Agapao in Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership Research Roundtable – May 2008

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Patterson's (2003) model of servant leadership assumes that from leader agapao flows all other expressions of virtuous and effective leader behavior (i.e., humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, service, and follower's agapao). As an antecedental component of Patterson's model, agapao's characterization has an undulating effect upon the model as a whole. This paper therefore posits the need for an extensive examination of the term agapao as a foundation for fully comprehending the concept and practice of servant leadership. Agapao as a term for love is distinct when compared to the use of the word "love" in our American culture and among differing religions, thereby making the need for a proper delimitation all the more significant. Since the concept of agapao envelopes what we know simply as "love", this writing begins by outlining scientific, cultural, and religious views of love in an effort to provide a foundation for conceiving the highest, purest form of love called agapao (Robertson, 1997). Agapao is then defined in its unique classification within the Christian tradition. To illustrate agapao's potential impact in the literature of leadership, this writer merges leader agapao with three recognized leadership theories. Finally, the evidence within contemporary leadership texts affirms the concept as a viable management virtue.

The great proliferation of the ideas and methodologies to explore organizations and leadership over the past 50 years reveals that there is a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the leadership phenomenon (Hickman, 1998; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2002). Collectively, the research provides a picture of a process that is sophisticated and complex, as well as theories that inform the practice of leadership. As the empirical bases, theoretical development, and methodological foundation of the field of leadership continue to evolve, a paradigm is emerging that focuses attention upon the inner dimensions of the person of the leader (e.g., Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Craig & Gustafson, 1998; Duigman & Bhindi, 1997; Harris, 2002; Humphrey, 2002; Keller & Cacioppe, 2001; Kanungo & Conger; 1993;

McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; McIntosh & Rima, 1997; McNeal, 2000; Northouse; Patterson, 2003; Rima, 2000; Sosika, Avolio, & Jung, 2002). In addition to the authors cited above, three recently published issues of the scholarly journal *The Leadership Quarterly* are devoted to subjects that involve the internal disposition of leaders: "Toward a Paradigm of Spiritual Leadership" (October 2005); "Leadership, Self, and Identity" (August 2005); and, "Authentic Leadership Development" (June 2005). All these writings presume deeper, a priori realities within leaders that affect their leadership behavior.

Decades ago, Greenleaf's (1977) concept of "servant leadership" was introduced. His research converges with contemporary notions about the relevance of the inner disposition of leaders, and posits that leadership practiced in a manner consistent with the divine attributes of Jesus' servant nature is effective and influential (Greenleaf). Though by omission it is readily seen that the construct of servant leadership has not yet become a recognized part of conventional leadership literature (Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2002), Greenleaf laid the groundwork for future empirical validation of the idea (Farling, et. al., 1999; Wong and Page, 2003; Patterson, 2003). Based upon Greenleaf's (1977) work, Patterson's (2003) theoretical model expands the research into servant leadership and helps define its expression in the life of a leader.

To understand Patterson's (2003) theoretical model one must first investigate what she called the cornerstone of the servant leader – follower relationship, agapao love. Her model illustrates how servant leadership begins with the expression of leader agapao (love), and how all other essential components of servant leadership (i.e., humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, service, and follower's agapao) flow from this supreme quality (see Figure 1). Thus, leader agapao serves as the independent variable and possesses a priori value as an imperative. Consequently, the term's precise characterization is invaluable for understanding the servant leadership model, as well as the model's unique contribution to the field of leadership.

Due to the scarcity of the construct of agapao in the literature, the term "love" is often used synonymously with agapao in this writing. From the beginning it should be pointed out however, that agapao transcends mere notions of love, stands unique as a concept of love, and fulfills love's greatest potential as a moral agent in the praxis of leadership.

Figure 1
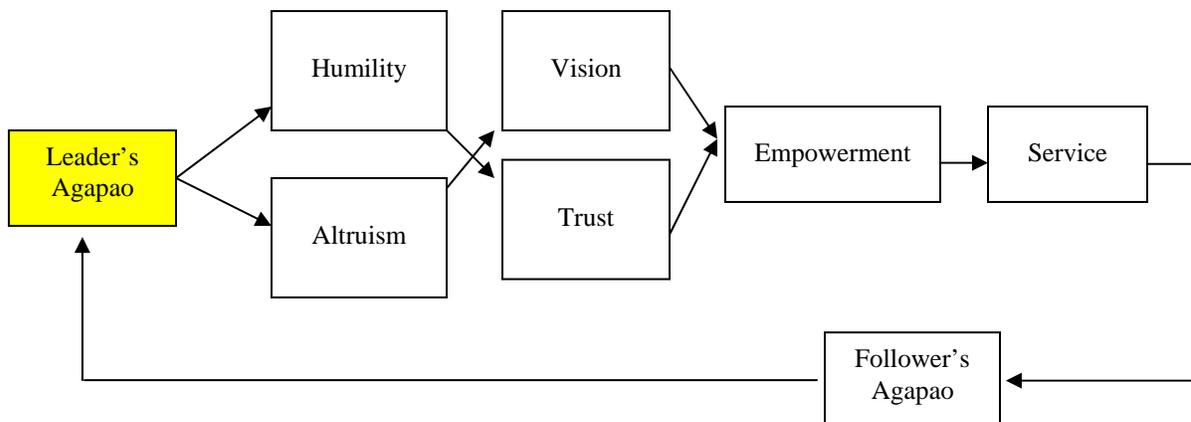
Defining Love

The Apostle Paul writes, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. . . . And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:4a–8, 13). Authors, philosophers, and poets throughout the centuries have extolled the supremacy of love. It is acclaimed as the premier virtue of humankind. Nevertheless, defining love remains a monumental task. Peck (1978) states, "Love is too large, too deep ever to be truly understood or measured or limited within the framework of words" (p. 81). To delimit love, then, requires looking at it from several vantage points. In doing so, the varying forms of love are seen to possess common characteristics relevant to the field of leadership.

General Conceptions

The most common conception of love is interpersonal love (Sternberg, 1997; Peck, 1978). This kind of love is found in relationships between family members, friends, and couples and goes beyond familiarity and fondness for a person or liking someone a lot. Ramachandran (1994) reveals some characteristics often associated with interpersonal love:

- Attachment: an emotional bond between two humans;
- Commitment: a desire or decision to maintain love;
- Intimacy: feeling cared for, known and validated by another;
- Trust: the ability to feel safe to share dreams or fears;
- Self-disclosure: revealing inner feelings and experiences to others;
- Equilibrium: a preference for an optimal, reciprocal and comfortable level of intimacy between people.

There is also a type of love related to one's attachment and fondness for the impersonal (Sloman, 2001). This is when a person loves material objects, animals, or activities if they value them greatly and are deeply committed to them. "They love their family, their country, the game of football, etc. It is possible that when such people offer love as an emotion they are thinking of episodes of passion or fervour . . ." (Sloman, p. 4). In the English language, the word "love" is often used to express fondness toward the inanimate or nonhuman, as well as to humans.

A third common conception of love is religious love, i.e. the experience between people and God (we investigate this concept more fully later in the paper). Most religions teach that love should be expressed to, and received from, their referent deity. This love is more than a mere experience of emotions; authors note it as transcendental, spiritual, mystical, and even euphoric (James, 1997; Pope, 1995). It is cultivated through religious activity such as scripture reading, prayer, meditation,

serving others and the community, and attendance in worship gatherings (Leaman, 2001; Prebish, 1993; Keown, 2003; Walker, 1968). Reciprocally, the devotees may feel love from their God (Richards, 1997).

Scientific Models

Biological models of love tend to see it as a mammalian drive, just like hunger or thirst, and scientists in this field seek physiological, behavioral, and cognitive links to the concept (Diamond, 2004; Porges, 1998). Theorists here posit that there are evolutionary antecedents formed in the processes of survival and reproduction that create inherited "emotional packages" (Ramachandran, 1994, p. 95). For example, neuroscientists are investigating the role of the hormone oxytocin (an amino acid peptide synthesized in hypothalamic neurons and secreted into the blood from the brain and the ovaries or testes), and say that it may be a factor in the physiological source of love and desire in humans that facilitates affectionate, nurturing and intimate bonds (Bowen, 1998; Diamond, 2004; Ramachandran, 1994). Various forms of love are differentiated as distinct subjective experiences with corresponding neurobiological substrates. According to Diamond (2004), the basis for these distinctions is the evolutionary origin of each type of experience: "The processes underlying sexual desire evolved in the context of sexual mating, whereas the processes underlying romantic love—or pair bonding—originally evolved in the context of infant-caregiver attachment" (p. 116).

The research also describes love as a psychological phenomenon. In a psychoanalytical approach, Freud sees love from the perspective of the sexual drive or "libido": a quantifiable energy required to keep the human engine operating (Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2001). Accordingly, love as well as sexuality is rooted in the newborn infant as it suckles at the mother's breast (Freud, 1975). In the process, both the child's hunger and sensuality are satisfied. Freud claimed that this initiates the onset of affection toward the child's first sexual love object and its crucial source of nourishment. The mother's breast provides the infant with not only sustenance, but is also a source of sexual pleasure that creates a capacity for love in adulthood (Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2001). Love, therefore, is the coexistence of two psychological realities: affection and sensuality. The former originates in the infant's awareness of the care and nourishment received from its parents, while the latter relates to sexual energy (libido). The sexual instincts are said to have a gratification seeking aim, and Freud believed that aim-inhibited love endures longer than sexual love, causing sexual desire to transform into a yearning for long-term relationships such as marriage (Bergmann, 1982). Freud (1975) writes that it is "very usual for directly sexual impulsions, short-lived in themselves, to be transformed into a lasting and purely affectionate tie; and the consolidation of a passionate love marriage rests to a large extent upon this process" (p. 92). In other words, for Freud intimacy and companionate love were due to the inhibition of passion.

Rubin (1973) takes a different approach to the subject of love by studying people's psychological attitude toward others. He notes the difference between simply liking someone and actually loving them, viewing the two as conceptually distinct, though linked, phenomena. The common ground between liking and loving is in the area of attitudes, i.e. the feelings, thoughts, and

behavioral predispositions of an individual toward another. However, in contrast to liking, love is comprised of three distinct elements: attachment, caring, and intimacy (Rubin, 1973). "Attachment" refers to the powerful desire to be in another's presence, to make physical contact, to be cared for, and to find approval. "Caring" is the willingness to sacrifice oneself for another. "Intimacy" is the union and bond between these two individuals. The emphasis on evaluating the other person, according to Rubin, makes liking different from loving. That is, we like someone only if we share a "psychological kinship" with him or her, i.e. if we think of that person as intellectually and morally good, and worthy of our respect (Bailey & Nava, 1989). Rubin developed empirical measures for liking and loving which support his theory. The measures contain two separate scales: the Liking Scale, which focuses on how favorable people evaluate their partner, and the Loving Scale, which is concerned with people's attachment, caring, and intimacy toward their partner (p. 217). Higher scores on these scales indicate greater liking and loving, respectively.

According to Corsini (1994), the prominent view of love in psychology sees the concept as being a combination of companionate love and passionate love (Hatfield, 1978; Berscheid & Walster, 1974). Passionate love is an intense state of longing for union with another (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993). It has three components: (a) cognitive - preoccupation with the person, idealization of that person, and desire to know the person; (b) emotional - attraction/sexual attraction, positive and negative feelings, longing for reciprocity, desire for union, physiological arousal; and (c) behavioral - actions to determine the other's feelings, studying of the person, giving service to the person, maintaining physical proximity. Hatfield and Rapson state that passionate love can be fulfilling and ecstatic when it is reciprocated, and despairingly negative when unrequited. Companionate love, on the other hand, is a cooler, far less intense emotion (Ramachandran, 1994) and occurs only between partners who are able to reinforce each other's intimate behaviors. Companionate love is the affection and intimacy we feel for those with whom we deeply connect (Hatfield & Rapson).

Sternberg (1997) has given the construct of love in psychology recent prominence with his triangular structure theory of love. This theory suggests that there are three major components of love: intimacy, passion, and commitment. They form a "love triangle", the three components being the vertices. He states that intimacy allows "feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships" (p. 119) and includes self-disclosure by sharing emotions, secrets, and stories with one's partner. Passion contains "the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena" (p. 119). Commitment involves making a decision to stay with a partner and to defer this type of relationship with other potential partners. It is "the decision that one loves someone else" and "the commitment to maintain that love" (p. 119). Though according to Sternberg it is rare, when all the elements are balanced, the most complete form of love— "consummate love"—exists.

In assessing these scientific models of love within biology and psychology, they fail to capture the pre-eminence and virtuous nature of the construct. Though biological models of love are prevalent in science, they do not thoroughly account for the innate morality of love and the higher forms of love

practiced by humans such as altruism and self-sacrifice, an issue that has plagued evolutionary theories for decades (Smith, 1995). While Freud's theories rationalize rudimentary forms of love (e.g. sex, affection) and proposes that the events of early affection and sensual experiences effect the outcome of love in adulthood, his pessimistic and reductionist explanations do not adequately account for higher forms of love like those found in the agapao concept. Rubin (1973), Hatfield (1978), and Sternberg (1997) help explain love in terms of the motivations and rewards that come to those who enter loving relationships. These include heightened feelings, physical satisfaction, and pleasurable attitudes that gratify the participants. Though certainly not immoral or unethical in the context of reciprocal relationships, they are, in the end, self-serving. James (1997) shares a story to illustrate an alternative, spiritual conception of love that captures its ultimate potential in the heart of a human being:

> It is from a man aged forty-nine--probably thousands of unpretending Christians would write an almost identical account. "God is more real to me than any thought or thing or person. I feel his presence positively, and the more as I live in closer harmony with his laws as written in my body and mind. I feel him in the sunshine or rain; and awe mingled with a delicious restfulness most nearly describes my feelings. I talk to him as to a companion in prayer and praise, and our communion is delightful. He answers me again and again, often in words so clearly spoken that it seems my outer ear must have carried the tone, but generally in strong mental impressions. Usually through a text of Scripture, unfolding some new view of him and his love for me, and care for my safety. I could give hundreds of instances, in school matters, social problems, financial difficulties, etc. That he is mine and I am his never leaves me, it is an abiding joy. Without it life would be a blank, a desert, a shoreless, trackless waste." (p. 49)

What creates the potential for needing and desiring the most sublime human experiences of forgiveness, feelings of worth, and spiritual belonging concomitant with the construct of love? Why do millions of humans long for love with someone or something beyond the earthly realm? How do we account for the selfless, sacrificial acts of love done for often undeserving strangers? Religious views of love approach answers to these questions by extending the concept beyond physiological needs and psychological attachments and move the discussion toward love's ethereal form.

Religious Views of Love

Religious views of love seek to define it not from the perspective of innate human needs, psychological motivations, or dictates of experience, but rather through the concept of divine revelation. The referent deities or spiritual leaders define, model and reveal love in their various religions and writings. These definitions outline the meanings and the experiences of love one aspires to through faith, religious devotion, and spiritual growth. Possible commonalities in the concept of love across religions emerge in the brief summaries of the following views.

In Confucianism, "Lian" is a virtuous, benevolent love (Leaman, 2001). It represents one's moral character, "the loss of which makes it impossible for one to function properly within the community" (Gao, Ting-Toomey & Gudykunst, 1996, p. 289). "Yuanfen," another Confucian word for love, is a connection of predestined relationships (Peng, 2003). In Chinese thought it has a holistic connotation in marriage and family that is "inclusive, focusing on communal loyalty, respect, responsibility, love, trust, and maintenance of life essence, as well as harmony and balance through relational living" (Peng, p. 11).

In the 4th century B.C., Chinese philosopher Mozi introduced "Ai" in reaction to Confucian "Lian" (Leaman, 2001). "Ai" emphasizes that people should love everyone as they love their own families and states, without discrimination. Leaman (1999) posits that Mozi advocated "simplicity of life and altruism in order to preserve the sort of state in which everyone could benefit both himself and others" (p. 190). Mozi sought to replace the Chinese family structure with the concept of "impartial caring" or "universal love." Although Mozi's teaching had some influence, the Confucian "Lian" is how most modern Chinese conceive of love; it essentially denotes one's moral character and personal integrity (Gao, 1998).

In Buddhism, "kama" is love or desire, particularly of a sexual nature (Keown, 2003). It is a ". . . Sanskrit term usually referring to sensual pleasure, but also applied to sexual desire, and occasionally, to longing in general" (Prebish, 1993, p. 152). The context of "kama" is the hierarchal cosmological realms and it denotes the quality that characterizes the lowest of the spheres of existence (Prebish; Keown). "Kama" is a great obstacle on the path to enlightenment since it is selfish (Keown). "Karuna," on the other hand, is compassion and altruistic action directed toward other beings and extends beyond "congenial people or one's nearest and dearest" (Snelling, 1991). Prebish states that "karuna" is an expression of the highest ethical standards and in some sects of Buddhism it exists as one of four "divine abodes." It is complementary to wisdom and is an essential ingredient in the perfection of the fully enlightened (Keown). "Advesa" (a lack of hatred) and "maitri" (universal goodwill) are also benevolent expressions of love that are unconditional and occur without self-interest (Keown; Snelling; Wallace, 2001).

In Hinduism, "kama" is pleasurable, sexual love meaning to "wish, desire, or long for," and is personified by the god of love Kama (Stutley & Stutley, 1977; Brockington, 1992; Walker, 1968). Discipline ("yoga") should be chosen over "kama" as the latter is a hindrance to asceticism and spiritual growth (Brockington; Lochtefeld, 2003). In contrast to "kama," "prema" is a pure and spiritual love used to reflect the kind of devotional love given to God (Sullivan, 1997; Walker). Similarly, "bhakti" is devotion to God (Lochtefeld) and comes from the root "bhaj" which means "to partake of" (Walker, p. 138). "Bhakti," however, exists as a higher form of love than "prema" for, as Lochtefeld states, "bhakti" "is one of the three traditional paths to gain final liberation of the soul, and it has been the most widespread type of religious practice for well over a thousand years" (p. 98). Walker asserts that the orthodox view of the practice of "bhakti" implies: (a) belief in a personal god of absolute love, mercy, and grace, especially towards his devotees; (b) a burning, indeed, all-consuming

personal love for the deity; (c) absolute faith in and devotion to the deity; (d) "prapatti," resignation, or total self-surrender and submission to the will of god; (e) "saranagati," or coming to god as a refuge for complete protection; and (f) belief in the divinity of the human soul and god's willingness to save all who love him and are devoted to him (pp. 138–139).

In Islam, love is called "ishk" and it is first for God, occupying the heart and conscience in a most powerful way (Hughes, 1994). Van Donzel, Lewis and Pellat (1978) write that "ishk" is the most dynamic form of love in Islam, and in its most general acceptation it describes the "irresistible desire to obtain possession of a loved object or being" (p. 119). The term itself contains levels that reflect differing expressions of love ranging from striving for happiness, to loving another human, to the intense reciprocity of perspectives between the lover (man) and the Loved (God) (Van Donzel, et al.). Hughes states that "ishk" is only possible as one attains inclusion into the essence of God. As such, this form of love is a reflection of God himself and when attained, it expels all worldly desires from the heart (Hughes). Van Donzel, et al. elaborates: "All natural beings are moved by the desire to raise themselves to the degree of existence immediately above them. This dynamism, which runs through the whole universe, is the universal *ishk*" (p. 119).

The Hebrew faith employs a wide definition of love, both between people, and the people and the Deity (Richards & Richards, 1987). Richards (1997) writes that some have argued the Old Testament represents a primitive, legalistic image of God and the New Testament should supplant the Old Testament because it presents a more enlightened and loving deity. "However, it is clear that love infused the Old Testament as well as the New. Both testaments picture a relationship between God and man which is rich in mutual love" (p. 128).

In reference to human relationships, the Torah proclaims, "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18b), and "Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love . . ." (Ecclesiastes 9:9). Dessler (1985) defines the goal of love between people, from the Jewish point of view, as "giving without expecting to take" (p. 126). Kittel, Friedrich and Bromiley (1995) state that "love in the Old Testament is a spontaneous feeling that impels to self-giving, to grasping that which causes it, or to pleasurable activity. It involves the inner person." The Old Testament contains great love stories, some of which serve to illustrate God's love for man. For example, the biblical book Song of Songs is considered to be a romantically phrased metaphor of love between God and his people, though it is in content and form a (human) love song (Richards, 1997). In this book, the love of God for His people is passionate and desirous of reciprocation. Likewise, the book of Amos is metaphorical, illustrating God's unconditional and unrequited love for His people (Richards).

Walvoord et al. (1985), Richards (1997), Birmbaum (1964), and Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997) all assert that the Old Testament stresses repeatedly that God has acted out of love in establishing his relationship with Israel, and that he offers this love passionately by his sovereign choice. In response, the Old Testament makes clear that what God seeks from human beings is not some terror-ridden observance of impersonal standards (Kittel, Friedrich & Bromiley, 1995). Rather, people are to respond in a wholehearted love, expressed naturally in joyful obedience: "Love the LORD

your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). Rabbi Hirsch declares that a loving relationship toward God is at the center of the Hebrew faith: "To love God means to realize that life has only value through God. We love God by loving the Torah and meeting its commands. There should be nothing dearer to us than the faithfulness which we owe to our God" (Birmbaum, p. 23).

Christians believe that loving God and loving others are the two most important things in life. When asked the greatest commandment of God, Jesus responded: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37–39, NIV). Love is the supreme virtue for followers of Christ and Jesus implored them to understand and practice the highest forms of it (Achtemeier, 1985; Wiersbe, 1996).

Therefore, the Christian concept of a relationship with God is distinctively rife with personal and passionate love. This distinction seems intentional on the part of Jesus. He contrasted a legalistic, distant and harsh caricature of God common in the Jewish faith at the time with a fresh image of God as personally loving, caring and intimate. Jesus referred most frequently to God as an immanent "Father in heaven" (Matthew 5-7). As deity, he told his disciples that he did not call them "slaves," but friends (John 15:15). He spoke freely of loving God rather than fearing him through legalism (Luke 11:42; John 5:42). Jesus also initiated a new perspective on loving others. He challenged his followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:44). He said that ultimate love is expressed by laying down one's life for another (John 15:13). He stated that leadership is found in sacrifice and service (Luke 22:24–27). He taught that it is improper to show love for God without reconciling yourself with another first (Matthew 5:23–24). Jesus also modeled this love by compassionate acts toward immoral, diseased and rejected people (Matthew 9:35-37) and by his own sacrificial death on the cross for forgiveness of sins (Matthew 27:27-56).

Beyond the gospels, the remainder of the New Testament perpetuates Jesus' philosophy of love. The combined theme of these books is the primacy of loving God fully (Romans 1:7; Romans 8:39; 1 Corinthians 8:3; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; Titus 3:41; John 3:17; 1 John 4:10; 1 John 4:16; 1 John 4:20; 1 John 4:21; 1 John 5:2; Jude 1) (Achtemeier, 1985; Wiersbe, 1996). The resulting assumption is that by personally experiencing God's love (i.e., by faith appropriate the love supremely expressed through the sacrificial death of Jesus), Christian's are to respond in deep gratitude with passionate love for God, and selfless, sacrificial love for others:

> "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." (Romans 13:8-10, NIV)

At the center of this triangulation (i.e., God's love for us, our love for God, and our love for others), stands the concept of agapao. This is due to agapao's identification as the clear substance of the New Testament teaching about the highest form of love (Wuest, 1997).

In review, almost all the major religious traditions share these views on love: (a) love possesses great virtue, (b) some forms of love are superior to others, (c) the most altruistic expressions of love are the purest and most spiritual, and (d) supreme love flows from, and is found in, the Deity. Although Christian agapao is consistent with these shared views, by its consistent employment in the New Testament to extol selfless, unconditional and sacrificial love, it consummates the various religious views and fully embodies, like no other religion, the virtue of love in its highest degree.

<div align="center">Delimiting Agapao</div>

Agapao, the verb form of the noun "agape," is "a love called out of one's heart by an awakened sense of value in the object loved that causes one to prize it" (Wuest, 1997). Students of leadership may have never heard the term before, but scholars of the New Testament are very familiar with it. This use of the word is unique for its time and is "practically a creation of the Christian church" as it "does not appear in classical Greek at all" (Gore, Goudge & Guillame, 1955, p. 52). Wuest explains further:

> *Agapan* (αγαπαν) never was a common word in classical literature, although it was in use from the beginning and occupied a distinctive place of its own. In Homer it is used only ten times, in Euripides but three. Its noun form *agapesis* (αγαπεσις) is rare. The form *agape* (αγαπε), so frequently found in the New Testament, does not occur at all. Its first appearance is in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It conveyed the ideas of astonishment, wonder, admiration, and approbation when connected with the word *agamai* (αγαμαι), which meant "to wonder at or admire." It was used in classical literature in the same sentence with *philein* (φιλειν) and had its distinctive sense of "a love of prizing" as contrasted to *philein* (φιλειν), "a love of liking." But owing to the very infrequency of its use, it was an admirable word that could be put to use to convey the new and higher conception of divine love that the New Testament presents. Its relative emptiness, so far as the general knowledge of the person was concerned who spoke Greek as his second language, made it the ideal receptacle into which the new moral and ethical content of Christianity could be poured. . . . The pagan Greeks knew nothing of the love of self-sacrifice for one's enemy that was exhibited at Calvary. Therefore, they had no word for that kind of love. They knew nothing about the divine analysis of this love that Paul gives us in I Corinthians 13.

Part of the unique character of the word is to be understood linguistically. The Greek vernacular, unlike English, used different words for the shades of meanings of the word "love." In English, we may use the single word "love" to describe affection for a person ("I love my wife"), as well

as affection for an inanimate object ("I love my boat"). We inherently understand that though the same word is used, the meanings behind its two uses are different. In Greek, the language of the New Testament, there are four different words used to describe love. One portrays sexual love. Another expresses an interpersonal loving or liking based upon receiving pleasure or enjoyment. Still another describes familial love. Finally, in many biblical texts the word agapao (or its cognates) is used, and it stands for the unique manifestation of divine love. It is a noble word expressing the highest form of the concept. Wuest (1997) states it eloquently:

> (Agapao) speaks of a love that is awakened by a sense of value in an object that causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves; not that of the object loved.

Agapao has been termed "selfless or altruistic love." In the New Testament it usually describes the love that God has for humans. It emphasizes the value placed upon the object loved—regardless of whether that object is inherently valuable, worthy, or deserving of such love (Gore, et al., 1955). Thus, the term also embraces the concept of unconditional love. The uniqueness of agapao is that it flows from the character of the one giving it (Wuest, 1997). Peck (1978) concurs in his assertion that one of the major distinguishing features of love seems to be the "conscious or unconscious purpose in the mind of the lover" (p. 82).

As Patterson's (2003) servant leadership model reveals, leader agapao serves as the catalyst for leadership that benefits others and evokes response within them. Therefore, the foremost purpose of the servant leader is to place authentic value upon people, to affirm their worth, with the goal of building them up. This is agapao as understood within the context of leadership. It is moving past leadership for the benefit of self, toward leadership for the benefit of others. Christian agapao stands distinct with respect to the conventional practice of leadership in the American culture. Leaders in Christ are called upon to deeply value, serve and sacrifice for their followers (Luke 22:24–27; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Philippians 2:1-11) and the power to do so comes from the example of Jesus as well as God's Holy Spirit indwelling the leader. In lieu of agapao's potential relevance to leadership, attention of this paper turns to understanding the concept of agapao as it relates to current leadership theories. Examples are provided that illustrate the need for further research and how agapao may indeed have significance within the field of leadership. The three theories offered are ontology of leadership, transformational leadership, and the construct of power/influence.

Agapao and Leadership Theory
Ontology of Leadership

Though Ontology of Leadership is a rarely used phrase in the literature, the impact of the inner disposition of leaders upon their leader behavior is assumed. Bennis (2003) states: "I am surer now than ever that the process of becoming a leader is the same process that makes a person a healthy, fully integrated human being" (p. xxiv). Thompson (1991) concurs: "It is our position that the

leadership qualities that will be required of corporate executives are not skills that can be learned. . . . Our premise is that leadership is not exceptional, but the natural expression of the fully functional personality" (p. 1). However, research in the discipline of leadership has not adequately investigated the ontological dimensions of leaders and settled instead for more superficial explanations (Yukl, 2002; Northouse, 2004).

Ayers (2006) posits a definition of this theory: "Ontology of Leadership is the study of the inner disposition of leaders, emerging as a framework to investigate the innate needs and hidden dynamics of potential leaders, thereby making manifest any evidence of leadership behavior" (p. 2). The theory is concerned with identifying relationships between the inner components of the person of the leader and the leadership styles and behaviors that he or she exhibits (Ayers). These inner, most basic components of a person include such a priori matters as identity, intimacy and integrity (Erikson, 1968). The theory claims that leaders lead from who they are, that leadership is primarily a function of who one is than what one does, and that more leadership studies into the impact of identity, integrity and intimacy are necessary.

While leadership theory is replete with literature describing dimensions associated with the person of the leader, the most prevalent theories in the history of leadership studies focus merely on the tactile skills and behaviors necessary for leader effectiveness (Hickman, 1998; Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 2002). Few studies delve deeper to examine what lies within the inner structure of leaders resulting in behaviors that allow people to assume and excel in leadership positions. This paucity is compelling, considering that the person of the leader has been the most constant, though inconspicuous, component of leadership research for more than 50 years (Hickman; Northouse; Yukl). Although there is abundance of material on the problematic aspects of the inner needs and characteristics of leaders, the work has primarily been descriptive and illustrative in nature. Till now, the research has been inadequate to explain the underlying reasons for leader behavior and the link of this behavior to the internal dynamics at work within (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Hickman; Kouzes & Posner, 2005; Northouse).

The internal character of the leader is a requisite dimension of study as it may provide the genesis for many traits, skills, and styles expressed by leaders. As such, *leader ontos* is an apposite and pervasive matter in the discussion of leadership. Yet, causal relations for proper or improper leader behavior remain obscure and enigmatic. Indeed, by focusing on behaviors and skills of leaders, most research examines leadership from an a posteriori position. By this researchers investigate only the fruit of the tree. The need now is to consider what lies beneath the surface that brings forth the structure and strength of the tree, as well as the quality of the fruit. Namely, researchers must begin to investigate the seed (and the conditions that provide the capacity for the seed to develop into a healthy tree).

Servant leadership converges with the theory of ontology of leadership as it explains expressed behavior that flows from the servant character. The concept of agapao assumes that a leader possesses a certain innate quality: namely, the disposition to love (Patterson, 2003). It

presupposes that those who practice loving deeds cannot do so apart from enjoying a loving nature. Since ontology of leadership assumes that leaders lead based on who they are, leadership is a direct reflection of inner disposition and character. Likewise, if leaders have the character of love, if their inner needs are met in such a way that they are able to express "agapao" love, then many of the behaviors needed for effective servant-leadership will follow. A loving nature provides a well from which the necessary capacities for healthy leader behaviors are drawn. These behaviors include those in Patterson's (2003) model: humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, service, and follower's agapao.

Transformational Leadership Theory

The premise of transformational leadership theory is that the behavior of the leader produces key leadership outcomes with followers (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990a). "The followers feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward the leader and are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do" (Yukl, 2002, p. 253). As its name implies, transformational leadership involves a process that changes and transforms individuals. "It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long term-term goals, and includes assessing follower's motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings" (Northouse, 2004). There is no more prevalent, more accepted or more researched construct in the discipline of leadership than transformational leadership theory.

Yet, Bass and Steidlemeier (1999) state that the content of leader behavior within this construct is critical and must be authentic: "to be truly transformational, leadership must be grounded in moral foundations" (p. 181). They go on to argue that the four components of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990a) are directly related to: (a) the moral character of the leaders and their concerns for self and others, (b) the ethical values embedded in the leaders' vision, articulation, and program, which followers can embrace or reject, and (c) the morality of the processes of social ethical choices and action in which the leaders and followers engage and collectively pursue (Bass and Steidlemeier, p. 181). For Bass and Steidlemeier, transformational leaders are morally and ethically motivated individuals who practice this form of leadership authentically. They offer this in contrast to pseudo-transformational leaders who possess "deception, sophistry, and pretense" (p. 181).

The characteristic components of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration denote a follower-centric approach to leadership consistent with our formulation of agapao and servant leadership. Leader agapao may provide innate capacities and motivations for leaders to express transformational leadership traits. In addition, themes of morality, ethics, and authenticity as posited by Bass and Steidlemeier (1999) that provide the substantive motivation for transformational leadership, converge with leader agapao as this form of love also assumes a depth of morality and character in the leader.

Agapao and Power/Influence

French and Raven (1959) identified five types of power exhibited by people interacting socially. In these types, they point out that power and authority are not synonymous. Power does not necessarily imply a commonly accepted authority ("right") to exert influence over others. Moreover, the legitimacy of power is relative to the time, place, and circumstances in which it is wielded.

The five types of power are: (1) reward, (2) coercive, (3) referent, (4) legitimate, and (5) expert. Reward power results from the ability to provide positive reinforcement for desired behavior. Conversely, coercive power reflects the potential to inflict punishment. This is the power to force someone to do something against his or her will. The common and essential element for both reward and punishment is that they are controlled by the "superior" person and are conferred upon subordinates. Referent power is the power obtained from another person either adoring you or wanting to be like you. It is the power of charisma and fame and may be wielded by political, social, moral, and spiritual leaders. In contrast, legitimate power is based upon authority recognized in accordance with position in an organizational structure. Referent power is person oriented, while legitimate power is formal and depersonalized. When I have knowledge and skill that someone else requires, then I have expert power.

The concept of "power legitimacy" is essential to French and Raven's (1959) theory and it runs through the five power types articulated by them. Legitimacy, in essence, means that all power and authority ultimately come from the person being influenced, not the person in the more powerful position. In other words, regardless of position, knowledge, or admirable traits among leaders, followers confer upon leaders the right or legitimacy to influence. This is relevant because when leaders express agapao in the context of servant leadership, it moderates the use of power by the leader (Greenleafe, 1977). In other words, when power passes through the sieve of agapao, it results in power wielded in a manner best for followers and the organization as a whole (Greenleafe). In this way, power accomplishes the kind of legitimacy permeating French and Raven's theory, and produces credibility and trust necessary for influence.

<center>Agapao as a Management Virtue</center>

There is strong evidence to suggest love's centrality to leadership, management, and organizational effectiveness. While one may make the assumption that leaders are uneasy talking about leadership in terms akin to love, Mitroff and Denton (1999), in their ninety interviews with high level managers and executives, found that "terms such as love, respect, trust, and wisdom are used freely and the concepts they represent are readily accepted" (p. 155). What seems to be minimized or ignored in scholarly leadership research is taken for granted by practitioners. For example, Waitely (1995), speaking of success in a knowledge-based world, sees love as the factor that underlies all his themes: "Leaders respond to the needs of others. Most leaders used to demand respect for themselves; the new leader cares much more about creating opportunities for people to respect themselves" (p. 161). In Kouzes and Posner's (2002) seminal work, they claim that good leaders show compassion to followers. DePree (1997) includes love among the attributes of leaders. Covey (1990),

in his groundbreaking book on leader effectiveness, writes of the need for unconditional love within the heart of all who seek to influence:

> In other words, when we truly love others without condition, without strings, we help them feel secure and safe and validated and affirmed in their essential worth, identity, and integrity. Their natural growth process is encouraged. We make it easier for them to live the laws of life- cooperation, contribution, self-discipline, integrity- and to discover and live true to the highest and best within them. (p. 199)

Take also, for example, Autry (1992) who provides real life stories of the power of love at work in an organization. In this context, he speaks of a dyadic form of leadership at a Fortune 500 company where a supervisor loves his employees by giving them some form of special treatment at times when it helps them:

> A few years ago a very bright and productive salesperson in my group came to me with a special request. Her husband was being transferred about a hundred miles away from the city in which our offices were located. Because of child-care problems in the new location, she wanted to be allowed to remain on full-time employment but work at home two days a week, coming to the office only three days a week. She promised to keep up her accounts and remain as effective as ever.
>
> I agreed to give it a try. There was resentment, most of which, surprisingly, came from other women on the staff. The personnel director didn't like it at all. "Bad precedent and outside policy." And my boss didn't like it very much, either, for the same reasons.
>
> At this point you think I'm about to glory in my vindication. Not true. It did not work out. But it did not stop me from trying another outside-the-policy accommodation for a new mother who convinced her managers and me that she could do productive, high-quality work by mixing office and home time. She simply wanted to be with her first child at home, longer than policy allowed. Her record was good. Her commitment to her work and to the company effort was unyielding, and her work itself was of outstanding quality. And in this case the special treatment worked perfectly: for the company, for her, and, I trust, for the baby.
>
> I've made exceptions to corporate rules to help get an employee's family through the nightmare of overwhelming financial and emotional distress. I've made similar exceptions for employees needing assistance to recover from substance abuse... In every office, you hear the threads of love and joy and fear and guilt, the cries for celebration and reassurance, and somehow you know that connecting those threads is what you are supposed to do and business will take care of itself. (pg. 30 – 32)

Those, like the practitioners of leadership cited above, who value love in the heart of leadership, possess the conviction that this construct at work in organizations is not mutually

exclusive to profits. They explode the myth that "nice guys finish last" and in fact, they advocate that loving leadership has the power to reap many benefits for organizations when exercised properly. They also say that love in leadership is personally gratifying as it becomes an extension of the leader's self, allowing him or her to exist consistently in society for its betterment. By questioning the assumption that one must sacrifice integrity and peace of mind in favor of organizational success, these people lead in congruence with their highest values, and find that a loving core to leadership works for them and their organizations.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

I have sought to describe that in the field of leadership, the potential of the agapao construct is readily seen. Defining the scientific and religious views of love allows us to acknowledge how it permeates almost every dimension of human existence and therefore should not be excluded from the field of practical leadership. Understanding the uniqueness of Christian agapao brings fulfillment to the concept by relating it to the highest (i.e. divine) form of practice. Relating agapao to current leadership theories has promise for further research. When applied in the organizational context of leadership, agapao possesses a unique and relevant significance. All this leads me to concur with Martin (1996) who proclaims the potential of the practice of love in all areas of life. He sees "love as a virtue-structured way to value people morally, which encompasses a multitude of possibilities," and implies that love in leadership is not unrealistic or naïve, but instead is "eminently practical, even pragmatic" (pp. 1–3).

The power of love to influence individuals, groups, and nations alike is evident. King (2004) states that love possesses a ". . . transformative energy for transcending the individual self and for creating radically new, collaborative, and cooperative ways of acting that will transform whole societies, indeed the planet" (p. 77). Love as a leadership construct is a power worth pondering. Consequently, it is imperative that agapao receive greater treatment in research. As the supreme manner in which to practice love and as the initial element in Patterson's (2003) servant leadership model, agapao may possess elucidatory value, providing researchers and practitioners better models on leadership in the world. In the process we may validate that what lies in the heart of a leader is significant for understanding leader effectiveness, worthy of fervent investigation, and indeed relevant in the praxis of leadership.

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