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MAGNUS CORPUS: PAUL'S DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

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In this study, an epistolary genre analysis of the Apostle Paul's leadership of the Corinthian community explores his preference for Distributed Leadership. Faced with the challenge of leading this community through adversity, Paul demonstrated a preference for Distributed Leadership by encouraging collective identity and greater engagement for cultivating organizational maturity. A thorough review of Paul's approach and the situational realities of the Corinthian context suggest metaphors can be powerful rhetorical tools for developing organizational culture open to Distributed Leadership. Ultimately, recommendations for further study are offered for the continued study of Distributed Leadership and its application in the contemporary context.

Magnus Corpus: Distributed Leadership

Much has been written regarding the Kingdom of God (Willis, 2020). Jesus spoke of nothing more, using parables routinely to convey the nature of this kingdom (Lohfink, 2021). As he ascended into Heaven, he entrusted this kingdom and its expansion to his apostles, promising them the Holy Spirit for the mission (Acts 1:6-9). To Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-12), Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1-8), and even to the ends of the earth (Acts 8:26-40), followers of Jesus carried the good news, and the Kingdom of God spread. Today, the Christian faith exists in 232 countries worldwide (Pew Research Center, 2020).

The growth and expansion of this movement Jesus started roughly 2,000 years ago represent an extraordinary feat. How this band of "unschooled, ordinary men" managed to lead this effort astonished even the opponents of their time (*New International Version*, 2011/1984, Acts 4:13) and should garner the attention of organizational leadership scholars in our day. The Apostle Paul emerged as an

important voice in the spread of this movement, working as a missionary and a church planter throughout the Roman Empire (Schnabel, 2010). Along the way, presented with the task of communicating the nature of this new community and its way of life, Paul used persuasive language as he introduced God's design for the Christian community, a strategy for growth that would lead to the fledgling movement's emergence as a mature, diverse, organization (Wright, 2013). Paul introduced a struggling community of Christians in Corinth to a different philosophy for fellowship, God's plan for them as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31).

One could argue the vision Paul cast for the life of the early church introduced an alternative means to maturation and growth, a preference for Distributed Leadership (DL), an orientation for positive organizational outcomes which has gained momentum more recently since the turn of the century (Bolden, 2011). In the last twenty years, most of the scholarly attention given to DL has resulted in descriptive and normative characterizations of the construct, but Bolden (2011) called for research focused on the rhetorical significance of the approach in the development of collective identity and engagement. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found DL one of the six key factors shaping the future of leadership (CIPD, 2014). In this study, an exploration of the wisdom of scripture is offered to contemporary organizational leadership students, an invitation to appreciate the proven DL wisdom espoused by Paul for cultivating collective identity, greater engagement, and organizational maturity. Following Osborne's (2006) recommendations for epistolary genre analysis, this study represents a commitment to a thorough investigation of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 with an expectation it will enhance understanding of DL and greater clarity regarding the leadership of organizations for greater positive outcomes.

Genre Analysis

Interpreting scripture effectively requires attention to a text's unique composition. Genre analysis begins with an appreciation for distinct types of literature marked by common characteristics, a recognition followed by applying hermeneutical principles most appropriate for their understanding (Osborne, 2006). Poetry, prophecy, and epistles of the biblical text demand nuanced treatment from readers. According to Osborne (2006), reading a New Testament epistle, like Paul's letter to the Corinthians, should involve five standard steps for genre analysis followed by additional attention first to the logical development of the argument, then to situational realities and subgenres present within the pericope. With an interest in organizational leadership and an evaluation of the context, grammar, semantics, syntax, and historical background, logical argument development, and situational realities of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, the following relevant observations occurred.

Context

According to Osborne (2006), the context of a literary text lies in its historical, logical, and rhetorical character. Polemical letters like those often written by Paul addressed a problem of some kind but left only contextual clues for us as contemporary latecomers to the scene. Context helps present-day readers recover an appropriate posture for reading ancient texts and attention to the epistle's composition's historical,

logical, and rhetorical distinctives. Greater clarity regarding Paul's authorial intent emerges as these realities enhance our contemporary perspective.

Historical Context

According to Powell (2018), Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was likely written in Ephesus sometime between A.D. 53 and 57. During this time, modern-day Greece existed as two Roman provinces, with Corinth serving as the capital of Achaia (Powell, 2018). Established by freed slaves about a century earlier, the city in Paul's day grew exceedingly prosperous due to its advantageous location between the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. Like many port cities, it held a reputation for wild living and licentious behavior (Johnson & Penner, 2002). According to Powell (2018), Corinth consisted of an ethnically and socio-economically diverse population. The historical context of the Corinthian church to which Paul addressed his letter presented unique challenges for organizational leadership, a context marked by extraordinary diversity and divergent behaviors (Johnson & Penner, 2002).

Logical Context

According to Osborne (2006), understanding the logical context of a pericope within an epistle must begin with a holistic view of the letter. As a polemical response to problems in the community, Paul's letter to the Corinthians can be understood as a triage for a body of believers struggling to survive together (Levison, 2018). Conceptualizing Paul's letter in this way, the following structure can be seen (Johnson & Penner, 2002):

Table 1

The First Letter to the Corinthians		
1 Corinthians 1:1-9	Greeting and thanksgiving	
1 Corinthians 1-4	The church of God	Addressing divisions within the community
1 Corinthians 5-10	The church in the world	Dealing with sexual immorality and legal disputes, responding to question about virginity and marriage, and providing guidance regarding food sacrificed to idols
1 Corinthians 11-14	The world in the church	Addressing problems in corporate worship
1 Corinthians 15	The church and the kingdom	Returning to the hope of the resurrection
1 Corinthians 16:1-4	Personal requests and final greeting	

Further attention to this text's place in the letter as part of Paul's polemic regarding the church's conduct when gathered for worship reveals Paul's concern for the community's

distinctive fellowship. Paul expected this community to operate differently, in a divinely appointed way.

Rhetorical Context

According to Osborne (2006), rhetorical techniques can help an author deliver a persuasive message to an audience. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he used several rhetorical conventions to persuade the community to a better way of life: collection relations, cause-effect relations, and description.

Paul utilized collection relations rhetoric extensively in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, first emphasizing the oneness of Christian community with a powerful reminder that one body and one Spirit established their unity (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Paul followed this persuasive point, emphasizing God as the one who placed each member and put the community together (1 Cor. 12:18, 24, 28). Additionally, Paul repeated the conviction that the Christian community should be marked by diversity and unity, many parts and one body (1 Cor. 12:12, 20). These intentional collection relations worked collectively to impress upon the Corinthians these essential truths.

Paul employed cause-effect relations rhetoric with great determination as well. To emphasize the truth that the community was a product of God's design, Paul asked three questions regarding this community of great purpose, and he was prepared to answer them all (1 Cor. 12:17-20). The questions effectively demonstrated the community's ignorance while emphasizing the good news of God's redemptive action. Paul met his questions with decisive answers, laying the foundation for a call to unity.

Finally, Paul also used the rhetoric of description to make his case to the Corinthian community. With remarkable effect, Paul compared the Christian community to a body with many parts. Though individual members might possess distinct qualities, characteristics, or capacities for action, they all belong to one and the same body (1 Cor. 12:12, 20). The absurdity of an ear asserting it does not belong to the body because it is not a hand casts the community's struggle for unity in an appropriately ridiculous light.

Grammar, Semantics, and Syntax

According to Osborne (2006), a spiraling engagement with the grammar, semantics, and syntax of a pericope can help a reader draw closer to an author's intended meaning. The linguistic character of a text, its grammar, semantics, and syntax all work together as part of an intentional delivery system. Evaluating each of these facets of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, a better understanding of Paul's approach to organizational leadership can be found.

Grammar

Attention to grammatical distinctives, the basic laws of language at work in a text's structural composition, can help the reader avoid misunderstandings and seize upon an author's intended message (Osborne, 2006). In the pericope under consideration regarding Paul's way with the community in Corinth, two relevant grammatical distinctives emerged. This first grammatical distinction of importance

concerns Paul's verb usage. Most of the verbs in the text point to the past or hypothetical actions until Paul brings his message to a climax in verse 27. There, Paul proclaims, "Now you are the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27). This dramatic shift in verb tense emphasizes Paul's discourse, priority to this conviction he longed to communicate. His verb usage effectively punctuated this truth that belonging was a reality that community members could experience in a present and powerful way.

Additionally, Paul's reliance on conditional propositions also contributed to the transmission of his message. Beginning with verse 15, Paul introduced five conditional statements in the next six verses, which worked together to build on the assertion that every community member had value (1 Cor. 12:15-20). This choice to grammatically structure his case with repetitive, conditional statements invited the members of the Corinthian community to wonder with Paul about their condition as a people placed by God for a purpose in the community (1 Cor 12:19). Grammatically, Paul repeated an important reality regarding God's involvement in the community's composition, insisting three times that God had placed members of the community as parts of the body, according to divine will. The choice to relay this conviction with the use of *etheto,* to arrange (1 Cor 12:18), *sunekerasen*, to compose (1 Cor 12:24), and *etheto* (1 Cor 12:28) again to communicate this reality, all aorist indicative verbs in their form, revealed Paul's understanding of the community's diversity as an act of God, a reality to be accepted as God's expressed will.

Semantics

According to Osborne (2006), semantics play a vital part in the transmission of meaning in an epistle as well. The words represent building blocks we must understand to receive an author's intended message. With attention to Paul's words for the community in Corinth, several words of critical importance require attention for clear interpretation. The Greek word for body (*soma* or *somatos*) occurs 17 times in this pericope, used more extensively here than anywhere else in scripture (Thayer & Smith, 1999). Semantically, the word, for Paul, possesses significant meaning. In the New Testament, Paul used *soma* 75 times and as a reference to the Christian community 33 times across four different letters (Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians). For Paul, *soma* seemed synonymous with the church as a living body of believers. According to Mitchell (1993), *soma* was commonly used in ancient political literature as a working metaphor. However, Paul seemed intent on using it to illustrate the community's alternative, counter-cultural way of life (Barton, 1997). According to Nessan (2012), Paul's repeated use of *soma* as a metaphor for the church as a body characterized the church as a community committed to unity and peace, holiness and Christlike character, stewardship, and mission.

Another word of semantic significance in this pericope relevant to our study is Paul's use of *melos* and *mela*, translated commonly as part and parts or member and members, respectively. Paul used this word a total of 18 times in these 20 verses. That accounts for more than half the 34 times the word occurs in the New Testament. For Paul, it seemed, the idea of membership was essential for an understanding of belonging to the body of Christ in Corinth. Perhaps a city with a reputation for an unhealthy preoccupation with the body (Powell, 2018) needed Paul's help understanding the community as a collection of members arranged by God (1 Cor.

12:18, 24, 28) for a greater purpose. Each individual had significance as part of the body, an important distinction in a context marked by extraordinary diversity.

Syntax

The syntax of a particular pericope, according to Osborne (2006), illustrates an author's thought development and sheds light on the intended meaning. Taking Paul's words to the Corinthian church as an intentional, structured message, observations regarding the pericope's syntax have implications for contemporary understanding. Paul works from a common understanding of the human body for a special understanding of Christ's body, the church. The Corinthians seemed to struggle with unity, and Paul's polemic presented the unity of the human body as an example of God's will for the community of believers. Structurally, Paul pointed the struggling community to the body's many parts, interdependence, ordered arrangement, diverse capacities, and connectedness. Making more than a flimsy assertion, Paul thoroughly displayed the spiritual body's resemblance to the physical body.

Historical and Cultural Background

In addition to linguistic considerations, reading ancient texts demands attention to the relevant historical and cultural background (Osborne, 2006). Greater awareness of historical realities can help a reader avoid misunderstandings and recognize historically relevant insights. Likewise, familiarity with the cultural distinctives that would have shaped the author's message and reception can help a reader better interpret the text.

Historically, Paul and the Corinthians lived in a time of remarkable diversity (Powell, 2018). Within the Roman Empire, in the city of Corinth, many different ethnicities, languages, and religions could be found (Johnson & Penner, 2002). According to deSilva (2004), Christians in the Roman Empire during Paul's life were despised by multiple people groups. Jews, reluctant to accept Jesus as the Son of God, treated Christians with contempt. At the same time, Gentiles accustomed to pantheism in the Greco-Roman religion took offense at the Christian claim to Christ's supremacy (deSilva, 2004). Additionally, just before Paul wrote this letter to the members of the church in Corinth, a change in power took place in Rome, with Nero assuming leadership of the empire (Johnson & Penner, 2002). Persecution was coming but had not reached widespread or consistently violent levels (deSilva, 2004). Christians were derided for their departure from the Jewish or Greco-Roman religious mainstream, suspected of sinister and subversive behaviors (deSilva, 2004). The people of the historical moment out of which Paul's letter to the Corinthians largely held Christians in low esteem, as evidenced by the writings of Pliny the Younger and Tacitus (deSilva, 2004). Paul's message, however, struck a different note and encouraged those in the Corinthian community with the good news they belonged as members of the body of Christ.

Living in an honor and shame culture, the Corinthians had their lives and relationships profoundly shaped by the perception of limited good (Malina, 2001). In this collectivist culture, the Corinthians understood their identities collectively, their social status as part of a fixed system bigger than them, immovable, unshakeable. Men and

women of the first-century Mediterranean world lived with group-determined stereotypes, and their character and behavior were assigned as static realities (Malina, 2001). Paul's words regarding the body and its many members might have been a novel idea, but an understanding of oneself relative to the whole was culturally ingrained. Where Paul's words of encouragement differed from the dominant perspective, lied in his assertion that every member of the body was essential, regardless of ethnicity, language, or social status.

Logical Development

In his correspondence with the Corinthians, Paul exhibited a commitment to the transmission of wisdom rooted in common knowledge and the development of a new worldview symbol (Wright, 2013). As humans were well acquainted with their bodies, the Corinthians were aware the human body consisted of many parts. They understood these many parts were interdependent, each one important to all the others for the body's well-being. Additionally, they appreciated the reality that each of these members had a vital role to play and diverse capacities and had been divinely arranged for the smooth functioning of the body. The connection and cooperation of these many members were a matter of life and death. Paul utilized this commonly held understanding to communicate vital truths regarding the extraordinary way of life in the church, the spiritual body of Christ. The body of Christ in Corinth had many interdependent members, each important to the body's well-being. Each community member had a vital role to play and diverse capacities arranged by God for the good of the whole. And, just like the human body, member connection and cooperation were essential to the community's survival.

Situational Realities

According to Osborne (2006), the awareness of situational realities can also contribute to a text's interpretation. This letter from Paul to the Corinthians is our first letter of record from Paul to the Corinthian community, but according to Johnson and Penner (2002), Paul's correspondence with the church at Corinth involved five letters, possibly more. It likely started with an original letter from Paul (1 Cor. 5:9), followed by a letter full of questions from the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:7), which gave Paul reason to pen this letter we refer to as 1 Corinthians, another Paul references in the writing of 2 Corinthians, followed ultimately by 2 Corinthians itself. All this writing suggests something about the nature of leadership in the first-century Mediterranean context, Paul's resilient commitment to guide the Corinthian church faithfully, even from a distance. Communication seemed to matter greatly to Paul, whose letters comprise almost half the books of the New Testament. Geographical distance can force leaders to adopt DL as a strategy for continued growth (Hambley et al., 2007). Paul's willingness and determination to lead in a distributed context via written words of wisdom and encouragement proved integral to the growth of the first-century church and continues to encourage believers to this day. Paul showed remarkable commitment to the Corinthian community, faithfully responding and corresponding in leadership.

Summary of Genre Analysis

In this epistolary genre analysis of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, I methodically considered the pericope's historical, logical, and rhetorical context before giving attention to the text's linguistic properties: its grammar, semantics, and syntax. Following these observations, considering the text's historical and cultural background, logical development, and situational realities yielded additional insights relevant to this study's scope of inquiry. A close reading of the text revealed Paul's commitment to DL and philosophy for cultivating collective identity, greater engagement, and organizational maturity.

Contextually, Paul's words to the Corinthian community represented an address to a very diverse people, a community struggling to live together and needing timely leadership. Paul's letter addressed several issues brought about by the community's diversity and the divergent behavior common to the city. Paul met the situation with persuasive skill, employing the rhetoric of collection relations, cause-effect, and description. Paul demonstrated the power of a diverse unity, drew upon the common knowledge of the human body to encourage greater community as the body of Christ, and employed vivid description to frame the situation in Corinth and call the people to unity in diversity (Thiselton, 2011).

The linguistic character of Paul's words to the Corinthian community further supported these efforts, grammatically, semantically, and syntactically structured to communicate Paul's desire to see the community embrace its God-given design as a diverse, but unified people with honor and respect for every member of the body. With determined emphasis, Paul presented a collective identity for the Christian community in Corinth as Christ's body, each member with a vital role to play and a purpose to fulfill. The historical and cultural background confirmed the resonance of Paul's message for a diverse people under immense pressure in need of good news regarding their capacity and calling for life together. Drawing upon shared knowledge of the human body, the logical development of Paul's polemic effectively appealed to a new collective identity and greater engagement via shared purpose. Ultimately, Paul's perseverance with the pen and his commitment to correspondence with the Corinthian community despite the situational difficulties demonstrated his desire to see them mature as a community and thrive as a people. This epistolary genre analysis of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Paul's leadership of the Corinthian community offers compelling evidence that metaphor can be employed effectively for successful organizational leadership. Additionally, Paul's commitment to DL in Corinth provides sufficient reason to explore further the value of DL in pursuing positive outcomes for organizations.

Distributed Leadership

Paul's exemplary approach to the leadership of the Corinthian community demonstrated a preference for DL, born of a conviction shared by Gibb (1954), one of the foundational contributors to the development of DL who held that leadership was most effective as a collective endeavor. According to Spillane (2006), DL is less about the actions of a leader and more about the practice of leadership shared by an interactive collection of leaders, followers, and their situational realities. More recently, the theory of DL found defined as "a variety of configurations which emerge from the

exercise of influence that produces interdependent and conjoint action" (Thorpe, 2011). One could argue this definition shares much in common with Paul's perspective on the human body and its many parts, interdependent and conjoined. A return to Paul's wisdom for the Corinthian community enhances and extends the concept of DL. Marked by an appreciation for diversity, Paul's DL works toward interdependence and conjoint action; Paul's orientation to organizational leadership offers an alternative to the heroic archetype commonly advanced by leaders (Thorpe, 2011).

Application

Shared understanding in the first-century Mediterranean context was often the fruit of philosophical rhetoric. According to Wright (2013), Paul's way with the Corinthian community might be best understood as the way of a philosopher inviting others to adopt a new perspective on life. Wright (2013) warned one could carry the notion too far but suggested Paul's relationship with the churches he planted was akin to a philosopher's way with his pupils. This genre analysis of 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 revealed a philosophy Paul espoused for the Corinthian community emphasizing collective identity and greater engagement for cultivating organizational maturity.

Collective Identity

To encourage the Corinthian community for a way of life consistent with the values of DL, Paul introduced a powerful metaphor for unity: the human body. Referring to individuals in the Corinthian community as members, their collective identity as a body consisting of many parts, Paul painted a vivid portrait of diverse unity. Paul challenged the Corinthians to understand their fellowship as a singular entity. For a community as diverse as Corinth, ethnically, socio-economically, and religiously, this was an important step toward organizational health, a development Melucci (1995) referred to as *identization*.

For practitioners of DL, organizational attention to collective identity formation represents an important foundational step for the distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities (Bolden, 2011). Paul, absent from Corinth and aware of God's desire to see every community member engaged for growth, persuasively penned to the Corinthians a vision for a better way of life together as the body of Christ. A similar approach could prove helpful for contemporary leaders tasked with helping organizations grow. Adopting Paul's powerful body imagery remains an option, but the consideration or development of alternatives could also yield great results (Haslam et al., 2003). Cornelissen (2006) offered a case study detailing the successful use of metaphors to cultivate organizational identity. More recently, Haslam et al. (2017) expanded their treatment of the vital work by studying the effect social constructionist, social identity, and social actor perspectives can have on the process.

For this important work, Spillane et al. (2004) argued a distributed perspective looks beyond the necessity of distribution and considers how that distribution occurs. Paul demonstrated remarkable wisdom and an ardent commitment to DL as he challenged the Corinthians for a new kind of orientation to life together. Paul's metaphorical language proved effective in his first-century context, and we continue to see this language at work routinely in the contemporary context. Country clubs, fitness

centers, wholesale clubs, and parent/teacher organizations strategically invite outsiders to become members for organizational growth (Baxter, 2015). Like Paul, leaders and organizations interested in DL as a way of life for their organizations should consider entering into an intentional process for the identification of helpful metaphors and language, effectively inviting members of their organizations to grow in the important work of collective identity formation.

Greater Engagement

According to Harris (2007), DL has also been linked to greater student engagement in the educational context and higher morale in organizations where students feel like active members of the decision-making process. More recently, a study highlighted the overwhelming evidence that workforce engagement positively impacted organizational performance (Schneider et al., 2018). Among the drivers of greater workforce engagement, Schneider et al. (2018) found that organizational practices, supervisory support, and work attributes were influential. In his leadership of the Corinthian community, Paul demonstrated an affinity for commitment to these influences to cultivate increased engagement.

Paul avoided a hollow case for greater engagement with an insistence upon every member's giftedness and importance to the body by highlighting a variety of gifts and roles of great value to the community (1 Cor 12:28-30). At the same time, Paul was also careful to emphasize every member of the body was vital and essential to the community, dependent upon one another for life together (1 Cor 12:15-21). According to Azorín et al. (2020), helping group members recognize their interdependence can contribute to the acceptance and development of greater DL. In a closer look at DL, Gronn (2000) illustrated interdependence was commonly the result of role overlap or shared skills and knowledge. According to Wageman (2014), interdependence could be structural or behavioral in nature, and cultivating greater interdependence is very difficult. Wageman (2014) noted an organization must be committed to radical alterations and persistent, long-term changes to foster greater interdependence and a greater likelihood of increased engagement. Paul demonstrated a great commitment to cultivating DL as he made a compelling case for the interdependent nature of the community's fellowship (1 Cor 12:15-26). Like Paul, organizations can effectively cultivate greater engagement by facilitating fellowship, emphasizing shared skills and knowledge, and demonstrating the interdependence essential to their organizational well-being. Emphasizing the essential nature of every member of an organization lays a foundation for every member's engagement and more positive organizational outcomes (Harter et al., 2013).

As the Corinthian community experienced problems, Paul responded with an insistence on their interdependence, a call to greater engagement. This strategic commitment from Paul to DL effectively called the Corinthians to a level of commitment essential to their growth. Recent studies found employee performance is positively affected by organizational commitment (Cesário & Chambel, 2017; Kawiana et al., 2018). Paul demonstrated an awareness of this organizational reality in his leadership of the Corinthian community and modeled for contemporary leaders the value of an unwavering commitment to DL during difficult times. Answering adversity with a call to

greater engagement and interdependence, Paul's actions invited the Corinthian community to adopt a new perspective and experience organizational growth.

Organizational Maturity

For Paul, the success of the community in Corinth depended to some degree on their desire for greater gifts (1 Cor 12:31). Like children who grow up to appreciate a vegetable for dinner occasionally, a sign of maturity for the body of believers in Corinth meant an appetite for the gifts that were of greatest value to the whole body (Schreiner, 2018). Paul was careful to add that giftedness remained an ordered arrangement, God's prerogative to whom gifts and roles in the body were distributed (1 Cor 12:18, 24, 28). Still, he offered this invitation to enjoy gifted growth to the entire community as means for their maturation.

Like Armitage et al. (2006), Paul seemed most interested in maturity as a measure of organizational success. Organizational maturity as a concept first emerged during World War II in the work of O'Brian and Fleischmann (1944), who studied the effort to manage the supply of resources for the war effort in the United States. Their study established three principles as foundational for organizational maturity: programming, operations, and integration. Many have since further developed the idea of organizational maturity and applied its perspective for research in diverse fields like communication, education, and project management (Dorrer, 2020; Modrák & Šoltysová, 2020; Moreno-Monsalve & Delgado-Ortiz, 2021).

Before O'Brian and Fleischman (1944), Paul extended the metaphor of the Christian community as the body of Christ elsewhere in his writings, articulating his desire to see followers of Jesus mature together (Eph 4:13), approaching fullness like Christ. With a similar emphasis on programming, operations, and integration, Paul emphasized a strong collective identity and a commitment to greater engagement. He expected the ancient Corinthian community to mature and grow. For contemporary information management organizations, the goal of organizational maturity has become a subject of considerable interest (Kucińska-Landwójtowicz, 2019). Grossman (2018) recently developed a model for measuring organizational maturity, a way of evaluating an organization's capacity to function effectively beyond infancy for sustainable growth. In another recent study of organizational maturity, Odważny et al. (2019) developed a model for evaluating organizations and their capacity for sustainable development, which identified five levels of health: ignoring, defining, adapting, managing, and integrating. According to Odważny et al. (2019), the unhealthiest organizations ignore opportunities to mature, while healthier organizations prioritize integration for positive change.

Paul's unique approach and emphasis on organizational maturity represent wisdom that DL contemporary leaders can apply. With an emphasis on cultivating collective identity and greater engagement, Paul prioritized the development of organizational maturity over individual gain or personal notoriety (1 Cor 1:10-17). Drawing inspiration from Paul's approach and following in his footsteps for the development of metaphorical language and shared perspective for collective identity, persuasive appeals for greater engagement, and genuine commitment to organizational

maturity, leaders can effectively practice DL and expect positive organizational outcomes.

Conclusion

Challenged by distance and difficulty, Paul responded to the leadership of the Corinthian community with a correspondence introducing a metaphor for DL and life together. With a commitment to DL, Paul emphasized the importance of collective identity and greater engagement for cultivating organizational maturity. In his distinct approach to DL, Paul modeled the utility of metaphor for communicating values important to cultivating organizational maturity. This study establishes the link between DL and Paul's foundational work in the first-century church. Paul's unique approach to DL offers contemporary leaders evidence that metaphors can be powerful rhetorical tools for developing organizational culture open to DL.

Additionally, this study revealed two areas for future research regarding DL and its practice in the contemporary context. First, greater attention should be given to using and developing metaphors and new worldview symbols as rhetorical devices for persuasive leadership of organizations invested in DL. Exploring both the practice and process for developing this powerful influence via qualitative and quantitative research could yield tremendous insight into contemporary organizational leadership. Second, Paul's polemical approach to the community at Corinth suggests DL may hold significant benefits for organizations experiencing difficulties. Dedicated research with interest in DL's viability for struggling organizations is also recommended, with attention to successful practice and applications. Longitudinal studies documenting changes in individual and organizational factors consistent with change management could alert researchers to more effective means for effective DL in changing contexts. Perhaps continued efforts to explore DL's viability will produce further evidence the theory affords contemporary leaders a strategy for organizational leadership worth utilizing for positive organizational outcomes. Beyond the church, the wisdom of Paul's way with the Corinthian community offers contemporary leaders a model for DL committed to cultivating collective identity and greater engagement for the development of organizational maturity, a *magnus corpus*.

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