Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

The Image of Leadership:
Man’s View of God as Reflected in His Leadership Style.

A Thesis Project Submitted to
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The Image of Leadership:
Man’s View of God as Reflected in His Leadership Style.

This thesis project will demonstrate the connection between a pastor’s practical perceived theology of the inner workings of the Trinity and his desired leadership style. Because “God’s people are stamped with the tag of ‘gods’,“¹ they will seek to rule in a similar manner. These perceived relationships will drive the pastor toward a desired style of leadership. In turn, examining horizontal styles of leadership will reveal true vertical beliefs. These levels of leadership interaction will be researched through literature and interviews with eight church leaders. As the leader defines the leadership structures and recognizes hidden similarities and disparities between practical and theoretical theology, lasting modifications become possible at core levels of belief and leadership style. Trinitarian theology and leadership will be reexamined and refined, strengthening the divine-human relationship.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation for my wife Pam who has stood with me in this process of study. She has refilled my coffee many times and supported me in prayer and encouragement. I would also like to express my appreciation to Fellowship Bible Church for allowing me to divide my time between pasturing and studying. Thank you Dr. Bob for your input and support as well. Above all, I desire to give God all of the praise for the many things that He has taught me, and the strength that He has given over the last two years. Only He is worthy of praise.
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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Orthodox Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church</td>
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Chapter One
Introduction

The definition of, and the desire for, effective leadership consumes the hearts and minds of many within the business and pastoral world. Every year there is a plethora of new material published in books and journals covering the theological nature of leadership, the psychology of leadership and styles of leadership. What often happens is that the aspiring pastor seeks out some new pattern that catches his attention because others have used it effectively and he seeks to integrate it into his leadership structure. What is not analyzed, however, is the leader’s understanding of his own foundational identity in the one in whose image he is created.

This Thesis Project proposes that the source of man’s leadership style is to be found in his view of the nature of God. Any leadership style, that a pastor attempts to implement that does not harmonize with his view of God’s nature will become problematic for him. This investigative project examined how a pastor’s beliefs regarding the interactions within the members of the Trinity and God’s desires for man, became the foundation of their leadership style. These beliefs may have been consciously or subconsciously understood, but they still shaped the desired result of the pastor. How the leader arrived at his core beliefs must be left for a different study. What was examined was his currently held belief system and its impact on his leadership structure.

The connection between relationship and authority was broken down into two degrees of interaction. The perceived horizontal interaction within the Godhead, along with God’s goals within creation is the source of one’s relationship model. The secondary level that was examined was the preferred leadership style of the pastor and the end goal that he desired for his church.
The author approached this Thesis Project by looking at how these two levels of relationships were defined, what the end product looked like, and how closely the divine and the human structures interconnected.

This task was accomplished in five chapters, the first being the introduction. The second chapter presented five different historical views of the Trinity and their corresponding church structures. These were the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, along with the reformation leaders: Martin Luther, John Calvin and Menno Simons. The third chapter looked deeper into the interview process and the tools used to collect the data. The theological and leadership results of the eight interviews were reported. The results of chapter two were also included in these horizontal comparisons. The fourth chapter compared the vertical connection of the trinitarian views of these men and churches with their leadership styles, demonstrating the relationship between an individual’s trinitarian theology and his leadership style. The final chapter sums up the research in the middle chapters. The theology and church structure of a pastor who deliberately followed his trinitarian theology was presented as a model for developing a church leadership style. Chapter five also looked forward to the application of this Thesis Project for strengthening church leadership and it presented future avenues for study. This first chapter presented the claim by addressing the following five elements: the statement of the problem, the statement of the scope and its limitations, the biblical/theological basis, the summary of literature review, and the methodology.

Statement of the Problem

When one examines the multiple leadership styles that have been promoted within the Christian church, the Christian home and Christian business, one quickly discovers that there are many areas of disagreement. Definitions have come and gone as to the role and nature of ideal
leadership. Almost everyone who has attempted to define leadership has done it in his own unique way.¹ There are a wide range of leadership styles that are proclaimed to be biblical, from the pastor who exercises absolute authority to the man who requires a consensus prior to the forming of a plan. There are dictatorial pastors and leadership teams, as well as congregational and democratic approaches to leadership. Servant leadership, representative leadership, mutual submission and theocratic representation seem to continually clash as they encounter each other. These conflicting styles have been found at all levels of leadership in the family and in the church.

The apparent answer to the current leadership dysfunctionality within society and the church has been to write a new book, or thousands of books, to present new proven models upon which to establish and grow God’s church. The contrast between the theocratic leadership where the pastor receives his vision by revelation from God, as presented by Henry Blackaby,² and the strategic planning process of measurable goals and visions presented by men such as Aubrey Malphurs,³ is rather stark. It was assumed that if one were to merely implement these claimed biblical principles, then true Spirit-filled growth would happen. Reality often differs from these proposals, for what worked for one person in one location does not work for others. What worked for the former pastor did not seem to work for the incoming leader. The solutions were new, but the same old problems resurfaced. How can one find the right solution to the leadership problem without the continual frustration of trial and error? According to Thom Rainer, the

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average pastor only remains in a church for three or four years before moving on. Perhaps a conflicted understanding of what God’s leadership looks like may play a role in that departure.

The presentation in Genesis of man being created in God’s image has led to extensive discussion and publication over the centuries. Emil Brunner declared that the doctrine of the imago Dei determines the fate of every theology. What does it mean to be a man or woman made in the image of God? Is the distinctive between humankind and the animals one of dominion, or will, or representation, or relationship, or community? Various authors and leaders have emphasized different perspectives and applied their preferred perspective to life.

Behind the understanding of imago Dei lies the vague but all-important understanding of the Dei, God within Himself. Gregg Okesson stated that it is the image of God that defines humanity and true influence, being the basis for the leader’s identity and the essence of what it means to be in charge. How does God relate to Himself as a triune being? Conflict over this perception of God’s relationship with Himself was the primary reason for the split between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The question of filioque was very significant, for out of it came the justification for the entire administrative structure of the universal church and how each local gathering related to church leadership as a whole. The definition of God’s horizontal relationship within Himself has significantly impacted church leadership structure throughout the centuries. The nature of the Triune God will always have a significant impact on His relationship with those created in His image.

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The vertical relationship of God toward man also serves as an example of what true leadership is. With the creation of humans, God assigned them two distinct tasks: to fill the world with children, and to rule and care for His creation. In doing these two things, man obeyed God. It is important, however, to know to how these tasks relate to *imago Dei*. Theologically, the understanding of the *imago Dei* has broken down into the two primary camps of dominion and relationship with limited regard for the interrelationship between these two tasks. Sin and man’s limitations have brought about a number of additional factors in complicating one’s understanding. Pure theology applies an intellectual knowledge to the process of defining the relationship between leadership and relationship. Man’s intellect, however, is not capable of pure logical thought due to the effects of sin and the limits of humanity. The clarity of Scripture is always filtered through the personal lenses of the viewer. Even though the marriage of the human father and mother was designed to portray the nature of the Godhead, the sinful human nature of parents blurs and conceals that which the marital relationship was to have revealed.

While good theological imagery may remain somewhat intact, the practical understanding of God’s relationship with Himself and man’s vertical relationship has been radically influenced by family, culture and life experiences. For some people, the sovereignty of God has come to mean that God is distant, uncaring and dictatorial. For the person holding that perspective, being a follower requires that one simply obey and worship the God who is worthy. For the next person, God may be immanent and loving, focusing in on relationship above all else without regard to morality or tasks. For that person, collaborative effort takes precedence over all else. Johannes Swart, for example, proposed that Christian leadership is not for the purpose of transmitting God’s truth to the world, but to enter into collaborative truth-seeking relationships
with others. A distinction between the actual theological reality of being an image-bearer, and the perceived concept of God that people live their lives by is made within the counseling community by the inversion of the phrase “the image of God” to “God-image”. Many people are blocked from comprehending the meaning of the *imago Dei* by their personal God-image, even though the true image remains hidden in the background.

One’s preferred leadership style is found in the outworking of one’s understanding of the Trinity and vertical relationship with God. The preferred style of a pastor working in an established church may not match the existing structure within that church. The leader does, however, desire to reshape that structure in order to bring it into harmony with his understanding of God-in-relationship. This theological and practical leadership transition, bringing beliefs and practices into harmony, takes time. In contrast, a pastor who has established his own church or organization has been able to create a much greater compatibility between his trinitarian theology and his ecclesiastical leadership structure.

Conflict and confusion often occur when there are discrepancies between the definition of the ideal and the perceived relationships. At times there are significant internal conflicts between the claimed theological belief and the realized relationship with God. On a very basic level, there are many people, leaders included, who believe theologically that God loves them. They, however, struggle to accept it and live as if it were so. If people experientially live under the authority of a distant and dictatorial God, then those people finds a reflection of that distance in their leadership style. Whatever characterizes the vertical relationship will also become a

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component of the horizontal structure. Attempts to change the horizontal leadership style without also dealing with the vertical will not resolve the conflict. Many proposed leadership styles and structures will not be beneficial for an individual, for they primarily address an external horizontal style without analyzing and matching the perceived *imago Dei*. When nothing matches administratively, then the pastor runs the risk of burning out or withdrawing from the task that God has called him to do.

Proclaimed theology and ideal definitions of one’s vertical relationship with God are usually presented in a positive and healthy manner, but a dysfunctional practical leadership style is much harder to hide. At times one encounters “territorial power-brokers masked by toothy grins and paper-thin vision statements.”\(^9\) By analyzing a leadership style, one’s true relationship and understanding of God can be revealed, exposing discrepancies between theological claims and practical reality. As one understands this flow of identity and the source of leadership style, one is then able to backtrack the path and reveal unhealthy and inconsistent foundational beliefs. This in turn, through the healing power of the Holy Spirit, should enable the pastor to bring integrity back to his life and leadership style.

Within the leadership world, there are many traps that remain hidden until a pastor firmly commits to a leadership path. Knowing the source code of a pastor’s leadership style is very important as he sets out to lead the church that God has placed into his care. Once the pastor has identified his trinitarian theology, he can choose a leadership style that will be effective for him. When the pastor recognizes areas of internal conflict between his theology and his practice, he can also let God bring about the correct changes to his theology. Understanding the differences

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\(^9\) Personal correspondence, November 2014.
in source codes will go a long way to avoiding conflict and resolving disagreements in these areas.

Statement of Limitations

The scope of this Thesis Project was to demonstrate the connection between the pastor’s understanding of God to his preferred leadership style. This link could have been examined within the marital or business world, however it was limited to the church. While this author maintains an emphasis on relationship as the primary component of the *imago Dei*, the intent of this project was not to establish a conclusion regarding which description of the image is the correct one. By focusing on individual correlations without being sidetracked by the classic theological debate, the source of the leadership style becomes apparent.

The principles demonstrated in this Thesis Project are applicable in evaluating the nature of the husband as leader of his home, however this aspect of leadership was deferred to a future project. The wife’s understanding of God and her vertical relationship greatly influences the shape of leadership within marriage. The man’s ideal leadership style is greatly complicated when his wife has a different understanding of what it means to live in a relationship under God’s authority. Analyzing these marital relationship definitions was far more complex than this Thesis Project allowed.

Leadership in the business world has different factors than those found in pastoral leadership. The vision and goals of the company, along with the nature of the product offered, have a significant impact upon the style of leadership required. The needs of business partners also play a significant role in shaping the method of leadership. Although the principles demonstrated in this Thesis Project remain applicable, a different set of questions and parameters would need to be applied.
For the sake of narrowing the research to a manageable level, this Thesis Project limited itself to evaluating pastors who are actively leading churches, while opening the door to future exploration in the broader world. A deeper discussion of limitations for the Thesis Project is done at the beginning of chapter three.

Theoretical Basis

The basis for this Thesis Project was found within the theological, psychological and counseling fields. The nature of man, how he thinks and how he interacts with others are primary topics within the psychological and counseling fields. In turn, the nature of man and how he understands his relationship to his creator is clearly found in the realm of theology. Theology and psychology will be brought together in analyzing leadership systems.

Theology begins with understanding God himself. The totality of the Divine is incomprehensible to the creature, yet God has revealed enough of Himself for man to begin to understand His being and nature and live in a relationship with Him. The process of arriving at a definition of God’s identity with understanding is only possible when one can compare similarities and differences. Many countries define their identity by contrasting themselves with their neighbors. Men and women define their gender by making comparisons with the other gender. In Genesis God has revealed that He created man in His own image. This means that there are similarities between God and man, for man, in contrast to other created beings, carries the image of God. The creature, however, is also different from the Creator. One can therefore make a contrast between the two, however limited that understanding may be. Therefore, theology seeks to enrich one’s understanding of the Creator by using comparison and contrast when dealing with the self-revelation of God.
God has revealed himself as three distinct persons, yet one God. This author often uses the phrase “differentiation-in-unity” to describe this relationship within the Godhead. This phrase emphasizes both the uniqueness of each member of the Trinity while also emphasizing Their oneness. The theological pursuit of defining and understanding the triune God in a sufficient manner to answer life’s questions began at the time of creation and will continue until He makes everything clear. There may appear to be conflict between the inner relationship of the Godhead and the sovereignty and leadership structure within that same Godhead, however the unity of the Trinity precludes this possibility. Questions regarding relationship, sovereignty and accountability within the Godhead, along with their answers, will have a direct impact upon the role of the image bearer within human leadership structures.

Man, created out of the dust of the earth and then brought to life by the breath of God, was created in God’s image. What is clearly taught in Scripture is that man is different from the animals and different from the angels. Man is also different from God. Yet, there are similarities between all sentient beings. This pursuit of theological anthropology and the answers derived from theological study greatly affect the goals and styles of leadership within the church, family and society. Is the primary task of man to rule or is it to care for the world? What is the difference and connection between these tasks? These two tasks will always remain in juxtaposition, with the one affecting the other. Figure one illustrates the overlap between leadership and relationship. There are questions of how relationship (care), and authority (leadership) with the overlap of accountability (submission) interact for one who functions as an image-bearer and a leader. The answers to these questions will have a direct impact upon the leadership structure that the pastor seeks to establish as he leads God’s people.

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10 Genesis 2:7 All scriptural quotations are from the New International Version (1984) unless otherwise noted.
Theology speaks of being created in the image of God and of a continual interaction with that sovereign God, whether positive or negative. The presence of this interaction in the shaping of one’s life and priorities has been analyzed from numerous perspectives. Psychologists have often sought to understand the significant role of God, or the god-image, in the thinking processes of man. Sigmund Freud postulated that men have a need to create a god in order to answer a deficiency in their lives.  

Ana-Maria Rizzoto modified Freud’s theory by accepting as a premise the role of a God-image in the life of a client. Dr. Tim Clinton presented the value of having God as a secure base from which to enter the world. The eternal interaction between God and man will always deal with the issue of who has leadership over the relationship. Any attempt to rebel against God’s rule, or live outside of a relationship with God, will result in a loss for man. Due to the fall and conflicts within homes, society, and internal struggles, the image of God is blurred within man, causing dysfunction within leadership at the expense of relationships. Leadership has come to exist in competition with relationship. Figure two illustrates the dysfunctional, oppositional conflict that arises when individuals are incomplete and no longer complimentary.

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Christian psychologists have sought to restore the correct definition of what it means to be human and have the proper response to authority. It is the role of Christian counselors to highlight the errors of thought, or the lies that have crept into one’s understanding of who God is, one’s belief of how God leads, and how one views God’s interaction with His creation. While these studies focus on man’s need for God to make up for deficiencies in one’s life, one’s relationship with God goes far beyond simply filling in the holes left by society. It is this very same God who is the positive foundation upon which man builds his structure of meaning and accomplishment in life. Definitions of leadership will find their source in these psychologically-defined beliefs.

Styles of leadership reflect a blend of one’s understanding of the nature of the Trinity, God-given uniqueness in personality, cultural and social influences and emotionally positive and damaging life experiences. Within the secular world, these intersecting factors also work together to form a leadership structure that may be functional but not optimal. Within the church, the pastor is continually confronted by his relationship with God as he strives to present the God he knows to those who are under his care. This man will more closely seek to emulate God and His treatment of him within his preferred leadership style. When there is a lack of integrity, that is, inconsistency between the theology, the vertical relational and the horizontal leadership structure, a dysfunctional loop becomes established. What often happens is that the leader
attempts to adjust his leadership style to accomplish the mission statement of the church without recognizing this dysfunction in the vertical relationship. At times, the leader may also attempt to redefine the Trinity to fit his preferences. This Thesis Project seeks to demonstrate that when all of these areas become synchronized, then an effective leadership style can be implemented that will reveal and enhance the work of God in the life of the leader as well as in those who are being led.

Statement of Methodology

This Thesis Project was designed to validate the claim that one’s theology of God has a direct impact on leadership style. The five chapters of this Thesis Project lay out the claims, compile research on historical leaders, as well as look at the theology and leadership structures of contemporary leaders. Each chapter plays a role in accomplishing this goal.

The introductory chapter begins the process by presenting in summary the key elements of a Thesis Project. The claim is stated and defined. The weave of threads in this study and the possible interconnecting disciplines are numerous, therefore it is essential to narrow the subject down into a manageable project. Thus, once the claim is stated, it is delineated and delimited in order to keep the subject matter concise and extensive. The first chapter looks at the connection theoretically, explaining how the reality of being created in the image of God will have a significant impact upon one’s manner of relating to, and leading other people. This process also examines the biblical support for the concepts of Trinity, relationships, authority and structure in divine-human interaction. It also explores the material that has been published touching this topic. While there currently is a multitude of material that deals with the individual topics of imago dei, Trinity and leadership, research reveals an almost complete lack of material that directly addressed the connection proposed here. Where a correlation was made, it was not
fleshed out in any significant manner. The resources listed show some of the connections that have been made. The importance of pursuing this Thesis Project to further develop the connection became apparent due to the poverty of available material.

The second chapter presents some of the significant historical views of the Trinity and how these theologies developed within church systems, shaping their corresponding leadership styles. The Thesis Project examines the early Christian church as they became established in their administrative structure and doctrine of the Trinity. The research follows the diverging paths of the Eastern Orthodox Church in their mystical and relational understanding of God, along with the western Roman Catholic Church as it gravitated towards an individual and legalistic understanding. The significant distinction between both the leadership structure, as well as the understanding of the inner workings of the Trinity is examined. While many factors were present at the time of division, the largest reason for the split between the eastern and western churches was the dispute whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Son or from the Father. Vladimir Lossky made the claim that this was indeed the sole theological reason for the separation of the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches.14 This author selected these two churches for inclusion in the Thesis Project due to their major influences upon the Christian world. The distinctions between them and the connections between their theology and leadership structures are demonstrated.

The Reformation brought in changes to the understanding of the Divine-human relationship. These changes had a significant impact on church leadership structures. This study investigates Luther, Calvin and Simons because of the manner in which they significantly shaped the church world, both in their understanding of who God is, and in their subsequent shaping of

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local churches through their sermons and writings. Their theologies on the nature of the Trinity are examined, as well as their understanding of how the church was to reveal God to the world. The impact of the return of *sola Scriptura*, humanism, and the emphasis on the individual priesthood of believers on individual leaders is examined. These differing beliefs ranged from a strictly private faith to singular, socialistic perspectives. While multiple smaller movements came out of the Reformation period, it was these three men who were the most prolific literarily and had a large sphere of influence. They are therefore the best leaders to examine in this Thesis Project.

While the mainline churches have not significantly changed their leadership structure from that established by their reformational foundations, the contemporary church scene is filled with a multitude of new leadership styles. It was impossible within this Thesis Project to analyze all of the modern variations that are present, even within the local vicinity. Chapter three examines the beliefs and models of eight different pastors. Due to the complexity of the subject matter and the level of variation that occurred within each section, the interview process was used to acquire the data instead of a broader survey tool. The chapter lays out in more detail the controls placed within the interview process to keep the results as concise and comparable as possible. The rationale for the selection of questions, as well as their order of presentation is further expanded. The interview results summarize the differences and similarities between the trinitarian belief systems. The similar and divergent church structures of the pastors are also compared.

The fourth chapter connects the variations that were found in the early church, the three reformational leaders, and the eight individual pastors as they led their congregations. The nature of the interaction between leadership and relationship is placed on a continuum that demonstrates
the connection between the theology and the leadership style. Within each of the major sections of leadership style, the different flavors defining the nature of leadership and the goals of that authority within the Trinity and church structure are drawn out. The continuity between the trinitarian theology and the leadership styles of all these systems is established, demonstrating that patterns flow from core beliefs. The connection between the pastor’s view of who God is, what God desires of him, and how he prefers to lead his congregation becomes clearer as each structure is analyzed. Illustrations of an authoritative God resulting in an authoritative leadership style are given, as well as the opposite of vague relationships leading to *laissez faire* leadership styles.

The conclusion in chapter five ties all of these threads together, demonstrating the effect of the vertical belief structure on the horizontal leadership style. This proved true regardless of the era of the church. The assessment of a pastor’s leadership style and structure, in light of this Thesis Project, is designed to enhance the value of the study for each organization. A real-world application of this deliberate connection is presented as an example of how structure and theology were married in an effective way. Chapter five lays out further avenues to pursue in examining this link as it occurs in other areas of life.

This Thesis Project can provide readers with a perspective by which they can examine their own leadership styles and note where harmony, dysfunction and discrepancies occur. It is also designed to encourage leaders to pursue a personal leadership style that is consistent with their theological understanding of God. This essential need for having a growing practical knowledge of God as the foundation for life is emphasized as the starting point. The Thesis Project demonstrates that when harmony exists, leaders can flourish. The intent of the author of this Thesis Project was not to precisely define the correct nature of the Trinity. Rather, by
entertaining a broad range of viewpoints, readers can apply the principles to their leadership situation and understand the consequences of their theology.

Literature Reviews

The literature that lay behind this Thesis Project only touched on the connection between the inner workings of the Trinity and leadership style, for there was no specific material that directly and extensively dealt with this material. A few other authors have made similar claims to the one in this Thesis Project, but they did not flesh out the connection. They assumed it to be evident. This Literature Review Section presents a number of the works that refer to the different aspects of this Thesis Topic.

Theology Resources

While God in many ways revealed His interaction with Himself, along with His unity, Scripture did not precisely lay out a clear theology of the essence of God. Being created in the image of God did, however, give us a glimpse into His nature. A good starting place when seeking to understand God and one’s vertical relationship with Him is to investigate what the Scripture reveals about the image of God. Anthony Hoekema\textsuperscript{15} presented a careful analysis of what it means to be created in God’s image. He dealt with the theological arguments and covered some of the major historical treatises on what that image entailed. A significant factor in the pursuit of knowing what it means to be in the image of God is sin. Hoekema presented how sin perverted the image and made an understanding of one’s true nature far more difficult to comprehend. The consequence of an improper understanding of God is dysfunctional relationship and conflicted leadership.

\textsuperscript{15} Anthony A Hoekema. \textit{Created in God’s Image}. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).
While many people desire to hold the nature of God as Trinity at a distance, Brian Edgar\textsuperscript{16} highlighted the essence of the Trinity in all aspects of God and His creation. He claims that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be separated from either creation or the salvation of the world. This nature of God was also foundational when considering the form and leadership of the Church. All social and political life finds its paradigm in this doctrine, writes Edgar,\textsuperscript{17} so it is essential that a person have as clear an understanding as possible about the nature of God and what it means to be an image bearer. The contrasting structure of leadership that would emanate from a solitary god and or from a Triune God is stark. Edgar traced out these connections from the self-revelations of God in Scripture.

Gregg Okesson\textsuperscript{18} also suggested that the first place to start in understanding leadership was with the image of God. His research occurred within an African context. His claim was that the image of God was both the center of leadership as well as the end goal of leadership. Within earlier African customs, the king received his authority from God and thus the community remained in submission to the leader. Leadership styles and worship practices found their origin in God with man as the image bearer. Identity, authority and responsibility all have as their locus the image of God and have as their goal a clear reflection of that image. When this claim is applied to Christianity, the relational nature of the individual members of the Trinity is important. The plurality of a priesthood including all believers, being led in love, is found in Okesson’s understanding of what it means to be in the image of God.

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\textsuperscript{17}Edgar. \textit{The Message of the Trinity}, 29.

Randall Otto\textsuperscript{19} presented the argument that the image of God was to be found in the concept of family. He began with the Barthian focus on relationship, then moved on to the Cappadocian trinitarian formulation of the Godhead as \textit{familitas}. Humans can only be in the image of God when they are part of the group, as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one group. No individual can be an image-bearer in solitary. It is the \textit{familitas} of humanity that is God’s image on earth. The \textit{imago Dei} is both vertical and horizontal. This human horizontal relationship supersedes other considerations because the \textit{imago Dei} cannot be found within an individual. Within this structure, Otto summarizes, the leader’s role would be to weed out disorder and conflict rather than to pursue a particular goal.

**The Connection between Trinity and Leadership**

If the locus of all leadership is found in the image of God, and the goal of leadership is to lead people into that image, then it is important to be aware of one’s understanding and definition of that image. Due to the plethora of books and articles regarding leadership, it was impossible to cover all who mention both leadership and the Trinity. However, those who discussed a clear connection between the two were far less common. One particular book that analyzed a select number of trinitarian leadership styles was written by Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter\textsuperscript{20} and dedicated to Dr. De Pree and his leadership legacy. This book gave a preliminary definition of leadership, and then it proceeded to look at leadership in the writings of Paul. The writers also selected a few of the church leaders and briefly presented their leadership paradigm utilizing metaphors to illustrate the principles. They presented a number of leadership paradigms.


styles that are biblically based, Christ centered, and trinitarian in nature. The focus of this collection was on the mutual working together of the Trinity rather than on a fixed leadership structure.

The following articles also demonstrated authors who did work to harmonize their theology of the image with leadership styles. One could debate which was the cause and which was the effect for these men, the theology or the chosen style, but the connection between the two was essential.

F. LeRon Schults followed the philosophical trail of scholars such as Hegel who moved from absolute focal points to a relational emphasis. The longing of the human for interaction with the divine is found throughout cultures and philosophies. This longing to know and be known by God is bound up in the Trinity, writes Schults. Multiple factors and disciplines influence how people understand this relationship and how they represent it in their world.

Ana-Maria Rizzuto built her research on Sigmund Freud’s foundation. Freud went to great lengths to attribute man’s concept of God to family relationships and problems. This approach was significantly flawed, for it failed to explain the relationship with the Divine in the lives of most people. Rizzuto did a clinical study looking at the origins of the individual’s God-image, that is, their private representation of God and how He influenced their lives. She examined both belief and unbelief. She proposed that a person’s understanding of God may have been present before the Oedipal stage of a young boy’s life. Rizzuto’s work is frequently referenced when one is talking about the god-image in contrast to the understanding of the *imago Dei*.

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Armistead, in her book *God-Images in the Healing Process*, followed up on Rizzuto’s work as Armistead sought to explore the counselee’s God-images. A person’s relationship with God is a relationship with one’s own personal god, not an external independent entity. This god is one who has been defined by a combination of personal experiences and divine revelation. The counselor may seek to bring healing to the individual, yet there can be a large disconnect between the God-image as understood by the counselee and the God-image held by the counselor. Armistead holds that this definition of the God-image is at the core of a person, therefore it needs to be properly understood and based in truth. James Hamilton also addressed this gulf between the objective God and the subjective God. Hamilton, however, believed that distorted views of God are acquired rather than inbred.

Dr. Clinton and Dr. Straub collected documentation of how there is an obsession globally about God. People have at their core a God-attachment. Even those who claim to be atheists react against God and strive to proclaim their separation from Him. Everyone must interact with God in some manner, and how one interacts with God affects their entire relational life. This vertical relationship will directly impact the pastor’s understanding of leadership. The better people understand their God-attachment, the better they will be able to understand the leadership structures that they desire to develop.

Leroy Howe connected the concept of the image of God with a theology for pastoral care and counseling. If one is created in the image of God, then the need for community as part

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of the counseling process is essential. Although Howe’s book followed the JEDP pattern of exegeting the Torah, the understanding of what image means was presented as an essential starting point to understanding counseling issues. The conflict that arises when people develop their own God-image in contrast to the true image of God is played out in interpersonal relationships and leadership styles. In order to restore wholeness, Howe concludes, one needs to re-discover the glory of being in the image of God.

Dr. Yusef Nur\textsuperscript{27} demonstrated the claim in his article of how the leadership patterns of men in the business world were influenced by their relationship with God. Four of the five men who were interviewed for Nur’s article underwent a transformational change in their understanding and relationship with God. The result of this transformation was also a transformation in their leadership style and focus. The themes of intensity of relationship and awareness of God came through in each of these leaders. Nur’s interviews demonstrated that a changed vertical relationship had an impact on leadership style.

**Leadership Structures**

The process of comparing a theology of the Trinity to a leadership style required an understanding of different church structures. The early church divided into two major groups with significantly different leadership structures. The Roman Catholic Church again divided and leadership was redefined during the time of the reformation. The three men presented in this Thesis Project, with their preferred structures, were in turn followed by men who further subdivided the church. In more recent history, a much wider range of leadership styles have risen. Some of these past and present movements are described in the material below.

The structure of the Orthodox Church differed in a variety of ways from the Roman Catholic Church. The collection of readings about the Orthodox Church edited by David Clendenin\(^\text{28}\) introduces some of the unique views that are not held within western Christianity. These readings define trinitarian theology, and explain the procession of the Holy Spirit. It is out of this theology that one emphasizes community, leadership and the role of the individual within the church structure. The unique manner of choosing priests and church leaders found its source in the concept of community.

Roman Catholic theology had a much wider distribution, for it was against this backdrop that the reformation developed. As such, Luther, Calvin and Simons all defined their beliefs in contrast to Catholic theology. Calvin worked throughout his life to set down a clear set of teachings\(^\text{29}\) that covered his understanding of the church, theology and Christian living. These Institutes have provided a significant amount of material describing his understanding of God and the role of the leader in God’s kingdom. While Luther was prolific in his writings, they are not found in the same sort of collection. He was less concerned with systematics and preferred simply teaching and preaching. Menno Simons, as with Luther, was prolific in his writing, however his work was not collected until after his death. The complete works of Menno Simons\(^\text{30}\) was collected in order to detail the origins of the Mennonite movements.


Diarmaid MacCulloch\textsuperscript{31} described the transitions that occurred during the time of the reformation and following as corrections and modifications which were brought to the theology of the church and the role of church in society. These changes, as they developed and solidified, significantly influenced political and leadership structures. His book provides a background to the rise of the major protestant and Anabaptist movements with their new definitions of man’s relationship with God and appropriate leadership structures.

Loren Broadus\textsuperscript{32} explored the struggle that pastors have in leading churches when there are differences of understanding between ideological and experiential theologies regarding the image of God. Each particular theology resulted in a different leadership style, and thus conflicts occurred, especially if the congregation had differing theological perspectives. At times these conflicts occurred within the pastor himself as his ideological theology perhaps was in conflict with his experiential theology. Broadus pointed out that when one examined his unguarded thoughts and speech, he could get a glimpse of his experiential theology and where the conflicts were that caused anger and frustration. Broadus laid out a stark contrast between two different theologies and how both of those theologies affected leadership style and relationship. While both of the perspectives that he presented were extreme, one could see that the resulting leadership styles arose from theology.

Gilbert Bilezikian’s\textsuperscript{33} primary focus was to justify the egalitarian view of the role of women in the church. The starting point for the discussion in his article was the image of God and the commands of God prior to the fall. He believed that God’s original ideal was found in


\textsuperscript{32}Loren Broadus, “What in the world does theology have to do with leadership.” \textit{Lexington Theological Quarterly} 11, no. 3 (July 1, 1976): 73-84. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed November 12, 2014).

the two tasks of man. Bilezikian strongly equated function and worth. If one’s function was deemed lesser, then so also was their worth. Worth was derived from being created in the image of God, and both tasks demonstrated that worth. Therefore leadership styles were to be egalitarian in nature.

Johannes Swart\(^{34}\) explored the new postmodern approaches to reality and knowledge and used them to look back into the theological constructs of the trinity. After finding the new constructs in the older texts, Swart nullified the traits-based or heroic leadership and postulated a leadership in humble relationship to the world. Because organizational leadership and styles were always an outworking of one’s epistemology, one’s view of knowledge and truth determined leadership style and structure. Communion ecclesiology,\(^{35}\) identity and truth were defined by the relationship that occurred within social and actor networks. The idea of a strong leader speaking objective truth became incompatible with this nature of God, so traditional church leadership was inappropriate. The leader’s task was to seek to build the network and consensus, with the whole focus on the process rather than any defined destination.

Perry Shaw\(^{36}\) followed the concepts of salvation history as he explored the different styles of leadership practiced. The manner of God’s creative work as well as the nature of being in the image of God laid out the pattern for proper leadership. A trinitarian action exercising authority and power spoke to leadership as the synergy of teamwork and precluded singular authoritarianism. The proper form that authority should take is not democracy but rather


\(^{35}\) Communion ecclesiology is a technical term which defines the core nature of the church as being composed of relationships between individuals and the individual members of the Trinity.

theocracy. When the leader reached the point of a confident relationship with God, then the leader became free to have authority and be under authority, a servant to God and a leader of His people. This vulnerable authority found its locus in the Trinity and should be the goal of the leader. As the relationship with God failed, wrote Shaw, so also did the leadership structure.

Diogenes Allen examined Jesus’ position as Lord, and how His understanding of lordship differed from Hegel’s master-slave bond. The distinction of God as He leads is that He does not need people. He is Lord, simply because He is. He does not need followers. It is because of His complete sufficiency that He is free to serve. When the leader does not need his followers for anything, for he has received all that he needs from his relationship with God, then he has become free to be a servant leader. If the leader needs something from his followers, then he has entered into the Hegelian construct of a master-slave relationship. The perception of people’s relationship with God determines their leadership style.

One of the excellent resources available on secular leadership styles was compiled by Bass and Stogdill. In this work, the authors summarized and documented most of the different styles of leadership within the business world. While these summaries do not address the theological connections, the patterns described help shed light on leadership systems within the church.

Each of the different areas described by these resources affects one’s understanding of God and how God views and treats the leader. The image of God is within each leader. Yet because of the corruption of sin and a lack of understanding, leaders will seek to develop a leadership style that reflects their incomplete personal and practical theology.

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Significant Biblical Texts

Passages on the Trinity

If one accepts the premise that leadership finds its source in the nature of the Trinity, then one needs to come to understand how God interacts with Himself in His triune form. How does His differentiation remain in unity? Questions of hierarchy and equality crash against each other as one examines the various passages. The ontological unity of the Trinity and the economic differentiation of roles run parallel. This Thesis Project did not seek to resolve this paradox, but rather it demonstrated how one’s definition of God’s differentiation-in-unity was reflected in their preferred leadership style.

In John fourteen through sixteen, Jesus comforted his disciples as he proclaimed his departure. The disciples were starting to understand the deity of Christ, and then Jesus declared that He would send the Holy Spirit to comfort them and continue to teach them. The progression of truth from the Father, through Jesus to the Holy Spirit appeared to be very clear.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. 39

In John five, Jesus proclaimed that he was under the authority of the Father, and that he could do nothing on his own. This leadership structure seemed to be very strong in an autocratic rule, however Jesus continued on to present a unity of knowledge. The Father did not hold back information of what the Father was doing. Both the Father and the Son worked together in concert. The Father raised the dead and gave life, so also the Son gave life to whom He pleased. The Father and the Son shared honor together. Yet, it was the Father who sent the Son, not the

other way around. It was also the Father who delegated the task of judging to the Son, either as a duty or a reward.\textsuperscript{40}

Paul in Ephesians presented what looks like a different order within the Trinity when he spoke of the end goal of God through the work of Christ. All things in heaven and earth will be brought into unity under the authority of Christ.\textsuperscript{41} One may come to the conclusion that the authority structure within the Trinity made a transition; however, Paul’s statement did not preclude the idea that God the Father may still be the ultimate one in command.

In one of the clear statements of a differentiation-in-unity, Paul, in his blessing to the Corinthian church, stated: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”\textsuperscript{42} This blessing suggested a different emphasis for each member of the Trinity, yet grace, love and fellowship were common to all three.

As one looked at all of the passages that present the relationship that God has within Himself, it is clear to see that there is room for a multitude of perspectives on the divine authority structure. This same diversity is found in the passages that expand what it means for man to be created in God’s image and his role regarding leadership and relationship.

**Passages on the Image of God**

The two main passages on the image of God came directly from God as He spoke through the Scriptures. Genesis one introduced God speaking in His plurality as He announced His creation of man.

> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man

\textsuperscript{40} John 5:19-23.

\textsuperscript{41} Ephesians 1:3-14.

\textsuperscript{42} 2 Corinthians 13:14.
in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

The core identity of being created in the image or likeness of God was presented four different times in this passage. This level of redundancy spoke to a strong emphasis. Because man and woman were each created in the image of God, they were blessed with the two tasks of multiplication and leadership.

Genesis two presented a second perspective on what it meant to be human. In this revelation, it was confirmed to man that being alone was not good. This two-part creation, unique to God creating humans, was done in a sequential manner in order to emphasize both the differentiation and the unity that comprised the interaction between man and woman. While chapter one emphasized the tasks of created man, this perspective emphasized the essential unity of the human race, proclaiming an ideal earthly differentiation in unity called marriage. Vast amounts of material have been written in an attempt to define which of these blessings is more elemental in what it means to be created in God’s image. The combination of chapter one and chapter two worked together in forming a definition of what it meant to be an image bearer, even though the conclusion is illusive. In this Thesis Project a number of these perspectives were laid out as to the nature of the goals God had for mankind.

**Passages on Leadership**

Jesus concluded his ministry on earth by giving a task to all of his disciples. They were to go and make disciples, baptizing them in the names of the persons of the Trinity, and teaching

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them to obey the words of Jesus.\textsuperscript{45} Accomplishing this commission in some aspect should be the goal of all Christian leaders. How this task is accomplished, however, leads to a great amount of discussion and even conflict.

Some pastors have defined leadership as bringing obedience to God into the church through an authoritarian style. Jesus stated in John fourteen that anyone who loved him would obey his teaching. He re-emphasized this by stating it in a negative manner. Those who did not love him would not obey.\textsuperscript{46} The section of this passage between the bookmarks of obedience spoke of the presence of God and home. The relationship, however, could be claimed to be the result and not the cause. An example is found in the life of Ezekiel. He desired to be a priest of God, but God required something different from him. God made him a watchman for the people of Israel,\textsuperscript{47} and Ezekiel’s only option was to obey. Jesus presented this same perspective when his family came to see him. Jesus proclaimed that it was not blood ties that made people his family but it was those who obeyed. Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”\textsuperscript{48} From these passages and many others it is possible to extrapolate the idea that the pastor-leader is to know the will of God and rule his people in a way that will cause them to obey what God tells them to do. Many contend that God speaks primarily through pastors. They also contend that those who do not obey the pastor do not love or show respect to God.

When God established His nation Israel, He established a theocracy with a group of civil servants, called priests and Levites, to administer the cultic system. He established judges who

\textsuperscript{45} Matthew 28:18 - 30.
\textsuperscript{46} John 14:23 - 24.
\textsuperscript{47} Ezekiel 3:16 - 17.
\textsuperscript{48} Matthew 12:49 - 50.
would determine adherence to His laws and sent prophets to remind people of those laws and the intent of their author. God also knew that the people would get tired of His way and ask for a military commander, a king. The role of this king in leading the people was fairly simple.\textsuperscript{49} He was not to build his own kingdom, but rather God’s. He was required to personally copy the law so that he would understand it well. Re-writing it as he desired was not an option. By fearing the Lord, meditating on the law and living in obedience, he would succeed as a leader. What it meant to be a king of God’s people was different from being a king over another nation.

Jesus addressed this desire to lord it over others as he addressed Zebedee’s wife. The desire for holding and maintaining a preeminent place in God’s kingdom was not the correct form of leadership.\textsuperscript{50} Rather, the proper style of leadership was being a sacrificial servant. In the past, some church elders held to the idea that the pastor was simply to be a servant, and they required that he do everything for nothing. The leader was to serve until he burned out.

Leadership is nevertheless still defined in this manner at times.

A different perspective comes from Romans eight where the Holy Spirit leads his people into sonship, co-heirs with Christ and sharing with all.\textsuperscript{51} This is where the emphasis on relationship took over and superseded any hierarchical or subservient servant structure. Paul’s \textit{magna carta} of freedom in Christ and equality has been considered to apply to leadership and leadership structure as well as accessibility to God. Paul states that “you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed

\textsuperscript{49} Deuteronomy17:14 - 20.

\textsuperscript{50} Matthew 25:20 - 28.

\textsuperscript{51} Romans 8:16-17.
yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

In contrast to the value of a simple relational standard, Paul also presented the differing gifts of ministry to the church. Ephesians four, along with I Corinthians twelve, described gifts of leadership and teaching that were given to specific individuals rather than everyone in the group. The unity of the Trinity was used as a reason for all believers to live in harmony. Paul wrote, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” Yet in the unity of the Trinity, there is differentiation, and there is differentiation within the Body of Christ. The goal of leadership in the church was to build up each member. There were specific roles for each person to play, while everything remained under the headship of Christ.

In I Peter 5, Peter expanded this concept of leadership by charging the elders to be good shepherds of their flock while remaining humble and accountable to God. Three different aspects of leadership were presented in this passage: shepherding, serving and accountability. How this worked out in the preferred leadership style of the pastor, however, seemed to differ greatly.

Paul in Ephesians, gave one of the clearest illustrations describing the interaction between leadership and relationship, where he described what it meant to love and support, while

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53 Ephesians 4:4-6.
54 I Peter 5.
55 Ephesians 5:25-32.
being led by another. The role of the husband in his leadership should in some manner illuminate the role of the Father in His leadership within the Trinity.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that God is the one who builds His church.⁵⁶ All ministry and church structure should be designed to allow the leader to be a co-worker in God’s service. It is when the God-image of the pastor has become different from the image of God in the pastor that dysfunctional leadership occurs.

There are three levels of relationship: God within Himself, God and the leader, and the leader of his people. These three levels are very closely connected because they find at their core the very identity of the individuals involved. When there is confusion at the top of these levels, then there will be confusion throughout all of the levels of understanding. One cannot simply proclaim a particular theology of the Trinity to be correct and expect everything to be resolved. Nor can one simply provide a different leadership model and expect to be more effective. All of these areas are so tightly connected that they must be all processed together in order to restore a biblical and effective personal leadership style.

⁵⁶ 1 Corinthians 3.
Chapter Two

The Historical Development of Five Church Leadership Structures and Their Theologies

Organized church structure was not an immediate part of the Acts 2 experience. One can, however, observe its growth as one reads through the writings of the early church fathers and historians. That which was seen in the early church at the beginning of Paul’s ministry differed from his instructions in First and Second Timothy at the end of his ministry. As time progressed, the growing number of believers throughout the world, the passing on of the disciples and the changing political and religious contexts of time influenced the makeup of the local church.

The church was no longer the small diaspora that had apostles to look to for direction. Rather, it was a growing movement that was perceived to need more formal leadership structures. With the addition of centralized authority, bishops claimed authority over local presbyters. Callistus I (bishop of Rome in 218-223 A.D.) claimed that no presbyter could ever depose a bishop. Cyprian (bishop of Carthage in 249-258) believed that the bishops had a special connection with the Holy Spirit. These claims exemplified the rigidity and protection of the authority structures that had already come to be. The separation of the offices of bishop and elder was institutionalized.

The persecution of the church also continued to cause upheaval in the developing leadership systems. Theology, however, had more freedom to process the questions that were brought regarding the nature of the Godhead. During the time of the great councils, they had to deal with a variety of heresies regarding the nature of Christ, the nature of the Trinity, and the

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nature of church leadership. As secular Rome gave way to the Roman Catholic Church, politics, authoritarianism and privilege grew and replaced the true body of Christ. Durant details the level of distortion that the church attained by the fourteenth century.\(^2\) In time, men arose to challenge the failures of church polity and theology, attempting to restore the purity of God’s people first from within the church and then later apart from the church.

This chapter examines the development of the major church structures that appeared out of the noise of the Roman world, starting with the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, then moving along to the further fragmentation of the western half of the church into Lutheran, Calvinistic and Mennonite camps.

The final split between the Roman and the Orthodox churches occurred over the understanding of how the Trinity functioned within itself. For the Orthodox Church, the leader was to be the first among equals. For the Roman Catholic Church, leadership was hierarchical. God’s leadership over the other members of the Trinity, as defined by a hierarchy over relationship, became the focal point of contention for Martin Luther. The just shall live by faith in God, not in a hierarchical priestly structure. John Calvin took the freedom that Luther proclaimed and modified it, believing that God had a different and glorious focus. Simultaneously, another Catholic cleric came to a separate conclusion as to how God functioned within himself and related to his church. Menno Simons used the marriage imagery as his starting point, most often calling the church the bride of Christ.

Each of these five theologies and resulting church structures emerged in a hostile world that used violent persecution to suppress differing views, and in return they also reverted to violence against those who disagreed with them. It was only the pacifist movements, of which

Simons was a part, that avoided this use of physical oppression to protect their view. In the end, each of these movements developed a leadership structure that mirrored their understanding of the nature of the Trinity and what it meant to be created in the image of God.

The Orthodox Church

In AD 326 Constantine chose to relocate the church to Byzantium, renaming the city after himself. The central location of Constantinople enabled the emperor to be more effective in dealing with volatile political issues to the east and north. The eastern location of the church also brought the priests and clerics into greater contact with the meditational and mystical religions of Asia. During this time of growth, the church underwent the radical transformation from being a persecuted body to a ruling religious and political organization. The cultural norms of both Constantinople and Rome had a significant effect on this developing church theology and structure. The church of Rome remained within the feudal empires of Europe with all of their intrigues, while the mobility of traders and the mysticism of the east shaped the Orthodox Church.

Orthodoxy is best understood through the lens of the icon.\(^3\) The iconic understanding of the Orthodox Church was clarified and confirmed for this author in conversations with Orthodox priests and others within the Orthodox community while he was a professor in Ukraine.\(^4\) An icon is a window that allows a person in the physical world to look through into the spiritual world, even heaven itself. The ornate frame that surrounds an icon is the window frame, not a picture frame. When one looks at the image of a saint, the focus is not to be on the painting or the man, but rather on that unique spiritual attribute that he exemplified during his life. When a person’s


gaze ends at the physical form, then the intent and message is lost. This mystical bridge between the earthly and the eternal is at the core of what it means to be Orthodox. Though defined in a different manner, evangelical believers hold to this same concept when they desire that others look beyond their person to see Jesus in and through their lives.

Every part of the Orthodox Church could be understood as an icon, with the sum of the whole greater than the parts. The architecture, the vestments, the liturgy and the church governing structure were all parts of the icon, windows revealing the spiritual world. Because it was the heavenly reality that was revealed through the iconic Orthodox Church, no one, apart from a great church council, had the authority to change the image. This was why they were called the Orthodox Church rather than the universal, or catholic church. When the popes Justinian and Leo III attempted to change theology by individual proclamation rather than through the council, the people violently rejected their views and they were forced to backtrack.\(^5\)

As an icon, the church was more than a structure or formalized institution, but rather it was the mystical body of Christ.\(^6\) Kallistos Ware described St. Sergius’ dedication of his Moscow monastery to the Holy Trinity. Every aspect of worship and life was to be an icon of the Trinity.\(^7\)

Because man was created in the image of God, man was himself an icon revealing spiritual reality.\(^8\)

Since man himself was an icon, within the Orthodox Church there was a strong emphasis on direct communion with God rather than on external authority structures.\(^9\) Both religious and

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\(^6\) Shelley, *Church History*, 143

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid., 142.

secular authority found their basis in the source of all authority, that is God Himself. If the source of all authority was the Triune God, and if the Orthodox Church was an icon to that Triune God, then the ecclesiology of the church would illustrate this connection between the definition of God and his treatment of man.

In pursuing an understanding of Orthodox Trinitarian theology, one must keep in mind that the primary approach to understanding God and the mysteries of this church was through the use of the apophatic style, which stated that which God is not. In many ways, it was easier and more accurate to state what God is not than what He is. The apophatic style was commonly used when describing heaven, God’s home, a place without tears, pain or suffering. Any positive affirmations of God would always fall far short of His true and incomprehensible nature. The mystery was to be accepted, not solved. Yet, even within the apophatic, a definition was required.

In its most basic form, God’s claim to the title of Father laid out the core of His nature. It was within this “monarchy of the Father” that one found the source, the fountainhead of the Trinity. The mystery of the Father God was not solved by examining human fatherhood, but rather one came to understand fatherhood by seeking to know God. To attempt to define in a deeper way the idea of “father” apart from God was to simply go into the unknowable. The early church struggled with understanding this nature of God and the connection between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The First Council of Constantinople in AD 381 put the Arian and

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10 Geanakoplos, Byzantine East and Latin West, 60.
12 Kallistos Ware, “The Trinity: Heart of Our Life” in Cutsinger, Reclaiming, 137.
13 Patrick Henry Reardon, “Father, Glorify Thy Name” in Cutsinger, Reclaiming, 108.
Semi-Arian controversies to rest. For the Orthodox Church, this Council’s definition was absolutely foundational. The entire identity of created man, woman and the church rested on the relational essence of God. It was only within inter-personal relationships that the triune image could be experienced because it was a relational image.\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, understanding the doctrine of the Trinity was the only possible way to understand the heart of the Christian life.\textsuperscript{15} Because the doctrine of the Trinity was the foundation of all theological thought, the smallest of differences in understanding the Trinity would have significantly different results in every area.\textsuperscript{16}

The Orthodox Church held strongly to the communion, or \textit{koinonia} of the Trinity, as presented by Saint Gregory in his oration.\textsuperscript{17} A personal God cannot be a singular God, for that would be a God without relationship. A dual God would also be impossible, for that would be a God in opposition to himself. It was only with a triad God that one can have absolute diversity and relationship.\textsuperscript{18} The manner in which this Trinity was understood was the point where the Orthodox Church separated from the Roman Catholic Church. Both churches subscribed to the idea that God the Father was the \textit{arche}, the source, the wellspring of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The debate between them came regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit. Did the Spirit come from the Father directly or \textit{filioque} (“and” from the Son). While this seemed to be somewhat insignificant, it had a profound implication for the nature of the church and its political structure. The Catholic view of \textit{filioque} stressed the unity and hierarchy of God, while the Orthodox view

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ware, “The Trinity” in Cutsinger, \textit{Reclaiming}, 141.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 126.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ware, “The Trinity” in Cutsinger, \textit{Reclaiming}, 125.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Lossky, “The Procession” in Clendenin, \textit{Eastern Orthodox Theology}, 173.
\end{itemize}
rejected *filioque* and emphasized the communal aspect of the Trinity.\(^{19}\) Orthodoxy rejected the addition of *filioque* to the Creed for two reasons: it was added without the consent of all churches at a grand Council; and it was theologically wrong and spiritually harmful.\(^{20}\)

The Orthodox Church in its structure, architecture and liturgy illuminated and illustrated the essence of God. The Church was the image of God, and therefore it had to remain true to that image. Because God the Father was the *arche*, out of whom flowed the procession of Christ and the procession of the Holy Spirit, the church would also have a patriarch who was the head of the church. This patriarch however was vastly different from the pope of Rome. Even though the Father was the source from which both the Holy Spirit and Jesus proceeded, He did nothing apart from the other two, for they were a triad. God was a God of relationship, and all that He did was in relational form. In this understanding, the Holy Spirit and Jesus were equal. Their function within the Trinity was to work as a team to bring the glory to the Father. There was no level of hierarchy between the two. In the same way, the only authority that was able to define or change the creeds resided in a council of all five patriarchs, of which the pope was one. While the pope may have had the preeminent position, he was still among equals and just one of the team. The same was true at the more local level. Within each district of the Orthodox Church, all the local bishops chose the chief bishop of that district. He was considered the head bishop; however, he was not to make any changes without the agreement of all the other bishops.\(^{21}\)

This same relational spirit determined that secular authority was given to the emperor while the patriarch directed the affairs of the church. God orchestrated this symphonic duet to

\(^{20}\) Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 32.  
\(^{21}\) Ware, “The Trinity” in Cutsinger, *Reclaiming*, 143.
maintain harmony between the two aspects of God’s kingdom of the church and society. In this same manner, Jesus and the Holy Spirit worked together as a team to fulfill God’s plan. While this duet of Patriarch and Emperor often resembled unharmonious counterpoint in practice, the foundational image remained.

Because theological understandings came only from grand councils of patriarchs, and because civil government came from God’s representative emperor, all connection with God remained within the state and the Orthodox Church. Those who sought an individual relationship with God apart from the Church remained apart from God. All things proceeded from the Father. Truth and teaching was available only to an anointed priest. The common man was allowed to read Scripture and pray, living in a relationship with God, but a correct understanding of Scripture was only possible through the teaching of a Holy-Spirit-anointed priest.

Church governance within the Orthodox Church clearly emphasized the equal and relational nature of the Trinity. The Father was the first among equals, yet He was limited in that He functioned with the limitation of needing the agreement of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit in all that He did. Thus, the voice of all the Orthodox Churches limited the authoritarian structure that existed within that church. Salvation was only found by being a member of the church, not by individual understanding and choices, for it was in the relational that God was manifested and fulfilled. The Roman Catholic Church also found salvation only through the Church; their path, however, was different.

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22 Geanakoplos, Byzantine East and Latin West, 57.
23 Shelley, Church History, 144.
24 Personal discussion with the metropolitan at Annunciation Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, April, 2007.
The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church were two branches of the same tree. Upon Constantine’s relocation to the east, however, a significant divergence in the geopolitical and cultural environment strongly redirected the two churches as they solidified their understanding of leadership structure. There was a strong need to have communication and communion between the various cities and locations of worship, so systems of leadership naturally developed. In the name of unity, leaders were chosen and honored. Unfortunately, these leaders did not remember Jesus’ response to the request by James and John that Jesus place them in a preeminent position of authority.\(^{25}\) As church leadership developed, bishops led presbyters, who led other servants in the church. An example of how leadership devolved from authority is reflected in the claims of some of the bishops. Callistus, bishop of Rome, defended the position of a bishop, even if that bishop committed a mortal sin.\(^{26}\) In contrast, the Orthodox Church deposed a number of patriarchs for a variety of moral and theological reasons.

The Roman Catholic Church posited that because God the Father was the supreme authority, man’s relationship with God must also be defined as being under authority. God, by His will, established this Divine authority and it was to reside in the apostles. The apostles however were mortal, therefore their authority was passed down to their successors within the church.\(^{27}\) According to the Church, Jesus ascribed this jurisdictional authority to Peter.\(^{28}\) As Peter was considered the first pope, a singular successor was chosen to continue this jurisdictional authority. Once the empire became “Christian”, the church assumed responsibility for the whole

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\(^{25}\) Mark 10:35-45.


\(^{28}\) Shelley, *Church History*, 143.
of society. This was especially true in western Europe during the middle ages, as the Church became the primary source of humanitarian care and the arbiter between the feudal lords.\footnote{John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, \textit{Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through its Development}, (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 11.} In the beginning, it looked like the church would be successful in establishing a Christian culture in the world. It did not need to image a heavenly reality, for it was in and of itself God's kingdom on earth.

The Church became a monarchy with a sovereign pope because it claimed as its foundation that authority came directly and solely from God.\footnote{Hallett, \textit{Catholicity}, 42.} Once the cardinals elected the pope, they existed under his grace. No bishop could be chosen unless the pope granted it. While the pope did rely on the advice of the cardinals and bishops, he was sovereign and his decrees were required to be followed. God the Father was the \textit{arche}, therefore it was the Father who determined the plan. Jesus fulfilled that which the Father ordained. Subsequently the Holy Spirit submitted to their authority, empowering the faithful to obey. Each bishop was required to swear his loyalty to the pope, with all religious orders requiring his approval.\footnote{Shelley, \textit{Church History}, 185.} Pope Innocent III (1198 - 1216) compared the papacy to the sun, while the kings were like the moon. All of their powers came through the papacy.\footnote{Ibid.} In 1437 at a council in Venice, Patriarch Joseph of Constantinople was commanded to genuflect and kiss the foot of the pope. As an Orthodox equal, this was something that he refused to do.\footnote{Geanakoplos, \textit{Byzantine East and Latin West}, 94, 95.} This concept of supreme authority existed only within the...
Roman Church, for the Orthodox Churches held that religious authority resided equally in all five patriarchs.\textsuperscript{34}

This Roman belief of hierarchical authority extended beyond the structural functioning of the church to the very salvation of every adherent. The church began to consider itself a priestly system, containing within it the only true church and providing through it the only possible way of salvation.\textsuperscript{35} As such, the Church considered itself to be eternal, without the possibility of failure or false teaching.\textsuperscript{36} It was the grace of God that enabled a person to enter into God’s presence and His eternal kingdom. The possession of this grace and the means to infuse it was the sole property of the church. Only a Roman Catholic priest could administer all of the seven sacraments that imparted the divine life of sanctifying grace.\textsuperscript{37} There was no other path available to acquire the grace of God. Participation in the body and blood of Christ was only possible when a priest was present, for it was only the priest who had the authority and power to enact consubstantiation. Only a priest could hear confession or proclaim forgiveness, even though the priest himself did not provide forgiveness. From the beginning of life and infant baptism to the end of life and final unction, salvation could only be found through the Roman Catholic Church. Any who disagreed theologically or practically with the priest or bishop could quickly be excommunicated. At times the popes interdicted entire kingdoms when the princes did not submit to papal authority. Thus, if people desired to avoid eternal hell and the damnation of their children, they had to submit to the authority of the Church.

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\hspace{1cm}34 Geanakoplos, \textit{Byzantine East and Latin West}, 86.
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\hspace{1cm}35 Ankerberg and Weldon, \textit{Protestants and Catholics}, 68.
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\hspace{1cm}36 Hallett, \textit{Catholicity}, 42.
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There was a clear distinction between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches when it came to structure and control. Within the Catholic Church, all authority worked its way down from the top, while in the Orthodox church, the priests were chosen by the people and authority was shared, both within the church and with the emperor. It is at this point that one comes to understand the incredible significance of the argument over *filioque*. For the Orthodox Church, both the Spirit and the Son proceeded from the Father, forming an equal triad with a strong leadership, the First among Equals. The Roman Catholic Church on the other hand had the Son proceeding from the Father and the Spirit proceeding from the Son. This procession within the Godhead was directly imaged within the Catholic Church. Once the cardinals chose the pope, he became the absolute monarch in the Church. His word and direction were to be absolutely followed when he spoke *ex cathedra*, with forgiveness and grace only bestowed at his discretion. As authority was dispersed throughout the church hierarchy, each level reflected the same attitude and leadership style. Of course, not every individual brother, priest or bishop led in the same manner. The authority structure, however, remained the same.

Following the final break between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, the church of Rome spent considerable energy in attempting to restore its authority over the church universal. This level of conflict escalated to the place where it was more important during the crusades to conquer the Orthodox Church than to conquer Muslims. The Orthodox Church desired unity and believed that salvation was only within the church. The unity they sought was a unity of equals rather than a dominion over all others. The Roman Catholic Church also sought unity. Theirs, however, was the unity of submission to authority. It was this unification of authority over the sacred and the secular that caused the Roman Catholic Church to so violently react to the teachings of the reformers.
Martin Luther

Due to the rise of Islam, and the effects of the crusades, Orthodoxy in its variations slipped out of sight in western Europe. After the schism of 1054, complete church councils were no longer possible. Orthodox theology was frozen in time. In the west, as Catholicism grew more powerful and more political, the careful teachings of the church took second place to the pursuit of power and ambition. Great immorality in many leaders of the church occurred including a number of the popes. The homogeny and tyranny of Rome began to crack under the criticisms of the people. Wyclif and Huss fought against the Church’s perceived monopoly over Scriptural truth. Papal infighting over the identity of the true pope resulted in a period of time with three concurrent popes and an increased level of nationalism. National heroes arose, such as king Arthur and the Arthurian legends. In Germany the origins of the Frankish race were “discovered” to reveal a godly beginning to Christianity. The German clans tended to view Christ as a glorified warlord who fought on their behalf instead of on the behalf of a distant Roman church. As the conflicts grew between the French and Italian popes, with Germany considered as simply a financial source, the people became more willing to go it alone.

In another break from papal supremacy, humanism arose. Humanism reacted against scholasticism. The scholastics used a four-fold interpretation of literal, allegorical, moral, and eschatological meanings, with a special emphasis on allegorical and eschatological explanations. While there were humanists who completely left the biblical fold, the early years of Christian humanism focused on the study of ancient literature and rhetoric. Beginning with Latin and

39 Dickens, The German Nation, 37.
40 Shelley, Church History, 155.
Greek and later introducing Hebrew, humanists sought to make scholastic pursuits practical. The new power and mobility of the trading guilds enabled many of the manuscripts preserved by the Byzantine empire and the Orthodox Church to re-enter western Europe. Through the works of Erasmus and other Christian humanists, the focus of scholarship switched from the fanciful interpretations of the Roman Church to the original texts. The results of these scholarship efforts and perspectives reached the individual via printing presses. Valla published his work on “the Donation of Constantine” document, demonstrating that it was a forgery. This donation supposedly transferred the control of Rome and the western part of the empire to the pope. This revelation became central in questioning the authority of the Roman Church to rule the world.

It was into this world of clerical corruption, nationalism and humanism that Luther came. As a young man studying to be a lawyer, he was almost struck by lightning and he immediately made a vow to become a monk. From this time on the desire to live a holy life consumed him, while his own sin and failure continued to overwhelm him. His pursuit of Scripture continually reminded him of how far he was from God’s righteousness. He excluded all else in his attempt to follow God’s rules. During this time of failure and despair, he discovered The Book of Romans and the path to freedom. Luther’s theology was profoundly changed by this simple truth that “the just shall live by faith.”

The Roman church fundamentally disagreed with Luther on this life-changing perspective, and as a result, his grievances against the church became more significant. In the

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43 Durant, Reformation, 16.
44 Shelley, Church History, 238.
45 Romans 1:17.
initial posting of the Ninety-five Theses for the purpose of discussion, Luther primarily objected to the radical abuse of the authority of the church in the promising of forgiveness for money without the need for repentance. As his conflict with the church expanded, Luther became more vocal and adamant in his opposition to these unbiblical ideas. Initially he attempted to correct the teaching by writing in Latin to church scholars, however he eventually gave up and began to do all of his writing in German to speak directly to the people. Because of the emphasis of humanism on original sources, and the availability of Erasmus’s second edition of the Greek New Testament, Luther translated the Bible into German in order that the people would not be dependent on Roman scholastic interpretations. The three legal walls protecting the Roman church from theological criticism through councils were insurmountable. These walls were: laity could not correct the clergy; only the church could define doctrine; and no one could call a council to discuss it.46 Because false teachings could not be addressed within the church, Luther came to oppose the church almost entirely. Truth was no longer to be found exclusively in the teachings and traditions of the church, but rather in sola scriptura. Because of logic and sound literary techniques, through the help of the Holy Spirit, God’s word and plan could again be available and clear to all who would seek Him.

Throughout Luther’s monastic experience, he was overwhelmed with the Almighty and Holy God. His own inadequacy stood in stark contrast to the glory of God. That the church or an individual could mediate this gulf was inconceivable for Luther.47 As a child of Catholicism, Luther maintained the same understanding of the Trinity as the official church, yet in his writings he did not expound on the composition of the Trinity. While he accepted and taught the concept


of a Trinity, he far preferred to focus on the centrality of the Father and the holiness of God, as did the Catholic Church. Faith was what one needed, not speculation.\textsuperscript{48} God was simply too glorious and sovereign to define. Thus, Luther emphasized that faith and life could only be received from God and that one could only live by God’s favor. Because God was so glorious, God could only be known when He made His goodness and love known through experience. It was the nature of God to sacrifice and show mercy, and this mercy could only be found through Jesus.\textsuperscript{49} The nature of the Father could only be perceived by looking upward through the Holy Spirit, through Jesus, to the Father.

The Roman Catholic Church understood the structure of the Trinity to be a procession of authority downward. Forgiveness and mercy was acquired through the upward acts of confession, penance and deeds. Man received grace from God because of merit. In contrast, Martin Luther viewed the interaction as only downward, with grace, mercy and forgiveness finding their only source and merit in God himself.

Luther, in his response to Erasmus, stated that “God knows nothing contingently, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His own immutable will. This bombshell knocks ‘free-will’ flat and utterly shatters it.”\textsuperscript{50} Luther believed that the sovereignty of God was so great that man had no free will. Everything was the work of God, for it was only God who chose who He would save and who He rejected. Those whom He chose to save, He gave faith through the Holy Spirit. It was only God who established the condition in the heart of man.


whereby mercy was granted.⁵¹ Because of this glory and mystery, it was senseless to even ask God questions of sovereignty and free will. One must simply accept it.⁵² God had a hidden will that determined the future of men, and it would always remain hidden.⁵³ Thus, for the Christian, freedom simply meant that one could only seek to please God within the parameters of God’s will through serving His people.⁵⁴ This path Luther called the way of the cross. God laid out this path that filled life with suffering to strip away all of man’s efforts. This path led Luther back to the simple act of infant baptism as the true evidence of the mercy and grace of God.

The revelation to Luther that the just shall live by faith became his core belief. He spent his life defending, expanding and expounding that belief. The nature of the Trinity for Luther was not structural, or even relational, but simply one of message. The Almighty God in His mercy chose to save some into a relationship with Him. Their appropriate response was to love and accept Him, and to demonstrate this by teaching and serving others. Because Luther’s understanding of the Trinity was so singular, his view of church structure was also singular. The church was spiritual and all church structures were dedicated to teaching, baptizing and the Eucharist.⁵⁵ While the people chose the deacons and presbyters, the role of those leaders was to simply fulfill the tasks of the church. They had no authority above or beyond that. It was not the role of the spiritual church to guide God’s activity on earth.⁵⁶ The necessary governing of unbelievers and society was a calling given to princes to maintain order and peace. If the whole

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⁵¹ Althaus. *Martin Luther*, 274.
⁵² Ibid., 281.
⁵³ Ibid., 276.
⁵⁶ Dillenberger and Welch, *Protestant Christianity*, 22.
of society was Christian, then there would be no need for secular authority. Luther, however, recognized the presence of both believers and unbelievers in society. Thus, it was the princes who maintained the physical environment of society and the physical environment of church meetings. Luther considered the physical local church to be composed of all members of that society, with infant baptism making them a member. It was up to the princes and lords of each society to rule and protect. These leaders, however, did not have the authority to teach the souls of the people for that was the role of the church leadership. Due to this singular focus, the Lutheran church became a state-church with all members of the state being a part of that church. By placing all structural authority under the state, in contrast to the desires of Catholicism, Lutheranism significantly advanced the secularization of society, even though that was not the initial intent.  

Those who participated in adult baptism, and those who celebrated the Lord’s supper as a memorial rather than a physical encounter with the divine were removed from society, either by expulsion, persecution or death.

The Catholic church assumed it had Divine authority to rule all of the earth and all were to submit. The Orthodox church assumed that the metropolitan and the emperor ruled as a divine duet, with membership in the physical body of Christ the true test of relationship with God. Martin Luther assumed that the focus of the church should be about living by grace while society followed a different calling of maintaining order until grace ruled. The true church was comprised of all of Christian society. Rebellion against authority by the church or by individuals was forbidden, for there was a Christian obligation for complete obedience to all physical authority. Each of these theologies had a core belief that there was one singular way in which

57 Durant, The Story of Civilization: Part VI., 376.7.
58 Cranz, Luther's Thought, 121.
the sovereignty of God the Father was represented within human society. It was upon these foundations that John Calvin built his theology and community.

John Calvin

John Calvin grew up in the French Catholic Church. He began his studies in Latin, philosophy and literature. His father subsequently directed him to take up the study of law. The influence of Erasmus in his academic circle, along with the writings of Luther, led Calvin to the protestant camp. Calvin lived with a passion for study and writing, and he sought to maintain that discipline even as he traveled. As Calvin was passing through Geneva, the local minister, William Farel, convinced Calvin that if he did not remain in Geneva to help with the work, he would offend the Almighty God.\(^59\) As a young man who had come to believe strongly in the sovereignty of God, Calvin felt compelled to acquiesce to Farel. Once committed, he became fully engaged.

The city of Geneva was in upheaval at the time of Calvin’s arrival. The city had broken free from the Catholic house of Savoy. It remained militarily defenseless while being desired by the cities surrounding it. There were continual tensions between Berne, Savoy and the Swiss, with the French also looking on with desire. The immediate chaos as Calvin came to Geneva was due to an uncertain relationship with Berne, it’s military protector.\(^60\) Two years later, after attempting to reshape the relationship between the church and the Senate within the city, Calvin and Farel became so enmeshed in politics that they were expelled from the city.\(^61\) Calvin moved on to Strasbourg and ministered there three years before he was called back to the troubled city.

\(^{59}\) Shelley, *Church History*, 256.


\(^{61}\) Naphy, *Genevan Reformation*, 312.
with the hope that he could set things right. Due to the expulsion of the Catholic bishop, a new constitution was required for the republic. New regulations for Geneva’s church were also needed to fit the changed public order. Calvin the lawyer was placed on both of these committees to establish the new rules. Calvin set about reforming the local laws, using his legal training and position to establish his ideal church.⁶²

Calvin’s understanding of the Trinity was much more developed than Luther’s. While both men used as their foundation the Roman Catholic hierarchical trinitarian structure, they had significantly different emphases. Luther’s focus remained on the Sovereign God’s grace, with Jesus being the bestower of that grace. For Calvin, God the Father in His majesty was the source of all, and Jesus was the mediator who made God’s glory known to the world. For both these men, the choice of participation was the sole province of God.

God the Father, for Calvin, was primarily displayed through his creation. Calvin spent much of his life in the Alps, enjoying the green views of the mountains in spring, the multicolored fall and the incredible beauty of snow-covered slopes and trees. Seeing this magnificence of Creation with all of its vastness, variety and beauty, Calvin recognized that the whole world was a theater whereby God displayed His glory.⁶³ In his commentary on Romans 1:19, man was created to know God, not through the written Word of God, but rather by observing and meditating on God’s self-revelation within creation.⁶⁴ This natural beauty and symmetry also revealed the providence of God. There was nothing that existed that did not manifest the nature and will of the Creator. Whether one asked for daily bread or miraculous

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⁶² Naphy, Genevan Reformation, 313.
⁶⁴ Randall C. Zachman, John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor and Theologian: The Shape of His Writings and Thought. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 182.
deliverance, it was all under the providence of God. This providence covered all of nature and extended to all of His creatures.  

It was from this providence that there flowed a logical understanding of predestination. Within the glory of nature and the idyllic mountain landscape, one also found a cold, harsh environment where one thing flourished while another perished. Nature could be beautiful, but it was not kind or merciful. If the created world revealed the nature of God, then the created world also revealed that some created beings were foreordained for victory while others were foreordained for loss. Some individuals were foreordained for eternal life, and others were foreordained for damnation. The creator and controller of the cosmos made these choices, not the individual, as demonstrated by the selection of Abraham’s child over all others. This foreordination was a comfort to Calvin as he contemplated the suffering of his fellow French Protestants. His countrymen were persecuted, deprived of all their possessions and exiled or martyred. If these horrors were a part of God’s plan, then they could be endured. In a world filled with both glorious beauty and grievous evil, it was difficult for a person to know and understand the Father. In fact, Calvin maintained that due to the fall it was impossible for man to come to know the Father God from natural revelation.

When sin entered the world, man became blind to God and all that which was good. Even though God clothed himself with the fabric of the universe, man could not see, therefore he needed a mediator. The creature and the Creator became separated, and thus there was no comparison or connection between them. The nature of God could only be understood through

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65 Calvin, Institutes. lxvi.7.
66 Calvin, Institutes. III.xxi.5.
67 Naphy, Genevan Reformation, 318.
68 Zachman, Calvin as Teacher, Pastor and Theologian, 213.
the second person of the Trinity. \textsuperscript{69} I Timothy 3:16 stated that “God was manifested in the flesh.” It was based upon this that Calvin considered Christ to be both the self-revelation of God the Father as well as the mediator between God and men. \textsuperscript{70} As a mediator, the Son was the central point in the relationship between the Creator and the created. Christ, in the image of the invisible God, revealed to man God’s nature and His attributes of love, justice and mercy. These were especially seen in his office of Priest and King. \textsuperscript{71} While the cross of Christ was the starting point, it was the resurrection that opened up the glory of God to man. \textsuperscript{72} Jesus was the mediator in revealing the nature of the Father to people, and then in turn, through his death and resurrection, he enabled people to return to a position of unity with God in His glory. The mediator however affected man in a passive manner as he stood before the Father, therefore there needed to be someone who spoke to the hearts of those being restored.

It was the Holy Spirit who “transfused vigor into all things, breathing into them being, life, and motion.” \textsuperscript{73} It was the Holy Spirit that brought about one’s participation with God. He was also the primary bond between Christ while he was on earth and God in heaven, in the same manner that a believer lives in unity with Christ. \textsuperscript{74} The Holy Spirit fulfilled his role in sealing the elect for adoption \textsuperscript{75} and making clear the meaning of the Word of God. While Calvin and many other Catholics devoted their time to studying God’s Word, no knowledge of the truth was

\textsuperscript{69} Julie Canlis, \textit{Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension}, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 57.

\textsuperscript{70} Zachman, \textit{Calvin as Teacher, Pastor and Theologian}, 245.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 258.


\textsuperscript{73} Calvin \textit{Institutes}. I.xiii.14.

\textsuperscript{74} Canlis, \textit{Calvin’s Ladder}, 97.

possible without the Spirit. The Word, by itself, even though inspired by the Holy Spirit, was
dark to truth apart from the illumination of the same Spirit.\textsuperscript{76} Both the Word and the Spirit were
essential in understanding the work of Christ that led to true knowledge of God. It was this
testimony of the Spirit, through the inspired Word and through the operation of the Spirit in the
hearts of the elect, that made the knowledge of God possible for man.\textsuperscript{77}

Calvin’s understanding of the Trinity focused on the distinctive roles that each member
had in revealing the glory of God the Father to the elect. While the Son and the Spirit were equal
in essence, they were subordinate in their tasks. The Father was the source of all things, the Son
managed all things, and the Spirit provided the power to make it happen.\textsuperscript{78} The emphasis was
much more on the process of revelation rather than any internal order within the Trinity. God the
Father revealed His glory in all of His creation, however, that glory was subsequently hidden
from humanity because of sin. Now, through the working of the Trinity, that glory could once
again be seen and will in the future be fully revealed. The hidden sovereignty of God established
this entire plan, and His will would be accomplished for His glory. This was not the story of men
and their desires, but rather the story of the Almighty and Sovereign God and His glory.

When one looked at Calvin’s desired church structure in Geneva, it was possible to see
how his understanding of God affected his church. Edward Downey states that for Calvin, the
reason God created the world was so that man in the end would glorify God by worship and by
obedience.\textsuperscript{79} If the goal for the Christian life was to come into full conformity with God as an

\textsuperscript{76} Calvin, \textit{Institutes}, I.ix.3.


\textsuperscript{79} Downey, \textit{Calvin’s Theology}, 8.
expression of His image, then the church should reflect that goal. Living in a world of alpine beauty, yet surrounded by the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and priests, Calvin pursued the ideal of creating a church that more purely reflected the glory of God. The Sabbath was a time to reflect on the image of God in creation 80 and thus all members of the church were to attend Sunday catechism and meetings.

For Calvin, as with Luther, the church and the community were synonymous including both wheat and tares. With the strong emphasis on predestination and the sovereignty of God, the assumption was that all who were baptized, that is chosen from birth, were part of God’s church. Those who were not baptized, or who significantly differed from the church were removed from the community. It was with this concept of complete community participation in the church that Calvin worked to set up his ideal society. The lives of the elect, that is the community, were to be so much a part of Christ that they could never be independent of the church. 81 Elected magistrates ran the city of Geneva. Calvin, however, established a Consistory of ministers and elders who provided direction and guidance to the magistrates who hired them. Once Calvin established a sufficient number of educated French clergy in his Consistory, he proceeded to fundamentally change the society.

Calvin was never satisfied with the low quality of the magistrates nor with the moral weaknesses of the population. He continually attempted to drive home a higher standard of living through laws and sermons. 82 The church leadership was required to bring all people to a life of glorifying God. While the Genevans attempted to maintain a moderate moral code, as did many other cities, the elected officials were no match for the power of the pulpit that Calvin and his

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80 Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*. 2:3.
81 Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 145.
eloquent ministers wielded daily in his pursuit of the holy. William Naphy documented the measures that Calvin took in order to establish this idea of a city reflecting the glory of God. Calvin neglected the needs of ministers who disagreed with him⁸³ and refused parents the right to name their children after their own fathers if that name appeared too Catholic.⁸⁴ Calvin used all methods possible to accomplish his goal. As with Luther, Calvin was a strong believer in teaching and training his people in his understanding of the Word of God. He did this through his college, his sermons, and through a plethora of writings that dispersed throughout the world.

While many visitors traveling through Geneva were impressed with the correct living within the city, there was a continual undercurrent of conflict between the Genevans, the residents and the French ministers. One got a glimpse of Calvin’s frustration through his sermon series on Job when he railed against the city leaders.⁸⁵ Calvin’s understanding of God’s glory revealed in the world and restored through Christ by the Holy Spirit in society ran into continual conflict with the real world. If the sovereignty of God and double predestination were true, then one would think that a minister of that God would be able to direct God’s chosen into holiness. This was, after all, Calvin’s understanding of the role of Christ and the Holy Spirit within the Trinity—revealing and restoring the glory and rule of God. Calvin successfully gained control of the city by the end of his ministry, and the glory of God could be glimpsed by an external moral obedience to the law. Many residents, however, were pushed aside in the pursuit of that goal.

In the earthly representation of the divine Trinity within the church, the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, Luther and Calvin all considered the true church to be a singular physical and spiritual body. All within the community were to be baptized as infants and made

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⁸³ Naphy, *Genevan Reformation*, 68.
⁸⁴ Ibid., 150.
⁸⁵ Ibid., 127.
part of God’s family. This concept of state and church united was endemic, and perhaps was required by the political world at that time. However, with the advent of Christian humanism, Luther’s teaching on *sola Scriptura* and the emphasis on individuals listening to the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of that readily available Word, a new danger approached. The power that religious leaders and secular rulers used to impose their will and taxation on the common people upon the peril of their eternal souls was threatened as the common man realized that he could approach God directly.

**Menno Simons**

Martin Luther, Menno Simons, and John Calvin were born with only twenty-six years separating them, Calvin being the youngest. Each of these men were raised within the Catholic Church, yet chose to depart when biblical truth overpowered their loyalty to their heritage. While Luther and Calvin were devout scholars, Simons entered the priesthood with a more casual approach. It was only when confronted with the issues of the Eucharist and re-baptism that Simons began to personally seek the Scriptures for answers. Eventually, he found it impossible to stay within the priesthood and maintain his integrity. Even his promotion from a small diocese to the priesthood of Witmarsun, his hometown, was not enough to hold him in the church. Although he knew Latin, Greek, and perhaps Hebrew, his focus was on the practical aspect of being a Christian. Luther and Calvin ministered and taught with the financial and moral support of the state from the comforts of their homes. Simons and his family, however, due to his understanding of the nature of the church, was forced to spend most of his ministry on the run from the state and the other churches. Each of these three men, coming from a similar theological background, ended up with competing church structures that resulted in violent confrontation.

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There were those within the Anabaptist camp, such as the Münsterites, that also attempted to use violence. Their understanding, however, of the kingdom was significantly different from that of Simons. Unfortunately, the Lutherans, Zwingli and the Calvinists used a wide brush to label all Anabaptists as one.

Much confusion was occurring in the theological field due to the freedom that Luther brought with *sola Scriptura*. In the melee, Simons was forced to write a statement defending his view of the Trinity.\(^{87}\) This treatise was not a precise layout of theological principles, but rather a description of the heart of each of the members of the Trinity. The Father, “who was an Almighty, powerful and an over-ruling King,”\(^ {88}\) was portrayed as the one in supreme command. Yet throughout the description of the Trinity, the Father was often described as benevolent and loving.

One of the very strong beliefs that both Calvin and Luther maintained was that of a double predestination. They believed that one could not maintain the sovereignty of God while at the same time recognizing the choices of men. For Simons, this predestination was an unspeakable blasphemy, for it was completely incompatible with God’s nature and made a mockery of His great love and mercy. God could never be the cause of all evil, no matter how it was theologically phrased.\(^ {89}\) The demand for predestination made God distant and glorious, with man simply grateful that he was saved by grace, or indentured to restoring that glory. In contrast,

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\(^{88}\) Ibid.

Simons strongly believed that God, in love, desired to reconcile the world to himself through Christ.  

Simons made clear the unity of Christ with the Father in his writings as he continually combined their goals and actions. The perfect unity between the Father and the Son was expressed to communicate the complete righteousness and sinlessness of the Son. The Father and the Son were in complete agreement with Jesus’ path of earthly suffering. The earthly Jesus in His life was the perfect embodiment of God’s commands. As in all ages, there was a struggle to define and understand both the deity and the humanity of Christ. For redemption and the restoration of man with God to occur, Christ had to be without sin, both divine and human. The Roman Catholic Church attempted to preserve the sinlessness of Christ by exalting Mary and proclaiming that the birth of Jesus was immaculate. All this accomplished was to push back the sinlessness one generation, while greatly confusing the nature of sin in man and Mary. Simons chose a different approach by claiming that Christ was conceived in Mary, but not of Mary. The Holy Spirit planted in her a new Adam, of the same nature as the original Adam. Christ was fully human, but not of the lineage of humans. While his followers abandoned this controversial perspective, it was simply Simon’s attempt to explain the connection of both the divinity and humanity of man in a world where the gulf between God and man was so great. For Simons,

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there was never any doubt as to the divine nature of Christ, nor of him being wholly human. He was the same Christ who provided the atonement as the Christ who created the universe.  

The Holy Spirit, as the third member of the Trinity, was the one who changed hearts and gave testimony that those redeemed were God’s children. Sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit, came only when one was taught by the Spirit. The Father shared this task as He illuminated and drew a person to Himself. Those redeemed through the work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit could enter into fellowship with God the Father.

Throughout his writings, Simons overlaid these three members of the Trinity as he proclaimed the heart of God to bring restoration to His family. God, in His unity, did not desire to lose anyone, and continually sought the restoration of all, even though not all would respond. While each individual must make their choice, the praise for one’s salvation could only go to the one Father through Jesus alone, and this only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The unity of the Trinity was complete in that they all participated in the creation and redemption of man. They will all participate in the future unity between man and themselves. They each, however, retained their individuality as separate beings. There was no sense of procession within Simons’ understanding of the Trinity, for the planned outcome was singular, and the celebration of its completion was common to all. This goal of participating in unity was directly reflective of the essence of the Trinity.

Simons clearly held to a temporary dualism between righteousness and unrighteousness, between God and the world. While all things were created perfect and in unity, sin caused a

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94 Simon, A Confession of the Triune.


96 Simon, A Confession of the Triune.
separation that resulted in continual conflict between the created and the Creator. This was not dualism in the classical sense of equal and opposing forces, for Simons believed that God would one day come and bring judgment and restoration. A major part of the pacifist teaching was that it was God who would bring about His kingdom, not the people, as the Münsterites attempted to do. While both Calvin and Luther believed that the church would prosper with both wheat and tares together, Simons believed that the church was composed of only those who had a personal and transformational relationship with God living in a world of tares. The true church was a spiritual reality which could be observed in local fellowships. The church was in opposition, however, to the natural, unredeemed world of politics and government.

The church, composed of believers who had authentically become unified with Christ, followed the teachings of Christ rather than an established church. Identity was not found in membership, but rather relationship. Simons made it clear, however, that while the believer became more like Christ, he did not lose his personal identity. Sanctified people retained their original substance. 97 This process of being conformed to the image of God and obeying Christ was similar to the choice that children made to obey and honor their earthly parents. It was to be joyful and voluntary. 98 This was to be a lifelong commitment to discipleship, not just membership and conformity to community standards. The change began internally through the working of the Holy Spirit and was exhibited in a joyful response to God.

The administration and structure of an Anabaptist church was not something that Simons set out to establish. He often spoke out against the abuses of the leadership within the Catholic church, as well as the blending of secular and Christian forces within the state churches. He did

97 Grislis, "Menno Simons on Sanctification", 235.
not, however, establish a specific structure. This was in part the result of the severe persecution that Anabaptists experienced at the hands of all state churches, including Reformed, Lutheran and Zwinglian forces. The Anabaptist movement, though quite popular, was never given an opportunity to be physically established in a specific location for any period of time during Simons’ lifetime. What Simons did teach was that leaders within the church were to be chosen, having a calling from God and the recommendation of the people. The leadership terms used to describe these men were interchangeable, for the focus was on their personal piety rather than their authority. These men were to be honored and obeyed as leaders. In those unsettled times, with unique teachings arising all around, it was necessary to establish leadership and doctrine in order to protect against another Münsterite-style catastrophe. The kingdoms of God and Satan continually were at war, both within the church and within the world, thus vigilance was needed.

The most common description that Simons used of the church was “the bride of Christ.” Simons’ understanding of the Trinity had a direct correlation with his description of the true church. The Trinity was composed of three individual beings that worked together in complete unity to restore the fellowship between God and his beloved creation. Just as the bread of communion was made out of many grains that were baked into one loaf; just as the cup of wine was made of many grapes that were crushed into one drink, so also was the unity of God and the unity of believers with Christ. This same understanding was established in the church. The church was the bride of Christ and maintained a separate identity from Christ, yet became

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102 Keeney, "Dutch Anabaptist Thought and Practice”, 167.
like him in holiness, love and purpose, working towards a restored fellowship of oneness between the Creator and the created. Within their community, believers maintained their own identities and possessions, sharing to meet the needs of each member of the body. Leadership was needed to guide the people in their path to conforming to Christ, to avoid false teaching and internal conflicts. Keeney pointed out the irony of the strong individualism of having a free will resulted in a strong corporate nature to the church.\textsuperscript{103} This was in contrast to the unity of a state church that was weak in community. While Simons did refer to God the Father as the one in charge, the focus was purely on the fellowship of God working together to restore His fellowship with His bride.

Conclusion

Leadership styles were directly connected to one’s understanding of the nature of God. As the Christian church developed through the centuries, one saw this interaction demonstrated in the various church movements.

The Orthodox Church believed that the Father God was the \textit{arche}, the source out of which the Son and the Holy Spirit were derived. While all three were without beginning, it was God the Father who was at the helm. He did nothing without the full agreement of the other two. He was the First among equals. So also among the churches, the Roman Church was the first among equals, but not entitled to make unilateral decisions. Council made all decisions with unanimity. The priests were chosen by the people, and in turn, they chose one who was to lead them, yet not rule over them. Those outside the church were not part of God’s fellowship.

In contrast, Roman Catholic theology stated that it was God the Father who was the \textit{arche}, with the Son proceeding out of Him and the Holy Spirit proceeding out of the Son. This

\textsuperscript{103} Keeney, "Dutch Anabaptist Thought and Practice", 236.
was a hierarchical system with all decisions coming from the Father, through the Son and brought to completion by the Holy Spirit. In the same manner, it was the pope who was the supreme leader of the church, pronouncing theology and directing the grace that was to be bestowed upon man. All truth, grace, and forgiveness for the common man came from God through the pope and through the priest. Those outside the church did not have access to God’s kingdom.

Martin Luther recognized the corruption that power had brought to the church and, as a result, strove to correct the errors that crept in. For Luther, God was the sovereign bestower of grace and mercy directly, and not through the Church. He followed the concept of *filioque*, emphasizing the holiness and otherness of God. Man was saved by the grace of God for the glory of God and was chosen by God to simply to live in that grace. The role of the Son and the Holy Spirit was to make it possible for man to receive the grace that God sought to bestow. In like manner, the structure of the church belonged to society and its princes. It was simply the duty of the member of society to live quietly within that society that God had ordained. Community members were not to rebel but to be thankful for the grace they had received. Those who could not live in God’s chosen kingdom were to be removed.

Calvin also focused on the hierarchical nature of the Trinity; the roles of the Son and the Holy Spirit, however, were to bring glory to the Father. The Glorious Father who displayed His majesty in creation worked to restore His creation’s knowledge of His glory through the work of the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. God, by His sovereignty, would accomplish this. The role of the pastor was to structure his church and society in such a manner that God’s people would demonstrate His glory. The pastor/leader was to use his authority to bring order out of chaos and purity to the people. As this was accomplished, God’s glory would again manifest
throughout creation. Those who refused to bring glory to God were to be minimalized or completely removed from God’s community.

Simons followed a completely different path in understanding the nature of God. He placed the issue of authority within the Godhead as secondary to the unity of the Trinity. He considered the Trinity to be a fellowship of three distinct beings in unity working towards a singular goal. While an authority structure was present, it was primarily an element of function. In the same manner, the structure of the church was secondary to the role of the Church, that is, a community of believers who cared for each other and worked towards unity. The people were to choose the leaders and they were called by God with the goal of building or restoring all relationships, as the bride toward her groom. True distinctions remained; complete unity and harmony of purpose, however, was the goal.

Each of these theologies and leadership styles found their origins in the Word of God. While culture and the political environment were strongly influential in the shaping of a church or movement, in the end the theology and the leadership style worked their way into agreement. For some, the starting point was their understanding of the nature of God. Others adjusted their theology to reconcile with their desired leadership style.
Chapter 3
The Interview Process, Tools and Results

The structure and theology of the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church can be researched and documented through two millennia of historical documents and solidified political and ecclesiastical structures. The world-view of the reformers, Luther, Calvin and Simons, can be discovered through the prolific amount of written material that they produced during their lifetimes. For contemporary pastors, there is not a mass of critiqued material and well thought-out documentation of their theology available. For this reason, the interview process was used to collect the research material. Collecting a broad range of subjects to interview was important in the selection process. Chapter one dealt in brief with the methods that are further expanded here. A number of the limitations on qualified interviewees in order to bring meaningful data to the process are expounded here. This enabled the inclusion of as wide of ministry styles as possible. The nature and order of the questions asked was also important in order to bring out the relevant material clearly within a reasonable time allotment for the interview. A summary of the results of these interviews highlighting their differences in the areas of personal background, theology and leadership structure concludes this chapter.

The Interview Process

There was a carefully considered process for the gathering of research to defend the Thesis Project. Research tools such as surveys could have been very effective in gathering information from a wide group of people. A survey was initially considered for this Thesis Project, however due to the complexity of the subject matter, it was found to be insufficient. In order to obtain meaningful, comprehensive and measurable results, the length of the survey was
problematic. The decision was thus made to utilize interviews to collect a more detailed understanding of each interviewee’s beliefs and practices. Apart from one, these interviews were done in person. The personal and visual interaction enabled the researcher to more effectively analyze the beliefs of the interviewee and utilize follow-up questions to clarify the answers. Most of the interviews required forty minutes to cover the research questions.

**Parameters for Selecting Pastors**

In a world surrounded by churches of a multitude of styles, it was important to selectively choose the subjects interviewed. The important questions of who should be included and who needed to be excluded were asked in order to achieve the most comprehensive study possible within the confines of this project’s limitations.

**Demographical Context**

The author of this Thesis Project lived in a community in North West Arkansas that had a church for every two hundred people. Within a sixty-mile radius there were approximately four hundred churches. There was also a very wide demographical spread among these towns and cities economically, ranging from great poverty to great wealth, from the unemployed to corporate executives, and from the politically liberal to the ultra-conservative. In this region, one could find a church in most every style imaginable. Some pastors privately owned their churches, while others set up their churches as corporations. Some churches were controlled by a central denomination, while others functioned as independent churches in the traditional evangelical sense.

Six major cities exist within the sixty-mile radius of this author. Each of these cities had their own unique culture and composition of people. Four different communities were selected from which the interviewees were chosen (see table 1). A large Christian university distinguished one local city, with a significant part of the community claiming to be connected in some manner to a local church. Three interviews, P6, P7, and P9 were done in that context. A second
community consisted of a large number of immigrants and lower income people. There was a much greater level of social unrest within that community. Pastors P2 and P4 ministered in that community context. A third community was primarily a bedroom town to a larger center. P5 established a large church within that city. The fourth city selected was the home of a major international corporation that employed a large number of white-collar workers. Pastors P3 and P8 came from that city. While the first city selected had a very significant Christian focus, the other three cities were far less church focused. These social and religious distinctions had an impact upon the members of the churches involved in this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town or City</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Focus of Church</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian University</td>
<td>P6</td>
<td>broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Focus on socially challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P9</td>
<td>broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Collar, poorer</td>
<td>P2</td>
<td>broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Focus on socially challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>P5</td>
<td>broad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Corporate</td>
<td>P3</td>
<td>broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P8</td>
<td>broad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Demographics of church location and focus

The socio-economic status of each church investigated was also quite varied. The focus of P4 and P7 was on the socially challenged within society, while the other churches reached the people who were more stable in their lives and employment. The churches also varied extensively in age with one church being just a year old, and another church being more than sixty years old. The smallest of churches had sixty attendees, while the largest of churches had in the vicinity of twelve thousand, with a fairly even spread between these two extremes. Table 2 lays out these comparisons of size and age.
In selecting church pastors for these interviews, care was taken to cover a variety of communities, church sizes, and social levels. A number of other pastors of both very large and small churches were approached with the opportunity to be involved in this Thesis Project, but they did not respond.

**Limiting Parameters**

The positive process of selecting specific men to interview also included the negative aspect of the elimination of other subsets of pastors. While an incredible variety of church systems existed in proximity to this author, most of the pastors of these churches were excluded from this research due to the need to keep the research narrow. A few of the limitations were in place due to the confines of the subject, such as ethnic churches and unitarian churches. Other factors regarding the freedom of the pastor to shape the structure, such as denominational limits, established leadership structures and cooperative team church plants, also limited the pastors who qualified for an interview.

**Ethnic limitations**

Pastors of ethnic churches often utilize a different set of skills and understanding as they bring leadership principles to their people. While the use of a different language may not be a barrier, one must take into account the differences in cultural understandings when expressing basic principles. Having been raised and ministered in a number of diverse cultural
environments, this author recognized the subtle and not so subtle differences of interpretation that can come from a common event. While there were many such ethnic pastors in this region, including those pastors in this Thesis Project would have broadened the issue further than desired.

Trinitarian Limitations

A trinitarian understanding of the nature and essence of God was an essential part of this particular study, although such a belief was not found in every evangelical church. Those Christians or non-Christians who believed in a singular, or unitarian god and leadership style, or between a polytheistic theology and leadership style should be included in a future study.

Possibilities for studying these groupings, among other future avenues will be laid out in the fifth chapter. For the purpose of this study, only pastors who believed in the Trinity were included. As with all categories of theology, the border lines between different groups were often vague. P5 and P7 had a limited and imprecise understanding of the Trinity, however they clearly held to a trinitarian belief. In P9's case, he came out of a Unitarian background. While he retained some of these unitarian aspects in his theology, he had clearly moved into the trinitarian camp. This vagueness was also demonstrated in the resulting church structures.

Denominational Limitations

In the contemporary world, theological understandings of the Trinity and church leadership structures have been derived from a vast array of theories and theologies. Some of the major denominations have solidified their established systems on the backs of their historical and theological roots and cultures. They have promulgated those systems through in-house theological training. One saw this same rigidity of structure in those who led within the various branches of the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. A less rigid though still
formal structure followed those denominations that tied their worship practice closely to the foundations laid by reformers such as Luther, Calvin, or other teachers like Simons. Within these established systems, the priests, pastors, or brothers, for the most part were expected to function within the set lines, attend denominational seminaries, and promote the established leadership structure. For the less liturgical denominational churches, such as the Alliance and various Baptist denominations, there was greater freedom to modify structure; however, limits were still there. Those churches also allowed far more variations in theological training. The demand for denominational purity through the choice of selected educational institutions was less rigorous. Some of the men interviewed functioned within such a denomination, while others established independent churches.

Church Limitations

While there are many pastors in the region who have the denominational freedom to reshape the leadership structure within the church to fit their trinitarian theology, they can be limited by other things, such as local established norms within the church. The process of blending and modifying established systems continually occurs. Arriving at a synchronous position, however, may take years. Where no conflict occurred between views, the trinitarian leadership conclusions were evident. Where the two perspectives were in flux, it was harder to determine which characteristics belong to which viewpoint. The congregation and elders within many churches have placed strong restrictions upon the freedom of leadership to change the direction of the local body. The constitution and bylaws of some of these churches are so established that it would be almost impossible to make any changes at the core level. The local pastor could possibly have colored these structures in his own way over time, but the lines could not be re-drawn. These restrictions may not have been constitutionalized within the church, but
they were simply the unalterable expectations of significant church members. It was this level of
control that brought obscurity to the pattern, and therefore the results of the research would have
been skewed. In searching for pastors to be interviewed, it was more productive to seek out men
who had planted their own churches or had led as senior pastor for many years. Seven out of the
eight men chosen established their own churches. P3, the one man who assumed leadership of an
established church, pastored his church for twenty-five years. He took the template that was
offered to him at the beginning of his ministry and locked it into his personal style. He was given
the freedom to lead as he desired, and he followed through on that offer. Those who have not led
a particular church for as long as P3, with the authority to use strong leadership, would not have
been able to redirect the leadership structure sufficiently enough to demonstrate the thesis
proposed.

It was the researcher’s observation that each of these men interviewed had the freedom to
shape their church administrative structure in a manner that was completely consistent with their
beliefs. Even P5, the man who established an elder-run structure where he was an employee of
the church, was the singular driving force behind that structure. In P9's case, the church began
under a denominational system, but he removed the church from that denomination, and they are
now an independent church.

The research goal of selecting eight pastors from a variety of leadership styles
communities and church sizes was accomplished for this Thesis Project. These men were not the
only qualified subjects in the region, however quantity was limited to eight. In total, nine men
were interviewed. It was discovered, however, during the first interview that the pastor of that
church had deliberately modeled his church administrative structure upon his understanding of
the Trinity. P1 could not be used to demonstrate a spontaneous link between one's trinitarian
theology and one's leadership style, for his link was deliberate. P1's interview therefore is used in chapter five to demonstrate the effectiveness of such an approach. The subsequent eight interviews were with pastors who did not deliberately link these two fields of trinitarian theology and leadership styles. All nine pastors went through the carefully designed interview questions.

The Interview Tool

The interview questions that were asked needed to cover the topics of personal background, personal theology and achieved leadership structures. It was important to cover the family and church background of each pastor to determine if or how those foundational factors influenced their leadership styles. The personal trinitarian theology of those pastors was then discussed. A bridge question was then asked to determine the perceived goal of the Creator with His created world. The questions then moved on to the second core area of the investigation. The function of the leadership team and the role of those who were being led was examined in a manner similar to the section on the Trinity. The interview concluded with a preliminary question of how the pastor's leadership structure reflected the inner working of the Trinity.

Personal Background

After preliminary greetings and an explanation of the technical aspects of the interview process, the personal historical section of the interview was presented. The questions began with a summary of the pastor’s church tradition regarding leadership and worship. It then moved on to authority, respect and leadership in the home. Finally, a place was given where strong positive or negative emotions could be expressed regarding those defining parts of the pastor’s life.

The body of Christ is a family, and a family has a strong influence on how one interacts with others. For the pastors who grew up with a continual church presence, their church family influenced their definitions of what it meant to be a man of God and a leader of people. For those
who did not grow up within a Christian home, as they entered into the local family of God, they would have encountered a new and practical definition of what it meant to be a leader in God’s kingdom. The definition of leadership develops within the church family as well as within the physical family. The ideal of the pastor could be based upon what was demonstrated by the church leadership, or on what should have been demonstrated. It could also be based upon what was demonstrated, or not demonstrated in the home. In order to understand the leaders, it was important to get a sense of where their definitions of leadership came from.

On a more personal and foundational level, the nature of the home life was briefly explored. Early childhood experiences and relationships have a profound influence on how one views the world. The patterns of how love is defined and expressed are learned in part from family, for the parents tutor the child in character development and interaction\(^1\). What it means to be a father is also extrapolated from interaction with men, be they fathers or male mentors during the formative years. When one contemplates what the Fatherhood of God looks like, previously learned definitions of the term “Father” will shape the thought process. For example, P3 viewed himself and God the Father in the same way as he viewed his own father. Others, such as P4, viewed a true father to be the exact opposite of their own father. While it was beyond the scope of this Thesis Project to investigate this correlation between the behavior of an earthly father and one's understanding of a heavenly Father, a general understanding of the situation was beneficial. The focus of this Thesis Project was on the pastor's beliefs current to the establishing of his church structure, not on the process of how he arrived at those beliefs. These questions were placed at the beginning of the interview process in order to determine if there were significant issues, plus they set a family context for the man being interviewed.

These three personal introductory questions\textsuperscript{2} were not intended to delve deeply into the psyche of the pastor. These questions could, if necessary, provide a filter to make sure the interviewee did not have significant foundational issues that would radically affect their leadership style. That was not the primary purpose of the questions. The personal nature of these questions enabled the interviewer to get a glimpse into the heart of the person being interviewed. They also served to direct the interviewee’s thoughts towards the emotional areas of experienced leadership and relationship. As the interview moved into the section regarding the Trinity, the interview focused more on the pastors’ personal belief systems, rather than on an in-depth theological analysis.

**Questions on the Trinity**

After the personal questions, the interview focused on the three members of the Trinity, their individual roles and how they interacted with each other. The goals of the Trinity were then examined and a perceived understanding of God's definition of success was defined.

The first question focused on the distinctiveness of each of the members of the Trinity. Each member of the Trinity had a specific task to do, referred to as an economic role, in fulfilling the plan that the Godhead laid out. Their identity was defined in contrast to another, and the distinctiveness of each member of the Trinity was tied closely to understanding their unique roles. This authority structure also defined the foundation of their relationship with each other. The tasks of planning, redeeming and enabling all needed to be accomplished in order for the Trinity to attain its goal. The role of each member of the Trinity in accomplishing these tasks needed to be defined.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{2} See Appendix A.}
Each member of the Trinity could have a unique and separate task, or they all shared in a singular blended task. What this blend of tasks and interaction looked like was the next question. In pursuing a definition of this nebulous blend, the question was approached in three different ways: How did the members of the Trinity interact with each other; What did the Fatherhood of God look like for Jesus, and; How did the Holy Spirit participate? These were difficult questions, and the answers included a touch of the speculative. The resulting answers did, however, reveal an understanding of a leadership structure. While all of the men agreed that there was ontologically complete equality between the members of the Trinity, what it meant to be the Son, and what it meant to be the Holy Spirit had significant variations. Having explored a definition of these interpersonal relationships, the interview moved on to exploring the desires and demands of God upon His creation.

The goals of the individuals and how they accomplished them revealed a significant amount about that person. God had a final goal in mind as He created the world. What He desired for His creation and the demands He placed upon man reflected His blend of relationship and leadership. In defining these eternal goals of God, one could further get a glimpse of how God interacted within Himself. Outward goals reflect the inward reality, thus one could come to understand in part the interaction within the Trinity by the goals of the Son and the Holy Spirit as they differed from the Father. A factor in this equation included the role of the ruled subject in the fulfillment of God's plan. Did man have a say in what would be accomplished, or was he simply an element of the leadership equation commanded by a sovereign God? The final question in this section dealt with what the results of God's goals looked like in their final completion.
God had a purpose when He created the universe, the world, and humans in His image. The final fulfillment of this purpose was something that would bring pleasure to God. The interviewee was asked to describe this ideal relationship between God and His creation. Just how did one bring pleasure to the Creator, the leader, the grand designer? It was in asking questions about the goals and end result that one could flesh out what leadership by the Trinity and within the Trinity looked like for the pastors. In this practical outworking of the Divine relationship, the distinctions between each of the pastors was significant. It must be noted that this individual understanding of leadership and God's desires may not be accurate in its representation of God. It, however, illuminated the pastor's understanding of his God, and how he reflected that understanding within his sphere and style of leadership.

The section of the interview dealing with the Trinity sought to clarify what it meant to be differentiation-in-unity. The individual members of the Trinity are often assumed to have significantly different tasks and they interact in distinction, yet they also function as one unit, working in unity to accomplish a shared end-goal. In defining each of these parts as they related to the whole, it was possible to understand how a pastor viewed what it means to lead others towards a common goal, and what it meant to be led by another.

**The Order of the Questions**

The order of questions for this interview process was very significant, for it would have been very easy to skew the results by the wrong sequence to the questions asked. One's theology, especially in regard to the awesome, mystical and incomprehensible nature of the Trinity, tends to be hard to define. The distinction between the individual members and the corporate unity within the Godhead with the overlapping tasks and goals, cannot be fully comprehended. The answers must include the speculative. In the search to bring definition, one would seek examples
and illustrations that bring clarity to the concepts. Church leadership on the other hand tends to be well defined. If one were to pursue the section regarding the pastor's leadership style and church structure first, those answers would have had a greater impact upon the task of defining the more nebulous understanding of the Trinity. One's own leadership system would have become the source for those illustrations, flavoring the results. As it was, one of the pastors, P3, during the interview process, quickly made this connection from the introductory material as the section dealing with his leadership style was reached. This connection flavored his subsequent answers. While this did not skew the results, it did move the interview more quickly towards the conclusion than initially intended.

**Questions on Church Leadership**

Church leadership combines relationship and authority in an interactive blend. The church body can be divided into three major groups; however, various organizations and leaders defined these groups differently. Most churches had a pastor, a priest, or a presbyter. In other churches, that man may be called the paid or lead elder. The second group was the secondary level of leaders, known as brothers, elders, or deacons. Again, for some organizations, elders and deacons were one and the same, while others viewed them as two separate groups. For those who viewed deacons as different from elders, the deacons usually took care of the physical plant while the elders took care of the spiritual needs of the people. The pastor usually had the dual function of holding the designation of elder while he also fulfilled the duties of a pastor. The third group of people within the church was the congregation. Each of these groups, the pastor, the elders/deacons, and the congregation, had their own individual roles to play in the functioning of the church. It was in the blend and the contrast between these groups that one saw the practical outworking of the church planter's theology.
The interviewees were asked to define each of these categories and the roles they fulfilled in their church. The role of the pastor was fairly easily defined for the men, as the pastors were talking about the particular job description that they set up for themselves. The role of the deacons and/or elders were often defined in connection with or in contrast to the role of the pastor. While these were not competing offices, their roles and level of authority were at times significantly different. A specific question also examined the role of the congregation. As within the Trinity, each member was distinct with its own essential role in the functioning of a local body. Understanding these distinctives and how a person was able to make the shift from being a congregational member to a member of the leadership structure reflected the nature of interaction between these differing groups.

The goals and desires of the church leadership were found within the formation of the vision statement. The question of how the vision statement of the church was determined was significant in understanding the relational structure between the leadership and the congregation. Did the congregation play a role in defining their identity? Did they determine who they wanted to be, or was that future direction left only in the hands of the official leadership. The question about how church discipline was practiced within the church also helped to define the level of participation of the congregation in church governance. These questions regarding the voice of the congregation in vision and discipline paralleled the theological questions of sovereignty and free will. The leadership, by its founding authority, determined the role of the congregation in the future direction of the church. As such, this spoke to the ideals of the founder and leaders rather than the nature of those who were being led. In the world situation where there was no state church, those who disagreed with a leadership style and structure were able to give voice to their
vote by their feet as they found a structure and fellowship that more closely represented their theology. This mobility reduced the frequency of challenges to the local authority structure.

The questions regarding church leadership structures were designed to mirror the queries regarding the leadership structure within the Trinity. Defining individual roles, describing their interaction, and considering the goals ascribed to the church organization elucidated the understanding of biblical leadership that was held by the one who shaped the church. In comparing the leadership and relational structures of the Creator of the universe with those of the creator of the church, one was able to see where there were commonalities.

The interview concluded with three questions. The first of these questions allowed the pastor to summarize what they believed their ideal church structure should look like. The second question addressed where they felt their structure was in need of revising. These questions allowed the pastor to reflect on whether he believed that his actual church structure was in agreement with his desired structure. It was an opportunity to retell the same story from a different perspective. None of the pastors had plans to revise their leadership style. A few sought revisions to increase congregational involvement within, and support of, the existing structure. They were, however, confident that leadership was being done in the right way.

The final question of the interview was simply an initial probe into the pastor's thoughts regarding this correlation between their trinitarian theology and their church leadership structure. For some, the idea of this connection was completely new and they needed more time to process the idea. For others, they quickly understood and began to point out significant details. The intent of this question was not to receive a detailed answer, but perhaps to uncover spontaneous observations of correlation that would later be fleshed out in the analysis of the material. It also was designed to stimulate the interviewee to begin to explore their own beliefs regarding
leadership and relationship within their church. Perhaps they would begin to experience the benefits of this Thesis Project in their ministry even as the Project was still being completed.

This interview process and the questions in their specific order was very effective in examining the theology and leadership structures of these eight churches. Each of the interviews were well received and provided valuable insight into this topic.

The Interview Results

The process of interviewing pastors for this Thesis Project was very rewarding and enjoyable. It was an excellent opportunity to get a glimpse of what God was doing in the lives of leaders ministering near this author. The results of these interviews also enhanced this author’s concepts of the Trinity and relationships. The answers to the questions regarding their personal background, their understanding of God, and their leadership structure provided an excellent foundation of commonality and differences between them whereby one found support for this Thesis Project.

Personal Background

A common pattern appeared in the results of the first question regarding leadership in the pastor’s church tradition. All, apart from P7, had as their primary, early church experience a dominant pastor as church leader. P7 experienced a very stable church with a good leadership balance between the pastor and the elders of the church. He remained in this church until he established his own church. Pastors P4, P5 and P6 came to Christ at a later stage in life, entering into the church experience as young adults. They also categorized these churches as dominant pastoral leadership style churches. This common church heritage for the seven men did not, however, result in uniformity with their leadership styles.
There was a much greater diversity in the early family situation of these men (see Table 3). Four of the men grew up in a home with a dominant father, one with a well-balanced relationship between father and mother, and three without a father. P3 and P6 had fathers who were very authoritarian and not well connected with their sons. There was also a distinction between these two men, in that P3 came from a very conservative Christian background while P6’s family was un-churched. In contrast to P3 and P6 with their distant fathers, P5 and P9 grew up in very loving homes. Both of these fathers were also authoritarian in their leadership style, and they shared the same religious split as the previous pair. P5 came from a non-Christian home while P9 came from a holiness-style conservative church background. All four of these men experienced a consistency of authoritarian leadership between their family life and their formative church life.

Pastor P7 also experienced a consistency between his home life and his church life. The father in the home was a solid spiritual leader with the mother complimenting his leadership. In the church, the pastor and the board also worked together as a good team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Home Leadership</th>
<th>Relationship with Father</th>
<th>Family Faith</th>
<th>Church Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>distant</td>
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<td>P5</td>
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<td>P9</td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>close</td>
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<tr>
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<td>non-Christian</td>
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<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>non-Christian</td>
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Table 3: Background family and church leadership relationships
For the three pastors who grew up with a single mother, P2, P4, and P8, there was a significant divergence between the home life and the church life. A strong emphasis on church and Christian living was present in P2’s home, while P4 and P8 lived in dysfunctional homes with no male mentoring.

The background of these eight men covered the range of experiences, and all of them were apparently successful in their ministry. This church and family heritage did not, however, result in uniformity with their leadership styles. Chapter four evaluates the differing leadership styles that these men chose to implement in their churches and how those choices related to the Thesis Project. The diversity found in the personal background of these men was also found in their understanding of the inner working of the Trinity.

Concepts of the Trinity

The task of defining the Trinity is a complex one, and it is impossible to glimpse more than just a fraction of the greatness of God in His differentiation. The paradox of one God in three persons challenges the mind to understand, yet it will always escape a comprehensive answer. All those who were studied and interviewed for this Thesis Project held the belief that God is one, and that He is also three. That this God was worthy of all glory and honor was important to every pastor listed. Significant differences arose, however, when it came to describing this central aspect of the nature of God and His desires for His creation. For some men the focus was on the hierarchical authority of God with everything returning to God, while others at the other end of the spectrum focused on the relational unity of God and His desire for intimate fellowship and unity with all of His creation. The unique thoughts of the pastors, along with the subjects presented in chapter two, are presented in the following paragraphs.
Hierarchical understandings

The Roman Catholic understanding of the inner workings of the Trinity was that God the Father was the *Arche*, the source of all. The Son proceeded out of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeded out of the Son. The Son’s role was to fulfill the work of the Father, while the Holy Spirit worked to communicate God’s wishes to God’s representatives, as directed by the Son. This vertical authority structure of the Trinity was illustrated within the Roman Catholic Church, where the pope was the head of God’s earthly kingdom. Roman Catholics believe that Jesus passed on the task of bringing God’s kingdom to this world to a singular man called Peter and subsequently to those who would succeed him. The pope’s singular goal was to bring about the Church triumphant, God’s millennial kingdom on earth. The pope was considered the supreme authority under Christ on all things of faith and morals.  

Calvin held to this same hierarchical understanding of the Trinity. God the Father was the source of all and the chooser of all. As the one in authority, He determined the path to restoring His glory. Creation, including sinful man, had no choice in this matter, for He alone was God. God the Father was glorious, and worthy of all glory. Due to the results of sin, though, man was no longer able to see or reflect the glory of God, for He became hidden from sinful man by sinful man. While Calvin still believed in an earthly, physical kingdom of God, he understood God’s goal to be primarily one of restoring His glory rather than one of simply ruling. The earthly church was not to be the recipient of glory nor praise, but rather God alone.  

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was to mediate between God and man, removing that gulf so that God the Father may again receive the glory that is His due.

P3, P8, and P9 held this same hierarchical structure of the Trinity, with P5 being referenced later. While P8 spoke of the synergy of all three members of the Trinity working together as co-equals and in mutual submission, the structure remained the same as the Roman Catholic Church and Calvin. The end result of God the Father’s plan was that all of creation would worship Him. In this area, P8 was in agreement with Calvin. Where all the pastors differed from Calvin was in the area of free will. According to them, God the Father allowed people to choose their own role in the final kingdom. According to P8, those who chose to follow God needed to have a kingdom-ushering element to every part of their life. Only in that way would God the Father receive the glory. For P8, the Son and the Holy Spirit aligned with God the Father’s plan and they functioned in mutual submission in order to accomplish His plan.

P9 continued this hierarchical perspective using different terminology. The primary term used by him to describe the Trinity was “fullness”, and this fullness was found in God the Father. It was the role of Jesus the Son to carry out the fullness of God in visible form, and the Holy Spirit brought out the fullness of God in and through believers’ lives. The direction of flow was always toward the Father, enabling a person to have access to God. The fullness of God the Father as found in relationship with His creation was broken, thus all members of the Trinity worked together to restore that unity. God and man were both delighted when creation followed Him, making the fullness of God in His creation complete. For P9, the hierarchy remained focused on God and His fullness.

P3 continued this understanding, but with a small change in the goal of the Father. For the Roman Catholic Church, the goal was God’s kingdom brought to earth. For Calvin and P8,
God the Father’s goal was that He be recognized and receive the glory that He was worthy of. For P9, the fullness of God the Father needed to be restored. P3, on the other hand, understood God’s will to be that everyone should image God the Father. The unity of the Trinity was found in following the will of the Father into unanimity. The Son and the Holy Spirit worked to fulfill the Father’s plan. God the Father’s end-goal was that man image Him and be like Him, living together in unity. This was a journey of obedience that the members of the Trinity did not need to make, for they already existed in this state of unity. Fallen creation, however, needed to follow obediently in this path in order to be like God.

The Roman Catholic Church, along with these four men all understood the inner workings of the Trinity to be one of authority and submission. God the Father was the one who directed, with the Son and the Holy Spirit working submissively in unity with His plan to bring all things into His kingdom. While there was a Trinity within the Godhead, they all were in full agreement and worked together to accomplish the Father’s plan. What that plan looked like for each of these men differed, but the path to accomplish it remained very similar in nature.

First Among Equals

A differing understanding of the Trinity was maintained within the Orthodox Church, P6 and P7. The Orthodox Church retained the belief in the primacy of the Father within the Trinity. There was a different perspective, however, on the role of the Son and the Holy Spirit within that unity. The idea of *arche* was shrouded in the mystery of the Father God. The apophatic style of describing the mystery of God the Father redirected the emphasis from the individual roles of the members within the Trinity to the unity of the Trinity. While distinct roles were recognized, the community of the Three was the focal point. The Son and the Holy Spirit shared with the Father in community. The Godhead, according to the Orthodox Church, had as its goal a universal
community of believers living in worship. The most important thing was for the individual to be included in and remain a part of that unified community.

For P6, God the Father also had the plans. Those plans, however, needed to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit and carried out by the Son. The Father was hidden from man, even though He was the source. It was to this invisible Father that all glory needed to be given. This glory was only possible when men walked and lived in His will as revealed by the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son, therefore, fulfilled his role of revealing the Father in flesh and blood, revealing the Father’s love for His creation, and revealing what His will looked like. Because of his role of revelation, the focus was on the Son. On the economic side of the Trinity, P6 held that the Father used the Son and the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself to the world. The Son and the Holy Spirit were essential and functioned as a team in revealing this invisible Father to man. This was not a true hierarchical structure, but rather it was the pleasure and honor of the Son and the Holy Spirit to bring glory to the Father. The focus was on a community working together in unity.

P7 expressed this same understanding of the Trinity. The words of Ecclesiastes about a triple-braided cord that was not easily broken \(^5\) described the unity of the Godhead. The Father was the mind, or the thought of the Trinity and it was His will that was good, perfect and pleasing, even though He was invisible. Because the Son was the physical manifestation of God, explained P7, Christ was the central figure in the divine-human relationship. Believers were subservient to the Son, who was the head of the body. God the Father’s desire was that people knew and received the love that He had for them. This love could only be truly known when people, living by the Spirit, remained in His will. When man submitted to the will of God and lived in this singular unity, then he was satisfied for all eternity, knowing that he was eternally loved. This will of the Father was understood as obedience to the Son. For the Orthodox Church,

\(^5\) Ecclesiastes 2:12.
P6 and P7, God the Father remained a mystery who was revealed through the teamwork of the other members of the Trinity, and to whom all glory would be given.

Singular Focus

At times, a singular, all-important theme dwarfed the importance of one’s understanding of the Trinity. An all-encompassing struggle over the essence of one’s relationship with God could absorb one’s complete attention. All details of leadership and structure within the Trinity took second place to the one issue at the forefront. Luther and P4 were people who lived in this category.

Luther functioned within the hierarchical and authoritarian trinitarian structure as understood by the Roman Catholic Church. The authority of the sovereign was so great that individual choice was denied to both the believer and the citizen. Luther did not dispute this understanding of the Trinity, but rather focused on how one came to be a part of God’s kingdom. He proclaimed that salvation was a gift of God by grace alone while the world around him insisted on meritorious grace. On this watershed issue Luther fought his battles, leaving all other issues in the background. Until the conflict of what it meant to be part of God’s kingdom was resolved, all other considerations were laid aside.

In the same manner, P4 was singular in his focus. For him, God the Father was the creator of the universe and was the head of that Trinity. After all of creation became separated from God in the fall, God the Father worked to again be a part of the world that He loved. All of His efforts, along with the work of Christ and the provision of the Holy Spirit, continue to focus on this effort until this relationship between God and His creation is restored. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, documented this work of God in bringing restoration. In the end, harmony will be restored between God and his creation. Those walking in harmony will
experience that great adventure of working and living with God. After that, lesser things like defining the inner workings of the Trinity and leadership structure could be dealt with.

A Relational God

The world of Simons was one where the hierarchical system was omnipresent. Others in the past attempted to break some of those bonds, however they were not very successful. Simons, P2 and P5 left behind the questions of who is in charge. They rather changed the focus onto the task of restoring unity. For these men, the task of the Trinity was not to establish a physical kingdom or for the Trinity to be revealed and confer glory to the Head, but rather to establish a restored relationship that all participated in equally.

Simons recognized that God the Father was in supreme command. The Father was, however, benevolent and loving. The Father continually illuminated and drew people to Himself. It was His plan to reconcile the world to Himself through Christ. The role of the Son was to bring about this reconciliation of the world to the Father. The Son, as the perfect embodiment of the Father, brought about this unity between man, himself and the Father. The Holy Spirit also joined in this work of changing the hearts of men and giving testimony that those redeemed were God’s children. The Trinity’s goal was a future unity between the Godhead and all individuals who desired that relationship. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all participated together in every part of this task of restoring fellowship, for this was how they related to each other. The flow of authority within the Trinity was incidental to the task and goal. The final picture of the church was one of an earthly bride and the heavenly Trinity in loving, eternal unity.

The members of the Trinity were also distinct for P2. His emphasis, like Simons’, was on their mutual task more than the economic structure. Jesus referred to God as the Father throughout his ministry, with the Holy Spirit relating to the Father in the same manner. The Son
was sent to earth for the divine purpose of bringing salvation, therefore he was the focal point for P2. The Holy Spirit also participated in the work of the Father and Son. As the active guide, he comforted, taught, and empowered the believer. Their blend with each other was seamless, operating with consistent theory and consistent processes. While each had different responsibilities, they were one team, leading in one direction. The primary goal for the Trinity was that all would have a relationship with them by choice, for that was their corporate nature.

Mutual Submission

P5, a Bible teacher having had significant theological training, presented an ontological description of the Trinity that was in agreement with the hierarchical model first discussed in this section. He held that there was a clear hierarchy with the Son acting in obedience to the Father and the Holy Spirit magnifying Christ. As the Son was magnified, the Father received the ultimate glory. The uniqueness of P5’s position was in how he completely overlaid that theological, hierarchical structure with the principle of mutual submission. Throughout the interview this idea of mutual submission was repeated in a variety of ways. The three were equal in relationship and submissive in work. The asainty of God was significant for God had no need of man or His creation. He did, however find enjoyment in the honor, praise and worship that He received. The Trinity functioned with mutual submission in order to expand the ideal of an ever-increasing intimacy.

The variations of belief that were found in this research demonstrated the complexity of defining the nature of the inner workings within the Trinity. For some, the central idea was the idea of dominion, authority and submission. For others, it was a team with a strong head. Others simply focused on the task at hand, or the unity of the team and mutual submission. This variety
of concepts was also found within the church leadership structures that were established by these men.

**Church Leadership Structures**

The ideal church leadership structure, as defined by this research group, varied greatly. The positive perspective of one man’s style was often viewed differently by another. One could define each of these various leadership styles in a negative and harsh manner, especially if an ungodly man were to be in charge. Within one church, the wrong person would be a dictator who expected all to follow his lead and have no opinion on their own. That man could almost be called a cult leader. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the wrong person could be described as a man who was not a shepherd, but simply a hireling. He could have been considered a man who just made sure the water tank was full, as he let his sheep find their own path. In the middle, you might have had a group of people who do not follow a leader, but rather participated in group-think, with no one taking responsibility or giving directions. These harsh accusations fortunately do not apply to the men interviewed, for each of them appeared to be a godly servant of the Lord. What was clear though is that it would have been impossible for these men to exchange congregations without major authority issues quickly appearing. They each flourished well within their own structures, for both they and their people were in agreement.

**Hierarchical Understandings**

As one looked at the rise and establishment of the structured Christian church in its Roman Catholic form, one quickly saw the development of an authoritarian style. Some of the authority structures that developed at a later time within the Church were read back into the scriptures as proof that things were always that way. This was evidenced by the claim that the Roman Catholic Church was the original church established by Jesus himself by his
proclamation to Peter. The authority of the Roman Church over the other Orthodox Churches was also viewed as a backward reading and the logical application of believing in a hierarchical Godhead. The Roman Catholic Church developed its theology and leadership structure within the context of emperors who considered themselves to be divine with the sole right to rule. The Roman Church also truly believed that their administrative structure would become the Church Catholic, that is, the Church Universal. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches came to believe that God gave them the control over all of society. Luther and Calvin seem to follow this global conclusion.

Calvin, as head pastor in Geneva, viewed his primary task as communicating and enforcing the definitions of what it meant to be holy and glorify God. He sought to expunge the evil of dissent and disagreement from within the community, with no regard for the reluctance of the people who did not want to follow God in this manner. God, from His transcendence, foreordained the manner in which each individual would bring Him glory. Thus, all under Calvin’s authority were likewise foreordained to exemplify that glory. The Consistory of ministers and elders functioned as mediators to communicate and enforce the edicts that emanated from Calvin’s pulpit, his pen and his school. His definitions and goals were to be supreme, and the other priests were to mediate between him, the city leaders, and the congregational community. Calvin’s desire was for this leadership style to be enforced in Geneva as an example for all Christendom.

Leadership for the men interviewed was not over all society or the entire kingdom of God, but rather over a local, growing body of believers. God had entrusted this group of people

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7 Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, 76.
to them. Their kingdom was their church. P8 led in a similar manner to Calvin. As Pastor, he led and fed the people. He received the vision for the church and it was he who established the goals and direction of that church as given to him by God. When the church needed redirecting, P8 did this according to his understanding of God’s leading. The elders served and mobilized the congregation, accomplishing P8's vision within the body and the community. Each congregant when they joined the body signed a membership covenant not to dishonor God. All within this body needed to support the church, having a kingdom-ushering element to their lives. P8's control flowed through the entire church. Together, as a body, they would glorify God.

The church leadership structure of P9 was similar. While there were the distinct offices of pastors, a governing board and the congregation, there was a singular plan. All of the leaders worked to bring about the fullness of that plan. P9 directly stated that he led the church in a theocratic manner, making decisions and giving directions. His primary role was to shepherd, teach and to lead. He worked more closely with his elders than P8, because the task of the church was to bring about the fullness of God in community. The pastor and the elders worked to honor God by growing a community of believers who were empowered for a life of using their gifts to serve their world. This leadership style used the hierarchical perspective to maximize fullness within the life of every individual in the church.

In contrast to P8 and P9, P3 placed the hierarchical structure within a more familial context. His operative imagery was not of theocratic rule, but of patriarchal rule. As the father of the people, he led them into a life of obedience to God. This structure functioned well within the smaller church of one hundred and fifty people. P3 led his people through the elders who were spiritual advisors to the congregation. They also provided a source of accountability and advice to the pastor. While he was definitely the authoritarian head of the church, he did not move
forward in leadership unless he had a unanimous decision on the part of his elder team. At times, that process of attaining unanimity took a few months. While the elders followed his direction, they needed to come along willingly and together. The congregation was to function as a team, serving each other and ministering to their world. Teams in unity, under the direction of the pastor, made up the church. Together, they radiated the light of God to the world.

First Among Equals

While the Roman Catholic Church emphasized the singular head of a church leadership structure, the Orthodox Church held to a different understanding of what that leadership meant. As leaders, the patriarchs of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches guarded the faith and guided the direction of the Church. Modifications to leadership styles and worship styles were not permitted because of the theology of the church. The people administratively constrained and held accountable all levels of leadership, both those below and above them administratively. The focal points for the patriarch, therefore, were to lead in the protection of the true forms of worship and to build up the community of orthodox believers. It was the church as community that lived in unity and participated in worship. Only this community as a complete unit was properly able to reveal the heavenly reality of the glorious worship that occurred in the presence of God. While P3 utilized a patriarchal system of leadership with unanimity in decision-making, he was not constrained theologically or congregationally when it came to shaping structure and worship styles.

P7 understood the role of the pastor as the shepherd, facilitator and leader. Anointed by God, he was to mimic the relationship that God gave him as he discipled his people. The elders provided a check and balance to the pastor, correcting his mistakes and keeping him functioning

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8 Self-governing jurisdictional churches in the local language and culture, but one part of the one Orthodox Church.
within God’s will. They also developed the unity within the body through teaching and care, which allowed the Holy Spirit to operate. Many of the congregants struggled with addictions and social issues, therefore, there was a greater space between the leaders and the people. P7’s goal was to provide a safe place, enable the people to recharge, go and minister.

According to P6, God chose the pastor, and his role was to be a teacher, helping Christians mature in Christ. The elders participated in this task of assisting the congregation with their spiritual decisions. In this sense, the elders and the pastor were equals within the church. The voice of the minority within the board and in the congregation was listened to as well. All were considered equal, and the elders needed to make all decisions in unity. Practically speaking, however, P6, while equal to the other elders, was the one who was closer to the ear of the people, therefore he chaired the elders board and did the primary teaching. Because the church focused on following the will of God, it fell to the pastor and these elders to determine God’s will for the organization. They functioned without a budget; therefore, almost every expenditure within the church required approval of the elders. While this was a leadership of equals, the chairman of the board had the greatest level of influence and control.

Singular Focus

Church leadership structure took a back seat for Luther and P4. Luther held to a hierarchical Trinity that was in agreement with the Roman Catholic Church. He was aware of the many faults within the existing church structures and spoke out against them. He was therefore persecuted for his beliefs. While the Roman Catholic Church focused on authority structures, Luther was consumed with the grace and mercy that flowed out of the Trinity. The pastor and the elders communicated this core nature of the Trinity to the entire community. Church governance and structure was left to the princes because the whole of the community was baptized into, and
considered a part of that church. The pastor within the state church was simply to reveal God to the people. The elders mirrored the role of the pastor. Let the princes rule, for that was their ordained task. The role of the community within the state was simply to be good citizens and to praise God and His princes for the benevolence that they received. The just lived by faith.

For P4, the Trinity was focused entirely on the restoration of a relationship that was broken. Structure and authority were far less important for the Godhead than renewed fellowship. P4 equipped the people and enabled the people to begin, and enjoy their great adventure with God. The focus was on knowing Jesus and making him known. The issue was less about God’s glory, obedience, or knowing the will of God, although these were very important, but rather about the reconnection of people relationally to the God and Father who wanted to love and protect them. The elders in the church were part of this team, working towards the goal. Together the pastor and elders carefully, in unity, planned and focused their efforts on achieving their task. Together they sought to empower the people and give them the drive to go, meet and support those who were hurting and bring them to the safety of God.

A Relational Leadership

A different concept of leadership structure was found in the teaching of Simons, as well as P2 and P5. For these men, leadership was a functional requirement towards the goal of shared community. The pastor, for Simons, fulfilled the role of protecting the flock and guiding the people in their path of conforming to Christ. Any who attained a level of wisdom and knowledge of God sufficient for the task could accomplish this function. The people were to honor and obey the pastor for his great sacrifice, for it was they who placed him at the forefront. His role, however, was not of a commander, but that of guide. The elders functioned in a similar manner to the pastor with little distinction between them. The church was a community of willing and
individual believers who chose to share with their brothers whenever there was a need. Together, they worked toward being a body conformed to Christ. They were called to reproduce, not conquer.

The church that P2 led was not a Mennonite Church, but it had a similar perspective on leadership. As one of four elders, P2 considered himself to hold the position of a leader among peers. All leaders of the church, apart from the secretary, were volunteers and they all had equal voice. While P2 was in charge of the logistics of the church, including scheduling and encouraging prompt responses to situations, all the elders worked in complete unanimity in the decision making process. Together they served and taught the flock, protecting the flock when sin arose in the camp. These elders were all chosen from the established members of the congregation. This congregation assisted in making all the major decisions, and were involved and responsible in the task of ministering. Leadership was a shared task.

Servant Leadership

The leadership of P5’s church began to bring the circle back to its start, blending relational leadership with submission. The leadership of the church was found in the board of elders. This team of elders set the direction. They had the ultimate responsibility for the congregation. While there was a senior pastor and a large pastoral staff, all decisions were finalized at the elder-board level. This elder-governed church protected the church from harm while directing the strategies for future ministry. As one of the staff, the pastor was free to bring leadership ideas to the board. He, however, remained an employee of that board. All of the pastors fulfilled the tasks of communicating the direction that the board had set to the congregation and implementing the board’s plans. The congregation, in turn, were the army of ministers that reached the community. The pastoral staff equipped the congregation with
thorough teaching and challenged them in this ministry, fulfilling the desires of the board. All three groups of people: the board, the staff and the congregation participated in the task of choosing new board members. While this church leadership structure assumed a shared role at all levels, the focus was on mutual submission to each other and effective focused ministry.

Conclusion

Each of these eight interviews, as well as the five historical subjects, demonstrated the wide variety of leadership structures that were found in Christendom. The creators of every one of these distinct styles held their style to be authentically biblical and they were flourishing. Chapter four analyzes the connections between the individuals’ understanding of the inner workings of the Trinity and the preferred leadership style.
Chapter 4

Analysis and Evidence

Chapter three presented a comparison of the beliefs of each of the men interviewed in regards to the Trinity and their leadership style. Chapter four analyzes the vertical connection between the theological understandings of the Trinity and how their church structures reflect those beliefs. As introduced in chapter three, five groupings of beliefs were presented in regards to the Trinity. One group of people was indistinct in their description, or they had an over-riding issue that pushed all other theological and leadership questions into the background. The second group of men viewed the Trinity in a hierarchical manner with power and authority flowing downward from the head administrator or planner to those who implemented the plan. The third group of people considered the Father to be the first among equals. These men held to a strong leader over a unified team. The fourth group of people focused on a team approach in the accomplishing of a task. For them, the identity of the leader was less important than the functioning of the team to accomplish a mutual goal. One last man overrode his hierarchical structure with submission, changing the form of the leadership structure. The variations within these groups were catalogued enabling an analysis of the correlations between the groups. The final process of analysis used the original interview text with the distillation product as a guide in order to clarify the groupings and connections.

Common Factors

A number of common factors appeared throughout the interview process. Some of these commonalities were structured into the selection process, while others were discovered in the responses. The two main standardizing limitations of holding to a trinitarian theology, as well as having independent control when forming the leadership structure, both held true during the
interviews. Other common features also appeared in the areas of church history and theology. The church leadership structure of the men during their formative church years was surprisingly similar. Less surprising was the basics of understanding the Trinity. While goals, motives and authority levels varied for each of the members of the Trinity, their individual primary tasks in achieving those goals remained mostly the same.

**Theological Commonalities**

When considering the economic position of God the Father, all of the men understood Him to be the titular head of the Trinity. What this headship looked like was where the diversity was found. All of the men recognized that the process of salvation occurred only through the work of Christ in his coming to earth, living, and dying on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. This was a task uniquely assigned to Jesus. The provision of salvation through his coming to earth was his clear purpose. The primary reason for that act of grace and God’s ultimate goal answering why He provided salvation varied for each of these men. The work of the Holy Spirit also was defined in a common manner. His tasks of communicating the plan of God, encouraging, and empowering believers in their walk with God was commonly shared. The Holy Spirit always worked to bring attention to the Father, even though he was the primary mover within the life of the believer. Again, the difference was found in the desired goal, how it was defined and how it was reached. Economically, all men recognized the distinct tasks of each member of the Trinity. How all of these tasks connected together and what they served to accomplish was where leadership systems within the Trinity and within the church diverged.

The free will of men and their ability to choose whom they would follow was also common between all those who were interviewed. This was true also of Simons, but not of Calvin, Luther, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. There was a small variation regarding the
role of the sovereign God in these beliefs. All men held strongly to the sovereignty of God, but in His will, He allowed men to choose.

**Experiential Factors**

Another area of commonality was found in the church environment where these men first experienced leadership within the body of Christ. For seven of the eight men, plus Luther, Simons and Calvin, there was an authoritative pastor or priest in charge of the church. The levels of control over the congregants did vary, but the message was clear: The pastor was the one who gave direction to the church, and to whom the others were accountable. P7, who was unique in this history, experienced a positive complimentary leadership model in the home and church. Those following the pastor were part of a complimentary team, even though it was not completely egalitarian. Thus, all men historically experienced one man as the lead in church leadership. This consistency of background did not lead to a consistency of leadership structures. Leadership within the family life of these men though was not consistent.

In the world of Christian counseling, there is a great emphasis on one’s formative years and generational sins. Positive and unhealthy patterns are passed down from one generation to the next.\(^1\) With all of the emphasis on the role of the father upon the personality of the son, one would expect to see a reproduction of the father’s leadership style within the son’s church structure. The son will often reproduce what he has experientially learned, or react against it and do the opposite. How these decisions are arrived at is a complex issue. However, the results of these interviews demonstrated that there was not a connection between the leadership style of the father and the leadership style of the son. Leadership in the home looked different for everyone.

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\(^1\) Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 93.
Table 4 charts the family background of these men with the type of church structure that they established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Background</th>
<th>Church Leadership Structure Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elder-led Employee Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Mother</td>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian Father</td>
<td>P5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Family background and church leadership structure

Within the category of a single mother, P2 and P4 chose to develop a church with a very strong elder-leadership model. P2's father died when he was seven; his mother continued to mentor him in a strong Christian manner. P4 and P8 both came from divorced, dysfunctional homes, having fathers who were absent from their lives. While P4 focused on an elder-led church with a strong emphasis on restoration, P8 established a church with a very authoritarian pastor who worked to build God’s kingdom.

The fathers of P3, P5, and P6 were very authoritarian in their leadership style. There was no doubt as to who was in charge. Each of these families was stable, with a clear demonstration of love between the members of that family. P5's family, while non-Christian in nature, held to a high moral standard. In contrast to his family and church experience, he chose to establish a leadership structure where he as the pastor was an employee of the church board of elders. P6's context was similar to P5's. He also ascribed to an elder-led church. He, however, held a tighter rein on the direction and running of the church. P3's family was a solid Christian family with a large extended family directly involved, yet his father was very authoritarian and often traveling. P3's leadership, however, clearly fell into the authoritarian category with the elders coming into
agreement with the direction that he had set for the church. The range of leadership styles within this category of family background was the widest of the three groupings.

Two men fell into the category of complimentary leadership within their home life. P7 and P9 both experienced a loving home environment. For P7, there was strong teamwork between the parents. His preferred leadership style is elder-led, with a strong pastoral oversight. P9 had a more authoritative father, however he used his authority to ensure the careful provision and protection of his wife. P9 has established a singularly authoritarian leadership style in serving his church.

While one saw glimpses of the family life in the leadership style of these men, it was also evident that other factors significantly influenced the direction that these men chose to take. It was of note that there was a fairly even representation of the three major leadership styles within each of these family categories. In contrast to this variation in leadership styles, the correlation of trinitarian theology to leadership was much more consistent, as this Thesis Project hypothesized. Because everyone was a unique blend of personality, history and theology, they had a unique understanding of God. The next section demonstrated how that unique understanding was transferred to their unique leadership style.

Theological Constructs and Authority Structures

Leadership, relationship, authority and unity all blend together to form a functioning organism of multiple parts. The blend of each of these factors differs for each individual. Seldom is there a specific defining line between leadership and relationship, or authority and unity. There is also a distinction between the complete harmony and comfortableness that the members of the Trinity have with their perspective positions, and the comfort of human members in a church
organization. It is possible, using a Venn diagram that shows these primary separation zones, to demonstrate the principle of correlation, no matter where the pastor is on the continuum.

**The Differentiation-in-Unity Diagram**

There are a multitude of illustrations that are used in order to explain what the Trinity looks like. Because of God’s immensity, it is impossible to define in a clear manner His identity. Ezekiel encountered this difficulty as God approached him being carried on an expanse of sparkling ice.\(^2\) With a direct vision of God on His throne, Ezekiel could only use similes to describe what he was seeing. So also, in attempting to define the inner workings of the Trinity, one is limited to inadequate illustrations of what it means to be differentiation-in-unity, the term this author prefers using.

![Figure 3: Differentiation-in-unity](image)

Figure 3 is an illustration that this author has utilized over the last eighteen years to describe the Trinity. This diagram was also useful for charting the different understandings of what the differentiation-in-unity encountered in this Thesis Project looked like. Scripture frequently speaks of God as being light, with John writing that “God is light. In Him is no darkness at all.”\(^3\) As one explores the nature of projected visible light, one discovers that it is composed of three primary colors: red, green, and blue. All possible shades of color are derived

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\(^2\) Ezekiel 1.

\(^3\) I John 1:5.
from a combination of only these three colors. Computer terminology uses the letters RGB to describe these three components. All three colors present in full strength and overlapping, create white light. In figure 1, the colors are offset for the purpose of explaining the presence of the three different colors. In actuality, the overlap is completely comprehensive. When one or more of the colors are diminished or one color becomes dominant, the white becomes a different shade. This is also true if one of the colors could be set off to one side. When none of these colors are present, then there is only darkness, the absence of light. It is only in the presence of each of these three colors in their fullness and unified in one location that white light is possible. The distinctions become blended into one inseparable vision without their loss of identity. It is also noteworthy that there are seven colors, or relationships within this imagery, the number of perfection. This figure illustrates this author’s elementary understanding of differentiation-in-unity. While there are multiple theological applications that connect to the color wheel, this Thesis Project will utilize this idea to primarily illustrate the interaction of relationships within authority.

In looking at perceived leadership structures within the Trinity as well as within the church, one could visualize how different understandings of authority shaped relationships. Within these diagrams, the color red was used to illustrate the Father, blue for the Son, and green for the Holy Spirit. These color designations varied for leadership positions within the church. For some leadership structures, there was a single circle, white in color, with hints of the three primary colors randomly occurring throughout the circle. For others, the red influence was clearly seen throughout the other two circles of green and blue. For others, there were three distinct circles that simply touched each other. For both trinitarian theology and leadership
within the church body, the three distinct, or not so distinct spheres of power fluctuated in their overlapping relationship to each other in regards to identity, relationship, and authority.

A continuum of leadership styles was found in the beliefs of the thirteen men and churches investigated. While there was variation in the flow of authority within each of these belief systems, they could be generally placed on a line chart (see figure 4). Those on the left side emphasized the differentiation within the Trinity and authority of God the Father, while those on the right focused on the unity of the Trinity and teamwork. This similar flow was found within their leadership styles.

![Figure 4: Compendium of leadership structures](image)

The task of defining the inner workings of the Trinity was not something that everyone chose to work through. While the early church took centuries to process these issues, many contemporary people have simply chosen to accept the assumptions of the past and have moved on to other things. Within this Thesis Project, two of the men had an over-riding concern that they worked to address, and they placed other considerations aside until those were resolved. Two others primarily emphasized one member of the Trinity. The rest had a clearer definition of this relationship.

**Overriding Theme**

For Luther and P4 the focus was on the grace of God and bringing about the restoration of His relationship to men. Luther, when he talked about the Trinity, emphasized the complete inability of man to understand what a Triune God looked like. In his sermon on Trinity Sunday
in 1522, he spoke of the man-made origin of the term, however he went on to use it as he described each member of the Trinity. These concepts of interrelationship were part of Luther’s theology, however, they were not something that he delved deeply into, in comparison to the scholastics of his time. He found that the distinctiveness of the Trinity was only to be found in their relationship to each other. His emphasis remained on the unity of the Godhead.

Figure 5: Luther's overflowing theme

Luther recognized the differences between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet he chose to focus on their unity. Figure 5 illustrates the indistinct presence of all three as one. There was no dissent within the Trinity, for their task was singular. In the same manner, Luther recognized the differences between the rule of the princes and the leadership of the church. Here also he chose to focus on their unity, defending the right of the princes to rule over all, and condemning those who disagreed with the princes control over the faith of the people. It appears that all of these distinctions were but a distraction from his over-riding theme of living in the grace of God. Church leadership was to proclaim the mercy of God and leave the ruling to the leaders of society. This paralleled the primary focus of Jesus on bringing God’s mercy to man.

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Relationships within the Trinity and relationships to human authority were simply to be accepted as they were, and not defined or modified.

P4’s trinitarian theology also included an overriding theme of restoration. While the Father was the head of the Trinity, the Son was the path that one followed. The Holy Spirit was the driving, moving force that moved a person on the path to restoration with the Father. The individual members of the Trinity were clear for P4, however, their focus remained fixed on restoring for the Father that which He lost in the fall of man. The work of Christ on the cross, with the Holy Spirit moving men remediated the Father’s loss. They worked in unity in accomplishing this goal of restoration for the Father. Figure 6 illustrates this cooperative effort.

![Figure 6: P4's overriding theme of restoration](image)

Within the church, the pastor, elders, and congregation all worked together to bring people back to relationship with God the Father. The distinction between pastor and the congregation was primarily one of quantity, experience and maturity, rather than position. As such, decisions and directions were made together, always keeping the goal in mind. The form of leadership was of minimal importance because the emphasis was not on administration, but on relationship. P4 considered himself a poor leader because he was not proficient in giving
direction to the organization. What he and his church did do well, however, was to enable others to live in relationship to each other and to God.

For both of these men, an overpowering idea was central to their lives. For Luther, it was the mercy of God freely given to all who were His. For P4, it was a restoration of lost relationships to the Father. Both of these men devoted their lives to making these principles known to those around them. The distractions of administration and authority kept them from communicating their foundational issues. There was a distinction between these men and Simons, as well as P2, for those men held strongly to a specific form of leadership that should not be changed. This overriding theme was also different than P7 and P9 who had a less defined Trinity.

**Vague Theological Constructs**

A different form of vagueness was found in the trinitarian beliefs of P7 and P9. While they both recognized that God was triune, their focus was almost exclusively on the Son. Both men emphasized the invisibleness of the Father in the same manner that Calvin did. For these men, God the Father was revealed most clearly through the Son, and He depended on the Son to accomplish this revelation. For people to reach the Father, they needed to remain on the path, that is, dwell in the Son. It was the Holy Spirit who empowered and made this dwelling and communication possible.

The best diagram of P7's theology was to represent as the Father a singular circle of red in the background with the blue circle of the Son almost overlaying the Father (see figure 7). It was the physical manifestation of the Son that revealed the Father. Even the pure red of the Father was modified due to the blue filter of the Son for the Son functioned as the Father’s ambassador. In contrast, the Holy Spirit retained his distinct colors because he was the
independent facilitator that enabled the Son to communicate with, and reveal the Father. The headship of Christ over the body was significant, for people submitted to God by submitting to Christ. John also emphasized this headship of Christ where Jesus stated that he was the one who is sending the Holy Spirit.\(^6\)

![Figure 7: P7's theology with the Son in front of the Father](image)

![Figure 8: P7's leadership structure](image)

The leadership style within the church was similar (figure 8). The pastor was the anointed shepherd, facilitator and leader. He mimicked his relationship with God to others as an illustration, to develop them in their relationship with God. The pastor, like Christ, was a physical manifestation of what relationship with God looked like, and the elders worked alongside him to keep his image clear through accountability. The elders were essential, and retained their individual identity in the leadership structure. They cared for the people and enabled a unity in the church that allowed the Holy Spirit to operate. While the church was defined as an elder-led church, the pastor was the primary point of focus, similar to an icon. He worked with the elders to keep the people’s vision of God uncluttered.

P9 kept his focus on the Father within the Trinity. The Father was the mastermind, revealed by the Son and lived out in Christians by the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity was present within a hierarchical order. The Father’s goal, through the Son first and then through the Holy Spirit, was for His fullness to be made complete. His focus was on His singularity and

\(^6\) John 16:7.
the restoration of that which He lost in the garden. When this fullness was restored, then all would delight in each other and be satisfied as part of that fullness.

In this particular diagram, the actual visual color should have been a reddish-white, as seen in figure 9. All three persons of the Trinity are primarily seen through the fullness of the Father, however, the illustration of the distinctions would no longer have been clear. Looking down on the image, one would only see the Father. This image was from the perspective of looking up from the bottom of the hierarchical structure. The colors in this diagram were all strongly influenced by red, for it was the fullness of the Father that was demonstrated in various forms. The circles were overlapping for they all had one common goal.

In the same manner, the church leadership structure took the form of a theocratic, incorporated model. P9's accountability system was external from the church, keeping his fullness as the pastor intact (figure 10). The board of governance within his church followed his leadership as the CEO. He utilized their gifts for administrating the church and suggested input into direction, however, the elders made the fullness of his vision visible and the congregation manifested that vision within the community. The church’s vision was to honor God, grow the body and empower people for life. The definition of each of these goals came directly from P9 and he retained his influence down to the individual level.
Both P7 and P9 had a more singular understanding of the Trinity. P7 focused in on the Son as the one who revealed the Father, while P9 focused in on the Father whose fullness was revealed in the Son. The differing church leadership structures clearly demonstrated the distinction between these two theologies. Both men took center stage, however P7 did this to reveal God to the people through personal mimicry. P9, in contrast, imaged God by having his organization demonstrate the fullness of his vision. The remainder of the men maintained a clearer distinction of the individual members of the Trinity as they functioned in unity.

Hierarchical Leadership

For the organizations that arose out of the Roman Catholic Church, one of the more common understandings of the inner workings of the Trinity was that of a hierarchical structure (see figure 11). As discussed earlier in this Thesis Project, the Roman Catholic Church clearly displayed a continuity between their leadership structure and their theological understanding. The Church taught a Trinity in unity, but the three identities were quite distinct. The authority of the Father continued down the chain of command. All three were equal, but the focus was on the progression. In figure 11, the red color of the Father was infused throughout the Son and the Holy Spirit, for they were obedient to the Father in bringing glory to the Father. It was not about their will and desires, but those of the Father.
Just as God the Father was the head of the Trinity with the Son in obedience to Him and the Holy Spirit in obedience to the Son, so also in the Church. The pope was the head of the church (figure 12) and was fully able to modify theology, as well as command and direct all those under him. Those who objected to his authority were excluded from his church. The physical church was an earthly extension of the heavenly kingdom.

Calvin retained this same authoritarian structure within the Trinity where the sovereign God accomplished His foreordained will through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Through them, the glory of God was restored and again became visible in nature and in the church. Calvin’s church structure (figure 13) also retained the same emphasis on chain of command, but God’s physical kingdom remained in heaven. The goal of the local church was to bring glory to God through life and practice. Every member of the community, that is, the church, was to fulfill his duty of returning this glory to God. Obedience to the consistory was essential for the community, and the consistory obeyed Calvin.
This authoritarian belief system was also held by P3 and P8 with a simple line of accountability presented. For P8, the Father sent the Son, who, in turn, sent the Spirit. The purpose for this sending was so that mankind would worship God the Father and usher in His kingdom. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were co-equals and submissive to each other, yet the flow of authority remained. The Son and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity accomplished their primary role of making the Father’s will possible by fulfilling their tasks. The distinction between P8 and Calvin was in regard to the congregation. For Calvin, everyone living in the community was forcibly included in God’s kingdom. For P8, everyone within the church who signed a covenant was under his leadership. By their tasks, the congregation assisted him as he worked to usher in God’s kingdom. P3 had the same theology, however, he held to a different goal. His goal was internal, where every person within the church family covenanted to be obedient in the path of becoming like the Father. The focus was on family and representation, not the kingdom.

P8’s church leadership structure was fairly simple. P8, like God the Father, was the source of the primary teaching and he declared the direction for the church. The elders served the
needs of the people and mobilized them in fulfilling the direction given by P8. The congregation, like the Holy Spirit, ministered to each other and the community. The parallel between the structure of the Trinity and the structure within the church was quite clear. For P3, the goal was not external kingdom building, but the internal imaging of God. The same authority that P8 used to build God’s kingdom was used by P3 to build a Father-Son relationship of unity and identity. It was the Father’s will that this be accomplished. Because his goal included voluntary unity, all the decisions of the elders required complete unity under his direction. P3 used his authority to ensure that unity was maintained.

The hierarchical leadership structure for each of these three men and the Roman Catholic Church was similar. All followed the flow of authority within the Trinity and used their position as head of their church to direct the outcome. The influence of the leader’s red color within the diagram was seen throughout all who were led. The final shape of the church differed because the desired goals of God the Father differed, as laid out by table 5. For the pope, the goal was establishing the glory of God the Father’s kingdom on earth. For Calvin and P8, it was returning the glory of the Father back to Him through the physical church. For P3, it was becoming like God in holiness and the unity of relationship. P9 restored the fullness of God the Father to every level. The one at the top gave the direction, and it was expected that all those who were under that authority, even though they were ontologically equal, needed to follow in submission. They worked toward the goal of the head, for the glory of God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Calvin</th>
<th>P8</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God’s kingdom on earth</td>
<td>God’s glory returned</td>
<td>God worshiped and His kingdom built</td>
<td>become like the Father</td>
<td>complete God’s fullness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A distinction between the leadership model of P9 and P8 was evident. While both maintained very strong control over their churches, P9's focus was on a single fullness that empowered all who lived within the control of the pastor to attain that fullness. P8 had a primary focus of kingdom building for the glory of God with clear authority structures used to accomplish this external goal. For both of these men, the top leadership appeared the same, but the remaining church structure was significantly different. P5 also maintained this strict hierarchical leadership structure within the Trinity. He, however, applied the lens of mutual submission which had become his primary focus. This lens radically changed the resulting leadership structure. It was because of this lens that P5 was discussed in the last section in this chapter.

First Among Equals

The early church developed its understanding of the Trinity in the context of challenging heresies and cultural differences. Over time, the western Roman Catholic Church separated theologically from the eastern Orthodox Churches, concluding with the addition of the *filioque* clause. The Orthodox churches emphasized the mysterious unity of the Trinity with the Father as the *arche*. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeded out of the Father equally. While they both had different roles assigned to them, it was to the Father that they related. As such, the Father was the head of a team. Together in unity they functioned, and it was to the goal of unity that they worked. No individual alone within the Trinity had the authority to change the plan.
In figure 14, the individuality of each member of the Trinity retained their pure color. Their interaction was mysterious with the authority and the revelation flowing from Father, as demonstrated by the arrows. The Father, however, was unable to unilaterally change the decisions of the others. The blended colors of the Son and the Father contained the full strength of both, and not shaded towards the red of the Father. The same was also true of the Holy Spirit and his interactions.

The leadership structure within the Orthodox Church also demonstrated this relational system where the patriarch and the emperor shared an equal status in the running of the church (figure 15). The patriarch oversaw and strongly protected the spiritual side of God’s kingdom, while the emperor oversaw and protected the societal side. Together they provided the window through which the glory of God could be seen by the world at large. It was essential that this one true window remained on earth. This unity and equality limited church leadership to the task of protecting and promoting what was established from the beginning.

The concept of strong leadership and teamwork was found in the leadership structures of P3 and P7. The motivation for teamwork for these men differed from the Orthodox Church though. For P3, God the Father utilized a team, therefore, the leader needed to also utilize a team to accomplish his will. The goal was to be like the Father. For P7, the leader mimicked God in
order to reveal that which was invisible. The team worked to reveal the Father. When the Father was revealed, one could know His grace and live in His love. P6 followed more closely to the Orthodox Church in his understanding of leadership within the Trinity and the church.

God the Father, for P6, was the source. Because God was Spirit, He was invisible to man. God therefore used the Son to reveal Himself to His creation (figure 16). The Son carried out the plans of the Father, and the Holy Spirit revealed the Father’s plans to mankind, having empowered individuals to carry out those plans. The image of the Father was in the Son. While the Spirit primarily spoke about the work of the Son as God’s plan for salvation, he directed all things back to the Father. Prayer was to be made only to the Father, and not to the Son or the Holy Spirit. The flow arrows of were reversed from the Orthodox church (figure 16) for P6 (figure 15), in that the Son and the Holy Spirit brought the glory to God, rather than bringing God’s kingdom to man. The Trinity worked within itself to keep the Father in the pre-eminent position. Their teamwork on earth was to bring glory to God by revealing who He was and how much He loved man.

Within the administrative structure of P6, the pastor led the team through teaching, and he guided the elder-board into knowing God’s will (figure 17). He provided the primary image of what the will of God looked like for the church. P6 and the elders worked together as a team in
discovering this will, and then they communicated it to the people. The church’s final goal was that those entrusted to them would be pleasing to God when they stood before Him. The congregation remained outside of the leadership triangle. Within the Trinity, the Father used the Son and the Holy Spirit as a team to accomplish His will. Within the church, P6 led and utilized the elders as they worked together to know and reveal the will of the Father. This team effort did not seek to change the Father’s plans, but to simply know and follow them in order to be pleasing to God. While each of the two were distinct, they worked in close relationship.

The Orthodox Church as well as the structure of P6’s church demonstrated the concept of “first among equals.” For both of these structures, God the Father remained at the top as the arche, while the leadership of the organization provided for the physical and spiritual needs of the people. The dual team of the Son and the Holy Spirit supporting the Father, or the pastor and the elders supporting God, was consistent. The role of leadership was not to provide something new, but rather to reveal the Father and remain in fellowship with the arche.

In the hierarchical leadership model, there was a chain of command used to accomplish the Father’s goals. In the First among Equals model, the team was essential in fulfilling the Father’s goals. There was a third approach to understanding the Trinity that had a significant bearing on leadership structure.

**Team Focus**

The flow of authority from the Father to the Son to the Holy Spirit was the pattern in the hierarchical approach. The “first-among-equals” understanding retained a singular head with a team supporting and fulfilling the will of the head or revealing and exalting that head. The team approach focused on a group working together to accomplish a shared victory.
Simons clearly understood the distinctions within the Trinity, and he understood the leadership role that the Father played within the Trinity. He did not focus on the position of leadership, however, for recognizing leadership was not the goal. Within the Trinity there were three distinct persons, each with a distinct task to accomplish. They worked together as one team to accomplish the mutual task of acquiring and enjoying an eternal relationship with creation. They already lived in relationship and were working together to increase that relationship. The imagery that was used was one of family.

In diagramming what this relationship looked like within the Trinity (figure 18), one saw a greater overlap of the three members of the Trinity, with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit retaining their pure colors. All of their distinctiveness remained. They all, however, shared the same goal that would bring joy to them equally. This was in contrast to the previous diagrams where the will and glory of the Father was placed upon the Son and the Holy Spirit with the result primarily enjoyed by the Father.

The church structure that Simons envisioned was also similar to his trinitarian theology (figure 19). The church community was composed of only those who were truly united in Christ. Their mutual goal was a fellowship of community where each looked after the needs of others as they grew in their fellowship with God together. There were different assigned positions within
the church in the form of pastors and elders for the purpose of fulfilling tasks. The focus was not on the position or the authority, however, but on community. The congregation was an integral part of this team. For Simons, the fellowship of the Godhead was spiritual in nature and included this earthly community. The church reflected the Trinity because it emphasized and was part of the fellowship of the divine family. The autonomy of each individual within the community was as important within the church as was the need for participating in meeting the needs of the community. The church was a group of individuals who shared the same goal, and all were blessed by attaining that goal.

The church that P2 established had a similar theology, even though P2 did not come from a Mennonite background. God the Father functioned as a coach who had a plan to win. The Son was sent to earth for the purpose of salvation, and the Holy Spirit comforted, taught and empowered. While their tasks were different, they were seamless, consistent in theory and processes. They all had the same message and their shared desire was for relationship.

The leadership structure set up by P2 was much the same way. Church leadership consisted of four elders who shared in decision-making and teaching. The only distinction between the head elder and the other elders was that he handled the logistics of leadership, making sure that all the details were brought to completion. They each had a specific role in leadership to protect the flock and build relationships. A complicated vision statement existed for the church, but for P2, the focus was simply on growing this relational team. The only person in the church who received a salary was the secretary. Individuals within the congregation shared all other tasks voluntarily. The volunteer and relational team of elders, along with the body, worked together on the task of growing more volunteers into a stronger relational body.
Within the vision of Simons and P2, leadership and authority were simply tools used to accomplish fellowship and health within the body. Although leadership existed and was needed, it was only used to protect the body and direct growth. Anyone well known and worthy of leadership could fill the role of elder.

Each of these main distinctions in understanding the inner working of the Trinity were displayed in the leadership styles of their proponents. Those who held to a more singular understanding of the Godhead also demonstrated a continuity between their theology and their church structure. The last interview discussed here described a paradoxical view of what the Trinity looked like.

**Paradoxical Submission**

The whole concept of differentiation-in-unity can appear as a paradox when one asks the question of how three can be one, or one can be three. Similarly, one might find a paradox of authoritarian leadership and mutual submission. P5's theology and church leadership structure interestingly blends these ideas.

Throughout the discussion of the inner workings of the Trinity, P5 clearly laid out an economic structure that paralleled the hierarchical perspective of the Roman Catholic Church, Calvin, P3 and P8. The Father designed the plan of redemption, the Son executed the plan of salvation, and the Holy Spirit applied the plan in the hearts of people. There was a definite submission of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the will of the Father. Where P5's structure differed from the other structures was that his flow-chart was circular rather than vertical (see figure 20). The Trinity was united in their mutual submission to each other. Ontological equality was laid over all other discussions as it kept re-appearing throughout the interview. The Father, Son and
Holy Spirit were equal to each other and one in unity. As they worked together in the affairs of men, they enjoyed the result.

Figure 20: P5's trinitarian theology

Figure 21: P5's leadership structure

This same concept of mutual submission occurred within the leadership structure of the church (see figure 21). This was truly an elder-led church, where all of the decisions regarding direction and process were made at the elder level. The pastoral staff, including the senior pastor, were employees of that elder board and were responsible to communicate those decisions to the congregation. The congregation was trained to do the ministry and they also had the final say in the makeup of the elder board. The concept of mutual submission marked each level within the church. Together they worked to train and release future leaders in the community. The pleasure of the team was found in fulfilling the task of producing other teams. This paradox of leaders in submission to those people they served was foundational to the whole church.

P5's church differed significantly from a hierarchical or first-among-equals church. There was also a difference between the working together of the team and mutual submission. The concept of mutual submission removed a singular source of authority and placed a group of leaders in charge who submitted to others. That group made mutual decisions and they, in turn, were held accountable by the people they served. This concept also looked quite different from a
team-focus church. The task of leadership and developing new leaders was primary, in contrast to the concept of an expanding family of fellowship and community.

Conclusion

Every church leadership structure in the group of thirteen researched was unique. This same uniqueness was found within the trinitarian theology of each of these subjects. Where there was an all-important message that the Triune God desired to communicate with His creation, the issues of church structure were set aside, being left to the state, or considered simply unimportant as the group worked to bring about this goal. When the distinctiveness of each member of the Trinity was hidden, and the focus was on the physical manifestation of the Son, then the leadership structure also strongly emphasized the manifestation of God’s plan through the lead pastor. If the team of the Son and the Holy Spirit were working to bring God’s kingdom to earth or to reveal the Father and bring glory to Him, then the pastors and elders also worked together to bring glory to God. When there was a shared unity and shared goal with shared rewards, then the identity of the leader took second place to the task of accomplishing the mutual goal of the congregation.

In all of these churches with their leaders, one saw a strong correlation between trinitarian theology and leadership style. Chapter five further supports this connection, as well as describes the P1’s deliberate connection as he structured his church according to his theology. A path forward is also suggested as one processes this information.
Chapter Five

Synthesis, Application and the View Forward

The task of tying together all of the different subjects covered in this Thesis Project falls to this chapter. Understanding what it means to honor the Creator is no longer clear because of sinful separation. What God’s inner relationship looks like has entered into a state of confusion for mankind. Being created in the image of God, along with the desire to image that Creator has a significant impact upon the function of man in God’s created world. Men and women struggle in their attempts to define the connection between dominion and relationship. This struggle was succinctly described in the curse for Eve, where her desire was for her husband and he would rule over her. These differences of understanding were examined within the leadership of the church.

Chapter four utilized Venn diagrams to illustrate how authority in relationship was understood and functioned within the different leadership models of the eight men interviewed. Chapter five has tied the different models together and summarized the conclusions reached. P1’s practical example of an understanding and application of the connection between trinitarian theology and leadership style was laid out. His story was presented in this chapter as a sample of how one could deliberately shape the administration of a church and the focus of ministry into a harmonious unit that was effective in reaching its goals. A number of paths that one could take that look forward into future areas of research have been presented. These are topics that would broaden the reach of this Thesis Project. The importance of knowing the trinitarian foundation

\[\text{Genesis 3:16.}\]
upon which one’s leadership structure was built and advanced became clear as this Thesis Project was concluded.

Leadership as Dominion in Relationship

The Creator God formed man in the garden and breathed into him His breath of life. Two different words, in the form of repetition, as found in the Genesis account\(^\text{175}\) stated the significance of this attribute. Humans were different from all of the rest of creation, including the angels,\(^\text{176}\) for they were image-bearers. Because “God’s people are stamped with the tag of ‘gods’”\(^\text{177}\) they function in a similar manner to their Creator. There is much discussion as to whether that image is described as ruling in the form of having dominion, being able to have complex relationships, having a will or being able to create. One can see all of these unique attributes to some degree in humans as they reflect the nature of God. To be human means to bear or reflect the image of the divine and thus to attempt to recreate and reflect that nature in their sphere of influence. From the beginning, men and women established societies, as well as contested with each other for power and authority\(^\text{178}\) in the attempt to establish their ideal society.

At Mount Sinai, the second command given was that man was forbidden from making a graven image of the divine.\(^\text{179}\) Idolatry developed quickly in other cultures after the flood, and it was also a great temptation for God’s people Israel. They desired a visual representation of their God in order to better worship Him. Even at Mount Sinai, they set up a golden bull to describe

\(^{175}\) Genesis 1:26,27.

\(^{176}\) Psalm 8:4-6.


\(^{178}\) Genesis 4:19-24.

\(^{179}\) Exodus 20:4.
the God who brought them out of Egypt.\textsuperscript{180} Isaiah also spoke in mocking terms of this desire to create a visual form of the invisible God.\textsuperscript{181} The desire to visually see the personal Creator and the desire to function as He functioned were ways of establishing a connection with Him and an attempt at honoring Him through imitation.

The two aspects of dominion and relationship present in a trinitarian God played against each other as an individual led others within a relationship. The common struggle between dominion and relationship in fallen man was often an either-or struggle rather than a both-and harmony. How the pastors understood the functioning of this paradox within the Trinity led them to the style of leadership that most accurately fulfilled them as an image-bearer. The question could also have been asked whether it was more accurate to lead as God the Father led, or lead as the Triune God is. This was the tension between leadership and relationship.

A Supported Thesis

The previous chapters of this Thesis Project presented the investigation of eleven individuals and two organizations as they envisioned the ideal leadership structure. As one looked across the timeline of church history, one could recognize a continuity of connection. The thirteen subjects could be gathered into three chronological groupings: The early church formation, the reformation period, and the contemporary world. That pattern which was most evident in the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Orthodox Church was equally evident in the subsequent groups.

\textsuperscript{180} Exodus 32.

\textsuperscript{181} Isaiah 41:21-24.
**Early Church Formation**

The distinctions between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church were carefully laid out in the previous chapters. While both of these churches developed in unique cultures, they shared the common goal of becoming the universal church. This universality covered both the religious priestly system, as well as the civil governance of the entirety of their world. Both the pope and the patriarch worked to build God’s universal church in their own theological image. Their civil and ecclesiastical results differed greatly because their theology differed. The pope was the infallible head of all, as God the Father was the *arche* and the one in command of the Trinity. The Son obeyed the Father and the Holy Spirit was submissive to the Son. The Roman Catholic Church was to be the head of all civil government and earthly kingdoms, and these rulers were required to submit to church dictates and taxes. Within the Orthodox Church, the patriarch and the emperor shared leadership of all on earth. They functioned as a partnership under the control and regulation of the infallible approved councils, supported by clergy and traditions. This partnership reflected the working of the Son along with the Holy Spirit in accomplishing the will of the Father. Together, they maintained the unity of the Trinity as the Father was honored. There was a harmony between trinitarian theology and these two church structures.

**The Three Reformers**

The theology and church structure of the three reformers in this Thesis Project continued to support the Thesis presented. Each of these men came from a similar theological and political world, with all having a foundation in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. There was, however, a significant difference in how they viewed God in His differentiation-in-unity, as well as the look of their ideal church. Of these three men, Calvin was the only one who explicitly
attempted to establish a state church that mirrored his theology. Martin Luther chose to delegate the control of the state church to the princes, demonstrating his emphasis on what he deemed to be of most importance for God. Both Luther and Calvin held to a hierarchical trinitarian structure with the Father as the ultimate authority. Because of God’s sovereignty over free will, the plans of God were to be enacted without question by all. Even though both of these men experienced persecution, they did not hold back on forcing others to accept their beliefs, for this was the level of obedience within the Trinity by the Son and the Holy Spirit to the sovereign Father. The need for submission even led to the persecution and expulsion of others who differed from them.

Simons was not able to establish a specific church structure due to this persecution. He, however, continually proclaimed the essence of what that structure should look like. For him, the church was a voluntary community living in unity. While the Father was the head of the Trinity and worthy of honor, the greatest identifying characteristic of the Trinity was that they were a community. There was no compulsion within either the Trinity or the church, for they all shared in the same reward. All three of these men came from a similar background, and all of them experienced persecution for their beliefs, yet their leadership structures differed significantly. Each of these men promoted a church structure that was in harmony with his unique understanding of the Trinity.

The Eight Interviews

A common cultural context also influenced the eight men reviewed in chapter four. While there were significant variations in their family lives, they all grew up in America where individuality and initiative were prized. They also had the freedom and the opportunity to establish a local church in the manner that appealed to them. While these men have not written a plethora of literature explaining their views, the interview process proved sufficient to grasp their
understanding of God and what His differentiation-in-unity meant to them. It is of note that just as each of these men had a unique understanding of God in His relationship to Himself, so also they had a unique understanding of what godly leadership should look like. These men had no significant theological distinctions regarding the attributes of each member of the Trinity. There were no major variations about what it meant to have the godly characteristics required for being a good shepherd of God’s flock. They also all recognized that God the Father was at the head of the Trinity. The true differences came in the manner in which they viewed God the Father functioning in His position of authority within the unified relationship, along with his role of pastor as he functioned in his association with the flock and the other church leaders. Strong correlations were found between the theology and the leadership style of each pastor. At times, the pastor reflected the role of God the Father, while other men reflected the role of the Son. Other times, the pastor formed a partnership with others to bring glory to the Father. Each of these men reflected their understanding of the Trinity in their created leadership structure.

Traditional evangelical church understandings of what leadership looked like influenced pastors in their definition of terms. At times, however, the stated leadership structure differed from the actual structure. The actual leadership structure of P6 and P7 resembled more closely the trinitarian theology of those pastors than the structure that they proclaimed to be true. These two men proclaimed that the elder-led structure was the only true biblical model and they believed that they were following it closely. In contrast, this interview process demonstrated how their core understanding of the inner working of the Trinity overwrote and colored their inherited definition of church leadership. While these two cases alone did not provide sufficient evidence to establish an overwriting principle, they did present a reasonable starting point for future
discussio

discussion. For both P6 and P7, the discrepancy between that which was proclaimed and the actual form was slight, and not destructive.

In comparing the results of chapter four with the different styles of leadership, one recognized extreme variations that might occur across the continuum of leadership and relationship. If one desired to cause a major disruption to these churches, all one would need to do is have the leaders switch pulpits for a short period of time. The conflicting definitions of leadership and how the church should attain its goals would quickly result in problems. Because each of these pastors established church structures that were in agreement with their theology, each of them was stable or flourishing. Not all pastors and churches have this harmony however.

**Conflicting Beliefs**

As one enters a new pastoral position or becomes a member of a missionary organization, there is usually agreement with the doctrinal statement and the proclaimed leadership structure. Conflicting beliefs, however, quickly arise to derail the leadership process. There are pastors and organizational leaders that fail to lead effectively because the relational leadership structure of the organization differs from their understanding of the Trinity. None of the pastors interviewed for this Thesis Project experienced these problems, but this author has encountered other pastors who have been in this situation.

In other previous interactions with and observations of church and mission leaders, this author has encountered leaders whose understanding of godly authoritarian leadership style could have been best described as dictatorial. Definitions of honor and respect began with the concept of quick and unquestioning obedience to the one that God had placed at the top of the organizational structure. Obedience to God was defined as obedience to the leader, and questioning the direction of the leader or his morality was walking in disobedience to God and
dishonoring Him. Such sinful, disobedient people were to be marginalized or removed. Those leaders believed that this pattern found its source within the Godhead and the authority of the Father, and all organizations should run in a similar authoritarian manner. For the men who held these positions, godly relationship could only properly exist under firm, absolute authority.

Other men who held to a team concept encountered failure when they tried to lead in a conflicting context. They presented an idea or a direction, and then they waited for the community to come alongside with a decision and begin to act. The community, however, was unwilling to commit to a plan of action or activate that decision. They may have been wanting the pastor to do it all, or they may have followed an undesignated leader. The desire for a united team and the unwillingness of the people to follow a specific leader led to an impasse and stagnation. The proclaimed style of a team focus with elder leadership failed to produce directional movement. The question of what it meant to be a differentiation-in-unity needed to be resolved, removing the confusion that reigned in this struggle for direction-setting by leadership and the community.

As the leader molds the leadership structure that he has been placed in, the latent similarities and disparities between the practical theology of the context and his trinitarian theology will emerge. Initially, the two differing views will co-exist. Frustrations will arise, however, as time passes. The reshaping of the structure will collide with the trinitarian theology of the established church. As the pastor gains confidence in his position, he will seek to take charge and establish a harmonious correlation between his personal theology and his leadership style. If he is given the freedom and the time to make the adjustments, or if both he and the church are compatible at the onset, then they will together grow in unity and harmony. What
happens most often though is the conflict of applied theology becomes more pronounced and the pastor resigns.

In this Thesis Project the ideal leadership construct was analyzed for each of these men as they established a church, or shaped the church in a style that was derived from their theology. They accomplished this goal naturally and unconsciously, without any deliberate attempt to force the leadership style and their understanding of the Trinity to remain in unity. P1 was unique in that he deliberately sought to build his church structure upon his understanding of the inner working of the Trinity.

The Deliberate Leadership Structure of P1

In proposing this Thesis Project, the writer was uncertain of how solidly the research would demonstrate the validity of the proposal. After carefully developing the interview questions, a group of possible church pastors was selected that fit the limiting requirements of the Project. It was a surprise that the very first interview conducted was with a man, previously unknown, who sought to deliberately use his trinitarian theology as a model for his leadership structure. Because of this intentional structuring, the presentation of this data was delayed until this chapter of the Thesis Project. P1 provided an excellent and flourishing model as to how one could have theology and leadership style in complete agreement.

P1 became a Christian while he was a teenager. He shared a similar experience with all of the other interviewees regarding church leadership. In both his home life and his early church life, the man in authority dominated all and was very authoritarian in style. Dissent from the chosen path was not encouraged. P1 has continued on with an authoritarian leadership structure in his church. His authority, however, was significantly different from what he experienced or from any of the other church structures analyzed.
In describing the Trinity, P1 described them as three equal persons, equal in essence but having different roles with God the Father taking the authoritative leadership role. The unique thing about his view of God the Father’s leadership was that God was a good delegator who shared the glory. It was the Father who led the team in fulfilling the plan, and it was the Father who made the Son Lord over all. All of creation and all of the church would recognize Jesus as Lord.\textsuperscript{182} P1 was the only man interviewed who mentioned this magnification of the Son, whom the Father led.

The Son was equal to the Father, yet submitted to the authority of the Father. This submission to the Father was most profoundly demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus struggled with the pain of the cross that awaited him. He submitted, proclaiming that it would not be his will, but the will of the Father that would be done.\textsuperscript{183} Having been exalted by God above all creation and as Lord of all, Jesus became the one who proclaimed judgment on all of creation and all men, including his church.

The Holy Spirit was also equal to the Son and equal to the Father. He was the messenger who communicated what Christ spoke and the Father planned. It was the Holy Spirit that brought the message, manifested it, applied it, carried it and preserved it. He sealed the believers, gave them gifts and transformed the church into a more glorious body of Christ. He was also the one who held back the evil that currently had power in the world. The day will come when this hold will be released, and evil will bring great destruction to God’s creation. Because it was the Holy Spirit who lived within the believer, he was also worthy of exploration.

Each of these three members of the Trinity had different roles, yet had complete unity. There was no argument, for they worked together in harmony as a team. They were the first

\textsuperscript{182} Philippians 2:10, Ephesians 1:20-22.
\textsuperscript{183} Luke 22:41,42.
example of a life-group. The Son and the Holy Spirit submitted to one another and the Father, for they were all ontologically equal. The Father used His authority to exalt the Son and the Holy Spirit. He was the foundation upon which the structure was built. This was a leader magnifying the team. The Father’s desire was that all glory was given to the Godhead. All were worthy to receive glory. The Father received the ultimate praise for His leadership as He accomplished this task. This understanding of the leadership of the Father provided an excellent model upon which to build a structure of church leadership.

![Figure 22: P1's trinitarian theology](image1)

![Figure 23: P1's leadership structure](image2)

P1 motivated the church leadership to also function as a team, with himself working behind the scenes to achieve the goal. He also served as a foundation providing the stability upon which the structure was built. He trusted his staff to do their part. Each member was equal. All decisions were to be unanimous, for the goal was one where all shared the glory.

The role of the pastor was the role of a father. While he did reserve the right to overrule the others in the area of direction, P1 primarily facilitated the working of the leadership team and the elder advisory board. P1 took all of the leadership issues to heart, and tried to direct the other team members in a manner that led them to a singular conclusion. He facilitated the discussion, listened to the team and held them accountable. Team members were honored, respected, and supported when they had a need. Each member of the team was expected to lead well in the role
that they had been placed by God. The pastor’s task was to provide the overview, delegating tasks and ministries, and making sure that the team remained a unit.

The concept of a leadership that promoted unity and value found expression throughout the structure. The leadership team listened to and honored the congregation, even though they were not involved in business meetings or voting. The congregation’s involvement in life-teams brought teaching and leadership to the more local level. Because everyone would “look stupid together, or great together,” according to P1, he needed to support successes at all levels. In the end, all of the team would receive the honor, not just the pastor or the elders.

This particular model of church leadership was deliberately built on P1’s understanding of the Trinity. He followed the similar belief of other pastors, noting the economic differentiation in roles within the Trinity, while also holding to the ontological unity of the three. What was different within this model was the unique perspective of God the Father as a delegator and facilitator within the Trinity in order to amplify and share the glory. The leader was the foundation upon which the glory of the others was predicated. As the one with the authoritative leadership role, it was the Father who exalted the Son above all. In the same manner, P1 was the senior pastor of the church who maintained the authority to set the direction of the church and to put his foot down where he deemed necessary. Because of great teamwork, however, he did not need to use this authority. His glory was only manifested when the other members of the team were properly supported and successful in their ministries.

When Jesus expressed his personal desire while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he gave the impression that he was wavering in his duty as one of the team members of the Trinity. It was the Father who reminded him of his task and when the correct decision was made, the
Father sent an angel to come from heaven and comfort the Son.\textsuperscript{184} Within the church, there were times when the pastor/overseer needed to challenge and remind a staff member of the big picture. This may not have been appreciated, however this was where the authority of the Father was needed.

The vision of P1’s church was to build relationships with God, family and their world. The purpose was not to establish a structure of authority, but rather bring about that same focus on exalting the team that existed within the Trinity. While the other team-focused churches emphasized the relational aspect within the Trinity, their goal was not on excelling in leadership. They rather focused on the deepening of relationships within the church and with God. P1’s structure did not focus on one side of authority or the other side of relationship. Rather, it seemed to place a dual emphasis on the leadership that enabled relationship to flourish and the task to be accomplished. Together they sought to reproduce unity and glory in the church, the family and their community. Shaw described this style of leadership as a theocracy, not a democracy or an autocracy. It was the centrality of unified teamwork.\textsuperscript{185}

P1’s model of church leadership demonstrated how it was possible to deliberately fine-tune one’s trinitarian theology with their leadership style. Not all modified structures would end up at a similar place to P1’s because starting points would differ. This particular model of leadership was unique and effective. It is, however, reflective of one particular pastor. This model has demonstrated the possibility of deliberate structural planning. By tweaking, or reshaping theology and leadership structure where discrepancies are present in each pastor’s situation, a greater harmony can come to exist between the pastor and his assigned leadership structure.

\textsuperscript{184} Luke 22:43.  
\textsuperscript{185} Shaw, \textit{Vulnerable Authority}, 120.
Practical Considerations

This Thesis Project has demonstrated a clear connection between one’s trinitarian theology and their preferred leadership style. Most of the men interviewed had not deeply considered the inner working of the Trinity nor how their trinitarian theology affected their leadership style. That lack of a defined and applied theology, however, did not inhibit their inherent desire to reflect the Trinity Creator within the created structure. The result of their efforts was a personal understanding of leadership that was believed to be the proper scriptural understanding. Those who implemented leadership in a differing manner were at times viewed as a little less biblical in their approach.

The practical considerations that arise from this research reveal the need to study the triune nature of God more, as well as to examine the foundations of how the existing leadership structures shape a local church. For pastors who establish their own churches, this harmony of beliefs should occur naturally. For the pastors who are hired by a new church and for churches who are seeking a new pastor, these considerations become far more important. The nature of an established leadership structure can also be used to reveal the true theology of the leader, in contrast to the proclaimed and “theologically correct” version. Where dysfunctionality appears in the leadership style, it may reveal a conflicted understanding of the leadership of God and His relationships in the pastor’s life. These comparative insights, when honestly investigated, can bring about lasting modifications that strengthen relationships with the divine, as well as within the church leadership circle.
Studying The Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is not something that stands at the side of Christian teaching, but rather it is essential to Christian life and understanding. It permeates all of Scripture.\(^{186}\) As the Orthodox Church has so significantly pointed out, the only way that a person can understand the heart of what it means to be a Christian is to understand the Trinity.\(^{187}\) Because mankind is created in the image of a relational and authoritarian God, understanding who God is is foundational to one’s identity and function within his world. The smallest of differences in understanding will have significantly different results.\(^{188}\) The Orthodox Church primarily focused on the relational and equal aspects of the Trinity, accepting the mystery of the holistic unity rather than analyzing the differences. The western world, under the Greek influence, has taken to analyzing each individual member of the Trinity, while largely ignoring their unity, simply assuming it to be true. For many pastors in the contemporary world, the focus is almost exclusively on the redemptive work of the Son. Other churches place a strong emphasis on the giftings and teachings of the Holy Spirit. God the Father may be mentioned in name and magnified as the One to whom all glory is due, but practically He may be given the characteristics of an absentee father. For some, he is relegated to the Old Testament, where He has limited relevance in the contemporary world. These preachers utilize the Old Testament as a book of illustrations about the message of Jesus. The result is that congregations are exposed to the individual work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, without recognizing the central authority figure who directs the world.


\(^{187}\) Ware, “The Trinity” in Cutsinger, *Reclaiming*, 126.

The claim that Christianity is a monotheistic trinitarian religion seems strange when churches drift to either the singular authoritarian style of leadership, or move to the leaderless, group-decision model. Jesus stated that the world would know that he came from the Father if the disciples lived in love and complete unity, being one with Christ and their fellow believer. Differentiation-in-unity is rarely seen in the world. Usually one god is pitted against another, or all must be identical. An omnipotent and omniscient God with a plan is viewed as a threat to identity rather than a guide and facilitator of excellence. Without an understanding of what it means for God the Father to lead the Trinity, one can easily slip into a wrong understanding of how to use one’s authority. Broadus illustrated two different extreme views of God: absolute and hostile, or good and creative with no particular goal in mind, apart from bettering Himself. Between these two extremes are a number of other unique viewpoints. The created will seek to emulate their creator, even though their understanding of the Creator may be imprecise or wrong.

If the goal of the Godhead is to be glorified, then it becomes important for man to know the nature of the one they are glorifying as best as they can. The pursuit of holiness can only truly occur when one understands the God in which holiness finds its definition. If the goal of the Godhead is to have a relationship with the created, then it is important to know what enhances or limits this relationship. A proper leadership style comes out of one’s proper understanding of this Triune God. Not all trinitarian theologies are complete or correct. Thus, there should be a greater interest in studying, revising, and teaching this aspect of one’s Creator.

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189 John 17:20-23.
190 Broadus, “What in the World.”
Studying The Leadership Culture of the Church

Churches that have been around for decades have developed their own particular leadership culture. Perhaps, beginning as a church plant from a denomination, that church-planting team simply adopted the leadership formula that was prevalent within that organization. Perhaps the original church planter departed from the church in the distant past, and the church has continued to run in a similar manner following his leadership style. The passage of time brings in new church members and leaders with different perspectives. The new leadership must then lead within a system that may be in conflict with their theology, inconsistent and fixed in local tradition. It is difficult for the new leadership to move toward the stated pattern of glorifying God within the church when that particular goal is not what the new pastor perceives as the nature and goal of the Trinity.

Organizational church structures of past decades within North America seemed to have a very strong, perhaps authoritarian, pastor at the top. Other denominations continued on in the elder-led tradition. Both of these forms of leadership are being challenged in the twenty-first century. When one looks at the growing perspectives held by organic, seeker-friendly church movements, among others, the over-arching authority of defined leadership has given way to independence in communion, with leadership only desired at the local level. The movement towards an egalitarian perspective on the position of women in leadership, both within the home and within the church, also demonstrates this cultural change. The ontological unity of the Trinity is set up in an adversarial position to the economic nature of varying roles. Bilezikian noted that the tasks of populating and caring for the world was equally shared by Adam and Eve.
When sin entered the world, however, then things changed. It was because of sin, and not the image of God, that hierarchy and competitiveness showed up in relationships.\textsuperscript{191}

The desire for a relational system of leadership is also affecting the clarity of the path to salvation. God the Father is no longer focused on a universal plan to bring glory to Himself through restoring holiness and unity, but He simply desires to live in relationship with His creation. Swart described this new perspective when he talked about a postmodern, social network concept of truth, where meaning was derived in the context of the social network, not from an external absolute.\textsuperscript{192} Truth was a product of relationship, rather than truth shaping relationship. A milder form of this relational God is found within the teachings of some television evangelists who teach that God desires for His people primarily to prosper and enjoy life. It is one’s faith that counts in receiving blessings from God, not holiness. The authoritarian God of the Old Testament, Paul and the Book of Revelation is fading from the scene and is being replaced with the little child sitting on the lap of Jesus.

These societal changes have influenced all leaders at some level. Some leaders have reacted against them, while others have embraced the new ideas. Dysfunctional leadership principles creep into all systems when those systems lose their moorings. In order to understand the leadership culture of each particular church, it is important for the people of the church to renew their understanding of the Trinity, the source out of which their preferred leadership style flows. As one better understands the fullness of the Godhead, the leadership style will be more effective in including both authority and relationship in unity.

\textsuperscript{191} Bilezikian, “In God’s Image,” 9.
\textsuperscript{192} Swart, Christian leadership as communion imagination,” 98.
Harmonizing Theology and Church Structure

Within most churches there are three groups of people who make up the body: the pastor, the elders, and the established congregation, be they members or long-term attenders. Within the larger churches there is a subset of additional pastors and staff that work under or with the senior pastor. Each of these groups are composed of individuals with their own personal trinitarian theologies. Bringing the differentiation that exists theologically within the local body into a unity of purpose in structure is a difficult process. In some communities, there are an abundance of churches available, therefore an individual will simply gravitate to the leadership structure that is most like their trinitarian theology. In other towns, there is less of a choice, and thus wider theologies are banded together into one body. This author has lived in a few communities where there has been only one evangelical church present. The task of unifying the focus of these solitary churches in this foundational area is very important.

A defined church structure is something that should be very easy to describe. In looking at the website of a particular church under the Southern Baptist umbrella, this author discovered that every position within the church was articulated to the smallest degree. Even the job description for the librarian took up half a page in the by-laws. Although every detail may be prescribed in by-laws, the reality often does not match the written ideal. The reasons behind the inclusion of these precise details need to be explored, along with an analysis of whether they are being followed in spirit or being ignored. This inquiry should reveal the source theology that drives the level of detail. An analysis of the desires of the church members in regard to leadership structures also needs to be done. Some will desire a tighter organization, while others envision a church with less adherence to stratified systems. The focus of the investigation needs to be on why so much detail is essential, rather than on what detail is present. This evaluation of
the existing and the desired structure, in light of this Thesis Project, will reveal future possibilities of unity or conflict within the church.

The task of defining the existing trinitarian theology of each member of the congregation, as well as the views held by the leadership, is much more difficult. Many people simply hold to a belief that has grown unprocessed out of their culture, church experience and personal study of the Word. Most believers can define the individual roles of each member of the Trinity, but they have not wrestled with the interaction within the Trinity. Their beliefs simply exist. A preliminary place to start would be to explore the beliefs of those who currently have influence within the Church. The interview questions used for this Thesis Project would provide a good template for discussion or for modification into a church-wide survey as a beginning to this exploration.

Once the current beliefs regarding leadership structure and trinitarian theology are defined, a specific study plan into the nature and character of God should be implemented. The common attributes of the Trinity, unfortunately, are presented often in a dry theological sense, with technical terms assigned to each different aspect. This particular manner of study can be boring to those who are not passionate about theology and confusing to those who are not theologically inclined. When each of these common attributes of the Godhead are connected with personal needs of security and significance for the individual, they are better able to facilitate a growing relationship between the Creator and the created. This awesome and practical study is essential, for it combines the leadership of God with His relation to Himself and to His creation. It is this background material behind these relational beliefs that drive leadership structure.

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193 See appendix A.
Within family structures, the definitions of correct marital relationships can be brought as starting points in the discussion of the Trinity. Questions of headship, submission, planning, and supporting are continually encountered when one talks about the role of husband and wife. Each marriage is different and each church is different, yet they all have a common foundation. A more significant and contentious debate arises in the tension between leadership goals and relational desires. The process of achieving a common purpose or goal can be filled with conflict if the interaction between leadership and relationship is not worked out. The pattern was set in the very nature of man and woman when they were created in God’s image. Understanding this pattern, unadulterated by the effects of the fall, must come by examining the pure relationship that has always existed within the Trinity, and will always exist. What does it mean for God the Father to be supreme, the One having the plan? How is it possible for God the Father to be the Head of the Trinity when He exalts Jesus above all? The questions of authority and submission and how they affect the complete equality of personhood find their answers in God. The Trinity is where one must also go when discussing an egalitarian or complementarian understanding of the marriage relationship. Once the church has wrestled with these issues, they will have a better understanding of why they hold to different authority structures.

All believers have their own unique flavor of understanding what God’s relationship with Himself, as well as with them, looks like. Every relationship is always unique because God delights in differentiation. Yet, with an understanding of foundational beliefs, it is possible to discover compatible leadership systems for a group of unique people. Perhaps some of the systems that are found at the extremities of the continuum (totalitarianism and structureless relationalism), can be modified to include both leadership and submission. For the majority of churches that fit in the middle of the continuum, the root causes of power struggles which occur
within leadership circles may be discovered and reconciled. As church leadership begins to reflect the leadership within the Godhead to harmonize it within their structure, they can become more effective in reaching the community and meeting the needs of all their people.

At times, one encounters significantly dysfunctional personal leadership styles that reveal themselves as ministry progresses. Power struggles that can decimate both the pastor and the congregation appear as leadership styles and goals crash against each other. At times the final goal appears similar, however the path to achieving that goal is radically different. Core dysfunctional beliefs can remain hidden for long periods of time, and only become revealed during times of victory or great conflict. Leadership has a way of revealing what is in the heart of the man. It also reveals the man’s true trinitarian theology and his understanding of God the Father’s rule over his life. Considering the subject of this Thesis Project and gaining an understanding of one’s personal theology may reveal why dysfunctional patterns keep reappearing in one’s life. Because leadership style is based upon one’s understanding of God and His leadership style, it may be possible to recognize wrong beliefs that have negatively influenced one’s relationship with God. Until these wrong beliefs are revealed, examined and corrected, dysfunctional leadership conflicts will keep appearing. With this insight, lasting modifications may become possible at core levels of belief which will change one’s leadership style. As one comes to know God better, there will be a strengthening of the divine-human relationship.

Future Research

This Thesis Project specifically investigated men who had created, or significantly shaped the leadership structure of the church they were leading. This same investigation could be further applied to pastoral concerns within more rigid denominational structures. Additional
research could also be pursued in church leadership among other cultures, such as Korean, Chinese, Hmong and First Nations. In moving beyond trinitarian theological systems, one could also investigate leadership models that exist within the monotheistic, polytheistic, animistic and transcendental faiths. One could also investigate how the rapidly changing theological culture of the Western world, along with the globalization of ideas, is having an impact upon the new pastors embarking on their ministry journeys. An investigation is needed at a more individual level of the nature of interaction between the husband and wife. Society’s redefinition of roles and authority structures is having a profound effect on these leadership styles as well. These cultural changes are in turn also having a significant impact on trinitarian theology. Each of these future avenues of research would greatly enhance the significance of these connections.

**Systems Within Denominational Structures**

Within North America there are large denominational organizations with thousands of local churches holding allegiance to the central authority. Some of these organizations allow for a wide variety of leadership styles at the local level. Others maintain a higher level of control at the regional or national level. It would be interesting to explore the interaction of the pastors leading within a fixed administrative structure, looking at the compatibility and conflicts that arise within that closed system.

**Culturally Distinct Christianity**

One of the distinguishing cultural features of the United States of America is a foundation of rugged individualism. It is this confidence in oneself, as well as having a task-oriented perspective, that enables Americans to economically flourish around the world. Other cultures, such as the Ukrainian evangelical churches, have different priorities. The Ukrainian evangelical movement began when Orthodox believers came into contact with Mennonite and Lutheran
farmers. By law, they were forbidden from worshiping with either group, so they established their own association. The theology arising from this tri-fold blend is mixed. Even though the Mennonite relational influence was strong, the current standard church structure within Ukrainian Baptist, Independent Baptist, Evangelical, and the Pentecostal churches emphasize the authority of the pastor. Usually each pastor plants a church and he remains with that church until he retires. The future leadership is then passed on to a son. While considered congregational, their understanding of what that means differs from the western perspective. With the arrival of western missionaries in the 1990's, the newly-trained post-soviet young pastors challenged this authoritarian model of leadership. It would be informative to examine the transition of leadership style and theology that has occurred in Ukraine and Russia. Similar studies could also be done examining the indigenous churches of China, Korea and other cultures.

World Religious Systems

Of all the religions in the world, Christianity is the only one that holds to a Trinity, a differentiation-in-unity as its God. This unique blend of authority, unity and relationship significantly shapes its leadership structures. A study and comparison of leadership styles within different religious groups would be informative. Questions about the functionality and sustainability of democracy and team leadership within the monotheistic faith of Islam could be addressed. The patriarchal tribal systems of the Arab world, dictatorships, and the democracies of Egypt and Turkey all exist under the Islamic umbrella. The viability, conflicts and solutions examined would reveal a lot about what life under a monotheistic god looks like.

Polytheistic religions present a different challenge. Within polytheism, there is always conflict within the realm of the gods. While some of the animistic First Nation cultures of Canada hold to a central Great Spirit, the lives of the people deal primarily with the competing
lower spirits. Leadership solutions within these First Nations often fail to satisfy the expectations of either the native or the white culture. One could examine how this syncretistic and animistic theology affects community leadership structures.

Eastern transcendental religions have a different concept of the divine. The most common of these religions are found in the forms of Hinduism and Buddhism with their many offshoots. While there may be thousands of lesser gods within these religions the ultimate reality is an essence without individuality or identity. Although the nature of the divine differs significantly from other religions, even these devotees desire to live and function within the image of their deity. Those that view the divine as a cosmic flow of energy seek to remove all structure and substance from their world in order to better attain that level of unity with the impersonal. Yoga, an example of one of the paths to this unity, teaches that all seek to unite their individual selves with God, that is, the universal self. Upon the uniting, fear and death cease to exist. When the yogi realizes that he is in unity with God, he comes to the realization that, “I am Brahman. The whole universe is myself. Whatever exists, I am. I am neither the body, nor the organs, nor was I the mind. I am existence, knowledge and bliss absolute: I am he.” For this enlightened man, organization, authority and structure disappear into placid mediation. The ultimate desire of Yoga is transcendental self-realization and a state of peaceful self-sufficiency. This state demands that the person transcend all polarities such as love, hate, pleasure, pain, creativity and demolition, creating an indifference to the affairs of other people in the world. The man who successfully attains unity with the impersonal becomes impersonal. One can ask what is the path

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forward when the goal of life is to avoid all conflict and the things that entrap the emotions? It would be interesting to investigate the nature of leadership and the accomplishment of goals within this worldview that rejects structure.

In a similar manner, atheistic beliefs assume that there is no higher deity with a personality to emulate. For these people, perhaps the god that they wish to emulate is reason, or even themselves in a form of humanism. One can examine how some of those leadership options connect, for they have been demonstrated in the large communistic systems of the Twentieth Century.

As one compares the various religions with their understanding of the divine, unique patterns of leadership within each group should emerge. Democracy functions well within a western, God-fearing Christianized environment. It has, however, encountered significant problems within other cultures. A study correlating preferred leadership styles with the theology of the local people will shed more light on the weaknesses of a democratic movement, including those failures now appearing in western societies.

**Foundational Marriage Structures**

Within the area of family counseling, one of the significant areas of conflict deals with expectations of the individuals within the relationship. God instituted the family immediately after creation and that family demonstrated in a powerful manner what differentiation-in-unity should look like. Genesis states that “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”. When the husband and the wife have conflicting views of how the Trinity functions within itself, then they may have conflicting expectations in regard

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198 Genesis 2:24.
to roles and status within the marriage. The struggles of authoritarianism, complementarianism, and egalitarianism find their source in this foundational understanding. A further exploration of this theological source code will be of value in understanding one of the starting points of marital conflict, providing a path forward.

The issues of dominion and relationship are found in every aspect of life on earth. As future research is done connecting these patterns with personal theology, one can better understand what is possible in leadership structures and what is not. With the globalization of the world and ever-increasing cultural transformations and interactions, it becomes more important to know the God upon whom administrative structure is based.

Conclusion

In setting out on this Thesis Project, it was expected that the thesis proposed would be demonstrated in the deliberately planned structures established by church planters. What was surprising was the level of confirmation which this research provided. Every person interviewed demonstrated a connection between their trinitarian theology and their leadership style. It was also of great value to interview a man who practically applied his theology to his church structure. Based on this Thesis Project, one would expect the path forward into future research would prove equally valuable in understanding the desire of man to emulate his Creator through leadership. This Thesis Project also highlighted the need for significant teaching regarding the most central part of what it means to be a Christian. Jude, in his benediction\(^{199}\) gives glory to God, who in His leadership is able to keep a person from stumbling and to present him before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy. “To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and

\(^{199}\) Jude 24,25.
forevermore!” Glory, honor, praise and love belong to the God who, with authority and
dominion created and established a world where differentiation will flourish in unity of
relationship.
Appendix A

Interview Questions

The Image of Leadership:

Man’s View of God as Reflected in His Leadership Style

Interview Questions

1. What is your personal historical context?
   a. What was your church tradition regarding leadership and worship styles?
   b. What was your family background in the area of authority, respect, and leadership?
   c. Do you have positive or negative emotions with these memories?

2. Describe the individual roles of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3. How do these unique job descriptions of the Trinity blend?
   a. What is their interaction with each other?
   b. What does the Fatherhood of God look like in the Trinity?
   c. How does the Holy Spirit participate in the work of the Father and Son?

4. Describe the desires and demands of God upon man.
   a. What is God’s eternal goal in His interaction with man?
   b. How does the sovereignty of God and the free will of man relate to God’s plan?

5. How would you describe the ideal two-way relationship with God?

6. What does your church leadership structure look like?
   a. What is the best way to define your role as pastor?
   b. What function do the elders or deacons fulfill within your church?
   c. What is the best way to define the congregation’s role in the church?
   d. What process did you use to arrive at your church vision statement?
   e. How do you deal with issues that require correction or church discipline?

7. What would you describe as the best form of church leadership structure?

8. Are you currently revising your leadership style in a particular direction, and how are you accomplishing this?

9. How well does your church structure and vision reflect the working of the Trinity?
Appendix B: Power Point Presentation

Slide 1
The Image of Leadership:
Man’s View of God as Reflected in His Leadership Style
A Thesis Project Submitted to
The Faculty of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

Slide 2
Statement of the Problem
Whose Biblical leadership pattern should one follow?

“Pastors generally don’t stay long at churches. The average tenure is between three and four years.”

Slide 3
Sample Solutions for Leaders
Why so many leadership programs ultimately fail is because they fail the challenge of emotional courage.

“Everything we are acquainted with is changing. If you are sensing you might be facing a little stuckness in your church, perhaps some of these following ideas might help you.”

Slide 4
The Missing Piece
• The imago Dei is elemental.
• The created will reflect the Creator.
• A distorted understanding

Slide 5
The elemental image
It is the image of God that defines humanity and true influence, being the basis for the leader’s identity and the essence of what it means to be in charge.

Slide 6
Created in the Image
Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

“A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God.”

I Corinthians 11:7
Created in the Image

Image means representative likeness—which tells us at once that we should be reflecting, at our creaturely level, what Genesis 1 shows God is and does.

Anthony A. Hoekema, Created in God's Image, 67.

The concept of man as the image or likeness of God tells us that man as he was created was to mirror God and to represent God.

Anthony A. Hoekema, Created in God's Image, 67.

Reflecting the Creator

There is a continuity between one's understanding of the inner workings of the Trinity and one's leadership style.

"Since we see a world around us that is proof of an eternally autonomous being, the first instinct that we feel in our self is the desire to imitate him."


Reasons for differing perspectives

- Sinful separation from God
- Distorted reasoning
- Dysfunctional personal experiences

A continuing correction

Establishing the Connection between trinitarian theology and leadership

- Necessary Limitations
- Research Tools
- Differentiation-in-unity Graphic

Correcting the Current Image to the Image of the Son

- For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:29

- Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2

- And we all, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Fields of Study in this Thesis Project

- Trinity Theology and Apologetics
- Leadership
- Ecclesiology and Administration
- Relationship Pastoral Care and Counseling

Establishing the Connection between trinitarian theology and leadership

- Necessary Limitations
- Research Tools
- Differentiation-in-unity Graphic
**Necessary Limitations**

Must haves:
- A pastoral leadership position
- A trinitarian theology
- Freedom to shape one’s leadership structure
- One particular culture

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**Research Tools**

- Interview process
- Interview over survey
- Comparable questions per section
- Order of questions

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**Leadership and Relationship**

- Leadership and relationship
- The Split of the Curse: Relationship-in-disunity
- A Trinitarian Graphic

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**The Descriptive Graphic**

**The Split of the Curse**

Differentiation in Disunity

- LEADERSHIP
- RELATIONSHIP

- Adam - supply/labor
- Eve - children/pain
- dominion and dependence

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**Differentiation-in-Unity**

- A personal God cannot be a singular God, for that would be a God without relationship.
- A dual God would also be impossible, for that would be a God in opposition to himself.
- It is only with a triad God that one can have absolute diversity and relationship.

Slide 19

Use of Trinitarian Graphic

Slide 20

Influencing Factors
- Theological Commonalities
  - The Primacy of the Father
  - The economic tasks of the Trinity
  - The free will of man
- Experiential Factors
  - Family Background did not determine Leadership Structure
  - Historical church leadership structures

Slide 21

Theological Constructs and Authority Structures
- An Over-riding Concern
- A Vague Trinity
- A Hierarchical Trinity
- Equality with Strong Leadership
- Team Focus
- Submissive Overlay

Slide 22

Overriding Concern

Luther
P4

Slide 23

A Vague Trinity

P 7

Slide 24

A Vague Trinity

P 9
Slide 25

Hierarchical Structure

- Filioque
- Obedience
- The Glory of the Father

Slide 26

Hierarchical Leadership Goals

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Roman</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Calvin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>God's kingdom on earth</td>
<td>God's glory returned to Him</td>
<td>God worshiped and His kingdom built</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>become like the Father</td>
<td>complete God's fullness</td>
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Slide 27

Equality with Strong Leadership

First Among Equals

Eastern Orthodox Church

Slide 28

Equality with Strong Leadership

First Among Equals

Slide 29

Team Focus

Simons P2

Slide 30

Submissive Overlay

P5
Slide 31

Deliberate Structure of P1

Ephesians 5:25-30, 32

Slide 32

Summation

One’s preferred leadership style directly reflects their understanding of the inner working of the Trinity

- Verified in three eras of church formation
- Trinitarian theology overwrites definitions

Slide 33

Practical Considerations

It is important to:

- Know your own trinitarian theology
- Study and teach the Trinity
- Study the leadership culture of the church
- Harmonize theology and church structure

Slide 34

Further Research

- Systems within denominational structures
- Culturally distinct Christianity
- World religious systems
- Foundational marriage structures

Slide 35

Final Words on God’s leadership

Jude 24, 25

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—
to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!

Amen.
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July 29, 2015

L. Wayne Pope
IRB Approval 2263.072915: The Image of Leadership: Man’s View of God as Reflected in His Leadership Style

Dear Wayne,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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