focuses on leadership concerning the external relations of the organization.

It is important to note that these four dimensions are integrated by what Yukl calls flexible leadership, applying these dimensions in concrete situations. The tension between different concerns may be overcome and transformed into trade-offs, but this kind of ordering and integration of values and relations is not necessarily stable. It demands a discernment that is specific to contexts and situations. Thus, effective leadership is also flexible in the sense that it involves a constant and constructive negotiation between task, relation, and change-oriented behavior within the context of the external situation (Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004). Yukl's theory may be summarized in the model presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: *My perception of Yukl's meta-categories of leadership, based on Yukl, 2012*



The first theological critique: spiritual leadership as a distinct meta-category

In this article, I approach the model from a more distinctly theological perspective, but I will also build on insights from a forthcoming article that offers a more philosophical reception (Syse and Tangen forthcoming). The most basic problem with Yukl's model from a Christian perspective is that it lacks a meta-category that can adequately describe interaction with God. Following Shults and Sandage's definition of spirituality (Shults and Sandage, 2006, p. 25), I will argue that spiritual leadership involves the way leaders relate to and lead toward the sacred.

The sacred, from a distinctly theological perspective, goes far beyond the social construction of a physical or intellectual object that is regarded as sacred. In the Christian tradition, the 'Holy One' is a Triune God, revealed in Jesus Christ. Equally important is the theological premise that God is a living, active, and present reality that continues to reveal or mediate Godself through Christian practices that are offered in the name of Jesus. These practices may be understood as sacramental or as charismatic in a diversity of ways. However, all of them will require an element of human facilitation that, broadly, I will call liturgical-charismatic leadership.

Liturgy (from the Greek *leitourgia*) can be seen as an ordered structure of public worship (Allison, 2016). The charismatic element can be seen as improvisation within such structures, inspired by the Spirit of God (Land, 2010). Both liturgical and charismatic practices include human and divine agency, in the sense that God acts through (and beyond) certain human acts and artifacts (e.g., bread and wine). Acknowledging this double agency or divine-human interplay is crucial for a theory of leadership aiming to be authentically Christian, particularly in a secular context. Secularism is, above all, a negation of practical worship rather than a theoretical denial of God or transcendence (Tangen, 2014).

Liturgical-charismatic leadership will be shaped by theological traditions and may, therefore, be performed in a variety of ways. Despite differences, Christian traditions believe that God, in some way or another, works through the preaching (or reading) of the gospel, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. They will also claim that worship and prayer in the Spirit are essential Christian practices or apt responses to God's saving presence. The practice of intercession seems particularly important for leaders (Exod 33:12-23; John 17:6-26). Different churches will then add or incorporate other sacraments (or ordinances) according to their own tradition. For instance, the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition will see praying for the sick and offering words of prophecy as essential ingredients of the church's worship (Anderson, 2004; Miller and Yamamori, 2007).

However, biblical realism also teaches us that both preaching, liturgical patterns, and charismatic practices may be or become erroneous, false, or even seductive (e.g., Eph 4:14; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 John 7). The Old and New Testaments are full of prophetic critique of erroneous spiritualities that, in practice, lead people away from God and God's ways (e.g., Amos 2:6-9; Jer 7:1-16; 1. Cor 11:17-22). Critical thinking in terms of theological discernment is, therefore, at the heart of spiritual leadership. In the biblical narrative, it also seems clear that this kind of wisdom or spiritual discernment can be given as a gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8; 2:6-12).

A second critique – phronesis and spiritual discernment as meta-dimensions

Moreover, as Amos Yong suggests, this kind of discernment seems to be relevant to all aspects of life (Yong, 2003, pp. 140–143; see also Rom 12:3-13 and Eph 4:20-32). Spiritual discernment is, therefore, relevant to the integrating practice that Yukl calls flexible leadership. This leads to another fundamental critique of Yukl's model. Since it is primarily oriented toward organizational effectiveness, it utilizes ethics instrumentally for its contribution to success. This approach is insufficient from both a moral, philosophical, and theological perspective. Thus, sustainable integration of different managerial concerns through flexible leadership requires moral judgment, or what Aristotle calls *phronesis*, as a primary and more fundamental practice (Syse and Tangen forthcoming).

Moral judgment is not only another meta-category of leadership but also the integrating dimension that, in this sense, serves as a meta-dimension of other meta-categories. Geoff Moore states,

> It is practical wisdom which enables the virtuous pursuit of the organization's good purpose, enabling the organization to think through how is it that the products or services it provides, and how it develops its organizational members, make a contribution to the common good. (Moore, 2019, p. 125)

Moore understands the common good based on Catholic Social Teaching:

> A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level is a society that has the common good—the good of all people and the whole person—as its primary goal. The human person cannot find fulfilment in himself, that is, apart from the fact that he exists 'with' others and 'for' others … with regard also to the future. (Moore, 2019, p. 43)

This concept of the common good appears to align well with the Protestant and evangelical dedication to enhance the welfare of any given church's "host community" (Cameron and Wright, 2013, p. 81). Moreover, the interpretation of practical wisdom (phronesis) as moral deliberation concerning common goods applies to leaders of all types, whether they identify

as practicing Christians or not. Similar considerations are applicable to more emancipatory forms of phronetic assessment, which inquire, "Who wins, and who loses by which mechanism of power?" (Flyvbjerg, 2001:148).

However, there might also be aspects of moral judgment that are specifically Christian. The reason is that phronesis also takes the form of tradition-based, judgmental rationality. According to MacIntyre, a given tradition is an "historically extended, socially embodied argument, which includes a discussion about the goods which constitute that tradition" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 222). Put differently, moral judgment requires a hermeneutical horizon narrative, and Christian leaders will begin their deliberation within the horizon of the Christian tradition.

Christian traditions include formative liturgical practices (Smith, 2009) and various modes of rationality, including studies of the biblical story, storytelling, discussions, contemplation of historical examples, and conceptions of principles and virtues. More importantly, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition, God and God's will are defined as the highest good, integrating all ecological and human common goods (Deut 6:4-9; Matt 22:37-39). Christian leadership and decision-making will therefore take place, *Coram Deo*, before God, in God's presence. Pentecostal theologians like Steven Land (2010) suggest that the task of Christian theology is to integrate right belief (orthodoxy) and right action (ortho-praxis) through right affections (ortho-pathy).

This kind of self-transcendent reflection is also shaped by its character of communal participation in Christ and should, therefore, be characterized by humbly listening to one another (*tapeinophrosýnē*) in light of the Christian story (Phil 2:1-4). Some form of corporate reflection is thus an essential aspect of Christian leadership. This perspective is also acknowledged by traditional churches with ecclesiastical hierarchies. For instance, as Williams et al. (, 1994) note, "In Orthodox theology, one cannot speak about hierarchy without also speaking about conciliarity" (p. 102).

The extent of conciliarity and the nature of hierarchy will vary extensively depending on the ecclesiology of a given theological tradition. Nevertheless, Kärkkäinen suggests that

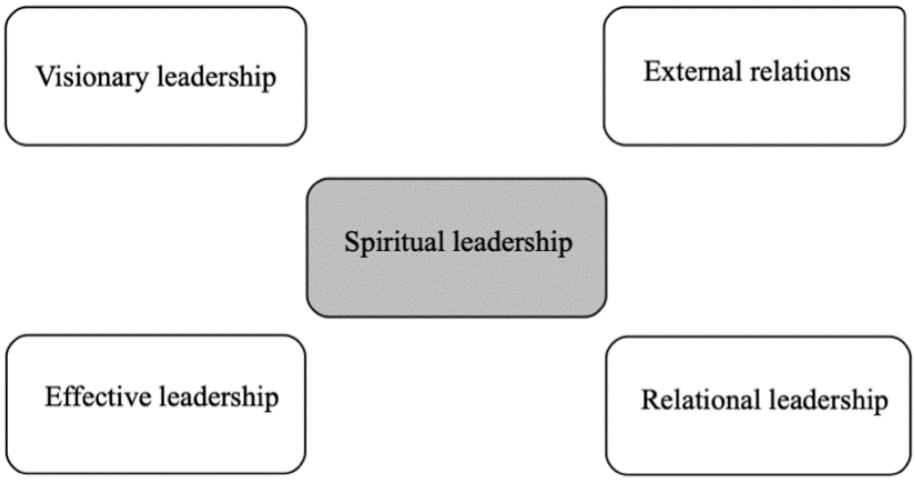
> although there might be in a church different levels of leadership and authority, say, related to the office of a "senior pastor" or bishop, there is no such hierarchy that would make a stand above other or use power for any other purpose than advancing common mission. (Kärkkäinen, 2017, p. 289)

From a philosophical perspective,[1] one might argue that certain forms of power can be entrusted to the most capable (and loving) individuals within a given timeframe if they utilize these resources to serve the common good and uplift the least privileged. This interpretation aligns with Paul's theological master story culminating in the crowning of Christ as the Lord (Phil 2:6-11; see also 1 Cor 15:24). In this way one may accept authority but reject domination and power abuse. Communal and humble dialogue for common discernment is important for securing the realization of this ideal (Phil 2:1-5), which in turn will require Trinitarian virtues that promote relationality in terms of 'presence-for-the-other,' recognition of mutual dependence, and a form of unity that does not suppress individual integrity (Kärkkäinen, 2017, pp. 286–289; see also Tangen and Åkerlund, 2017).

Overall, this implies that Yukl's model needs transformation by incorporating spirituality as a meta-category. Furthermore, spirituality, as self-transcendent phronesis, serves as a meta-dimension across other categories. In the S-E-R-V-E model, depicted in figure 2, spiritual leadership is placed at the center.

[1] For a philosophical perspective on the principle of difference, see Rawls 1999.

Figure 2: *The S-E-R-V-E frame*



In the subsequent analyses, I will argue for the reconceptualization of change orientation into visionary leadership and demonstrate that task-oriented leadership equates to effective leadership. However, first, I will explore the applicability of the concept of spiritual leadership beyond its traditional context within the church.

Spiritual leadership in social spheres beyond the church?

Thus far, I have identified two performative features of spiritual leadership: (1) liturgical-charismatic facilitation and (2) moral and spiritual discernment. The question remains, Can these dimensions of leadership be enacted in other social spheres? Addressing this necessitates a brief exploration of 'political theology'. From a Judeo-Christian perspective, it is evident that all domains of life relate to God (Wagenman, 2019). This belief stems from the understanding that God is the creator of all things, as reflected in the social vision of the Old Testament, described by Walter Brueggemann as follows:

> Moses dismantles the politics of oppression and exploitation by countering it with *a politics of justice and compassion*. The reality emerging out of the Exodus is not just a new religion or a new religious idea or a vision of freedom but the emergence of a new social community in history. (Brueggemann, 2018, p. 6)

A guiding idea in the Torah is that right worship and righteous living go together. One might ask if this implies that the church can instruct the state or leaders in other domains of life. The best starting point, in my view, is to see the web of life in terms of different, sovereign, yet interdependent spheres. The idea of principled sphere sovereignty (Mouw, 2011; Kuyper 1880; Wagenman, 2019) means that the church should not be dominated by the state and that the church should not seek to establish a form of theocracy or 'priestly government' in terms of controlling leaders in other spheres.

The church, however, should function as a community of formation, supporting members in developing Christlike wisdom that can be applied in other spheres. This involves providing a prophetic critique of institutions and individuals when necessary (see Tangen, 2017). While Christian leaders should consider such guidance, they remain responsible for their own phronetic reasoning in pursuing the moral purposes of a particular social sphere through ad hoc collaboration with others (Bretherton, 2014). As they strive to serve the common good, they should also seek advice from Christians within the same sphere.

However, this form of fellowship should not replace active participation in the local church. The rationale behind this proposal is that Christian leaders from various social spheres need to converge with others from different walks of life to become one body in Christ (Tangen, 2018; Phil 2.1-5; 1 Cor 12:13; see also Tangen, 2017). The alternative would be a church that segregates along the patterns of work, and therefore, in practice, class, power, and prestige, contrary to the vision of the New Testament church.

So, what does 'sphere sovereignty' mean for the question of whether it is desirable for Christian leaders to perform spiritual leadership in other social spheres? I will suggest that answers to this question will be highly contextual. At one end of the continuum is leadership that takes place in societies or organizations heavily influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition. Philosopher Guttorm Fløistad acknowledges that specific Christian practices like devotions (*andakt*) and corporate reflection were important factors in the way Hans Nielsen Hauge and his associates built organizational cultures. These businesses significantly contributed to the Norwegian economy in the 19th century (Fløistad, 1998; Grytten, 2013; Honningdal, Grytten and Liland, 2021). Elsewhere, I have shown how prayer and other Christian practices have been successfully integrated with Western school medicine in medical missions in Congo (Tangen, 2023). This kind of intimate integration between liturgy and work is, in my view, desirable and possible, given that such organizations provide services or goods to all people regardless of faith or worldview.

Systematic theologians such as Luke Bretherton and Amos Yong utilize the guest-host dialectic to comprehend Christian service in the world (Bretherton, 2010; Yong, 2008). Christians are simultaneously guests in the world and co-hosts of God's transforming hospitality (Tangen, 2018a). Christian leaders are not guests in the world in the sense that creation is alien to them. The gospel of the kingdom represents hope for a transformed world, not an escape from it. However, the church that acknowledges Jesus as their Lord will be alien to any culture or sociological power structure that promotes alternative ultimate concerns, along with corresponding values and mechanisms of power (Phil 3:20-21).

One of the central questions for Christian leaders, therefore, is, How should we, as God's people, seek the peace and prosperity of our "earthly cities"? (Jer 29:7; Cameron and Wright, 2013, p. 81). This involves cooperating with others for the common good without compromising our primary identity. Exactly how this should be done will require further theological reflection (see Smith, 2017; Hauerwas and Willimon, 2014; Bretherton, 2010). This question is nevertheless crucial due to the potential dangers associated with integrating faith and work.

The first peril arises from the instrumental misuse of God's name for power, profit, and prestige, while the second hazard involves creating an unwelcoming environment of religious conformity within the organization. Even in milder forms, this situation poses a threat to people's integrity. Consequently, a careful approach is essential to navigate these risks effectively. Christian leaders must practice tolerance and hospitality (Yong, 2008; Bretherton, 2019, chap. 9), creating a safe space for those who may not share their faith but contribute to the organization's purpose. While Christian leaders can share their personal testimony (Gill, 2020; Luke 10:1-9) within the realm of friendships, it is crucial for them to refrain from imposing their faith on others within their leadership roles. When engaging with people, Christian leaders should ensure that their approach reflects God's hospitality as an invitation rather than an intrusion into personal boundaries.

Nevertheless, in most secular Western organizations, Christian leaders often find themselves in the role of a contributing guest in an environment where secular values are hegemonic. Like the Jewish people in Babylon, they may find themselves within an organization characterized by a mix of life-affirming purposes and a flawed order of values (see Smith,

2009; Koyzis, 2003). As previously suggested, their essential call remains to contribute to the organization's peace, prosperity, and the greater good (Jer 29:7), as God's good will can be channeled 'from below' through service in all social spheres. However, as the book of Daniel seems to suggest, there are certain ethical limits for this kind of service, particularly if a given organization becomes idolatrous (Dan 3:8-12; Tangen, 2017).

A Christian perspective on the other meta-categories

So far, I have suggested that spiritual leadership for Christian leaders includes (1) being in communion with Christ, (2) facilitating liturgical-charismatic practices, (3) exercising spiritual and moral discernment within the context of the Christian tradition, and potentially (4) engaging in service within social spheres in a guest-host dynamic. Although this description is not exhaustive, I propose that it is adequate to define spiritual leadership. With this in view, I proceed to outline how spiritual leadership, as a meta-dimension, transforms other meta-categories of leadership.

From change orientation to visionary leadership

In Yukl's framework, visions are linked with change-oriented leadership. However, when change is viewed as a meta-category, one might question, why change? I suggest that leading change requires an overarching sense of purpose (*telos*), and it is worth noting that Yukl acknowledges that organizations possess a core ideology (Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004, p. 218). Yet, his approach primarily focuses on what MacIntyre defines as external goods, portraying a vision as a tool in a strategic process aimed at providing organizations with a competitive advantage. I have argued elsewhere that this emphasis should be re-balanced (Syse and Tangen forthcoming). The organization's core ideology should take precedence. Moreover, the core purpose should be expressed in an understandable manner. MacIntyre suggests that this demands some form of narrative:

> I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?' (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 216; see also Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 379)

The construction of vision is, therefore, achieved through foresight and narrative leadership (Matesi, 2022). Hence, I prefer to refer to visionary narratives rather than mere vision or vision statements.[2] The visual aspect of vision should also be taken seriously from the multiple-intelligence perspective provided by Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1993). However, Gardner's own analyses of leadership seem to imply that leaders offer more than visionary snapshots of a desired future. Visionary narratives encompass a narrative plot that imparts a deep sense of identity. Gardner says,

I want to call attention to the fact that leaders present a dynamic perspective to their followers: not just a headline or snapshot, but a drama that unfolds over time, in which they—leaders and followers—are the principal characters or heroes. Together, they have embarked on a journey in pursuit of certain goals, and along the way and into the future, they can expect

[2] Critical theory correctly suggests that images, as worldviews, can hold us captive. However, critical theory focuses on wholes, language games, narratives, and discourses rather than on organizational vision statements.

to encounter certain obstacles or resistances that must be overcome. (Gardner and Laskin, 2011, pp. 49–50)

In summary, this seems to lead to the following conclusion: what Yukl conceptualizes as change-oriented leadership is better understood as a form of visionary narrative leadership. This kind of visionary leadership is rooted in a given organization's specific purpose but requires contextualization to particular situations through strategic reflection. Furthermore, I posit that task-oriented leadership can be redefined as effective or excellent leadership.

Christian leadership and visionary leadership

It follows that visionary Christian leadership needs to be anchored in the Christian narrative. The Christian story, as articulated by biblical authors, essentially emerges as a response to God's revelation in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:1, 17-31; John 1:1-18). Paul underscores that Christian leaders are stewards of the divine vision, carriers of the mysteries of God, as these are revealed in the biblical narrative (1 Cor 4:1-4). Present-day Christian leaders are part of this tradition, tasked primarily with preserving and transferring the new song to new generations and new places (Isa 42:10; Rev 5:9).

This involves contextualizing the story in local churches that exist in a variety of host cultures. Timothy Keller describes the task of theological envisioning in terms of bridge-building, saying that

> proper contextualization is the act of bringing sound biblical doctrine all the way over the bridge by reexpressing it in terms coherent to a particular culture. (Keller, 2012, p. 101)

Keller integrates the languages of theology and organizational leadership by speaking about theological visions. Yet, Keller maintains that Scripture is the norming norm in this kind of theological and organizational enterprise (Keller, 2012), even though he also acknowledges that the Christian tradition is a very important factor for providing theological sustainability in the process of faithful contextualization. I will suggest that tradition will play an important but secondary role, alongside experience, reason and prayer for the guidance of the Spirit (Bevins, 2006; Land, 2010; McClendon, 2002).[3]

Keller emphasizes that the bridge, in a sense, serves both ways, with the consequence that pastors must engage in both theological and cultural analyses. Thus, visionary leadership will require systematic theological deliberations in paradigmatic modes of knowledge. Yet, it is also a form of strategic and critical contextualization (Hiebert, 1986) that may adapt the practices that Yukl summarizes. I will suggest that all the behaviors that Yukl describes as essential to change-orientated leadership can be performed with the biblical story as a hermeneutical horizon. Will Manzini has also provided a useful guide for developing narrative goals on different levels with different time horizons (Mancini and Bird, 2016).

This is essential because any kind of systematic and strategic reflection needs to be translated back into narrative plots that enable the whole church to participate in the drama of God. Hence, theologizing, the strategic crafting of a vision statement, and theo-dramatic preaching, in which the leader serves as a dramaturge, are all crucial visionary practices that take place in the local church (Land, 2010:107; Vanhoozer, 2005; Tangen, 2012). They demand what Steven Land calls "discerning reflection in light of the vision of the kingdom of God" (Land, 2010, p. 123). Land portrays this as an exceedingly holistic process:

[3] The relationship between these elements must also be discussed in more depth elsewhere (e.g Frestadius, 2018).

> Theology requires not only discursive reasoning but also the engagement of the whole person within the communion of charisms. The community of the Spirit and Word functions as a worshiping, witnessing, forming, reflective whole; but at the heart of all this is the liturgical life of the community. (Land, 2010, p. 23)

Thus, visionary and spiritual leadership is certainly interdependent: visionary leadership finds its catalyst in its liturgical relationship to God, which in turn needs to be guided by a theological vision.

Visionary leadership will also be a part of the way Christian leaders lead in other social spheres. The vision of life as a *creatio continua*, and as participation in moral practices (see above) certainly encourages visions of excellent service in all social spheres (see also Gill, 2008, chap. 4; Gill, 2020, chap. 6). The Christian leader might be both a conservative agent that cultivates a tradition and a progressive leader that seeks to challenge the 'status quo.' The conserving function is carried by what Moore calls tradition awareness. This virtue might enable the organization to persevere in its core values through strategic thinking rather than becoming an uncritical victim of new trends in its social context (see also Moore, 2019, p. 127). Knowing what to change and what to keep is an important part of wise leadership. This kind of value-conscious leadership will contribute to what I have defined elsewhere as sustainable leadership (Tangen forthcoming). However, the Christian horizon narrative, the Judeo-Christian vision of justice, and Jesus's vision of the kingdom might also inspire Christian leaders to challenge the status quo and empower co-workers to see the world from a radically new perspective. This inspiration might foster courageous, visionary thinking that could ground transformative leadership in terms of political or social entrepreneurship. According to Burns, transforming leadership emerges when leaders engage with others for the mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher moral purpose beyond transactional bargaining based on self-interest (Burns, 1978, pp. 19–20). This kind of "prophetic" imagination (BrueggeI) is relevant for Christian leaders who serve in all legitimate social spheres. An obvious example that requires visionary leadership today is the present ecological crisis that calls for more sustainable ways of living – and leading (see also TangI Tangen, 2022 unpublished).

Christian leadership as effective – and excellent – leadership

Yukl defines task-oriented behavior in terms of accomplishing work in an "efficient and reliable way" (Yukl, 2012, p. 68). I suggest that this type of leadership, for communicative purposes, could be relabeled with the equivalent term 'effective leadership' since Yukl uses efficiency as the criterion of task-oriented leadership. Effective leadership is oriented towards getting things done beautifully.

Yukl suggests that clarifying roles, planning, monitoring, and operational problem-solving are key behaviors in this dimension. I propose that these elements are equally relevant for leadership within the church. A church could develop certain standards (performance indicators) for how tasks are accomplished, as well as for how interactions and communication should take place. What stands out as the primary managerial ideal in the biblical story is that of being a faithful steward (1 Cor 4:2; Matt 25:21-23; Dan 6:4-5). The image of stewardship (*oikonomos*) is, as correctly argued by Ken Wilson, a dominant metaphor in the teaching of both Jesus and Paul (Wilson, 2016; Wilson, 2010). Stewardship can be defined as the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. In other contexts, I have elaborated on this definition and defined sustainable leadership as "stewarding something in a way that enables it to flourish and endure over time, according to its intrinsic God-given character and purpose within the web of life" (Tangen forthcoming).

I will suggest that this requires a balance between what MacIntyre calls internal and external goods. The primary objective of stewardship is to sustain internal moral goods, which are the values that a certain practice seeks to realize. On the other hand, it is also crucial to acknowledge that not only businesses but also non-profit organizations need to allocate what MacIntyre calls external goods. An obvious example of external goods is money. No organization can exist in late modernity without enough money to invest in human resources, infrastructure, and technology. Geoff Moore is, therefore, correct when he suggests that secondary institutional goods and primary moral goods need to be kept in a kind of balance:

> We have noted previously that such things as fame, reputation, wealth, profit, and, perhaps most generically, success are goods (not 'bads') and that, as MacIntyre pointed out, 'no one can despise them altogether without a certain hypocrisy'… But, as we have stressed repeatedly, it is not a good thing in and of itself. … This is why we have referred to the need for the correct ordering of these goods (internal goods should take precedence over external goods), and the balanced pursuit of both. (Moore, 2019, p. 120)

It follows that a Christian perspective on effective leadership must also focus on getting the balance between external goods and internal purposes right, acknowledging that this requires the art of compromise. Again, practical wisdom plays an important part. Geoff Moore suggests that

> getting the balance right – pursuing sufficient external goods but not prioritizing them – is a challenging assignment and one in which the virtues of phronesis (practical judgment) …, will be particularly necessary. (Moore, 2008, p. 501)

Prudence will, in turn, require other classic cardinal virtues like courage, justice, and particularly moderation, which protects from greed (Tangen, 2015b; Syse, 2009). Moore also promotes zeal, suggesting that this virtue can replace selfish ambition as a drive for getting the job done (Moore, 2019, p. 125). This is quite interesting from a theological perspective since Paul also seems to identify zeal as a key virtue of leadership (Rom 12:8).

The virtue of faith (*pistis*) is also relevant because the Bible and the Christian tradition provide stories of how God sometimes provides resources for his people in extraordinary ways (e.g., Genesis 22:14, 41-46; Luke 9:10-17; Pierson, 2011; Monsen, 2011). More research needs to be done to understand these phenomena and a kind of spiritual (and human) gift economy (Blanton, 2017). Nevertheless, in the biblical stories, experiences of God's providence and blessing are often associated with good stewardship and wisdom (e.g., Gen 41:38; Nehemiah 1–7; Proverbs; Daniel 6:4-5). Even the story of how Jesus miraculously feeds more than 5000 people in the wilderness includes organizational elements such as clarifying roles, planning, and monitoring operations (Mark 6:38-40; Luke 9:14, 16). Thus, supernatural grace seems to work with, rather than against, conventional managerial wisdom. However, this also implies that Christian leaders might integrate spiritual practices like prayer into the process of planning.

When it comes to effective organization in terms of clarifying roles (or structuring) within the church, certain theological issues must be addressed. Some traditional churches (Roman Catholic and Orthodox) will argue that their ecclesial hierarchies reflect a kind of divine order, which possibly can be grounded in Trinitarian relations (see the discussion in Volf, 1997). Liberationists, on the other hand, seem to divinize egalitarian structures, grounded in the alternative and more 'democratic' conceptions of the Trinity (see overview in Kärkkainen, 2014). My basic response is that theological traditions can develop different versions of the S-E-R-V-E model depending on their ecclesiology and the challenges that these

represent. This will also apply to questions of gender and the role of women in the church (Andersen, Smidsrød, and Tangen, 2019).

Yet, leaders must still take responsibility for the formation and modification of effective organizational structures. Structures should be judged by the degree to which they empower all organizational members to contribute with their gifts and abilities to the common good (Eph 4:11-13). Moreover, concern for efficiency should be integrated with or balanced by relational concerns. Above, I suggested that leaders may give the mandate to lead if it serves the mission of the church and the welfare of the least privileged. Yet, leaders should also seek to facilitate authentic dialogue and model relational virtues that are shaped in the image of the Trinity (see also Kärkkainen, 2014, chap. 13; Tangen, 2019). Again, hierarchy and conciliarity should be balanced in light of the overall purpose: maximum participation in the mission of God, which is the ultimate common good.

Missiological anthropologist Sherwood Lingenfelter has shown that this kind of service/serving can take place in a variety of institutional structures, including both egalitarian and hierarchical cultures. One might add that all kinds of organizational structures have latent problems when it comes to the distribution of power (Lingenfelter, 2008; Lingenfelter, 1996). Research shows that flat structures in network organizations produce informal hierarchies (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011), which in some cases, may be more, and not less oppressive than hierarchies by design, because it is difficult to hold power yielders accountable. More critical for effectiveness is the problem that constant power struggles in terms of 'positioning' will steal energy away from the task of getting things done.

Christian leadership and relational leadership

This demonstrates how relational and effective leadership are intimately connected. I will suggest that there is both a synergy and tension between, on the one hand, concern for people and processes and, on the other, the need for directive leadership and results. These can be combined in different ways, as theories of situational leadership suggest (Blanchard, 2003). According to Yukl, relational-oriented leadership is "concern for people and the quality of human resources and relations" (Yukl, 2012, p. 68). Concern for people is the key interest of this dimension of the S-E-R-V-E frame. I call this relational leadership.

I will suggest that Yukl's descriptions of relational behavior in terms of supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering have ethical qualities. These practices can be motivated by a loving attitude that wants to serve others. Yukl also acknowledges that ideal influence in terms of role-modeling (transformational leadership) and correction of immoral behavior (transactional leadership) are essential ingredients in relational leadership (Hassan et al., 2013; see also Bass and Riggio, 2005; Bass and Steidlmaier, 1999). The Christian tradition will agree. Nevertheless, a Christian perspective will transcend this kind of functional behavioral approach and see relational leadership in terms of moral virtues and internal moral goods that should be pursued for their own sake. In some of his later works, Yukl seems to move in this direction. Here, he identifies four relational virtues: integrity, moral courage, justice, and compassionate care (Hassan et al., 2013).

This catalog of virtues may be seen as valid but not exhaustive descriptions of good relational leadership. The reason is that the rich descriptions of moral virtues in the Christian tradition not only add relational virtues like peacefulness and forgiveness (Lederach, 2014; Stassen, 2008) to Yukl's catalog but also offer an alternative order and understanding of certain virtues. Put differently, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, provide a unique perspective on moral virtues and how these are acquired through Christian practices. Christian traditions will consequently offer a more comprehensive

understanding of ethics in various ways (e.g., Hays, 1996; O'Donovan, 1994; Gushee and Stassen, 2017; McClendon, 2002; Hauerwas, 1981; Land, 2010; Schwindt, 2015)

Paul's master story in Philippians 2:1-11 offers an important moral horizon for faith-based community building. Leaders and followers should serve one another and humbly seek to develop a form of common wisdom. Paul emphasizes, like modern theories of moral leadership (Bass and Steidelmaier, 1999), the importance of being a role model that embodies the virtues he promotes (Philippians 3:1-17). He also stresses that the virtues of Christian service are given by the Holy Spirit, as leaders and followers of Christ are transformed to agapeic love through participation in Christo-practices (Phil 3:1-12; Romans 5:5). Overall, agapeic love stands out as a cardinal virtue in the Christian tradition, alongside hope and faith (Galatians 5:22; see also Stump, 2011, Aquinas, 2012). Recent Pentecostal theology has also revitalized the language of virtues by discussing Christian affections (Land, 2010; Castelo, 2012). These are integral to the makeup of virtues: faith comes with gratitude, love is manifested in compassion, and hope vitalizes passion and boldness (Land, 2010).

Hope is certainly essential because Christian leaders will experience relational setbacks, including suffering and persecution (Luke 6:22; 1 Pet 3.14-17). Hope brings joy and comfort as Christians pray for one another. Relational care and hospitality may, therefore, be grounded in spirituality. However, it is also worth noting that this way of being present in the world, with and for one another, always requires some form of organizing. The virtues of joy and hospitality may, for instance, be affiliated with the common practices of eating together (Acts 2:46). The same applies to dyadic practices like mentoring or coaching, where the leader is present for the other. Thus, relational leadership, spirituality, and effective organization are intertwined in many ways.

The classic Christian tradition has also adopted the Greek cardinal virtues of justice, moderation, courage, and practical wisdom (e.g., Aquinas, 2012). Prudence has already been described. Justice is important for the distribution of resources, which is one of many areas where relational and effective leadership merge. Courage is also vital in conflict transformation because it enables leaders to confront unacceptable behavior with a balance of bravery and consideration. Here, I agree with Yukl who suggests that transactional leadership, in terms of holding followers accountable for ethical and unethical conduct, is an integral part of moral leadership (Hassan et al., 2013, p. 334, see also Bass and Riggio, 2005; Bass and Steidlmaier, 1999).

Peacemaking is another virtue that plays a central role in the longer Christian tradition (Hauerwas, 1991). More specific tools of conflict transformation cannot be discussed here (e.g., Lederach, 2014), nor can the skills of organizational politics that speak truth in love. What needs to be said, however, is that critical questions of power and power abuse need to be asked by both leaders and followers. Thus, justice is also imperative as leaders seek reconciliation. Elsewhere, I have shown that charismatic leadership and enthusiasm cultures may slide into forms of quasi-totalitarianism. Followers should, therefore, be encouraged and allowed to establish some form of critical distance and personal reflective space to secure moral integrity (Tangen and Åkerlund, 2017).

The reality of power abuse and conflict also provokes pertinent questions of whether, and to what degree, the use of coercive power is a legitimate aspect of relational leadership. I agree with Robert Greenleaf's basic idea that a good leader is to be a servant first, by heart and attitude. Moreover, the desire to empower co-workers, to perform persuasive rather than coercive leadership, is certainly a valuable moral preference (Greenleaf, 2002; Eva et al., 2019; Spears, 2008). Yet, it might be argued that his theory and later theories of servant leadership (Eva et al., 2019) promote an overly optimistic account of human nature (Alvesson and Einola,

2019) and lack a robust account of coercive power (see Syse and Tangen forthcoming, see also Tangen, 2019).

Coercive power can be defined on a continuum from withholding rewards to legal sanctions, imprisonment, and even the preventive use of violence, such as performed by the police. Leadership in each social sphere will have its own resources and dilemmas in terms of coercive power, with law enforcement and the military representing the most extreme cases. Christian leaders should primarily be oriented towards the kind of non-coercive leadership that was modeled by Jesus and promoted by Greenleaf. However, since God's kingdom is not yet consummated, it might also be reasonable to suggest that Christian leaders will face situations where the moderate and controlled use of coercive power, for the common good and according to moral criteria (see Syse, 2009), can be considered as the lesser evil – when the alternative is to allow more destructive forms of power to prevail. Yvonne Bradley suggests tha

> to be involved in leadership may have outcomes that many Christians have difficulty accepting – compromise, uncertainty, and, even more threatening, an uneasy conscience. A leader in an imperfect world will often face a choice not between right and wrong but between one wrong and another wrong. Even trying to choose the lesser of two evils is extremely difficult. (Bradley, 1994, p. 34)

This kind of Christian realism can also be grounded in the doctrine of sin and Paul's perception of law enforcement as God's servant (Rom 13:4). At the same time, it is clear that Jesus is a model of radical non-violent strategies and non-coercive influence in an imperfect world (Hauerwas, 1991). Thus, the idea of fair use of coercive power (including criteria for 'just war') needs to be discussed in more depth elsewhere (see also Tangen, 2019). Here, I will simply suggest that this problem should also be met by a kind of Christian prudence (phronesis) that is neither relativistic (without moral criteria) nor absolutistic in the sense of lacking ambiguity or situational sensitivity (see also Yong, 2005, p. 226 on spiritual discernment).

Christian leadership and external relations

This approach is also highly relevant for the next dimension: leadership in relation to the organization's external dimension. This is the key concern of this dimension of the S-E-R-V-E frame. I have already suggested that the church and Christian leaders participate in God's mission to the world in at least two ways, as part of creation and as witnesses to salvation. The church should relate to the world in modes of ad-hoc cooperation and evangelistic hospitality (see also Kärkkainen, 2014, chap. 13). The Cape Town declaration describes the first aspect of this relation as follows:

> Let us conscientiously obey biblical teaching to be good citizens, to seek the welfare of the nation where we live, to honor and pray for those in authority, to pay taxes, to do good, and to seek to live peaceful and quiet lives. (Cameron and Wright, 2013, p. 81)

However, ecclesial leadership still includes theological and moral boundary-setting and confrontational leadership that protects the church from destructive members and guests. An imperative aspect of leadership that deals with external relationships is to identify how the church is different from the world. This is important precisely because the church is called to offer God's hospitality to the world. Amos Yong describes this tension as follows:

> Without boundaries, there will be no system into which anyone could be invited; without hospitality, the system will dry up, will turn in on itself, and die. (Yong, 2008, p. 123)

In extreme but not uncommon cases, this will also include confrontation with violent persecutors of the church. Here, the church could seek to love and pray for their enemies rather than repaying evil with evil (Rom 12:14, 13:4-5). They may, however, seek protection from law enforcement. The church's ultimate security is nevertheless in God. Thus, I will maintain with Luther that the church, as church, should not promote nor defend its messages using violence. Evangelistic hospitality is God's primary (or proper) work, whereas the use of coercive force through law enforcement is God's "alien work" in the world (see Tangen, 2019).

Christian leaders who serve in other social spheres (as the organic church) will also need to serve with this kind of situational judgment. This means engaging in dialogue with people from other traditions and seeking forms of overlapping consensus (Rawls, 1999). In these spheres, leaders should basically act according to the moral purpose of the given sphere. This will even apply to social spheres like law enforcement and military forces, although some Free church traditions will question whether Christians can fully participate in these spheres (see Shaffer, 1998). Thus, because different traditions will relate to the world in different ways, this may also lead to a variety of strategies. What remains common ground is that Christians should remain faithful to God through wise discernment. Since every sphere has a moral telos, Christian leaders can also claim freedom of conscience when they face questionable practices that, in sum, violate the moral purpose of the sphere, as in the case of euthanasia (Bretherton, 2010, chap. 6). Such cases also call for Christian leaders to engage in different forms of trans-traditional dialogue in public spheres. This might lead to unexpected forms of cooperation, but it may also lead to conflicts and persecution.

The second aspect of the church's mission requires that ecclesial leaders must develop strategies for evangelism in their local context and identify how they will participate in global mission. Thus, there is certainly an intimate connection between this kind of missiological contextualization and visionary leadership. The variety of holistic missional strategies (e.g., Bosch, 2011, Gelder and Roxburgh, 2007) cannot be discussed in depth in this article. What remains clear is that the church has the responsibility to witness to Christ in the power of the Spirit (Acts 1:5-8) and present the good news of the kingdom in word and deed.

This will require faithfulness to God's mission and wisdom and courage that is given by the Spirit (Matt 10: 19-20). The practices that Yukl advocates (see also Mintzberg, 2013; Mintzberg, 1973) can also be transformed into missional practices. Christian leaders should perform networking, monitor what happens in culture, and represent Christ in the world – as guests that may become hosts, offering the gifts of the kingdom. This should be modeled by ecclesial leaders; but through the training and sending of the church's members, Christ-like leadership may become present in every legitimate social sphere. It will include goal achievement in terms of human flourishing but also ambiguity and experiences of divine power in weakness and suffering (Root, 2014). The Christian leader can nevertheless rejoice in the fact that she or he can pray for the guidance of the Spirit, deliberate with other Christians, and find wisdom in the Christian tradition that enables her or him to perform prudent and missional leadership, *Coram Deo.*

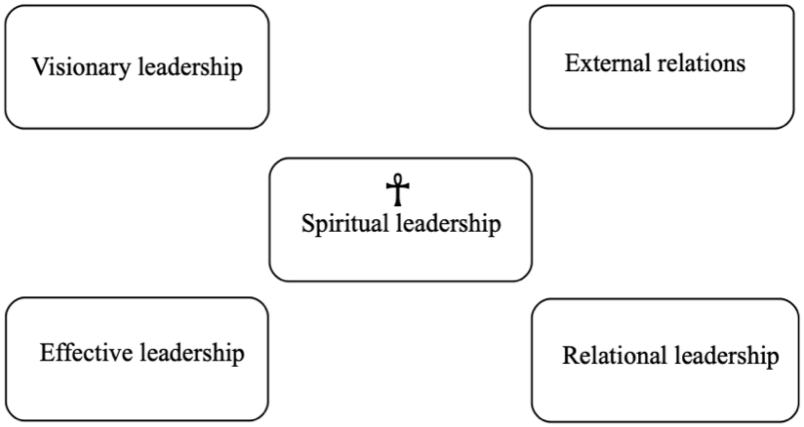
CONCLUSION: AN OVERVIEW OF S-E-R-V-E FRAME AND A PROVISIONAL MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

To summarize, S-E-R-V-E is a model of servant leadership grounded in the Christian tradition. It includes, but also transcends, Yukl's model of effective leadership. The most important innovations of this study are that (1) spirituality is defined as a distinct meta-category and as

liturgical and charismatic leadership; (2) self-transcendent phronesis or spiritual discernment is the integrating factor of the model; (3) change-oriented leadership is understood as essentially purpose-driven, and that this kind of visionary leadership must be grounded in the Christian story; (4) Yukl's thin description of relational behavior is elaborated by the thicker description of moral virtues in the Christian tradition; (5) task-oriented or excellent leadership is seen as the balance between internal moral goods and external instrumental goods that requires effective organization and long-term stewardship of resources.

I have maintained that the character of both internal and external relations within the church should be shaped by Trinitarian relations, which manifest as servant leadership in the power of the Spirit. Moreover, this model of servant leadership encompasses five key dimensions: spiritual, effective or excellent, relational, visionary, and the external dimension, which is here understood as evangelistic hospitality. Above, I have highlighted how these dimensions delineate five distinct concerns that need to be integrated. Yukl calls this process flexible leadership, and I have argued that this requires moral judgment, which in the Christian tradition takes the form of self-transcendent and Christ-shaped phronesis. Leaders aspiring to achieve long-term results must navigate between priorities and accept that decisions encompass risk. This kind of wisdom can, in a sense, be encapsulated in four C's: It is Christ-oriented, cruciform, charismatic, and communal. Thus, the image that has been used so far can now also include the symbol of the crucified and risen Christ (figure 3):

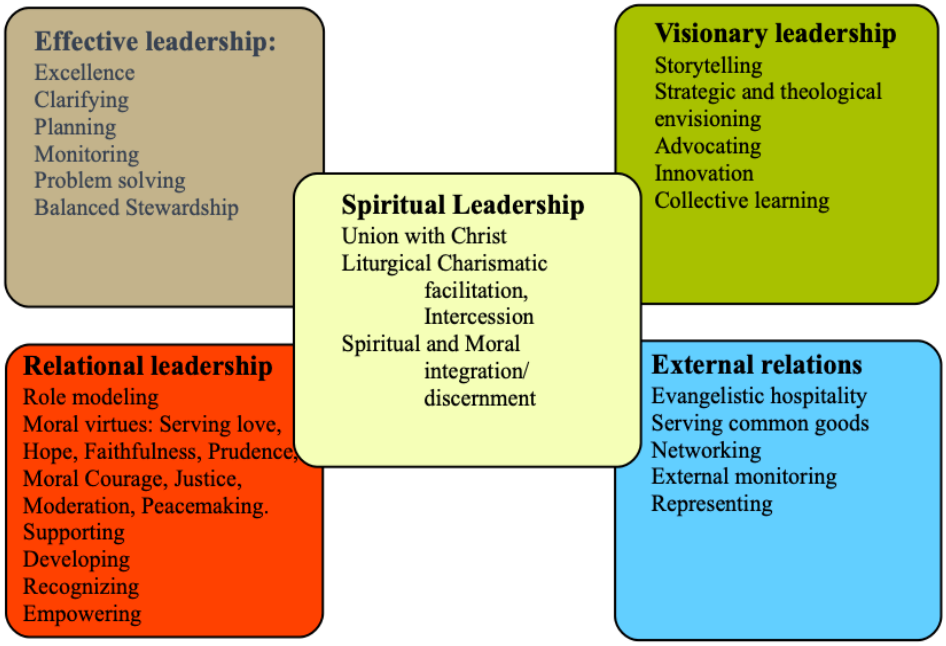
Figure 3: *The S-E-R-V-E framework for Christian Leadership, including the centrality of Christ*



The article has also shown that these dimensions are connected in a variety of ways. Visionary leadership finds its catalyst in spirituality, but spiritual leadership needs to be guided by theological visions. I have shown that there is an intimate connection between external leadership as missiological contextualization and visionary leadership. I have found that relational leadership necessitates the presence of leaders for others, but this is also contingent upon some form of effective organization. Effective leadership, in turn, appears to hinge on visionary narratives and relational virtues, where vision imparts motivation, while relational virtues cultivate trust and enable synergistic interactions.

Finally, this article has identified key practices and virtues that belong to the different meta-categories. Consequently, I will now present a model of leadership based on the S-E-R-V-E framework. The model sums up this article and can be visualized as set out in figure 4.

Figure 4: *The S-E-R-V-E model, with basic sub-categories*



However, this model is preliminary and requires further exploration, particularly within local churches representing diverse traditions.

Suggestions for further research

The S-E-R-V-E model unquestionably demands further exploration across various academic and theological disciplines. It can serve as a valuable tool for empirical studies, and I strongly recommend prioritizing case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2004). This emphasis is rooted in the understanding that leadership is significantly influenced by its context. The resulting case studies can lead to adapted, localized versions of the S-E-R-V-E model. Nevertheless, these adaptations hold the potential to become part of broader ecumenical and possibly global dialogues. The S-E-R-V-E framework could also function as a hermeneutical tool for studying the New Testament, and there is a considerable need for expanded biblical studies within the different categories.

Practical theologians might further develop an instrument to evaluate and nurture virtues within each dimension of the framework. For instance, future research should discuss whether effective leadership should be renamed excellent leadership. The importance of virtues described in this article points in that direction since virtues, by their nature, carry excellence; they get things done beautifully. However, the term 'excellent' may also carry unfortunate connotations of perfectionism that need to be discussed in more depth in another essay. Sometimes, it is more fruitful to speak about sufficient quality.

The question of how different meta-categories or dimensions both contend with each other in certain situations and yet rely on each other needs more in-depth discussion in future research. Qualitatively oriented researchers may consider constructing an instrument to measure the five dimensions, while those adopting a more qualitative approach might explore the intra-personal conditions for this type of leadership: How are Christian leaders shaped into disciples with personal integrity and empowered to serve? This is just one of many questions that may arise if researchers and practitioners find this framework useful. Ultimately, the answer to the last question is for the reader to decide.

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