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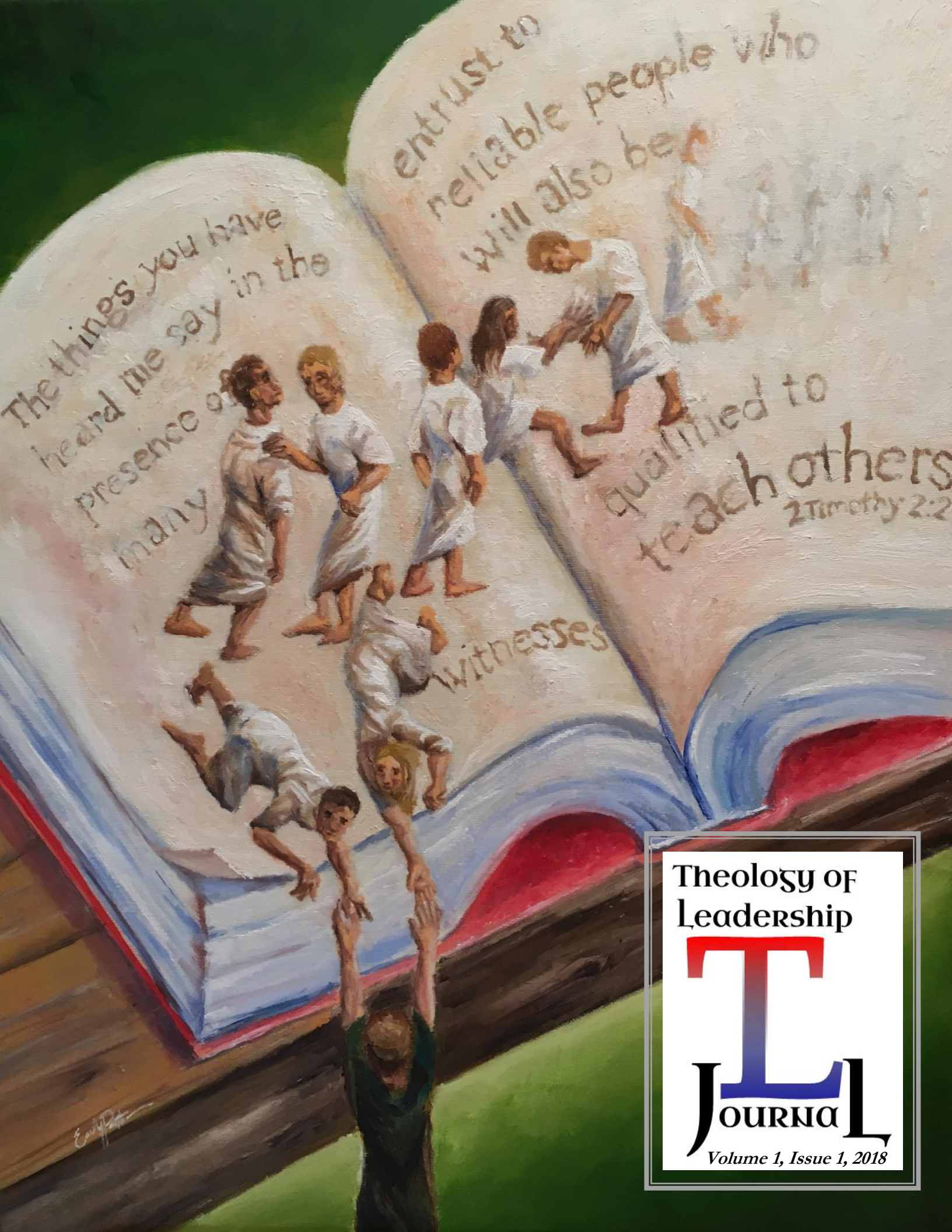
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The things you have heard me say in the presence of many

entrust to reliable people who will also be

qualified to teach others  
2 Timothy 2:2

witnesses

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# JESUS' CROSS-CULTURAL MODEL OF 'LEADER AS SERVANT' IN LUKE 22:24-30

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**ABSTRACT:** This article presents a model of leadership proposed by Jesus that contributes to outstanding leadership in cultures throughout the world. A review of the literature on servant leadership and power distance reveal that although resisted, servant leadership is a desired and appropriate form of leadership even in cultures with high power distance. A socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke 22:24-30 is presented focusing on Jesus' command to 'lead as a servant'. The modern-day conception of servant leadership is found to parallel Jesus' teaching of leader as servant. Power distance, one of the dimensions in the GLOBE Study (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007), relates directly to Jesus' teaching on leadership, and the GLOBE Study confirms that Jesus' form of 'leader as servant' is appropriate to use in cultures across the world and that leaders worldwide desire more of this form of leadership.

**KEYWORDS:** *Leadership, Power, Influence, Power Distance, Counter-cultural*

## Jesus' Cross-Cultural Model of 'Leader as Servant' in Luke 22:24-30

Outstanding leadership is a coveted and rare commodity in our world. Servant leadership is a form of leadership that has recently gained popularity, although many of its characteristics can be found exhibited as early as Jesus. His model of 'leader as servant' (Lk 22:26, Jn 13:13-17), and the contemporary notion of servant leadership, contribute to outstanding leadership that is effective across cultures. The culture in which Jesus lived embraced a patron-client cultural construct which supports an unequal power distribution amongst members of society (deSilva, 2004), known as a high power distance culture. Power distance and servant leadership relate directly to Jesus' teaching on leadership in Luke 22:24-30. This article presents a socio-rhetorical interpretation of Luke 22:24-30 illuminating an approach to the 'leader as servant.' This model of exceptional leadership can be used across many cultures irrespective of power distance. Research on servant leadership and power distance seems to confirm that Jesus' form of leadership is appropriate to use in cultures across the world, contributing to outstanding leadership that is desirable to people all over the world.

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### SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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Greenleaf coined the concept of servant leadership in the 1970's, which has now become a popular contemporary leadership theory. Greenleaf applied his belief about the value of serving others first to his career of 40 years as a manager at AT&T and then started writing about this form of leadership (Greenleaf, 2002). According to Greenleaf, servant leaders are those who are first and foremost interested in serving those around them. Through this act of serving they become a leader. The purpose of this service is for others to grow in service and in leadership. Even though servant leadership has been a recognized form of leadership since the 1970's, research on the model only began in earnest in 1999 (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999) and is still in its early stages. There are numerous definitions of servant leadership and many instruments that measure various attributes of servant leaders (Parris & Peachey, 2012). Scholars have not yet reached consensus on the definition or theoretical model of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). Although there are many proposed attributes of a servant leader, the basic foundational definition that Greenleaf offered continues to be central in the present research and clearly resonates with Jesus' conception of 'leader as servant'. Greenleaf states the main characteristics of a servant leader are having a foundational desire to serve and "to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (p. 27). The many definitions of servant leadership in the literature (Aarum Andersen, 2009) keep this one aspect of servant leadership in tact as well. Servant leadership is presented as a form of leadership that is linked to ethics, virtues and morality as well as a way to serve, rather than as a way to wield power over people (Parris & Peachey, 2012).

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### POWER DISTANCE

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One cultural attribute that may cause people and cultural groups to resist servant leadership is power distance. The concept of power distance was first studied by Hofstede (1980) and later his research was extended and deepened by the GLOBE study. The GLOBE study consists of a two-part study done over the course of 17 years and published in two volumes (Chhokar et al., 2007; House, 2004). The first study established cultural attributes and how leadership is effected by culture. It collected qualitative data from 17,300 mid-level managers (House). The second GLOBE Study is a significant research project conducted in 25 countries collecting detailed cultural analysis

producing “intensive qualitative and quantitative research in each of 25 societal cultures (in 62 countries) relevant to the enactment of highly effective leadership” (Chhokar et al., p. xxxi). The 62 countries that were studied were clustered into ten cultural clusters, each cluster includes countries that have similar cultural qualities (Chhokar et al.). The authors present nine dimensions of leadership between leaders and employees in each culture. The leaders and employees rated the actual prevalence of each dimension of leadership in their culture (‘as is’), and they also rated the desired (‘should be’) prevalence of each dimension (Chhokar et al.). The cultural dimensions studied by GLOBE are: performance orientation, assertiveness, future orientation, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (House). The dimension most directly relevant to Luke 22:24-30 is power distance; “the degree to which members of an organization and society encourage and reward unequal distribution of power with greater power at higher levels” (Chhokar et al., p. 4). Of the ten country clusters studied, the scores for power distance fell between 3.9 and 5.9 on a seven-point scale, with one being low and seven being high (Chhokar et al.). The study found that in relation to power distance, “scores of all countries on ‘should be’ were lower than ‘as is’, showing a common desire that people in all these countries aspire for more equality than they currently have” (Chhokar et al., p. 887). The cultures with the highest power distance ratings were the ones that desired to have the lowest ratings. For example, Sub-Sahara Africa had the highest rating of 5.9, and their desired, or ideal power distance was as low as 2.8 (Chhokar et al.). In other words, every culture that was studied, whether they had an actual score of moderate or high power distance, believed that leadership in their country would be improved by having lower power distance in their leadership.

## SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND POWER DISTANCE IN THE LITERATURE

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A review of the literature on servant leadership and power distance shows that some empirical research has been conducted in this nexus. Although servant leadership research is still in the foundational stages, the preliminary research shows a strong interest in its implementation in cross-cultural environments: of 39 empirical studies on servant leadership, 11 countries were represented (Parris & Peachey, 2012). A few of these studies specifically considered the cultural construct of power distance along with servant leadership.

In an article based on the GLOBE study, Mittal and Dorfman (2012) consider the level of endorsement of five aspects of servant leadership (egalitarianism, moral integrity, empowering, empathy and humility) in each of the ten cultural clusters. They found that all five aspects of servant leadership were endorsed in all cultures, however, different cultures placed different value on each aspect. Each culture valued the qualities of a servant leader, but the qualities that people valued the most depended on their cultural perspectives. Power distance was specifically considered in this study. It was the one cultural aspect that was negatively correlated with all aspects of servant leadership. In other words, all cultures valued all aspects of servant leadership but power distance had the most negative effect on the relationship.

A study examining servant leadership in Ghana showed that Ghanaians experienced servant leadership less than their American counterparts (Hale & Fields, 2007). This finding is consistent with the notion that high power distance cultures resist servant leadership and therefore enact it less frequently. However, the study found that the three elements of servant leadership that were measured (service, humility and vision) all contributed to leader effectiveness for the Ghanaians.

This study reiterates the GLOBE study proposition which proposes that high power distance cultures will not naturally enact servant leadership, but that followers still value the elements of a servant leader and see them as contributing to effective leadership.

Another study theorizes about the appropriateness of servant leadership when considering Hofstede's cultural characteristics. Hannay (2009) proposes that high power distance cultures will not naturally gravitate towards servant leadership since it has a high level of empowerment which is innately in opposition to high power distance. This proposition aligns with the findings in the GLOBE study about power distance and leadership. Hannay fails to note that these cultures often desire and value the characteristics of servant leadership even though they do not naturally enact them in their culture.

In a quantitative study of servant leadership in two countries, "servant leadership was perceived to be culturally universal in Australia and Indonesia. However, the different attributes perceived to make up servant leadership were not all rated as equally important" (Pekerti & Sendjaya, 2010, p. 754). In this detailed study, servant leadership was valued in Australia (moderate power distance) and Indonesia (high power distance) but the cultural values in each culture influenced which attributes of servant leadership were most valued. Although both cultures valued servant leadership, they valued some attributes of servant leadership more highly than others and this varied according to cultural values.

Through a qualitative study of Peruvian pastors, Irving (2010) finds that the pastors highly valued servant leadership and saw it as an effective form of leadership. Irving also found servant leadership to be difficult to implement in Peruvian culture and cited power distance as the major obstacle. This is a modern-day example of Christian pastors in a high power distance culture struggling with the servant leadership Jesus taught in Luke. Although these pastors believe in Jesus' servant leadership and value it greatly, they struggle to find ways to implement it in a high power distance culture where it goes against the culturally determined norms of leadership. This article gives a modern-day example of the difficulty of enacting servant leadership in a high power distance culture while noting that people within the culture deeply value this form of leadership.

These studies illustrate that servant leadership is universally valued, although different aspects of servant leadership are valued differently in each culture. Also, there is consistent evidence that high power distance cultures resist servant leadership even though they simultaneously value its characteristics. The book of Luke is situated in a high power distance culture (deSilvia, 2004), and Jesus' message of leading as a servant certainly challenges cultural norms.

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## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF LUKE

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Luke, the Gospel author, was likely a medical doctor, certainly an educated man, with a broad vocabulary (Bock, 1994; Lange & Schaff, 2008). He was also most likely a Gentile, possibly Syrian or Greco-Roman, but surely not a Jew (Bock, 1994). Although suggested dates for the authorship of Luke range from 60 to 170, most scholars date these books between 70-95 (Bock, 1994; Esler, 1989; Keener & Press, 2014). Luke recognizes that there are other forms of the Gospel written (Stein, 1992), and his self-proclaimed reason for writing this Gospel is, "I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you...so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed" (Lk 1:3).

Perhaps Luke was aware that as the early church was forming, there were many non-Jewish Christians who would benefit from his non-Jewish perspective on the life of Jesus.

At the time Luke was written, the church was still forming (Bock, 1994; deSilva, 2004). Jesus' life and sayings had been preserved in an oral tradition, and the four gospels were written to formalize and regularize Jesus' teaching (Guthrie, 1990). The early church had many questions about how to interpret and live out Jesus' teachings and needed to understand the link between their past heritage and this new Christianity (Bock, 1994). Luke was especially concerned with forming a new Christian community with Jews and Gentiles together, where they were treated as equals (Bock). Gentile Christians desired to understand how to interact with the Jewish community and with other non-Christian Gentiles (deSilva, 2004). Luke wrote his account of Jesus' life primarily to the non-Jewish Christians, (Gaebelein, Carson, Liefeld, & Wessel, 2007) and the teaching on leadership in Luke 22:24-30 is especially informative to the new Church, both Jews and non-Jews, on how to interact and lead as they share the good news with people outside the church. Luke was particularly concerned with highlighting the person and teaching of Jesus, especially for the purpose of delineating how Christians should live now that Jesus is physically absent (Bock).

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## EXEGESIS OF LUKE 22:24-30

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This exegetical analysis follows a socio-rhetorical interpretation (Robbins, 1996). Socio-rhetorical analysis helps the reader to see and understand the cultural contexts of the writing and facilitate deeper understanding of the text. The exegesis begins with textual analysis, presenting a textual interpretation of the passage. The interpretation then moves to consider a common social and cultural topic, which helps the reader understand Jesus' message about leadership in the Christian community. For this research, the topic that is focused on is the patron-client cultural norm.

In Luke 22:24-30 the disciples argued about who is the greatest among them, and Jesus urged them to "become like the youngest" and to "lead as one who serves" (Lk 22:25). This is not the first time this argument erupted amongst the disciples. In Luke 9:46, just after Jesus told them that he would die, they had a heated discussion over who was the greatest. In this instance, Jesus told them that whoever welcomes a child welcomes Jesus; and whoever welcomes Jesus, welcomes God. He concluded with the statement "for it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest" (Lk 9:46). This teaching on leading as a servant is repeated twice in Luke (22:26; 9:46), and the disciples' desire to be the greatest, and to fight about it, seems to be a frequent occurrence (Nolland, 1993). The text of Luke 22:24-30 is best understood in three parts: 1) a dispute that arose among the disciples, 2) Jesus' answer to the dispute, and 3) Jesus reiterating his promise of a Kingdom.

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### A DISPUTE THAT AROSE AMONG THE DISCIPLES

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In verse 24, a dispute arose amongst the disciples concerning who was greatest among them. The timing of this dispute is astonishing (Craig, 1990). Jesus and his disciples had just finished a Passover meal in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and revealed to them that he would suffer and die (Lk 22:7-20). They also just finished a conversation about who would betray Jesus, which was likely heated and upsetting (Lk 22:21-23). On the cusp of Jesus' betrayal and suffering (Lk 22:15-16), just after the horrifying news that one of them would betray Jesus (Lk 22:21-23), the

disciples' thoughts turned to their own desires for greatness (Lk 22:24). Jesus' conversation then turned from his own future to discussing issues of discipleship with his disciples – first betrayal, then the strife among the disciples to prove their own importance and prominence (Lk 22:24-30) (Fitzmeyer, 1985). Richards (1987) notes, “Jesus' disciples were insensitive. They did not understand what Christ was saying, nor were they aware of His sorrow. Instead they fell to arguing about who would be greatest in the glory days to come” (p. 698). Instead of focusing on the event that would soon become the central event of history, they were concerned about how to promote themselves over the other disciples.

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### JESUS' ANSWER TO THE DISPUTE

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Jesus began by showcasing the present social system of leadership by noting that kings lord their power over their subjects and yet enjoy being called benefactors (Lk 22:25). DeSilva (2004) argues that this verse “attests to the appropriateness of describing the ancient Mediterranean world as a patronal society” (p. 130). The patronal (or patron-client) society of the Greco-Roman world dictated social relationships (deSilva). A few rich people held the bulk of the resources, and most citizens were dependent on a patron to provide for them (deSilva). The patron-client social structure placed expectations on wealthy rulers to share favors with poor clients, and the clients in turn were to offer gratitude in the form of “honor, loyalty, testimony and service to the patron” (deSilva, p. 136). Clients were expected to act loyally to the patron, even to the point of risking their own health, positions, or even their lives (deSilva). DeSilva posits that social cohesion was maintained in large part by these mutual bonds of indebtedness and favor created by the patron-client society. In verse 25, Jesus points out the raw truth that typical rulers used their patronal authority and power in ways that were not necessarily beneficial to the citizens (or clients), but rather benefited only themselves. They even called themselves benefactors and enjoyed others calling them benefactors realizing that the point of patronal leadership is to benefit the people, but the title is only to cover their own selfish use of power.

In the patron-client social structure that was prevalent, patrons who possessed power and wealth and clients who acted in complete gratitude was not only acceptable, but it was the expected and appropriate social relationship. The whole society was built on these very relationships (deSilva, 2004). Since all relationships were built within the patronage system, not only the most rich and powerful but the poorest fit these categories. All of society was a web of patron-client relationships on different scales. However, Jesus empathetically stated that the disciples were not to rule from the patron-client model but rather those in the highest positions must become like those in the lowest positions, and leaders need to become like those who serve (Lk 22:26). In this society, the greatest always had authority over the youngest, and the leader was always over the one who served. Thus, Jesus commands the greatest and wisest among them to be humble. This would be exhibited both in position and actions – asking the most powerful to sit with, eat with, relate to and otherwise equate oneself with the servant, or the youngest, among them. Jesus' words go directly against deeply ingrained cultural norms. Jesus asks the disciples to change their patterns of relationship, to change the way they interact, and to follow his directives and example to lead as a servant rather than follow the norms of culture.

Jesus' words about how leaders ought to act surely would have brought pause. Did Jesus denounce leadership? Or did he denounce the cultural norms for leadership? Certainly, Jesus was advocating a unique kind of leadership where the rulers do not ‘lord it over’ but rather lead through service and humility. There is no cultural parallel in the patron-client society for leading from a place



of service. For the disciples, this directive would seem to be counter-cultural and counter-intuitive. Lange and Schaff (2008) notes that Jesus was not denouncing all distinction of office and power amongst Christians, but rather was recognizing an aristocracy that goes beyond power, one that is based on humility. Jesus did not only demand this servant leadership of his disciples, but he lived out an example for them to follow. Jesus did not criticize the gentile rulers' power or the way that society adopted the patron-client relationships – rather he emphasized that this use of power is contrary to the way that power ought to be used in the faith community (Esler, 1989). Jesus instituted leadership with power coming from humility and service, which he juxtaposed with power used harshly and for the benefit of the ruler. Jesus made a clear distinction here between how 'they' use power (the culturally approved patron-client power structure) and how 'we' use power (Esler). Jesus challenges the culturally accepted power usage of leaders, and sets a new precedent for how the disciples use the power of leadership. This distinction has ramifications for the early church. The structure of leadership in the church, the methods used for evangelism, and the proper ways to treat one another on a daily basis are called into question. Jesus does not accept cultural norms as a sufficient base for creating the structures of the church. He gives them a new, counter-cultural model of leadership to use in establishing the early church.

Jesus reiterates his message by asking the disciples "who is greater, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves?" (Lk 22:27) The answer would be obvious to anyone enmeshed in a patron-saint society. Jesus recognizes the cultural constructs of greatness, even reaffirms them to his disciples. But then he reveals that his cultural construct is different, "But I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). Jesus uses himself as a model since he has shown the disciples his strong and powerful leadership over the last year and disciples know him as leader, but they also know him as servant (Nolland, 1993). Through his words and actions Jesus shows them how to lead powerfully through service and humility. Jesus gives a clear call to his disciples, the early church, and Christian leaders today to go against the power constructs of the culture, and to embrace leading as a servant.

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### JESUS REITERATING HIS PROMISE OF A KINGDOM

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In the third and concluding part of the passage Jesus confirms with his disciples that he is indeed giving them a Kingdom in which they will have a proper place. Jesus begins by appreciating his disciples for standing by him in trials. Then he says, "I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a Kingdom" (Lk 22:29). In this statement, Jesus is actually responding to the disciples for their argument over greatness. He establishes that taking on a servant role, a 'humiliating' posture, is the way to become great, and will culminate in them receiving the gift of the Kingdom (Nolland, 1993). Also, in this verse the word 'confer' has the connotation of a dying man giving over something important (Lange & Schaff, 2008). This makes it clear that the disciples are not earning nor owning the Kingdom, but rather accepting Jesus' gift of the Kingdom. Jesus himself was given the Kingdom, just as he is giving it to the disciples. The gift of the Kingdom is not a new concept to the disciples, rather it is a reminder to stay focused on serving here on earth because the Kingdom is real and it is the final reward (Lange & Schaff). His focus on giving the disciples a 'proper place' in his Kingdom shows Jesus' concern for the disciples' need for social order. He implies that his Kingdom will have a social order where each person has a 'proper place' even though Jesus' social order is completely different than the patron-client model.

Furthermore, Jesus highlights the difference between the values of this world and kingdom values. While the world defines greatness as having power and being served, in the kingdom greatness is found by being a servant to all (Stein, 1992). In the Jewish culture, and in our cultures

today, power and greatness are culturally defined, and are generally in opposition to the position of a servant. Jesus is clear that greatness comes through service and humility, not through authority and power (Bock, 1994).

In this passage, Jesus confronts cultural norms and presents a culturally challenging alternative to power and greatness: leading as a servant. Today in the US culture and in cultures across the world leadership is largely defined by power and greatness. The notion of 'leader as servant' that Jesus proposes challenges all cultural norms of leadership.

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### POWER DISTANCE IN LUKE 22:24-30

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Jesus refers to the Gentile leaders' leadership as 'lording it over' their subordinates. This is a perfect example of leadership in a high power distance culture combined with a low humane orientation. Humane orientation is another cultural factor measured by the GLOBE study and it indicates "the degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others" (House et al, 2004, p. 569). When the Gentile leaders lorded it over their subjects they were practicing not only high power distance, but also low humane orientation, and when combined, these cultural characteristics make it easier for leaderships to become oppressive, domineering and inhumane.

The editors of the GLOBE study indicate that in high power distance leadership, there is a hierarchy through which power and resources are allocated versus using an egalitarian distribution (Chhokar et al., 2007). Also, there is a large social and economic distance between people of different strata (Chhokar et al.). The patron-client culture is an example of an extremely high power distance culture. The Gentile leaders were operating from a high power distance leadership model, and the patronage structure was based on high power distance. In today's world, it is much the same. A relatively high power distance was reported in all of the countries studied by GLOBE, even though not all those cultures embrace the patronage system (Chhokar et al.). The reality is moderate to high power distance leadership is the leadership paradigm used in businesses and organizations across the globe.

Jesus instructs his disciples not to lead as the culture dictates, but he instead institutes leadership among Christians in which the greatest becomes like the youngest, and the leader is like the one who serves. In power distance terms, Jesus is advocating a very low power distance style of leadership, one that shook them out of their cultural norms and forced them to value the lowest members of society. Approaching leadership from a lower power distance and higher humane orientation more naturally supports servant leadership. Jesus' directive to 'become like the youngest' and 'lead as one who serves' are actions that, when carried out by leaders, will greatly reduce the power distance of their leadership (Yukl, 2009) while increasing their humane orientation, their value and respect for every person. Christian leaders then and now need to let go of the power usage dictated by cultural norms and relate to, get to know, and even serve the 'youngest' among them. The very act of serving and being peers with the 'youngest' breaks power distance and brings the leader down to the level of everyone else in the organization. This is not saying that leaders give up their position of leadership, but rather that they lead from the stance of a servant.

The GLOBE study has confirmed that Jesus' proposed 'leadership through service' style is relevant and effective today. Every culture that was studied indicated that the present power distance used in leadership is higher than what they desire it to be (Chhokar et al., 2007 fig. A1). In effect,

culture has a tendency to create high power distance leadership, but people actually want to be treated in a low power distance way. Every single culture studied desires to have lower power distance leadership and believes that it would be better for their organization (Chhokar et al.). In fact, the three leadership styles that were found to contribute to positive leadership in organizations across all cultures (charismatic/value based leadership, team oriented leadership, and participative leadership) all use a low power distance leadership style (Chhokar et al.). The two leadership styles that were seen as inhibiting positive leadership or as having no impact on leadership (autonomous leadership and self-protective leadership) are both high power distance leadership models (Chhokar et al.). Thus, the GLOBE study confirms that Jesus was indeed right about low power distance relationships contributing to outstanding leadership. Jesus' exhortation to 'lead as one who serves' is relevant to leaders across the world and, according to GLOBE, it contributes to effective leadership in all cultures studied. Jesus' conception of servant leadership is consistent with the modern-day research on servant leadership which is presented as a way to serve people, rather than as a way to wield power over people.

Yukl (2009) sums up the research and theory of power and influence by saying, "the manner in which a leader exercises power largely determines whether it results in enthusiastic commitment, passive compliance, or stubborn resistance" (p. 478). He posits that the research points towards effective leadership using power in a "subtle, easy fashion that minimizes status differentials and avoids threatening the self-esteem of others" (2009, p. 494). He goes on to explain that effective leaders empower followers through their use of power and they use their power in ethical ways (Yukl). From Yukl's summary of the use of power and influence in leadership theory we can deduce that Jesus' example of 'leader as servant', and the way that he instructs his disciples to use power, is a highly effective form of leadership.

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#### AN EXAMPLE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN A HIGH POWER DISTANCE CULTURE

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There is a general hesitation to teach 'western' management or leadership theories in a cross-cultural context. Cultural sensitivity, as well as encouraging leadership theory to emerge from cultural relevancy are important considerations. Servant leadership can be seen as a western leadership theory that has risen up in part because of the western value of lower power distance. However, this exegetical study of Jesus' form of servant leadership shows that this is not a western leadership theory at all. It originates within a high power distance culture.

I spent 18 years working as a missionary in Rwanda, Africa. One of my contributions was to initiate a holistic development program created by the Navigators called *Discipling for Development* (Navigators, 2017). I spoke the language fluently and had worked closely with Rwandans for about 8 years when I began doing holistic development, so I understood the culture fairly well. I realized from my experience that the culture was similar to a patron-client society in that it was starkly stratified (high power distance), and that people on the upper and lower levels of society had prescribed obligations to one another. As a white woman who was a missionary, my job was to help people, and to act appropriately to my higher station in the society. This meant using a higher power kind of leadership (more authoritarian) and providing for people in a paternalistic style of leadership. These forms of leadership did not fit my personal leadership style, nor my values and I did not believe they would lead to meaningful life transformation or sustainable development. My prerogative was to break the culturally assigned high power distance roles and work with and among communities as a servant leader.

This was not an easy task. When I first stepped foot into a new community my role as leader was clear to everyone – and I spent my first four to six months in each community convincing them that I was not going to act out my assigned role, neither was I going to accept their assigned role. When I started in a new community they expected me to do all the talking. I created times for us to dialog together instead. They expected me to provide them with resources, and make decisions for them. Instead I helped them to identify their own felt needs, as well as the resources they had as a community and helped them to think through how they could solve their problems with the resources they had. The difficult part of this was that it took time. Breaking cultural leadership norms means that you cannot move ahead quickly, because they are unsure how to interact with a servant leader. Also, it meant that while I was in the process of breaking the cultural ideal of leadership, I could not in any way step into their leadership expectations. If I stepped in to take over and solve their problem for them, even once, they would continue to expect me to conform to the normal cultural patterns. I had to stick fastidiously to the servant leadership empowering model until they decided to change their cultural interactions with me. This often would take 6 months to a year, and even then, they would often slip back into having expectations of me that I was unwilling to fulfill. It was continuous work to remain in servant leadership mode and not to be drawn into the strong cultural pull towards higher power distance forms of leadership.

Although it was a long and arduous task to break the cultural norms of relationships and lead through a servant leader paradigm, it was well worth it. Today I have left Rwanda and the work there still is thriving. People have taken ownership, not looking to me to make the decisions and provide the resources. They were quickly able to take over leadership since they had been empowered from the beginning to make decisions and lead alongside me. Although I spent 3-5 years in a community helping them to have the capacity to lead themselves through his holistic development process, now those communities continue in their upward spiral of transformation and sustainable development without me. They can continue this indefinitely since they have the knowledge and skills to keep it going. Not only that, their children grow up learning this new paradigm of leadership and development as a way of life. Servant leadership helped me to serve the greatest interest of the people and communities that I worked with.

Some people working in a high power distance culture may not have years of cultural experience and mastery of language. Although this makes ministry through a servant leadership paradigm more difficult, it is still possible. I encourage those who work overseas to become familiar with cultural expectations and to follow cultural norms and expectations closely in most instances to show deep respect for the people and their culture. However, when it comes to leading, the cross-cultural leader needs to carefully consider the cultural expectations of leadership and decided if leading in a culturally appropriate way will result in a form of leadership that is less fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others. The servant leadership attitude that Jesus proposes to his disciples cuts through many cultural expectations and will challenge the cultural norms of leadership in most cultural contexts. The cross cultural Christian leader needs to be willing be in the uncomfortable place of going against the cultural grain to act as a servant leader and to endure the cultural backlash from doing so. Servant leadership will create resistance in most cultures, and yet people also indicate their desire for and appreciation of servant leadership.

Jesus' form of low power distance leadership as presented in Luke 22:24-30 is an effective leadership model that ought to be taught to and implemented by leaders in cultures across the world. The GLOBE study, relevant research, and my personal experience confirm that Jesus' 'leader as servant' low power distance, high humane orientation leadership would be widely accepted as a form

of outstanding leadership across cultures (Chhokar et al., 2007). Even when cultures have a socially accepted high power distance, Jesus asks his followers to act counter-culturally and operate from a low power distance stance and specifically to embrace leading from the standpoint of a servant. Jesus is asking Christian leaders, just as he asked his disciples, to boldly confront socially acceptable forms of power usage and leadership and to learn to lead as a servant. He reminds us that the kingdom is real, that we will have a place in the kingdom, but for now we are to live as leaders who serve.

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