

## **ABSTRACT**

### **LEADING WITH A CLEAR VISION AND VALUES:**

### **EXERCISING A VISION AND VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP**

### **DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AMONG MINISTRY LEADERS IN EACC**

by

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Elyon Abdiel Christian Church conducts ministry without a clear vision and values, becoming distracted by an overabundance of activity and drifting toward complexity. It has no clear ministry process nor a way to measure success. The goal is merely to keep certain things going. EACC has no identified guidelines to know about the life change and spiritual growth of the congregants. This cycle will likely continue without intentional and well-designed leadership development training to prepare leaders capable of serving with a clear vision and values. Setting a clear vision and values will be a pivotal step to helping EACC rise again.

This study addresses the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among EACC ministry board members who participated in a leadership development workshop on leading with a clear vision and values. The workshops were held for four consecutive weeks with eleven active leaders as qualified participants. Employing pre- and post-workshop surveys as well as three focus group interviews, the combined data evaluated the effectiveness of this project in preparing the ministry board members. The findings suggest that regular vision casting, leaders' guidance and modeling, leadership team training, a clear ministry process, and measurement of success facilitate growth in participants' capability to lead with a clear vision and values.

LEADING WITH A CLEAR VISION AND VALUES:  
EXERCISING A VISION AND VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOP AMONG MINISTRY LEADERS IN EACC

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by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	x
CHAPTER 1 NATURE OF THE PROJECT .....	1
Overview of Chapter .....	1
Personal Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Purpose of the Project.....	4
Research Questions .....	4
Research Question #1 .....	4
Research Question #2 .....	5
Research Question #3 .....	5
Rationale for the Project .....	5
Definition of Key Terms .....	8
Vision .....	8
Values .....	8
Ministry Board Members .....	8
Knowledge .....	8
Attitude .....	9
Behavior .....	9
Simple Church .....	9

Complex Church .....	9
Leadership Development Workshop .....	9
Delimitations .....	9
Review of Relevant Literature .....	10
Research Methodology .....	10
Type of Research .....	10
Participants .....	11
Instrumentation .....	11
Data Collection .....	11
Data Analysis .....	11
Generalizability .....	12
Project Overview .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Overview of Chapter.....	13
Biblical Foundations .....	13
The Surveys of Visionary Leadership in the Bible.....	13
Theological Foundations.....	43
The Kingdom of God and The Purpose of Leadership Role in the Bible..	43
The Purpose of Church. ....	48
Vision and Values in Leadership .....	54
The Definition of Vision .....	54
The Impact of Vision .....	58
The Development of Vision .....	65

The Roles of Leadership .....	68
The Roles of Values in Leadership .....	70
The Definition of Values .....	70
The Impact of Values .....	72
The Development of Values .....	73
Research Design Literature .....	77
Summary of Literature .....	78
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Overview of the Chapter .....	81
Nature and Purpose of the Project .....	81
Research Questions .....	81
Research Question #1 .....	82
Research Question #2 .....	82
Research Question #3 .....	83
Ministry Context .....	83
Participants .....	84
Criteria for Selection .....	84
Description of Participants .....	84
Ethical Considerations .....	85
Instrumentation .....	86
Surveys .....	86
Focus Group .....	87
Expert Review .....	87

Reliability & Validity of Project Design .....	88
Data Collection .....	90
Data Analysis .....	90
CHAPTER 4 EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT .....	92
Overview of the Chapter .....	92
Participants .....	92
Research Question #1: Description of Evidence .....	94
Research Question #2: Description of Evidence .....	98
Research Question #3: Description of Evidence .....	108
Seeing the Benefit of Having a Clear Vision and Values .....	108
Clear Communication and Articulation of Vision and Values .....	109
Leadership Figures to Guide, Model, and Lead the Vision .....	110
The Team Embraces the Same Vision and Values Through Intentional Training .....	111
System of Implementation: Clear Measurement of Success and Evaluation .....	112
Summary of Major Findings.....	113
CHAPTER 5 LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT .....	114
Overview of the Chapter .....	114
Major Findings.....	114
Having a Clear Vision and Values Gives Leaders a Sense of Direction, Meaning, and Passion .....	114
Clear and Regular Articulation of Vision and Values Is Critical in Guiding Ministry .....	116
The Necessity of Having a Leader to Guide, Model, and Lead The Vision Implementation.....	117

Building Leadership Teams that Embrace the Same Vision and Values .	119
Applying a Clear Ministry Process, Measurement of Success, and Evaluation .....	120
Ministry Implications of the Findings.....	122
Limitations of the Study.....	123
Unexpected Observations .....	124
Recommendations.....	124
Postscript .....	125
 APPENDIXES	
A. Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Pre-Test Survey .....	126
B. Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Post-Test Survey.....	129
C. Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Focus Group Questions .....	132
D. Informed Consent Letters.....	133
E. Project Permission Letter .....	134
WORKS CITED .....	135



## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 4.1. Responses to Pre-Test Attitude Questions.....	96
Table 4.2. Responses to Pre-Test Behavior Questions .....	98
Table 4.3. Comparison of Response to Pre-Test/Post-Test (blue color) Knowledge Questions.....	99
Table 4.4. Comparison of Response to Pre-Test/Post-Test (blue color) Attitude Questions .....	102
Table 4.5. Comparison of Response to Pre-Test/Post-Test (blue color) Behavior Questions.....	106

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1. Discover Your Kingdom Concept .....	66
Figure 2.2. Values Discovery .....	73
Figure 4.1. Demographic of Participants (n=11) .....	93
Figure 4.2. Responses to Pre-Test Knowledge Questions (n=11) .....	95

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Overview of the Chapter**

Vision and values are two inseparable components of effective leadership. People rarely object to the necessity of having a clear vision and values, but whether they see them as essential factors or not in leadership is another matter. Many organizations, including churches, do have vision and mission statements. The problem, however, lies in two issues: (1) whether the vision is clearly defined or not—many organizational vision statements function only as obligatory declarations; and (2) whether the vision is actually being lived by the leaders or just an act of formality. This chapter introduces a project that aims to equip leaders to have a clear vision and values that give shape/direction to their leadership.

This chapter begins with a personal introduction and statement of the problem before stating the project's overarching purpose. The purpose is then justified by the rationale for the project, definitions of key terms are provided, followed by the three research questions and delimitations that guide the research. Chapter 1 also includes a brief introduction to the relevant literature, and research methodology used for the project, and concludes with an overview of the project offering a brief description of the application of this study to churches that struggle with similar challenges.

### **Personal Introduction**

I have served in Elyon Abdiel Christian Church since October 2012. Elyon Abdiel Christian Church (EACC) is a 90-year-old conservative evangelical church with a strong Chinese background and culture, located in Surabaya, the second-largest city in Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. EACC has four

campuses that are spread around Surabaya. I serve in Pregolan Bunder, the first campus of the church. I served as a youth pastor for the first six years, and for the last five years, I have supervised children and young family ministries. Having served in this church for many years, I have observed some cultural patterns that are hindering the church from growing or perhaps even causing it to enter a declining state.

Leadership culture is one of the main issues in Elyon Abdiel Christian Church. Leaders are appointed by quantitative measures, for example by the duration of their church membership and how active they are in the church. The church has no specific training or designated qualitative indicator in preparing leaders to serve as ministry board members. The existing church vision and mission statements are vague and poorly articulated. The vision statement is a general sentence like, "Becoming a discipling church and helping people to love God maturely." No articulated values guide the vision. Hence, ministry board members are not well trained to be capable of leading the church according to the vision statement.

Most EACC ministry programs are evaluated on quantitative instead of qualitative measurements. During the strategic meeting for setting annual main programs, the board ministry members keep repeating the same programs every year, sometimes adding more or doing a little modification to make it look fresh with no clear vision in mind beyond an increase in attendance. No evaluation is done to measure the effectiveness of the programs, nor any assessment of qualitative aspects like personal growth and the emergence of new leaders. During monthly meetings, ministry board members usually discuss daily minor practical issues. I sense this leadership culture is the result of the

absence of clear vision and values. Hence, no guidelines about what to achieve and how to evaluate are lacking.

Ministry board members are weak in discerning whether a program is aligned with the church vision or not, thus resulting in a tendency to accept all “good” programs. People offering new ideas after attending conferences or seminars is a common thing. Any request, especially from those whose voices are dominant, will be heard and approved easily. For every newly approved program, a pastor will be assigned to supervise it, causing distracted focus. I currently am responsible for several ministries besides the two main ministries, like teaching Bible study classes, premarital counseling, funeral ministry, small group ministry, strategic leadership team, and many other regular ministries that are based on certain schedules.

Realizing the current situation, I sense God’s calling to start a leadership development workshop on serving with a clear vision and values. This becomes possible since the lead pastor includes me in the strategic leadership team, a new ministry that was born from a new program suggestion during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the difference in purpose, I regard this as an opportunity to build a leadership development workshop. I hope that this project might provide useful guidance that will equip ministry board members to serve according to the vision and values of the church.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Without clear vision and values, any church could easily become unfocused (or distracted) by an overabundance of activity. Elyon Abdiel Christian Church is a clear example. It has no clear ministry process or means to measure success. Instead of using programs as tools and seeing people grow into spiritual maturity, the tendency is to make

programs the focus, and people become the means to make successful programs. The goal is merely to keep certain things going. No identified guidelines help leaders know about the life changes and spiritual growth of the congregants. Furthermore, the long history and traditions of the church tend to cause the ministry to drift toward complexity. This cycle will likely continue without intentional and well-designed leadership development training to prepare leaders who are capable of serving with a clear vision and values.

Elyon Abdiel Christian Church currently lacks a clear vision and values. The church has a vision statement that is too general to be compelling and it has no articulated values. My conviction is that setting a clear vision and values will be a pivotal step toward helping a declining church like Elyon Abdiel Christian Church to rise again.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on leading with a clear vision and values.

### **Research Questions**

#### **Research Question #1**

What were the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values before the workshop?



**Research Question #2**

What were the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values after the workshop?

**Research Question #3**

What aspects of the leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values had the greatest impact on the observed changes in the participants?

**Rationale for the Project**

The first reason this project matters is that vision and values are two inseparable components of developing a clear ministry process. People within a church must know the process because they are integral to fulfilling it. A clearly defined process encourages people to progress through it because they know the expectations (Rainer 119). When churches bring clarity and intentionality to their vision and develop strong ownership of that vision among their people and leaders, they will see an amazing increase in the effectiveness of their ministry both inside and outside the church (Lynn 9). Vision helps people get focused, keeps them going during times of adversity, and gets great results. Along with vision, having clear values is an equally important factor. Values are deeply held beliefs that certain qualities are desirable (Blanchard and Stoner 78). They define what is right or fundamentally important and provide guidelines for choices and actions. Clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people. Before the process can be clear to the people in the church, it must first be clear to the leaders. A lack of clarity leads to confusion and complexity because a coherent direction is lacking.

The second reason this project matters is because biblically speaking, every leadership role in the Bible stems from the purpose of bringing the kingdom of God into realization. With the kingdom, vision came along with the law as the guiding value. The restoration will then reach its culmination through his Son, Jesus the Messiah, as the ultimate mediator. Jesus himself served with a clear vision. Throughout his ministry, Jesus spoke of what his kingdom looked like. He continually talked about the kingdom of God, its values, teachings, parables, miracles, and final fulfillment. He gave the disciples a clear picture of the future, and they committed themselves to that future (Blanchard and Phil Hodges 69). Jesus also gave a clear and careful mandate to his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 before leaving for heaven. The great part of the mandate that Jesus issued on that day is that it still can be the guide and direction for actions in our twenty-first-century gatherings of Christ's followers (Lynn 26).

The third reason this project matters is because church ministry is based on volunteers rather than professionals. Most people who assume leadership positions in churches are not professionals. They do not always have experience in organizational leadership, let alone a thorough understanding of vision and values. Church leaders cannot assume that all prospective leaders they want to recruit know what is expected, what their roles are, how things should be done according to the vision and values, and what areas they sense God calling them to emphasize in the local expression of his body. The voluntary nature does not necessarily mean mediocre or low quality due to all these capabilities lacking. On the contrary, the calling to serve with integrity and excellence should be an inherent part of Christian leaders since it speaks about the willingness of the hearts that have been redeemed by Christ. Hence, leaders must be equipped with a deeper

understanding of vision, values, and ways for the church to be embodied both individually and collectively as a church community.

The fourth reason this project matters is because ministry naturally drifts toward complexity. The older the church is, the more complex it becomes. A complex church will become cluttered and busy doing church instead of being the church. People usually crave a good result and are easily enchanted by success stories. Thus, understandably, they will want to apply whatever works in other places to their own context. This good intention, however, lacks wisdom. Without clear vision and values, the tendency to add more “good stuff” and the reluctance to cut off “mediocre stuff” will become a habit making the church more and more complex. This, in turn, will cause the church to have a more distracted focus, from discipling people to running programs. Hence, leaders should be prepared to understand the focus and the uniqueness of the vision of their local church. This way, leaders are ready to discern not only between right and wrong but also between good and best. Predetermined values can help leaders make these tough calls. Vision and values will guide the church to focus on being a simple church, a relevant church, a church that focuses on discipling people for God.

The fifth and last reason this project matters is that the church is living in a rapidly changing situation that will bring more uncertainties. During two years of the COVID-19 pandemic 2020-2022, the church leaders discovered how people change their ways of doing things. From online services to metaverse and virtual reality churches, these are the new things that emerged amid the pandemic situation. Only with clear vision and values can we get into the process of discerning what is biblical teaching,

when is the right timing, and how is the correct method, to embrace and apply new things.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### **Vision**

In the context of leadership, a *vision* is a mental model of an ideal future state. It offers a picture of what could be. Visions imply change and can challenge people to reach a higher standard of excellence. At the same time, visions are like a guiding philosophy that provides people with meaning and purpose.

#### **Values**

*Values* are deeply held beliefs that certain qualities are desirable. They define what is right or fundamentally important and provide guidelines for choices and actions.

#### **Ministry Board Members**

*Ministry board members* is the term used to describe the leadership team who serve at Elyon Abdiel Christian Church. Ministry board members must hold a membership in the church, have a minimum age of 25, and have experience serving in the church for at least a year. They are elected by the senior pastor with the recommendation of the active board members or other leaders. Once elected, they will serve a specific term of three years.

#### **Knowledge**

*Knowledge* refers to facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education, the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.

**Attitude**

*Attitude* is a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

**Behavior**

*Behavior* is how one acts or conducts oneself, especially toward others.

**Simple Church**

*Simple church* refers to a vibrant and growing church with a clear vision and values that are centered around a clear discipleship process. Simple church does four things: design a simple disciple-making process, organize key programs to accomplish this, unite all ministries around the process, and eliminate everything else.

**Complex Church**

A *complex church* is a church that has no clear vision and values, resulting in the absence of a clear disciple-making process, lack of ministry clarity and focus, working on many programs that are not well aligned, and thus competing with other ministries for profile and resources within the church.

**Leadership Development Workshop**

*Leadership development workshop* refers to a training program that prepares the prospective leaders of EACC as ministry board members to be able to serve with a clear vision and values.

**Delimitations**

This project included ministry board members and small group leaders at the time of the intervention. The sample group was diverse in age, family situation, educational

background, occupation, length of church ministry, and gender. All participants were from the Pregolan Bunder campus.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

The common resources consulted and cited were biblical, theological, leadership, and ecclesiological. Each of the following people contributed diverse yet compelling perspectives to this project.

Biblical and theological: Craig S. Keener, Moberly, Leighton Ford, Ajith Fernando, Lesslie Newbigin, Jason E Vickers, N.T. Wright, Kevin DeYoung, Michael J. Vlach, Derek Kidner, Dwight Pentecost, Manfred Oeming, Stephen Seamands.

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Vision and values development process: Will Mancini, Ken Blanchard, Aubrey Malphurs, Thom S. Rainer, and Eric Geiger.

### **Research Methodology**

The intervention for this research was a series of workshops entitled Leading with a Clear Vision and Values: Defining a Clear Ministry Process. This was a new training program that I designed for the strategic leadership team of EACC. Participants completed pre- and post-event questionnaires. It included demographic data collection, interviews, and utilizing focus groups.

### **Type of Research**

This research project was designed as an intervention. This study utilized pre- and post-event questionnaires and a focus group.

**Participants**

The participants were drawn from among active ministry board members and small group leaders. The participants were those who spread the values both through their talk and action in the ministry.

**Instrumentation**

Data was collected through pre- and post-event questionnaires exploring knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to serving with a clear vision and values. A focus group identified aspects of the training event that were most and least helpful in facilitating serving with a clear vision and values.

**Data Collection**

All participants completed pre- and post-retreat questionnaires related to their personal knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward the church's vision and values. The pre-event questionnaire was completed on the day of the workshop, as the initial activity of the first session. The post-workshop questionnaires were completed at the focus group session. Two focus group times were offered because of the differing availability of the participants.

**Data Analysis**

The project was an intervention with both qualitative and quantitative research methods utilized. The pre-and post-event questionnaires provided statistical and quantitative information, including the mean and standard deviation. The focus group contributed important qualitative information that guided the interpretation of the questionnaires.

### **Generalizability**

While no context is identical to another, this study may benefit researchers who look for guidance on creating or evaluating the vision and value of their organization as this project includes the general process of forming and evaluating them. Although the study was limited to EACC, a church with a Chinese background located in Surabaya, Indonesia, it is focused on the process of forming vision, values, and ways to help leaders in the organization embody them, thus making the work transferrable to another ministry setting.

### **Project Overview**

The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with a clear vision and values. Chapter 2 discusses the biblical and theological foundations along with the most influential writers and practitioners regarding clear vision and values in church and various organizations. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology employed for this project. Chapter 4 reports the results of the pre-and post-event questionnaires and the focus groups. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the major findings of the study as well as implications for serving with a clear vision and values in ministry both now and in the future.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to the study of leadership based on a clear vision and values. The research for this chapter is organized into three sections. The first section provides the biblical foundation for visionary leadership. This section includes the surveys of leadership in five major eras in both the Old Testament and the New Testament: (1) The Period of Exodus, (2) The Period of The Judges, (3) The Period of The Kingdom, (4) The Period of Post-Exile, and (5) The Period of Jesus. The second section provides a theological foundation for leadership that focuses on the kingdom of God and the purpose of the Church. The third section explores leadership research focusing particular attention on vision and values as the core of leadership exercise.

#### **Biblical Foundations**

##### **The Surveys of Visionary Leadership in the Bible**

###### *The Period of Exodus*

The book of Exodus is foundational for the biblical understanding of God, Yahweh, and the people of God, Israel. The mandate of God at creation and his promise to Abraham are being continued through the growth of Israel into a people (Gen.1:28, 12:2; Exod. 1:7) that then contextualizes all that follows within God's overall purposes for his world. The fact that the book of Exodus does not end at chapter 15 with the song of praise after crossing the Red Sea, but continues with the giving of the law and the building of the Tabernacle provides a clue that physical bondage in Egypt was not the

most critical problem for the Israelites. Throughout the story of deliverance, a phrase—“You (Moses or The Israelites) shall know that I am the LORD”—keeps recurring. It suggests that the primary problem was theological, that they needed to know God (Fretheim, Purpose). The physical deliverance was a means to the end, which is worshiping God and becoming his emissary. The major leadership figure in the book of Exodus is Moses, whom God called to be a “prophet”, one who will speak and act for God. God will deliver Israel to achieve his vision, which means Moses is the chosen leader to embrace the godly vision.

### *Moses*

The original vision presented to Moses was to bring the people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. However, that vision had an important part that is only hinted at during the negotiations between God and Moses at the burning bush:

But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” (Exod. 3:11–12, ESV)

During the negotiation, God gave Moses the true purpose of why the Israelites needed to leave Egypt. That purpose was to worship God at “the mountain of God,” Mount Sinai. The target for leaving Egypt was not the end of the mission, rather Moses was entrusted to lead the Israelites to become the people of God through the journey to the Promised Land. Responding to the purpose, rather than asking Pharaoh for permanent freedom to build the nation of Israel in Canaan, Moses tried to ask for a spiritual pilgrimage, a three-

day journey from Egypt, to engage in religious sacrifice and celebration. Although this particular ruse did not work as expected as God had warned Moses before, “And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, if not by a mighty hand” (Exod. 3:19), nevertheless, “it is meant to give some sense of reasonableness and legitimacy to Moses’ request and highlight Pharaoh’s rigidity and callousness in refusing to grant that request” (Laufer 178-79).

For the Israelites to reap the benefit of settling in the Promised Land and displacing the native populations, they needed to fulfill God’s purpose in choosing them in the first place, which is to constitute a nation that could fulfill God’s vision for humanity at creation and the Israelites’ role in the community of nations. They needed to develop the character to be effective as God’s partner and God’s agent in the world. They needed to embody a set of values and behavioral norms that would be a vast improvement over the morally corrupt nations of Canaan that they were to displace (Deut. 9:5). God’s vision of creation had been to create beings in his own image who would act with responsibility toward God and other human beings. God’s vision for the Israelites was for them to be the vanguard in fulfilling humanity’s potential. They were to function as an exemplary nation to humanity, serving, teaching, and modeling how to live in a passionate relationship with God and how to interact in a responsible relationship with each other (Laufer 223). To be able to achieve such a huge vision, God had prepared a moment to formalize the covenantal mission at Mount Sinai. Hence, Moses’ role as a leader of the Israelites did not stop at bringing them out of Egypt, rather he had to teach and guide them how to live according to the vision. God’s vision had to first become his before he could bring it out for the people to see.

The Israelites had been slaves for so long. They needed assurance that Moses could consistently provide all their necessities during their long journey in the desert. God had shown how he could provide everything they needed. Three times God miraculously provided water for them (Exod. 15:22-25, 27, 17:3-7), yet for the next struggle with their basic necessities, they came complaining with even more of a bitter edge (Exod. 16:3). Apparently, they were lacking spiritual faith that God was with them (Laufer 210). They had many values and habits to be changed too. However, Moses still tried to govern the people all by himself until Jethro showed the mistake being made there. Moses' response reflected that he was too overwhelmed and distracted by the Israelites' daily problems (Exod. 18:15-16).

Jethro's suggestion helped Moses to embrace his role as a leader to bring out God's vision. He suggests:

Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of the fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace. (Exod. 18:21-23)

The suggested qualifications—able man, God-fearing, trustworthy, and bribe-hating—reflected the values that needed to be embodied. More likely, however, Moses was unable to meet all the qualifications as he actually chose “able men from all Israel”. The lack of

the other three attributes may signify that he had to settle for the best available appointees on the market. After all, the Israelites of Egypt were supposed to learn to be God-fearing men of truth who hated bribery. Later on, Moses would have to choose another seventy appointees to help him manage the burden of leadership. God himself would put the Spirit on Moses, meaning the spiritual vision to lead the people (Laufer 222).

After recruiting the newly appointed judges, Moses had to ensure that they worked toward the same vision. Thus, those judges had to be taught what justice means within that framework. Appointing people as judges and telling them to go out and dispense justice was not sufficient. Egypt was a nation where the despots ruled cruelly and arbitrarily. They treated their slaves as dispensable chattel. This was for sure not the type of society that God and Moses envisioned for the Promised Land. In Canaanite society, children were offered as human sacrifices to pagan gods; incest, bestiality, and adultery were rampant. It surely was not the type of civilization that God and Moses had in mind either. The purpose of the Exodus was to create a new civilization with radically different ethical values and social norms than those that existed in ancient Egypt and Canaan. It was called the society's "ethical monotheism," something that God and Moses envisioned taking root in the Promised Land (Laufer 225).

Only after Moses appointed a hierarchical judicial authority in Exodus 18 and described the vision of covenantal responsibility in Exodus 19 did God continue with the fundamental strategic values necessary to achieve that vision, the Ten Commandments (Laufer 224-25). These Ten Commandments were not merely ten specific laws governing human behavior. Rather, they conveyed the large, axiomatic, strategic values that were to guide the Israelites on their historic mission (226). They addressed the fundamental

spiritual and ethical values that the nation as a whole needed to internalize and inculcate in their children to become the kind of people and the type of nation God and Moses envisioned in the Promised Land. The commandments are the medium to teach people how to be responsible to God and each other. The values embodied in the Ten Commandments are the corrective to that chaotic and corrupt natural human state. They establish the nonnegotiable laws of what constitutes a just society and a holy nation.

Since the calling of Moses at the burning bush event, God's vision was not merely for Moses to physically lead the people out of Egypt and bring them to the land flowing with milk and honey. Laufer described the vision as follows:

The vision was to bring them to the Promised Land only after they underwent a national transformation on God's mountain and became God's special emissaries to the world (Exod. 3:12, 19:5–6). Egypt was not merely a geographical location but an all-pervasive cultural reality: Moses's task was to lead the people out of Egypt geographically, culturally, and morally. The geographical exodus took approximately one year; the cultural and moral exodus took nearly forty years and even then was not totally successful in rooting out the corrupting influences of ancient Egypt. Still, whatever success was achieved can be attributed to God and Moses's teaching of the Ten Commandments and the laws of the covenant. (231)

This meant that the role of Moses as a leader included both freedom from external oppression and internal change of heart. His task then was not only to lead the people to look at The Promised Land as a land of freedom for themselves but also a vision to bless

the world around them. To achieve that vision, God and Moses used the Ten Commandments to train the Israelites to embody the values of the chosen people.

*The Period of Judges*

The book of Judges took its theology primarily from Deuteronomy. Its underlying theological principle was covenantal. The book argues that Israel's leaders were to be constantly reminding Israel to remember the Lord's covenant faithfulness, as demonstrated by his past actions, especially in the exodus, that obedience to the covenant of the Lord leads to peace and prosperity (Boling, *Judges, Book of*). The obedience was particularly expressed in the worship of Yahweh and Yahweh alone. They were to fear the Lord and follow him by keeping the covenant (Deut. 4:9–12; Judg. 2:6–10, 20–23, 3:1–6, 6:13).

Another theme that pervades the book is the issue of leadership. Under a judge, Israel was able to adhere to the command to worship Yahweh and Yahweh alone. However, with the death of a judge, Israel fell again into apostasy, suggesting that a more permanent form of leadership was needed. Judges understood this leadership as coming from Judah (1:2–20) and through a king (e.g., 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25). Judges was pointing, in other words, to King David as the ideal, covenant-keeping leader (Boling, *Judges, Book of*).

The primary activity of the judges was to lead the Israelites against their oppressive enemies. Individual judges were also called “deliverer” as the description of their work (Judg. 2:16, 3:9, 15, 31, 6:15, 8:22, 13:5). The term “judge” can be understood in a broader sense of “ruler” or “governor” since the work was apparently not completed immediately after the deliverance. Thus, Jon L. Berquist suggests that the term “judge”

can be rendered instead as “to establish justice” (91). The designation implies that the judges were entrusted with the enactment of God’s will for the world, which was deliverance from external oppression (2:16, 18), leadership exercised to bring the exclusive worship and service of Yahweh (2:19), and hence the creation of internal conditions that encourage the life quality as God intends it to be (McCann, ch.2a. What Were the Judges).

The comprehensive sense of the judges as establishers of justice is also suggested by the form and placement of the Book of Judges. The judges are portrayed as successors of Joshua (1:1, 2:6-23). Joshua in turn is portrayed as the successor of Moses (Josh. 1:1). Moses was the receiver of the Torah, while Joshua was to be the guardian of the Torah (1:8-9). The purpose of the Torah was to ensure the exclusive worship of Yahweh and the establishment of conditions that foster human life as God intends it. Hence, as successors to Moses and Joshua, the purpose of the judges was to be the mediators of the covenant, the exclusive worship of Yahweh, and obedience to God’s way, which was justice (McCann, ch.2a. What Were the Judges).

The message of Judges addresses the difficulty that Israel’s leadership had in leading the people of God to fear the Lord and keep the covenant. More particularly, the book demonstrated two messages. The first was the failure of the judges’ leadership to pass on the knowledge of God to the next generation or to lead them in covenant-keeping (2:10 as it leads into 2:11ff). Judges told repeated tales of what happens when that knowledge of the Lord is not passed on to subsequent generations. By focusing on the judges, the book emphasizes the integral role of leaders in this process.



The second message referred to the argumentation for a better leader who will keep the covenant but as a king and not a judge, from Judah, not Benjamin. This pointed toward David, not Saul, despite no explicit mention of their names. The character and behavior of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, however, are contrasted several times, serving to contrast the character of the leadership of David and Saul, the most famous sons of each tribe. The book of Judges demonstrates that the answer to the crisis in leadership was David, the king from Judah, who would lead the people of God in fearing the Lord and keeping the covenant (Boling, Judges, Book of). By providing mixed accounts of the judges, both faithful and faithless, with the repeated refrain in the closing chapters—“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25)—the book of Judges argues that a king is a better kind of leader. The essential factors for the king are that he be a God-fearing, covenant-keeping king, who would help the people themselves keep the covenant.

The Book of Judges was not written to the people who lived during the time of the judges. It was an account of that period for a later audience of God’s people. To its contemporary audience, Judges was an account of what happens when one generation fails to pass on the knowledge and fear of the Lord and was therefore an exhortation to correct that problem among themselves. Its message was to seek and embrace God-fearing, covenant-keeping leadership, which would have led Israel to keep the covenant (Boling, Judges, Book of). When leaders do not embrace such purpose and the guiding values themselves, the situation as portrayed by the book of Judges, “everyone did what was right in his own eyes,” is a clear description of what could happen.

*Samson*

The last and probably the most popular of the judges is Samson. Samson was a man whose main purpose was pleasure, a person of great physical strength but of total selfishness of purpose. His feats were impressive as he killed many Philistines, the oppressor of that time (13:5). However, that was all that he had. His best ability was to defeat others in often pointless physical combat. Samson's first action in Judges 14 was an act of pure lust as he asked his parents to propose a Philistine woman in Timnah as his wife. This was not the typical Jewish girl Samson's parents had in mind, nor was this to be a union based on mutual respect and love (Moberly, *Samson, His Mother, and His Lovers*). It shows his clumsiness and ignorance toward the Nazirite vow (13:5). No wonder it became the beginning of a series of affairs that led to Samson's betrayal and death.

Samson was not a leader of his people. The Bible says nothing of his organizational or inspirational abilities. He did not demonstrate any value of a leader who cared about God's purpose and vision for the Israelites. At the end of Samson's life and his story, things were no better than they were before. Chapters 17–21 of the book of Judges even indicate that they were actually much worse. He left no legacy except revenge and destruction. Even his last act was one of self-destruction as he brought the temple of Philistines down on himself.

Samson was a flawed hero. Instead of showing an interest or inclination toward delivering Israel, he was so busy pursuing Philistine women and taking personal revenge on the Philistines. Although he did implore God for help, the strength that God granted led him to a rather hollow victory and his own death instead of deliverance (Moberly,

13:1-25). God's will for the deliverance of the people was clear enough, but Samson's unfaithfulness was even clearer as he violated the Nazirite vow at every turn. Surely God did not accomplish his vision through Samson.

### *The Period of The Kingdom*

Since kingship was the virtually universal method of governance in the ancient Near East, people understandably envisioned the deity as King (Stevens 11). However, in ancient Israel, all kings were accountable to Yahweh, and the prophets were his representatives to confront them when they sinned. This contrasted dramatically with ancient Near Eastern conceptions of kingship where, for example in Egypt, the kings (pharaohs) were considered to be gods themselves (Longman, Ryken, and Wilhoit, Kingship).

The king was not a law unto himself but rather was subject to God's law. His major function was to be an example of a humble servant of Yahweh leading the people to keep the law. Yahweh himself was to be Israel's Divine Warrior. Just as the king on earth sat on a throne and ruled the territory, so God sat on a throne in heaven and ruled (Stevens 11). The theology of God as King supports and reinforces God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Hence, when the Israelites asked for a king to lead them in fighting their battles like the other pagan nations (1 Sam. 8:5, 20), it was as if they were deposing Yahweh as Israel's warrior (Longman, Ryken, and Wilhoit, Kingship).

Long before the Israelites asked for a king, God himself had prepared qualifications for future kings. According to Deuteronomy 17:14-20, (1) he was to be chosen by God, (2) he was not to be a foreigner, (3) he must not accumulate, (4) he must not accumulate many wives, lest his heart be turned aside, (5) he must not accumulate

wealth for himself; (6) he must write a copy of the law for himself; and (7) he must read it and obey it. The duty of a king is to guide and guard his people. The success of a king is judged by how well he performs his duty (Grottanelli 91). The leadership during the period of the kingdom was not based on the competencies of the king, rather it was dependent on the obedience of the king to God's vision.

### *Saul and David*

Throughout their entire narrative, Saul's failure and David's success as kings were closely tied to the behavior that determined the fate of their people. When Saul was first introduced in the book of 1 Samuel, he was portrayed as a good candidate for a king (1 Sam. 9:2), endowed with the Spirit (1 Sam. 10:10-12), and changed into a new man (1 Sam. 10:9). He performed well too by driving the Ammonites out of Israel (1 Sam. 11:1-15). This battle was so important that the entire eleventh chapter was devoted to describing the event. The fall of Saul began as he developed a problem with what Ralph K. Hawkins and Richard Leslie Parrott describe as rankism. A leader who suffers from rankism tends to exercise autocratic and top-down leadership (11). This can be seen as Saul started to make his own decisions rather than become someone who was under God's authority. He acted autonomously without regard for God's prophet.

Saul's two greatest mistakes pertained to sacrifice. The first failure was in his commitment to wait for Samuel to offer sacrifice as prescribed. Instead, he chose to offer it himself due to the moment of crisis. This failure cost Saul the preservation of his reign over Israel (1 Sam. 13:7-15). The second failure happened when Saul decided to offer the booty plundered from the Amalekites instead of destroying them as ordered by The Lord (1 Sam. 15:7-35). In most ancient Near Eastern cultures, kings were also high priests and

were often considered divine. Hence, for the king to offer the ritual sacrifices would not have been a problem. However, in ancient Israel, the altar was the exclusive province of the priests. Israelite kings were not divine and should not be distinguished in how they approached God in the sacrificial system (12). Thus Saul's grave sacrilege revealed Saul's ritual clumsiness and ignorance. The second failure of Saul especially cost him his throne as The Lord declared through Samuel: "The Lord rejects you as king of Israel" (1 Sam. 15:26).

On the other hand, the Scriptures state that David offered sacrifice only two times, and on both occasions, he did them correctly. Both circumstances were exceptional as in the transporting of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:17-19) and in the raising of a new altar (2 Sam. 24:25). When God finally delivered the nation from all their enemies, David decided that the time had come for him to build a house for God in Jerusalem. He then consulted Nathan about his plan and received the initial approval of the prophet (2 Sam. 7: 3). However, building a temple turned out to be not God's will, and Nathan had to convey to David God's rejection of the plan. God did not stop at the oracle of prohibition as he then gave David an oracle of hope. David was not the one who would build God a house, God would be the one to build the house of David (Glasser et al. 181). God promised him an eternal kingdom, from which the vision of Messiah will be fulfilled.

Saul also had a problem with loving the people whom he was to lead. This caused them to transfer their love to a better leader, who was David (Glasser et al. 91), as seen on some occasions. The first one was when Saul almost killed Jonathan, his own son, for the violation of the oath to which Saul had foolishly bound his troops (1 Sam. 14:24-52). When Saul prioritized his superstitious oath before his love for his son, not even his

troops agreed with the decision. They even resisted Saul and managed to ransom Jonathan so that he did not die. Even his troops showed greater loyalty to Jonathan than Saul.

Jonathan and David became friends and entered into a covenant with one another. After defeating Goliath, David reported to Saul and expressed his loyalty to Saul and to the nation. However, Jonathan also expressed his loyalty to David afterward. The author of 1 Samuel reports:

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

(18:1-4)

The word *love* used to describe their relationship can possibly have political connotations, not just a personal friendship. When the word is used in the context of treaties or covenant establishment, it always has political overtones (Jenni 49). In 1 Kings 5:1, when King Hiram of Tyre is reported to have always loved David, this signifies that he and David were on friendly political terms. The word *love* in the context has to do with international friendship or cooperative politics between potentially hostile parties (Hawkins and Parrott 91). Jonathan had seen the inability of his father to lead Israel as a nation and, on the other hand, he recognized God's call to David. A robe often symbolizes one's authority and power. Hence, the giving of a robe and armor from

Jonathan to David may symbolize his transfer of status as heir to David (Youngblood 707).

David showed a different quality as he then became a commander of a thousand by going and coming in before the people. He devoted his life to serving the people of Israel. David showed his love for the people he served, thus all of Israel and Judah loved David (1 Sam. 18:13, 16). A few verses later, Michal, the daughter of Saul also came to love David as well. The word may also have the same covenantal shades of meaning as the case mentioned before. The two siblings showed more love and loyalty to their father's competitor, David, than to Saul himself (Youngblood 710). Because Saul failed to love his people, they gradually transferred their love to David, a better leader who loved them (Hawkins and Parrott 94).

As for their attitude toward priests, Saul showed impious behavior by punishing the priests in Nob with death. He even went as far as entrusting the slaughter task to an Edomite when his own Israelite followers refused to do the cruelty (1 Sam. 22:6-23). Saul even went further. While the Law made provision for a town being placed under a ban when it went astray after other gods, Saul decided to destroy the city because he thought it had been unfaithful to him. Saul played a god as if he were divine, just like the behavior of many kings of other nations (Hawkins and Parrott 81).

While for David, received a warm welcome, with help offered to him by the priests of YHWH in Nob (1 Sam. 21:2-10). David also showed his respect toward God when he refused to kill Saul despite having the opportunity to do so, as he acknowledged Saul as the Lord's anointed one (1 Sam. 24:6). A similar crime by Saul happened when he killed the Gibeonites which caused a famine in Israel for three years. To remove this

impurity, David had to become the avenger of the Gibeonites, whose city was the site of a great sanctuary, by surrendering the children of Saul to be killed (2 Sam. 21:1-14). These events possibly demonstrate a privileged relationship between the sanctuary and the household of David and, on the other hand, a hostile relationship between it and Saul (Grottanelli 97).

Saul did well in his early reign as a king by expelling mediums and necromancers (1 Sam. 28:3) and relying on dreams, Urim, and the prophets as the canonical means to discern the will of God. However, in another grave crisis raised by the war against the Philistines, Saul decided to consult the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28:7-25). Cristiano Grottanelli summarized the dynamic as follows:

The complete lack of communication between the Lord and Israel by means of a king, caused by the malfunction of the correct means of divination, is one of the most serious outcomes that Saul's misconduct brings upon his people. From it derives the ultimate contradiction (and guilt) of Saul, who is constrained to violate his own laws. He is forced to turn to the abhorrent practices of the necromancy, disturbing the eternal rest of Samuel, and to depend on the lower world rather than on the divine for an answer. The possession of the king in the story of Saul does not bring anything that is decisively good, and above all, it does not bring any divine inspiration. At best, it brings the superhuman strength seen above in the episode of the dismembered oxen. (97-98)

Meanwhile, throughout his career, David was accompanied by the prophet Nathan and the priest Abiathar, not generic prophets or priests. He depended on the urim and tummim



on all occasions, especially in war. The Lord even communicated with the oracle that promised an eternal reign to David through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 7:1-19).

The cumulative toll of Saul's ethical failures was severe. They contributed to the destruction of his kingship and ultimately to his death. The author of 1 Chronicles summarized the narrative of Saul as follows:

So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse. (1 Chron. 10:13-14)

Saul did not have a vision for God's kingdom as he exercised his leadership. He ignored the law of offering sacrifices, he did not show love toward the people he led, he showed impious behavior by slaughtering the priests in Nob, and he even consulted a medium which God forbade. Saul acted as if he was God himself. He was no different from many kings of the nation at the time instead of becoming a king that represented the reign of God.

David, on the other hand, was the ideal though not the perfect human king that Yahweh intended him to be. As shown above, he was like the antithesis of Saul. He embraced godly values as the subject of Yahweh by honoring the law and sacrificial ritual, protecting the people he led, and respecting God's chosen priests and prophets. God promised him an eternal kingdom, an allusion to the coming of the Savior from his descendants. The people of Israel will look to David as a messianic figure in the sense that the return of his descendants is awaited with hope (Grottanelli 92).

Leaders who wish to develop and cast vision must begin by focusing on God's vision. This requires intense interaction and a quality relationship with him, which in turn will provide a basis for a persistent and loyal attitude. The persistent attitude can be seen in three leadership applications. First, the persistence of the vision of God's kingdom, which put God first above everything. Second, the persistence of divine interaction keeps all actions, lifestyles, and thinking patterns in accordance with God. Third, mission consistency is related to continuous self-denial efforts (Suharto, Daliman, and Ngesthi 7). Both Saul and David were competent figures. The core difference between them was in how they regarded God's vision in their leadership.

#### *The Period of Post-Exilic*

The book of Nehemiah focuses on leadership in the post-exilic period. The era had a strong connection with the theme of the temple and the remnant. The temple had been the center of religious practice for pre-exilic Israel. The atonement of sins had been the focus of the practice in the temple. The destruction of the temple during the exile disorganized the whole religious life of the Israelites. Hence, the first act after the restoration/post-exilic period was to build an altar and start the reconstruction of the temple. The rebuilding of the temple meant more than restoring a venerable old building, rather it was the highest religious significance. As the previous period had shown, the ritual of sacrifice could easily become a mere tradition instead of an embodied value. The offering of the lamb could be happening together with the violation of justice as implied in the Torah. Thus, the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah with an emphasis on the law were their attempts to ensure the way of life of the people was in accordance with the purpose of the Torah (Fensham, Theology).

The remnant is another important theological theme of the post-exilic period. The Israelites held on to the prophecy of Isaiah that Israel might be ‘as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them’ would ‘return’ (Isa. 10:22). The return here was not only from exile but ‘to the mighty God’. The books of Ezra-Nehemiah showed the smallness of the remnant and a new consciousness that it was a people apart. Even though there were nearly 50,000 who came back from exile (Ezra 2:64ff.), these home comers felt themselves to be only a handful in comparison with their forebears (Ezra 9:15). The remnants understood their survival as a confirmation of God’s ‘favor’ and ‘steadfast love’ (Ezra 9:8f.). Derek Kidner argues in his commentary on Nehemiah that the term ‘the exiles’ then became an honorable title, virtually the equivalent of ‘the true Israel’ as can be seen in the proclamation of Ezra 10:8, which threatened certain defaulters with being ‘banned from the congregation of the exiles, although the exile itself had ended eighty years before (Kidner, *The people of God*).

Two things were stressed in this new era, continuity with the historic Israel, whose name and inheritance were carried on by this remnant (cf. Ezra 2:2b), and secondly, separation from the taints of heathenism. These emphases were displayed in the leadership of Nehemiah.

### *Nehemiah*

Nehemiah was a biblical leader with a clear purpose. He understood how the collapsed wall of Jerusalem also meant the destruction of the will of its people. The wall at that time was the symbol and fabric of the nation. Thus, Nehemiah tried to encourage the remnants of Israel to rebuild the wall with a clear reasoning, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us

rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace” (Neh. 2:17-19) (Woolfe 39). The wall of Jerusalem was a symbol of the covenantal identity. This means that by building the wall, Nehemiah built not merely a new building, but also restored the purpose of being the people of God.

Following the temple, rebuilding the wall was necessary as the destruction of the wall was a sign of Israel’s sin and God’s punishment of his people. The building of the wall had three theological meanings. First, it was a symbol of God’s forgiveness and a sign that an era had ended. This is the reason for the enthusiastic celebration of the wall’s completion (Oeming 142). Second, the wall signified the role of the city as a holy city, and the calling to live as a holy people. Within the boundaries of the wall, the Torah had the authority to govern the people’s lives, especially with the Sabbath observance, religiously mixed marriages, and social justice. Third, the boundary signified identity, and building the wall was part of the spiritual renewal (142-43).

Nehemiah had a vision to lead the remnant, those returned exiles, to serve God following the prescriptions of the Torah. For that to happen, he stressed the purity of religion as the expression of the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites (Fensham, Theology). All that was related to the Israelites’ theological view of the wall.

Manfred Oeming emphasized the same interpretation:

The name of God can only dwell in a city with a wall. Proper cultic procedures can only take place within a purified wall. The wall surrounds the dwelling place chosen by God—it thus must be cultically pure. The construction of the wall is an act of God that also has a missionary aspect, leading to the recognition and acceptance of God (Neh. 6:18). For the

ancient Judeans in the Persian period and at the beginning of the Hellenistic era, the stones of Jerusalem's wall were much more than stones. They were "praying": God dwells here; inside these walls is the holy space where his will must be done. (143)

Bob Becking argues that Nehemiah can be regarded as a Mosaic heir. In chapter 13, Nehemiah gave a speech to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to keep themselves holy by avoiding mixed marriages, he reformulated the prohibition of the Ten Commandments using the syntax "you shall not" These tactics gave the commandment almost the weight of the Ten Commandments. He also referred to the tragic shift of Solomon from a chosen king, who was loved by God and without rival, to a human sinner. The idea of Sabbath as a weekly day of rest was also a new construction during the post-exilic period. Nehemiah emphasized the new productions of identity by appropriating the traditional ideas of the historical covenantal law for the benefit of his vision (Becking 105-07).

The vision also helped Nehemiah to stay "on purpose" in facing both temptation and opposition. He honored the Lord, he did not lord it over others or acquire large amounts of money, food, or land. "Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land" (Neh. 5:16). To accomplish his purpose of rebuilding the wall, Nehemiah knew that he needed to strengthen the purpose of the entire team as he also faced strong opposition. He taught the remnants that they were not just rebuilding a wall, but also rebuilding and defending their families and a nation (Woolfe 40).

God put in Nehemiah's heart a plan that could transform Jerusalem's destiny (2:12), relieving its people of ignominy (1:3), insecurity, and poverty. Nehemiah became

indignant about the city's appalling degradation and could not be at peace until an alternative prospect began to form in his mind (Brown, Nehemiah's Example in Leadership). This gave Nehemiah a strong conviction and clear strategies for facing the opposition. Nehemiah posted the people by families, with their swords, spears, and bows. "After I looked things over, I stood up and said to . . . the people, 'Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes'" (Neh. 4:14).

Nehemiah's conviction and strategy of building a purposeful team succeeded. With the help of a purposeful team, Nehemiah was able to complete the wall in fifty-two days. He then managed to accomplish his purpose by uniting the remnants of the purpose and at the same time also demoralized the opposition: "When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence" (Neh. 6:16). All of his struggles paid off. Jack Lynn described Nehemiah's obedience to God's vision accurately this way:

The fact that following God's vision was a demotion for Nehemiah is a powerful one to understand. And often there is a cost to submitting to a vision. It can cost individual independence, and it can require risk. But Scripture indicates that this passionate, yet risky, vision resulted in the betterment of the people of God. It caused the people to unite behind a purpose, to work toward a common goal, and to eventually see the city wall rebuilt (the vision accomplished). (29)

The vision given to Nehemiah was what kept him from leading the people back to Jerusalem despite all odds and challenges, not only to build the wall physically but also the identity of the covenant people.

### *The Period of Jesus*

Jesus was a first-century Palestinian Jew; thus he shared the beliefs of the time. At that time, theology and politics were inseparable. N.T. Wright, in his article “The Mission and Message of Jesus,” argues that Jesus embraced the theology of Jewish monotheism. This meant that Jesus shared the belief that Israel’s God was the only true God. Since monotheism went hand in hand with the doctrine of election, Jesus also shared the belief that Israel had been chosen to be YHWH’s special people, that the current oppression at that time was a temporary state, and YHWH would soon act within history to vindicate his people and establish justice and peace once and for all (31-32).

Furthermore, the era when Jesus lived is called the second-temple period, which covered the last four centuries before Jesus and the first century after him. During that era, despite being freed from the Babylonian and Persian exile, the Jews believed that as long as God’s people were still subject to foreign dominion, in the context of Roman colonization, exile was still happening (Bryan 27). Exile was the state of political servitude, cultural domination, and theological lostness that Israel continued to experience as a punishment for their sin. The three main strands of second-temple hope were as follows: (1) Israel will return from exile, (2) evil will be defeated, and (3) YHWH himself will return to Zion (Wright, *Mission* 32). He began his ministry out of a strong sense of vocation that he had a particular role to perform (35). Jesus started his ministry within such a context with its expectation of liberation.

Jesus announced the coming of the kingdom of God as a Jewish prophet. This was the center of Jesus' mission and message. Like the prophets, Jesus' twofold focus was God and the cultural life of his people in a time of crisis. The prophetic urgency was displayed through Jesus' message pattern as the prophets did before the destruction of the two kingdoms: indictment, threat, and call to change. It was a calling to return to the "way of The Lord" (Borg 152, 156). As Jesus proclaimed the imminent coming of the kingdom of God, he called followers and fed them in the wilderness, resembling what the second-temple period prophet would do (Bryan 40).

Both Marcus J. Borg and Wright agree that Jesus embraced the role of a revitalization movement founder (Borg 157; Wright, *Mission* 38). To fulfill that role, Jesus gave the indictment of the politic of holiness at that time. The politic of holiness was intended to purify Israel. However, the Pharisaic influence upon Israel had the opposite effect. Hence, Jesus attacked the Pharisees' concern about purity and tithing. Jesus claimed that purity was not a matter of externals but of the heart. Thus, the emphasis on the separation of pure and impure created division that defiled instead of hallowing (Borg 157-58).

This kind of act created tensions and conflicts between the Pharisees and Jesus. The clash between them came about not because of the difference in the doctrine of justification by work against justification by faith, but because Jesus demanded them to leave the concept of liberation through military action. Instead, he endorsed them to abandon the practice of oppression and violence within society, including corruption as these are the other side of the coin of militant nationalism. He advocated another kind of revolution that was so far away from what the people had expected. The revolutionary



actions were loving one's enemies, taking up one's cross, and losing one's life in order to gain it (Wright, *Mission* 48).

Jesus' criticism of his social world was not an indictment of Judaism itself. It was the current direction of the social world that he considered misguided. Thus, the conflict between Jesus and his contemporaries was not about the adequacy of Judaism but was about two different visions of what it meant to be a people-centered on God. Despite coming out of the same Torah, the visions of Jesus and the Pharisees were different. Jesus interpreted the Torah according to the paradigm of compassion as opposed to the paradigm of holiness by the Pharisees (Borg 160). From the vision, Jesus taught the way of transformation that focused on relationship with the Spirit, not the religious beliefs and cultural convictions of the time. Out of the relationship, he taught a new ethos and with it the politics of compassion instead of holiness (164).

The compassion of Jesus was not about a personal emotional reaction, but the expression of public criticism that was born from his concern against the entire numbness of his social context. Jesus entered into the hurt, and he came to embody it. His criticism as embodied hurt was expressed toward the sick and the marginal ones as he went to heal many of them (Brueggemann 63). Hence, the compassion of Jesus had two sides. On the one hand, it was a frontal attack on the dominant culture that was motivated not by anger but by love. Jesus understood clearly that the mission would bring him death at the hands of Jerusalem. On the other hand, Jesus' vision through the compassion paradigm evidenced the power to transform as he restored the dead, healed the sick, fed the crowds, and preached the good news. Jesus promised an alternative beginning (65-66).

Jesus was known as someone who spoke with power and authority and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:29). This was a bold claim since the scribes were the authorized teachers of the law with a right to expect the people to accept their legal rulings. This did not refer to the tone of his voice nor because he appeared to be founding a new school of his own, but due to the content of his message. Wright, in his other book *Jesus and the Victory of God*, argues that “Jesus announced that the reign of Israel’s god, so long awaited, was now beginning” and “that the exile was at last drawing to a close, that Israel was about to be vindicated against her enemies, that YHWH was returning at last to deal with evil, to right wrongs, to bring justice to those who were thirsting for it like dying people in a desert” (172). The periphrastic tense “he was teaching them” rather than “he had taught them” suggests that the crowd’s astonishment not only applied to the discourse in Matthew 5 but to Jesus’ continuing teaching in Galilee which was already implied in the previous passage from Matthew 4:24-25 (France 7:28-29).

A similar testimony about Jesus’ authority in teaching is found in Mark 1:22. The people of Capernaum were astonished by his teaching after the exorcism in the synagogue. Jesus’ mighty work and his message proclaimed in authority were closely related to each other. They became the fundamental part of his announcement of the kingdom of God which is in the process of realization (Hengel and Schwemer 492). In other words, Jesus used them as signs to show that he was bringing the long-awaited fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. At that time, sickness often excluded people and made them ritually unclean. Hence, the works of healing by Jesus could be seen as restoration to membership. Many people, like the blind, deaf and dumb, lepers, and a woman with blood issues, whom Jesus healed were in the banned categories, not only as

the ritually excluded but also socially ostracized. Thus, the effect of Jesus' healing was not merely to bring physical recovery, nor a renewed sense of community membership. In the deepest sense, it reconstituted them as members of the covenant people of YHWH. Jesus' mighty work thus had the effect of gathering the people of Israel and this was in accordance with the prophecy of the Old Testament (Wright, *Jesus and the Victory* 191-93).

Besides that, Jesus' miracles were performed to authenticate himself as God's messenger, his offer of the kingdom, and his messianic identity. Each miracle that Jesus performed revealed his authority as Messiah. Each miracle that Jesus performed in the physical realm also revealed what he did in the spiritual realm. He healed the blind not only to see physically but also spiritually. He healed the lame not only so they could walk physically but also to please God. He raised the dead to affirm that he had come to give eternal life to those who believed in him. The miracles became the preview of the conditions of the kingdom when he reigns, with no sickness, hunger, sin, or death. These were the same messianic kingdom conditions that the prophets had described (Pentecost 209).

Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God embraced the vocation to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. The coming of the kingdom of God was not an abstract idea, a new sort of religion, a new spiritual experience, a new moral code, or a doctrine of getting to heaven after death (Wright, *Mission* 35). Jesus' message of repentance and the call to believe the gospel meant more than giving up personal sin and accepting a body of dogma of religious salvation. For the first-century people, it was an urge to give up their agendas of nationalist revolution as it would involve warfare. Such an agenda was a

contrast to what Jesus taught and it would even become their disloyal to YHWH regarding their vocation to be the light of the world. Warfare would give way to something entirely different, so Jesus denied his people the use of the sword to further his mission (Matt. 25:52; John 18:36). The kingdom of God that Jesus announced would not have geographic or racial boundaries. Instead, it would be found wherever YHWH is acknowledged in personal faith and obedience (Glasser et al.154). Instead, Jesus challenged them to live as the people of the covenant, the people who returned from exile, the people whose hearts were renewed by the word and the work of God (38-39).

Jesus announced the coming of the kingdom of God as a Messiah, the one through whom God would at least deal with exile and sin, and bring the long-awaited redemption. Jesus expressed his identity as Messiah by confronting the temple and casting out the traders (Matt. 21:12-17). The temple was the symbolic heart of Judaism, the dwelling place of YHWH, and the place of sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Politically, it was also the power base of elite priests who along with the Herodian house, ran the second-temple Judaism at the time. However, the temple had been a symbol of corrupt and economically oppressive power structures for the poor. The people's vocation had been distorted, both toward foreigners and the poor, as shown through their attitudes toward the temple (Wright, *Mission* 44-45). Hence, Jesus' temple action became a breaking symbol to recover the purpose of the sacrificial system.

Jesus' actions and sayings regarding the temple also indicated his identity as Messiah. Since the temple of Jerusalem claimed control of the means of forgiveness, Jesus' teaching in Mark 12:32-4 shocked the first-century Jews when he said "to love God with all one's heart, understanding, and strength, and to love one's neighbor as

oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” and to connect it with a claim that the Scribe understood that as being “not far from the kingdom of God.” This meant that the temple system would be replaced with the system of the kingdom of God that valued heart renewal. Jesus acted in such a way to indicate his own movement as a God-given replacement for the temple itself (Wright, *Mission* 46). Jesus claimed himself to be the temple as he cleansed the temple (John 2:13-25).

The incarnation of Jesus into the world was in keeping with the Old Testament pattern of God’s sending mission. His vision of the kingdom of God was to be equated with a covenantal community where his goods of salvation were available and received by people. Thus, Jesus paid particular attention to preparing those who would continue serving the kingdom vision as keepers of its keys (Matt. 16:19, 18:18; John 20:23). Among his many followers, Jesus chose the apostles and designated them to spearhead the advance of the church into the world after his ascension (Glasser et al. 364). As Jesus represented the Father, they were sent to represent him to the world. He gave them “the glory which he had with the Father so that they may be one in the same unity with which the Father and the Son are one, that by this perfect unity, the world may know that the Father has sent him”. He also gave the authority to forgive sin; Jesus intended to be represented in all the fullness of his power by the chosen people he commissioned (Newbigin, *Household of God* 63).

On the surface, Jesus’ ministry of calling, training, and sending out disciples appeared to be similar to the common practice of a Jewish rabbi, where the prospective disciple would approach a rabbi, ask to study with him, follow him around, and then imitate his teaching of the Torah (Green, 3.1.1. Responding to the call to Kingdom Life).

However, as Jesus' ministry unfolded, he began to establish a form of discipleship that was different from the rabbis. With Jesus, the initiative lay with his call (Matt. 4:19, 9:9; Mark 1:17, 2:14) and his choice (John 15:16) of those who would be his disciples. The response to the call involved his recognition and belief in his identity (John 2:11, 6:68-69), obedience to his summons (Mark 1:18, 20), and counting the cost of full allegiance to him (Luke 14:25-28; Matt. 19:23-30). Being a disciple is the beginning of something new. It meant losing one's old life (Mark 8:34-37; Luke 9:23-25), yet they would find new life in the family of God through obeying the will of the Father (Matt. 12:46-50). Jesus realized that he must prepare them for the kingdom, not only in the present but also in an eschatological sense (Keener 341-42).

Jesus realized his mission to redeem sinful humanity would involve his atoning death. Like the act in the temple, the Last Supper was also Jesus' symbolic act. Many of his words such as "flesh", "blood", and "poured out" suggested sacrificial terminology. The "blood of the covenant" refers to Exodus 24:8 where blood was shed to settle the covenant between God and the Israelites. Since crucifixion itself technically required no blood, this act signified Jesus' intended sacrificial death (Keener 488). Ajith Fernando expresses the paradox of Jesus' incarnational ministry beautifully:

The one who was equal to God has become nothing. The Lord of all creation has become a slave. The Creator of life has died. The King who is sovereign over history has become obedient to death. The sinless one has had to pay the wages of sin (death). The whole life of Christ was a paradox propelled by the need to redeem sinful humanity. He took on burdens that he did not have to take on, and he gave up things that were

his legitimate right. And shortly before he left the world, he told his disciples: “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21). So his mission becomes our mission. At the Last Supper he told the disciples that they too must give their lives for others as he did (John 15:12-13). Then he went on to say that their willingness to give their lives for others showed that they were his friends (John 15:14). (30)

Jesus shows a clear vision of the kingdom of God through his teaching, his act of mercy and miracles, the revelation of his identity as Messiah, and the sending of the apostles. Jesus is the perfect embodiment of God’s kingdom vision and values.

### **Theological Foundations**

#### **The Kingdom of God and The Purpose of Leadership Role in The Bible**

Dwight J. Pentecost offered the three basic concepts to understand the meaning of the word “kingdom.” First is authority. For example, when the authority is vested in a king, he is granted the right to reign over a kingdom. The same thing holds true with the appointed priest, judge, prophet, or apostles. Second is the realm of rule. This involves the subjects of the one in authority, rather than the authority himself. Third is the reality of rule. Even if a sovereign has the right to rule and a realm to rule, he cannot rule apart from the active exercise of his authority. From the survey of the Scriptures, God’s sovereignty clearly is exercised over all realms, both heaven and earth. No realm is outside of God’s authority (7-8). The theme of the kingdom of God can be found throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Pentecost believes that it is a theme that unifies all of the Scriptures (4).

The exact phrase “kingdom of God” does not appear in the Old Testament, although its roots are nourished and grown there. The theme shows the widespread conviction that God is the Divine King, whose reign is characterized by justice for all and the wholeness of all creation. However, clear references address the concept of the kingdom. For example, in the era of Moses, the concept of the kingdom was explicitly brought up in Exodus 19:5-6:

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’

These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.

This was the first time that the term “kingdom” was used explicitly to refer to God’s rule over Israel as his mediatorial kingdom on earth. Israel was intended to embrace the roles of “a kingdom of priests” and “a holy nation” (Vlach 99).

The Bible is replete with God’s purpose of blessings for all nations. The concern is not about releasing the redeemed soul from history and merely waiting for heaven, rather it is about the action of God bringing history to its desired end. The Old Testament is full of visions of restored humanity living in peace that are not otherworldly bliss, but of earthly prosperity, as described in Psalms 82, 44, of just government, and of a renewed nature in which the law of the jungle has been replaced by kindness as shown in Isaiah 1:1-9 (Newbiggin, *Open Secret* 32). In other words, God intends for all creation to flourish to its fullest potential, characterized by abundance and generosity. The Old Testament vision is for such a Divine Reign, that is, the kingdom of God realized in the world.



Yet, the Old Testament spoke truthfully about the lack of such a vision in real life. For most of the Old Testament narrative, from the era of Moses to the post-exilic period, the reigns of the earthly leaders did not mirror the reign of the Divine King. Creation did not flourish to its fullest potential. All people in society did not experience justice. Life was neither abundant nor generous. In the face of such reality, the ideal vision of the Divine Reign then was pushed to the future, thus it became eschatological (Stevens 44). However, even though the vision was pushed into the future, it was not a future that would take place in another realm, but in the course of real history. The expectation of the Divine Reign enacted through the earthly king was anticipated for the people in the land of Judah/Israel.

The theme of the kingdom of God comes to fulfillment in the New Testament. The kingdom term *basileia* appears over 160 times, used prominently by Jesus throughout his teaching. The kingdom belongs to and is ruled by Jesus as he refers to it as “my kingdom” (Luke 22:30; John 18:36) (DeYoung and Gilbert 133). The New Testament testifies that the powers of the kingdom are manifested in Jesus through his mighty works which are the signs of the presence of the reign of God (Luke 1:14-22) and ultimately through the way of the cross. Jesus brings the presence of the reign of God not by overpowering the forces of evil, but by taking the full weight upon himself (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 31-32). The cross is not a defeat, but a victory as manifested through his resurrection. The manifestation of the risen Christ is given to those whom God chose, not for themselves, but to be the witnesses to all (34).

The term *kingdom*, however, tends to mislead with the idea that something or someplace or a group of people is being talked about when the New Testament speaks of

“the kingdom of God.” This impression is fostered by the habit of abbreviating “the kingdom of God” into simply “the kingdom”. However, “the reign” has no meaning unless it is stated whose reign is in view. In other words, the main idea of “the kingdom of God” is not about a “thing” called “the kingdom,” but about God, that he is king. Hence, “the kingdom of God has come near” means “God is taking over as king,” and to “enter the kingdom of God” is to come under his rule, to accept him as king. The term is a dynamic expression for any situation in which God’s authority is exercised and will be done as king. This means that whoever receives God’s calling for a certain leadership role, the purpose is to bring God’s mission through whatever role he/she has (Juel, Kingdom of God).

Throughout the Bible, God appoints leaders to embrace a certain role and perform some kind of specific mission. Some major roles are mentioned in the Bible, like the priest, judge, king, and prophet in the Old Testament. The New Testament mentions the apostle, deacon, and elder as the spiritual leaders of the church. Among all those roles, the most prominent one is Messiah. Because a central tenet of Christianity has always been the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah expected by Israel, much attention has been paid to the study of Jewish expectations of the Messiah. However, in the Old Testament, the term *anointed* is never used for a future savior/redeemer, and in later Jewish writings of the period between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100, the term is used only infrequently in connection with agents of divine deliverance expected in the future (Green, Messiah).

The English word *Messiah* is a transliteration of the Hebrew noun *meshiach*. The Hebrew noun is derived from the verbal root *mashach* which means “to smear with oil.”

In Greek, the noun chosen is *Christos* because it too is derived from the verb that means “to anoint with oil” (Stevens 44-45). Many Old Testament texts understand oil anointment as a ritual that sets apart an object or a person for service, often with religious implications. For example, in the story of Jacob, he erected a stone pillar and poured oil over it when he was awakened from a dream in which he experienced the presence of God (Gen. 28:28). In a strict sense, the stone pillar could be considered a messiah as it had been smeared with oil and set apart. The Lord himself gave Moses the recipe for the anointing oil (Exod. 30: 23-25). The oil should be used to smear the tent, the Ark of Covenant, the table, the lampstand, the altar, and all the utensils (Exod. 30:26-29). In a strict sense, all these items can also be considered ‘messiahs’ (44-45).

When the word is employed with persons, it denotes the conferring of a specific status or service role (except Amos 6:6). For example, Aaron and his sons were anointed with oil to be set apart for priestly service in both the Wilderness Tabernacle and then in the temple of Jerusalem (Exod. 30:30) as was a prophet, in one Old Testament case, Elisha (1 Kings 19:16). David is another example as he was anointed as a king when Samuel poured oil from his ram’s horn onto David’s head (1 Sam. 16:13). The Old Testament also frequently uses the phrase “the Lord’s anointed” as a kind of shorthand for “a king in the dynasty of David.” Again, in a strict sense, people smeared with oil and set apart for service as priests, prophets, or kings were messiahs (Stevens 45).

The Old Testament passages typically labeled as “Messianic prophecies” do not even use the word *messiah*. Isaiah 9:1–7, for example, describes an ideal ruler who will establish justice and righteousness, but without any indication of the term *messiah* or even anointing being used. Likewise, Isa. 11:1–12 depicts one in the line of David who

will enact justice and righteousness, facilitating a peaceable kingdom, but without any trace of the word *messiah* or *anoint*. Stevens interprets this situation as follows:

Despite the lack of ‘messiah’ vocabulary, the passages paint a picture of the rule of the Divine King, which would be brought about by the designated earthly king, a ‘messiah.’ Even in the days of the New Testament, many persons claimed to be messiahs, by which they meant that they were set apart for service that would demonstrate the reign of the Divine King. The theological trajectory that leads to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah (with a capital M) will take place in the early Church, along with the acclamation of Jesus as ‘King of Kings.’ (46)

The kingdom program starts with God as king and the universe as his kingdom. God’s kingdom is universal and mediatorial. Universal means that God reigns over everything at all times, while mediatorial means God rules over the earth through people as the mediator for his purpose (Vlach 651). The Bible storyline shows the process of God restoring the fallen kingdom. He chose people like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then Moses to lead the growing family into a nation and kingdom called Israel as a means to reach the restoration, which is to bring blessings to all nations. Despite the failures, every leadership role in the Bible stems from the purpose of bringing the kingdom of God into realization. With the kingdom vision came along the law as the guiding value. The restoration will then reach its culmination through his Son, Jesus the Messiah as the ultimate mediator.

### **The Purpose of the Church**

Michael J. Vlach asserts that the church is an important stage in the kingdom program. It is part of God’s plan to exercise his sovereignty over every aspect of creation.

The concept of the kingdom of God can be seen in many major themes in Scripture, such as covenants, law, salvation, and people of God. The church is in the category of the people of God (544). Jason E. Vickers says that the church is established by the Spirit as the primary means of witness to the kingdom of God here and now. The church is not to be equated with the kingdom of God. The church bears witness to what the kingdom of God will be like when it comes in fullness. However, just like the kingdom of God is an eschatological reality whose complete fulfillment yet lies in the future, so is the church (39-40).

Although the church is not the kingdom, it relates to the kingdom program in several ways:

1. The church consists of people who have consciously accepted Jesus as their God and Messiah.
2. All believers are adopted as “sons of the kingdom” (John 1:12-13). The kingdom belongs to them, and they are the members of the kingdom. The people of God have been moved from the power of darkness to the kingdom of Jesus (Col. 1:13).
3. The congregation is called to exhibit righteousness aligning with the values of the kingdom of God.
4. The church proclaims the message of the kingdom that qualifies people to enter the kingdom of God.
5. The church’s future hope and reward are in the future. Every believer can endure suffering and persecution because vindication in the kingdom has come. (Vlach 544)

DeYoung and Gilbert state that the church acts as a sort of embassy for the government of the king. Hence, just like the embassy of a nation is to be a showcase of the life of the nation to the surrounding people, the church is meant to manifest the life of the kingdom of God to the people around (142). The church is God's people living the values of the kingdom. It is not a mere religious activity of converting people to Christianity. Evangelism is not the only thing that really counts for Christians, as all acts of kindness are praiseworthy only if they result in conversion (22). On the other hand, the mission of the church is not about generous justice (16).

The mission of the church is a specific set of things that Jesus asked his church to accomplish. It does not mean that everything people do in obedience to Christ should be understood as part of the church's mission. Rather, they define the mission of the church in the Great Commission as follows:

to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father. (DeYoung and Gilbert 67)

Here the mission is very specific: making disciples and teaching people to obey Christ's command is a non-negotiable part of the mission (68). However, although the church is a divine creation of God, the membership of the church is made up of fallible humans. The ministry of the church is to equip the congregation to grow toward spiritual maturity while fighting their old natures (Newton 55).

When people talk about churches and ministries, they tend to always include a critique of the weaknesses or even flaws of the leaders, the system, the culture, and the

list goes on. From such a perspective, the church seems to be failing the call to embody the presence of the kingdom of God. To speak about the presence of God in the church, Newbigin offers two insights. First, the church as the bearer of the presence of the kingdom through history does not do that as the community of the righteous in a sinful world (*Open Secret* 56).

Second, the church bears the presence of the Lord through the power of the cross, not through any power or goodness of its own. The cross is the place that shows how the reign of God is manifested in what seems to be its defeat; the power of God, in weakness; and the wisdom of God, in foolishness. The mission of the cross is preached to all nations, yet it is secret in that it is manifest only to the eyes of faith (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 63). The church might be a sinful, weak, divided, and unsuccessful community, yet God has called and chosen this company of people as his gift on behalf of all people. However, that is not an excuse to stay in the same state. On the contrary, the church—no matter how sinful, weak, divided, and unsuccessful—needs to be open to experience first the change that God intends to create in this world.

Mission changes not only the world but also the church. The story of Peter and Cornelius is significant to show, not only the conversion of Cornelius but also the conversion of Peter and of the church. At the beginning of the story, Peter firmly rejects what he thinks to be an assault on his fidelity to the law. Despite these objections, he is persuaded to go with Cornelius and share the story of the gospel. It ends with an unimaginable scene for Peter when the Holy Spirit falls on Cornelius and his household as they are speaking in tongues. They are all then converted, and Peter baptized Cornelius together with the household. Peter then defends his action before the church and gives

testimony that brings about change in the church. Mission is not just church extension. It is the action of the Holy Spirit, who in his sovereign freedom convicts the world (John 16:18-11) and leads the church toward the fullness of the truth that it has not yet grasped (John 16:12-15) (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 67).

Mission is not essentially an action by which the church puts forth its own power and wisdom to conquer the world around it; rather, it is an action of God, putting forth the power of his Spirit to bring the universal work of Christ for the salvation of the world nearer to its completion (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 64, 66). The church's witness is secondary, insofar as it follows obediently where the Spirit leads. The mission of the church is not conducted, nor is its success measured according to the worldly business mindset. It is not as though the church opened its gates to admit a new person into its company, and then closed them again, remaining unchanged except for the addition of a name to its roll of members. The real triumphs of the gospel have not been won when the church is strong in a worldly sense; they have been won when the church is faithful amid weakness, contempt, and rejection (72).

Frank Viola asserts that God's mission is about God's eternal purpose, which is for God, contrary to the modern Gospel which emphasizes more about human needs for salvation. He argues that God did not create humans in need of salvation. God's purpose precedes the fall in Genesis 1 and 2. Viola proposes that God's eternal purpose is intimately wrapped up with the church. The church matters so much to God, and it should never be separated from the Christian life (86-87).

The church then should understand salvation not merely as an afterlife matter as if the main work of the church is bound to be seen in terms of saving souls for the future.



Wright in his book *Surprised by Hope* suggests that the main work of the church is here and now, based on the interpretation of the New Testament that sees God's promised new heavens and earth and the promised resurrection to share in that new and gloriously embodied reality. Salvation, then, is not about "going to heaven" after death, but "being raised to life in God's new heaven and earth" (197-98). Wright continues to argue that God did not mean to rescue Israel from the Gentiles, and neither will he rescue humans from creation. Conversely, as he saved Israel to be a light to the Gentiles, so did he save humans to be his rescuing stewards over creation (202).

Steven Seamands emphasizes that although the church is an instrument of God's mission, God's mission precedes, defines, and sustains the church in mission. Mission is first an attribute of the triune God before it is an activity of the church. The Father is the first missionary who creates the world and sends the Son for our salvation. The Son is the second missionary who redeems humanity and all creation. The Holy Spirit is the third missionary who creates and empowers the church. Finally, the church is the fourth missionary that is sent to go to the world. In other words, the church exists for the mission of the triune God, and not otherwise. Hence, mission is not a human activity initiated by the church out of obligation to the Great Commission or even out of gratitude for God's love. Rather, it is God's own mission that invites the church to participate in it (160-61).

The mission of Jesus is the focal point of the church's mission. However, his mission was not only to proclaim the kingdom of God but also to embody the presence of the kingdom of God in his own person (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 35), and so is the mission of the people of God in the church. Mission is not just something that the church does, but

it is something that is done by the Spirit. The Spirit is he who always goes before the church, who is himself the witness that changes both the world and the church (51).

Seamands asserts the same principle by saying that the church's ministry should be directed primarily to the Father for the sake of the church and the world, not primarily to the church and the world for the sake of the Father (25). Vickers suggests that the church exists primarily to worship the Holy Trinity and to bear witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in word and deed (63). When leaders consider any actions of the church, they should ask whether these things will help the church more faithfully to worship the Holy Trinity and more effectively bear witness to Jesus. This is the role of the church as part of God's kingdom program.

### **Vision and Values in Leadership**

People often express a need for strong leadership. However, when people ask for leadership in any particular situation, it is not always clear exactly what they want, except that they want to change for the greater good. To understand how change could happen, one must begin with an understanding of things that they want to see changed and what is the imagined change. This section will explore the topic of vision and values in leadership. Since vision and values are a vast topic, a selected review of relevant literature in this section will provide an understanding of the definition, impact, and development of vision and values in leadership.

#### **The Definition of Vision**

Countless definitions of vision are found in the leadership context. This section divides them into two categories, based on secular leadership theory and Christian leadership theory.

*Secular Leadership Theory*

Vision was not a commonly used term until the book “Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge” by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus was first published in 1985. They defined vision as:

a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This image, which we call a vision, may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement. The critical point is that a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists. (82)

Peter G. Northouse gave a similar definition of vision as a mental model of an ideal future state by offering a picture of what could be. It implies change and can challenge people to reach a higher standard of excellence. Vision guides people by providing meaning and purpose (188). John P. Kotter defines a vision as a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future (48).

James C. Collins and Jerry I Porras describe vision through several kinds of images like outstanding achievement, held values that bond people together, audacious goals that galvanize people, and the underlying reasons for an organization’s existence, something that reaches inside people and pulls out the best efforts, and the dreams of what they want to be (217-18). Collins and Porras’ definition of vision also includes core ideology and an envisioned future. Core ideology consists of two sub-components, core values, and core purpose. Julie Straw et al. explain a vision as something that is uniquely

human and uplifting in nature. The uplifting nature can be seen as a vision that can help organizations stand out from competitors, provide purpose, and drive the creation of goals (31-32).

From these secular definitions, four common elements can be seen. First, vision is always future-oriented. Second, vision always includes the change from one point to another point that is better than the current one. Third, vision is related to purpose and meaning. Fourth, vision inspires and uplifts people to be better.

#### *Christian Leadership Theory*

Andy Stanley, the senior pastor of North Point Community Church, defines visions as dissatisfaction that matures into a clear picture of what could be with a moral element to it. Vision is “a clear mental picture of what could be, fueled by the conviction that it should be.” Furthermore, a vision requires someone who has the courage to act on the preferred future (*Visioneering* 14). Stanley’s definition adds to previous definitions by including the moral aspect and courage.

Bill Hybels, the former pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, gives another distinctive definition of vision as “a picture of future that produces passion” (32). Hybels’s definition includes the energy and passion that evokes deep in one’s heart that must be experienced to be fully understood. George Barna explains vision as “a clear mental image of a preferable future, imparted by God to His chosen servants, based upon an accurate understanding of God, self, and circumstances” (*The Power of Vision* 28). Barna’s definition adds another typical aspect of a religious leader as he defines vision as a relationship between God and “His chosen servants.”

George W. Bullard, Jr., puts a fairly similar definition:

Vision is a movement of God that is memorable rather than a statement of humankind that is memorized. Vision is about God's Holy Spirit moving among us and touching us with inspiration, opening a door for us to walk through, or showing us something that helps us say, "I see it!" It is sensing and feeling the movement of God's Holy Spirit that allows us to see and focus on God's future for us with our full heart, soul, mind, and strength. (40)

Bullard's definition is more distinctive because the initiator of the vision is God's Holy Spirit. It is God's movement that makes a memorable impact. Will Mancini argues that "the first step in ascertaining a unique vision is to discover your Kingdom Concept" (84). Mancini explains that to find the Kingdom Concept, one needs to look at the intersection of three circles, which are local predicament (the local needs), collective potential (the local resources and capabilities), and apostolic esprit (the leadership passion) (85).

The aforementioned definitions from the Christian perspective show three characteristics. First, vision comes from God. Second, vision always involves humans as God's chosen servants. Third, vision stirs conviction and passion to have the courage to work for the desired future. These Christian characteristics are unique to the church leadership field, yet they are still related to the definitions from the secular field perspective. Chris Messerer argues that because many scholars in the Christian leadership field assume that supernatural vision and organizational vision are identical, three critical distinctions about the supernatural one can be made. First, God can provide a supernatural vision to a person in a dream and or direct communication. Second, the

vision does not change due to circumstances from the human side. Third, supernatural vision is initiated by God and not by humans due to its unchanging nature (105).

Underlining the difference between vision and mission is important. Both terms are usually used together in many contexts; however, they have different meanings. Samuel Cueva describes five differences. First, vision involves a conviction regarding a God-given idea, whereas mission is oriented to putting that idea and conviction into practice. With a vision, leaders look toward the future; with mission, they look at the present. Second, a vision inspires and explains a conviction regarding an idea, while mission is about dedication to implementing a vision. Third, vision involves a mental picture of what leaders want to accomplish in the future, while mission is the present state of what they do and what they live for. Fourth, a vision is described in such a way that it inspires something that lies ahead in the future, while mission describes what is to be done, who must do it, and how one should do it. Fifth, vision helps leaders to find out where they want to go, while mission helps them to understand what they are called to do. (143)

### **The Impact of Vision**

Churches have sought to answer the struggle of revitalization. Generally, the attempts at revitalization can be done through two approaches. First is the attractional model, which focuses on methodology and numerical growth. The second is the incarnational model, which focuses on participation in God's mission in the world (Jun 74-75). While the first one is too inwardly focused, the latter is more aligned with God's kingdom vision. Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger explain the challenges of many churches that have become so cluttered that people have a difficult time encountering the simple and powerful message of Christ. Many churches become burdened with

overabundant activity and then are busy doing church instead of being the church (27). In many cases, success at church is measured by how well a particular program goes. Parts are evaluated but never the whole. Many churches have never looked at each weekly program in light of a simple discipleship process. They have no process. They have no clear beginning and no clear end, only a bunch of programs. This is happening due to the absence of a clear vision and values that guide the ministry.

Without a clear vision, church leaders are not sure who they are. They try to blend multiple church models into one, resulting in a collision of ministry philosophies. Rainer and Geiger call it ministry schizophrenia (29). Furthermore, when there is no clarity and focus, the ministry naturally drifts toward complexity, and it, in turn, dilutes the potential for impact (107). Rainer and Geiger then suggest the vision of having a Simple Church as follows:

Imagine a church where you, as a leader, can articulate clearly how someone moves from being a new Christian to become a mature follower of Christ. Imagine that your church is no longer just busy but is alive with ministries and activities that make a difference. Such is the simple church revolution. (35)

The four main things to do, to achieve the vision of being a Simple Church, are clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. First, clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people. Before the process can be clear to the people in the church, it must first be clear to the leaders. A lack of clarity ultimately leads to confusion and complexity due to a lack of coherent direction (Rainer and Geiger 116). Second, movement is the sequential steps in the process that cause people to move to

greater areas of commitment. Movement is about flow. Here assimilation effectiveness is more important than programmatic effectiveness (80-81). Third, alignment is the arrangement of all ministries and staff around the same simple process. Alignment ensures the entire church body is moving in the same direction and the same manner. In a church that lacks alignment, everyone is competing for the same space, resources, volunteers, and time on the calendar. All churches naturally drift away from alignment. Without alignment, complexity is certain (82-83). Fourth, focus is the commitment to abandon everything that falls outside of the simple ministry process. Focus is the element that gives power and energy to clarity, movement, and alignment, yet it is the most difficult element to implement. In many churches, the original tools for life change have created too much clutter. Instead of uniting, they divide focus. The programs have become ends in themselves (84-86).

George Barna, in his book “The Power of Vision,” describes 12 benefits of having a clear vision from God in ministry. They are Big Dreams, Continuity, Direction and Purpose, Increased Interest and Commitment, Acceptable Change, Filter for Opportunities, Openness, Encouragement, Confidence, Loyalty, Efficiency, and Productivity (ch.8. Your Ministry Will Benefit). Many Christian and secular experts have similar ideas with slightly different wording.

### *Big Dreams*

Dreaming big can provide great power as such vision implies a long-term approach to ministry. The combination of the dream and long-term approach will help people become more excited about the grand possibilities instead of being threatened by the magnitude of the task (Barna, Benefit 1). The right vision also provides meaning in



the lives of people and gives them a sense of purpose. When they know that they are part of a godly cause, something bigger than themselves will stir passion and energy inside them (Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry* 110).

Bob R. Agee stated that a growing institution is usually marked by an atmosphere that shows that something significant is happening. A Christian institution can find such a flow of spiritual dynamics from three very important sources: a sense of divine compulsion, a burning conviction about the significance of the work and mission of an organization, and a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm about the mission, the people, and the place (97). A meaningful vision responds to these sources. A vision for the future of the institution provides a sense of direction and a compelling dream (99).

#### *Continuity*

Without vision, many churches struggle with a stutter effect. The symptoms are lacking a long-term, significant vision ordained by God, and the temptation to create new goals to satisfy the protesters in the church, which has little sense of accomplishment due to insufficient ties to a larger theme that runs through all the ministry endeavors. When there is vision, the past becomes part of the whole building instead of being ignored. The vision uses the fruit of past efforts rather than being paralyzed by experience (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8 Benefit 2).

#### *Direction and Purpose*

A leader with vision will be able to identify the destination and articulate a clear reason for a desired goal (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8. Benefit 3). This in turn will stir people to action because a vision provides a map that gives direction, so followers know when they are on track and when they have slipped off course. People often feel a

sense of certainty and calmness in knowing they are on the right course, and a vision provides this assurance. People are also comforted to know they have a map to direct them toward their short- and long-term goals (Northouse 192). Without a clear vision, the rest of the leadership skills and effort will not matter. without any direction or guidelines, people will lose their way, and the organization will suffer immeasurably. Guidelines are boundaries that channel energy in a certain direction. Blanchard compares guiding vision with a river, in which banks are taken away. It would not be a river anymore, it would be a large puddle, devoid of momentum and direction. What keeps the river flowing are its banks (74).

#### *Increased Interest and Commitment*

A shared vision helps people know what needs to be done and fosters their willingness to take risks. Even when leaders do not always know the answer to how to do something, people who get the vision are committed anyway. What moves them is not the guarantee of success but the clarity of godly vision that turns it into an exciting adventure into the world of the unknown (Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* 111). A leader needs to have a godly ambition that is born out of a love for God and the lost; otherwise, leaders will easily lose focus or give up (Chen 252). With a clear vision, people will begin to formulate their own ministry environment by anticipating changes and focusing on building more effective circumstances instead of being victims of them. They will focus on creating the desired future instead of waiting for the imagined scenario to happen. They will have a renewed interest and commitment to pursue specific outcomes in ministry (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8, Benefit 4).

### *Acceptable Change*

Since change is an inseparable part of living a vision, people are expected to be uncomfortable. However, when a leader details his vision for the people, the level of discomfort and uneasiness can be dissipated quickly. Barna asserts that “our distaste for change is usually emotional rather than intellectual.” Thus, leaders and the people need to ensure that the vision is ordained by God. The vision of God will bring calmness and unity to his people, dissolving fears and doubts in the process (*The Power of Vision* ch.8. Benefit 5). People are not inherently against change. Most will embrace initiatives provided the change has a positive meaning for them. Hence, the way to make an effective long-term change is to visualize what leaders want to accomplish, and then cultivate the vision until it comes true (Robbins and Finley 11).

### *Filter for Opportunities and Openness.*

The challenge of a church is the tendency to be all things to all people and to handle any condition. This will hinder the church from becoming effective and excellent in ministry. However, with a clear vision, the church will have a filter that allows people to say no to a variety of ministry opportunities no matter how good they seem (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8. Benefit 6). On the other hand, an openness to new approaches, creative thoughts, and interesting perspectives will keep the vision fresh (ch.8. Benefit 7).

### *Encouragement and Confidence*

Vision functions as a cohesive factor as it holds the team together. Different people will become one team working passionately toward the same vision because they can contribute in a unique way to accomplish the vision. People will gain a sense of

needing each other if anything significant takes place (Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry*, ch.1. A Vision Invites Unity). Vision and passion work hand in hand. A compelling vision will fuel passion. When the church has a clear vision, it will help people to perform better than average, resulting in greater endurance and more durability against burning out as they will feel good about the achievement (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8. Benefit 9). Frank Damazio emphasizes the impact of vision which gives a clear sense of direction that keeps one going, even when he cannot see everything, and the fog surrounds him. Vision makes people stay the course (ch.3. Necessity of a Clear Vision).

#### *Loyalty*

When a vision is being cast effectively, it will increase people's ownership of the vision. This in turn will create a commitment to the vision (Hybels 47). Vision-led churches will have people with a heightened sense of loyalty when the people share a common vision. They are more likely to feel as truly part of the church. This can also be seen in the area of recruitment. "A vision signals to all who desire to be a part of the ministry precisely where that ministry is going. It is a portrait of the ministry's future." (Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry* ch.1. Vision Invites Unity).

#### *Efficiency*

Vision steers the decision-making for leaders in the present to prepare for the future that has not happened yet. It keeps them from implementing strategic missteps and failures (Hyatt 48). A clear vision provides a direction for execution, as well as a standard to judge performance. Otherwise, unimportant projects and irrelevant outcomes will waste valuable resources including money, time, and talent (49-50). A clear vision will

bring a sense of urgency and hold procrastination at bay. It will also bring out the energy needed to achieve the requirement efficiently (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8. Benefit 11).

### *Productivity*

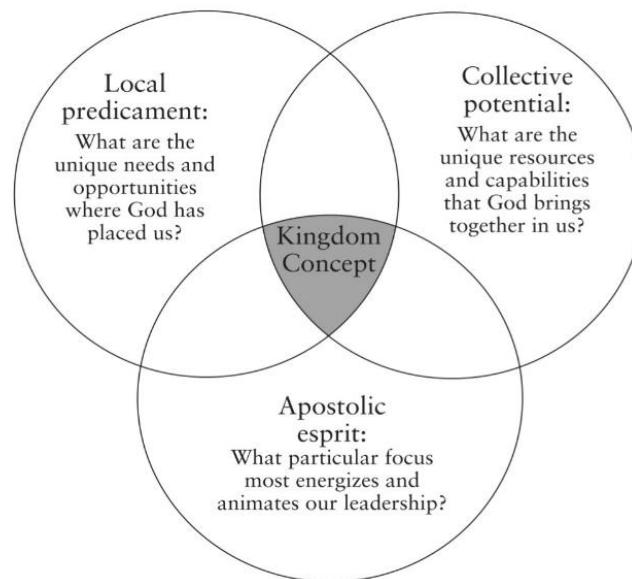
Northouse asserted that a competent leader will have a compelling vision that challenges people to work toward a higher standard of excellence. Since a vision provides a picture of a future that is better than the current condition, is grounded in values, and advocates change toward a new set of ideals, it also challenges people to commit themselves to a greater common good (196). A heightened level of productivity is the direct consequence of a clear vision implementation as people work in harmony and pursue the same outcomes (Barna, *The Power of Vision* ch.8. Benefit 12).

### **The Development of Vision**

Mancini emphasizes the necessity of finding one's Kingdom Concept to be able to define one's vision clearly. The Kingdom Concept differentiates one church from every other church. The best way to find the Kingdom Concept is by looking at the intersection of the three circles that represent aspects of God's given uniqueness to each church (85). The first circle is called "Local Predicament" which focuses on the unique needs and opportunities of the local community (86). Mancini provides a list of guiding questions to find the answer (Appendix A).

The second circle is called "Collective Potential," which looks at the unique resources of a multifaceted community, including "spiritual gifts, training, education, shared experiences, financial capabilities, motivated abilities, common possessions, a particular anointing of the Holy Spirit, and so on" (Mancini 89). The list of guiding

questions to discover the collective potential is included in Appendix B. Circle three is called “Apostolic Esprit,” which Mancini describes as “the hot place in a man’s consciousness, the group of ideas to which and from which he works, the habitual center of his personal energy” (94). In other words, it is the leader’s emotional energy that usually includes a sense of deep conviction. Apostolic esprit lives in and through the leadership community (95).



**Figure 2.1. Discover your kingdom concept.**

Rainer and Geiger suggest starting by building clarity in the ministry process. If leaders want the process to be clear, they “must define it, illustrate it, discuss it, and measure it.” (116). Church leaders must define more than the purpose (the what); they must also define the process (the how). The process is more important than the purpose of a company because it is the process that makes everything work. People within a church must know the process because they are integral to fulfilling it. A clearly defined process encourages people to progress through it because they know the expectations (119).

There are three concepts to be considered in defining a ministry process:

1. Determine what kind of disciple that leaders wish to produce in the church. What do we want the people to be? The list needs to be as specific as possible.
2. Describe the purpose as a process or sequential order.
3. Decide how the weekly program is part of the process. (119-120)

After the defining, comes the illustrating process. Vision and blueprints are always visual; thus, illustrating the process is vital to help people understand. The visual illustration may be a diagram or metaphor that “gives people a mental picture”. There are three components in the visual illustration. First, it must be reflective of the process. Be it three or four steps, it should express the reality of the process. Second, it should show progression since it is about moving people toward greater commitment. Third, it should help simplify. If there are too many symbols or hidden meanings, it is too complicated (Rainer and Geiger 125). The last step is measuring. Measuring helps people to gain clarity and to take the ministry process seriously. As the adage goes: what gets evaluated, gets done (126). To be able to measure effectively requires two critical considerations. First, view the numbers horizontally and not vertically. It means we are not measuring the total number of people in a particular program, but a certain percentage of people who move across the chart. Second, measure attendance at each level in your process to be able to know how many people are plugged in at each stage. This will give the key knowledge for planning, praying, and making decisions (128).

The old scorecard of churches that valued external measures tended to count the number of attendees, the money being used, and the size of the building being used for

the church's purpose. It is commonly known as the three Bs: bodies, budget, and buildings (Stetzer and Rainer, ch.2 Change the Scorecard). Reggie McNeal states that such measurement will keep the church-absorbed culture. The church will continue to be inward-focused, program-driven, and church-based in its thinking and leadership. Such culture assumes that the church is winning if people are gathering around and in the church. In fact, the church is keeping people from their true destination, which is "the abundant life that is lived out with loved ones, friends, acquaintances in the marketplace, in the home, in the neighborhood, and in the world" (16).

The gold standard metrics for how the church is progressing are new believers, membership, and attendance at primary gathering times. However, Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, in their survey of more than seven thousand Protestant pastors, emphasize the need for expected accountability as a normative part of spiritual development (Ch.2 Change the Scorecard). They suggested a new scoreboard for churches that measures, not only the number of conversions but also other key aspects like the process that facilitates the disciple's life. The tangible form is the number of leaders being produced in a church. Thus, the church should measure attendance at worship, Bible study, leadership training, or any main program that reflects the process of producing a leader (Ch.2 Change the Scorecard).

### **The Role of Leadership**

The first step in creating a vision is to define the problem or what is lacking in an organization. True value comes from helping others solve problems important to them, not from forcing unrelated ideas on people or merely looking at those who agree with leaders' current thoughts. A unanimously approved vision that does not connect to the



heart and soul of the people and the current situation will not lead to revitalization (Weems 67). Visions become valuable because they create a picture of the future that is different, yet far better than what currently exists (Graves and Ihlenfeldt 26). Leading with vision is about “charting new directions to solve existing problems with the resources at hand, and leading others by showing them the excitement of change that is possible” (34). Thus, changing the perception of people is important. This can be done by discerning the current problem and helping people to see and agree that it needs to be changed. As a leader can successfully deliver the process of change, over time the cumulative effect will lead to new directions, to the imagined visions.

Visioning does not substitute for strategic and tactical plans, rather it is a process that comes before the plans. The recommendation is to create a manageably-sized group of accountable leaders and creative people to develop an inclusive plan to involve and guide a congregation through a visioning process (Weems 67-68). When groups start engaging in visioning, emotions will come into play and unleash tensions. They should then understand that this is a predictable process to let the “buy-in” and commitment to making changes take place (Scott, Jaffe, and Tobe 12). The culture of the church follows the culture of leadership. The leaders’ understanding and ownership overflow to everyone. Thus, for a clear vision to become a part of the church culture, it should start with the leadership culture. The ministry process needs to be discussed consistently. The evaluation should be done through the ministry process perspective. The conversations should be guided back to the ministry blueprint (Weems 133).

Leaders who manifest visions should manage their internal states since the visioning process among leaders tends to deal with challenging situations involving

uncertainty and complexity. In addition, the strategies and skills related to leadership are also purely physiological aspects. The internal physiological state stimulates and organizes other neurological activities. In other words, the manifestation of all leadership abilities comes through the body or physiology of the leaders in some way, like the words, voice tone, facial expression, body posture, hand movement, etc. (Dilts 32). The implication is that a tough situation will force leaders to draw more fully on their inner resources. Managing one's internal state involves the capacity to select and maintain the types of internal states that will promote effective leadership performance (33).

### **The Roles of Values in Leadership**

#### **The Definition of Values**

James Davison Hunter states that “to understand how to change the world, one must begin with an understanding of what is to be changed. In short, everything hinges on how we understand the nature of culture.” He argues that the essence of culture is found in the hearts and minds of individuals, which are called “values.” He then defined values as “moral preferences; inclinations toward or conscious attachment to what is good and right and true.” In other words, values guide every individual's actual decisions in life (17). This aligns with George Barna's definition of culture: “The accumulation of behaviors and beliefs that characterize a group of people. It is comprised of the attitudes, symbols, language, rewards, expectations, customs, and values that define the experience and context of those people.” (*Revolution* 108). In other words, values are the core element to building a culture that in turn can change the world.

Cynthia D. Scott, Dennis T. Jaffe, and Glenn R. Tobe define values as “the principles, the standards, the actions that people in an organization represent, which they

consider inherently worthwhile and of the utmost importance” (4). Values are what will govern how someone behaves in the organization. Values are the nonnegotiable principles that define the character of a leader. Values are important because they drive the behavior of people who work on the purpose and picture of the future (Blanchard and Stoner 67). Lovett H. Weems, Jr., describes values as “the commitments of any organization that shape the way the organization does its work” and “in some ways, the values represent the guidelines and boundaries within which the organization will function to accomplish the mission” (58).

Mancini called values as the mission nonnegotiable, things that leaders are ready and willing to die for. He defines it as “the shared convictions that guide the actions and reveal the strength of the church.” Values are filters for decision-making and springboards for daily action, the reminder of what is most important to the church (129). Similarly, Ivancevich defines values as “guidelines and beliefs that a person uses when confronted with a situation in which a choice must be made” (418). Hence, values are significant because leaders will always find value conflicts in life. When these conflicts arise, people need to know the values on which they should focus. Without guidelines, people create their own order of priority, and that may lead away from fulfilling the desired organizational purpose and picture of the future (Blanchard, *Lead Like Jesus*, ch.19. Your Values).

Aubrey Malphurs defines core values as “the constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that go deep and really, truly empower and guide the ministry” (*Advanced Strategic Planning* 128). Furthermore, he offered the distinctions to understand core values. First, values are timeless functions, not timely forms. He gave an example of

“community” as a timeless function, while “small group gathering” as a timely form. Thus, the small group is not a value. Second, values are ends not means to ends. Again, he used “small group gathering” as an example of a means to an end, while “community” is the end, thus making it the value. Third, values explain why people do what they do. Leaders need to determine whether it is what we are doing or the reason for what we are doing. The latter should be the value (131).

### **The Impact of Values**

Values are the foundation for vision as they provide people with a sense of common direction and guidelines for day-to-day behavior. Shared vision, mission, and values bring people together and are more likely to take responsibility as these are the expression of commonalities of what people are committed to. People with a shared vision and values are more likely to challenge the bounds of the convention as they do not assume that they are powerless (Scott, Jaffe, and Tobe 19-20). Northouse in *Introduction to Leadership* asserts that since visions are grounded in values, they advocate a positive change and movement toward some new set of ideals. He gave an example of a vision that emphasizes that everyone is important, then the expressed value should be human dignity (189). Values are energizing, motivating, and inspiring. They can spur people on to great achievements.

Values replace rules. When people understand the core values held by the organization, they are not guided by rules anymore in making decisions. As long as the decision fits the values, then people will know that it is right (24). When the values are clearly defined, numerous benefits ensue. First, they define good decision-making that releases leaders on the front line of ministry. Second, they demonstrate a God-honoring

unity. Third, they attract more staff, leaders, and members who share the same values. Fourth, they free the church organization to not do a lot of things that other churches may do. Fifth, they increase commitment because people know clearly what they stand for. Sixth, they will enhance leadership credibility because everyone knows what is most important to the church as a whole. Lastly, they navigate change more easily because people are emotionally connected to the values that never change (130).

### The Development of Values

In developing the values of the church, Mancini suggests six inputs from his experience in guiding churches to develop the core values in ministry. The diagram of values discovery can be seen in Figure 2.2 (130).



**Figure 2.2 Values discovery**

It begins with a survey of the leaders to catch unfiltered and unbiased input. Then it continues with the hall of fame kind of story that raises the morale of the church. The third step is a list of the most common values from many churches to stimulate thoughts in the group after gaining the initial input. The fourth component is the lead navigator's perspective in picking up one or two defining values after a few meetings. The fifth step is the dynamic collaboration of the vision path team which involves training, prayer, and discussion. The last step is looking at the previous statements of vision the leaders have used in the past (131).

Mancini also provides some guiding principles. The first is a proactive, not reactive principle. Reactive value is something like "excellence." but instead of saying "We are not like the other dying church", leaders should tell what makes them excellent. The second is guarding the doctrine and freeing the values. As important as doctrinal heritage, it is not necessarily suitable to be repeated as the values. Leaders need to express the reason they do ministry in addition to the doctrine that they believe. The third is letting the values reveal the strength of and instill God-honoring confidence in the people. The fourth is embracing and exploiting the uniqueness of the church personality (132).

In identifying the core values of the organization, Collins and Porras suggest the necessity to push with relentless self-honesty for core values. Leaders should not articulate more than five or six to be able to get to the essentials. Most companies that have stated values either have too many values or do not have rank-ordered values. To be able to impact behavior, Blanchard suggests emphasizing no more than three or four values because people cannot focus on more than those (ch.19. Your Values).

Leaders should not confuse core values, which do not change, with operating practices, business strategies, and cultural norms which should be open to change. These values must stand the test of time. After drafting a preliminary list of the core values, ask about each one: “If the circumstances changed and penalized us for holding this core value, would we still keep it?” If we cannot honestly answer yes, then it’s not core and should be dropped (Collins and Porras, ch.11. Core Values).

Collins and Porras also recommend building a team consisting of five to seven people with the highest level of credibility and competence among their peers to articulate the core values as they are becoming the exemplars of the core values themselves. They called the team “the company’s genetic code” (ch.11. Core Values). The strategic leadership team must have been part of the church for a long time rather than being new to the church, even for pastors (Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* 136). Those involved in articulating the core values should wrestle with such questions as follows:

1. The core values we hold to be so fundamental that we would keep them regardless of whether they are rewarded or not.
2. Our description to our children and/or other loved ones of the core values we stand for, that we hope they will also stand for when they become working adults.
3. If money is not an issue at all, would we continue to live according to these core values?
4. Will the core values be equally valid for us 100 years from now as they are today?

5. Would we want to hold these core values, even if at some point one or more of them became a competitive disadvantage?
6. If you were to start a new organization tomorrow in a different line of work, what core values would you build into the new organization regardless of its industry?

The last three questions make the crucial distinction between enduring core values that should not change and practices and strategies that should be changing all the time. Core purpose, the second component of core ideology, is the organization's fundamental reason for being. An effective purpose reflects the importance people attach to the work as it taps idealistic motivations rather than just describing the organization's output or target customers. It is the soul of the organization. Purpose should not be confused with specific goals or strategies. Purpose should last at least one hundred years, while goals and strategies should change many times in the same period. Collins and Porras use an interesting phrase to describe the difference between them:

Whereas you might achieve a goal or complete a strategy, you cannot fulfill a purpose; it is like a guiding star on the horizon—forever pursued, but never reached. Yet while purpose itself does not change; it does inspire change. The very fact that purpose can never be fully realized means that an organization can never stop stimulating change and progress to live more fully to its purpose. (ch.11, Core Values).

Organizational values are always the values of the current company elite, which in the church are the top leaders: the pastors, elders, deacons, etc. Since culture is shaped by values, leaders thus are the culture carriers. For values to shape the organizational culture,



Buchanan and Huczynski suggest: “A fairly stable collection of people need to have shared a significant history, involving problems, which allows a social learning process to take place” (112). They cited the research of Chris Grey’s experience with one of his MBA students who was a senior manager in a company that sent his staff to join a multi-million-pound culture training initiative. The results were surprising, as the staff not only did not believe in these values, but three-quarters of them claimed never to have even heard of these values (qtd. in Buchanan and Huczynski 113). To develop a working values-shaping culture, the leaders of any organization, including the church, must treat the values, not as sentences framed on the walls or organizational websites, but as embraced personal values.

### **Research Design Literature**

This will be an intervention study as the project was designed to impart pastoral leadership that implements change (Sensing 63). It includes a leadership development workshop to prepare the prospective leaders of EACC as ministry board members to be able to serve with a clear vision and values. The project is a mixed-methods research between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. Research problems suited for mixed methods are those in which one data source may be insufficient (Creswell and Clark, ch.1 The Nature). Thus, it will involve “collecting and integrating quantitative and qualitative data in a project and therefore may result in a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (Leavy 164), which in the context of this project is to measure the effectiveness of the leadership development workshop in guiding the participants about leading with a clear vision and values.

The instrumentation for collecting data used a survey for pre-and post-assessment as the quantitative method to measure the attitudes, opinions, or achievements in natural

settings unbiasedly (Wiersma and Jurs 155). For the qualitative approach, the instrumentation used interviews and focus groups. A focus group identified aspects of the leadership development event that were most and least helpful in facilitating serving with a clear vision and values. A focus group was chosen because “the synergy of the group will often provide richer data than if each person in the group had been interviewed separately” (Sensing 120).

### **Summary of Literature**

The first section explores the biblical foundation for visionary leadership. Throughout the major periods in the Old Testament and New Testament, God had chosen leaders with a clear vision for them to lead. God chose Moses with a vision to bring Israel to the Promised Land only after they underwent a national transformation on God’s mountain and became God’s special emissaries to the world. In the era of judges, leadership exercised by the judges brought the exclusive worship and service of Yahweh, and hence the creation of internal conditions that encouraged the life quality as God intended it to be. Samson did not demonstrate any value as a leader who cared about God’s purpose and vision for the Israelites. At the end of Samson’s life and his story, things were no better than they were before.

In the kingdom period, the major function of a king was to be an example of a humble servant of Yahweh leading the people to keep the law. Saul’s failure and David’s success as kings were closely tied to the behavior that determined the fate of their people. In the post-exilic period, Nehemiah had a vision to lead the remnant, the returned exiles, to serve God by the prescriptions of the Torah. Finally, in the New Testament, Jesus announced the coming of the kingdom of God as the Messiah, the one through whom

God would at least deal with exile and sin and bring the long-awaited redemption. His vision of the kingdom of God was to be equated with a covenantal community where his goods of salvation were available and received by people.

The second section explores the themes of the kingdom of God and the church as the theological foundations for visionary and values-based leadership. The Bible is covered with God's purpose of blessings for all nations. The concern is not about escaping the redeemed soul from history and merely waiting for heaven, rather it is about the action of God bringing history to its desired end. The Old Testament is full of visions of restored humanity living in peace that are not otherworldly bliss, but of earthly prosperity, of a just government, and of a renewed nature in which the law of the jungle has been replaced by kindness (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 32). Every leadership role in the Bible stems from the purpose of bringing the kingdom of God into realization. With the kingdom vision, the law as the guiding value came along. The restoration then reached its culmination through his Son, Jesus the Messiah as the ultimate mediator.

The church is an important stage in the kingdom program. It is part of God's plan to exercise his sovereignty over every aspect of creation. The mission of Jesus is the focal point of the church's mission. However, his mission was not only to proclaim the kingdom of God but also to embody the presence of the kingdom of God in his own person (Newbigin, *Open Secret* 35), and so is the mission of the people of God in the church. The church exists primarily to worship the Holy Trinity and to bear witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in word and deed (Vickers 63).

The third section explores the topic of vision and values in leadership both in the secular and Christian fields. Visions in secular fields include the element of future-oriented

change, purpose, and meaning. In the Christian leadership field, visions include three characteristics: coming from God, involving humans as God's chosen servants, and conviction to work on it. The research shows a consensus regarding the positive impact of clear vision and values in leadership as opposed to leadership without them. Two of the main results were the existence of a clear ministry process and measuring success. This section closes with a guide to developing organizational vision and values.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter covers the research methodology that was used for this project. It contains the nature and purpose of the project, the research instruments utilized to address each of the research questions, the description of the specific ministry context related to the project, the selection of participants for the project, and ethical considerations in undertaking the exercise. The last part of the chapter describes how the data was collected and analyzed.

#### **Nature and Purpose of the Project**

The project was a four-session workshop aimed at shaping leadership based on a clear vision and values for EACC board members. It was conducted over two months. Correspondingly, each session focused on abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. A clear vision and values will help the church to be purposeful and revitalized. This project aimed to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members, from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church, who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with a clear vision and values.

#### **Research Questions**

To help the ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church learn how to serve with a clear vision and values, the research process was guided by three questions. These questions were answered through the corresponding instruments: Pre-Intervention Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Survey, Post-Intervention LDW

Survey, which were identical, Post-Intervention LDW Focus Group, and Post-Intervention Interview. All instruments were researcher developed.

**RQ #1. What were the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values before the workshop?**

The instrument used to answer this question was the Pre-Intervention LDW Survey (Appendix A). The data collected for this question provided the baseline for the self-perception of the individuals regarding Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior. The questions that focused on Knowledge were 6, 9, 13, and 15. The questions that focused on measuring Attitude were 8, 10, 12, and 14. The questions that concentrated on Behavior were 7, 11, 16, and 17.

**RQ #2. What were the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values after the workshop?**

The instrument used to answer this question was the Post-Intervention LDW Survey (Appendix C). The data collected for this question was synchronous with the Pre-Intervention LDW survey provided for the quantitative change in the self-perception of the individuals regarding Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior. The questions that focused on Knowledge were 6, 9, 13, and 15. The questions that focused on measuring Attitudes were 8, 10, 12, and 14. The questions that concentrate on Behavior were 7, 11, 16, and 17.

**RQ #3. What aspects of the leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values had the greatest impact on the observed changes in the participants?**

The instrument used to answer this question was the Post-Intervention LDW Focus Group. The data collected from the LDW Focus Group provided the individual's opinions on the Workshop. An assistant helped me facilitate each focus group. The audio was recorded on my phone, and I took field notes during the conversation. The dialogue provided an in-depth response to the course. The questions used for the LDW Focus Group are included in Appendix B.

**Ministry Context(s)**

Elyon Abdiel Christian Church is an eighty-five-year-old church at the time of conducting this project. It is located in urban Surabaya, the second-largest city in Indonesia. The surrounding area is part of the central business district. Younger families usually live farther away in the suburbs. Thus, one of the struggles of the community is gathering young families to worship and serve in the church due to their location. The ethnicity of the church is predominately Chinese Indonesian with less than 10 percent of Javanese and people from another ethnicity attending.

The church tends to value seniority, preserving self-image, and the shame-guilt culture. The church has a vision and mission statement. However, they were not clearly defined, nor did they have any value as guidance in living out the vision. As a result, the church had no clear ministry process, no aligned ministry, no clarity in measuring success, and no clear qualitative qualification nor preparation for leaders. The immediate impacts that could be seen were an overabundance of activities, repeated programs

without clear goals and evaluation systems, and the culture of preserving traditions. The church had no leadership training program either. The board members were selected based on their church membership status and their active experiences in serving in any area of the ministry.

## **Participants**

### **Criteria for Selection**

The participants selected and invited for this LDW were from EACC. The sampling of participants met two criteria. First, the participants were active ministry board members or small group leaders across all church ministries. Second, they had served at least a year as a ministry board member or a small group leader. Permission for the project was approved by the senior pastor and the executive board members verbally as they did not require an official letter.

The EACC board members were recruited and selected by me. After permission was gained, I sent a message to participants inviting them to be part of the study, what the study would entail, how they met the criteria for selection, confidentiality parameters, and an Informed Consent Form to be completed.

### **Description of Participants**

The participants were active board members or small group leaders across all ministries in EACC who had served at least a year. One was from youth ministry, three were from children ministry, three were from young family ministry, one was from men ministry, one was from women ministry, and two were from the general board members. There were 7 women and 5 men in total. The age varied between 24 to 60 years old. They were all volunteers, and none of them was a staff member.



## **Ethical Considerations**

The power dynamics of my role as a pastor could have made it problematic for a board member to decline participation in the study for fear of displeasing me. I kept this in mind when inviting board members to be a part of this study. The consent form, which stated clearly that participation was voluntary, showed that EACC ministry board members could cease to participate at any time without any negative consequences. The confidentiality of their identities in the project also ensured they were free to respond honestly without any intimidation to achieve certain conclusions. In order to protect confidentiality, the study had no names or any other distinguishing characteristics of individual participants. If referencing a particular participant was needed, he/she was referred to using a pseudonym known only to me. The written record of the pseudonym was kept in the password and my fingerprint-protected phone. Raw data including transcripts of interviews and focus groups were never shared or disseminated.

Before filling out the surveys, participants were asked to re-read the Survey Informed Consent Form attached at the beginning of the Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention LDW on SurveyMonkey to give their informed consent (Appendix C). Participants were able to read and respond with, "Do you agree to the terms written on the Consent Form? By clicking "Yes, you consent that you are willing to answer the questions on this survey?" The survey was terminated at that point if they did not consent. Privacy protocols were used to assure confidentiality for both surveys, which can be found on SurveyMonkey's website. Only a person with the login information and strong password on my laptop could access the information. The Post-Intervention LDW Focus Group's confidentiality was secured by a statement in the LDW Confidentiality

Form (Appendix E) signed before the group began. The form was handed out and immediately collected. The papers were then locked in a filing cabinet in my office that only he had a key to unlock. The audio was recorded on a smartphone that is fingerprint-protected.

The dialogue and responses were kept private, with only me having access. The computer was only accessible to me. Within twelve months after the research project ended, I destroyed all electronic data. In a colloquium on Asbury's Kentucky campus, I revealed key findings from his research with Doctor of Ministry cohort colleagues and ATS faculty. I shared the research findings to improve the Intervention for future usage as part of the leadership development workshop on serving with a clear vision and values.

## **Instrumentation**

### **Surveys**

This intervention utilized two tools to gain qualitative and quantitative data. The first was a researcher-designed quantitative survey distributed before and after the intervention with seventeen questions named Leadership Development Workshop on Serving with a Clear Vision and Values Survey. The second instrument was a post-intervention focus group with six researcher-designed qualitative questions called the Leadership Development Workshop on Serving with a Clear Vision and Values Focus Group. Assent to the terms in the consent form was given before the participant could complete the survey. The second section included three demographic information questions. The third section of survey questions had twenty-four randomly mixed questions from the categories of knowledge, attitude, and behavior. The LDW utilized the four-point, forced-choice scale to provide a subjective assessment of their attitudes

toward the Leadership development workshop on Serving with a Clear Vision and Values. The same survey was used before and after the intervention to collect descriptive data on the changes in dependent variables.

### **Focus Group**

After completing the intervention, the next tool was a researcher-designed focus group entitled Leadership Development Focus Group. The focus group conversation provided group responses and synergy about the four-session Leadership Development workshop that was not possible to acquire through the LDW surveys. I was present with a trained assistant as a note-taker, taking an audio recording and typing field notes. The participants sat in a circle with the moderator to facilitate dialogue. The semi-structured group answered the questions found in Appendix B. The first question was a question every individual in the circle was invited to respond to. The questions moved from general to more specific and focused on what aspects of the LDW enhanced their understanding of serving with a clear vision and values. Before the final question, I summarized the responses of the focus group participants and asked if there were any questions. It was conducted after the four teaching sessions and helped identify the most significant part of the four teaching sessions on discipleship that contributed to EACC ministry board members' growth in their leadership according to a clear vision and values (RQ#3).

### **Expert Review**

I engaged two expert reviews on the design of the instruments used in this project. Dr. Clint Ussher, the researcher's dissertation coach, and Dr. Ellen Marmon, the director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary, reviewed each of the

instruments; revisions were made based on their feedback. Revisions included some corrections on the survey questions category; suggestions included questions regarding the vision of the church from memory and how the understanding of it shapes the life and leadership of the participants in ministry.

### **Reliability & Validity of Project Design**

The research used methodological triangulation, which used multiple methods to study a single problem or program, such as surveys and focus groups to enhance the validity and reliability of the research (Sensing 74).

A Likert scale for the LDW Survey provided respondents with a broader range to express their subjective understanding or feelings about the impact of vision and values in their ministry. Some questions were asked more than once, using different phrasing to reveal patterns of association among participants. At the beginning of the survey, the participants were asked to write down the current vision statement of the church from memory to give a clear starting point on how well they actually know the vision of the church. The use of the LDW Pre-test and LDW Post-test survey for the entire sample of participants was the best way to gather and measure quantitative data for the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behaviors regarding serving with a clear vision and values for the EACC ministry board members.

Both the pre-test and post-test were completed in the needed seven-day time frame and were easily accessible through a website link given through the WhatsApp messenger. This gave participants sufficient time to think about their responses. Respondents to the survey were encouraged to ask me questions on any item that was unclear to them. Those questions were clarified to all participants in case of a common

misunderstanding. The survey had a standardized format given through a reliable service. All completed surveys were returned on time. The entire procedure was consistent with both the pre-test and post-test.

The discussion focus group allowed participants to reflect upon, report on, and discuss the impact of vision and values in a confidential manner with other ministry board members. The framework for the focus groups was derived from the study of pertinent literature in order to give a general structure to the questions. The use of a focus group allowed for multiple perspectives on the same aspect of discipleship to obtain more thorough results. The focus group provided validity and reliability as this method allowed for an in-depth exploration of serving with a clear vision and values among EACC ministry board members.

The qualitative Leadership Interview enabled deeper research within a smaller sample of the larger group to investigate discipleship understating and allow participants to expand on their answers. The interview was conducted by a trained research assistant. The use of a research assistant also helped remove any power dynamics that may hinder participants' willingness to share with the pastor present. The research assistant learned about the best practices for semi-structured interviews. The three interviews were held on one day for consistency's sake. The research assistant followed the same semi-structured interview protocol and used the same audio recording method for data collection. During the interview, all questions were asked in the same way each time, and the researcher's assistant intentionally did not make any comments to indicate approval or disapproval of the answers to the questions.

### **Data Collection**

The project design was a mixed-method pre-intervention, which used a quantitative LDW Survey and a qualitative LDW Focus Group and Interview. The LDW Survey was done using Survey Monkey and was sent out to the selected ministry board members in EACC. The quantitative LDW Survey elicited answers to the research questions from a large group of people.

The qualitative LDW Focus Group was held on the same day after the fourth session of the LDW intervention project. The participants were divided into three groups with five participants for each group. As there were two to three representatives from each ministry department, they were divided into different groups to keep the acquaintanceship of the participants in the group as low as possible. This measure was taken according to what Thomas W. Lee observed, “Acquaintances are more likely to share tacit, taken-for-granted assumptions; discussion among focus group members with stronger acquaintanceship ties can be relatively difficult to interpret, understand, and evaluate” (70). A trained assistant moderated one of the groups, while the other was led by me. Another assistant was trained to work as a note-taker at the LDW Focus Group. After the session, the note-taker converted the notes into a fuller description of the event. Through group interaction, I imposed the generated data and insights that were related to a particular theme, which in this project was about serving with a clear vision and values and enriched by the groups’ active discussion (Sensing 120).

### **Data Analysis**

This Ministry Transformation Project involved intervention research and incorporated mixed methods research design. The data analysis of this project followed a

blended approach drawing upon ideas and models from Creswell and Sensing. I found themes and patterns in the data by coding, categorizing, and interpreting the information in order to arrive at a narrative summary explaining the discoveries of this project. The quantitative data was collected with identical LDW Pre-test and Post-test surveys sent to ten EACC ministry board members. The online service SurveyMonkey provided the quantitative data from the LDW Pre-test and Post-test surveys. The data was collected and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Analysis by Excel calculated the descriptive statistics, most notably the mean and standard deviation of each question. Each question was individually analyzed to determine the responses' statistical significance, mean and standard deviation. The transcript of the LDW Focus Group, along with the research assistant's observation notes, were examined to identify common words and themes. These data points were categorized in a way that described their content and connected with the project's research questions. The categorized data points were numerically labeled under each of their headings (for example, the heading "Vision and Values Knowledge" then contained VVK1, VVK2, VVK3, etc.). The semi-structured Discipleship Interview provided qualitative data which was recorded. Notes were created during the interview and from the recordings. I read the notes of the interviews and listened repeatedly to certain sections of the interviews to provide clarity of answers. After repeated readings and clarifications, I created codes for certain themes that reoccurred in the interview and coded them.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

Elyon Abdiel Christian Church is a clear example of a church that does not lead with a clear vision and values, thus easily becoming unfocused (or distracted) by an overabundance of activity. It has neither a clear ministry process nor a way to measure success. Instead of using programs as tools and seeing people grow into spiritual maturity, the tendency is to make programs the focus and people become the means to make successful programs. The goal is merely to keep existing programs going. The church has no identified guidelines to know about the life change and spiritual growth of the congregants. Furthermore, the long history and traditions of the church tend to cause the ministry to drift toward complexity, a trend that will likely continue without intentional and well-designed leadership development training to prepare leaders capable of leading with a clear vision and values.

The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with a clear vision and values.

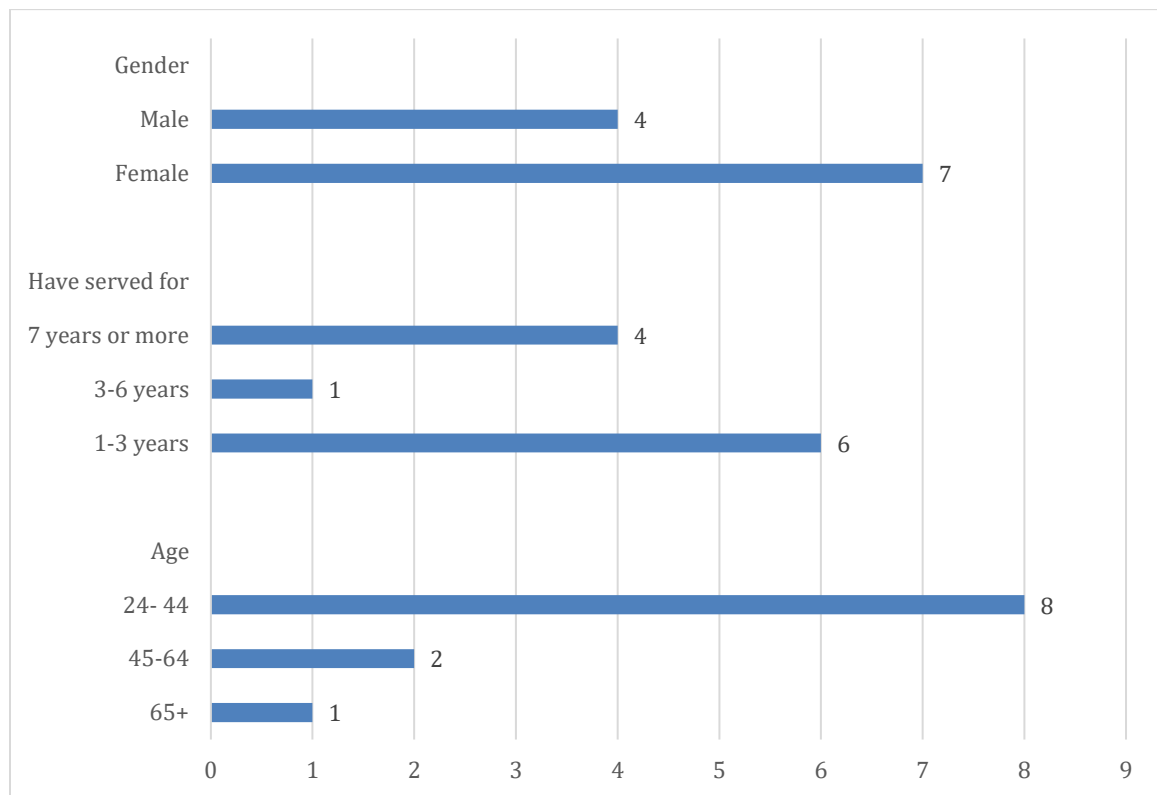
#### **Participants**

Eleven board members across all ministries and departments from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church agreed to participate in the leadership development workshops on leading with a clear vision and values. The initial participation target was sixteen to twenty. However, due to the tight Sunday school schedule for most board members, the



valid samples turned out to be eleven participants. Four workshops in total were held in four consecutive weeks in February 2023. All participants were considered valid samples based on three criteria: (1) have served for at least a year as a board member or small group leader, (2) have a minimum age of 18 or above, and (3) participated in three workshops or more. Of the eleven valid samples, ten people participated in all four sessions and one attended three sessions.

The demographic profile of the eleven valid samples is represented in Figure 4.1.



**Fig. 4.1. Demographic of participants (n=11).**

### **Research Question #1: Description of Evidence**

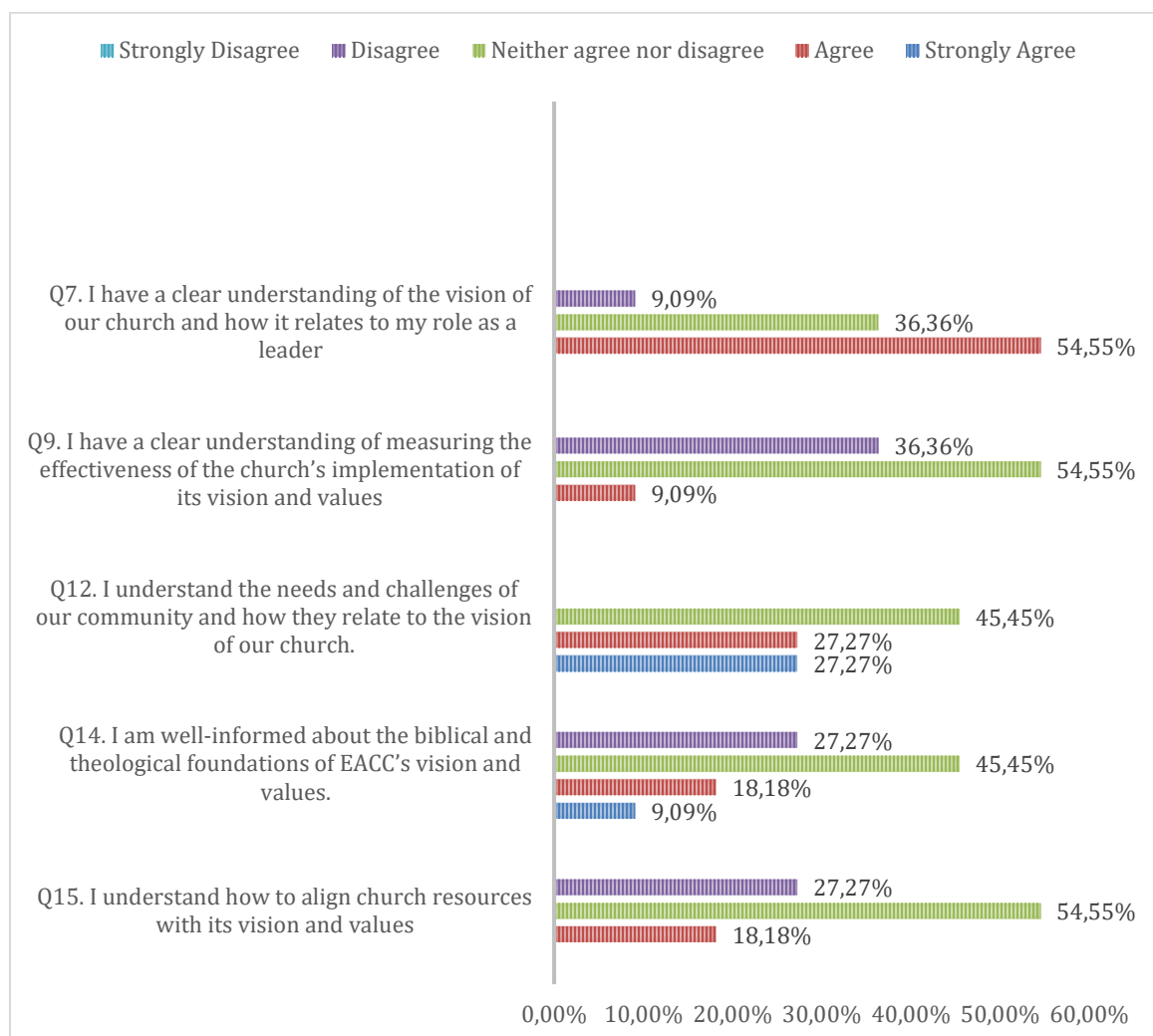
**What were the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values before the workshop?**

The tool used for collecting answers to this research question was the pre-test survey administered through Survey Monkey. In the survey,

- Questions 4, 7, 9, 12, 14, and 15 tested the participants' knowledge about serving with a clear vision and values.
- Questions 5, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, and 19 tested the participants' attitudes about serving with a clear vision and values.
- Questions 6, 13, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, and 27 tested the participants' behaviors about serving with a clear vision and values.

The pre-test survey yielded observable data regarding the participants' knowledge of the EACC's vision and its implementation. The pre-test survey began by asking the participants to write down the vision statement of the church from memory. The result showed that forty-five percent of the participants did not know the vision statement of the church. Fifty-five percent wrote down what they perceived as the vision of the church, but only thirty-six percent gave close to correct answers while eighteen percent gave wrong answers. The pre-test surveys also stimulated verbal feedback which was recorded in the field notes. Two younger board members admitted that they did not know at all if the church ever had a vision statement. The senior board members remarked that they had heard it before but could not remember it precisely.

The results of the knowledge questions can be seen in Figure 4.3. This chart shows that around forty-five to fifty-five percent of participants were confident that they understood the church's vision and how it related to their role as leaders (Q7). However, when asked about the implementation of the vision, the confidence level dropped to nine percent (Q9). The dominant responses about the elements of the vision (Q12, 14, 15) like the vision's relevance to answering the needs and challenges, the biblical foundations, and how to align resources with the vision were largely ambiguous with almost fifty-five percent of respondents answering, 'neither agree nor disagree.'



**Fig. 4.2 Responses to pre-test knowledge questions (n=11).**

The pre-test data for the attitude questions can be seen in Table 4.1. This shows that in five of eight questions, over two-thirds of the respondents were already in agreement with the beliefs and attitudes about the importance of vision. However, when the questions asked were about the personal impact of the church's vision on their current situation (Q10, Q17), more than fifty percent of responses showed neither agree nor disagree or even disagreement.

No.	Survey Question	N	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q5	It is very important for church leaders to prioritize upholding the values of our church in their decision-making	11	18,18%	72,73%	9,09%	0%	0%	1.91	0.51
Q8	It is important for the church's leadership team to actively seek to align its decision-making and actions with the values of our church.	11	18,18%	81,82%	0%	0%	0%	1.82	0.39
Q10	I am confident in my ability to explain EACC's vision and values to others.	11	0%	18,18%	54,55%	18,18%	9,09%	3.18	0.83
Q11	I believe that personal growth and development are important for effective church leadership.	11	54,55%	45,45%	0%	0%	0%	1.45	0.50
Q16	Clear and well-communicated values are essential for effective church leadership	11	45,45%	45,45%	0%	9,09%	0%	1.73	0.86
Q17	I have confidence in the ability of our church's leadership team to lead us toward- realizing the vision of our church.	11	0%	27,27%	45,45%	27,27%	0%	3	0.74
Q18	I believe that the church's resources (e.g., time, money, personnel) should be aligned with its vision and values.	11	27,27%	54,55%	18,18%	0%	0%	1.91	0.67
Q19	The church's vision and values foster a sense of belonging and community within me.	11	9,09%	36,36%	54,55%	0%	0%	2.45	0.66

The pre-test data for the behavior questions can be seen in Table 4.2. In six of the nine questions, over half of the respondents indicated that they have acted following the church's vision through their personal growth and the church's activities. The exceptions were questions 21, 22, and 24. In response to question 21, 45.45 percent of the respondents said they had actively sought to align their actions with the vision of the church. In response to question 22, 27.27 percent of respondents said they frequently review the church's vision and values before designing and launching a ministry program. In response to question 24, 36.36 percent of the respondents said they often engage in personal spiritual practices that reflect the church's vision.

Question 27 was an open question that asked if there was any correlation between their understanding of the vision toward their behavior in leading and conducting ministry. The respondents gave eight responses. Four of them said there were no correlations due to their unfamiliarity with the church's vision. Two respondents said something general and not directly related to the church's vision. They said that it helped them prioritize God over their own interests and do activities according to Christian values: to love others while being assertive at the same time. The last two respondents gave more specific answers that were correlated with the vision of the church. They said the vision should help them in the decision-making process in ministry and guide them in building the path of a "loving Christ maturely" kind of character.

No.	Survey Question	N	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q6	I frequently participate in church programs or services that align with its vision and values.	11	0%	54,55%	36,36%	9,09%	0%	2.55	0.66
Q13	I continually work to improve my leadership skills and abilities.	11	27,27%	63,64%	9,09%	0%	0%	1.82	0.57
Q20	I prioritize the spiritual growth and development of the church activists over their ministry.	11	45,45%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	0%	1.64	0.64
Q21	I actively seek to align my actions with the vision of our church.	11	18,18%	27,27%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	2.45	0.89
Q22	I frequently review the church's vision and values before designing and launching a ministry program.	11	9,09%	18,18%	54,55%	18,18%	0%	2.82	0.83
Q23	I advocate for the church's vision and values in my community.	11	9,09%	45,45%	45,45%	0%	0%	2.36	0.64
Q24	I often engage in personal spiritual practices that reflect the church's vision.	11	9,09%	27,27%	36,36%	27,27%	0%	2.82	0.94
Q25	I contribute my time and talents to help our church realize its vision.	11	18,18%	63,64%	18,18%	0%	0%	2.00	0.60
Q26	I actively seek feedback from others to improve my effectiveness as a leader in our church.	11	9,09%	45,45%	18,18%	27,27%	0%	2.64	0.98

## **Research Question #2: Description of Evidence**

**What were the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values after the workshop?**

### **Knowledge**

The results of the knowledge questions from the post-survey test are shown in Table 4.3. where they are compared to the results from the pre-test. The comparison shows that in three out of five questions, the mean of post-test responses moved closer to

the knowledge of the church vision among the respondents than the mean in the pre-test results. In addition, the standard deviation from the mean decreased for these questions. The mean of the post-test results of Questions 12 and 15 increased compared to the pre-test result. Question 12, which addresses the knowledge of the needs and challenges of the community and how they relate to the vision of the church, showed a shift from a dominant answer of neither agree nor disagree to either agree or disagree. Question 15 showed a slight decline in the understanding of how to align church resources with its vision and values.

No.	Survey Question	N	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Q7</b>	I have a clear understanding of the vision of our church and how it relates to my role as a leader	11	9,09%	9,09%	63,64%	18,18%	0%	2.91	0.79
		11	9,09%	36,36%	18,18%	54,55%	0%	2.82	1.03
<b>Q9</b>	I have a clear understanding of measuring the effectiveness of the church's implementation of its vision and values.	11	0%	9,09%	54,55%	36,36%	0%	3.27	0.62
		11	0%	36,36%	36,36%	27,27%	0%	2.91	0.79
<b>Q12</b>	I understand the needs and challenges of our community and how they relate to the vision of our church.	11	27,27%	27,27%	45,45%	0%	0%	2.18	0.83
		11	0%	72,73%	18,18%	9,09%	0%	2.36	0.64
<b>Q14</b>	I am well-informed about the biblical and theological foundations of EACC's vision and values.	11	9,09%	18,18%	45,45%	27,27%	0%	2.91	0.90
		11	18,18%	27,27%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	2.45	0.89
<b>Q15</b>	I understand how to align church resources with its vision and values.	11	0%	18,18%	54,55%	27,27%	0%	3.09	0.67
		11	0%	9,09%	63,64%	27,27%	0%	3.18	0.57

The qualitative data demonstrates that there are two kinds of knowledge that the participants addressed. The first is about EACC's specific vision and values statements. All responses were negative, showing the unfamiliarity with the vision of the EACC. The

reflection can be seen from the responses of the participants to a post-survey open-ended question in which the identities of the respondents were unknown as the setting of the survey did not include personal information. The question was about how the understanding of the church vision will affect the ministry life and leadership of the participants after the workshop, for example:

“Personally, I am still trying to understand the vision of EACC (and the values that can be implemented). If I try to quantify, my level of understanding might be around 55-60%. However, the explanation in the last session of the workshop helped me to give a picture of the process of helping the congregants to love Christ maturely”.

“The congregants do not understand or even do not know the vision of EACC.”

“A clear vision will have a strong impact on decision-making. Currently, I do not understand the vision of EACC.”

“I know nothing about it.”

In the second focus group discussion, Leader 1 commented, “It is so blurred. I have not known any vision from EACC (FG2, 1). I have never been urged by anyone in the church leadership to put any vision into practice.”

Leader 8 remarked, “I have never known if the vision had been cast except once at the beginning of the year only, and afterward, it is gone.”

In the third focus group, Leaders 9 and 10 responded that they did not remember, so they did not care.

Second, the knowledge about the importance of serving with a clear vision and values. The qualitative data demonstrated that all responses given in this particular knowledge were positive. The impact was both personal and organizational.

In the first forum discussion group, Leader 7 remarked:



The sessions of the workshop were good, there were new ideas I had never thought of before. We do need to have a clear vision and mission with clear steps to bring them to realization.

In the second forum discussion group, Leaders 1 and 2 commented that after participating in the workshops, their horizons expanded. Some knowledge was new to them. Leader 5 said the material helped her in navigating ministry. Leader 2 shared this way:

I am intrigued that having a vision is like adding more fuel to be able to run further than what we currently do. Also cognitively speaking, it gave me new information.

In the third focus discussion group, Leader 9 testified:

From this workshop, I learned that it is so important to have a clear vision and mission. Not only in ministry but also in personal life. I have never thought about this before.

Leader 10 shared a similar response saying:

I learned a lot about vision, and it kept me thinking about how to be able to have one. The most helpful part is it connects to my personal life. I felt strengthened by the workshop materials. I felt as if all problems would have their answers as long as you have a clear vision and values.

### **Attitude**

The results of the attitude questions from the post-test survey are compared to the pre-test results are shown in Table 4.4. The data shows that out of the eight Likert-style questions, the average of the six questions moved slightly toward full agreement with the attitude. The pre-test showed that there was already a large-scale agreement for the six questions before the leadership workshop. The two questions that showed both a lower agreement and then a decline in the agreement regarded personal confidence in the ability to explain the vision of the church and the personal sense of connection with the vision. From the results of the Knowledge questions, most participants did not understand the

vision of the church. Hence, the result has a direct connection to these two attitude questions.

No.	Survey Question	N	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q5	It is very important for church leaders to prioritize upholding the values of our church in their decision-making	11	18,18%	72,73%	9,09%	0%	0%	1.91	0.51
		11	36,36%	63,64%	0%	0%	0%	1.64	0.48
Q8	It is important for the church's leadership team to actively seek to align its decision-making and actions with the values of our church.	11	18,18%	81,82%	0%	0%	0%	1.82	0.39
		11	36,36%	63,64%	0%	0%	0%	1.63	0.48
Q10	I am confident in my ability to explain EACC's vision and values to others.	11	0%	18,18%	54,55%	18,18%	9,09%	3.18	0.83
		11	0%	9,09%	36,36%	54,55%	0%	3.45	0.66
Q11	I believe that personal growth and development are important for effective church leadership.	11	54,55%	45,45%	0%	0%	0%	1.45	0.50
		11	72,73%	27,27%	0%	0%	0%	1.27	0.45
Q16	Clear and well-communicated values are essential for effective church leadership	11	45,45%	45,45%	0%	9,09%	0%	1.73	0.86
		11	63,64%	27,27%	0%	9,09%	0%	1.55	0.89
Q17	I have confidence in the ability of our church's leadership team to lead us toward- realizing the vision of our church.	11	0%	27,27%	45,45%	27,27%	0%	3	0.74
		11	0%	36,36%	36,36%	27,27%	0%	2.91	0.79
Q18	I believe that the church's resources (e.g., time, money, personnel) should be aligned with its vision and values.	11	27,27%	54,55%	18,18%	0%	0%	1.91	0.67
		11	45,45%	45,45%	0%	9,09%	0%	1.73	0.86
Q19	The church's vision and values foster a sense of belonging and community within me.	11	9,09%	36,36%	54,55%	0%	0%	2.45	0.66
		11	9,09%	36,36%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	2.55	0.78

The qualitative data shows that the responses of the participants followed the quantitative data. Through the forum discussion group, participants gave responses that demonstrated their beliefs about the importance of a clear vision and values for the church and their personal lives.

In the first discussion group, Leader 7 gave a score of 8 to describe his willingness and readiness to apply what he has learned from the workshop. He further expressed:

I am impressed with the shared story of the children's ministry. I did not know at all that the children's ministry had such a struggle and progress based on a clear vision and values. I am not a children's minister. I do not know at all about what is happening in other departments or ministries. In a church of our size, we should not work as if the goal is for the advancement of my department. Rather, we should have been bound by a clear vision that moves us all together.

Leader 8 gave a similar remark since she is in the children's ministry and has been part of the movement on doing ministry with a clear vision and values. She testified:

I have seen the impact of having a clear vision and values in children's ministry. We have tested it, and I experienced the process. One example, the value of grace really helped me to serve and love the kids who were having brokenness in their family and whose behaviors made it not easy to be loved. Yet now I begin to see the change happening in their lives. In the team, we have to recite the vision and values sentences. Some people do not like it, but there is a real change that the team has experienced. We were guided by the vision.

In the second discussion group, Leader 4 expressed her belief in the urgency to lead according to a clear vision and values with a score of 9. She explained:

I have understood the material. It gave me insight and guidance to begin the work. It is as if we have to start from scratch, thus it feels so heavy. But we have seen another ministry that worked well. We have seen the necessity of having people on the team who share the same vision. We do need a team like that.

The beliefs, however, are weakened by the current pessimistic situation, what they identified as the elements that church leadership currently lacks, and the necessity to change. In the forum discussion group, Leaders 2, 3, and 5 gave a score of 5, 6, and 7 consecutively to describe their conviction level about the implementation of the workshop despite their positive attitude toward the workshop material on serving with a

clear vision and values in the church. They approved the theory, but had many questions about the implementation process. Leader 2 remarked:

I believe that as leaders, we do need to serve with a clear vision and values, but after this workshop, how to follow up and make sure it will work well. There is heavy work ahead.

Leader 5 gave a similar concern, “theoretically, it is excellent. What makes it tough is the resources to apply the theory. We are not sure who else is on the same page and seeing the same vision.” Leader 3 suggested that to help people see the same vision, it should begin with acknowledging the same problem. The vision then will be able to act as a solved situation for the future.

### **Behavior**

The results from the behavior questions from the post-test survey were compared to the pre-test survey results and are shown in Table 4.5. Contrary to the knowledge and attitude test results, in seven out of nine questions, the average of the post-test survey results on behavior showed an increasing number. This means that despite the higher level of knowledge and attitude, the participants demonstrated doubt about behavior change and were weak in the call to action. Seven out of nine questions about church activities and their relation to the vision demonstrated a consistent decline in agreement. Question 6 about participating in church programs that align with its vision and values shows a decreased percentage of agreement from 54,55 percent to 45,45 percent while the percentage of disagreement rose from 9,09 percent to 27,27 percent. The highest shift is shown in Question 25: “I contribute my time and talents to help our church realize its vision.” The average increased from 2.00 to 2.55 with the percentage of agreement

dropping from 63,64 percent to 18,18 percent. There was also a significant rise of the neither agree nor disagree option, from 18,18 percent to 54,55 percent.

The exceptions were Questions 13 and 22. The statement of Question 13— “I continually work to improve my leadership skills and abilities,”—had no direct relation to the specific church vision and values. The result showed a slight increase in agreement from 63,64 percent to 72,73 percent. The number moved from the percentage of the “neither agree nor disagree” option from 9,09 percent to 0 percent. Question 22 was about reviewing the church vision before designing and launching a ministry program. The results showed a slight decrease on average. The number of participants who agreed rose slightly from 18,18 percent to 36,36 percent, while participants who disagreed also rose from 18,18 percent to 27,27 percent. The highest percentage change is the option of neither agree nor disagree which dropped from 54,55 percent to 27,27 percent.

No.	Survey Question	N	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q6	I frequently participate in church programs or services that align with its vision and values.	11	0%	54,55%	36,36%	9,09%	0%	2.55	0.66
		11	0%	45,45%	27,27%	27,27%	0%	2.82	0.83
Q13	I continually work to improve my leadership skills and abilities.	11	27,27%	63,64%	9,09%	0%	0%	1.82	0.57
		11	27,27%	72,73%	0%	0%	0%	1.73	0.45
Q20	I prioritize the spiritual growth and development of the church activists over their ministry.	11	45,45%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	0%	1.64	0.64
		11	45,45%	36,36%	18,18%	0%	0%	1.73	0.75
Q21	I actively seek to align my actions with the vision of our church.	11	18,18%	27,27%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	2.45	0.89
		11	9,09%	36,36%	45,45%	9,09%	0%	2.55	0.78
Q22	I frequently review the church's vision and values before designing and launching a ministry program.	11	9,09%	18,18%	54,55%	18,18%	0%	2.82	0.83
		11	9,09%	36,36%	27,27%	27,27%	0%	2.73	0.96
Q23	I advocate for the church's vision and values in my community.	11	9,09%	45,45%	45,45%	0%	0%	2.36	0.64
		11	18,18%	27,27%	27,27%	27,27%	0%	2.64	1.07
Q24	I often engage in personal spiritual practices that reflect the church's vision.	11	9,09%	27,27%	36,36%	27,27%	0%	2.82	0.94
		11	0%	27,27%	54,55%	18,18%	0%	2.91	0.67
Q25	I contribute my time and talents to help our church realize its vision.	11	18,18%	63,64%	18,18%	0%	0%	2.00	0.60
		11	18,18%	18,18%	54,55%	9,09%	0%	2.55	0.89
Q26	I actively seek feedback from others to improve my effectiveness as a leader in our church.	11	9,09%	45,45%	18,18%	27,27%	0%	2.64	0.98
		11	0%	54,55%	18,18%	18,18%	9,09%	2.82	1.03

The qualitative data concerning behavior gives context to the overall result of the quantitative data.

Leader 6 commented:

I can understand the frustration. I have to admit that my ministry colleagues only talk about the daily and pragmatic stuff during monthly strategic meetings instead of talking about visionary stuff or the future. When we have different values, it is difficult to achieve even the agreed vision. Values should act as our corridor of conduct. However, there has been an improvement lately as the general board members agreed to form a small group of leaders to think about the implementation of the church's vision.

Leader 7 clarified a similar experience:

There has never been any evaluation of the vision implementation, both by the board members and the senior pastor. We just run the ministry as usual. I have never met any colleagues who think and talk about vision and mission. We just run every program and fellowship, with no talk about the achievement of our vision.

Leader 8 added:

I approved all the workshop materials, but we are not professional people who understand how to apply such things. We need a consultant to guide us through the implementation of the church's vision and values. I feel pessimistic when I look at the reality, how we differ a lot in opinions and cannot be united. It is a different thing if we have an authoritarian leader who can decide which thing to be done.

Leader 11 stated:

I do not know anything about the church's vision. To be honest, I do not like to be involved in organizational settings. I took the position of a board member due to the church's indoctrination that serving God means I have to serve in the church. So I did it not from a willing heart but out of the guilty feeling and perforce. And now as a board member, I do not even know the success measurement of doing church ministry. As a businessman, I believe that serving God does not have to be in church, I can serve Him outside the church.

Leader 11 expressed his frustration because he felt pressured to take the position as a board member. He did not know about the church's vision. He did not feel inspired by how the current leadership team ran the ministry.

Leaders 6, 7, 8, and 11 were in the first discussion group. They expressed a similar concern about the lack of vision clarity that impacted their behavior in ministry.

Leader 4 gives the most positive response in the second group of the discussion:

Despite the ups and downs of ministry, I can see how the power of vision can help us. After the workshop, I now understand that I need to go through the preparation process to be a disciple and then continue the process of becoming a mentor. What encouraged me despite all the ups and downs of ministry right now is that by hearing from you all, I realized I am not alone in wanting a clear vision for our ministry.

The results of the post-test survey, open-ended questions, and focus groups showed that changes took place in the participants in the Leadership Development Workshop on Leading with a Clear Vision and Values. The changes in the knowledge and attitude were the most observable from the qualitative data. These changes were the most dramatic, while the lower percentage of behavior change in quantitative data was observable from the qualitative data.

### **Research Question #3: Description of Evidence**

**What aspects of the leadership development workshop on serving with clear vision and values had the greatest impact on the observed changes in the participants?**

Qualitative data collected from the three focus groups provided some answers to this question. My coded data analysis showed that the participants repeatedly identified the following elements as very helpful in enhancing their understanding, providing guidance of implementation, and, consequently, contributing to their improvement in leading and serving with a clear vision and values.

#### **Seeing the Benefit of Having a Clear Vision and Values**

The participants often expressed the benefit of having a clear vision and values both in personal life and church ministry. Leader 9 expressed that after seeing the benefit of having a clear vision from the workshop, she then taught her younger brothers about what she had learned about it. She noted:

I have never imagined that having a clear vision in life can have a big impact, not only in ministry but also in personal life. I now realize that it is important to have a vision and mission in life. When I got back from the workshop last week, I even told my two younger brothers who just started a new garage business together. They still have no clear direction for the



new business, and it is risky since they are collaborating. Each of them will have a different role. One will handle the marketing, the other will take care of the technical role. However, if they do not have the same vision, it will not work well. So as soon as I finished the workshop sessions, I told them the importance of having a vision and mission. How they will tell your staff the vision of the business. Whether you want your garage to be number one in quality or become the cheapest garage service, they first must be clear. I do think having a vision and mission is very important although I also realize it is not easy and it does take process.

Leader 11 had a similar response about seeing the relevance of having values to guide his business: “Now I see it is also important to have values, especially values that are aligned with Christianity, not only profit-oriented values.” Leader 5 remarked that people should be clear about their own personal vision before wanting to know the vision of the church. She stated:

During the first session when I was asked to write down my personal life vision, that moment inspired me because I had never thought about it. I am quite sure that I am not the only person who does not know what the vision of my life is.

Leaders 7 and 9, the two oldest participants, noted that they do not see the importance of having a clear vision in their life season as elderly persons. However, they do emphasize the necessity of having a clear vision for the ministry context. Leader 4 considered a vision as a calibrator whenever she began to stray away and lose direction in ministry. Vision is a needed reminder to return to the original purpose of doing church ministry. Leader 6 noted that having a vision and values will give him a new idea and mindset of doing ministry. He quoted the children’s ministry project as an example of the workshop that inspired him.

### **Clear Communication and Articulation of Vision and Values**

The participants demonstrated a united voice about the importance of having a clear articulation and communication of vision and values for the church. Leader 3

addressed the issue of personal interpretation that might be different from what the church actually means. She commented:

We need to sit together to make sure that other people are on the same page when we talk about the vision of the church. Each of us may have our own interpretation of the church's vision statement. That is why it is important to explain it clearly, so we have the same interpretation of the vision.

She also added that a vision should begin with acknowledging the problem church leaders want to solve to determine the future they want to see happen. Leader 2 highlighted:

It is good for the church to tell the vision to the congregation, but I feel that the lesson from the second session which was about having clear values that guide the vision was practical and it is easy for the congregation to follow. In my opinion, the church has not delivered a clear vision that is guided by clear values. This will [create] confusion about the direction of the church among the congregants.

Leader 5 acknowledged that she did not know the church vision at all until it was told during the workshop. She also commented that the language is way too complex and sophisticated, which will usually hinder the congregants from actually doing it. Leader 10 expressed a similar concern about the delivery of the vision. She noted, "The vision must be communicated clearly. We cannot assume that people already know what the vision is. And for this necessity, intentional training is needed."

### **Leadership Figures to Guide, Model, and Lead the Vision**

The participants overwhelmingly voiced the importance of a leader who is capable of guiding, modeling, and leading the implementation of the church's vision. Leader 4 stated her concern that besides the issue of vision communication, she has not seen the top leadership team who formulated and announced the vision statement embody the vision themselves. She noted that people will forget the sentences easily when the

leaders themselves do not mean what they say regarding the church's vision. Leaders 7 and 8 emphasized similar ideas about the necessity of a capable and authoritative, but not an authoritarian, leadership figure to lead the church with a clear vision and values. They have seen too much dissenting opinion and polarization among board members as the result of doing ministry without a clear vision and values. Leader 11 commented:

A clear vision shows us the end of a tunnel. The solution to make a vision work is to have one top leader to guide us to the end of the tunnel. People see a figure. We also see the figure of Jesus. Thus, without an authoritative leader who can guide the implementation of the vision, it is impossible to apply anything from the workshop to the ministry.

Leader 10 highlighted the same priority about leaders. She voiced that the leaders should be the priority of concern. Change should start with the leaders. They must share the same understanding of the vision. Only when leaders agree on what the church wants to achieve, does the system follow. She then suggested the necessity of training for the leaders.

### **The Team Embraces the Same Vision and Values through Intentional Training.**

Participants shared the necessity of having a team that shared the same vision and values. Leader 4 asserted:

If [we] want to apply what we have learned, it is as if we want to build a new building on a land that already had an old building. We need to destroy the old buildings and clear the land. To be able to do that, we need a team with the same vision to be able to continue the process of building the new building.

Leader 7 also expressed a similar idea:

The theory of leading with a clear vision and values is really good. What makes it difficult is the human resources. We have not found those who are actually seeing the same concern to change.

Leader 6 shared his evaluation of the leaders' regular meetings that only talk about pragmatic issues without visionary things. He then expressed the need to have clear metrics that are aligned with the vision and stated his hope to socialize the workshop material for the general board members to help them have the same mindset. Leader 7 voiced his hope that the four sessions' material from the workshop is shared with the church pastors' team and all leaders so that the leadership team overall can see the same needs and want to go through the same route to achieving the vision.

**System of Implementation: Clear Measurement of Success and Evaluation.**

Along with the optimistic attitude of the participants toward the importance of leading with a clear vision and values, most of them demonstrated more pessimistic attitudes toward the implementation success probability.

Leader 4 addressed her pessimism because she had not seen any practical implementation of the vision. Leaders 2 and 7 noted the need to have a clear system of evaluation of the vision to back up the vision. Leader 11 expressed the necessity of having a clear metric to measure success according to the vision. Leader 1 emphasized the need for a practical approach that is applicable in the discipleship groups. The system of implementation includes clear metrics or success measurement and evaluation. Leader 11 assertively said: "I do not think it is applicable. I gave it a score of five. We need more understandable terminologies; we need a role model to show us the way of implementation and be clear on what we want to be."

### **Summary of Major Findings**

Several major findings emerged based on the data analysis. They are listed here only in summary form and will be further discussed in the next chapter:

1. Having a clear vision and values gives leaders a sense of direction, meaning, and passion.
2. Clear and regular articulation of vision and values is essential in guiding ministry.
3. The necessity of having a leader to guide, model, and lead the vision implementation.
4. Building leadership teams that embrace the same vision and values.
5. Applying a clear ministry process, measurement of success, and evaluation.

## CHAPTER 5

### LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

Elyon Abdiel Christian Church's general vision statement is “to become disciples who love Christ maturely.” It is inadequate as the vision is not clear, there are no articulated values to guide the ministry, and the top leadership teams do not embody them. As a result, the church lacks clear ministry processes, measurements of success, identified guidelines to know about the life change and spiritual growth of the congregants, and intentional leadership development training to prepare leaders capable of leading with a clear vision and values. The purpose of this project was to measure the changes in knowledge, attitude, and behavior among ministry board members from Elyon Abdiel Christian Church who participated in a leadership development workshop on leading with a clear vision and values.

#### Major Findings

##### **Having a Clear Vision and Values Gives Leaders a Sense of Direction, Meaning, and Passion.**

One of EACC's weaknesses is the implementation of the ministry plan without a long-term perspective. Most of EACC's annual programs look exactly like the program of the previous year. The highlights of the church ministry program are the special events based on the church calendar, like the Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and Christmas services. From the budget allocation, time of preparation, and the number of volunteers involved, the church clearly depends on those special events as the main programs to attract people. Those programs do not correlate with the church's vision

statement. The vision statement seems to only act as a decoration without any real meaning and impact. Volunteers are commonly in short supply to serve as committee members for each event, resulting in competition among board members who are appointed as people in charge of each event. George Barna identified the symptoms of lacking a long-term goal as a sign of having no vision (*The Power of Vision Benefit 2*).

Leaders' meetings rarely include discussions of visionary topics, only pragmatic and daily problem discussions. The atmosphere is not inspiring at all. As a result, the church usually struggles to find candidates who are willing to accept the role of board members. I often hear that the reason people reject the request is usually because they do not want to be involved in church drama, or they only want to serve in the church without any organizational responsibility.

As the literature review in Chapter 2 describes, a vision helps people dream big and imply a long-term approach to ministry. It helps people become more excited about the grand possibilities instead of being threatened by the magnitude of the task (Barna, *The Power of Vision Benefit 1*). Having the right vision provides meaning and gives a sense of purpose as people know that they are part of a godly cause. The atmosphere shows that something significant is happening and will in turn boost the buy-in process for people. Three very important sources provide such an atmosphere: a sense of divine compulsion, a burning conviction about the significance of the work and mission of an organization, and a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm about the mission, the people, and the place (Agee 97).

The biblical foundation for this research project points to the impact of having a clear vision and values that in turn provide clear direction, meaning, and passion. This

could be seen from the leadership of Nehemiah as discussed in Chapter 2. Nehemiah was called to restore the purpose of being the people of God, not just building a mere wall, as the wall of Jerusalem was a symbol of the covenantal identity. Nehemiah had a vision to lead the remnant to serve God under the prescriptions of the Torah. For that to happen, he stressed the purity of religion as the expression of the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites (Fensham, Theology). The reason for Nehemiah's courage and passion to leave his post in a safe and comfortable Persian kingdom was due to his compelling vision.

### **Clear and Regular Articulation of Vision and Values is Critical in Guiding Ministry**

EACC tends to take a programmatic approach to ministry. Even the development of a vision and mission statement was also treated as a program only. The church spent a lot of money renting a huge building in the center of the city to hold a vision casting event for the whole campus. The church even hired a public communication expert to train the general senior pastor to be able to do a compelling presentation. The presentation went well, and the atmosphere of the event reached its climax. Many people were moved by the presentation. However, the event had two weaknesses. First, people saw no concrete steps toward achieving the vision. Second, the vision presentation that day was not followed up with regular vision casting in local churches. The vision statement was only printed on the front page of the church bulletin, with no intentional communication or further articulation of the vision to encourage both leaders and congregations to embody and achieve it. During the focus group discussion, Leaders 2, 3, 5, and 10 stated their hope that EACC's vision should be communicated regularly. They admitted that they did not know anything about the vision of EACC.



In the literature review, I used Rainer and Geiger's research about the implementation of their simple church strategy. They suggested that the vision of a simple church achieves four main aims: clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. Clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people. The process should be clear to the leaders before they can hope that it will be clear to the congregation (116). Casting a convincing vision once is not enough for people to be able to remember it. As Andy Stanley stated in chapter 5 of his book "Making Vision Stick," The vision needs to be repeated regularly and become the rhythm of the church (Stanley, ch.5 Repeat the Vision Regularly).

The biblical foundation in Chapter 2 affirms this point. During the period of the Exodus, the vision given to Moses as the leader was to lead the Israelites to become the people of God through the journey to the Promised Land and then become God's emissary. To achieve the vision, God gave them a set of values and behavioral norms through the Ten Commandments. Moses had to regularly teach and guide them on how to live according to the vision. When people embrace the vision of becoming a worshiper of God, they also pass the habit of teaching the vision to the next generation. This is well known as the practice of *Shema Yisrael* (Deut. 66-69).

### **The Necessity of Having a Leader to Guide, Model, and Lead the Vision**

#### **Implementation**

EACC is led by the combination of a group of local senior pastors and general board members. However, in reality, the senior pastors are entrusted with great authority to filter or even decide many things in ministry before they are brought to the plenary meetings. The challenge is that a senior pastor is typically chosen based on seniority

rather than capability. Seniority is heavily influenced by age and the duration of one's ministry in the church. Thus, the senior pastors are not necessarily capable of leading an organization. In reality, the current senior pastors tend to act as managers who focus on keeping certain programs and traditions going. During the focus group discussion, Leaders 7 and 8 voiced their pessimism that without capable and authoritative leadership figures, the church would not see any change. Leader 4 also emphasized that the current leadership team has not shown any embodiment of the vision in their leadership.

The literary review in Chapter 2 emphasizes the role of a leader in guiding, modeling, and leading the vision. A vision requires someone who dares to act on the preferred future (Stanley, *Visioneering* 14). The leaders' understanding and ownership of the vision and values will overflow to everyone. Hence, for a clear vision to become a part of the church culture, it should start with the leadership culture (Weems 133). A leader needs to have a godly ambition that is born out of a love for God and the lost; otherwise, leaders will easily lose focus or give up (Chen 252). A competent leader will have a compelling vision that in turn will challenge people to work toward a higher standard of excellence (Northouse 196).

The biblical foundation for this project also affirms the huge impact of a leader. Throughout the Bible, God appointed leaders to embrace a certain role and achieve some kind of specific mission. Each period had a specific leader to lead people in their unique situations. In Chapter 2, I show how God used Moses, Samson, Saul, David, Nehemiah, and Jesus to bring the vision to pass. Each leader had a specific task that also required certain capabilities. Another example is during the Exodus period, Moses also chose

seventy appointees who were considered “able men from all Israel” to help him lead the people toward the vision (Exod. 18:25).

### **Building Leadership Teams that Embrace the Same Vision and Values**

I have observed that the relationships in the leadership team—be they senior pastors, pastors, or board members—are mostly shallow with no real connection and with mostly program-related communication. Ministry departments only focus on their own needs and progress. During the focus group discussion, Leader 8 expressed her concern about the disunity among the board members. Leader 9 remarked how every ministry department tends to go its own way in doing ministry and competing with other departments. Each ministry department is like a small church inside a bigger church. Leader 7 acknowledged that he did not know anything about other ministry departments but his own. Such situations foster no unity and cohesion.

In the literary review, I emphasized the importance of a shared vision as it will help people to move in the same direction and in the same manner. All ministries and staff will be aligned around the same process. When that happens, people will not compete for the same space, resources, volunteers, and time on the calendar (Rainer and Geiger 116). Church leaders must understand vision not only as the purpose but it also defines the process to achieve it. The process is more important than the purpose of an organization because the process is what makes everything work. As the leaders can successfully deliver the process of change, over time the cumulative effect will lead to new directions, for the imagined visions.

The biblical foundation for this project can be seen in what Nehemiah and Jesus did during their respective leadership journeys. In facing opposition, Nehemiah posted the people by families, with their swords, spears, and bows.

After I looked things over, I stood up and said to . . . the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, and your daughters, your wives and your homes.” (Neh. 4:14)

Nehemiah’s strategy of building a purposeful team succeeded. With the help of a purposeful team, Nehemiah was able to complete the wall in fifty-two days.

The other model is Jesus’ ministry. The way he calls, trains, and sends out disciples is not just a common practice of Jewish rabbis. With Jesus, the initiative lay with his call (Matt. 4:19, 9:9; Mark 1:17, 2:14) and his choice (John 15:16) of those who would be his disciples. The response to the call involved his recognition of and belief in his identity (John 2:11; 6:68-69), obedience to his summons (Mark 1:18, 20), and counting the cost of full allegiance to him (Luke 14:25-28; Matt. 19:23-30). Jesus imparted a shared vision of a new identity to the disciples. In other words, Jesus built a team that embraced the same vision and values.

### **Applying a Clear Ministry Process, Measurement of Success, and Evaluation**

I observed that the most talked about topic and the most heated discussion in leaders' meetings revolved around budget, body, and building. EACC stated that they care about making people maturely love Jesus. However, the vision statement is not backed up with a clear process and measurement to know whether it is being achieved or not. Hence, the traditional measurement is still being used, although it has no connection to the vision statement at all. During the focus group discussion, Leaders 2, 7, and 11 expressed their pessimism due to the absence of a clear measurement of success beyond

building, body, and budget, which do not reflect the stated vision. Without a clear implementation that shows a deep connection to the vision, the vision statement means nothing as it is not applicable. In EACC's case, success is measured by how well a particular program goes, but it is never evaluated as a whole process. It has never looked at each weekly program while considering it a process to achieve the vision. The church has no process, no clear beginning, and no clear end, only a bunch of programs.

The literature review emphasized the importance of having a system of implementation. Visioning does not substitute for strategic and tactical plans, rather it is a process that comes before the plans (Weems 67). Measuring helps people to gain clarity and to take the ministry process seriously. As the adage goes, what gets evaluated, gets done (126). The ability to measure effectively calls for two critical considerations. First, view the numbers horizontally and not vertically, which means not measuring the total number of people in a particular program, but a certain percentage of people who move across the chart. Second, measure attendance at each level in the process to be able to know how many people are plugged in at each stage. This gives the key knowledge for planning, praying, and making decisions (128).

The biblical foundation for this point is seen in Nehemiah's leadership. Nehemiah emphasized the new productions of identity by appropriating the traditional ideas of the historical covenantal law for the benefit of his vision, like the reiteration of the Ten Commandments, and the idea of Sabbath (Becking 105-07). He can implement strategic steps to connect to people's trust and gain their support to fulfill the vision of building the wall. When faced with opposition, he also managed to strengthen the purpose of the entire team by teaching the remnants that they were not just rebuilding a wall but also

rebuilding and defending their families and a nation (Woolfe 40). Nehemiah posted the people by families, with their swords, spears, and bows. With all these strategies, he was able to complete the wall in fifty-two days.

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

This research project along with its findings provides at least three implications for EACC of Pregolan Bunder. The first implication of this study concerns study participants and other board members or ministry leaders in EACC, especially in the Pregolan Bunder campus. The workshop generated positive responses and strong interest among the participants who were active board members. They expressed the hope that the materials could also be taught to more leaders in the church as it opened their minds and moved their hearts to lead with a clear vision and values. This will build an awareness of the importance of having a clear vision and values in ministry. If more leaders learn the importance of having a clear vision and values, it will help them serve in the same direction and same manner. The church will also be able to deal with the issue of competition between ministry departments as there is a clear purpose and values as guides.

The second implication of this study relates to leadership training programs and materials for pastors and ministry leaders. This study opens the door to guiding the implementation of vision and values into the training and development of ministry leaders, both pastors and lay persons in denominational leadership programs, leadership and ministry retreats, seminaries, conferences, and the like. A clear vision and values will help create a more purposeful team. When leaders act based on a clear vision and values,

they perform better than average and have greater endurance because the vision and values provide them with a map that gives direction and assurance.

The third implication concerns any ministry or organization that is in the process of making a relevant vision and values. This study can help them discern and design their own vision and values as there is practical guidance to develop one's vision and values in both personal and organizational life. Both small and larger institutions can develop relevant visions and values from scratch using the material in the workshop. Having a clear vision and values will give people a sense of direction, meaning, and passion.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study were relatively minor and inconsequential. The primary limitation was time. Since the four sessions of the workshop were conducted on Sunday, which is usually full of activities, especially for the active board members, three pre-qualified leaders were unable to participate in the workshops at all. As a result, the participants were reduced from fourteen to eleven people only, which is unlikely to have had a significant impact on the findings. The duration of each workshop initially was designed to be 90 minutes. However, due to special events, meeting schedules, and choir practice that took place on the dates when the workshops were conducted, the duration of the workshops was reduced to 60 minutes as some of the participants had to attend those activities. This, however, should not have any significant impact on the findings either.

There are two things I would do differently to improve the study. First, I would split the workshops into two schedules. One would be held on Sundays, and the other would be on weekdays. By doing this, I would have been able to gather more participants. Second, I would add more duration for each workshop to let the participants

interact with each other regarding the impact of each lesson and to have a longer time to practice writing down their vision and values.

### **Unexpected Observations**

Two of the participants showed extraordinary responses after the workshops. One of them testified that she told her younger brothers who just started a business together to think carefully about the vision and values of their business. The other one asked me for an extra meeting to guide her develop her personal core values. These responses, among other positive ones, left an impression that the materials are relevant both personally and organizationally.

### **Recommendations**

While the results are encouraging, the following recommendations may enhance the fruitfulness of the leadership development workshops and further validate its effectiveness:

1. I did not give any homework to the participants during the workshops because one of the participants agreed to join if there was no requirement to do anything after the workshops. Those who want to experiment with this same project may wish to consider more requirements for homework to reinforce the learning results. The homework could be set as optional for those who do not want to work on it to facilitate certain participants like one of my workshop participants.
2. Those who wish to reproduce this project may want to consider extending the time from four weeks to five or six weeks longer. This will give more space and time for the participants to do interactive projects like practicing writing their visions and then sharing them in the group.



3. Conduct further research into observable impacts and outcomes of this workshop on the church's ministry one to three years later.

### **Postscript**

The journey of doing this research project has been a burning passion for me since the beginning. I began the Doctor of Ministry program with an end in mind. I wanted to have clarity of thought to solve the lingering problems in Elyon Abdiel Christian Church. Thus, deciding on a research topic for the DMin dissertation was not difficult for me. I remember when Dr. Gyertson asked what I needed the most in my leadership role and my expectations of this program, I wrote four things. First, I need clarity. This is the prominent reason that guided me to do a research project about leading with a clear vision and values. Second, I wish to grow as a person in the areas of accountability and discipline by having mentors or coaches, especially during my study in Asbury. Third, I need to be equipped with knowledge and skill sets to lead the change I wish to see happen in my ministry. And lastly, I long for long-lasting companionship from the Asbury seminary family, especially my cohort team.

As I finished the project, I reflected on how I had grown in those four areas. This is the end that I imagined at the beginning of my study. I am satisfied and grateful for the whole learning experience and relationship during my study at Asbury Theological Seminary. However, this also signifies the beginning of the next journey. The lifelong learning process never stops. I believe the implementation of this research project will benefit the ministry and the team that I serve with. Soli Deo Gloria!

**APPENDIX A****Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Pre-Test Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to gauge our current understanding of serving with a clear vision and values. Please take a few minutes to respond to these questions. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers when filling out a survey. Your answers will be kept confidential, and no one will know the identity of the person filling out the survey. Thank you for your participation!

1. Age: 18-35/ 36-50/ 51-65/ 66 or older
2. How long have you served as a board member?
3. Please write the vision of EACC from memory (to the best of your ability).

- 4 = Strongly Agree
- 3 = Agree
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly Disagree

Using the scale above, please rate the following statements:

4. It is very important for church leaders to prioritize upholding the values of our church in their decision-making.
5. I frequently participate in church programs or services that align with its vision and values.
6. I have a clear understanding of the vision of our church and how it relates to my role as a leader.
7. It is important for the church's leadership team to actively seek to align its decision-making and actions with the values of our church.
8. I have a clear understanding of measuring the effectiveness of the church's implementation of its vision and values.

9. I am confident in my ability to explain EACC's vision and values to others.
10. I believe that personal growth and development are important for effective church leadership.
11. I understand the needs and challenges of our community and how they relate to the vision of our church.
12. I continually work to improve my leadership skills and abilities.
13. I am well-informed about the biblical and theological foundations of EACC's vision and values.
14. I understand how to align church resources with its vision and values.
15. Clear and well-communicated values are essential for effective church leadership.
16. I have confidence in the ability of our church's leadership team to lead us toward-realizing the vision of our church.
17. I believe that the church's resources (e.g., time, money, personnel) should be aligned with its vision and values.
18. The church's vision and values foster a sense of belonging and community within me.
19. I prioritize the spiritual growth and development of the church activists over their ministry.
20. I actively seek to align my actions with the vision of our church.
21. I actively try to align my actions and decisions with the church's vision.
22. I frequently review the church's vision and values before designing and launching a ministry program.
23. I advocate for the church's vision and values in my community.
24. I often engage in personal spiritual practices that reflect the church's vision.

25. I contribute my time and talents to help our church realize its vision.
26. I actively seek feedback from others to improve my effectiveness as a leader in our church.
27. Please describe how your understanding of EACC's Vision informs/shapes your own life and leadership in ministry.

**APPENDIX B****Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Post-Test Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to gauge our current understanding of serving with a clear vision and values. Please take a few minutes to respond to these questions. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers when filling out a survey. Your answers will be kept confidential, and no one will know the identity of the person filling out the survey. Thank you for your participation!

1. Age: 18-35/ 36-50/ 51-65/ 66 or older
2. How long have you served as a board member?

4 = Strongly Agree  
3 = Agree  
2 = Disagree  
1 = Strongly Disagree

Using the scale above, please rate the following statements:

3. It is very important for church leaders to prioritize upholding the values of our church in their decision-making.
4. I frequently participate in church programs or services that align with its vision and values.
5. I have a clear understanding of the vision of our church and how it relates to my role as a leader.
6. It is important for the church's leadership team to actively seek to align its decision-making and actions with the values of our church.
7. I have a clear understanding of measuring the effectiveness of the church's implementation of its vision and values.
8. I am confident in my ability to explain EACC's vision and values to others.

9. I believe that personal growth and development are important for effective church leadership.
10. I understand the needs and challenges of our community and how they relate to the vision of our church.
11. I am committed to continually improving my leadership skills and abilities.
12. I am well-informed about the biblical and theological foundations of EACC's vision and values.
13. I understand how to align church resources with its vision and values.
14. Clear and well-communicated values are essential for effective church leadership.
15. I have confidence in the ability of our church's leadership team to lead us toward-realizing the vision of our church.
16. I believe that the church's resources (e.g., time, money, personnel) should be aligned with its vision and values.
17. The church's vision and values foster a sense of belonging and community within me.
18. I prioritize the spiritual growth and development of the church activists over their ministry.
19. I actively seek to align my actions with the vision of our church.
20. I actively try to align my actions and decisions with the church's vision.
21. I frequently review the church's vision and values before designing and launching a ministry program.
22. I am willing to advocate for the church's vision and values in my community.
23. I often engage in personal spiritual practices that reflect the church's vision.
24. I am willing to contribute my time and talents to help our church realize its vision.

25. I actively seek feedback from others to improve my effectiveness as a leader in our church.

26. Please describe how your understanding of EACC's V&V informs/shapes your own life and leadership in ministry.

**APPENDIX C****Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) Focus Group Questions**

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “It is all a blur” and 10 being “I’m ready to bring the vision into reality!” How would you rate the LDW workshops you just experienced? Explain your number.
2. Did you find a clear understanding of how to serve with a clear vision and values during the LDW workshops?
3. Before the LDW workshop teachings, what was your attitude toward the church vision: excitement, trepidation, indifference, curiosity, or something else?
4. What about the LDW workshops experience contributed to your knowledge about serving with a clear vision and values?
5. What did you like best, enjoy most, or what was least enjoyable about the LDW workshops?
6. What would you identify as the most significant part of the four-session LDW workshops towards your growth in serving with a clear vision and values?
7. What was the least helpful part of the LDW workshops?
8. Was there anything that you learned from the LDW workshops, that you have or want to incorporate into your ministry?
9. How have the LDW workshop teachings changed your view of the church’s vision and values?
10. Do you think the LDW workshop teachings would help EACC board members to prepare programs that are aligned with the church’s vision and values? If so, how?



## APPENDIX D

### INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

#### ***LEADING WITH A CLEAR VISION AND VALUES***

You are invited to be in a research study being done by **HANSUN a doctoral student** from Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you are an active GKA Elyon Pregolan Bunder ministry board member.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to fill out two surveys, attend four teaching sessions, and may be invited to a focus group, and/or interview. Both surveys will take about 10 minutes, and the teaching sessions will be 60-90 minutes each. If you are a part of the focus group, you can expect about a 60-minute duration. If you are invited to be in an interview, you can expect a 30-minute interview.

If anyone else is given information about you through this study, they will not know your name. A number or initials will be used instead of your name. An audio recording device will be used during the focus group and interviews. All personal data accrued through this process will be protected and confidential. Within 12 months of the student's graduation, all personal data will be deleted and destroyed. There will be three research assistants who have been trained and certified by PHRP (Protecting Human Research Participants) for ethical understanding and confidentiality purposes.

Although confidentiality will be encouraged within the study group, it cannot be guaranteed due to the presence of other participants in the study.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please tell the Asbury Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry department who can be reached at [dmin.office@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:dmin.office@asburyseminary.edu).

You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time without penalty. If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Hansun at [dhs.sun@gmail.com](mailto:dhs.sun@gmail.com).

Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you and that you want to be in the study. Do not sign the paper if you do not want to be in the study. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

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Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

---

Date Signed

**APPENDIX E**  
**PROJECT PERMISSION LETTER**

Warmest Greetings!

I would like to ask your permission to allow me to conduct a field project among the board members of each ministry department of GKA Elyon or Elyon Abdiel Christian Church Pregolan Bunder. This is in view with my dissertation, entitled, “Leading With a Clear Vision And Values”.

The survey would last only about 10-15 minutes and would be arranged at a time convenient to the participant’s schedule. The field project will include four courses, and a focus group held on an agreed schedule. Participation in the project is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. All information provided will be kept in utmost confidentiality and will be used only for academic purposes. The names of the respondents will not appear in any thesis or publications resulting from this study unless agreed to.

If you agree, kindly sign below acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this project at the church and return the signed form in an enclosed envelope.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your interest and assistance with this research.

Sincerely,

HANSUN FAM

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_

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