

# Leadership Perspectives Among Diaspora Evangelicals in the USA: The Interplay of Theology, Self-Discipline, and Spiritual Maturity

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**Abstract:** This article examines perspectives on leadership and leadership development among Evangelicals in the so-called Slavic diaspora of the United States, with particular attention to the interplay of theology, self-discipline, and spiritual maturity. The study is based on data from 173 participants—36 interviewees and 137 survey respondents—drawn primarily from Ukrainian diaspora churches, alongside Christians who migrated from Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and Central Asia. Data were collected between April 2021 and May 2025 within educational processes initiated by churches or non-accredited educational organizations in the United States.

The findings indicate that participants consistently affirm spiritual growth and intimacy with God as foundational to leadership. At the same time, many acknowledge that insufficient self-discipline constitutes a significant obstacle to their formation as leaders. Leadership was frequently described in social or functional terms—such as organizational effectiveness or communal influence—rather than in explicitly theological categories. Moreover, a majority of respondents gave little attention to the role of followership, revealing a notable gap in holistic reflection on leadership.

The article argues that an integrated approach—linking theological reflection with disciplined leadership practice—is essential for cultivating spiritually grounded, ethically responsible, and effective leaders and followers. Such integration is particularly crucial for immigrant evangelical communities as they navigate questions of identity, cultural adaptation, and mission in the American context.

**Keywords:** diaspora Evangelicals, 3M Hodos Leadership Framework, leadership development, spiritual maturity, self-discipline, followership, cultural memory, faith–work integration.

## Introduction

The U.S. diaspora, Evangelicals of Eastern European origin, remain underexplored. Although general accounts of immigrant congregations exist, often in non-academic literature, sustained research on the interplay of theology, leadership, and spiritual formation in the American context is limited. This article addresses this gap by examining leadership perspectives among Evangelicals from Ukraine and neighboring countries who have settled in the United States in recent decades.

## Terminology and Researcher Positionality

The focus of this article is on the Christians often referred to as *Slavic Evangelicals*—a cultural-religious label in the United States applied to immigrants from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and parts of Central Asia. In current historical realities, especially following Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, this terminology has become problematic. It obscures national identities, risks echoing ideologies such as pan-Slavism or Eurasianism, and is increasingly rejected by Ukrainian believers as outdated and insensitive. The Russian aggressive war against Ukraine has further sharpened national, cultural, and theological distinctions, rendering the umbrella term—"Slavic Evangelicals"—inadequate even in the U.S. context. It is for this reason, in this article, I employ the reference phrase "Diaspora Evangelicals in the USA" (hereafter abbreviated as DE) to refer to Christian evangelical communities—primarily Pentecostal and Baptist—formed by immigrants and displaced persons from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Central Asia.

It is also important to note my own positionality. Having immigrated to the United States in 1997, I have never belonged to so-called *Slavic* churches in the U.S. My role as an observer, researcher, and educator has allowed me to engage with diaspora communities with respectful distance. This position has enabled me to examine more critically the intersections of culture, theology, and leadership formation within these immigrant contexts.

## Diaspora Studies

Academic literature often distinguishes between two related but distinct concepts: ethnic enclaves and the diaspora. Ethnic enclaves are local, often urban, neighborhoods where immigrant communities preserve their language, customs, and institutions.<sup>1</sup> Ethnic enclaves are typically studied in sociology, migration studies, or economics. Diaspora, by contrast, refers to more dispersed, often multigenerational populations who live outside their homeland but maintain cultural, emotional, and spiritual ties to it.<sup>2</sup>

1 Gold suggests calling these ethnic suburbs like Chinatown or Little Italy, Russian-speaking Brighton Beach in New York, etc. See Steven J. Gold, "Ethnic Enclaves," in *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. R. A. Scott and S. M. Kosslyn (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 10.

2 Harjinder Singh Majhail and Sinan Dogan, eds., *World of Diasporas: Different Perceptions on the Concept of Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Dániel Gazsó, "An Endnote Definition for Diaspora Studies," *Minority Research*, no. 18 (2015): 161–82.

Any diaspora may be defined by three core elements: dispersion across geographical boundaries, an enduring connection to a homeland, and deliberate efforts to preserve a distinct identity across generations. The scholars of diaspora studies, such as Grossman and Cohen, categorized diasporas into several types, including victim diasporas (forcibly displaced), trade diasporas, labor diasporas, cultural diasporas, and imperial or colonial diasporas.<sup>3</sup> Religion has the capacity to generate its own forms of diaspora and homeland, because religious beliefs shape human social identity in ways similar to ethnic belonging.<sup>4</sup>

Diaspora has increasingly become a subject of study for both theologians and leadership scholars, though with distinct emphases that often intersect. Theologians approach diaspora communities through biblical and theological frameworks, exploring themes such as exile, sojourning, hospitality, identity, and belonging. They investigate how displacement reshapes theological reflection, ecclesial practices, and mission, as well as how diaspora churches negotiate their place between homeland and host cultures.<sup>5</sup> Leadership scholars, by contrast, examine how migrant and displaced groups around the world develop models of authority, resilience, and community organization in transnational contexts. Their analyses often highlight adaptive leadership, intergenerational tensions, and the ways diasporic leaders mediate between cultural and institutional worlds.<sup>6</sup>

The intersection of these two fields is particularly significant: theological convictions shape how leaders guide diaspora communities, while leadership practices embody theology in the midst of migration and cultural negotiation. Both perspectives converge on questions of identity, responsibility, and renewal in host and sending societies. For instance, displaced Ukrainian Christians have shown leadership through church service, support networks, and advocacy for justice—strengthening both community resilience and the diaspora’s broader witness.<sup>7</sup>

3 Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2022); Jonathan Grossman, “Toward a Definition of Diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 8 (2019): 1263–82.

4 A. Pătru, “Religious Diaspora: A New Approach to Its Existence and Meaning,” *Religions* (2021), 12(10): 831.

5 See, for example, Luther Jeom O. Kim, *Doing Diaspora Missiology toward “Diaspora Mission Church”: The Rediscovery of Diaspora for the Renewal of Church and Mission in a Secular Era* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016); Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); Israel Oluwole Olofinjana, ed., *World Christianity in Western Europe: Diasporic Identity, Narratives and Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2020); Sadiri Joy Tira and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016); Meron M. Piotrkowski, *Priests in Exile: The History of the Temple of Onias and Its Community in the Hellenistic Period* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2019); Namsoon Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology: Asia and Theopolitical Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

6 See, for example, Abdul-Latif Alhassan and Brandon W. Kliever, “African Leadership in the Diaspora: Diffusion, Infusion, Synergy, and Challenges,” *Journal of Leadership Studies* 16, no. 1 (2022): 52–56.

7 Alexander Negrov and Ronald E Riggio, *Leadership in Ukraine: Studies during Wartime* (Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2025), 78–109; Alexander Negrov, Oleksandr Malov, and Dina Polishchuk-Prokopchuk, “Leadership in the Face of Trauma: A Qualitative Study of Forced Ukrainian Christian Migrants,” *Theological Reflections: Eastern European Journal of Theology* 21, no. 2 (2023): 157–80.

## Characterizing the Diaspora Evangelicals in the USA (i.e. DE)

The DE can be understood as a hybrid formation shaped by multiple migration waves: refugee experiences of religious persecution, family reunification, economic migration, and U.S. policy pathways. Growth accelerated after the Soviet Union's collapse, with new freedoms to emigrate; since 2014, it has been further reshaped by political upheavals such as Russia's annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine. Reliable data are scarce, but conservative estimates place the DE population at over 200,000, with hundreds of congregations nationwide serving immigrants from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and other post-Soviet states.

This study proceeds from several assumptions about these communities. First, they maintain a strong religious identity rooted in conservative evangelical theology, with Scripture, prayer, and fellowship at the core. Second, the church functions as a community hub, substituting for lost cultural networks and providing guidance, control, and stability in adaptation. Third, they preserve loyalty to homeland culture and worldviews that shape perceptions of politics and society. Finally, these communities are diverse—uniting recent arrivals, long-term immigrants, and U.S.-born generations—producing both tensions and opportunities for leadership formation and theological reflection.

## The Study: Methodology, Theoretical Framework, and Findings

The sections below form the main part of the article. Here, I present the framework used for studying leadership perspectives among the DE, outline the methodology and research questions, and explain the findings derived from the analysis of multiple sources.

### Theological and Hermeneutical Framework for Leadership

Definitions of leadership vary widely, and theoretical frameworks for leadership are equally diverse. In what ways may or should leadership be perceived and/or interpreted? From a social science perspective, leadership is generally viewed as a contextual social process—where individuals influence others to achieve shared goals. In distinction, Christian theological frameworks view leadership as a divine calling rather than a merely human enterprise. Leadership is not only about skills or outcomes—it is participation in God's redemptive mission. It is shaped by spiritual formation, modeled after Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and rooted in Scripture and community discernment. While theological interpretations vary across traditions (e.g., Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic), many scholars argue that Christian leadership must begin with God and be modeled after the life and motivations of

Jesus. Anacker and Shoup identified eleven foundational elements of Christian leadership rooted in a biblical worldview.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to emphasize that a Christian theological perspective on leadership and followership should integrate reflection on the person of the leader, the community they serve, the processes they employ, and the ultimate purpose they pursue. Such an approach ensures that both individuals and communities are continually being transformed into Christlike godliness in life and leadership.

My operative definition of leadership, framed within a Christian biblical worldview, is as follows: “Following Jesus Christ as a co-worker of God in fulfilling God’s will for the entire Creation.” This definition of leadership begins with the human response and responsibility to follow God’s call to abide in Him. It integrates this calling by situating both individual and communal leadership and followership processes within the broader context of God’s mission. I argue that such a definition of leadership is applicable across all spheres of life under God’s reign.

For the interpretation of leadership in this study, I employ a framework that I termed *3M Leadership*, elaborated more fully in my book *Hodos Leadership*.<sup>9</sup> This framework provides a concise yet integrative approach to leadership by examining it through three interrelated dimensions: mindset, model, and maturity. The thesis is as follows: “Spiritual and practical wisdom shape our mindset. When moral values align with behavior, they create a model for exemplary leadership. Shifting from doing to being fosters a maturity that deepens our connection to God, ourselves, and the world.”<sup>10</sup> What follows is a summary of the three dimensions.

- (1) *Mindset in Leadership*. It refers to the internal framework—human beliefs, values, and assumptions—that shapes how we lead. A healthy mindset includes humility, accountability, a learning posture, and openness to feedback. Individuals, or communities with such a mindset, focus on relationships, growth, and shared purpose. Conversely, a negative mindset resists change, prioritizes control, and focuses on self-interest, often producing toxic environments. Cultivating a spiritually grounded leadership mindset means aligning our inner convictions with God’s truth and with a commitment to service, growth, and community.
- (2) *Model in Leadership*. Leadership is not just about mindset but about behavior, actions, and processes for doing things. A leadership model gives structure to how we lead in practice—whether through servant leadership, transformational leadership, or others, like authentic or connective leadership. Biblical leadership, as exemplified by Jesus, prioritizes humility, service, and sacrifice.

<sup>8</sup> Here is the list: following Christ, being Spirit-filled, responding to God’s call, living as Christ’s ambassador, stewarding gifts for God’s kingdom, practicing fellowship, applying Scripture, praying persistently, participating in church life, integrating revelation, and trusting God over self-reliance. See Gary J. Anacker and John R. Shoup, “Leadership in the Context of Christian Worldview,” in *Organizational Leadership*, ed. Jack Burns, John R. Shoup, and Donald C. Simmons Jr. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 35–64.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Negrov, *Hodos Leadership* (Seattle: Hodos Institute, 2025), 55–73.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Negrov, *Hodos Leadership*, 54.

As Jesus said, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Matt. 20:26).

- (3) *Maturity in Leadership*. It refers to the development of our inner life—spiritually, emotionally, and relationally. It is not just about acquiring skills, but about deepening wisdom, discernment, and Christlike character. Mature leaders are marked by resilience, adaptability, and spiritual discernment, especially when navigating complex or uncertain environments. The Apostle Paul calls believers to grow into “the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13) and to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23), which includes love, peace, and self-control. Spiritual maturity grows through surrender to God, intentional practices of prayer and rest, and by resisting the temptation to define leadership by busyness or performance. As the late professor Andre Delbecq argued, leadership formation must integrate both *spiritual depth and practical ability*.<sup>11</sup> Leadership is not only about doing more—it’s about becoming more whole in Christ.

### A Mixed-Methods Approach

This study draws on data collected from 173 individuals, including 137 survey respondents and 36 interviewees. While the majority of participants were members of Ukrainian diaspora churches, the broader sample also included leaders originating from Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and Central Asia. The research was conducted between April 2021 and May 2025 as part of a larger initiative of the Hodos Institute, carried out in collaboration with several educational partners in both the United States and Ukraine.

To investigate leadership perspectives and practices among adults in the DE communities, a mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design enabled both the identification of broader patterns and the exploration of the more nuanced, personal dynamics of leadership in context. The research unfolded in three primary stages:

1. *Semi-structured interviews (2021)*. Extended interviews were conducted with 36 organizational leaders representing the DE. These conversations highlighted personal leadership trajectories and the challenges leaders face in adapting to new cultural and *spiritual environments*.
2. *Survey research (2021–2025)*. Structured surveys were administered to participants before leadership courses, often hosted by partner organizations. The surveys combined multiple-choice and open-ended questions, focusing on theological perspectives, definitions of leadership, personal growth, and ministry engagement.
3. *Informal conversations and observations*. In addition to formal methods, insights were gathered through informal conversations during class discussions, group

<sup>11</sup> André L. Delbecq, “Christian Spirituality and Contemporary Business Leadership,” *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 12, no. 4 (1999): 345–54.

activities, and one-on-one exchanges. These observations provided valuable supplementary data on how leadership is conceptualized, embodied, and practiced in diaspora settings.

This mixed-methods design offered a comprehensive view of leadership in DE communities. Surveys identified recurring patterns, while interviews illuminated lived experiences. Informal conversations further grounded leadership in everyday practice. The study has limits, as the sample was shaped by partner access and self-reported data carries bias. Still, triangulating multiple methods enhanced reliability and provided a textured account of diaspora leadership.

### *Research Questions*

This study on leadership and leadership development among evangelicals in the U.S. diaspora was guided by the following five questions, explored through surveys, interviews, and classroom discussions.

1. How do theological convictions shape evangelical understandings of leadership?
2. How do cultural and church experiences from the homeland influence perceptions of good or bad leadership?
3. Do diaspora evangelicals view leadership as developed rather than innate, and how does this perception shape their needs and obstacles to formation?
4. How does participation in both work and church contribute to an integrated Christian view of leadership?
5. How does migration influence leadership models, including shifts from hierarchy to peer-based approaches, and what role does followership play?

### *Qualitative Insights: Leadership Formation*

In 2021, the Hodos Institute conducted a qualitative study with 70 Christian organizational leaders across the United States. Of these, 36 were from the Evangelical diaspora—primarily Ukrainian, with others from Russia, Moldova, Belarus, and Kazakhstan—living in states such as California, Ohio, North Carolina, Washington, Texas, Florida, and Colorado. Interviews were conducted in English, either in person or via Zoom.

The diaspora participants represented a relatively mature cohort: 29 men and 7 women, mostly ages 30–60, with an average age of 45. Most (75%) had lived in the U.S. for more than twenty years, and nearly all were married with children. Their leadership roles spanned business (15), church and ministry (9), nonprofit organizations (7), and civic institutions (5). Many were bi-vocational, leading both in the marketplace and in ministry, often mentoring others and influencing networks of over 100 people.

Participants were asked a series of nine questions about leadership, including definitions, personal journeys, influences, challenges, faith practices, and crises (see

Appendix 1). The analysis that follows focuses on their responses to Question 9: “What do Christians need to become better leaders?”

Thirty-six organizational leaders from the DE provided 104 individual insights in response. Through systematic analysis, these responses were organized into three major themes, each corresponding closely to the dimensions of the “3M Hodos Leadership Framework”: *mindset* (32 responses), *model* (36 responses), and *maturity* (36 responses). The balanced distribution across these categories provides strong confirmation of the framework, underscoring that mindset, model, and maturity are perceived as essential dimensions of Christian leadership within the diaspora context.

The following analysis of the three interpretive dimensions incorporates illustrative quotations drawn from respondents’ answers. [To protect confidentiality, individual names are not disclosed; instead, each quotation is accompanied by brief identifiers indicating the participant’s professional background and the state of residence at the time of the interview].

- (1) *Mindset in Leadership*. Respondents emphasized the need for leaders to focus on internal beliefs, theological convictions, and strategic thinking. Some stressed living according to what one preaches, while others pointed to enriching theological understanding, adopting results-driven thinking, or keeping Jesus at the center. Here are several notable quotations:

*“Christian leadership begins with a transformed mind. Before you can lead others, you must submit your thinking to Christ.”*—(engineer, manager NC)

*“Christians need to analyze what we think of leadership; I used to think leadership was about being in charge. Now I see it’s about being aligned with God’s mission.”*—(executive manager, transportation company WA)

*“Leadership is a calling, not a position. This is a proper mindset for leadership. You follow Jesus first, then people might follow you.”*—(business owner, WA)

*“One of the key changes in mindset for me was realizing that I am not the savior—Jesus is. That freed me to serve without controlling and fixing others.”*—(business owner, OH)

- (2) *Model in Leadership (36 Insights)*. Leaders highlighted the importance of modeling responsible, ethical conduct, letting go of toxic behaviors, and committing to continual learning. Some stressed delegation, mentoring, and balance to avoid burnout.

*“Leadership begins with modeling humility, not simply preaching humility.”*—(business owner, WA)

*“We have to drop toxic models of leadership that value charisma over character.”*—(CEO of nonprofit, FL)



*“Every leader must learn to listen before leading. In the diaspora, that means listening to both God and stories of others. Often our leaders in the diaspora listen only to themselves.”—(manager, educator, OH)*

*“It is important to continue to learn. The most dangerous thing is when leaders stop being learners.”—(manager, NC)*

*“Leadership doesn’t mean having all the answers, or giving answers, but asking the right questions. We need to learn to lead with questions.”—(IT professional and church elder, CA)*

*“Leaders need to start paying attention to a balanced life. Even Jesus took time to retreat, rest, and recharge. Why do we think we can or should work or lead nonstop?”—(pastor, CA)*

*“Our job isn’t to be the sole star. It’s to equip the team members. We must start developing people around us. Being a leader doesn’t mean doing everything yourself. Start delegating your tasks—create a team that thrives.”—(CEO, business owner, OH)*

- (3) *Maturity in Leadership (37 responses)*. Leaders noted the need to cultivate inner life, discipline, and self-awareness in their spiritual journey with God.

*“Christian leadership is about a continual pursuit of Christ, not just development of skills to impact the world.”—(manager, CA)*

*“A Christian leader’s greatest influence is rooted in their walk with Christ, not their public social capital.”—(organizational executive, CA)*

*“To lead well, you must cultivate an intimate relationship with God. Everything else flows from that. The growth needs to be holistic!”—(organizational executive, OH)*

*“True leadership is built in secret in silence, alone with God—the work that no one sees is what shapes our character.”—(manager, NC)*

*“To lead well, one must cultivate the spiritual habits Jesus modeled—prayer, fasting, service to community, etc. Faith, hope and love are given by God to us as we are disciplined in these practices.”—(business executive, CA)*

## Key Survey Findings

The survey was administered among students in leadership classes and seminars organized by the DE churches and partner institutions. Earlier versions were distributed in Russian, later in English and Ukrainian. Between April 2021 and May 2025, 137 individuals completed the survey across ten sessions. Despite minor variations, a substantial set of common questions allowed analysis as a cohesive whole. The instrument included 28 structured items on leadership definitions, spiritual

formation, team dynamics, challenges, character, aspirations, learning experiences, mentoring, church expectations, and demographics (see Appendix 2).

The 137 participants represented evangelicals from Ukrainian and broader post-Soviet diaspora communities across the U.S. Concentrations were highest in Washington (22%), Florida (20%), Ohio (15%), South Carolina (15%), and California (14%). Most were raised in Christian homes. The majority were ages 30–50, with smaller cohorts of recent arrivals, second-generation participants, and some under 20. Gender of the participants skewed male (67%), though female participation was growing in recent years. Education levels varied: 45% held a bachelor's degree and 23% a graduate degree, requiring pedagogical approaches that balanced rigor with accessibility. Vocationally, 70% were employed full-time, while others identified family (26%), education (11%), or ministry (7%) as their primary focus.

### *Perspectives on Leadership*

The survey combined multiple-choice items with a single open-ended prompt: “How do you understand leadership?” This design allowed for analysis of diaspora views in both spontaneous and structured formats. Open-ended responses revealed frames such as influence, service, authority, and spiritual calling, but many definitions were leader-centric rather than theological or collaborative (e.g., “a leader guides/influences others”). Only 33% described leadership as pursuing common goals, and 29% as serving God and others. Overall, leadership was more often depicted as the social action of a leader; yet when offered multiple-choice options (e.g., “leadership is serving God and others”), participants more readily endorsed theological and relational views, underscoring the sensitivity of perceptions to elicitation format.

Few participants articulated leadership explicitly in terms of partnership or connective leadership, indicating a notable gap in relational understandings of leadership. This suggests that diaspora communities often remain relatively closed, with limited participation in broader citywide or national networks. Where partnerships do exist, they are usually confined to a small circle of similar churches. As a result, opportunities for interdenominational collaboration and cross-sector partnerships are often underdeveloped, reducing the community's capacity to engage in broader civic, social, and vocational initiatives.

Some respondents highlighted leadership as social responsibility, often framed in service to the poor, homeless, or vulnerable. Leadership was thus understood relationally and communally, oriented to the well-being of the immediate context. Notably absent, however, were references to environmental responsibility or care for creation—suggesting that ecological concerns remain outside the leadership imagination of diaspora evangelicals. This gap reflects broader patterns in their countries of origin, where evangelical communities have given limited attention to environmental stewardship as part of discipleship or leadership formation.<sup>12</sup>

12 Alexander Negrov and Alexander Malov, “Eco-Theology and Environmental Leadership in Orthodox and Evangelical Perspectives in Russia and Ukraine,” *Religions* 12, no. 5 (2021): 305.

These findings suggest that while theological language and concepts do not always emerge spontaneously, there is a strong underlying resonance with theocentric and relational models of leadership when such ideas are named and offered. This underscores the need for the DE to continue educating their members on shared leadership and to deepen their understanding of the broader theological—rather than purely social—dimensions of leadership.

### *Leadership Developmental Needs*

Survey participants reflected on leadership and identified both weaknesses and aspirations. Nearly 90% rejected leadership as power or domination, signaling a broad dismissal of authoritarian models, while 75% pointed to selfishness, passivity, and lack of self-discipline as common weaknesses. Together, these responses reveal awareness of unhealthy patterns and a desire for Christ-centered, servant-oriented leadership.

When asked what contributes most to their growth, 89% emphasized their relationship with God and spiritual formation, supported by mentorship (65%) and church-based projects (60%). Leadership was thus understood less as technical skill and more as a spiritually integrated calling, rooted in discipleship and expressed in service.

At the same time, respondents identified their greatest obstacles as lack of spiritual maturity (75%), weak self-discipline (70%), and limited access to training (69%). Over half (54%) also noted insufficient church support. This paradox—valuing spirituality while struggling with maturity and discipline—underscores the need for intentional discipleship and coaching that strengthen both inner character and outward competence.

The findings show that the main barriers to leadership development lie not in external structures but in personal habits and formation. Without discipline, leaders struggle to model integrity, persevere under pressure, or align decisions with a theological framework. Addressing these gaps is essential for cultivating spiritual, ethical, and effective servant leadership within the diaspora.

### *Integrated Analysis of Findings*

This section integrates findings from multiple sources—survey responses, in-depth interviews, and informal conversations with members of the DE. Synthesizing these perspectives allows for the identification of recurring themes, underlying tensions, and potential blind spots that characterize diaspora leadership today. Several key themes are presented, each accompanied by a brief discussion, guiding questions for reflection, and recommendations for practice.

### *Leadership and Followership*

In response to our open-ended question about the meaning of leadership, the majority of diaspora participants did not mention the role of followers. Their

definitions tended to emphasize the leader as an individual actor, often highlighting personal traits, skills models of influence, or development. Leadership formation is predominantly described as the development of the leader, the development of skills, how to lead better. The DE, unfortunately, has not developed a paradigm of thinking that leadership is a relational process involving both leaders and followers. This suggests a significant gap in the understanding of followership within diaspora leadership discourse.

This limited view of leadership contributes to a common assumption within the diaspora that crises are overcome—or success is achieved—primarily through the influence of a few key individuals, rather than through collective effort or shared leadership. This limited view of leadership contributes to a common assumption within the diaspora that crises are overcome—or success is achieved—primarily through the influence of a few key individuals, rather than through collective effort or shared leadership.

In contemporary American society, a dangerous hunger for a strong, decisive, and forceful leader is on the rise, and the DE appears increasingly tempted to align with this perspective. Within this context, it is essential to emphasize that healthy spiritual, ethical, and effective leadership presupposes both healthy leaders and healthy followers, grounded in godly relationships within diaspora communities. Biblical teaching, along with the abundant academic literature on followership, should not be ignored, as both provide valuable insights for cultivating balanced and sustainable leadership practices.<sup>13</sup> An American expert on political leadership, Ira Chaleff—whose family roots are in Ukraine—has argued strongly that political crises in many Western countries, and especially in the USA, often hinge on the courage and wisdom of followers who are willing to resist dictators and corrupt leaders.<sup>14</sup>

### *Views on Leadership Development*

The belief that leaders are developed, not born, was confirmed by the data (Q13), supporting H5/H9. Most participants affirmed a growth-oriented view of leadership, expressing confidence that leadership capacities can be cultivated. Two quotations below well illustrate these views:

*“I never considered myself a leader. But through courses and mentors, I began to grow in that direction.”—(manager, WA)*

13 See, for example, Ronald E. Riggio, Ira Chaleff, and Jean Lipman-Blumen, eds., *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2008); Nicolas Bastardoz and Mark Van Vugt, “The Nature of Followership: Evolutionary Analysis and Review,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2019): 81–95; Barbara Kellerman, *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2008); Olga Epitropaki, Ronit Kark, Charalampos Mainemelis, and Robert G. Lord, “Leadership and Followership Identity Processes: A Multilevel Review,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2017): 104–29; Michael W. Linville and Mark A. Rennaker, *Essentials of Followership: Rethinking the Leadership Paradigm with Purpose* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, 2024).

14 Ira Chaleff, *To Stop a Tyrant: The Power of Political Followers to Make or Break a Toxic Leader* (Los Angeles: Wonderwell Press, 2024); Ira Chaleff, *Intelligent Disobedience* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2015); Ira Chaleff, *The Courageous Follower* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2009).

*"I studied. I made mistakes. I studied again. Leadership is a process, not a talent you're born with."*—(psychotherapist, Executive in Mental Health clinic, TX)

However, these insights were often coupled with the presupposition that leadership can be learned and developed primarily within church activities and through predominantly scriptural traditions. Respondents and participants in the study rarely demonstrated openness to a multidisciplinary approach to leadership development or to advancing their leadership capacities outside of church-centered discourse. Here is the opinion of a pastor that represents a minority:

*"I think there is a stigma that many Christians have, at least those with our Slavic background. Anything that doesn't have a stamp of Christianity on it is not something that we can learn from. So if it's a good psychology book or if it's a good business principles book or if it's a resource on how to counsel people on a specific topic, it gets labeled as worldly and inapplicable to your congregation. I don't believe that's the case... I would encourage leaders to constantly grow and be willing to learn. I think teachability is a trait that every leader must have. If somebody's teachable, God can do amazing things in that person's life through the surrounding people for leadership. But the moment the leader stops learning and changing is the moment they start hindering what I believe God is doing through them."*—(pastor, WA)

One respondent from California explained that her early model of leadership, shaped by her father and the traditional Slavic (Russian) church context, equated leadership with dominance, authority, and categorical judgments toward other churches or people with different lifestyles. Over time, however, her perspective shifted toward a more relational and empowering model. She said,

*"I'm learning a softer and more humane style of leadership. I figured out that it's not about being the strong, dominant figure. To me, a leader is essentially a teacher—someone who guides others and helps them discover themselves. Much of my leadership growth has come not only from church but also from business and professional life. My Christian convictions influence my daily leadership practices in secular settings, such as praying before meetings with designers or responding with grace to clients whose lifestyles I do not affirm. Among my clients are women who are lesbian. As a Christian in the workplace, I have learned that I can love them and say, 'I don't agree with what you do, but I would love to help you find your dream dress'."*

### *Self-Discipline in Spiritual Formation*

Across the interviews, spiritual maturity was consistently described as the true foundation of leadership. It is marked by *dependence on God through prayer and Scripture, humility, emotional discipline, trust, integrity, and the ability to integrate faith into every sphere of life*. Maturity is not a static state but a lifelong process of growth,

tested especially in hardship, transitions, and professional environments outside the church.

Respondents repeatedly identified self-discipline as both indispensable and deficient in their leadership. They saw it as a foundation for growth but admitted its absence hindered maturity: “I am a hard worker, but I lack discipline in rest” (minister, FL); “I set boundaries and goals, but then I break them” (church leader, WA). One business owner stressed that authentic leadership requires both spiritual and physical discipline, recalling how he learned it through military service and Scripture rather than church.

These testimonies reveal a persistent gap between aspiration and practice. Scripture consistently presents self-control as a fruit of the Spirit and a mark of godly leadership (Prov. 25:28; Dan. 1:8; Gal. 5:22–23; 1 Cor. 9:25–27). Christian thinkers consistently affirm that self-control can and should be intentionally cultivated through the systematic practice of self-denial.<sup>15</sup>

For diaspora leaders, self-discipline is vital for resilience amid cultural complexity and competing expectations. It enables leaders to pause before reacting, resist ego-driven choices, and sustain integrity. Without it, they risk burnout or misuse of authority. Leadership theory likewise stresses self-leadership as a prerequisite for guiding others.

Contemporary leadership theory emphasizes self-leadership as a prerequisite for guiding others. This is especially critical for diaspora leaders who face identity negotiations, generational divides, and pressures from both heritage and host cultures. Heifetz and Linsky’s framework highlights three essential capacities for self-management: (1) *Holding Steady*—remaining calm and focused amid criticism or resistance; (2) *Managing Inner Hungers*—recognizing and disciplining longings for affirmation, control, or intimacy; and (3) *Anchoring the Self*—distinguishing role from identity, and cultivating confidants and sanctuaries for renewal.<sup>16</sup>

Ultimately, self-discipline fuels self-management, and self-management enables diaspora leaders to remain rooted in identity, model maturity, and sustain long-term ministry and public influence. In diaspora contexts, governing oneself is not optional but essential for spiritually faithful and effective leadership.

### *Cultural Memory and Leadership Trauma*

Our study shows that members of the DE remain deeply connected to their “home cities” (Kyiv, L’viv, Minsk, Moscow, Tashkent, etc.), shaping both spirituality and leadership. Some report feeling more culturally at home in the U.S., yet many exhibit what Shtareva (2025) calls a “cultural freeze”—a psychosocial phenomenon in which

15 James S. Spiegel, “Cultivating Self-Control: Foundations and Methods in the Christian Theological Tradition,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 13, no. 2 (2020): 193–210.

16 Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002); Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, “Self-Management,” in *Encyclopedia of Leadership*, vol. 4, ed. George R. Goethals, Georgia J. Sorenson, and James MacGregor Burns (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004).

Slavic evangelical migrants, whether individually or collectively, remain anchored to the cultural, theological, and ritual patterns that characterized their homeland and their “home-congregations.”<sup>17</sup> Recent migrants from Ukraine tend toward more democratic leadership models, while earlier arrivals from Russia, Belarus, and Central Asia often retain hierarchical or charismatic views, echoing broader Eurasian patterns.<sup>18</sup>

A striking theme was aversion to negative leadership. Participants frequently condemned authoritarianism, dishonesty, and manipulation—traits linked to Soviet-style authority and dysfunctional church leadership. They named arrogance, selfishness, and dishonesty as especially destructive. These findings highlight the need for trauma-informed leadership formation that deconstructs inherited authoritarian models.

*“My family came from Central Asia, where people are afraid of leaders. Here, I am learning that a leader can be a friend, not just a boss.”—(church minister, FL)*

*“I was in a church where leadership was authoritarian and toxic. It discouraged me from participating. Only later did I realize there are other models.”—(CEO business company, OH)*

*“When I moved to the U.S.A, I realized that leadership in ministry is not about titles it is not about controlling people—it’s about relationship and example.”—(manager, educator, NC)*

*“In the Soviet context, a leader controlled and subdued others. I had to retrain myself, because leadership from a Christian perspective should be different.”—(business owner, WA)*

Yulia Shtareva, in her doctoral dissertation, *Frozen: A Grounded Theory of Transgenerational Trauma Cycles in the Evangelical Slavic Diaspora of Former Soviet Union Refugees*, further explains how authoritarianism and trauma operate in cycles: migration often fosters authoritarian structures and religious fundamentalism as a way of creating order, yet younger generations experience this rigidity as harmful.<sup>19</sup> Such tendencies—moral absolutism, demand for conformity, dogmatic intolerance of difference—can harden into aggressive religious fundamentalism that silences dissent. Over time, these cycles risk reproducing trauma across generations within the DE.

17 Yulia Shtareva, *Frozen: A Grounded Theory of Transgenerational Trauma Cycles in the Evangelical Slavic Diaspora of Former Soviet Union Refugees* (Doctoral dissertation, Antioch University, 2025), <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/1206>

18 Roger Gill and Alexander Negrov, “Perspectives on Leadership Development in Post-Soviet Eurasia,” *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management* 21, no. 3 (2021): 409–29.

19 See Y. Shtareva, *Frozen: A Grounded Theory of Transgenerational Trauma Cycles in the Evangelical Slavic Diaspora of Former Soviet Union Refugees*.

### *Theology of Work and Workplace Leadership*

Many in the diaspora possess a strong theology of church leadership but lack an integrated vision for leadership in the workplace or public life. Christian mission is often reduced to evangelism or short-term trips, with few recognizing its connection to all spheres of life. In our study, 70% viewed church involvement as central to leadership development, while only 43%—mainly younger professionals—saw growth through non-church settings. This gap reflects not a lack of potential but of narrow theological reflection and identity formation.

*“For me, leadership in the church is service, and at work, it is performance and responsibility. But I am increasingly realizing that the values should be the same. I am still puzzled.”*—(public school executive, CA)

*“In church, we were taught to be servants, but we were never taught how to lead in society and at work.”*—(CEO, business company)

Working Christians in the U.S. face diverse realities—competition, fairness, balance, diversity, and the pursuit of meaningful success. Professional growth is vital, yet it must be inseparably linked to spiritual transformation. When training and career development nurture both capacity and spiritual well-being, professional advancement becomes an expression of Christian values, aligning leadership with faith rather than isolating them.<sup>20</sup>

### Limitations and Future Research

The study’s reliance on self-reports and access through partner organizations limits generalizability, though triangulation strengthens confidence in the patterns observed. Future research should examine second-generation leaders, gendered experiences, and long-term outcomes of faith–work integration and followership training.

Several areas remain underexplored. This study did not systematically address the networks (social, religious, professional) that shape leadership, or the dynamics of assimilation, integration, or marginalization in relation to broader U.S. society. Women’s activism, entrepreneurial ventures, and other emerging leadership arenas also warrant study. Nor did the research investigate concrete practices that sustain leaders’ spiritual growth and self-discipline, despite participants naming these as vital. Further work could also explore how diaspora communities navigate U.S. political divisions and overcome the dualism between faith and work. Finally, broader questions of immigration policy remain. As Zolberg (1931–2013) observed,

<sup>20</sup> On the subject of workplace spirituality and the integration of faith and work, see, for example, Dorothea Alewell, Yochanan Altman, et al., *Workplace Spirituality: Making a Difference* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2022); Timothy Ewest, ed., *Faith and Work: Christian Research, Perspectives, and Applications* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2022); Larry W. Sharp, *Missions Disrupted: From Professional Missionaries to Missional Professionals* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2022).



such policies are tools of nation-building.<sup>21</sup> Why were so-called Slavic Evangelicals welcomed in recent decades—religious conservatism, work ethic, political reliability? Though beyond this article, these questions highlight the need for deeper inquiry.

## Conclusion

Our mixed-methods study offers an integrated portrait of leadership within the DE communities, confirming that spiritually grounded formation, ethical modeling, and personal maturity (the 3M—Mindset, Model, Maturity) are mutually reinforcing pillars of effective leadership. Quantitative patterns and qualitative narratives converge on several key insights: (1) leadership is widely understood as spiritually rooted, yet often practiced in leader-centric ways that underemphasize followership; (2) theological vision is strong inside the church but remains only partially integrated with workplace and public life; (3) cultural memory—especially residues of authoritarianism—continues to shape assumptions and behaviors, requiring trauma-informed discernment; and (4) migration catalyzes a shift from positional authority toward relational influence, inviting leaders to couple spiritual depth with organizational competence.

At the same time, respondents identify internal barriers—most notably insufficient spiritual maturity and self-discipline—as chief constraints on growth. This self-assessment suggests that structural fixes alone will be inadequate without intentional practices of formation (mentoring, accountability, prayer, and disciplined learning) and a clearer theology of followership. Practically, the findings commend: (a) embedding followership education alongside leadership training; (b) integrating faith-and-work pedagogy to close the church–work dualism; (c) cultivating trauma-aware leadership habits that name and unlearn authoritarian patterns; and (d) using the 3M framework as a diagnostic and developmental tool in churches, ministries, and marketplace settings.

The study of leadership within the DE reveals that leadership is spiritual before it is positional, rooted in a deep relationship with God and the cultivation of maturity in Christ. Yet the role of followership is often overlooked, leaving leadership imagined in overly individualistic terms. Good leaders arise where there are good followers—of Christ, of truth, and of community wisdom.

Participants also highlighted the need to integrate leadership across all spheres of life, resisting the tendency to separate church leadership from workplace or public responsibilities. Consistency of values is essential, whether at work, in church, or in daily life. Growth in leadership further requires intentional formation—discipline, accountability, mentorship, and spiritual practices that nurture readiness and resilience.

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21 Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

Cultural memory continues to shape leadership assumptions, with authoritarian residues from the Soviet past or dysfunctional church models persisting in many communities. Healthier leadership demands honest reflection and the courage to unlearn such patterns. In these circumstances, the 3M framework—Mindset, Model, and Maturity—proves especially useful, offering a practical way to assess and guide growth.

Ultimately, leadership is a process, not a title. It is expressed in small but faithful acts: mentoring others, serving locally, and practicing self-awareness. True leadership emerges through collaboration and partnership, supported by courageous followership that fosters healthy leaders and resists toxic ones, ultimately benefiting the entire diaspora community.

## Appendix 1

### Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Qualitative Research

Note 1: This guide was used for qualitative interviews with organizational leaders from diaspora evangelical communities in the USA. The questions were semi-structured: while the same core prompts were asked of each participant, follow-up questions and probes varied depending on the context and responses. The guide was focused on leadership formation in diaspora settings.

Opening Question: Can you tell me a little about yourself and your organizational and professional background?

Further Research Questions:

1. What does leadership mean to you?
2. Tell me about your journey as an organizational leader.  
Follow-up question: How do you see yourself as a leader today?
3. Who or what has helped (supported) you become the leader you are today?
4. The world is changing rapidly. Do you see a need to change as a leader? If so, in what ways?
5. When you are faced with a difficult decision, what do you do?
6. Please share with me an example of how your Christian beliefs and leadership are connected.
7. As a Christian, what do you do to cultivate your relationship with God?  
Follow-up question if respondent mentions prayers: Tell me more about your prayer life.
8. Have you experienced a spiritual crisis as a leader?  
Follow-up questions if respondent mentions prayers: Can you describe that experience? How did you deal with it?
9. What do Christians need to become better leaders?

## Appendix 2

### Survey Questions

*Note 1:* This survey was developed for participants of leadership training among representatives of the Evangelical diaspora in the USA.

*Note 2:* This survey was conducted before seminars, allowing participants to respond prior to being introduced to theological and other conceptual ideas about leadership and leadership development. The participants completed this survey online. The questions appeared one by one, beginning with open-ended items, and the overall order of questions was randomized.

*Note 3:* While the survey is presented as a list of questions, multiple interpretive categories emerge once responses are analyzed. Items may be grouped into perceptions of leadership, reflections on others' leadership, personal leadership, and evaluations of leadership within the diaspora. Additional categories—such as leadership development, followership and teamwork, or spiritual life and meaning—can also be constructed. This underscores that the instrument was designed not to impose rigid classifications but to generate data suitable for analysis across diverse thematic lenses.

- Q1.** How do you understand leadership? (Please write your definition in no more than 20 words)
- Q2.** Which definition of leadership do you agree with the most?
- Leadership is interaction between a leader and followers to achieve a common goal
  - Leadership is serving God and people for higher purposes
  - Leadership is showing the way and helping others follow it
  - Leadership is influencing others and leading them
  - Leadership is power over people
  - Leadership is popularity, fame, and success
- Q3.** Which of the following statements best describes your view of leadership potential?
- People are born with potential and need to develop it
  - People become leaders through development
  - Hard to say
  - People are born as leaders

- Q4.** Which of the following traits are most characteristic of Christians you know well? *(Select up to 5)*
- Sacrifice, willingness to serve
  - Honesty
  - Responsibility and reliability
  - Sociability
  - Ability to recognize strengths and weaknesses
  - Purposefulness
  - Initiative, activeness
  - Self-control
  - Creativity
- Q5.** What negative traits are most characteristic of modern Christians? *(Select 4)*
- Unwillingness to learn and grow
  - Pursuing personal interests over others'
  - Irresponsibility
  - Unwillingness to serve others
  - Arrogance
  - Lack of initiative
  - Lack of spirituality
  - Reluctance to take leadership in church or society
- Q6.** What are the most characteristic signs of negative leadership in a team? *(Select any number)*
- Pursuing personal interests to the detriment of the team
  - Inability to resolve conflicts
  - Dishonesty, injustice
  - Inability to define a shared goal or strategy
  - Distrust
  - Arrogance
  - Unwillingness to support others
  - Poor understanding of roles within the team
- Q7.** As mature Christians, we know that self-development is an ongoing process. Which of the following weaknesses or struggles do you notice in yourself? *(Select up to 4)*
- Lack of initiative in service or life
  - Lack of spiritual maturity
  - Tendency toward pride or self-importance
  - Irresponsibility
  - Reluctance to take leadership in church or community
  - Unwillingness to help or serve others
  - Lack of desire for personal/spiritual growth

- Laziness or procrastination
- Lack of self-discipline
- I do not notice any such weaknesses in myself

**Q8.** What is the leader's task in working with a team? (*Select any number*)

- Provide support, motivate, and inspire team members to pursue a common goal
- Encourage personal development of each team member and create the conditions for it
- Demonstrate values, rules, and standards by personal example
- Formulate and communicate the team's common goal
- Create necessary conditions for team members to fulfill their tasks

**Q9.** What is the role of followers in relation to a leader?

- Follow the leader
- Serve others for the common goal
- Obey the leader's instructions
- Strive for the common goal together with the leader and the team

**Q10.** What role do you most often find yourself in?

- Both leader and follower
- Leader
- Follower
- Not sure

**Q11.** In which role do you feel most comfortable?

- Both
- Follower
- Leader
- Not sure

**Q12.** In which role do you see yourself in the future?

- Leader
- Doesn't matter
- Follower
- Not sure

**Q13.** What do you lack most for your development and formation as a leader?  
(*Select 4*)

- Educational programs, trainings, seminars
- Personal motivation and self-discipline
- Relationship with God, spiritual maturity
- Participation of the local church in my development
- Encouragement and support from others

- Participation in non-church projects
- Participation in various Christian ministries and projects
- Other (please specify)

**Q14.** What helps you most in developing as a leader? *(Select up to 5)*

- Relationship with God, spiritual growth
- Mentorship (personal interaction with experienced leaders)
- Participation in local church ministries and projects
- Family
- Personal motivation and self-discipline
- Educational programs, trainings, seminars
- Motivation and encouragement from others
- Support from the local church

**Q15.** Have you ever studied leadership? *(Select all that apply)*

- In a Christian educational institution
- Self-studied
- In a secular educational institution
- At work
- In the local church
- Other

**Q16.** Is there anyone in your life who helps you grow as a person? *(Select all that apply)*

- Relatives
- Friends
- Christians
- Colleagues from work or school
- I have a mentor
- Other
- No one

**Q17.** Which church leadership activities do you consider most important? *(Select 3)*

- Spiritual formation and edification
- Training other ministers
- Strategic planning for church development
- Preaching and prayer
- Evangelism
- Maintaining order and discipline
- Church administration
- Managing church finances
- Other

**Q18.** Which skills should church ministry leaders possess first and foremost? (*Select all that apply*)

- Ability to encourage, motivate, inspire
- Ability to model Christian values
- Ability to relate to each person individually
- Ability to articulate and convey vision, strategy, goals
- Ability to build and lead a team
- Desire and ability to develop others
- Organizational skills

**Q19.** Which of the following recommendations for church leaders are most important? (*Select all that apply*)

- Love God and people
- Train new leaders, ministers, teams
- Be sincere
- Continue learning and getting education
- Reflect on yourself and your ministry
- Be accountable and seek mentors
- Foster cooperation with other churches
- Other

**Q20.** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1–5 scale):

- My life has meaning and significance
- There is someone in my life who cares for me
- I have life goals for the coming years
- I regularly use my gifts and talents
- What I spend most of my time and energy on is meaningful
- I feel understood and appreciated

**Q21.** What negative experiences have you encountered in your church? (*Select one*)

- Lack of dedication and maturity among believers, including pastors
- I have not encountered such things
- Other (please specify)
- Lack of interest in my development
- Dishonesty or hypocrisy in church leadership
- Indifference or neglect toward members
- Lack of awareness or competence among leaders

**Q22.** Where do you function most effectively? (*Select up to 3*)

- Family
- Church projects and ministries
- Work



- Education
- Creative activities
- Sports
- Other

**Q23.** Please indicate your age.

- Under 20
- 20–30
- 30–40
- 40–50
- 50+

**Q24.** Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female

**Q25.** Please indicate your education level.

- High school diploma
- Technical school / associate degree
- College / university (undergraduate degree)
- Graduate degree

**Q26.** Please indicate the state in which you currently reside: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q27.** Optional: Do you have any comments, feedback, or reflections regarding this questionnaire or the topic of leadership? (*Open text field*)

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## Погляди на лідерство серед євангельських християн у діаспорі в США: Взаємодія теології, самодисципліни та духовної зрілості

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Анотація: У статті розглядаються погляди на лідерство та розвиток лідерських якостей серед євангельських християн слов'янської діаспори у США, із особливим акцентом на зв'язок між богослов'ям, самодисципліною та духовною зрілістю. Дослідження ґрунтується на даних 173 учасників — 36 інтерв'ю та 137 анкет — здебільшого з українських церков діаспори, а також від християн з Росії, Білорусі, Молдови та країн Центральної Азії. Збір даних тривав з квітня 2021 по травень 2025 року в рамках освітніх ініціатив, започаткованих церквами або неакредитованими освітніми організаціями у США. Результати показують, що учасники послідовно вважають духовне зростання і близькість із Богом основами лідерства. Водночас багато з них зазначають, що недолік самодисципліни є суттєвою перешкодою на шляху до формування лідерських якостей. Лідерство часто описується у соціальних або функціональних термінах — як організаційна ефективність або вплив на спільноту, а не у богословських категоріях. Крім того, більшість респондентів приділяли мало уваги ролі послідовництва, що свідчить про дефіцит цілісного розуміння лідерства. У статті стверджується, що необхідним є інтегрований підхід — поєднання богословського осмислення з дисциплінованою лідерською практикою — для виховання духовно закорінених, етично відповідальних та ефективних лідерів і послідовників. Така інтеграція є особливо важливою для євангельських спільнот емігрантів, що шукають відповіді на питання ідентичності, культурної адаптації та місії у американському контексті.

Ключові слова: євангельські християни діаспори, 3M Hodos Leadership Framework, розвиток лідерства, духовна зрілість, самодисципліна, послідовництво, культурна пам'ять, інтеграція віри та праці.

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