The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2
DO WE REALLY NEED ANOTHER ACADEMIC JOURNAL?

Russell L. Huizing: Editor
Toccoa Falls College

I presume that you have all been on the library databases looking for resources. So, you know, there are thousands of journals available for nearly any topic one can imagine. Apparently, it is not an experience unique to contemporary times since Solomon lamented the number of hits in his own library database search (Eccl 12:12). However, the speed with which we can mine mountain ranges of information perhaps makes the recognition of the experience a bit more acute.

Thus, with the introduction of our inaugural issue of the Theology of Leadership Journal, we could look at this problem from two perspectives. On the one hand, will one more journal have any impact in such an ocean of information? On the other hand, is one more journal needed with so many other resources available? Let me address both of these.

ANOTHER JOURNAL?

Let’s start with the question of the availability of resources. In the last 100-150 years, studies of the leadership field have proliferated. This might be somewhat expected given the cultural changes that have occurred during that time. Organizations have shifted from a highly localized emphasis with perhaps tertiary connections to outside influences to outside influences becoming the primary driver of the organization. It would be difficult to name organizations that have stayed truly localized and have not been transformed in their very structure by regional, national, or global influences. All of this diversity of resources and stakeholders requires a stronger emphasis on leadership, and, thus, the increase in leadership studies during that time.

While the church has felt these same influences, it has not often considered what it means to be a leader beyond certain spiritual markers and requisite initiations. In some ways, this is not surprising because Christianity is, at its heart, a follower movement. Our prime directive is to make disciples. However, it is presumed, as seen in the early church’s historical account, that out of these followers, leaders would develop. What that process of development looks like in a Christian context is an important element of not only Christian studies but of leadership studies. Too often the church has adopted leadership principles based solely on pragmatic results rather than considering the manner in which our leadership reflects the nature and character of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If Christianity is to inspire through its leadership in not only ecclesial environments but every sphere of cultural influence, then this analysis of Christian leadership must occur.

But the form of leadership that is developed must be something more than just a Christianized version of leadership theories. Before we can expect to be invited into the public form of leadership discussions, we must have models and theories of leadership that have been developed, tested, and shown to be at least as effective as anything else the world may offer. This does not
mean that Christian leadership models will eschew all that is learned from other forms of leadership theory – we believe that all truth is God’s truth and so expect that there is truth in what has been observed in leadership studies. At the same time, we would expect that the Christian approach to leadership will be unique to the character of the Godhead, from which Christian leadership draws its vision. At the very least, then, we would expect that a theology of leadership would need to be developed, out of which we would be able to build our theories and models. Till we have something like this to offer, we should not expect the world to invite us into its conversation.

There are other journals that offer such a dialogue. We support them. We encourage authors to publish with them. But we also join them. There are not many academic peer-reviewed journals specifically dedicated to the development of Christian leadership…do the Google search. While there are certainly other venues, both Christian and non-, where Christian leaders can present their research, the increase in Organizational Leadership degrees in Christian academic institutions alone should suggest that there is much more research available than can be published. All of this would suggest that another journal dedicated to the development of Christian leadership is necessary at this time.

**ANOTHER JOURNAL**

At the same time, as the journal was developed, there was a sense in which we wanted it to be unique from our sister publications. I believe we have accomplished that in three ways. First, we wanted the journal to be accessible to any level of academia. Thus, it is the academic rigor of the writing that will determine publication, not the letters that follow an author’s name. In fact, we have specifically not included academic credentials in the author’s name to limit initial bias from readers. Our Call for Papers go out to nearly 4,000 professors representing diverse business, leadership, and theological fields in undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate degrees. It is our hope that recipients of these Call for Papers will take seriously our desire to see anyone with an academically rigorous contribution to this conversation get published and encourage their students to submit to our journal.

Second, our journal is different in the types of research it accepts. Our hope is that with each issue, we will see a variety of articles that focus on Old Testament and New Testament studies. We hope that there will be a variety of qualitative (including exegetical), quantitative, and grounded theory research articles submitted. We hope that authors will draw upon both contemporary examples of leadership as well as the wealth of historical riches that Christian leadership uniquely has at its disposal. Our current issue is a good example of this, including articles touching on qualitative, quantitative, exegetical, Old Testament, New Testament, historical, and a contemporary case study. We believe that in the richness of this methodology and design we will add a unique element to the journals that already exist.

Finally, our journal is different in its desire to think about leadership from outside the box by requesting creative expressions of leadership. For academics, our words tend to be our stock in trade. However, learning can occur outside words and our request for creative expressions of Christian leadership is an attempt to capture these other ways of expressing leadership. Our front cover of our first issue is the first step towards that. We are grateful for Emily Patton designing an expression of Christian leadership. We hope to receive other expressions that can be included not only on the cover but also within its virtual pages. We are blessed to live in a time where such unique expressions are available for review at the click of a button. As we continue to seek avenues to have...
artistic conversations about leadership, we believe we will add a layer of learning to the leadership field that is not often tapped.

YES, ANOTHER JOURNAL!

Of course, all of this takes those exuberant enough to invest the hours and effort into bringing a dream into a reality. I am humbled and honored that I have been joined on this journey with these four outstanding Christian leaders that round out our Editorial team. When I began to share with them some of my own ideas on developing a journal of this nature, each of them heartily joined me. I am grateful for each of them.

MaryJo Burchard is our Copy Editor. Anyone who has ever met MaryJo knows that she is a bundle of energy and joy with a unique skill of listening and connecting with what people are trying to communicate. This makes her a perfect match for our Copy Editor role. We did not want someone in this role who was simply going to identify spelling errors, grammar corrections, or citation style adjustments. We wanted someone who was going to capture the intensity and passion of each author and assist them in communicating those insights with the greatest clarity possible. She is uniquely gifted to do this.

Chris Hamstra is our Production Editor. He is an expert in the field of communication which becomes a boon for us to have him as our Production Editor. It is too easy to simply put words on a page – digital or otherwise – and put it out there for the world to read. Chris helps us to consider not simply what we are communicating through our journal but how we are communicating it to make sure that there is not only an expression of ideas but a reception of ideas as well. He is a great blessing to our editorial board.

Artem Kliuchnikov is our Leadership Representative. When I first met Artem, I was aware that different cultures would view leadership differently, but it was fascinating to listen to him describe leadership from the Ukranian perspective. I realized quickly that his unique cultural experiences in leadership gave him a perspective of global leadership that my own American experiences hindered me from seeing as clearly. We are blessed to have Artem giving direction to our journal on the topics of leadership that need to be considered to remain current.

H. David Schuringa is our Theological Representative. In some ways, you can blame David for this journal. When I was uncertain whether to pursue a doctoral degree, David was the primary encouragement to me that I would be not only a good candidate but a contributor to the academic field. His professional background represents well the types of Christian leadership in both ecclesial, social, and marketplace environments that we hope to develop through this journal. It is an honor to have him giving direction to the journal on theological topics that need to be considered to remain current.

And, so we begin. Where this journey will take us, we are not sure. But we are pleased with this first offering that we have to present to you. And it is our hope that this and future issues will continue to bless you as you seek to plant the flag of Christ’s Lordship in every part of this universe, including every leadership role.