

“Personal Leadership Character Formation”

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If “in Christ all things are made new: then how does our relationship with Christ convert our leadership lifestyle? The question pursues a spirituality of leadership.

Where does Christian spirituality and spiritual leadership intersect in the context of a Christian community? In the midst of conflicting expectations, and often irreconcilable differences, the Christian leader is a local congregation, mission organization, Christian college, a church governing board, or a host of other communities, what does it mean-really mean- in these often conflicting situations to lead with the mind of Christ?

I am often challenged by the words of “The Servant Song” in our hymnal (page 679). Listen to the first two verses:

*Brother, let me be your servant,
Let me be Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant too.*

*We are pilgrims on a journey;
We are brothers on the road,
We are here to help each other,
Walk the mile and bear the load*

Each time I sing this hymn, however, I am haunted by a question. Is it really possible to be a servant-a servant leader-in the real world of the contemporary Christian community with all of the conflicting demands and pressures on us?

My contention is that, regardless of where God places us as leaders and with whom He places us within the Christian fellowship, we need-we must have at the core of our being-at least three compelling convictions:

- A vision of who we are as people of God;
- A passion for what we are called to do in the work of God; and
- An obsession for how we live together as the family of God

These convictions are the heart and soul of the servant leadership. They comprise the essence of the Servant’s Song. I am coming to understand that if leaders are to assist “the led” to think and act Christianly, we must wholeheartedly embrace these leadership themes:

- The motivation for servant leadership is grounded in a theology of ministry.
- The lifestyle of servant leadership is characterized by a passion for Christ-likeness.

- The goal of servant leadership is for transformation and reconciliation.
- The ministry of servant leadership is to prepare others for their ministries.
- The evidence of servant leadership is in the qualitative growth of the led-individually and collectively.

My thesis is that there must be a vision within the Christian community we serve regarding ministry that is shared by both the leader and the led. Without this shared vision of ministry, the community of faith will experience disintegration and despair. Conversely, mobilizing a Christian community for ministry hinges on a radical commitment to our identity as:

- brothers and sisters in Christ,
- fellow travelers on a spiritual journey,
- members together of Christ's body,
- a fellowship of God's people,
- a microcosm of the kingdom of God on earth,
- a community of faith,
- a sacramental community in and through which the grace of God flows.

Fundamentally, I believe, effective leadership for character formation ministry expression is grounded in biblical perspective and not in organizational skills. Skills, of course, are needed. However, sharp skills without Christian motives easily lead to manipulation. The primary orientation and motivation of our actions as Christian leaders must be deeply theological. Brother, sister, let me be your servant...