

The background of the cover is an abstract, swirling pattern of blue and white, resembling a vortex or a storm. The colors transition from light blue and white at the top to darker blue and black at the bottom, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Theology of  
Leadership

**T**  
**L**  
JOURNAL

*Volume 2, Issue 1, 2019*

## Table of Contents

<i>Servant Leadership Through A Cultural Lens: Kluchnikov .....</i>	<b>Page 3</b>
<i>A Biblical Foundation of Cross-Cultural Christian Leadership: An Explication through Pauline Leadership in Acts: Hall .....</i>	<b>Page 7</b>
<i>The Viability of Servant Leadership in Poland: Hofstede's Four-Value Dimensions Perspective: Wreczycki.....</i>	<b>Page 21</b>
<i>A Double Paradox: Servant Leadership and Gender Scripts in the Latin American Context: Hernández.....</i>	<b>Page 38</b>
<i>What's NOT Christian Leadership? Learning from Jesus' Condemnation of Toxic Leader Exemplars in the New Testament: Bell.....</i>	<b>Page 56</b>
<i>Turning from Toxicity to Healthy Leadership Environments: An Inner-Textural Analysis of John 10:1-21: Atterson .....</i>	<b>Page 73</b>
<i>Follow the Leader: An Integrated Theology of Leader Development: Broward .....</i>	<b>Page 86</b>
<i>Book Review: Formational Leadership: Shelton.....</i>	<b>Page 98</b>

Moriah Olmstead, a student at Toccoa Falls College, created the cover artwork. She explains that a wave is like a Servant Leader. Both are constantly changing with new tides of influence and resurfacing from depths that life passionately brings forth. Always seeking new horizons and growing in strength, Servant Leaders empower others by setting the example of what it looks like to remember hope. In the same way, a wave is powerful and graceful by its gesture of drawing its onlooker into its beauty. Life can become overwhelming when focused on the ever-present waves of chaos, but the very essence of becoming a Servant Leader is to hold fast and stand firm while focusing on, “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and whatever is admirable” (Php 4:8). There is a horizon to every ocean and there is a God whose greatness calms the sea. It is in this center of chaos that the Servant Leader displays a calm in the midst of the storm.

Theology of  
Leadership



Volume 2, Issue 1, 2019  
All material licensed under  
[CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)  
[theologyofleadership@gmail.com](mailto:theologyofleadership@gmail.com)

### Editorial Team

Editor: Russell L. Huizing, Ph.D.  
Content Editor: MaryJo Burchard, Ph.D.  
Production Editor: Chris Hamstra, Ph.D.  
Theology Representative: H. David Schuringa, Ph.D.  
Leadership Representative: Artem Kliuchnikov, Ph.D.

---

# WHAT'S NOT CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP? LEARNING FROM JESUS' CONDEMNATION OF TOXIC LEADER EXEMPLARS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

---

R. Mark Bell

Wayland Baptist University

**ABSTRACT:** The development of a distinctly Christian leadership construct is presented by examining what is clearly not Christian leadership. The relevant question in this study is how did Jesus describe leadership He did not prefer? The importance of Christian leadership as a question is addressed, common responses are examined, and ultimately a different approach to the question is followed. Toxic leadership theory is reviewed in general, in specific, and several consequences of the theory are noted. Jesus' rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:1-7 is analyzed with a social and cultural texture method. The results of the analysis indicate the Jewish leaders were toxic leader exemplars. Jesus' rebuke of the toxic leader exemplars of His day provides insight into what constitutes a Christian leader because whatever Christian leadership is, it cannot be toxic in nature. A new leadership construct emerges from the analysis called healthy leadership. This leadership is understood as the antithesis of toxic leadership. Six dimensions of healthy leadership are found as respectful oversight, volitional leadership, altruism, stable consistency, follower advocate, and sincere integrity. Descriptions of each dimension are provided. Several recommendations for current executive leaders are noted. Future research needs are discussed especially including the development of a validated survey instrument to measure healthy leadership.

**KEYWORDS:** *Toxic Leadership, Christian Leaders, Healthy Leadership, Christian Leadership Characteristics*

## What's NOT Christian Leadership? Learning from Jesus' Condemnation of Toxic Leader Exemplars in the New Testament

The essence of Christian leadership remains a point of interest for scholars, practitioners, secular and religious authorities. Numerous intellectual endeavors have helped elucidate Christian leadership principles and how those principles should be applied. Similarly, the present study endeavors to provide, in a unique way, more theoretical, conceptual, and practical clarity in the realm of Christian leadership. Initially, the question of what constitutes Christian leadership is examined as a conceptual framework. One overarching research question forms the foundation of this exposition - as the founder of Christianity, how did Jesus describe leadership He did not prefer? Contemporary leadership theories help explain those leadership descriptions. Toxic leadership theory is explored generally, specifically, and in terms of consequences to followers. To explicate the matter, Jesus' interaction with the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23:1-7 is explored with a social and cultural texture analysis method. The analysis provides insight into the social and cultural realities present when Jesus interacted with the Jewish leaders, and those realities are examined with the toxic leadership theory structure. Further, the question of what constitutes Christian leadership is addressed by exploring what is clearly not Christian leadership. Ultimately, a distinctly Christian leadership concept, Healthy Leadership, emerges and is discussed with recommendations for executive leaders and future research opportunities. Understanding what is not Christian leadership reveals Healthy Leadership as markedly Christian in essence.

---

### THE QUESTION OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

---

As a starting point, the question itself is examined conceptually. The purpose is to better understand why the question is asked generally and why the question has been so frequently explored by scholars, leaders, professionals, and other parties of interest. The question is also examined by considering the common response generally given when the question is raised. Finally, probing the question from a different angle provides a new method of exploration and insight. Examining the question itself, at a conceptual level, provides the necessary foundation for the remainder of the study.

---

### WHY ASK THE QUESTION

---

People ponder the concept of Christian leadership for various reasons. For the purposes of this study, the question of Christian leadership is explored to examine the concept at the theoretical level. The question is not merely explored rhetorically by focusing on modern exemplars who are considered Christian leaders. The question is not explored in the proverbial sense by simply considering what it a good, decent, and/or spiritual leader. As important as these are, examining Christian leadership at the level of theory does imply the need to describe the relevant human behaviors. Indeed, describing human behaviors is a critical element in any attempt to explain the characteristics of Christian leadership when Christian leadership is said or thought to occur. As such, the present study engages the question of Christian leadership for the purpose of contribution to theory and theory development by examining certain relevant behaviors.

---

### A COMMON RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION

---

A familiar response to the Christian leadership question identifies Jesus as an exemplar of leading. Considering the question often involves examining the traits, characteristics, and leadership style Jesus demonstrated during His leadership in ministry. The examination of Jesus' leadership points to similarities with servant leadership theory. In their systematic review of servant leadership literature, Parris and Peachey (2013) claimed five distinct studies named Jesus as the ultimate servant leadership exemplar. Parris and Peachey noted those authors use Jesus' teachings to His disciples as a foundation for their various servant leadership models. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) were direct in their assessment claiming "it was Christianity's founder, Jesus Christ, who first taught the concept of servant leadership" (p. 58). Sendjaya and Sarros further claimed Jesus' life described in the biblical narrative demonstrates evidence for servant leadership teaching and practice dating back two thousand years. Blanchard and Hodges (2008) go beyond simply attributing servant leadership's roots to Jesus' example equating virtually all aspects of servant leadership to the model Jesus provided. Blanchard and Hodges claimed Jesus was clear to His followers concerning how they should lead--"by being effective servant leaders" (p. xi). Therefore, a predisposition equating the Christian leadership question with servant leadership is an understandable norm.

---

### A DIFFERENT ANGLE ON THE QUESTION

---

Some scholars and practitioners are likely content with servant leadership as the sole, or at least most adequate, response to the Christian leadership question. One might be content with such a position if only acknowledging how Jesus led. Instead of only exploring how Jesus led, the present study examines what leadership traits He despised. Negative role models are useful to study and should not be ignored because of their negativity (Gini & Green, 2012). Gallos (2008) noted studying negative role models for the purpose of training is reasonable. Learning from negative role models is useful to understand what persons should not do in a given situation (Gächter, & Renner, 2018). Examining bad leadership is not done to celebrate the negative behaviors but to convert them into a purposive heuristic (Baden, 2014). In that vein, this study uses a different angle to address the question by examining Jesus' reactions to the toxic leadership He encountered. As such, the lens shifts from the common mode of examining Jesus' positive leadership attributes to considering Jesus' description of unfavored leadership. The primary research question follows:

RQ: As the founder of Christianity, how did Jesus describe leadership He did not prefer?

---

## TOXIC LEADERSHIP THEORY

---

To understand Jesus' description of His rejected leadership traits, one must examine how Jesus reacted to certain toxic leaders. Toxic leadership theory provides a framework for understanding the negative leadership Jesus encountered. Toxic leadership is an emerging theory with robust scientific support for its premises. Some of the foundational literature is discussed generally, and the specific theoretical construct used for this study is examined. Toxic leadership theory and its consequences are important elements warranting explanation prior to examining Jesus' description of the bad leaders He encountered.

---

## TOXIC LEADERSHIP IN GENERAL

---

Various researchers have studied toxic leadership in a general sense by providing descriptions of toxic leaders and toxicity in organizational environments. The term toxic was first used by Whicker (1996) to label certain negative leadership characteristics. Whicker's description was based on qualitative research across various professions. Whicker specifically described a toxic leader as "maladjusted, malcontent, and often malevolent, even malicious" (p. 11) and also noted how the success of a toxic leader is often characterized by extreme uses of positional power and comprehensive control measures. Whicker further noted toxic leaders often appear insecure concerning many basic or lower level needs on Maslow's hierarchy. Part of Kusy and Holloway's (2009) research was specifically focused on describing the toxic individual's personality. Kusy and Holloway summarily defined the toxic personality as one routinely demonstrating certain detrimental behaviors in the work environment which have a debilitating effect on the various people, groups, and organizations involved. Detrimental behaviors alone are not helpful in the work environment, but Kusy and Holloway note how these toxic individuals "pervade our thoughts and sap our energies" (p. 4). Reed (2004) had an interest in describing toxic leadership in the military services. Reed claimed no one particular action or behavior could solely cause a leader's toxic labeling. However, Reed further described several toxic leader characteristics including lack of concern for followers' well-being, a severely negative interpersonal method of interacting with others, and a primary motivation revolving around one's own self-interest.

The three previous research efforts each made an attempt to describe a toxic leader or at least the characteristics of a toxic individual fulfilling a leadership role. Descriptions are helpful and most abundant in the toxic leadership literature. Some researchers have endeavored to move toward a toxic leadership theory in an effort to better operationalize those general descriptions. Lipman-Blumen (2005) reviewed several different cases of toxic leadership across various sectors including for profit, not for profit, political, private, and the like. According to Lipman-Blumen, a toxic leader is labeled as such when he or she demonstrates several different types of destructive actions while simultaneously demonstrating various flawed personal traits, but "to count as toxic, these behaviors and qualities of character must inflict some reasonably serious and enduring harm on their followers and their organizations" (p. 18). Pelletier (2009) took Lipman-Blumen's detailed descriptions and worked to develop a survey instrument measuring the toxicity of a leader. Pelletier developed the Perceptions of Toxic Leadership scale measuring eight dimensions of toxic leadership. Working separately but with similar intent and comparable findings, Schmidt (2008) developed an instrument measuring toxic leadership in five dimensions. Moving from general description to specific theory is an important step in understanding toxic leadership more thoroughly.

---

## TOXIC LEADERSHIP IN SPECIFIC

---

Schmidt (2008) described toxic leaders as "narcissistic, self-promoters who engage in an unpredictable pattern of abusive and authoritarian supervision" (p. 57). The definition provided by Schmidt accurately captures the essence of toxic leadership and is the definition and understanding of the theory used in the present study. As indicated by the description, Schmidt identifies the five dimensions of toxic leadership as including abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, narcissism, self-promotion, and unpredictability. Schmidt conducted qualitative research in order to isolate the five dimensions. Three of the dimensions, abusive supervision, authoritarian leadership, and

narcissism, already had existing support in the literature related to bad leadership. The final two dimensions, self-promotion and unpredictability, emerged from Schmidt's qualitative research. The Toxic Leadership Scale was developed as a result of this research and measured the five dimensions via thirty questions.

The five toxic leadership dimensions are individually defined and described as follows. Abusive supervision is classically defined by Tepper (2000) as a "sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (p. 178). Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, and Farh (2004) described authoritarian leadership as the leader exerting absolute authority and total control over followers including the requirement for unqualified obedience. Narcissism is typically understood as a personality trait that includes actions or behaviors demonstrating arrogance, entitlement, grandiosity, self-absorption, and hostility toward rejection based on a fragile self-esteem (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Unpredictable leadership behavior is easily understood yet Schmidt (2008) specified how unpredictability in a toxic leader includes erratic negative behavior that magnifies the negative results. Additionally, Schmidt described the self-promotion dimension as involving behaviors used by the leaders to promote their personal interests or agendas instead of focusing on the organization's interests. According to Schmidt, these self-promoting actions are generally designed to produce a positive image that ascends the organizational ranks and captures the attention of higher-level leaders.

Schmidt (2014) continued to test and develop the Toxic Leadership Scale reducing its total items from thirty to fifteen. In its shortened version, the instrument still measures the same five toxic leadership dimensions. In its original format or in its short form, the instrument has been used in several subsequent studies (Bell, 2017; Dobbs, 2014; Gallus, van Driel, Walsh, Gouge, & Antolic, 2013) to measure leadership toxicity. Having been found valid and reliable in each of these studies and having more widespread use in the limited toxic leadership literature, the five-dimension toxic leadership theory is considered credible for application in the present study.

---

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF TOXIC LEADERSHIP

---

The name of the theory connotes a leadership style that is poisonous, lethal, or otherwise quite harmful in effect. The consequences of toxic leadership are important to understand because it seems apparent toxic leadership is a pervasive problem in contemporary organizations. For example, Kusy and Holloway (2009) found 94% of their research participants claimed to have worked with toxic individuals at some point in their professional career. Additionally, Bell's (2017) study reported "that 78% of followers have worked with a toxic leader" (p. 89). Toxic leadership research wanes in comparison to research in the general leadership field. The overall lack of research on toxic leaders is surprising when understanding the apparent widespread nature of both toxic individuals broadly and toxic leaders specifically. As such, a brief survey of some of the consequences of toxic leadership follows.

The following studies illustrate the serious consequences toxic leaders exert on followers and organizations. Lian, Ferris, and Brown (2012) found the abusive supervision dimension is strongly related to various organizational deviance behaviors such as the intentional decrease in productivity levels by followers. Thus, followers may be likely to repay their toxic leader with slowed productivity having obvious negative consequences on the organization. Xu, Loi, and Lam (2015) found a relationship between abusive supervision and the emotional exhaustion of followers. Xu et al. described emotional exhaustion as a follower's purposeful withholding of new ideas or serious

concerns about issues in the workplace. It becomes clear followers may hold back both their physical and mental efforts in response to such leadership behavior. Bell's (2017) research found the self-promotion dimension had a direct negative effect on the follower's level of active engagement. Bell noted active engagement by followers was best understood as being contrasted with followers who were only passively involved. Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia, and Darr's (2016) study indicated the authoritarian leadership dimension had a negative effect on a follower's level of creativity. Since creative thinking is a mental effort, once again, the consequences of a toxic leader are demonstrated to have a negative impact on both physical and mental efforts of followers. Pelletier's (2012) research indicated some followers of a toxic leader will experience increased rebellious tendencies or a "greater intent to challenge the leader" (p. 412). Schmidt (2014) found toxic leadership would negatively impact individuals and groups on various outcomes including productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational trust. As demonstrated, toxic leaders and toxic leadership have many various negative outcomes on individuals, groups, and organizations including the intentional decrease in productivity levels (Lian et al.), the emotional exhaustion of followers (Xu et al.), the decreased level of active engagement (Bell), the decreased level of creativity (Naseer et al.), increased rebellious tendencies (Pelletier), and decreases in productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational trust (Schmidt). The consequences of toxic leadership are significant.

---

## NEW TESTAMENT TOXIC LEADER EXEMPLARS

---

The primary question of this research, concerning Christian leadership, has already been framed in the research question - how did Jesus describe leadership He did not prefer? This section will ultimately provide clarity concerning that question. In order to produce this clarity, a social and cultural texture analysis of Jesus' interaction with the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23:1-7 is conducted. Initially, the social and cultural analysis method is described. The method is then applied to the narrative account in Matthew's gospel. Ultimately, the analysis reveals the presence of certain toxic leader exemplars.

---

### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TEXTURE METHOD

---

The social and cultural texture method is generally understood first as a qualitative method of hermeneutical inquiry focused on ancient documents as the data source. Qualitative methods focus on a naturalistic approach to inquiry that is generally inductive in essence (Patton, 2009). A qualitative method is useful for the present research as the goal is to glean knowledge and understanding directly from a specific incident and then apply that knowledge and understanding more broadly. Creswell and Poth (2018) categorized hermeneutics as a regular mode of qualitative inquiry. Hermeneutics is a broad term used to classify efforts to interpret written texts. Yin (2018) argued hermeneutics should be understood as valid and reliable methodology as is often ascribed to certain quantitative methods. Creswell and Poth noted the usefulness of hermeneutical inquiries in analyzing textual based documentation.

Several different specific hermeneutical methods exist. However, in its very broadest sense hermeneutical analysis should produce meaning from a text. According to Patton (2009), the meaning derived from a text through a hermeneutical approach depends, among other things, "on the cultural context in which it was originally created" (p. 113). Patton further noted hermeneutics

can provide a researcher the theoretical framework by which he or she can then determine the author's original context and purpose for writing. One of the primary goals of this present work is to accurately understand the meaning, purpose, and context presented by the narrative account in Matthew 23. As such, a hermeneutical inquiry is the correct choice of research methodology. Patton stated hermeneutical inquiry provides a useful perspective in interpreting various types of written documents "especially biblical" (p. 114) texts.

Social and cultural texture analysis is a particular hermeneutical approach, and the approach specifically applied in the present study because it calls special attention to the dynamic of the world of the author and the original readers. As indicated by Koptak (1999), this analytical method provides interpretive insight concerning how significant social and cultural phenomena are represented in the text. Robbins (1996) listed three primary dimensions of social and cultural analysis as specific social topics, common social and cultural topics, and final cultural categories. Each of these dimensions aids in understanding how the discourse is related to the societal and cultural realities existent at the time. The second dimension, common social and cultural topics, is the specific tool applied in the present work. Robbins clarified the scope of this dimension as concerning "the social and cultural systems and institutions that it [the text] both presupposes and evokes" (Robbins, 1996, p. 159). According to Bayes (2010), this dimension is concerned with the regular topics that are evident in a text. This dimension, therefore, considers the social and cultural topics relevant to those characters inside the text. The characters within a text would naturally be very familiar with the common social and cultural topics within their own society (Gowler, 2010). This familiarity results from prolonged inclusion or awareness of a society, but the familiarity may not exist for modern readers. Thus, as van Eck (2001) stated "what is needed is a social-scientific analysis of [the] texts" (p. 595). Robbins noted the three important social and cultural institutions and systems are family, patron-client relations, and cultural symbol systems. Bayes stated that these three institutions and systems are manifested in a text through various topics including honor, shame, legal contracts, and purity codes. Robbins added kinship, hospitality, conflict, temple and household, meals and fellowship, and status to the list of relevant topics impacting these systems and institutions. Therefore, it is expected a text will indicate the presupposed relevancy of these regular topics and consider them as part of the discourse. In the following section, the social and cultural texture analysis method is applied to Jesus' encounter with the Jewish leaders.

---

#### ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 23:1-7

---

The social and cultural analysis of Matthew 23:1-7 reveals several manifestations of the social and cultural institutions relevant to the original author, original readers, and characters within and associated with the text. Each verse is taken in turn and in the order presented by Matthew. Analysis only is provided in this section with conclusions provided in the following section. All scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

VERSE 1. Matthew begins the narrative clearly identifying the original audience by stating "Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples." At face value, it is clear the original audience included the Jewish leaders themselves, Jesus' own followers, and the crowds gathered to hear His teaching. Esler (2015) claimed these groups were all primarily Israelites of Jesus' time noting Matthew records Jesus' activities as being mainly restricted to the Jewish nation. DeSilva (2004) asserted the evidence in the text indicates a Jewish audience based on the reality that the author does

not make a great effort to explain the social and cultural aspects and/or customs within the text. The author assumed his Jewish audience would have well understood the social dynamic presupposed in the text along with the crowds and disciples.

VERSE 2. The second verse is the beginning of Jesus' statements directed to the scribes and Pharisees who "have seated themselves in the chair of Moses." Some debate exists among scholars as to whether a physical chair of Moses existed in the temple. General agreement exists among many scholars that the chair of Moses, literal chair or not, represents the teaching and civil authority of the Jewish leadership (deSilva, 2004; Michaels, 1981; Nelaval, 2008; Powell, 1995). Jesus' condemnation of these leaders was not because they held leadership positions but was because of their autocratic and absolutist application of their leadership role (deSilva, 2004; Michaels, 1981). The latter fact becomes evident in subsequent verses.

VERSE 3. Jesus confirmed that His hearers should observe and follow the teachings of the Jewish leaders but to not follow the example of their deeds "for they say things and do not do them." Powell (1995) indicated how one might assume that the teachers of the law would be dependable followers of the law, but such was not the case with the scribes and Pharisees. Viljoen (2018) further noted how the Jewish leaders are presented in this verse as "insincere and untrustworthy" (p. 6). The teaching proclaimed by the Jewish leaders was not the problem. Jesus condemned them for not reliably applying their own teachings.

VERSE 4. A transition of sorts begins in verse four. Nelavala (2008) indicated this transition includes Jesus pointing to some "specific things that 'they' [scribes and Pharisees] do that are against what they teach" (p. 27). Jesus stated the Jewish leaders "tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders" while simultaneously being "unwilling to move them [the heavy burdens] with so much as a finger." DeSilva (2004) claimed Jesus is referring to the body of abusive religious laws that He would have regarded as "oppressive and impossible" (p. 267). Apparently, these Jewish leaders were using their position of governance in ways one might describe as ruthless or heartless.

VERSE 5. Jesus continued in verse five noting how these Jewish leaders were conditioning their behaviors because they wanted "all their deeds to be noticed by men." Esler (2015) claimed Jesus is referring to the scribes and Pharisees' habit of "parading their pious deeds in public" (p. 45). Viljoen (2018) noted how the Jewish society at the time was an honor and shame society and the scribes and Pharisees had an ongoing goal to seek honor and recognition from the larger social system. Their behaviors and actions were apparently more about promoting self than about promoting the kingdom of God.

VERSES 6 AND 7. In the final two verses, Jesus provided several examples of the level of self-appreciation held by the scribes and Pharisees (Michaels, 1981). Jesus first noted in v. 6 how these leaders loved having the "place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues," and then in v. 7 Jesus noted their great appreciation for "respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men." Powell (1995) said these verses should be interpreted as the scribes and Pharisees doing these things so as to "bring glory to themselves" (p. 432). Viljoen (2018) used the word "vanity" (p. 6) to help describe these actions and behaviors. Indeed, the scribes and Pharisees seemed to have developed a great sense of personal admiration.

As a final note regarding the social and cultural analysis of Matthew 23:1-7, one cannot escape the fact Jesus was communicating about the scribes and Pharisees' hypocrisy. Pollmann (2001) claimed Jesus is clearly calling out the Jewish leaders related to their double standard. Saldarini (1992) claimed this is one of many examples of Jesus charging the Jewish leaders with hypocrisy. Pollman noted Matthew 23 is basically an entire speech given by Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees' hypocritical behavior. Although each verse in Matthew 23:1-7 should be considered individually and in detail as has been completed here, it would be a mistake to not also recognize the higher-level theme of hypocrisy as evidenced within the text.

---

## TOXIC LEADER EXEMPLARS

---

A brief comparison of the toxic leadership dimensions to the actions and behaviors of the scribes and Pharisees is presented. The comparison provides considerable evidence Jesus was describing what is now referred to as Toxic Leadership. The scribes and Pharisees provide a clear example of Toxic Leadership in a first century Jewish context. As with the previous section, all scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

**ABUSIVE SUPERVISION.** The first dimension of Toxic Leadership identified by Schmidt (2008, 2014) was abusive supervision. Schmidt accepted Tepper's (2000) definition of abusive supervision as being a "sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (p. 178). Jesus was negatively describing abusive supervision in Matthew 23:4 when He said "They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger." DeSilva (2004) seemed to confirm this reality by describing the extremely difficult and oppressive nature of the law imposed by the Jewish leaders. Both verbally and nonverbally, the scribes and Pharisees governed with hostility toward the common Jew.

**AUTHORITARIAN LEADERSHIP.** The second dimension noted by Schmidt (2008, 2014) was authoritarian leadership. Schmidt applied Cheng et al.'s (2004) description of an authoritarian leader as one who demonstrates "behavior that asserts authority and control over subordinates and demands unquestionable obedience from subordinates" (Cheng et al., p. 91). Jesus was rejecting the authoritarian style of the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23: 2-3 where He noted they styled their authority as following Moses but then applied that leadership in a dictatorial manner reminiscent of the 'do what I say not what I do' cliché. The common Jew was not allowed to question this authority. As noted by deSilva (2004) and Michaels (1995), the issue was not whether they had authority to lead but was the authoritarian style of their leadership.

**NARCISSISM.** The next dimension of Toxic Leadership identified by Schmidt (2008, 2014) was the personality trait of narcissism. Schmidt recognized Rosenthal and Pittinsky's (2006) description of narcissism as "a personality trait encompassing grandiosity, arrogance, self-absorption, entitlement, fragile self-esteem, and hostility" (p. 617). Jesus described four demonstrations of the scribes and Pharisee's narcissism in Matthew 23: 6-7. Jesus noted they loved being greeted respectfully in public, they loved being called Rabbi, they loved the honor seat at banquets, and they loved the chief seats in the synagogues. These Jewish leaders had developed an elevated sense of personal worth and vain admiration (Viljoen, 2018) and worked to "bring glory to themselves" (Powell, 1995, p. 432).

**UNPREDICTABILITY.** The subsequent dimension of Toxic Leadership theory identified by Schmidt (2008) is unpredictability. Schmidt described this dimension as an unreliable nature in the leader keeping followers from successfully predicting how the leader may act in a given scenario. Schmidt said “negative behavior has negative effects, unpredictable negative behavior might exacerbate the negative results” (p. 30). In Matthew 23:3, Jesus made a clear reference to the unpredictability of the scribes and Pharisees when He stated “they say things and do not do them.” The common Jew would have expected their leaders would follow and rightly apply the same law they taught and the strict adherence they expected (Powell, 1995). However, the Jewish leaders were not dependable and not reliable in this manner. The common Jew could not rightly anticipate their leaders’ behaviors in various situational realities.

**SELF-PROMOTING.** The final dimension of self-promoting was described by Schmidt (2008) as when “leaders act in ways that promote their own interests above and beyond the interest of the units they are leading, usually with the intention of maintaining a positive image to upper levels of the leadership hierarchy” (p. 28). Jesus made a strong implication about the Jewish leader’s self-promoting behaviors in Matthew 23:5 when He said “they do all their deeds to be noticed by men.” Esler (2015) confirmed these behaviors were designed for “parading their pious deeds in public” (p. 45). Honor and shame were serious considerations in the first century Jewish culture. The scribes and Pharisees made it a regular and conscious effort to seek and promote their own honor across the larger social order.

Recognizing the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day as toxic leader exemplars is useful in the contemporary study of the theory. Stuckert (2018) claimed this negative leadership experienced in Jesus’ day was ordained by God. Why would God allow such negative leadership? Saldarini (1992) may have the correct answer noting “Matthew uses the scribes and Pharisees as negative examples to define true leadership” (p. 670). Whether this was Matthew’s intention or simply a by-product, the following discussion is developed from the same mindset. Understanding Jesus’ rebuke of the toxic leaders He encountered aids in determining what is true Christian leadership.

---

## DISCUSSION

---

In this section, a thorough discussion of the analysis and findings is presented. The study’s research question is specifically addressed providing clarity concerning what should not be considered as Christian leadership. Learning from a different perspective leads to the development of a distinctly Christian leadership construct - Healthy Leadership. As such, the characteristics of Healthy Leadership are examined. In order to provide some immediate benefit by way of practical application, several recommendations for executive leaders are provided. Finally, a section detailing the future research needs concerning both toxic leadership and healthy leadership is presented.

---

### WHAT IS NOT CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP?

---

The present work is based on searching for an answer to the question of what constitutes Christian leadership. Specifically, the research has focused on determining how Jesus, as the founder of Christianity described leadership He did not prefer. The idea has been that understanding what leadership Jesus did not prefer would then provide insight as to what leadership Jesus would prefer. Whatever leadership is preferred by Jesus would naturally then be understood as a Christian

leadership construct. As has been demonstrated, Jesus's interaction with the scribes and Pharisees makes clear that He did not prefer nor approve of their leadership style. That leadership style has been demonstrated as Toxic Leadership with the scribes and Pharisees now understood as toxic leader exemplars. Thus, one can initially conclude whatever Christian leadership is, it is not Toxic Leadership. As such, an important conclusion is toxic leader behaviors should not be characteristic of a Christian leader. Therefore, one can assume toxic leader behaviors are not Christlike. The ability to state Christian leadership is not toxic in nature does not provide specific clarity as to what is Christian leadership. However, knowing the specific dimensions of toxic leadership along with knowing Jesus did not approve of that leader behavior does allow one to work in reverse by identifying the leadership concepts that are polar opposites of the toxic leadership dimensions. By learning what is not Christian leadership, perhaps it is possible to point to what is Christian leadership. The following section addresses what is being called Healthy Leadership and makes a brief case for it as a possible understanding of leadership from a Christian perspective.

---

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY LEADERSHIP

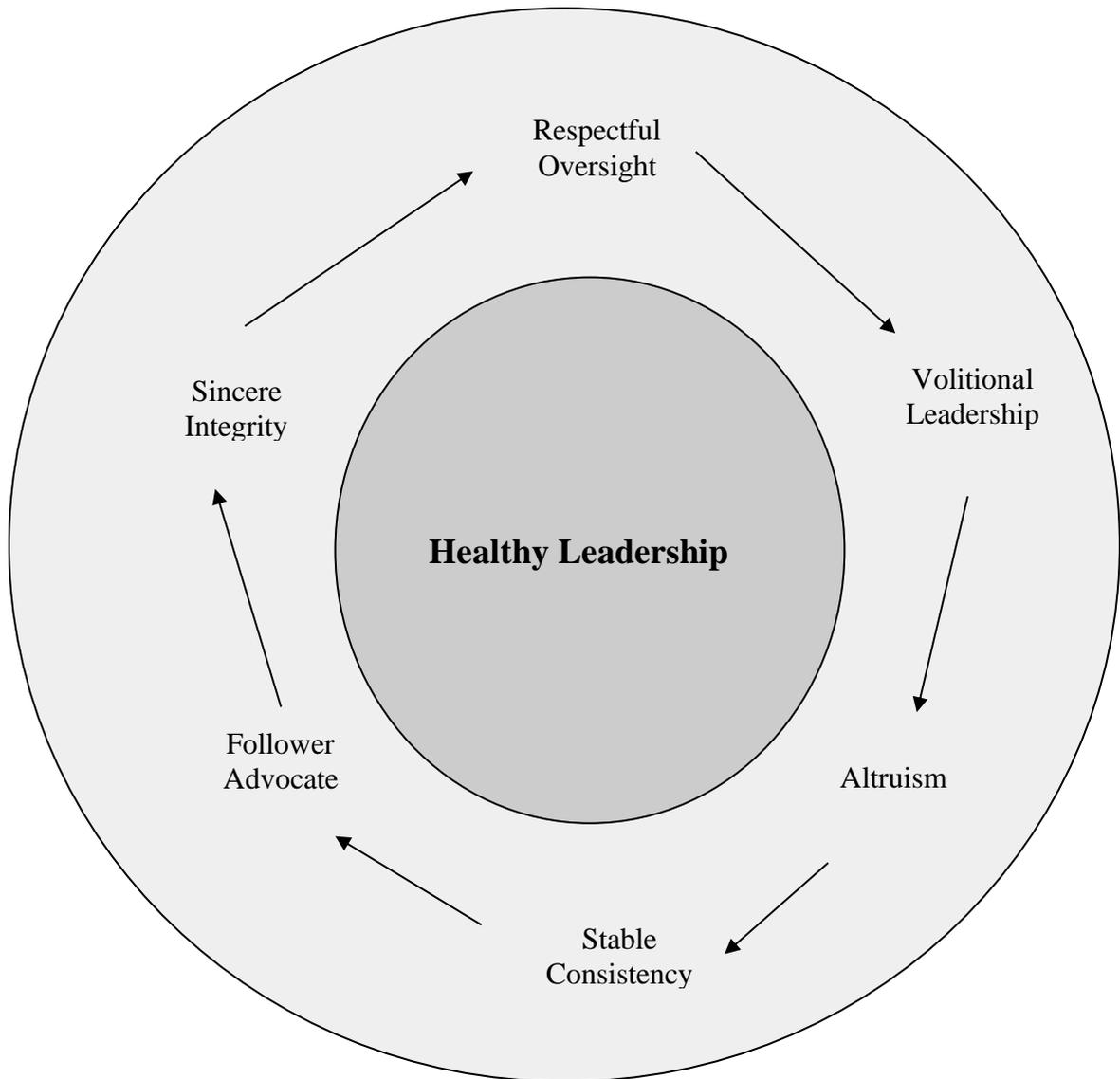
---

Healthy leadership is possibly best described as being more concerned with the well-being of followers and organizations than of the leaders themselves. Healthy leadership is describing the process of leadership behaviors, attributes, and activities which seek to promote the health of followers and organizations. As previously mentioned, the dimensions of healthy leadership are conceptually conceived as being the polar opposites of the toxic leadership dimensions. This method starts with the choice of the word healthy in naming the concept. Using the word toxic addresses the very poisonous nature of a toxic leader. A poisonous substance is deadly to a body. By contrast, healthy substances maintain the vitality of a body. Toxic Leadership is detrimental to followers and organizations whereas Healthy Leadership is beneficial to the organization and its members. Healthy Leadership is described as involving six dimensions. Figure 1 demonstrates the six dimensions of healthy leadership.

**RESPECTFUL OVERSIGHT.** The first dimension of healthy leadership is respectful oversight as contrasted with the abusive supervision dimension of a toxic leader. Respectful oversight is defined here as holding followers in high esteem while overseeing their work at appropriate levels. Respectful oversight honors the intrinsic value of the individual while supervising work without elements of hostility. Respectful oversight recognizes the dignity of the person while not abdicating the important role of administration.

**VOLITIONAL LEADERSHIP.** The second dimension is volitional leadership as contrasted with authoritarian leadership. Volitional leadership involves a leader whose leading inspires volitional following among organizational members. Volitional leadership does not focus on legitimate power, extreme measures of controlling, nor extreme demands for obedience. Volitional leaders do not remind followers of their own position but do encourage free and critical thinking.

**ALTRUISM.** The third dimension is altruism being contrasted with narcissism. Altruism in this vein is an unselfish concern for the health and well-being of followers. Altruism will often involve the leader's personal sacrifice of time, effort, or energy. Altruism is follower-focused in a right balance as the leader demonstrates humility and meekness through caring.

**Figure 1: The Six Dimensions of Healthy Leadership**

**STABLE CONSISTENCY.** The fourth dimension is stable consistency as contrasted with unpredictability. Stable consistency should be understood as the leader providing a consistent set of predictable behaviors and responses that are calm, ordered, and thoughtful. Stable consistency provides the follower a safe haven in cases of organizational turmoil and crisis. Stable consistency provides followers the ability to accurately anticipate leadership decisions and then contour their work toward that end.

**FOLLOWER ADVOCATE.** The fifth dimension is named the follower advocate being contrasted with the self-promoting dimension. To be a follower advocate would involve a leader promoting the interests of their followers in conjunction with the organizational goals. A follower

advocate will encourage followers to pursue professional interests that correspond to long term goals. A follower advocate will both defend their followers and tout their accomplishments up the hierarchical ladder in the organization.

**SINCERE INTEGRITY.** The final dimension of healthy leadership would involve sincere integrity which is contrasted with hypocrisy. Sincere integrity would include the willing demonstration of various virtuous behaviors such as truthfulness, incorruptibility, and general honorableness. To be truthful with followers is always important, but to want to be truthful with followers is meaningful at an even higher level.

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE LEADERS

---

Six distinct recommendations are suggested for executive leaders. Initially, executive leaders should take time to assess the current level of Toxic Leadership within their organization. Toxic Leadership is a pervasive problem in organizations and is having a widespread negative impact. Executives must understand the need to assess mid-level managers regarding their potential toxic behavior. Surveying the organizational followers would help to provide such information. Once an assessment of the current toxicity level has been established, executive leaders should take specific action to retrain the toxic leaders identified within the organization. These leaders should be allowed the opportunity to learn and apply the six dimensions of Healthy Leadership. As such, retraining should focus on developing organizational specific behaviors that apply the healthy leadership dimensions appropriately within that organizational context. The third recommendation is straightforward but may be unpleasant for some. Toxic leaders who have not responded to the retraining effort should be removed from the organization. Removing a mid-level leader with many years of service is not an easy choice to make. However, the overall organizational health depends on removing the poison from the system. If the poison is not responding to the antidote, then stronger measures must be taken. If retraining proves ineffective, these toxic leaders need to be provided with the opportunity to be successful elsewhere.

The final three recommendations are more proactive whereas the first three were more reactive in nature. Executive leaders are always focused on the development of new, junior leaders within the organization. There should be a conscious effort made to include training on the six dimensions of Healthy Leadership in every leadership development program within the organization. Starting with junior leaders makes sense because their development is already a customary activity. The next step is to create leadership reward systems that promote the six healthy leadership traits. Reward systems do not have to be financial in design. The appropriate reward systems will likely be organization specific and even leader specific. Executive leaders should remember they will get more of what they reward. As such, to reward the enactment of Healthy Leadership behaviors will cause more of those behaviors to occur. Finally, executive leaders should not forget to focus on followers with their consideration. Each recommendation thus far has been focused on leaders at various levels within the organization. However, the organizational member may require some socialization to healthy leadership as well. Followership training should be implemented with a focus on the critical thinking and active engagement of the organizational members. Followers should learn to see themselves as partners in accomplishing the organization's mission as they follow the healthy lead they have been provided.

---

## FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

---

Several future research opportunities exist related to both toxic leadership and healthy leadership. These future research endeavors include opportunities that are qualitative, quantitative, and action research oriented. The present work ceased analysis at Matthew 23:7. However, in the remaining part of Matthew 23 Jesus continued with what is customarily known as the seven woe statements. Understanding these seven woes as being directed toward toxic leader exemplars may provide insight regarding the potential outcomes of toxic leadership in a contemporary context. Likewise, understanding the woe statements as pertaining to toxic leaders may allow examination of the opposite realities of each of the seven woes using the same reverse understanding as was employed in the present work. The result may provide insight into positive outcomes one might expect from healthy leadership. Both of those future research efforts would require a new qualitative approach that applies some specific hermeneutical analysis.

In the area of potential action research, there are at least two opportunities. First, a toxic leader rehabilitation program needs to be developed. It has been suggested here that some toxic leaders can be retrained. However, no such formal retraining program seems to currently exist in the literature. It would not be feasible to expect every toxic leader can be reformed, but perhaps many can if some formal program were developed and implemented. Second, a healthy leadership training program also needs some action research work to be completed. It has been suggested here that training junior leaders and other leaders within the organization on the six dimensions of healthy leadership would be beneficial. That is a logical assertion, but a formal training program needs to be developed along those lines.

Finally, the Healthy Leadership construct needs additional research that is both qualitative and quantitative. In order to develop Healthy Leadership to the level of theory, qualitative inquiry must follow first. The specific dimensions mentioned in the present work need empirical validation. Qualitative work should be completed as a first step in order to work toward the development of a validated instrument that could measure healthy leadership. The result of the qualitative work could narrow or broaden the current constructs associated with healthy leadership. Once the qualitative scale development work has been completed, then several iterations of quantitative work would necessarily follow in order to determine validity and reliability of the instrument. Ultimately, the development of a validated survey instrument that could measure the healthy leadership dimensions would contribute significantly in advancing healthy leadership from concept to theory.

---

## CONCLUSION

---

Understanding what constitutes Christian leadership will continue as a point of interest for many. The present work focused on addressing the idea of Christian leadership by attempting to determine what is not Christian leadership. As such, the main force of this work was to examine what leadership style did Jesus not prefer since He is the founder of the Christian religion. The social and cultural analysis of Matthew 23:1-7 reveals Jesus did not prefer what is contemporarily understood as Toxic Leadership. Seeing the scribes and Pharisees as toxic leader exemplars allows one to approach the Christian leadership question from a different direction. Whatever Christian leadership should be understood as, it becomes clear to see that it is not toxic. As such, the concept of healthy leadership emerges as a distinctly Christian leadership construct. The six dimensions of healthy leadership have been identified as respectful oversight, volitional leadership, altruism, stable

consistency, follower advocate, and sincere integrity. Several recommendations for future research have been offered and should be pursued because too few organizational members have experienced a healthy form of leadership.

---

 REFERENCES
 

---

- Baden, D. (2014). "Look on the Bright Side: A Comparison of Positive and Negative Role Models in Business Ethics Education." *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 13(2), 154-170.
- Bayes, J. D. (2010). "Five-fold Ministry: A Social and Cultural Texture Analysis of Ephesians 4:11-16." *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, 3(1), 113-122
- Bell, R. M. (2017). "The Dysfunction Junction: The Impact of Toxic Leadership on Follower Effectiveness." (UMI No. 10260880). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database*.
- Blanchard, K. H., & Hodges, P. (2008). *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons for Everyone From the Greatest Leadership Role Model of all Time*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Cheng, B. Chou, L., Wu, T., Huang, M., & Farh, J. (2004). "Paternalistic Leadership and Subordinate Responses: Establishing a Leadership Model in Chinese Organizations." *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 7, 89-117.
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- deSilva, D.A. (2004). *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Leicester, Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press.
- Dobbs, J. M. (2014). "The Relationship Between Perceived Toxic Leadership Styles, Leader Effectiveness, and Organizational Cynicism." (UMI No. 1459425092) *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database*.
- Esler, P. F. (2015). "Intergroup Conflict and Matthew 23: Towards Responsible Historical Interpretation of a Challenging Text." *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 45(1), 38-59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146107914564824>
- Gächter, S., & Renner, E. (2018). "Leaders as Role Models and 'Belief Managers' In Social Dilemmas." *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 154, 321-334. doi:10.1016/j.jebo.2018.08.001
- Gallos, J. V. (2008). "Learning from the Toxic Trenches: The Winding Road to Healthier Organizations—and to Healthy Everyday Leaders." *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17(4), 354-367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492608320580>
- Gallus, J. A., van Driel, M., Walsh, B. M., Gouge, M. C., & Antolic, E. (2013). "Intolerable Cruelty: A Multilevel Examination of the Impact of Toxic Leadership On U.S. Military Units and Service Members." *Military Psychology (American Psychological Association)*, 25(6), 588-601. doi:10.1037/mil0000022
- Gini, A., & Green, R. M. (2012). "Bad Leaders/Misleaders." *Business and Society Review*, 117(2), 143-154. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8594.2012.00402.x
- Gowler, D. B. (2010). "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Textures of a Text and Its Reception." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 33(2), 191-206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X10385857>
- Koptak, P. E. (1999). "Of Methods, Monarchs, and Meanings - A Socio Rhetorical Approach to Exegesis / Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide To Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 42(1), 122.

- Kusy, M. E., & Holloway, E. L. (2009). *Toxic Workplace: Managing Toxic Personalities and Their Systems of Power*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lian, H., Ferris, L. D., & Brown, D. J. (2012). "Does Taking the Good With the Bad Make Things Worse? How Abusive Supervision and Leader-Member Exchange Interact to Impact Need Satisfaction and Organizational Deviance." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 117, 41-52. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.10.003
- Lipman-Blumen, J. (2005). *The Allure of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians—and How We Can Survive Them*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Michaels, J. (1981). "The Intention of Matthew 23." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 100(2), 302-304. doi:10.2307/3266105
- Naseer, S., Raja, U., Syed, F., Donia, M. B., & Darr, W. (2016). "Perils of Being Close to a Bad Leader in a Bad Environment: Exploring the Combined Effects of Despotism, Leader-Member Exchange, and Perceived Organizational Politics on Behaviors." *Leadership Quarterly*, 27(1), 14-33. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.09.005
- Nelavala, S. (2008). "2nd November: Proper 26 Matthew 23:1-12." *The Expository Times*, 120(1), 27-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524608096269>
- Parris, D., & Peachey, J. (2013). "A Systematic Literature Review of Servant Leadership Theory in Organizational Contexts." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(3), 377-393. doi:10.1007/s10551-012-1322-6
- Patton, M. Q. (2009). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pelletier, K. L. (2009). "The Effects of Favored Status and Identification With Victim on Perceptions of and Reactions to Leader Toxicity." (UMI No. 304861401) *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database*.
- Pelletier, K. L. (2012). "Perceptions of and Reactions to Leader Toxicity: Do Leader-Follower Relationships and Identification with Victim Matter?" *Leadership Quarterly*, 23(3), 412-424.
- Pollmann, K. (2001). "Hypocrisy and the History of Salvation: Medieval Interpretations of Matthew 23." *Wiener Studien*, 114, 469-482.
- Powell, M. A. (1995). "Do and Keep What Moses Says (Matthew 23:2-7)." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 114(3), 419
- Reed, G. E. (2004). "Toxic Leadership." *Military Review*, 84(4), 67.
- Robbins, V. K. (1996). *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology*. New York: Routledge.
- Rosenthal, S. A., & Pittinsky, T. L. (2006). "Narcissistic Leadership." *Leadership Quarterly*, 17(6), 617-633. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.005
- Saldarini, A. J. (1992). "Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 54(4), 659-680
- Schmidt, A. A. (2008). "Development and Validation of the Toxic Leadership Scale." (UMI No. 193655997). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database*.
- Schmidt, A. A. (2014). "An Examination of Toxic Leadership, Job Outcomes, and the Impact of Military Deployment." (UMI No.1558874321) (Doctoral dissertation). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database*.
- Sendjaya, S. S., & Sarros, J. C. (2002). "Servant Leadership: Its Origin, Development, and Application in Organizations." *Journal of Leadership And Organizational Studies*, 9, 57-64.
- Stuckert, J. D. (2018). "Forgive Our Presumption: A Difficult Reading of Matthew 23:1-3." *Perichoresis*, 16(3), 3-15. doi:10.2478/perc-2018-0013

- Tepper, B. J. (2000). "Consequences of Abusive Supervision." *The Academy of Management Journal*, 2, 178.
- van Eck, E. (2001). "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Theoretical Points of Departure." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 57(1/2), 593-611. doi:10.4102/hts.v57i1/2.1884
- Viljoen, F. P. (2018). "The Controversy Dialogue Leading Towards Jesus' Severe Response in Matthew 23." In *Die Skriflig*, 52(1), e1-e8. doi:10.4102/ids.v52i1.2349
- Whicker, M. L. (1996). *Toxic Leaders: When Organizations Go Bad*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.
- Xu, A. J., Loi, R., & Lam, L. W. (2015). "The Bad Boss Takes It All: How Abusive Supervision and Leader-Member Exchange Interact to Influence Employee Silence." *Leadership Quarterly*, 26(5), 763-774.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

## CONTRIBUTORS

---

**Mark L. Atterson** – a Ph.D candidate in Organizational/Ecclesial Leadership at Regent University. He currently serves the needs of pastors and churches providing consulting, support, and mentorship to churches with Ascend Leadership Consulting and as president of Propulsion Evangelistic Ministries. His education includes an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Leadership from Regent university, a M.A.T.S. from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, and a B.A. in Bible/Pastoral Ministries from Central Bible College. He previously served in various ecclesial roles including church planting, revitalization, missions aviation, and pastoral leadership.  
matterson@mac.com

**R. Mark Bell** - Assistant Professor of Management at Wayland Baptist University and serves as a faculty member in WBU's Doctor of Management program. Mark holds an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership. Mark's research interests include effective followership and ineffective leadership.  
bellm@wbu.edu.

**Joshua Broward** - serves as the Director of Missional Development for the Church of the Nazarene's Northern California District, where he helps pastors and churches live into God's mission more deeply. Over the past twenty years, he has helped with Nazarene missions in more than a dozen countries, including nine years in South Korea. In 2015, Josh co-edited *Renovating Holiness: Global Nazarenes Revision Sanctification for the 21st Century*. In 2017, Josh co-wrote *Edison Churches: Experiments in Innovation and Breakthrough*. Josh is pursuing his PhD in Organizational Leadership at Eastern University, where he is studying how to help pastoral leaders develop the adaptive capacities to guide churches to missional effectiveness in a rapidly changing world.  
joshua.broward@eastern.edu

**Kevin S. Hall** - a life-long learner of leadership with the desire to encourage and develop cross-cultural leaders. He completed his B.A. in Comprehensive Bible at Cedarville University. He holds an Advanced M.Div. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he also served as Assistant to the Dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry. He is currently pursuing the Ph.D. in Christian Leadership from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Kevin previously served as a full-time missionary in Mexico. He is married to Bethany, and they have three kids.  
havtorun@gmail.com

**Norlan Josué Hernández** - is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies from Biola's Cook School of Intercultural Studies. He holds a Master of Arts in Theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. His research interests include Latin American identity, theology, contextualization, leadership, and diversity and inclusion.  
Norlan.J.Hernandez@gmail.com

**W. Brian Shelton** - has served as Provost, School Dean, and Associate Vice-President of a Christian college. He holds the M.Div. from Covenant Theological Seminary and the Ph.D. in historical theology from Saint Louis University. He is a Fellow of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) Leadership Development Institute for Emerging Leaders. His leadership includes serving on the board of PHōS Studies Abroad Program and the educational board of Honduras Outreach International (HOI). Brian is Adjunct Professor of Theology at Asbury University.  
wbrianshelton@gmail.com

**Alina Wreczycki** – a Regent University School of Business & Leadership doctoral student in the dissertation phase.  
alinwre@mail.regent.edu