

# Sneller Salute



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*Dear Supporters,*

It is back-to-school season for our children, but for the first time in thirteen years, neither Deric nor I is in school! The past few years of pursuing doctoral work were both challenging and joyful for me, and it was a bittersweet

(mostly sweet) celebration to graduate in May! We would like to use this newsletter to share a brief summary of what I learned with you all. My research centered on the question: *How can Cadence best develop leaders within our organization so that they flourish in Christ and serve effectively for years to come?*



Graduation

## THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Cadence International ministers to military communities around the world—communities that are constantly in flux. New families arrive, others depart, and transitions are the norm. For our staff, this means good leadership is both demanding and essential. In recent years, many of our staff members, both at headquarters and on the field, have expressed a strong desire for more intentional training and support as they serve. Without a clear strategy for developing leaders, organizations often face burnout, turnover, and gaps in ministry.

## WHAT I RESEARCHED

To explore this need, I studied both Scripture and leadership theory. I dug into some of the Bible's examples of leadership development: God shaping Moses, Moses mentoring Joshua, Jesus training his disciples, and Paul discipling Timothy. Each of these models emphasized that leadership isn't just about skills but about transformation through relationship with God and others.

Alongside biblical study, I examined social science research. Scholars consistently point to several elements that help leaders grow:

- Experiential learning (gaining wisdom through doing and reflecting)
- Mentoring and coaching
- Peer networks and relationships
- Stretch assignments that push leaders beyond their comfort zones

What fascinated me most was how these insights connect with theology. For example, attachment theory—a field from psychology that studies how secure relationships shape people—resonates with the biblical truth that our deepest growth comes from secure attachment to God. Leaders who know they are loved and grounded in Christ develop stronger character and can lead with humility, security, and resilience.

## THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Because I didn't want this to remain only theoretical, I brought together a focus group of Cadence staff from different parts of the organization. Over four weeks, we studied these biblical and research-based principles, evaluated what Cadence already has in place, and identified what's missing. The group engaged deeply with the material—sometimes even wrestling with abstract concepts like “attachment to God” and how that plays out in everyday leadership.

Their feedback confirmed that:

- Our people long for growth in both character and competence.
- Leadership development should be woven into the life of the ministry, not tacked on as an extra program.
- A balance of spiritual formation and practical skills is necessary for lasting impact.



Visiting HQ



Community Fair



Patio at K-town



WHAT STOOD OUT TO ME

Several themes struck me as I synthesized the research:

- Leadership development is not one-size-fits-all. Each organization, including Cadence, needs a strategy that fits its unique mission and culture.
- Leaders grow best in community—through mentoring, coaching, and learning alongside others.
- Above all, leadership development in a Christian context must be rooted in identity in Christ. Skills and training matter, but without a secure foundation in God’s love, leaders risk leading out of fear, pride, or exhaustion.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Studying leadership in this way has been deeply meaningful for me. I have been reminded that while programs and strategies are important, leadership growth is ultimately about transformation—God shaping us more into the image

of Christ as we serve others. Since graduating, I have shared my findings and proposed action plan with Cadence’s executive leadership team, department directors, and field leaders. My hope is that this research will not only help Cadence but will also contribute to the wider conversation about how Christian leaders are formed.

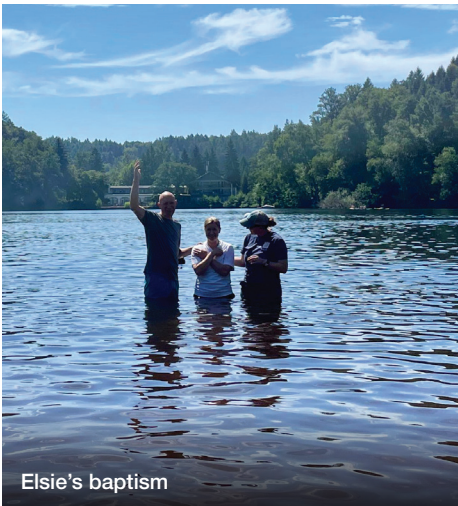
THANK YOU

This project would not have been possible without your prayers, support, and encouragement. You have been part of this journey with me, and I am grateful. Thank you for cheering me on as I studied, listened, and learned. I look forward to seeing how God will use these insights to strengthen leaders in Cadence and beyond.

With gratitude,  
**Rebecca (on behalf of the Snellers)**



Baptism witnesses



Elsie's baptism



Story time



Friday friends



Friday music



Visiting the Baumholder Hospitality House



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**Deric & Rebecca Sneller**

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**GIVE ONLINE**



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