A beginning look at leadership in a church setting

Kevin M. Hass

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A Beginning Look at:
Leadership in a Church Setting

By

Kevin M. Hass

Senior Project
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
University of Richmond
Richmond, Virginia
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Kevin Matthew Hass
Senior Project
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
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Preface

This paper will call upon three different types of information to express current thought in how Leadership occurs (or should occur) in the Church setting. These two different sources are 1) an accumulation of two local Pastors' thoughts and ideas gathered from two separate interviews that I conducted, and 2) my experiences and insights as I have dealt with leadership in this setting over the course of my life-time, but more specifically in the last four years.

Assumptions and Clarifications:

This paper is examining leadership in the "evangelical" church setting. Evangelicalism is defined by the Concise Dictionary of Christianity in America as

"A movement in North American Christianity that emphasizes the classic Protestant doctrines of salvation, the church and the authority of the Scriptures... it is characterized by stress on a personal experience of the grace of God, usually termed the new birth or conversion." (123).

Authority of the Scriptures is a typical view that the Bible is the complete, infallible and divinely inspired Word of God. It is therefore dependable without error and exception. It is the complete revelation of God to His people. For the purpose of this Paper all of the Scripture quoted within will come from the New International Version, known as the NIV translation.

In light of this definition I feel the need to further warn you that this paper will get into specifics and methodologies for spreading the Gospel and how that directly effects the way leadership is developed or cultivated within these churches. One of the largest findings of this project is the reality that people who have
their relationship with God furthered and developed are led into taking on more and more leadership within the church. Let me be clear at this point to draw the distinction between vocational ministers and members of the church. I am not proposing the notion that everyone who really knows God will go into vocational ministry. That is not what I am saying. What I am saying is that the more of our life that we yield to Christ, the more He will use us to carry on His work. In other words it is by focusing on Christ that we are drawn into more leadership in the church. It is also by studying how Jesus modeled and taught leadership that we can fully understand what leadership in the Church should look like.

The Basis

Before we can look at leadership in the church, we must first look briefly at how the church came into existence. Christianity is a Religion or Faith that began with the teaching, healing, life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, more commonly known today as Jesus (the) Christ. The word Christ actually means Messiah; it is a title not a name. He is the cornerstone of the church, as a result this paper will explore how Jesus carried out the work of His Father (God) and by reflecting on His example we will gain insight into how we should carry out the work that He began.

The first episode we will look at is recorded in the Gospel of John. In this pericopee Jesus is posed with an important question that directly applies not only to how He carried out ministry, but it also sets the stage for how we should develop leadership in the Church today. This is taken from John 6:28+29 and it reads:
"They asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’ Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’

In this passage we see clearly how much of ourselves we can find in the disciples roughly two thousand years ago. We want to know the formula for how to develop leaders in our churches today. We want the recipe for how to build a successful church in today’s difficult and pluralistic society. Jesus reminds the disciples that their first and greatest responsibility is to believe in Him. For without that emphasis and realization their efforts are merely an attempt to modify behavior. In that any work that we do in the name of God that is done without His empowerment or approval is done apart from Him and is therefore useless; we labor in vain (Psalm 127). Behavior modification and the notion of change from the outside inward are topics that we will discuss in much more depth later in this paper.

This passage is also the basis for church membership. In order to officially join most churches you must publicly profess agreement with their “doctrinal basis for membership.” This is the set of beliefs that you must have in order for the church to accept and grant your application for membership. In any evangelical church, this set of beliefs will certainly start with a profession of Jesus as their Lord and Savior, fully acknowledging their need for His death as an atoning sacrifice and payment for their sins. That may seem like a lot of “church lingo” but it is a clarification for what Jesus meant when He said that we must believe in the One in whom God sent. An applicant for church membership would have to believe that Jesus
was sent by the Father, from Heaven to Earth, for the purpose of paying the price for their rebellion from God and His ways. In so doing they are admitting their total dependence and reliance on God to change them. Their belief in Jesus is the key element that any evangelical church would require for membership.

We have just examined a small passage about what Jesus saw as important or foundational to the development of His followers. These were words from His own mouth. I want to switch gears a little and look at all of the information that we have from the four (Canonical) gospels located within the Bible. As I look at where Jesus spent the majority of His time, He invested both his teachings and his mission into a small group of twelve men. While it is true that Jesus ministered to the crowds as a whole i.e.: the Sermon on the mount, the feeding of the five thousand, etc., and that He had compassion on the crowds (Matthew 10:36); it is clear that on the whole Jesus focused the bulk of his time, energy and teaching into a small group of men. We call them the Apostles or original disciples. He spent three years living, teaching, traveling and eating with them. In some respects Jesus was an originator of today's notion of mentoring. It was that mentoring that revealed the Truth of their purposes to the Apostles. It was that mentoring that gave them the experience (in a safe and loving atmosphere) that enabled them to practice what they were learning alongside the master...Jesus.

The effects of His mentoring are clearly displayed in the book of Acts. In this book, the author gives us the history of the early church. He explains how this small group of men were able to put into practice the teachings and life-style that they had witnessed
Jesus performing. This book also explains how they were used to bring the message of hope (the Gospel, which literally means "Good News") to the majority of the known world in that time. We read stories of miraculous displays of God's healing power. Acts is full of the documented speeches given by the Apostles. This book clearly depicts a band of men that are very different from the group of commoners that we see when they first begin to follow Jesus. This shows me that Jesus knew more than anyone else (as I would expect God to) how to share the Love and Teachings he came to impart on us (through them), while carefully instructing them on what he was about to do (on the cross). As the Bible clearly presents, Jesus more than any other leader in history empowered those he was with. In this section we have given the background for where the church came from and some of its "original" methods or emphases.

Where is my Identity?

In this section we will explore what it means that our Identity is in Christ. This is an assertion of the belief that everything starts with Jesus. Any one who reads the rest of this paper must know that for any of the "works" depicted within, there must be a complete reliance on the power of God to change our hearts and thereby change our behaviors. It is foundational to the evangelical church that we realize our own inability to change ourselves to the degree that the Bible requires. This is a relatively new concept in all of leadership thought: that we can not be changed from the outside inward. We need to be transformed from the inside out! We are fully and completely dependent on God to continue to use us despite
ourselves to bring about the changes not only in this world, but even within His Church, that need to take place.

We examined earlier the passage where Jesus answers the disciples question about what is the work that God requires. In our belief in Jesus as Lord, we also discover in the writings of both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John, that our identity is changed when we receive Christ as Savior. John writes in his Gospel,

"Yet to all who receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God." (John 1:12+13).

In this we see a distinct change from separation from God, to being “adopted” into his family. It is as if our last name changes from Johnson to Godson. Paul confirms and expounds on this notion in a letter he wrote to the church in Galatia,

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20).

Again we see a change in identity. A transfer of ownership. Paul is explaining that all the he was has been changed, he no longer has his former identity.

Paul also writes in his second letter to the church in Corinth,

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2Corinthians 5:17).

In all of these passages we see a tremendous emphasis on a change in identity. It is crucial to understand that an evangelical church
sees this as completely accurate and vital. As such, they spend a great deal of time and energy on understanding this transformation that has taken place. This change in identity is also indicative of a change in priority and perspective. The highest priority in their lives has changed from serving themselves to serving God and others. It is a daily focus on the teachings of Christ, that propels them to allow God to change their behaviors and attitudes. In acknowledging their change in identity, they open themselves up expecting to be transformed as God has promised.

**Uniqueness and Gifting**

It is only after we have focused on this change in identity, that we are able to begin to examine our uniqueness in Christ. The Bible clearly reveals the reality that God has given us special gifts and abilities to be used in His name and for His purposes. One of our responsibilities is to discover and develop these gifts and abilities. Steve Shelby, whom we will meet later, firmly believes that this is one of the most important elements in a mentoring relationship: developing our gifts. It is a clearly Biblical principle that God gives us proficiencies above and beyond the normal skill level in different areas of life (1Corinthians 12). While it is common practice for people to be given a “Spiritual Gifts Test,” this is not what I mean when I affirm the notion that leaders in the church are aware of and continuing to grow in their gifts. It is true that these tests can certainly identify tendencies or generalities of where our strengths and gifts lie, but there is more to be said for involving yourself in a wide variety of settings or communities within the church in hopes of developing a weakness or discovering a strength.
depth as to what that “work” is momentarily, but we need to have a firm grasp on the issue at hand, first.

We have a built-in-need for one another because we all have something unique and special to offer in performing the work of the church. The above passage also destroys any notions of hierarchy or competition in terms of gifts. Meaning that no gift is “better” than another, because all of them are necessary to the Body as a whole. If we are all dependent on the different parts of the body (as we are), than every part, no matter how large or small, is crucial to the body running continually and efficiently. It also clarifies for us the reality that by ourselves we are incomplete. There are areas of church life that I simply do not and can not flourish within. My presence in some places of ministry is just not as productive as some other people. Does this excuse me from ever attempting that area of ministry? Absolutely not!

We are all called to develop our lives, in every aspect, not just our strengths. Just because I have a gift in evangelism doesn't mean I don’t have to pray or teach scripture. We all need to develop the different disciplines of our faith (prayer, bible study, worship, fellowship, evangelism, etc.); we just need to pay close attention to where our gifts lie, in hopes of utilizing and developing them. This brings us back to mentoring. Our mentors are the ones who open these opportunities up to us. They are the ones who challenge us to grow and stretch, to take risks. We will further explore this notion of mentoring, but let’s get back to the issue of “work.”

Requires-vs.-Desires
but they take time to develop and grow as we mature in wisdom and strength in the faith. These three categories take time to develop fully.

In light of that, the first of these categories we are going to look at is availability. Before we join in the work of the Great Commission, we must be willing to participate. We must know that our ultimate purpose is so completely embodied in this wonderful task. It is important here, to remind us that we looked at our identity first, and to know that our purpose flows directly from that identity, not vice-versa. The great Commission does not affect our identity, rather it enables us to use the gifts that we are given to join in with God to change other peoples identity. Our willingness to participate in the Great Commission will have tremendous benefits to the world around us. So we must be available to go to the ends of the earth with the message of Hope. We must also be willing and available to stay right where we are.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a story that needs to be told everywhere. Which brings us to the notion of motivation. Rather than focusing on going to Malaysia, our focus should be on being motivated to serve God where ever we are; in that we can certainly be present in a place that needs to hear the Good News of a Risen Lord, but if we are unmotivated to present the Gospel, than we are clearly unavailable to the opportunities that surround us all of the time. We need to be motivated by a love that consumes us, even to the point of sharing our faith. We need to be motivated by the realization that we are just as needy and desperate for God as anyone with whom we speak.
Thirdly, we need to be equipped. We need to know the message that we are spreading completely and clearly. We need to know the scriptural understanding of what we believe. We also need to learn how to articulate what we believe about the world and about Jesus' role within the world. We need to know how to express, in love, what we know to be true. In a world of relativity and plurality, we must be equipped with a full understanding of the Gospel.

These three categories also bring us back to the notion of mentoring. Along with discovering our gifts, a mentor's job should also include encouragement. They should be encouraging their mentee to be available and motivated. It is their job to help the mentee get equipped with the Gospel. It is a primary role of theirs to not only create that experiential learning, but also to supply them with the theological framework for why they believe what they believe, that goes beyond the personal experiences that they have had. This theological teaching is in no-way superior to the experiential lessons and understanding they already have, in fact it is complimentary. Both understandings are crucial to develop so that like 1Peter 3:15 asserts, we will be able to give a [complete] explanation for the Hope that we have. A mentor should create an atmosphere where their mentee can grow in all three of these categories.

It is important to remember that Jesus gave this Great Commission to the group of disciples (Apostles) that soon after formed the first churches. He never intended us to attempt any of this commission by ourselves. He knew that we would need not only His help (I am with you even to the end of the age...), but that we
would need our brothers and sisters to help work alongside of us. Some of us are great at making disciples, but we have a hard time teaching, or maybe some are exceedingly willing to go to any nation, but they really need to understand more how to make disciples, etc., etc., etc.

We are completely dependent on one another to help us grow and be challenged in our faith. We need people who can develop different elements of our faith. We all have different gifts, but we have a common purpose. We have a common goal. We have the Great Commission. We also have the assurance that we have the resources available to us, in the form of the other members of the Body of Christ, to complete the work that He has given us. God has been developing our understanding of leadership since the beginning of time! Now that we have a great understanding for the basis of our faith (Jesus), we have examined our identity, our gifts, and our purpose in this world, we can now turn our attention onto a more practical and concrete analysis into what exactly leadership in the church might look like.

_A View Inside_

There are many different possible approaches to understanding church leadership, we have already seen the utilization of a background understanding of leadership in the church. We are now going to switch gears entirely, and peek into the leadership understanding and development of one church, right here in the West End of Richmond. We are going to look at this church through the eyes of its two full time Pastors by way of two separate interviews that I conducted with them.
The first interview that I conducted was with Kevin Greene. He is currently the assistant to the Pastor at West End Presbyterian Church (WEPC) in Richmond Virginia. Kevin has previously served as a Staff-Worker with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship for over seven years. This gives him a total of 9 years of vocational ministry from which to draw his own conclusions about Leadership in the Church.

Kevin had many insights into how his church practically runs throughout the week, but more than that Kevin had a real vision for how this young church (4 years old) can create an environment conducive to fostering growth and maturity within the congregation. They have long-term goals at WEPC. They include finding their own building, because right now they are meeting in a middle school gymnasium. After they find (or build) their own building, they really want to grow the church to be about 1,000 core members with room for 1,500 total people. Kevin was very honest in admitting that over the last four years they have completely utilized the “warm-body” technique for finding leadership. This is a view of leadership that says, “if you want something done, than you've got to find someone (anyone) to do it. If it has to be done well, then you can’t (necessarily) delegate it, but if it just needs to get done, than any warm body (i.e.: living human being) can handle it.”

In other words, they have moved past the point where anyone who wants to do anything basically can. They have transitioned out of that initial “grassroots” stage of development and moved into more formal training for their Small Group Leaders and more regulation as to what Small Groups are focusing on and studying. Which brings me to somewhat of a working definition of what a “Small Group” actually
is. This is a concept that we will develop throughout the rest of this paper. For now, you should see them as groups of men and/or women (sometimes even couples) who gather together to build a smaller community of believers to foster Spiritual growth and maturity. We have often come back to the concept of mentoring, but up to now we have only explored this notion in the realm of one to one relationships.

Small Groups focus on mentoring in a slightly modified style from that of one to one discipleship. They are a place that is less intense, and yet completely vital to our maturing process. We have previously examined the necessity for the church as a whole (too the world); as a member of the Body of Christ, we have learned of our need for the other parts of the Body of Christ (on a large scale); Small Groups bring both of these needs into a fun and more manageable size. We gain the benefits of 3-20 peoples insights into scripture and their experiences with God and others. We also gain the support of people who remind us that we are not alone in our faith and struggles. They provide stability and encouragement, coupled with biblical teaching and a challenging environment in which we grow and can be changed.

According to Steve Shelby—the Senior Pastor at WEPC— they are the environment where people feel safe to fail. Too many times we are unwilling to take risks because of our fear of failure. Steve believes (and I contend that the Bible agrees) that true failure is a lack of belief. We need to have the freedom to fail as much as we need to maintain a focus on the reality that “perceived” failure (as distinct from the above true failure) is another part of God’s
redemptive power. If He can redeem me as a person, than He can certainly redeem the different choices and actions that I make. In keeping an “eternal perspective” -i.e.: what does [x] mean for me 20 years from now, or 2,000 years from now for the world... etc; those would be two examples of an eternal perspective. In realizing that much of our everyday worries amount to little in the eternal perspective, we are then free to take risks, and know that no-matter what happens as a result, God will use that as a way of bringing about His purposes.

Small Groups are the perfect place to try new approaches to studying scripture or to figure out a need that the church has, and to attempt to fill it. We will return to this notion of filling the needs of the church, soon enough, but first let’s explore the differences between successful Small Groups and healthy Small Groups. A successful Small Group might accomplish a lot of tasks, they might even come to understand deep elements of theology, but these do not make a Small Group healthy. Steve was very passionate about this notion of a healthy Small Group. He noted that it would be best characterized by Transformed Lives. A healthy Small Group is one in which its members are given a plethora of challenges and instruction. One in which the normal meeting is a place where true discovery and encouragement are fostered. A place that is impossible to return from unchanged. They might not have the best Bible teaching or instruction, but the lives of the individuals that compose the group are reflective of God’s love for them and this world.

Another distinction that Steve made between successful and healthy Small Groups is that any work in a healthy Small Group is
done by the team. They are not just accomplishing a task, they are learning to develop their community as well as their gifts. The ultimate product of a healthy Small Group is the emergence of a Small Group Leader. By this I mean that if a current Small group Leader does his/her job well, they develop a member who can eventually lead a Small Group of their own. So a healthy team will give rise to healthy leaders, who in turn start other teams that become healthy, and this process is then cyclified. It doesn’t matter whether the leader makes the first healthy group, or the group makes the first healthy leader, because it is now a cycle that both Kevin and Steve recognize within their church.

Let me expound on a distinction that Steve clarified at this point in our conversation. They are not into the “cookie-cutter” form of leadership development. They are not trying to manufacture leaders just like themselves, rather they are trying to develop an atmosphere where individuals can be free to serve and to lead this community in accordance with their gifts. The emphasis should be placed on “stepping out in faith” to try something, anything, rather than teaching them your exact methodology. Does this mean that methodology is never a part of their teaching? No! It is used as a starting point or spring board from which they can begin to develop their own method of leading or serving. All of this is done in hopes of discovering, developing and directing the use of their gifts for the betterment of the larger community.

This brings me to WEPC’s call to service, which is, “To build a Community of Faith Expressing Itself in Love.” This is their local purpose that guides them towards the larger purpose of the Great
Commission. As we have seen, Small Groups are foundational to developing that kind of community and expressing itself in love. Kevin still feels very limited in terms of the Pastoral Care that he and Steve can give at that church. There are over 400 members and roughly 250 regular visitors. There is just simply no way that he and Steve alone can meet the needs of 650 people. As such they have utilized this strategy for reaching larger groups of people by putting them all into these Small Groups and making sure that the leaders of those groups are being followed up on, etc.

Let me take this time to explain some of the more formal structure of WEPC. They are comprised of 37 small group Bible Studies. There is a once a week Sunday morning service. There are seven Elders in their church, one of whom is the Pastor we have met already, Steve Shelby. Kevin’s job is to make sure that the elders are fulfilling their obligations, taking personal time to spend with God daily and serving their families. Steve’s job is to prepare for Sunday services and a focus for them are the sermons’. Kevin’s job is also to coordinate all of the Small Groups, for which the elders are each responsible for 2-5 Small Group Leaders. They report to Kevin, so Kevin only has to meet with the actual Small Group Leaders (or even less often with a small group member) in extraordinary circumstances.

With this structure in place, the entire church can be reached, cared for and encouraged to pursue their relationship with Jesus. There are plenty of communication avenues flowing back and forth among all of the segments of the church (see organizational). This structure also allows for “specialization” within small group
Organizational Chart for WEPC

Kevin, Steve, and the Elders

-A Small Group Leader
-A Small Group Member
structures. By this I mean that as we continue to develop our faith, there are different areas of our spiritual lives that we are particularly weak in, so this allows a small group to form for people who need help in developing similar aspects of their faith. Examples could include people who are just struggling with how to begin to read their Bible, or how to help develop a prayerful life, or even a Small Group that forms to Study a Biblical perspective on Evangelism.

The Small Group structure provides an atmosphere where people can be taught, loved and challenged, without sacrificing the reality that Kevin and Steve can not care for everyone in the church at all times. This structure still allows for members of the church to be able to ask for personal attention from Kevin or Steve when necessary. Examples of “when necessary” cases could include marriage difficulties, or an on-going struggle with a particular repetitive sin cycle, such as drug or alcohol abuse, adultery, or any other cycle that you can think of. Small Group Leaders at WEPC are told to report any requests that their members might have to schedule a meeting with Kevin or Steve.

In light of this insight into WEPC’s structure I want to add to our understanding of why this structure might have developed based on my personal experiences as an associate Pastor at Lighthouse Christian Ministries in Salem Virginia. There, I came to see two major difficulties that need addressing when forming the structure of a church. They both stem from two observations that I made during my time there. The first observation is that people expect a Pastor to be amazing and challenging and giving of his time and energy, that’s why they pay him to be there! The other is that it is
impossible for a single Pastor to focus on the group as a whole, for their needs are too plentiful and diverse. I learned that the only way a church is going to care for its members, is if the “Elders” (Small Group Leaders, too) are the ones sacrificing of their time, talent and energy. The perception at Lighthouse was that a Pastor is either “untouchable” and therefore the congregation doesn’t strive to be more like him; or new comers are distrustful of him, so they look to members of the congregation as a whole, to reveal to them what the church is all about.

However people in either category see the activities of the Pastor, they always seem to focus their attention on to the “Elders” in the church and spend a great deal of time and energy trying to learn from them and become more like them. It is my firm belief that a Pastor can best serve his congregation, by investing the bulk of his time, talent, and energy into this group of experienced and Godly men and women, knowing full well that they will in turn, invest in the remainder of the congregation. That is a true picture of this mentoring process that we in the church call DISCIPLESHIP. This is a word that is often misunderstood in our society today. Discipleship, as we have seen, has more to do with living in each others lives and joining in ministry together than it does on Bible teaching alone. It is about sharing your struggles and joys with someone who has experienced and understands more of God than you do, knowing that you in turn will soon care for someone else, the way you have been cared for.

This reality of the benefits of this structure are as true for growing a church as they are true for sustaining a church. The
Pastor should focus on challenging his elders so that they can then focus on the rest of the congregation. In this specific case with WEPC, we have seen the effectiveness of these strategies in the rate of growth of both size and maturity within the church.

Another manifestation of their commitment to fight the “cookie-cutter” tendencies of leadership development is the content of the sermons that Steve presents. As Kevin reported, Steve spends 99% of the sermon focusing on what God has done or said, and maybe one or two sentences on what we should be doing as a result. This is what they call focusing on the indicative rather than the imperative. The indicative is an emphasis on what it means that we are children of God, it is more about our identity (which we discussed above) versus the imperative which are our obligations or duties.

Kevin reiterated this notion when he addressed the issue of how do they train and equip their Small Group Leaders to lead. He replied that he shows them what scripture says is true about them primarily, and after they are grounded in scripture he will begin to share not only stories and episodes from his experiences in leading small groups in the past, but he will encourage them to come along on ministry opportunities. If he needs to visit someone in the hospital for example, he will invite someone to come along. They are free to participate in the discussions or just sit and watch in hopes of gaining their participation at a future “event.”

I promised you earlier that we would look at where WEPC is in terms of their approach to filling the needs of the church. They have reached a stage in their development where they no longer have to rely on the afore mentioned warm body technique. They have
reached a point where the needs of the church seem to surface not only within particular aspects of the church, but they are starting to surface in the hearts of different members of the church as a whole. That is to say that members of the church are noticing on their own what needs the church has, and God is growing within them a desire to dedicate a great deal of time and energy (in the midst of quite busy lives) towards addressing these needs.

This is lovingly refereed to as “gap-filling” by Steve. He said that his realization that this trend was taking place warmed his heart for two reasons. The first is that it means that the church members are committed to the work that they are doing. He reminded me that a church is a Voluntary Organization. People are free to come and go as they choose, and to participate as often or as infrequently as they like. So this gap-filling reveals to him their heart for the ministry that the church is doing. Secondly, it gives him increased faith that they are developing a community that is pleasing to the Lord. It gives him great pleasure to see how God is revealing a vision to him, and how parts of that vision are being seen by members of the congregation without his prompting. People are noticing on their own what needs should be addressed, and are then bringing those needs to Kevin or Steve or the Elders. God is continually filling the gaps in their church.

Summary

As we have now looked at the background understanding of leadership in the church as revealed through Jesus’ life and teachings, we have given ourselves a back drop to study today’s notions of leadership within the church. This paper is in no-way a
complete articulation of all that could encompass leadership in the church. We have seen leadership in the church through the eyes of two of the most amazing men of God that I have ever come into contact with personally. We have seen not only their structure for the church, but also their perspective on why and how that structure came into being. We have gained insight into the differing uses and approaches to mentoring and fostering growth in this community. We have seen the emphasis that church places on the demonstration of the love that they have not only for God but also for others. All of these varying understandings of leadership in the church can be summed up in two different quotations from Scripture. The first comes from 1 Theselonians 2:8,

"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."

In this passage, we see clearly not only Paul’s heart for discipleship, but also the realization that WEPC is in agreement with Paul. In sharing either the Gospel or your life without sharing the other half is robbing the people we care about from an important aspect of our identity and gifting. Those who are dear to us should know all that there is to know of who we are, and since our relationship with Jesus is a (the) defining factor of who we are, we are compelled to share that as well. The other scripture is also a portion of a letter from Paul. This comes from 1Corinthians 11:1

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

This affirms the idea that discipleship is a critical element of leadership development in the church. Our greatest methodology for
mentoring the people around us is to bring them along side the work that we are already doing. We create an atmosphere where they feel safe to experiment and grow and stretch themselves, and leaders will emerge. They will follow us, as we follow Christ, and sooner or later people will begin to follow them as they follow Christ. The cycle is then repeated until the end of the age!
**Works Cited**


